

Delta 3 Programme Workshop FAQs

The following questions were noted during the Delta 3 workshop on February 24, 2015. Some may have been re-formulated for clarification. If you have additional questions or need further clarification, please send an email to: lift@unops.org

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Programme Relevance

Rice Value Chain

1. *In the Delta, soil fertility is declining. Is there any consideration about this in the programme?*

LIFT has no knowledge of declining soil fertility in the Delta and welcomes any evidence-based information on this issue. It is our understanding that farmers' nutrient management practices are rarely adequate; the farmers lack knowledge and have financial constraints to improve their practices. In addition, the Southern area of the Delta has issues of salinity, which prevents the growth of specific crops and reduces opportunities for summer rice.

2. *Is crop diversification an objective for the Delta farmers, especially to increase their resilience to climate/cultural shocks?*

The low level of crop diversification in the Delta is rightly identified as an issue in terms of farmer resilience; it is particularly problematic in the Southern areas of the Delta where it is not possible to produce in the summer season (during this time, people have access to fisheries). The programme welcomes any ideas on how to increase diversification both for cropping

systems and livelihood opportunities.

LIFT has worked with partners in Delta 2 to test new crops in brackish areas. These pilots have had mixed results with agronomic and marketing issues. Success has been limited to few farmers and no significant impact has been observed yet. LIFT understands that more agronomic and market research on these issues is needed to develop practical solutions. Thus far, agronomic research has not been a priority for LIFT investments though LIFT will commission occasional studies to address a knowledge gap, which will leverage investment. We encourage partners to submit proposals promoting technologies that have been sufficiently tested, are locally adapted, have proven agronomic and economic results, and have the potential to achieve a reasonable scale in terms of adoption, especially by smallholder farmers.

- 3. Agriculture in the Delta is risky, often due to the late onset or ending of the monsoon. Some high risk areas are not cultivated. How is the programme planning to reduce risks and increase the pay-off to rice producers?*

Agricultural production is indeed a risky activity; LIFT sees more potential to reduce risks through income diversification, as well as through better post-harvest management (especially drying) and collective storage to ensure that farmers can get the best price for their crops.

- 4. Knowing that water is a critical resource for the agriculture in the Delta, the new programme seems to fall short in addressing water management issues. How is this considered?*

Water management is rightly considered a key issue in the Delta. The programme concept mentions: "Investment in large irrigation infrastructures and flood protection embankments is not considered a priority for LIFT given the scale of the investment required and the complexity of multi-village collaborative work. However small scale works at village level could be considered as a potential resilience activity. It would need to demonstrate that the proposed investment will have a significant impact on smallholder farmers." In addition, LIFT would like to encourage farmers to invest in irrigation and proper equipment for irrigation through advisory services and access to rural finance.

In response, IRRI has noted that they have tested Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD) methods that have proven efficient to reduce pumping costs for summer rice.

- 5. Salt water intrusion remains a problem in the Delta with many farmer level embankments still not reinstated following Nargis and a so a lot of land remains redundant. Brackish areas in Labutta were noted as an example. Will LIFT be involved in reconstruction?*

Support for farmers to reinstate such low level embankments could be considered if the justification for doing so is clear, e.g. cost benefit ratio in terms of cost vis-à-vis land returned to production and the benefits this would return in regard to the Delta 3 objectives i.e., diversification of farm production and increase in labour options.

6. Can we propose support for SMEs, irrigation, and hire purchase in the Financial Inclusion Programme?

Yes, see more details in the Call for Proposals for the Financial Inclusion Programme on LIFT website: <http://www.lift-fund.org/news/answers-your-questions-call-proposals-financial-inclusion>

7. *What do we know about suitable rice varieties adapted to the Delta environment? Has IRRI identified the seeds which are adaptable to climate change or which are suitable for different agro-ecological conditions? And new varieties identified by broader seed growers?*

IRRI has identified and tested new varieties as well as the best management practices for specific rice environments. IRRI is now designing a future project to help farmers work with private seed companies and improve the seed value chain. IRRI can share more information about these varieties and practices with partners.

8. *How will an Integrated Seed Value Chain be realised? Is the idea to link farmers with private companies?*

LIFT has learnt that the local production and distribution of quality seeds by seed-growers face some limitations. These are briefly explained in the programme concept paper. While LIFT intends to continue to work with seed-growers at the local level, the programme will also fund interventions to strengthen the capacity of the public and commercial seed systems to meet the needs of the farmers. The first step in this endeavor will be to study these needs and to explore ways to engage with the government and commercial seed firms.

