



CARE Sierra Leone
Rice Value Chain Development (RVCD) Project,
(December 15, 2009 – October 15, 2011)

funded by the EuropeAid Food Facility
(DCI-FOOD/2009/213-280)

Final Evaluation
(September 23 - October 18, 2011)

Final report,
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Executive summary

The Rice Value Chain Development project (RVCD), funded by the EU Food Facility between December 15, 2009 and October 15, 2011, and implemented by CARE Sierra Leone, has successfully achieved its main objectives as set out in the Logical framework.

The RVCD project has successfully contributed to enhanced rice production and trade at the local level, both in quantity and in quality, through the improved profitability of rice production to farmers (through training, bulk selling, quality improvement, area expansion), to communities (through training, improved storage and store management, and better access to traders), and to traders (bulk selling, improved quality, less marketing transaction costs).

The approach and concepts of the Rice Value Chain Development project (RVCD) cannot be evaluated though in a fair and comprehensive manner after two incomplete years of operation. Monitoring and final evaluation of the RVCD project results, outcomes and impacts is recommended within one (1) to three (3) years after closure of current phase.

The Evaluation mission considers, in any case, that the Rice Value Chain Development project (RVCD) is very relevant in the production and trade contexts of Northern Sierra Leone. CARE as well as donor EU are highly encouraged to search and provide additional funding for continuation and full testing and development of this innovative and practical production and trade-oriented project under a new phase of two (2) to three (3) years.

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The Evaluation mission is equally grateful to all those who facilitated the field visits and interviews with stakeholders in Koinadugu, Tonkolili and Bombali Districts, i.e. the RVCD District Team leaders, the Field Agents and the Village Rice Consultants (VRC). The visit programme covered all of the three project intervention districts, and considered all main stakeholders in implementation of the RVCD project in the field. Practical arrangements in the field were made to full satisfaction of the mission.

Furthermore, the Evaluation mission wishes to thank this way all actors and beneficiaries in Koinadugu, Tonkolili and Bombali Districts that have shared with us their appreciations, views and understanding of the RVCD project and its results and outcomes for their daily professional lives in farming, processing and trading. These include the Farmer Associations (FA) and Federations of Farmers Associations, the Village Rice Consultants (VRC), the Storage Management Committees (SMC) and the local village chiefs attending the Evaluation meetings, as well as the rice traders and millers.

Exchanges in Freetown with the Delegation of the European Union (donor of the project), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Seed Multiplication Project (SMP), the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) and the ACDI/VOCA programme Promoting Agriculture, Governance and Environment (PAGE) were very useful, open and informative, and therewith provided the mission with a valuable in-depth understanding of the evolution and appreciation of the RVCD project, and the possibilities and opportunities for follow-up.

Finally, my sincere gratitude goes out to the CARE Sierra Leone Country Director Diawary Bouaré, the Head of Program Operations Younoussou Tangara, and the newly appointed Head of Program Development and Quality Assurance Asmara Ayele for the frank and open exchanges about the RVCD project and its underlying concepts, and for their collaboration in successfully carrying out this Final Evaluation.

This is the Final report of the Final Evaluation, which takes into account where necessary and appropriate the comments and observations received from RVCD project staff and CARE SL management on a previous version of this report.

Peter TON,

Freetown, 15 October 2010.

Acronyms

ABC	Agricultural Business Centre
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CAP	Conservation Agriculture Project (CARE SL project)
ECOWAP	ECOWAS Agriculture Policy
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FA	Farmer Association
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
GAFFSP	Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (IFAD programme)
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPPM	Integrated Production and Pest Management
IVS	Inland Valley Swamps
LEAD	Livelihood Expansion and Assets Development (CARE SL programme)
LINKS	Promoting Linkages for Livelihood Security and Economic Development (CARE SL programme)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAFFS	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
NaCSA	National Commission for Social Action
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSADP	National Sustainable Agriculture Development Plan
P4P	Purchase for Progress (WFP programme)
PAGE	Promoting Agriculture, Governance and Environment (World Bank programme)
PRCC	Primary Rice Collection Centre
ROM	Result Oriented Monitoring
RVCD	Rice Value Chain Development project (CARE SL project)
SCP	Smallholder Commercialisation Programme
SLARI	Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute
SMC	Store Management Committee
SMP	Seed Multiplication Project (SLARI project)
SNAP	Sustainable Nutrition and Agriculture Promotion
TL	Team Leader
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollars
VRC	Village Rice Consultant
VSL	Village Savings and Loans
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme

1. Introduction

1.1 Objectives of the Evaluation mission

This Final report presents the results of the Final Evaluation of the Rice Value Chain Development Project (RVCD) implemented by CARE in Northern Sierra Leone (Koinadugu, Bombali and Tonkolili Districts) (DCI-FOOD/2009/213-280). Total budget of the project is Euro 1,508,860.21. The project is funded for 90% by EuropeAid under the EU Food Facility established in 2008 following rising food prices. Project period was twenty-two (22) months; from December 15, 2009 to October 15, 2011.

The Final Evaluation took place in late-September and the first half of October 2011, i.e. the last three (3) weeks of project period. The general objectives of the Final Evaluation were to inventory and assess the results and the outcomes of the project compared to those expected at project start (cf. Logical Framework; Annex 4), to draw lessons from the project concepts, implementation and management, and to develop conclusions and recommendations for the various stakeholders in the RVCD project. The Evaluation mission also assessed the opportunities for continued financial support of the project activities - in whole or in part.

The original Terms of Reference of the Final Evaluation are in Annex 1. The ToR was adjusted between CARE SL staff and consultant upon mutual agreement as to adhere to the tight time schedule and to the evaluatory character of the assignment. Data regarding the Rice Value Chain in Northern Sierra Leone were gathered and updated by the internal Project Monitoring & Evaluation Survey. However, unfortunately the survey results were not available to the Evaluation mission in an appropriate format. The survey results will be included in the Final report of project holder CARE to EuropeAid.

1.2 Evolution of the Final Evaluation

The Final Evaluation was carried out by one international consultant. The first part of the Final Evaluation consisted in the analysis of the main project documents (Project proposal document, EuropeAid Result Oriented Monitoring (ROM) visit, CARE NL Monitoring report, Base-line survey, Mid-term Evaluation report, and the Interim Narrative Report of June 2011) and other project-relevant reports publicly available on the Internet. The second part of the Final Evaluation consisted in three (3) days of field visits to the three Northern Districts, and in participation in the Project's Close Out Workshop on October 8, 2011. Thirdly, interviews took place with the donor EU Food Facility, project partners and relevant related rice sector-oriented development programmes in Sierra Leone.

This report presents the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation mission. It includes most of the comments, observations and remarks received from RVCD project staff and CARE SL management during the workshop presentation of the Draft report (October 13, 2011).

1.3 Methodological aspects

In preparation of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Final Evaluation it was agreed between parties to distinguish the generation of new data through surveys etc. (a project activity) from the actual project evaluation work. The Final Evaluation was limited to a primarily qualitative assessment and interpretation of the project activities, results and outcomes based on interviews with stakeholders. The programme of the Final Evaluation was jointly prepared between the RVCD project and the mission before field visits took place.

The Final Evaluation has focused on the open exchange and deliberation with RVCD project stakeholders about the relevance, the underlying concepts, the implementation, the results and outcomes, and any other impacts of the project on the rice value chain and on food security in Northern Sierra Leone. For this, semi-structured interviews were held with stakeholders all along the project and the rice value chain; including donor agencies (EU, FAO), project partners (SLARI, SMP, WFP), related projects (PAGE), project management (CARE SL management, Project manager, Thematic Coordinators, M&E advisor), field staff (District Team Leader, Field Agents), Village Rice Consultants (VRC), Store Management Committees (SMC), Farmers Associations (FA), traders and millers.

Interviews with the Village Rice Consultants, Store Management Committees and Farmer Associations took place during joint village meetings which were logistically prepared by the same. Other interviews were held per stakeholder or stakeholder group. During field visits, the mission was accompanied by the international Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Advisor of the RVCD project who was recruited only in June 2011. His contributions to the Final Evaluation and the interviews were highly appreciated, and helped on several occasions to shed new light on certain elements of the regional rice value chains.

Analysis of the main RVCD project documentation and the Logical framework furthermore translated into an extensive listing of project documents and other outcomes, with the aim to cross-check and assess the presence and availability of relevant project data.

The Rice Value Chain Development Project comprises many different stakeholders and activities, which makes it impossible to assess them in sufficient detail in the short time-frame that was available to the mission. However, the mission considers to have nevertheless been able to assess in sufficient depth the main lines of the RVCD project as to be able to draw a number of relevant conclusions and recommendations about project set-up, strategies, activities, evolution, results and outcomes.

The Final Evaluation took place in the period of September 23 till October 18, 2011. Annex 2 provides the programme and itinerary of the Final Evaluation. The list of resource-persons contacted is found in Annex 3.

2. Project logic and implementation

2.1 History of the project

CARE Sierra Leone was established in 1961. CARE SL has been heavily involved in relief and emergency aid to victims of the war that struck Sierra Leone for about a decade. Since peace set in as of 2002, CARE SL has carried out large programmes on, amongst others, the reinsertion of child soldiers into society, relief to other victims of the war, food for work, HIV/AIDS prevention, the establishment of Farmer Associations and Village Savings and Loans groups, etc..

As to agriculture, CARE SL together with CARE International have become increasingly interested to go beyond a production orientation and towards a more integrated and comprehensive Value Chain approach to agriculture. The Rice Value Chain Development Project (RVCD) is the first endeavor of CARE SL into the implementation of a Value Chain approach. New project proposals are currently being drafted around value chains for poultry, groundnuts, honey and non-timber forest products (NTFP).

The RVCD project proposal to the EU Food Facility was developed by CARE SL's team with the contribution of the Chief of Party of the former USAID-funded Livelihood Expansion and Assets Development (LEAD) project in collaboration with a French consultant specialized in EU proposal writing.

The Project proposal was submitted to the EU Food Facility in Brussels by CARE Netherlands. The proposal was awarded by Brussels directly with limited content involvement of the EU Delegation in Sierra Leone (a "no objection"). The RVCD project forms part of a much larger EU Food Facility portfolio in Sierra Leone, together with another smaller rice production-oriented project led by the NGO Concern Worldwide, and the large Smallholder Commercialisation Project (SCP; Euro 28.5 mln) carried out by the FAO and WFP in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS).

The RVCD project could draw upon certain project activities previously undertaken by CARE in the three Northern Districts within the framework of the USAID-funded projects Livelihood Expansion and Assets Development (LEAD) and Promoting Linkages for Livelihood Security and Economic Development (LINKS). In Koinadugu District, CARE currently still carries out two other projects: the EU-funded Sustainable Agriculture Development Project (SADev), supporting the organisational development of Farmer Associations (FA), and the Conservation Agriculture Project (CAP) funded by the Howard Buffett Foundation, and focusing on land productivity.

2.2 Project period

The Rice Value Chain Development Project was formally started in December 2009. However, work of the RVCD team only took off in April 2010 due to delays in recruitment of staff. Delay in project start (four months) implied that the RVCD project missed out on the first months of the 2010/11 season for organizational build-up and technical advice.