9. *In the concept paper, seed is an important component. Does seed mean just paddy seeds or is it also for other crops?*

In the Delta, LIFT will give priority to interventions related to the production and distribution of paddy seeds. However it is not exclusive to other crop seeds. Please refer to question 2, which discusses crop diversification.

Component 2: Off-farm income generation

1. *There is a need for a continuing focus on fisheries governance at the regional level. Improvements to law and regulations give scope to improve fisher households' access to fishing livelihoods.*
2. *Investment in skills training should be linked to identified employment demand and SME business needs. Important to ensure a demand led process.*

These two comments are noted and align well with the programme component 2.

3. *Is cash transfer an activity related to reducing indebtedness or income generation?*

The programme considers the possibility of:

- (1) Maternal cash transfer in relation to nutrition objectives (component 3)
- (2) Conditional Cash Transfers to the most vulnerable as a social protection mechanism and potentially for reducing indebtedness (component 3)
- (3) Start-up grants for vocational and business trainees for income generation (component 2)

The modalities for such transfers will have to be defined and justified in the proposals according to the applicants' objectives and experiences.

4. *Access to power supply for productive purposes is an issue in the Delta. How will the programme tackle it?*

The programme doesn't address power supply as a specific objective, but the programme could facilitate access to power generation equipment through rural finance.

10. *Why is migration not considered together with social protection in the same component? Are they not closely related?*

In a way, migration is a mechanism for vulnerable households to cope with external shocks whether environmental or economical. As such, it relates closely to social protection. However LIFT sees migration as an economic opportunity to diversify and increase the household sources of income and as such it relates to the "stepping out" side of our strategy. LIFT intends to support social protection mechanisms at the village and community levels to help vulnerable households "hang in".

11. *Does support to off-farm livelihood include rural finance or are these two different components?*

Yes, the component two of the programme "Access to new economic opportunities for landless/poor households: off-farm income generation, vocational training and support for migration (Stepping out... and up)" includes access to rural finance. However rural finance and other interventions (such as training, etc.) are located in different "packages" because LIFT intends to contract them through different modalities, i.e. a specific call for proposal for rural finance only which has been already released.

Nutrition and addressing vulnerabilities

1. *The document doesn't mention resilience, is it not an important aspect of the new LIFT strategy?*

Resilience is indeed mentioned in the programme and is a key outcome of the LIFT strategy, but not as a single entry point for interventions. LIFT considers that all the components will play a role in improving the resilience of farmers, landless, vulnerable households and communities as a whole.

2. *Within the WASH component, does LIFT intend the focus to be on hardware or software? The funding for package 3 is only US\$3 million, so can it be assumed that LIFT is not envisioning larger scale water system development?*

LIFT funds will be insufficient for much hardware support, so the focus will be on software with hygiene promotion and Behavior Change Communication (BCC) activities. LIFT would be open to WASH activities that involve co-funding to facilitate hardware investment alongside software supported by LIFT.

3. *Suggestions have been made for LIFT to provide a study on current hygiene practices in target areas. Main causes of stunting in the area should also be found out in order to clarify the link between Stunting and WASH infrastructure and services.*

There is a lack of evidence directly linking hygiene interventions to stunting (Reference: Humphrey, J. H., 2009, "Child under nutrition, tropical enteropathy, toilets, and hand washing", Lancet Volume 374, Issue 9694 , 1032 – 1035).

4. *Is there any norm for construction in WASH activities?*

Partners who want to propose interventions in WASH should have a clear knowledge about the technical and financial requirements for the related activities.

5. *Does social protection include rural finance? Is there a specific budget for social protection? What is the difference?*

Yes, rural finance can play a role in social protection, but their purposes are different. Rural finance aims at increasing business and productive opportunities. In the Delta 3 programme, rural finance is not part of the component 3.

Prop-poor policies

1. *Gender is not mentioned in the programme, is it not an issue for LIFT? Would it be relevant to consider the role of women in the rice value chain for example?*

LIFT has an established gender strategy (available here: <http://www.lift-fund.org/lift-gender-strategy>) that all its programmes should work to and we encourage our partners and potential applicants to look at it carefully. We are open to suggestions regarding where gender is particularly problematic in the Delta. The programme framework is not intended to provide a comprehensive assessment of all issues and potential interventions in the Delta, but to give guidance to highlight LIFT priorities and linkages with LIFT overall strategy. Crosscutting issues such as gender, environment, human rights, disability and so forth, will be considered in the

new programme and LIFT expects applicants to explain carefully how their intervention will tackle those.

- 2. The consideration of land issues in component 4 is welcome, but the definition seems narrow. Rather than focusing on land conflict resolution mechanism, we advise a broader approach to land rights, including awareness and to consider the opportunities related to the National Land Use Policy.*

LIFT agrees that land issues should be considered more broadly and awareness is part of the potential interventions identified by LIFT. LIFT has no experience yet in dealing with these issues at local level and is looking for opportunities to support pilots based on the draft National Land Use Policy. LIFT is following the development of this policy closely and will consider potential interventions in due time and in consultation with partners.

- 3. Does the programme provide an opportunity to help the landless get access to land? (i.e. by facilitating lease arrangements where larger land holdings are not being fully utilised) World Concern noted that they have had some success with this previously.*

We would be willing to provide new opportunities to landless household, but it would need to be clear that the proposed approach was viable and that the number of beneficiaries that stood to benefit justified the cost.

Targeting and geographical coverage

- 1. How far will the programme support investment in business by larger farmers? Is livelihood diversification not important for larger farmers as well?*

The component one primary target is the smallholder farmers. In some case, the services developed to respond to their needs may be also available for the larger farmers (for example rural finance), but these services should be designed to respond to smallholders' needs. Sometimes larger farmers and businesses play a crucial role in developing services for small farmers. So they are not entirely excluded from the programme, but the programme will measure its impact on the smallholders and any proposals should explain what result they will achieve on this specific target group.

- 2. To improve fishery governance you need to target regional level authorities (government, parliament and DoF). The programme geographic targeting is at township level. Is there scope for larger intervention or for activities at regional level?*

Definitely yes: "This geographical focus is intended to bring direct support to the local villagers of these five townships; however it doesn't prevent the possibility of including activities located outside this area where it is relevant to build services, create linkages to public and private service providers, markets and government, especially in the township, district and regional

towns (e.g. Maungmya and Pathein). Some services or organizations may also be developed / supported to a larger coverage for some specific reason (market, economy of scale, policy needs, etc.).”

3. *Can partners do seed production projects in Dedaye, which is very near to Pyapon and in existing project villages in Dedaye?*

Dedaye township is not in the priority geographical coverage, so for interventions to be located in this township there should be a specific justification as explained in the answer above. The fact that a project supported these villages in the LIFT Delta 2 programme would not be sufficient. The partner should explain why it is essential to support these villages.

Call for proposal and contracting modalities

1. *Will these four components be considered in isolation from each other or will it be possible to submit proposals that integrate objectives across several components?*

The components will not be considered in isolation and LIFT expects proposals that may address several components. It will be important for proposals to demonstrate how they contribute to nutrition objectives, building evidence-based knowledge, policy influence and local capacity building.

2. *Is the financial inclusion budget inclusive or exclusive of the total 30 million USD Delta 3 budget? What is the relationship between the recently released call for financial inclusion and the proposed package in the programme for “diversified rural finance services”?*

The recent call for proposals for financial inclusion includes the budget allocated to rural finance in the Delta 3 programme (approximately \$8 m) from the overall budget of \$30m.

3. *Will the coming call for proposals include support to the fishery sector or not? At the moment it is mentioned in package 7 for complementary supports.*

This is clarified in the call for proposal. The decision has been taken to include fisheries in the coming call for proposals, excluding aquaculture for the moment.

4. *Is LIFT open to proposals and contributions from new partners, as it seems that the barrier to entry for new IPs is high?*

Our call for proposals is fully open to any eligible organization and is not restricted to existing partners. LIFT has ensured that the same information is available to all and fully public. The invitation for the Delta workshop to introduce the new programme went wide and well beyond LIFT’s existing partners. Many non-partner organisations participated. In some cases, LIFT may decide to negotiate some intervention directly with one partner without organizing a call for proposal.

5. *What is the meaning of the budget earmarked in each packages? Do the partners have to make their proposal fit a specific package or not?*

The budget earmarked in each package is purely indicative and LIFT will revise allocation based on the actual proposals it receives and their relevance. Applicants don't need to follow this allocation for budgeting individual projects.

6. *Will LEARN be able to give technical advice and support for new organisations that are NOT LIFT partners when preparing their proposals?*

LEARN has not been asked to provide technical support to either current LIFT IPs or others that may be preparing proposals. If applicants wish to seek advice from the LEARN partners (Save the Children, Helen Kellar, ACF) for proposal preparation it should be on their own arrangement with the LEARN partners themselves. All LIFT partners (new or old) will have access to LEARN team support as long as LEARN continues. The current LEARN project runs to end of 2015.