The EU Food Facility being a special, short-term and temporary facility, the RVCD project's ending date of October 15, 2011 could not be extended by the EU to compensate for late

project start. A budget-neutral extension until October 31 might have been possible if CARE SL had so formally requested and motivated. Extension to a later date was not possible for administrative reasons. In consequence, CARE's RVCD project had to be closed down right in the middle of the 2011/12 rice growing and marketing season.

This report evaluates the Rice Value Chain Development project primarily according to the Logical framework and the Objectives as defined in Project document. However, the unfortunate non-alignment of the effective project implementation period with the project period set by donor implies that a fair and comprehensive evaluation of the project's concepts, results, outcomes and impacts is not actually possible. In particular, this Final Evaluation cannot pretend to thoroughly and fairly evaluate those concepts and approaches considered to be very innovative both by CARE SL and the donor EU Food Facility; of which the concepts of Intervention without input grants, the establishment of self-financed Village Rice Consultants, and the linkage of Farmer Associations (FA) and rice traders with banks and Micro-Finance Institutions (MFI) (see below).

Yet, the current Evaluation can contribute to a better understanding of the results and outcomes of implementation of these concepts and approaches, without aiming to be final and conclusive. CARE SL and donor EuropeAid are strongly encouraged to monitor the evolution and the performance of the different stakeholders in the Rice Value Chain Development (RVCD) project through an assessment and final evaluation of the RVCD project impacts within one (1) to three (3) years after project closure.

2.3 Project associates

CARE SL implemented the Rice Value Chain Development (RVCD) project with four main partners: MAFFS, SLARI, SMP and WFP. At the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS), the Division of Agricultural Extension was RVCD's main counterpart. MAFFS contributed to the extension approach of the RVCD project mainly through its participation in RVCD-organised discussion fora on local and national radios.

The Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI) was involved through one of its scientists in a study into the Quality characteristics of rice seeds and in the development of the Rice Producer's Handbook. The Seed Multiplication Project (SMP) contributed to quality rice seed provision, through the sale of certified rice seed to participating Farmer Associations.

The World Food Programme (WFP) runs a school feeding programme in Sierra Leone for which it used to import cereals. WFP decided internationally as of 2008 that 40% of provisions should be made in-country, in order to stimulate national production. The WFP programme Purchase for Progress (P4P) is in charge of procurement, and decided to favour procurement from smallholders when reasonably possible. On that basis, the CARE SL and WFP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) granting each other mutual support in order to achieve production, quality and purchasing targets.

2.4 Project management

The RVCD project is managed from the CARE SL head office in Freetown, with sub-offices in Makeni (Bombali and Tonkolili Districts) and Kabala (Koinadugu District). Figure 1 shows CARE's organisational chart of the RVCD project. Figure 2 lists the different staff members and the percentage of time involved – as to original Project document.

Figure 1. CARE SL organisational structure of the RVCD project.

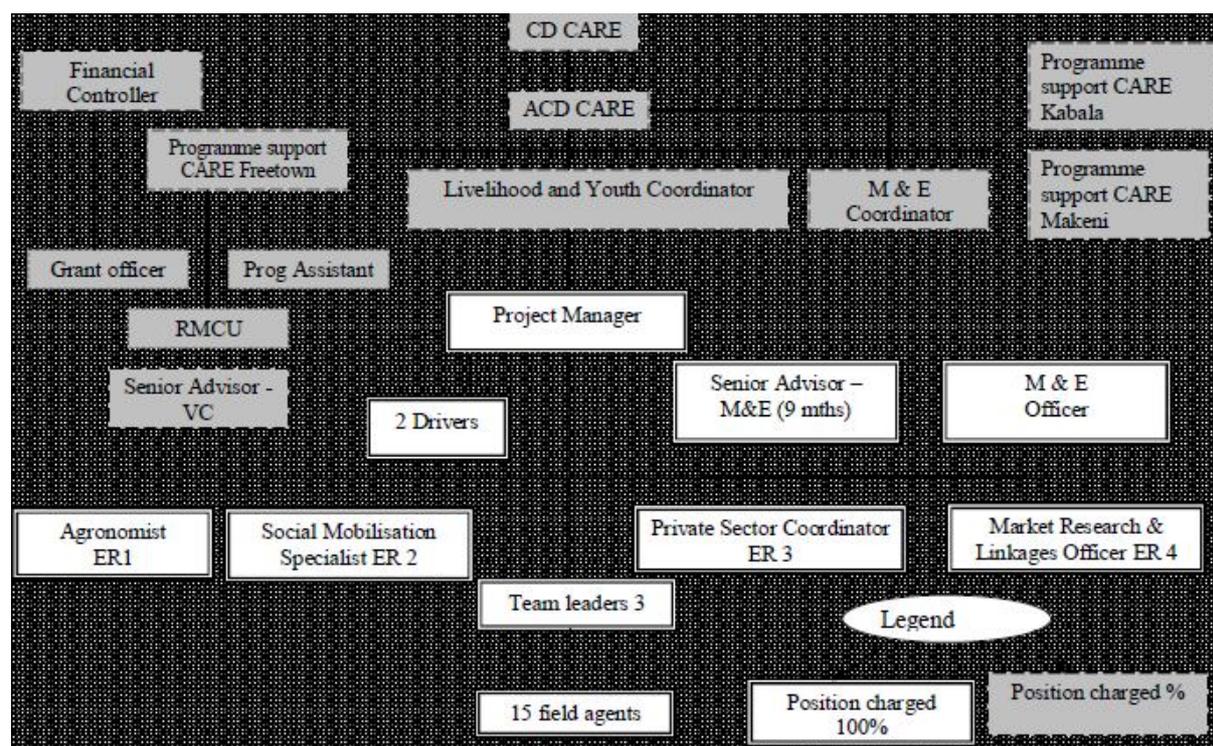


Figure 2. Overview of the RVCD project staff as planned in Project document.

Function	Role	International or National	Time
Country Director	Strategic support	International	3 %
ACD Program	Strategic support	International	5 %
Financial Controller	Overview of Finance	International	10%
Livelihood & Youth Sector Coordinator	Operational oversight	International	20%
Design, Monitoring & Evaluation Coordinator	Overview of DME	National	5%
Programme support	HR, Admin, Procurement	National	5%
Finance Officer	Financial management	National	20%
RMCU	Risk & Compliance	National	20%
Programme Assistant	Administrative support	National	25%
Project manager	Delivery of Project	International	100%
Senior Adviser – M&E (9mths)	Technical Advice M&E	International	100%
DME Officer	M&E activities	National	100%
Senior Adviser – VC	Technical Advice VC	International	10%
Agronomist	Delivery of ER1	National	100%
Social Mobilisation Specialist	Delivery of ER2	National	100%
Private Sector Coordinator	Delivery of ER3	National	100%
Market Research and Linkages	Delivery of ER4	National	100%
Team leaders (3)	Supervisor - Field Agent	National	100%
Field agents (15)	Field activities	National	100%
Drivers (2)	Logistical support	National	100%

The RVCD project is managed from Freetown by an expatriate Programme manager and specialist in rice production, with logistical, financial and managerial support of the CARE SL Head Office. The project counts with four (4) technical coordinators in the fields of: Agronomy, Social mobilization, Private sector development and Market research and linkages. The first two are based in Makeni, the last two in Freetown.

The RVCD project has its own Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) staff, which is supported by a temporary (five months; June-October 2011) international Monitoring & Evaluation Advisor. In the Northern Districts where the RVCD project intervened (Koinadugu, Bombali, Tonkolili) CARE employed a Team leader or Supervisor and five (5) Field Agents per district. Additional technical support to management was provided by a national and an international consultant as to the: Base-line Survey (Miller, 2010), Rice seed variety characteristics (Ngaujah & Spencer, 2010), Farmer assessment of rice varieties (Spencer, 2010) and the Rice Producer's Handbook (Ngaujah & Spencer, 2010).

Due to the positive evolution of the Sierra Leonean economy in recent years (particularly through investments in mining, sugarcane/ethanol production, and other development projects), new job opportunities emerged for project staff over the course of project period. This in combination with the relatively short period of RVCD contract resulted in a relatively large number of project staff (seven persons) leaving in the course of the project period. All current RVCD project staff will see their contracts discontinued by October 15, which implies that most of the expertise and experiences built up by CARE about the Value Chain approach and its implementation in the Sierra Leonean rice sector is discontinued.

The RVCD project experienced difficulties in recruitment of international consultants, in part because of the EuropeAid regulations on procurement, and in part because of delays in contract negotiations and unexpected withdrawal of selected candidates. This resulted in significant delays in the recruitment of a suitable international rice consultant (finally replaced by a Sierra Leone national), an international consultant for the Base-line survey, a Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) advisor (for 5 instead of 9 months), and the international consultant recruited for Final Evaluation of the project.

Late project start has not been compensated by the recruitment of additional staff as to end up with equal man-months. Otherwise, no particular concerns about the evolution of Personnel management in the project period were noted by the Evaluation mission.

2.5 Monitoring & Evaluation

CARE's Project Manager, supported by the M&E officer and a temporary (9 months) Senior Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) advisor, were responsible for overall monitoring of the project. Special attention was to be given to gender aspects. The project envisaged to undertake an annual review based on the key studies (Farmers Survey, Sales Monitoring) measuring log-frame indicators. A Base-line survey was drawn up by an international consultant in close collaboration with project staff (Miller, 2010). A Mid-term review of the project, scheduled for December 2010, was finalized by a national consultant in April 2011.

In the process of establishing the Base-line survey, the Logical framework was adjusted to specify which survey questionnaire related to which indicator (see Annex 4). The Base-line survey (N=240) generated a lot of data which are highly useful to improve our understanding of the contexts of rice production and marketing in the three Northern Districts. The survey consisted in separate Questionnaires for: Paddy rice production, Rice milling, (Domestic) Rice traders, Rice input (Seeds) Providers, and Agricultural service providers to producers and traders. Additionally, focus group meetings took place with women rice farmers for gender analysis. Note, however, that the Base-line survey report does show some important weaknesses as to the reliability of the data collected and their presentation in tables.

At the end of the Project (August-September 2011), a new survey has been undertaken by the project on the basis of an adapted methodology and questionnaires for: Individual farmers, Farmer Associations, Store Management Committees, Village Rice Consultants and Traders. No focus groups took place. It is not clear to the Evaluation mission why the Base-line survey was not repeated with same methodology and same stakeholders as to assess any changes from base-line. Personnel changes in the Monitoring & Evaluation team (leave of M&E officer in October 2010, new M&E officer per February 2011 and the international M&E advisor starting only in June 2011) appear to have interfered with the internal M&E logic.

The Final survey may have been more comprehensive and more targeted as to the RVCD logframe indicators, as more details of rice production and marketing are today known to the project. However, the Final survey results were not available to the Evaluation mission in an accessible format (no report). Some preliminary findings were shared with Evaluation mission (October 11), and will appear below where found relevant.