7. *What is the time frame for the programme? Is it expected to be a 3, 4, or 5-year programme? What will happen beyond 2018?*

The timeframe for the programme is until the end of 2018. Interventions can be planned for maximum 3.5 years or less. A potential future extension of LIFT beyond 2018 is not yet under consideration by LIFT's Donor Consortium. And so all proposals should include appropriate exit provisions.

8. *How many grants/contracts will LIFT be dealing with under the Delta 3 Window?*

There is no limitation, but we estimate that LIFT might be able to manage up to 15 grant contracts within the programme.

9. *According to time frame mentioned in the concept paper for the new proposal appraisal and contracting time, the new programme will start too late for the monsoon paddy season.*

LIFT is not expecting to have activities funded under the new programme running during the coming monsoon season. The most optimistic calendar would be to start operations during the following dry season.

10. *Is there any plan for bridging grants for small local organisations to cover the project gap between current project and upcoming project? If Delta 3 is delayed, how can partners maintain their staff?*

Bridging grants will be considered on a case-by-case basis by LIFT and discussed directly with the partners. This decision will not be related to the size or whether the organization is local or international.

11. *Will it be possible for an organization to submit a proposal both for phase 1 and the phase 2? Can one organization alone run two projects within the same programme?*

The future calls for proposals will be open to all eligible organizations. More information will be provided in the calls themselves. LIFT does not limit the number of grants per organization.

Partnership and coordination

1. *The programme mentions, “LIFT could retain the option to group prospective IPs according to their experience, expertise...” Does that mean that LIFT will force partnerships or to work with donor-driven consortium? What will be LIFT approach to partnership, will it be compulsory?*

More information will be provided in the respective calls for proposals about the need for partnership. LIFT hears the concern here and does not intend to force partnership against the partner’s will, but wants to keep some leeway to encourage collaboration where LIFT sees advantage in matching expertise. LIFT intention is not to devolve coordination through a consortium, but LIFT will continue to facilitate the overall coordination between partners as it was organised during Delta 2.

2. *How will LIFT manage the way partners subsidise activities and services (for example for seeds)?*

LIFT will try to build coherence within the programme to avoid different rules applying within different areas or to different organisations. Beyond the period for contract negotiation, a strong coordination mechanism will be put in place for partners to discuss their approaches and service delivery mechanisms. In regard to asset transfer, including seeds, LIFT does not support free distribution, or in the case of seeds, selling seeds at grain price. As much as possible services should be provided at cost for sustainability and to avoid market disruption. If a partner wants to introduce a subsidy, it will have to provide a clear justification and targeting mechanism.

Collaboration with government and private sector

1. *How far is LIFT expecting partner to work with the government, knowing that government priorities and approaches may not align with the partner’s and the township level departments are poorly resourced?*
 - Given that DoA is very poorly resourced and staffed (only four for Bogale), there is a risk that partners compete with each other to get their attention, collaboration through higher DSA. In addition, this might detract them from their own official work. We recommend that LIFT prepare specific guidelines to interact with government departments and manage coordination to avoid crowding their capacity.

It is not an obligation to work together with the government, but it is an obligation to coordinate with government. The context has changed and there are now more opportunities

and willingness from both sides to collaborate and discuss interventions with the government technical departments at union and local levels. Partners are encouraged to seek their support and to bring issues up to them. If possible, partners should align their intervention with the government policies and if they don't, they must explain why not. LIFT operational guidelines provide some indications and limitations on how government services can be funded through projects in order to support their services and to avoid distracting the civil servants from their main duties. Collaborations should focus on the technical departments core functions. LIFT programme coordination will provide additional support to engage with government and a place where issues can be raised.

2. *Are extension services to be delivered through or in close collaboration with the private sector? Objectives and interests may not fit those of our organisation for example regarding the use of pesticide.*

Farmers have to work with the private sector and are indeed part of the private sector. While it is true that in some cases, the farmers and the commercial companies may have conflicting interests, they are meant to work with each other. Private companies are not always looking for short term profits and might be looking for more long term and mutually beneficial relationships. Many companies lack expertise to improve their advisory services, but these services might be more sustainable than NGO ones. Hence LIFT doesn't see commercial companies as the only way to deliver advisory services, but they are certainly part of the process. LIFT has commissioned a study about agricultural extension and advisory services in Myanmar. The results of the study will be discussed in a workshop on 30 March where partners will be invited. LIFT hopes that the study will provide some strategic guidance on how to develop extension services in Myanmar.

3. *In order to coordinate better with private sector actors, LIFT is recommended to conduct a survey or a feasibility analysis with the profiles of potential private sector companies or enterprises that have interests to work with development organisations. This document will be a reference for the implementing partners to hunt for specific private sector actors to work in coordination.*
 - *If LIFT wants to engage in nutrition activities, it is important that it engage with the Ministry of Health.*

The two suggestions above are noted and will be considered by LIFT in due time.

4. *Would it be possible to pay for farmers or students to learn at Yezin? Alternatively, could we develop training courses for students or young technicians to prepare them to work on development issues as their studies are very technically oriented?*

Yezin University and the government have set specific rules for selecting students across the country and LIFT does not want to interfere. Thus, it might not be possible to send practitioners or farmers to Yezin. Furthermore, the curriculum proposed by Yezin with its scientific orientation might not fit the needs of farmers.

With this said, LIFT encourages collaborations with education institutions across the country. Partners can also consider offering capacity building opportunities outside the project area. For example, some partners have sent technicians and farmers to the Metta training centers. Bringing students who have to prepare a thesis to do their field work within a project is also an interesting idea. LIFT will facilitate learning opportunities across projects by setting Communities of Practice.

Important and potential policies

1. *The cooperative law is outdated and creates uncertainty for farmer organisations to register as cooperatives. In particular, the government can decide to dissolve the cooperative. LIFT should engage with the Ministry of Cooperatives to advocate the needs of farmer organisations.*
2. *LIFT and partners need to determine where the focus should be for input and influence on policies, i.e. some need to be at the state/regional level, others at the Union level.*
3. *There is a need to advocate for a policy focusing on ensuring equitable access to resources, i.e. fisheries, land user rights*
4. *Policy reform that stimulates SME development (also FDI). Should be linked to Vocational Training and Education policy reform for skills training to meet relevant growing employment options generated. Note UNIDO is proposing a Special Economic Zone for the Delta.*
5. *Policy support needs to accommodate the lack of capacity at state/regional level.*
6. *Improve policy to protect migrant workers (e.g. conditions, safety – fishermen was cited as an example).*
7. *Influence the reforms of MADB to ensure more effective loan products. Delays in availability of finance have been noted as a problem. It was also noted that there is a moribund ‘Rural Development’ bank under the MoLFRD that presents an opportunity for support to landless. Apparently the bank came out of the old Municipal banks (City Development Banks).*
8. *Policy areas suggested for LIFT to engage through IPs:*
 - *National Action Plan on Nutrition*
 - *Social Protection Policy*
 - *Health Insurance Policy (government vs. private sector insurance policies)*
 - *Microfinance Policy*
 - *Land Use Policy*

All these suggestions regard policies where LIFT and the Delta 3 programme could be influential have been noted and will be carefully considered. LIFT encourages partners to explain clearly in

their future proposal how their intervention will bring evidence-base knowledge to the programme and will influence policies at local and union levels.

Shared knowledge and gaps

1. *Indebtedness. We need to know more about the scale of the problem to quantify it to be able to respond.*

- LIFT has been suggested to share their IP's best practices in reducing indebtedness among the most vulnerable/poorest of the poor population if there already is one or more models. If not, LIFT should conduct a study about this among IPs.

Certainly more needs to be understood about the scale of indebtedness and the extent to which it is a problem in the Delta. Projects seeking to address debt problems will need to provide relevant information on the scale of the problem in their target areas as part of their justification for a LIFT response. This could also be the subject of further analysis in the context of a proposal to LIFT.

2. *Is there any downscale system of financing (e.g. banking for the most vulnerable) to meet the needs of the poorest?*

No. Commercial banks are not in the position to downscale/down-market financial services (loans) to the "poorest". They are targeting customers who are able to afford the cost of loans and to reimburse. In this regard, the stake for financial inclusion is to improve the capacity of the commercial banks to reach smallholder farmers and SME. LIFT is targeting the poorest or the most vulnerable through social protection mechanisms.

3. *There is a need to fully understand the mobility dynamics of landless households noting that some households are or have the scope to be mobile (i.e. migrate to employment) and others not. There will be a need to target assistance options to households according to the degree to which they can be mobile.*

LIFT agrees with this statement and hopes to gain knowledge on the relationship between landlessness and migration/mobility through the ongoing QSEM study on migration. We also note a [recent study carried out by Helvetas](#) with a Kayin, Shan and Dry Zone focus.

4. *Regarding knowledge management, existing LIFT knowledge sharing mechanisms: LIFT's Community Feedback Mechanism, bi-annual regional IP meetings and FMO's regular activity like Communities of Practice are well-acknowledged. The lessons learned from those events should be share with a wider audience through LIFT website.*

LIFT publishes all relevant information on its website for full public access.