2.6 Data collection and analysis

Whereas the RVCD indicators of success in the Logical framework are very quantitative of nature, it should be noted that data collection and interpretation is cumbersome in the contexts of rice production and marketing as encountered in the three Northern Districts.

Various production systems apply under this RVCD project: Inland Valley Swamps (IVS), bolilands and upland systems. Rice varieties and yield potential differ in consequence. Data collection by the project has not generally disaggregated for production system, so that data on area and yield per hectare are little available and hard to interpret.

Measurement in the field is often in units (number of bushels etc.) rather than in weight (kg, tons). Units may have the same name (bushels, bags, etc.) yet may have very different meaning between Districts (Tonkolili vs. Bombali bushels; Tipi bags vs. 50kg bags, no. of bushels per bag, etc.). Also, rice can be paddy, cleaned or milled, and be parboiled or non-parboiled; which has a significant impact on weight and mill processing efficiency.

Prices are moreover difficult to compare within and between seasons while being subject to general rice market conditions, month of sale, place of delivery, month of delivery, and the deduction or non-deduction of services delivered by buyer (bags, tarpaulins, credit loans, etc.). In summary, while the RVCD project works with stakeholders on different stages in the rice chain, the presentation, conversion and interpretation of data is prone to inaccuracy.

2.7 Project finances and reporting

Over the course of the RVCD project period, the CARE portfolio of projects consisted of a total of nine (9) projects (see Figure 3). The RVCD project is a relatively large project for CARE SL contributing almost a quarter (23%) to overall annual CARE SL budget and staff.

The total Budget of the RVCD project is Euro 1,508,860.21, of which 90% is funded by the EU Food Facility and 10% to be financed by CARE. Upon contract signature, the EU Food Facility transferred to CARE NL an advance payment of 70% (i.e. Euro 870,535). Funds for implementation were remitted to Sierra Leone and maintained in the Country office's bank account. No special bank account was opened for the project and interest was not earned on the funds transferred (see Audit report, July 2011).

Figure 3. CARE project portfolio (December 2009-October 2011) and estimation of average annual budget (in USD).

Title of project	Project period	Total in USD	Total in Euro	Average annual* in USD
Accessible Free Healthcare < 5 yrs	05/2010-04/2012	630,000	-	315,000
HIV/AIDS Prevention (HAPP)	06/2005-06/2012	8,000,000	-	1,100,000
Extending Micro-Finance	08/2009-03/2011	340,000	-	170,000
Window of Opportunity (WoOP)	01/2009-12/2011	750,000	-	250,000
Vocational Training Child Soldiers & War Affected Youth	07/2010-01/2012	150,000	-	75,000
Community Case Management	05/2009-04/2011	550,000	-	275,000
Conservation Agriculture (CAP)	02/2009-01/2012	1,700,000	-	550,000
Sustainable Agriculture (SADev)	02/2009-01/2013	-	1,700,000	530,000
Rice Value Chain Development (RVCD)	12/2009-10/2011	-	1,500,000	1,000,000
Total average annual budget (in USD; December 2009-October 2011)				4,265,000

* Annual figures are approximate (at EUR:USD=1.34) and were rounded off by author.

Relations between project and donor representative of the EU Food Facility in Sierra Leone have been regular and good. Informal relations with RVCD Project manager were highly appreciated by the EU representative, and also served to respond to any questions about implementation and budget management. Formal relations were few and more administrative of nature. Reporting was limited to an Interim report and a Final report. Intermittent requests by CARE for exceptions to the procurement regulations of consultants were awarded. Requests for re-allocation of budget lines or extension of project period were not.

The EU Food Facility received in September 2011 from project holder CARE NL an Interim Narrative and Financial Report covering the period December 15, 2009 until May 31, 2011. The report was expected by the EU Food Facility after one year of project implementation (i.e. around January-February 2011). However, according to CARE SL reporting was due only once expenditures reached the threshold of 70% of advance payment made to CARE Netherlands by the EU Food Facility.

The Interim Narrative and Financial Report was accompanied by a positive Audit report from Chartered Accountants in Sierra Leone. By May 31, 2011, the total of project expenditures was Euro 710,216.96 or 47% of total budget (see Audit report). By August 31, 2011 cumulative project expenditures had risen to Euro 1,071,160.51; i.e. 71% of total budget. CARE SL provisionally estimates accumulative project expenditures at September 30, 2011 to rise to Euro 1,361,943.97, or 90% (statement of CARE SL; October 11, 2011). With project expenditures continuing over the first half of October 2011, the RVCD project may be expected to almost entirely realise total projected expenditures and to therewith exhaust total of funds awarded under the EU Food Facility.

Delays were noted by several RVCD project and field staff regarding the reimbursement of expenditures, however, after complaints these problems were solved by management in the course of the project period. No further particularities have been noted by CARE or consultant regarding the RVCD project finances or the disbursements of funds by the EU Food Facility.

3. Project logic, concepts & approaches

3.1 The rice sector in Sierra Leone¹

Sierra Leone has two kinds of rice marketing networks: one for domestic production, and one for imported rice. Rice demand was estimated at around 770,000 metric tons in 2007. Rice production was close to 590,000 tons, thus leaving important room for imported rice.

Sierra Leone has favorable conditions for growing rice: high rainfall, plentiful availability of water for irrigation, suitable land in abundance and a conducive climate. Rice is produced throughout the country primarily for subsistence with most of the harvest retained on farm for family consumption. It is estimated that not more than 30% of the production is marketed. A wide variety of farming systems are used in different environments, the most important of which is a rain-fed, upland system which accounts for two-thirds to three-quarters of total acreage. Several systems are used in the valleys (bolilands, mangroves, Inland Valley Swamps and riverain grasslands). The lowland systems have generally higher yields (1.3 to 2 tons/ha against 0.8 to 1.3 tons/ha) but also require considerably more labour input (309 man days per hectare as compared to 184).

The focus on rice as a subsistence crop has important implications for production systems. Because farmers are not heavily engaged with markets either for inputs or for their rice output, their production systems inevitably are built on labour and land. Crop husbandry depends on physical labour and while the most committed farmer may still achieve reasonable results, others who are unable to find adequate time for their fields throughout the season will inevitably get poor output.

After harvest most of the farmers leave rice bundles in the field to dry. Threshing and winnowing are invariably done by hand and further drying is on mud floors and tarmac roads. Access to concrete drying floors is limited to a small proportion of farmers in the country. The quality of local rice marketed is generally low due mainly to the lack of use of modern rice mills. Most of the rice mills were destroyed or rendered non-functional during the war. Traditional methods and the use of steel roller mills constitute the major means of rice processing in the country. Producers generally prefer to store rice as paddy on farm and process as required for consumption (or for sale). Parboiling is widely practiced and parboiled rice constitutes a substantial proportion of local rice in the market particularly in the North.

The rice marketing system is traditional, involving assemblers (collectors), wholesalers, and/or itinerant retailers. Because transport conditions are difficult and because quantities put on the market are very small, marketing costs are particularly high. Local rice is usually purchased by assemblers on the weekly markets where producers are coming from the surrounding villages. Quantities sold by farmers are usually small and only some of them are able during the harvest season to sell by 50 kg bags. The assembler is generally selling the rice to retailers on the same market or transports it to the main town to provide wholesalers. On small markets, assembler and retailer can be the same person. Rice is generally sold as paddy and is processed by women retailers, who bring the paddy to small-scale toll mills, predominantly after parboiling (parboiled rice is traditional in the Northern Province). Rice is also sold 'rough' (milled/unpolished). There is little distinction between the many varieties

¹ This chapter draws largely on Terpend (2011), Analysis of value chains: Rice.

grown when it comes to marketing despite the preferences expressed for various varieties in surveys carried out amongst rural households.

The value chain of the domestic production is characterized by weak information flows, coordination failures and a lack of investment, both in more productive farming systems and in processing and distribution. A critical weakness in the value chain that contributes to these failures is the absence of players of any scale. In the growing of rice, large commercial farms are extremely rare. There are a number of small and medium commercial farms but they are not sufficient in number to affect the overall supply of rice. There are no large-scale processors. This absence of scale makes the whole chain extremely fragmented, so difficult to intervene in successfully.

Until recently, domestic rice was sold at a higher price than imported rice (15 up to 20%) throughout the country, particularly for the lower grades of imported rice. Domestic rice is highly valued in Sierra Leone because of its sweet taste, eaten occasionally as a luxury item by urban consumers. The small quantities available for sale in the domestic market reinforced that position. By January 2008, this was no longer the case, essentially because the price of imported rice had increased dramatically. Domestic rice is now slightly less expensive than imported rice at the harvest period (January-March) and can be slightly more expensive at the lean season (August-December) during which supply of local rice is scarce.

Consumers are accustomed to white non-parboiled rice. Although locally parboiled rice remains the traditional type of rice consumed and often preferred in Sierra Leone, consumers, especially in urban centers, have been increasingly accustomed to white rice during the past decade, as most of the rice supply was from imports. In the absence of available qualitative surveys, one can assume, based on the observation of market places, that white rice (either imported rice or, for a marginal quantity, local rice processed in modern mills) represents now close to 50% of the urban rice supply (Terpend, 2011).

3.2 Logical framework of the RVCD project

Rice is the main staple food, and the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) is targeting self-sufficiency in 2012 (71% in 2007) and exports in 2015. CARE considers that a strong dependency on imported rice is weakening the livelihoods of the farmers, enriching a small number of importers, and leaving the population vulnerable to swings in world market prices. The 2008 crisis in food prices already led the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) to give high priority to decreasing the dependence on imported rice. CARE lines up to that goal.

The overall objective of CARE's Rice Value Chain Development Project (RVCD) is *“to contribute to the sustainable improvement of the food security of the population of Northern Sierra Leone”*. The specific objective is *“to address the main bottlenecks in the rice value chain in three districts of Northern Sierra Leone (Koinadugu, Bombali and Tonkolili)”*.

The RVCD Project document states that improved food and nutrition security and increased income can be reached through more efficient production and marketing practices supported through value chain promotion. Value Chain (VC) promotion as a market-driven economic development approach is by nature not explicitly pro-poor yet pro-growth. Value Chain Promotion can generate direct significant development impacts and create opportunities for the poor farmers, increase food production and have indirect poverty impacts through the creation of rural employment.

The RVCD project envisaged to work on identifying opportunities to increase the profitability of rice production by:

- Reducing costs by improving productivity, mainly through the efficient use of inputs (seeds in particular) and reducing post-harvest losses (improved techniques).
- Improving farmers' bargaining position through group marketing and rice quality.
- Adding value mainly through access to improved knowledge and linkages.
- Providing training and exposure to improve agricultural practices and market linkages.

The following expected results, main outputs and activities of the new Rice Value Chain Development project (RVCD) were formulated:

- Sustainable access to suitable seeds to 2,400 farmers / rice producers through partnership between Farmer Associations (FA), the private sector and the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI)
- Enhanced agriculture-based services in the rice value chain through development of sustainable and suitable for fee services to rice growers for post harvesting quality control, drying and packaging
- Design a solid business model to convince identified investors to build storage facilities associated with credit inventory service to farmers in remote areas and help them to develop their businesses.
- Strengthened linkages between farmers/producers and their nearest storage point and with importers and exporters, World Food Programme (WFP)/Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme and foreign brokers to research the best market for rice.

3.3 New concepts and approaches

Based on its previous work on the support of Farmer Associations (FA) in Northern Sierra Leone, CARE developed a new approach for this RVCD project. From the Project document: "To facilitate linkages to support the process of increased marketing, income and food security: the project put in place a service model where CARE and its project partners act as backup services providing training and capacity building to service providers (VRC, banks, MFI, traders) and to farmer organisations that are requesting services, therewith avoiding as much as possible, market distortion. For value chain development, the project combined vertical (between farmers and traders for example) and horizontal (bulking of the rice production of several FAs for example) cooperation. Horizontal cooperation is an asset that has many positive implications for sustainability and ownership (economies of scale, dynamics of innovation, legitimacy, capacity for negotiation, voice). The Action will support this horizontal cooperation at producer level and also at private sector level."

The RVCD project also envisaged to test different business models (rice purchased to farmers by entrepreneurs, FAs, VSL's etc.), with different types of services provided to the farmers, and to the traders (financial services), with the aim to identify innovative win-win solutions whereby the farmers are producing more, higher quality rice and making more money and the traders are expanding their business.

CARE's new approach to project intervention translated in a few concepts and approaches under this RVCD project which are new and innovative in their contexts.

A. Intervention without free distribution of inputs

Development activities in Sierra Leone have, since 2002, gone increasingly from post-conflict and emergency relief to the support of longer-term development. However, many agricultural programmes and projects are still based on the free provision to farmers of inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and farm implements. Under this RVCD project CARE deliberately refrained from the free provision of inputs, in order to reduce donor dependency and not to create production and market distortions.

B. Creation of fee-based services to farmers

Farmer extension is organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS). However, the number of public extension agents is by far too little to service a substantial percentage of farmers nation-wide. International and national NGOs and Farmer Associations (FA) will have a major role to play to complement farmer extension in the foreseeable future. The Farmer Field School (FFS) approach has been embraced by MAFFS and has been introduced on a large scale throughout Sierra Leone both through public and private parties. Additional technical advisory services are still little and few and are generally financed from outside sources. Under the RVCD project, CARE proposed the training of Village Rice Consultants (VRC) to provide fee-based crop-specific support to farmers and their associations in rice production and marketing. The VRC are locally-based and community-selected individuals who are supposed to become well-established local rice experts and be remunerated for their activities by both farmers and traders.

C. Improvement of the marketing position of farmers and the quality of their produce

The RVCD project activities are village-wise centred around the Primary Rice Collection Centre (PRCC) and related feeder stores, where paddy rice is stored for a number of months in order to prevent distress selling and to access higher prices later on in the season. The concentration and storage of rice in rehabilitated communal stores improves general storage conditions and quality of the rice for sale. Under the RVCD project, CARE supported the rehabilitation of communal stores already available but not in use (actually built by previous closed projects), the training of Store Management Committees (SMC), and the training of individual farmers on post-harvest rice quality management before storage.

D. Creating access to loans for farmers and traders

By lack of storage capacity and due to poor storage conditions, the local markets are swept with rice for sale right after harvest, thus reducing price. Many farmers are in need of cash in order to pay back any loans taken up during the growing season. Local rice traders have over time stepped in to cover this need for credit in the lean (growing) season, yet their loans come at a very high interest rate. At the time of harvest many farmers feel obliged to sell at whatever price; so-called distress sales. Under the RVCD project, CARE aimed to reduce distress selling by collective storage of the rice and sale later in the dry season when prices are high. The stored product would act as collateral to access loans from banks or Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs) at more accessible interest rates as to cover farmers' cash needs.

4. Projects results and outcomes

The Logical framework in the Project document was adjusted and specified during the Baseline survey for Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) purposes (Miller, 2010). The revised Logical framework of the Rice Value Chain Development project (RVCD) is in Annex 4.

The latest update on Project results shared with Evaluation mission was an Annex to the Interim Narrative Report (December 15, 2009 - May 31, 2011). Based on these data and additional data from the RVCD international M&E advisor, the mission drew up the Project results and outcomes (at End of Project) as to Logical framework (see Annex 5). Any deviations from Expected Project results and outcomes (at Project start) are highlighted in Annex 5 (in red).

Hereunder we summarise our main observations regarding Project results and outcomes:

4.1 Specific objective: Address main bottlenecks in the rice value chain

The RVCD project successfully achieved its Specific objective according to the indicators that were mentioned in the Logical framework:

- the 35 traders participating all declared an increase in the quality and the quantity of their rice business. Sales reportedly doubled.
- out of the 120 Farmers Associations in total, 62% have access to a store through which they participate in bulk trading.
- repairs of rice mills (still ongoing at end of Final Evaluation) will likely bring the number of functional rice mills beyond the planned figure of 20 mills.

4.2 ER 1: Sustainable access to suitable seeds

The project aimed for the increased use of quality rice seeds by farmers. Spencer (2010) assessed that there are actually many types of rice varieties around with farmers, including good local and improved varieties. The issue here is thus the access to good quality rice seed.

Despite structural problems in seed procurement with SLARI (lack of good breeder seed) and SMP (lack of improved seeds), the project did achieve its numeric goal. However, the number of participating farmers in the RVCD project was 50% higher than expected, so that a lack of improved seeds was actually experienced. The training of all farmers in rice seed selection and storage will contribute to a future sustainable access to suitable rice seeds for planting.

Women make up 44% of participating farmers. Women's access to quality rice seed through SLARI and SMP was low (only 31%). The experienced lack of access to quality seeds, due to an increase of overall farmer participation in the RVCD project (from an expected 2,400 to 3,600), may have reduced women's access to scarce quality rice seeds.

4.3 ER 2: Sustainable access to suitable seeds

The project already reached in its first (incomplete) year of operation the sales target of 200 tons of better quality rice. Note, however, that this was achieved with 50% more farmers ! Rice quality for sale improved according to FA and traders, thanks to increased de-stoning, less mixture of rice varieties, and more attention being paid to drying process (moisture rate).

The RVCD project claims that 231 tons of quality rice was sold to traders through Primary Rice Collection Centres (PRCC), therewith achieving the set project goal (200 tons). Total production for sale is believed to have been 470 tons (M&E advisor). Women participation in sales through Farmer Associations (FA) was slightly lower than expected (41% vs. 45%). The difference does not suggest a significant bias against women participation in selling rice.

The number of Village Rice Consultants (VRC) trained was reduced at Project start from 80 to 60; allegedly in order to ascertain a degree of exclusivity of the VRC knowledge and expertise in view of future sustainability of the VRC model. Today, 56 VRC are available. Most of them (48 persons; 84%) passed the special exam that was taken off in October 2011 on behalf of CARE and MAFFS. The ten (10) VRCs who are reported to be most active were rewarded a full set of VRC work implements at end of project (i.e. including moisture meter).

There is a clear gender issue regarding the Village Rice Consultants (VRC). There are only about 5 or 6 female VRC (10% of total). This disappointing number, already achieved at start of project, may be due to the fact that VRC selection procedure was entirely left to the communities. It could not be assessed whether the gender gap in VRC has reinforced gender gaps in other areas (production, cleaning, trade, representation in FA and SMC, etc.).

The Village Rice Consultant (VRC) is a new concept launched by the RVCD project. At end of project, 70% of VRCs stated to have received some form of fee for the services they provide. It is not known to the mission how much, when and by which stakeholder (farmer, FA, trader) the fees were delivered, nor what would be the approximate monetary value. We are thus unable to evaluate the financial and economic sustainability of the VRC concept.

4.4 ER 3: Convince investors to build storage - with credit services

The objective of the RVCD project was to impact positively on food security in the Northern Districts by increasing the amounts of rice that are available for sale. Through the rehabilitation of existing yet unused stores, farmers would gain access to a better price (bulk selling) and traders improved access to produce (at lower marketing transaction costs).

It was hoped that increased trade would incentive traders to invest in storage capacity; building new stores or renting Primary Rice Collection Centres, and to provide credit services to farmers with rice storage as collateral. These assumptions were too far-fetched however. Traders did increase their sales yet expressed no interest in new or rented storage at village level. Credit services from traders to farmers moreover likely decreased as the latter precisely wanted to prevent distress selling.

In many villages, however, the RVCD project has successfully linked participating farmers with existing or new Village Savings & Loans (VSL) groups². This way, many farmers obtained sufficient cash to overcome the prolonged period of rice storage at PRCC (4-6 months), and/or to cover expenses in the cropping season.

All traders stated that they increased both their sales in volumes and their profit margins. Reliable data about the degree of changes are not available to the mission.

² CARE's former LEAD project supported the establishment of 210 new VSL in Bombali and Tonkolili Districts; of which 75 are in the RVCD operational area.

The Interim Report states, based on records of Store Management Committees (SMC), that 365 tons of rice were sold in bulk to participating traders in 2010/11. This figure is substantially higher than the 231 tons allegedly purchased by traders (see above). The mission does not understand why the two figures are so far apart. Total production for sale is believed to have been 470 tons (M&E advisor).

The concept of the RVCD project to use stored rice as collateral for credit loans from banks or MFI did not (yet) materialize. Bank loan applications by eight (8) SMC were provisionally turned down by the United Trust Bank (UTB) and conditions attached some of which were not acceptable to CARE. Details are available from a report by the bank (UTB; 2010). The Evaluation mission encourages CARE though to assess the feasibility of fire and other insurance for Store Management Committees (SMC), in view of future access to bank loans.

4.5 ER 4: Strengthen linkages along the value chain

The RVCD project has successfully strengthened the linkages between rice farmers and their nearest storage point and between farmers and traders. It has also contributed to strong linkages between traders and the WFP programme Purchase for Progress (WFP/P4P; 2009-2014). WFP/P4P now deliberately buys local rice as to boost local production and trade. Their target is to purchase 500 tons of rice per year through traders and millers. In 2010/11, 162 tons were realized; in 2011/12 260 tons of rice are planned. The WFP/P4P programme thus leaves ample opportunity for farmers and traders to increase production and trade.

The RVCD project has not been successful to link traders to banks or MFI. Only 6 traders managed to access bank loans. Certain traders interviewed testified of high bank loan transaction costs (allegedly Le 500,000 is requested from applicant by bank personnel in order to have request be treated), which make bank loans prohibitive. Yet, the RVCD project has successfully helped SMC and traders to open bank accounts as to facilitate their financial and trading transactions.

4.6 Visibility of the RVCD project and the EC funding

The RVCD project has taken proper care to make visible the existence of the project and the source of funding. The logo of the European Union figured on almost all documents, booklets and posters produced, it appeared on information boards next to stores in villages, and was made visible during workshops.

Most impact, however, have likely had the weekly radio emissions which the RVCD project organized in 2011 on Friday nights on local and national radios, and which were reportedly very well appreciated and awaited for by many stakeholders. The emissions highlighted each time a specific issue related to the running rice growing season. The Division of Agricultural Extension of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS) and the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI) are amongst those who contributed to radio discussion panels with questions from and interaction with listeners.

5. Project relevance, impacts & sustainability

5.1 Project relevance

The Rice Value Chain Development project (RVCD) proves to be very relevant in the production and trade contexts of the Koinadugu, Bombali and Tonkolili Districts. A fair and comprehensive evaluation of the project approach and concepts is not yet possible, however, after two incomplete years of operation. Monitoring and final evaluation of the RVCD project results, outcomes and impacts is recommended within 1-3 years after closure of current phase.

The concept of bulk storage and sale through rehabilitated community-managed Primary Rice Collection Centres (PRCC), and backed up with Village Savings & Loans (VSL) groups to provide access to cash in the prolonged storage period, is a very promising and seemingly attractive and profitable business model for individual farmers, Farmers Associations and traders. Farmers have bought into the idea by allegedly increasing farm acreage by 30% from 2010/11 to 2011/12 growing season (M&E advisor).

The strong demand for rice expressed by the WFP/P4P programme provides a unique opportunity to successfully experiment the RVCD approach and to explore options to access loans from banks and MFI. The success of the storage & sale approach does, however, not depend on access to bank loans, while Village Savings & Loans (VSL) groups can seemingly already cover the most urgent needs for cash at the level of individual farmers. In terms of sustainability the self-reliance of communities as to access to cash is to be favoured as well over new dependency on banks or remote Micro-Finance Institutions.

5.2 Project impacts

If project approach and concepts are yet difficult to evaluate at current stage, the same applies certainly to the project impacts on farmers, gender, communities, traders and food security and the rice value chain at large. Hereunder we will briefly make some first general remarks.

5.2.1 Impacts on farmers

Individual farmers have been trained through their Farmers Associations on a number of subjects. Post-harvest quality management appears to have been the main technical subject of training. The self-organisation of farmers in Farmers Associations has also received a lot of attention of the project, which could build for this on previous CARE projects in the region.

Existing communal stores were reportedly not in use because of a lack of, or deficient, Store Management Committees. Yet another reason forwarded was that rice quantity at sale tended to be much lower than the paddy rice initially stored. The technical issue of loss of humidity at store during storage was apparently not understood by many, and paved the way for more metaphysical explanations or for outright social conflicts. Communal storage was not popular. Through training and extension the RVCD project has taken away some of these hesitations.

Regarding production, some attention has been paid to agronomic aspects of rice cultivation. In concept such extension messages were to reach farmers through the intermediary of their VRC or FA. The impacts of the RVCD project on land and farm productivity will therefore largely depend on the degree of interaction and the effectiveness of the VRC's advice.

5.2.2 Impacts on gender

The concept of storage in Primary Rice Collection Centres (PRCC) may have profound impacts on the social and financial organization of rice sale, ownership of income and ownership over expenditures. This will have its ramifications on gender issues.

Farmers use to keep part of their harvests stored at home in order to have food available until the next harvest. Any excess crop was also stored at home, if not sold for cash or debt payments right after the harvest. With storage at hand, access to the food is very easy, and it risks to disappear in small quantities as food or in petty trade. Now, with storage in a PRCC and sale in bulk, people receive large amounts of money at pay, enabling them to invest in more valuable goods for consumption and production. The store acts as a savings opportunity, and the registered owner of the stored produce will gain access to the money it represents.

Women storing rice at the PRCC may well become more independent economically from other household members, as they could not generally make any savings before and tended to have little ownership over income and cash. From this angle, the RVCD project may well have even more favourable impacts on women than it has on men farmers.

5.2.3 Impacts on communities

All rice sold through the PRCC is believed to originate from communal fields. An increase in production and sales of rice from communal fields may possibly alter the local and regional set-up of growing rice. However, we lack sufficient basic data to test the hypothesis.

It has been stated during field visits, by farmers and traders alike, that the RVCD project has contributed to a much better understanding of where their money goes. Record-keeping of costs and benefits pre-production, at production and post-production, have given many farmers and traders a much better insight in the real costs and benefits of their operations. This leads to more rationalized decision-making and in many cases to cost reduction.

However, as costs and benefits are calculated at an individual level, one risks to consider previous social and communal expenditures, such as those on food for fellow workers, as a financial burden for the individual farmer. This might possibly undermine to some extent the current system of working group-wise on each other's farm on a rotational basis.

The Evaluation mission believes that the RVCD project sent out confusing messages about ownership and community life, while it actively voiced that privatization of mills and stores is to be favored over communal ownership. CARE SL had observed from past experience that even though collective action is working somehow in the project intervention zone, this was not generally the case with equipment like milling rice machine with many questions about repairs, maintenance etc..

Yet, the Evaluation mission considers this call for privatization to lack sufficient fundament. In fact, the PRCC and bulk sale system have increased the production on *communal* lands. Storage Management Committees have been established where no such *collective* system was functional. And the SMC requires *social cohesion* for sustainable management. The project would better take a neutral position on this, supporting communities to inform themselves about the many options available for proper management of (communal) goods such as stores and mills. The case of Rorinka village (Bombali), which decided overnight (following the

RVCD visit to mills in Ghana in August 2011) to privatize the store to the one very person who is both the Village Rice Consultant (VRC), the president of the current Store Management Committee, *and* who singly participated in the Ghana visit, also raises questions about the governance of the privatization process and the role therein of the RVCD project.

5.2.4 Impacts on traders

Before the RVCD project rice traders were seen by many inside and outside the project as a barrier to progress rather than as a partner for value chain development. The RVCD project has played a positive role in creating linkages between farmers, Farmers Associations and trader and millers which did not exist before to the same degree. Traders interviewed were enlightened by the fact that they do no longer have to go into the villages to buy produce, but can rather have access to substantial quantities of rice at store level.

Traders also were positive about the fact that they no longer have to set aside part of their capital in loans to farmers who lack cash for food or production during the growing season. This runs contrary to common belief before the project that traders were actively awarding loans to farmers in order to undermine their negotiating power at harvest and to force them into distress sale. In fact, traders interviewed stated that they now have more work capital revolving and thus can trade larger volumes of rice or other products during marketing season. Their marketing transaction costs (time, transport, cleaning) have reduced substantially and make it possible, in principle, to pay a higher price for the produce.

5.2.5 Impacts on food security

The overall objective of the RVCD project is “*to contribute to a substantial improvement of the food security of the population in Northern Sierra Leone*”. The Project document does not, however, contain data on food security, food insecurity or outright lack of nutrition in the Northern Districts, nor about the level of household incomes.

Food security is actually not so much related to food availability on a national or regional level, but rather to (lack of) access to available food. Severe food insecurity is generally not found in farming communities unless droughts or floods have destroyed yields or persist for many years. Moreover, food insecurity tends to affect the have-nots, i.e. resource-poor people, rather than the population at large. Any increase of household income will in principle contribute to more food security through the ability to purchase food when required.

The RVCD project will most likely have impacted on the availability, at large, of rice as a food (in volume). The project may also have contributed to increased income for participating farmers and farming households, with which they can purchase food in the lean season. One may expect that any increase of income will raise the interest of farmers and other rice chain actors to invest in increased production - thus strengthening the food security base.

Yet, the concept of bulk storage and sale does not necessarily contribute to more access to food at household level during the storage period. Also, bulk storage may act as a physical food buffer in difficult times only if sale has not yet taken place before the lean season.

5.2.6 Impacts on the rice value chain at large

According to Terpend (2011), the rice value chain is characterized by weak information flows, coordination failures and a lack of investment, both in more productive farming systems and in processing and distribution. *“A critical weakness in the value chain that contributes to these failures is the absence of players of any scale. (...) This absence of scale makes the whole chain extremely fragmented and so difficult to intervene in successful”*.

The value chain approach CARE has elaborated under this RVCD project addresses some of the issues cited: The RVCD project creates scale through the de-facto promotion of group-wise production on communal lands, it creates scale for traders through bulk storage and sale, and the project actively contributed to better communication and better understanding between farmers, Farmer Associations, traders and millers.

5.3 Sustainability of the interventions

Hereunder, we will briefly elaborate on some general and specific issues of sustainability in relation to the Rice Value Chain Development project.

5.3.1 General sustainability of the project

The approach and concepts of the Rice Value Chain Development (RVCD) project clearly favour sustainability of the project results. However, short project period is deplored by all interviewed RVCD stakeholders in the rice value chains of Koinadugu, Bombali and Tonkolili Districts, while the results of the second season (which would make a first full production and marketing season) are still to become visible and evidenced.

Stakeholders are uncertain whether they themselves and other actors will already be able to follow-up on their own, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to the investments made by the RVCD project in training, knowledge and expertise. RVCD project staff also expressed clear discontent and disappointment about the (well-announced) ending of this particular project, which many consider to be preliminary content-wise.

5.3.2 Intervention without free distribution of inputs

The CARE policy in the RVCD project not to provide any inputs to farmers for free initially led to confusion at the level of individual farmers and Farmers Associations. However, it has created room for new dynamism and interaction, which is appreciated by all. Farmers appear to be content about the fact that farming is being approached as a business; one farmer even claimed that his status had increased from being a farmer to being a business man.

However, CARE is at the same time involved in projects where the free distribution of inputs such as seeds is common practice. More coherence on this concept throughout CARE project portfolio is to be recommended. Also within the RVCD project the approach has not entirely rooted, as was witnessed by the last-minute approval by project of the construction of two completely new stores at low beneficiary contribution (sand, water for construction). The rehabilitation of stores and mills was also carried out with little beneficiary contribution.

5.3.3 Creation of fee-based services to farmers

The concept to develop local nodes for the diffusion of knowledge and expertise on rice production, storage and sale, through Village Rice Consultants (VRC), is certainly innovative and seems to be sustainable on first sight.

Yet, the Evaluation mission questions the approach followed to establish this new type of professional job on local level. Both the Project document and discourse by VRC themselves show that the so-called “VRC implements” are considered a major feature of VRC identity and success, whereas the original idea was rather to have experienced Village Rice Consultants who have knowledge and expertise rather than materials and technology.

The Village Rice Consultants may become an established asset to local communities as long as they manage to continue to reach out to those who do not know (enough), and can do so on the basis of new and evolving knowledge and expertise. If the VRC do not reach out and create their own markets, and their knowledge is not refreshed and updated regularly, they risk becoming invisible as a VRC. Also, the VRC are then unlikely to be compensated in cash or in kind to a sufficient degree as to motivate themselves as extension workers.

Furthermore, the RVCD project has not been as consequent towards the VRC in applying its approach of “no free inputs” (see paragraph 5.3.2). The VRC did invest their own time in trainings (at per diem), yet they did not have to contribute in any way to the supposedly required “VRC implements” identified by the project and distributed for free.

The Evaluation mission questions the composition of the package of VRC implements, which consisted in: a scale, a generator, a stitching machine, and -for some- a moisture meter. Few traders are likely to use moisture meters on a daily basis when in the field. In any case, the price the project paid (USD 1,000 per unit) is prohibitive; and should have reoriented towards tools and tricks to assess the rice quality characteristics related to moisture content with an expert eye and sound judgment (as do many traders). The generator (paid at USD 100) was required for the stitching machine (paid at USD 200) but will most likely be lived out for other important tasks and events in the village - which go beyond the rice marketing season alone. The stitching machine itself is not indispensable for the job it is to undertake, while communities know well how to stitch bags, or could have their knowledge revived at no cost.

Finally, the allocation of moisture meters amongst VRC has not been managed properly according to Evaluation mission. Project document and communications with VRC have created the expectation that everyone would receive a meter. Just before the Close Out Workshop, moisture meters turned out to be so at short because of prohibitive costs so that only 10 out of 56 VRC received one. The mission received explicit complaints on the issue.

Otherwise, the mission acknowledges the degree of innovation of the VRC concept, and strongly encourages CARE and donor EU to monitor and evaluate its sustainability and impacts about one or two years after project closure.

5.3.4 Improvement of farmers’ marketing position and of rice quality

The PRCC is a communal store which in effect generates the bulking of rice for sale, to the benefit of both farmers (improved negotiating position) and traders (reduction of purchasing costs).

On first sight, one would expect that the benefits of bulk selling accrue primarily to the farmers as their negotiating power is increased and they can sell at a higher price later on in the season. However, traders may well be making a better deal through bulk purchase as the costs they made in the village for rice collection and purchase reduce significantly, including their relative costs on credit loans. Moreover, traders are on the average often rewarded through a certain percentage of the value of the goods they sell, which implies that if price of produce is higher (at the end of dry season) profit margins are also higher in absolute terms.

Rice quality will most certainly have increased through trainings of farmers and Farmers Associations. De-stoning is reported to have become the norm, drying is carried out far more carefully than before (when often over-dried), and separation of rice varieties is becoming more common and rigid on the drying floor than was previously the case.

5.3.5 Creating access to loans for farmers and traders

The concept of the Credit Inventory System envisaged by the RVCD project is an interesting and laudable one. However, first experiences of Store Management Committees (SMC) in negotiations with the banks also indicate that more thinking and preparation of implementation of the original approach is required.

Access to credit is an important input for increase of investment and trade for the benefit of local and regional economic development. Investment and trade will remain more limited if capital needs to be generated first at village level through Village Savings and Loans (VSL) groups. Yet, the latter approach is far more manageable and less prone to free-riding by non-reimbursement. As such the VSL appear to be an adequate stepping stone for communities to establish their SMC as a business, and to access credit loans from banks or MFI in future.

6. Conclusions

Rice is the main staple food in Sierra Leone. The national policy goal is to reach self-sufficiency in 2012 (71% in 2007) and exports in 2015. CARE's Rice Value Chain Development (RVCD) project aligns well with that policy objective.

The value chain of domestic rice production in Sierra Leone is characterized by weak information flows, and a lack of coordination and investment in production, processing and trade. A critical weakness in the value chain is the absence of players of any scale.

The intervention strategy of the RVCD project was precisely to organize farmers village-wise around Primary Rice Collection Centres (PRCC) and related feeder stores, where rice is stored for a number of months in order to prevent distress selling and to access higher prices later on in the dry season. The concentration and storage of rice in rehabilitated communal stores managed by a Store Management Committee (SMC) improves general storage conditions as well as the quality of the rice for bulk sale to traders.

The Evaluation mission considers that the RVCD project has successfully achieved its main objectives as set out in the Logical framework - both in quantity and in quality. The RVCD project has successfully contributed to enhanced rice production and trade at the local level through the improved profitability of rice production to farmers (through training, bulk selling, quality improvement, area expansion), to communities (through training, improved storage and store management, and better access to traders), and to traders (bulk selling, improved quality, less marketing transaction costs).

The original project objective to use stored rice as a collateral for credit loans from banks or MFI did not materialize. However, the RVCD project successfully linked participating farmers with existing or new Village Savings & Loans (VSL) groups. This way, many farmers obtained sufficient cash to overcome the prolonged period of rice storage at PRCC (4-6 months), and/or to cover expenses in the cropping season. The VSL are actually to be considered a preferable, more stable and risk-averse solution to farmers' cash problems.

Whereas the Rice Value Chain Development project (RVCD) proves to be very relevant in the production and trade contexts of the Koinadugu, Bombali and Tonkolili Districts, a fair and comprehensive evaluation of the project approach and concepts is not yet possible, however, after two incomplete years of operation. CARE SL and donor EuropeAid are strongly encouraged to assess and evaluate the evolution and the performance of the different stakeholders in the project within one (1) to three (3) years after current phase.

The concept of bulk storage and sale through rehabilitated community-managed Primary Rice Collection Centres (PRCC), and backed up with Village Savings & Loans (VSL) groups to provide access to cash in the prolonged storage period, is a very promising and seemingly attractive and profitable business model for individual farmers, Farmers Associations and traders. The strong demand for rice expressed by WFP's Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme provides a unique opportunity to further experiment and expand the RVCD approach and project in and beyond the three target districts.

7. Recommendations

The Final evaluation of the Rice Value Chain Development project (RVCD) results in the following recommendations - with the addressed agency put in brackets:

(Donor EU and CARE SL) The Logical framework and the Objectives of the Rice Value Chain Development project as defined in Project document have been evaluated. However, the underlying approach and concepts of the RVCD project cannot be evaluated in a fair and comprehensive manner after two incomplete years of operation. Monitoring and final evaluation of the RVCD project results, outcomes and impacts is recommended within one (1) to three (3) years after closure of current phase.

(CARE and donor EU) The Rice Value Chain Development project (RVCD) proves to be very relevant in the production and trade contexts of Northern Sierra Leone. CARE as well as donor EU are highly encouraged to search and provide additional funding for continuation and full testing and development of this innovative and practical production and trade-oriented project under a new phase of two (2) to three (3) years.

(CARE SL and donor EU) Opportunities for future funding and cooperation for a new phase of the Rice Value Chain Development project (RVCD) may be explored with the much larger but related Smallholder Commercialisation Programme (SCP; by IFAD and FAO) and the Sustainable Nutrition and Agriculture Promotion programme (SNAP; by ACI/VOCA).

(Donor EU and CARE) The Evaluation mission recommends that future Project documents specify the calculations behind any quantitative indicators for success mentioned in the Logical framework; to put them into appropriate context for monitoring and evaluation.

(CARE SL) CARE SL is encouraged to assess the feasibility of fire and other insurance for the stores managed by Store Management Committees (SMC), in view of the latter's eventual future access to credit loans with banks or Micro-Finance Institutions (MFI).

(CARE SL) CARE SL is recommended to include a Close Out phase in its running and future projects as to avoid that end date of implementation of activities in the field is equal to end date of project.

(CARE SL) CARE SL is encouraged to continue and integrate the RVCD project approach of "no free provision of inputs" into its running and future projects. Beneficiary contributions to materials and technology are a useful strategy and means to enhance the ownership and the rationale of development interventions.

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Annex 1. Term of Reference (110923)

Rice Value Chain Analysis Update Assessment and Final Evaluation of the Project. Rice Value Chain Development Project , CARE- Sierra Leone

Background

CARE International in Sierra Leone (hereinafter referred to as CARE) has had an established office in Sierra Leone since October 1961, initially focusing on improving child nutritional status through school feeding programs and later implementing basic infrastructure projects. More recently, CARE's programming has focused on improving agriculture, water and sanitation, and public health systems.

The Country Office's long-range mission statement is to address the root causes of poverty and suffering through capacity building, advocacy, and partnership so that vulnerable, disadvantaged, and marginalized people are empowered to participate effectively in achieving livelihood security and realizing their right to live with dignity. To contribute to the over all mission commitment, CARE Sierra Leone implemented several projects. For instance, the EC funded Sustainable Agriculture Development Project (SADev) in Koinadugu District is supporting organizational development of Farmer Associations (FAs) to increase their yields through improved Inland Valley Swamps (IVS) cultivation; the Howard G Buffet Foundation Conservation Agriculture Project (CAP) also working with FAs in Koinadugu District to adopt conservation agriculture techniques in a bid to conserve and improve productivity of the land; the USAID projects, Livelihood Expansion and Assets Development (LEAD) and Promoting Linkages for Livelihood Security and Economic Development (LINKS) worked towards setting up of Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and to help them improve farming techniques etc.

CARE has experience on establishing 93 farmer field schools (FFS) and 120 farmer associations (FAs) in Northern region. FFS and FAs are receptive to a market-led approach and have been trained in marketing concept; able to familiarize with market, the price fluctuations and to some extent access to market information and having negotiation skill. The Rice Value Chain Development Project built on the progress made by these projects in setting up the farmer associations, in supporting their organizational development and helping the farmer associations to improve their farming and marketing techniques, by taking them to the next step by facilitating improvement in quality of product and adding value through engaging in product value chain activities and marketing of their product.

The Value Chain Development Project:

The Rice Value Chain Project, a European Commission funded 22 month project started in December 16, 2010 with the aim of improved food and nutrition security and increased income which could be achieved through more efficient production and marketing practices supported through value chain promotion.

The Project worked on identifying opportunities to increase the profitability of rice production by:

- Reducing costs, this is about improving productivity, mainly through efficient utilization of inputs (seeds in particular) and reducing post harvest losses (improved techniques).
- Improving bargaining position through group marketing and rice quality.
- Added value mainly through access to improved knowledge and linkages.
- Providing training and exposure to improved agricultural practices and market linkages

Main actors for the rice value chain include: Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), Ministry of Agriculture Forestry Food Security extension agents, transporters, traders and input

suppliers. CARE conducted discussions with most of those actors and they expressed an enthusiasm in engaging in rice value chain development. Other key stakeholders included national level bodies (such as the National Farmers' Association, Chamber of Commerce, Sierra Leone Business Forum and Sierra Leone Indigenous Business Association) which are involved in agriculture and food security issues. Besides the projects been implemented by CARE, other key stakeholders included projects funded by FAO, and those funded by African Development Bank, US-AID (PAGE). After an analysis of opportunities and bottlenecks in the rice chain, the following expected results (ER), main outputs and activities were implemented to achieve the specific objective of this action.

- Sustainable access to suitable seeds to 2,400 farmers / rice producers through partnership between FAs, private sector and Sierra Leone Agriculture Research Institute (SLARI)
- Enhanced agriculture-based services in rice value chain through development of sustainable and suitable for fee services to rice growers for post harvesting quality control, drying and packaging
- Design a solid business model to convince identified investors to build storage facilities associated with credit inventory service to farmers in remote areas and help them to develop their businesses.
- Strengthened linkages between farmers/producers and their nearest storage point and with importers and exporters, World Food Programme (WFP)/Purchase for Progress (P4P) programme and foreign brokers to research the best market for rice

Scope of work

rice is the main staple food for Sierra Leoneans but production doesn't satisfy demand. Similarly, areas that produce enough rice find it difficult to access the main provincial towns. Therefore, the country is obliged to import rice especially to feed the Freetown population. Rice production culminated at 875,000 mt in 2006 before falling to 637,983 tons in 2007. The main problems identified with rice production by CARE are: 1) the poor quality of seeds leading to poor yields, 2) lack of post harvesting quality control, 3) lack of post harvest services such as rice mills, collection and, 4) lack of organized distribution channels.

The purpose of this assignment is to conduct a comprehensive rice value chain analysis update and assessment in the three targeted *districts (Bombali, Koinadugu and Tonkolili)* with special emphasis on gender analysis to the standard mapping of the rice value chain and the final evaluation of the RVCD Project. Critical steps are (i) to enquire about the relative proportions of women and men at each node and (ii) to ask about who makes the transactions between nodes. This work can be complemented by further investigation into wage differentials between women and men at each node, and between nodes. The assessment will also draw up diagrams with information on how and where the most vulnerable groups participate in the rice value chain.

Objectives of the Assessment:

To conduct Final evaluation of the project with specific attention to comprehensive Rice Value Chain updates assessment.

The specific tasks of the consultant:

- Review different reference materials such as CARE RVCD Project Proposal, different reports, recent rice value chain study conducted by Action Aid, gender related reports etc.
- Develop methodology, tools and questionnaire

- Lead both the quantitative and qualitative data collection – this includes: training of evaluation team on the tools/questionnaire and supervise data collection.³ The process is expected to include field survey, physical observations, focus group discussions with community groups.
- Design data entry screen using preferred software, supervise data entry, and conduct data cleaning and data analysis.
- Identify feasible opportunities for further improving and developing the rice value chain
- Advise on possible further actions.
- Conduct a debriefing with stakeholders on the main findings of the assessment and final project evaluation.
- Upon completion of the assignment, the consultant will submit the completed Rice Value Chain studies and project evaluation report to Project Manager for approval.

Time frame

Assignment period: starting from September 23 to October 16, 2011. The Consultant shall complete and submit report by October 16th 2011.

Tentative timeframe and responsibility of the consultant is outlined below (to be refined with the consultant):

Activity	Duration	# days	Remark
Review relevant documents, develop tools/questionnaires and methodology. Share methodology and tools/questionnaires with CARE SL team before travelling to Freetown to be ready for discussion up on arrival	23 – 30 September	4	4 working days from Netherlands
Refine tool, train enumerators, pre-test	1 – 3 October	3	Consultant arrives in Freetown on 1 st of October and discuss with the PM that day.
Conduct the actual assessment	4 – 8 October	5	
Prepare draft report	9 - 11 October	3	
Share draft report with Country Office and other stakeholders	12 October	1	
The consultant will present the study result on a workshop setting	13 October	1	
The consultant incorporate inputs and write up	14 – 15 October	2	
Submit final report	16 October	1	
Total		20	

³ From this assignment, we wanted to assess the current status of Rice Value Chain in Sierra Leone after implementing the RVCD project. We would prefer to reviewing the project documents and other research reports. If consultant find some thing missing in the different documents then, he/she could conduct survey. In that line, we may need to trained the eumarators, and also need to briefly refresh the concept of value chain. The activities stated in the tasks may reviewed and negotiable best on time and documents avialable.

Deliverables

- RVC Project Final evaluation report
- Value Chain assessment report

Qualifications and Experiences

- Post graduate degree in Agro- Economics or other related field
- Good knowledge in Agricultural research and analysis in rice value chain
- Technical M&E skills (including designing and conducting assessment survey, data analysis using statistical packages such as SPSS and Excel, report writing)
- Extensive experience and demonstrated track record in handling similar assignments
- Good facilitation skills
- Familiarity with the development landscape of rural communities in the Northern region of Sierra Leone is an advantage.

Payment Method

The consultancy fee will cost a total of sum of EUR **xxxx**. In addition, CARE will provide a daily per diem as per CARE SL's approved local per diem rate, transportation and accommodation if required.

The Consultant shall receive full payment upon submission of all the key deliverables specified above with the approval of the RVCD Project Manager.

Administrative support:

RVCD Project Manager will be responsible for day-to-day supervision of the consultant's work with technical guidance from DME Coordinator who will ensure relevance and appropriateness of research methodology, tools and sampling.

The consultant shall receive administrative support from CARE as reasonably needed such as photocopying, Internet connection, movement etc.

Annex 2.**CARE SL / RVCD / Final Evaluation / Programme
(23 September - 17 October 2011)**

23 September	Friday	Contract signature + Trip preparations (visa, etc.)
24 September	Saturday	Day off
25 September	Sunday	Reading and analysis of Project documents + Internet
26 September	Monday	Reading and analysis of Project documents + Internet
27 September	Tuesday	Reading and analysis of Project documents + Internet Travel schedule
28-30 September	Wednesday- Friday	Days off
01 October	Saturday	Reading and analysis of Project documents + Internet
02 October	Sunday	Reading and analysis of Project documents + Internet
03 October	Monday	* Travel Amsterdam (06.50) - Brussels (07.40) (KL 1721) * Travel Brussels (11.00) - Freetown (17.50) (SN 225) * Transfer from Lungi airport to Freetown by water taxi * Transfer to Hotel Africanus, Freetown * Meeting at hotel with CARE SL RVCD Project manager Faridul Mohamed Alam and M&E advisor Bert Neevel
04 October	Tuesday	* Briefing with CARE SL RVCD Project manager Faridul Mohamed Alam and M&E advisor Bert Neevel: Analysis of Project set-up, structure, evolution and management; Work & Travel programme * Meeting with SMP coordinator Edward Gbeppie * Meeting with FAO consultant Joost Gwinner * Meeting with Mrs Betty Cooper and Victor Pieh of World Food Programme / Purchase for Progress (WFP/P4P) * Travel to Makeni (15.30-19.30) * Transfer to Hotel Wusum, Makeni
05 October	Wednesday	* Close Out Workshop in CRS meeting room, Makeni * Meeting with Coordinators and District Team Leaders * Meeting with RVCD Project coordinator Farid Alam * Stay at Hotel Wusum, Makeni
06 October	Thursday	* Travel to Kabala in Koinadugu District (with M&E advisor Bert Neevel and driver Alfred Bangura) * Meeting in Isyama with Store Management Committee (SMC), Farmer Associations (FA), Village Rice Consultants (VRC); with RVCD Field Agents. Visit of communal store and drying floor. * Meeting in Numadiakoro with SMC, FA, VRC; with RVCD Field Agents. Visit of communal store and drying floor. * Meeting in Senekedougou with three (3) traders of rice and vegetables * Transfer to Guest House Sengbeh, Kabala

07 October	Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Travel to Tonkolili District (with M&E advisor Bert Neevel and driver Alfred Bangura) * Meeting in Mabai, with SMC, FA, VRC; with RVCD Team leader and Field Agent. Visit of communal store, construction of new store, and old and new drying floors. Visit of privately-run communal rice mill. * Meeting in Mapaki, with SMC, FA, VRC; with RVCD Team leader and Field Agent. Visit of communal store and drying floor. Meeting at and visit of Agricultural Business Centre (ABC), including new communal mill, agricultural machinery and drying floor. * Meeting in Magburaka with six (6) rice traders of Pentagon Traders' Association * Meeting in Magburaka with RVCD Team leader and Field Agents * Transfer to Hotel Wusum, Makeni
08 October	Saturday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Travel to Bombali District (with M&E advisor Bert Neevel and driver Alfred Bangura) * Meeting in Rorinka, with SMC, FA, VRC, and intended new private store owner; with RVCD Team leader and Field Agent. * Meeting in Makeni with a rice mill processor * Meeting with two (2) rice traders at Makeni market * Meeting with RVCD Team leader and Field Agents * Travel to Freetown (15.00-19.00) * Transfer to Hotel Africanus, Freetown
09 October	Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Preparation of Draft report * Stay at Hotel Africanus, Freetown
10 October	Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Meeting with CARE SL Procurement manager, Programme Assistant and Data manager * Meeting with EU representative Giampiero Muci * Meeting with CARE SL Director, Vice-Director and Director of Programmes * Preparation of Draft report * Stay at Hotel Africanus, Freetown
11 October	Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Preparation of Draft report * Dinner with CARE SL M&E advisor Bert Neevel * Stay at Hotel Africanus, Freetown
12 October	Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Preparation & submission of Draft report to CARE SL * Stay at Hotel Africanus, Freetown
13 October	Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Meeting with SLARI Director General Alfred Dixon * Meeting with MAFFS Director of Extension Ben Massaquoi * Presentation of Draft report in Workshop with RVCD project staff and CARE management * Stay at Hotel Africanus, Freetown
14 October	Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Meeting with ACDI/VOCA Chief of Party Jim Dean * Preparation of Final report * Meetings at CARE SL regarding contract issues * Stay at Hotel Africanus, Freetown
15 October	Saturday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Submission of Final report * Stay at Hotel Africanus, Freetown
16 October	Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Day off * Stay at Hotel Africanus, Freetown
17 October	Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Meetings at CARE SL regarding contract issues * Transfer from Freetown to Lungi Airport by water taxi * Travel Freetown (19.00) - Brussels (05.30; 18/10) (SN 226)
18 October	Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Travel Brussels (08.20) - Amsterdam (09.15) (KL 1722)

Annex 3. List of resource-persons (in chronological order)

General

Farid Mohamed Alam	Project manager, Rice Value Chain Development Programme (RVCD), CARE SL, Freetown
Bert Neevel	Advisor Monitoring & Evaluation, Rice Value Chain Development Project (RVCD), CARE SL, Freetown
Younoussou Tangara	Director of Programmes, CARE SL, Freetown
Edward Gbeppie	Director, Seed Multiplication Project (SMP), Freetown
Joost Gwinner	Consultant, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
Betty Cooper	Senior Programme assistant, Purchase for Progress (P4P), World Food Programme (WFP), Freetown
Victor Pieh	Programme officer P4P, World Food Programme (WFP)
Giampiero Muci	Representative, EU Food Facility, Delegation of European Union, Freetown
Lucy S. Sankoh	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, RVCD, CARE SL, Freetown
Emanuel D. Kemoh	Private Sector Advisor, CARE SL, Freetown
Joseph Juana	Market Research Linkage Advisor, CARE SL, Freetown
Henson Venn	Supervisor/Team Leader, Koinadugu District, RVCD, CARE SL, Kabala
Ibrahim S. Talloh	Program Finance Officer, RVCD, CARE SL, Freetown
Alfred M. Kanu	Team Leader, Tonkolili District, RVCD, CARE SL, Makeni
Lovell Joe Sisay	Team Leader, Bombali District, RVCD, CARE SL, Makeni
Emurana K. Sowa	Agronomist, RVCD, CARE SL, Freetown
Asmara Ayele	Head of Program Development & Quality Assurance, CARE SL, Freetown
Makuta Tarawali	Procurement Manager, CARE SL, Freetown
Rosetta A. Cole	Programme Assistant, CARE SL, Freetown
Yemisi Songo-Williams	Data Manager, CARE SL, Freetown
Diawary Bouaré	Country Director, CARE SL, Freetown
Henry Happy Ngabo	Financial Controller, CARE SL, Freetown
Alfred Dixon	Director-General, Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI), Freetown
Ben Massaquoi	Director of Agricultural Extension Services Division, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS), Freetown
Jim Dean	Chief of Party, ACDI/VOCA, Promoting Agriculture, Governance and Environment (PAGE), Freetown

Koinadugu District

Ismael Sisay	Village Rice Consultant, Koinadugu District
Keherley Sisay	Village Rice Consultant, Koinadugu District
Hassan F. Kamara	Village Rice Consultant, Koinadugu District
Muhamed Marah	Village Rice Consultant, Koinadugu District
Ferekeh Marah	Village Rice Consultant, Koinadugu District
Musa Sesay	Chairman, Store Management Committee (SMC), Ismaia,

	Koinadugu District
Foday Sesay	Town chief, Ismaia, Koinadugu District
Karifa Sesay	Storekeeper, Ismaia, Koinadugu District
Yearie Sankoh	Chairlady, Farmers Association, Ismaia, Koinadugu District
Lahou Sesay	Financial secretary, Ismaia, Koinadugu District
Alusine Wulareh	Village Rice Consultant, Koinadugu District
Abu Marrah	Storekeeper, Numadiakoro, Koinadugu District
Sheku Marrah	Chairman, Numadiakoro, Koinadugu District
Passie Kamara	Auditor, Numadiakoro, Koinadugu District
Sheku Conteh	Village Rice Consultant, Koinadugu District
Momorie Wulareh	Acting Town Chief, Numadiakoro, Koinadugu District
Hawa Marrah	Trader, Senekedougou, Koinadugu District
Karifa Marrah	Trader, Senekedougou, Koinadugu District
Aminata Kamara	Trader, Senekedougou, Koinadugu District

* Plus 39 members (approx. half women, half men) of five (5) Farmers Associations in Ismaia, Koinadugu District

** Plus 32 members (approx. half women, half men) of two (2) Farmers Associations (one for women, one mixed) in Numadiakoro, Koinadugu District.

Tonkolili District

Edward Conteh	Field Agent, RVCD, CARE SL, Tonkolili District
John A. Turay	Field Agent, RVCD, CARE SL, Tonkolili District
Ibrahim A. Turay	Village Rice Consultant, Tonkolili District
Saidu I. Koroma	Village Rice Consultant, Tonkolili District
Ibrahim S. Thullah	Village Rice Consultant, Tonkolili District
Mohamed Tikay Conteh	Rice miller, Mabai, Tonkolili District
Ishmael Koroma	Trader, Pentagon Association, Magburaka, Tonkolili District
Muhamed Fonala	Trader, Pentagon Association, Magburaka, Tonkolili District
Muhamed Jalloh	Trader, Pentagon Association, Magburaka, Tonkolili District
Salvin G. Sankoh	Trader, Pentagon Association, Magburaka, Tonkolili District
Muhamed Bangura	Trader, Pentagon Association, Magburaka, Tonkolili District
Alimamy Kargbo	Trader, Pentagon Association, Magburaka, Tonkolili District
Miltina E. Momoh	Field Agent, RVCD, CARE SL, Tonkolili District
Rose Anne Kanu	Field Agent, RVCD, CARE SL, Tonkolili District

* Plus 20 members (approx. two-thirds women, one-third men) of the Federation of Farmers Associations, three (3) member Farmers Associations and one (1) aspiring member Farmer Association in Mabai, Tonkolili District

** Plus approximately 20 persons (approx. half men, half women) of two (2) Farmers Associations (one women; one mixed) and the Agricultural Business Centre (ABC) in Mapaki, Tonkolili District

Bombali District

Mustafa Fornah	Village Rice Consultant + President of Farmers Association + aspiring private owner of the store, Rorinka, Bombali District
Aminata Fana	Chairlady, Women Farmers Assoc., Rorinka, Bombali District
Kabba Kagbo	Chairman, Young Farmers Assoc., Rorinka, Bombali District
Alie Tholley	Field Agent, RVCD, CARE SL, Bombali District
Alfred S. Korgo	Field Agent, RVCD, CARE SL, Bombali District
Michael R. Mansaray	Field Agent, RVCD, CARE SL, Bombali District
Kaiha Koroma	Field Agent, RVCD, CARE SL, Bombali District
Mbalu Thurrah	Trader, Makeni market, Makeni, Bombali District
Marie Kamara	Trader, Makeni market, Makeni, Bombali District
Aisha Sesay	Trader, Makeni market, Makeni, Bombali District

* Plus approximately 25 persons (approx. 80% men, 20% women) of two (2) Farmer Associations (one women; one mixed) in Rorinka, Bombali District

** Plus a rice miller and rice mill operator in Makeni, Bombali District.

Annex 4. Summary of revised Logical framework (December 2010-October 2011) as of June 2010.

	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators of Achievement*	Means of verification	Assumptions
Overall Objective	Contribute to the sustainable improvement of the food security of the population of Northern Sierra Leone			
		Price fluctuation of local rice on the markets of the 3 districts	Market information system (CORAD and others)	
Specific Objective	Develop activities aiming to address main bottlenecks in the rice value chain in three districts of Northern Sierra Leone (Koinadugu, Bombali and Tonkolili).	18 participating traders declaring significant increase of their rice business activity.	Survey 3 baseline results and final evaluation	Weather conditions are normal
		20 rice mills operating in the 3 districts at end-of-action compared to beginning of action.	Survey 2 baseline results and final evaluation	The government and district authorities are supportive of the action, and inform traditional leaders and village authorities
		75 FAs involved in bulk trading of rice, and 45 % of women members	FA baseline registration data and final evaluation	
	Intervention Logic	Objectively Verifiable Indicators of Achievement	Sources and Means of Verification	Assumptions
Result 1	Sustainable access to suitable seeds for 2,400 farmers / rice producers through a partnership between FAs, private sector and Sierra Leone Agriculture Research Institute (SLARI)	50% of Farmers (of which 45% of women) accessing suitable improved rice seeds through partnership with the Seed Multiplication Center ,private sector and/or SLARI	Survey 1 and 4 baseline and final evaluation	Improved varieties are available through Seed Multiplication Center
Result 2	Enhanced agriculture-based services in rice value chain through development of sustainable and suitable for fee services to rice growers for post harvesting quality control, drying and packaging	200 metric tons of better quality rice sold to traders by FAs.	FA baseline registration data and final evaluation	The Ministry of Agriculture has the financial resources to support SMC and SLARI seed labs
		80 VRC receiving fee for service during the duration of the action.	Survey 5 baseline results and final evaluation	
Result 3	Design a solid business model to convince identified investors to build storage facilities associated with credit inventory service to farmers in remote areas and help them to develop their businesses	18 traders renting larger stores for the 2011 rice harvest.	Baseline community infrastructure profile and final evaluation	
		50% involved traders having a better profitability of their rice business during the 2010-2011 harvesting campaign.	Survey 3 & 5 baseline and final evaluation	Price of imported rice is not reduced
		500 metric tons of rice purchased by participating traders between October 2010 and January 2011.	Survey 1 and 3 baseline and final evaluation	Traders have access to finance
Result 4	Strengthened linkages between farmers/producers and their nearest storage point and with importers and exporters, WFP/P4P programme and foreign brokers to research the best market for rice	18 loans for traders	Survey 5 baseline and final evaluation	BRAC or other partner with the Smallholders Commercialization
		25 traders opening bank accounts.	Survey 3 & 5 baseline and final evaluation; info from banks	Improved financing of agriculture is addressed as per the GoSL / MAFFS plans
		5 private entrepreneurs starting rice mills business.	Survey 2 baseline and final evaluation	Credit available from BRAC or other lender

Annex 5. Summary of Project results (October 2011)

CARE – Food Facility project Sierra Leone				
	Intervention Logic	Expected Project results and outcomes (at Project start)	Projects results and outcomes (at End of Project)	Observations
Overall Objective	Contribute to the sustainable improvement of the food security of the population of Northern Sierra Leone	Price fluctuation of local rice on the markets of the 3 districts	Data not available to Evaluation mission	
Specific Objective	Develop activities aiming to address main bottlenecks in the rice value chain in three districts of Northern Sierra Leone (Koinadugu, Bombali and Tonkolili).	18 participating traders declaring significant increase of their rice business activity.	All 35 traders declare increase. Sales doubled. Quality improved (cleaner, less mixture, better moisture rate).	Achieved
		20 rice mills operating in the 3 districts at end-of-action compared to beginning of action.	In 2010: 45 in total; 18 functional, 15 open but not in good shape, 12 closed. In 2011: Repairs are underway.	Likely achieved by end of project
		75 FAs involved in bulk trading of rice, and 45 % of women members	Total: approx. 120 FA. 62% have access to PRCC. 1,350 farmers store rice at PRCC; 41% are women.	Achieved. Women % slightly lower.
	Intervention Logic	Expected Project results and outcomes (at Project start)	Projects results and outcomes (at End of Project)	Observations
Result 1	Sustainable access to suitable seeds for 2,400 farmers / rice producers through a partnership between FAs, private sector and Sierra Leone Agriculture Research	50 % of Farmers (of which 45 % of women) accessing suitable improved rice seeds through partnership with private sector and/or SLARI & Seed Multiplication Project (SMP)	1,141 farmers (32% women) purchased rice seed from SMP (i.e. 47% of total). Training to retain quality seeds. 90 FA preserved 11.8 tons of quality rice seeds.	Largely achieved. Women % is low. Lack of breeder seed at SLARI. Shortage of improved seeds at SMP. Total of famers in project: 3,600.
Result 2	Enhanced agriculture-based services in rice value chain through development of sustainable and suitable for fee services to rice growers for post harvesting quality control, drying and packaging	200 metric tons of better quality rice sold to traders by FAs.	* 231 metric tons of quality rice sold by traders. Quality improved (cleaner, less mixture, better moisture rate).	* Total: 470 tons produced. Rest used for home consumption, and/or sold outside FA/store.
		80 VRC receiving fee for service during the duration of the action.	56 VRC trained in 1st year; none in 2nd year. 70% of VRC say to receive fee (from farmer/FA/trader).	Partially achieved. Number of VRC was reduced by project. Fee receipt rate is low.
Result 3	Design a solid business model to convince identified investors to build storage facilities associated with credit inventory service to farmers in remote areas and help them to develop their businesses	18 traders renting larger stores for the 2011 rice harvest.	No trader interest in hiring stores at community level.	Not achieved. Indicator is not logic.
		50% involved traders having a better profitability of their rice business during the 2010-2011 harvesting campaign.	100% of the traders indicate that they have more profit	Achieved.
		500 metric tons of rice purchased by participating traders between October 2010 and January 2011.	Store Management Committees (SMC) sold 365 metric tons rice to the participating traders in 2010/11.	Partially achieved (73%). Approx. 470 tons was available for sale. Rest sold beyond PRCC.
Result 4	Strengthened linkages between farmers/producers and their nearest storage point and with importers and exporters, WFP/P4P programme and foreign brokers to research the best market for rice	18 loans for traders	4 traders received a loan from a bank to develop their rice business	Not achieved (22% only). High transaction costs to traders. SMC not eligible for banks/MFI loans.
		25 traders opening bank accounts.	7 traders and 17 SMC opened a special bank account for their rice business	Achieved (96%).
		5 private entrepreneurs starting rice mills business.	6 private entrepreneurs starting rice mills business.	Achieved.