**the civil society fund, small scale interventions**

**Knowledge exchange for tea farmers in kenya and zimbabwe**

**Engineers without Borders Denmark**

Application 2020

1. **Objective and relevance**

Background and introduction

Honde Valley in Mutasa district in Manicaland province is one of the three tea growing areas in Zimbabwe. More than 1,000 smallholder tea farmers here grow tea for black tea production. The tea growers are poor and the majority live below the poverty line. The farmers have difficulties supplying the children with school uniforms and other basic needs. Today, the small-scale tea farmers pick the tealeaves from their bushes and sell the raw tealeaves to Eastern Highlands Plantations Ltd, that has the industrial drying and fermentation facilities that are needed to produce black tea for the market.

With background in dialogue with EWB-DK during a fact-finding mission I 2016, the smallholder tea farmers in Honde Valley have experimented and worked to realise their dream of raising their income by diversification of the tea production with white tea production. However, they need to know more about the process of picking the tealeaves, the drying process and the use of technology. If they can learn how to produce white tea they have a second source of income from their tea bushes since it is from the same tea bush that black, green and white tea are produced.

The tea-farmers are organised in HVTGA (Honde Valley Tea Growers Association). They have expressed a wish for a study visit to Kenya, one of the largest producers of white tea worldwide, to do networking as well as to learn from the Kenyan tea farmers how to produce white tea and how to market the products. HVTGA has previously, in 2015, visited Kenya in relation to certification of their black tea production. The certification took place in partnership with SNV (Netherlands’ Development Organization) and Eastern Highland Plantation Ltd Group.

* **What do you want to achieve through the intervention?**

This intervention will implement a study tour to Kenya together with the local partner PUTZ (Pensioners Union Trust of Zimbabwe). The participants, 3 tea-farmers from HVTGA (Honde Valley Tea Growers Association), 1 from PUTZ, 1 from AGRITEX (Agricultural and Technical Extension services) and 2 EWB-DK members, will get insight in all aspects of the white tea production, marketing and organisation of sales. The delegation gets an opportunity to meet, discuss, observe and see for themselves what smallholder farmers in Kenya are doing and how the production of white tea highly benefits their livelihood and income in comparison to production of black tea.

During the study tour, it will be possible to investigate the local and regional market for white tea and explore the possibilities of transferring the structures from Kenya to Zimbabwe. The farmers can observe the benefits of controlling a larger part of the value chain: producing, packaging and labelling the white tea in their own organisation. Adapting and placing the obtained knowledge in Zimbabwe paves the way for the farmers’ ability to control the production process and to sell the white tea for a much better price than what is possible to get for black tea. PUTZ will organise a follow up workshop in Zimbabwe where study tour members, including the AGRITEX representative, disseminate the knowledge to all members of HVTGA.

**Overall objective of present initiative:** To increase the skills and knowledge among smallholder tea farmers from Honde Valley in relation to white tea production.

**Immediate objectives:**

* To gain technical knowledge on how white tea is produced in Kenya.
* To investigate the value chain and the local and regional market for white tea.
* To give the delegates the opportunity to learn about good agricultural practices that increases tea production as well as leadership and financial transparency in farmers association.

The core of the intervention is for the Zimbabwean tea farmers to get information from the white tea producing areas in Kenya. The farmers can get answers to their many questions on how and which leaves to pick for the white tea production, how to produce the white tea, how to conserve the tea to secure taste and stability, and how the tea farmers in Kenya market their products. There are individual farmers in Nandi Hills in Kenya marketing on their own, selling their high quality tea directly to companies abroad and not through brokers. Another essential part of the study tour is the networking, knowledge sharing on organisation and financing and discussions on how to produce in a fragile environment.

* **Why is the intervention important?**

Due to growing competition on the world market for black tea, the price has dropped massively and the farmers get only a low income from selling the tea (the raw leaves), and the tea growers have very limited opportunity to influence the price they get. It is therefore important for the tea farmers to find a way to increase their income and stabilise and improve their livelihood. An obvious solution is to diversify the production and start producing white tea. The world market price for white tea is up to ten times the price for black tea.

Life for the tea farmers in Honde Valley will be very different if they can expand their production with white tea. Currently, knowledge of the white tea production and the needed technology does not exist in Zimbabwe, but is flourishing in the neighbouring country Kenya. The procedures around the handling of the tea leaves is essential in production of good quality white tea. To obtain good quality the leaves needs to be picked in the right way at the right time and the drying has to be done at the right temperature. The drying and packaging can be done at the level of the individual farmer, but the tea growers need to gain a far better understanding of the processing as well as the development of the needed climate-smart, low-cost technology of drying.

Further, the youth in the countryside lacks future possibilities. This intervention puts emphasis on reducing the number of youths migrating to the urban centres by contributing to a better future for tea farming and associate businesses.

* **Describe the context of the intervention, i.e. the conditions prevailing in the intervention area which are expected to shape the intervention (e.g. social, economic, political, climate and environmental conditions, and whether it will take place in a stable or fragile context).**

Zimbabwe is no.10 on the fragile state index following Afghanistan. It is characterised by political instability, long-term economic stagnation, inflation, food insecurity, poverty, limited provisions of basic service. Climate changes are causing droughts and there is a lack of clean water. In the latest years, the El Niño climate pattern has been stronger than ever, and has resulted in severe flooding as well as severe drought across Southern Africa. Due to lack of foreign income, the country seeks new ways and new markets to improve the economy. This can be achieved through development of the technology and capacity of the small-scale farmers to produce a product that will provide them access to cash markets and add greater value to their agricultural produce.

1. **Partnership/partners**
* **What is your organisation’s role, and what will you contribute in pursuit of the intervention’s objective?**

**Engineers without Borders Denmark (EWB-DK)**

Established in 2001, Engineers Without Borders Denmark (EWB-DK) is a technical-humanitarian organization of volunteer members with a large range of technical skills and backgrounds. EWB-DK collaborates with local and international NGOs to improve the living conditions for marginalised and vulnerable people in poor countries. EWB-DK provides clean water and better sanitation, builds schools and health clinics, improves roads and bridges as well as establishes solar power plants and waste treatment plants. EWB-DK supports sustainable and resilient communities, where development is generated on the basis of knowledge-sharing, partnership development and capacity building of civil society organizations, provision of sustainable technical solutions, and high level of community participation. EWB-DK works from a human rights-based approach and will therefore always seek to cooperate with local government authorities and other duty bearers. EWB-DK has 1300 members and approximately 250 active volunteers engaged in projects different places in the world. EWB-DK has an efficient secretariat (3.5 staff) providing support and assistance in all stages of the project cycles (management, M&E, quality assurance, donor contact, communication and project administration). Bookkeeping and finances are outsourced to the Danish Engineers Association (IDA); budgets at project level are managed by volunteers, and controlled by volunteer controllers.

The role of EWB-DK is:

* To evaluate the technical solutions used in Kenya in the white tea production and with their technical expertise to be a counterpart to the tea farmers from Zimbabwe.
* To collect information on the value chain for white tea in Kenya and regionally in East Africa.
* To produce a film with documentation of the findings in Kenya to be used in workshop 2.
* To be responsible for the economy of the initiative.
* **With whom will you cooperate on the intervention, and what will they contribute in pursuit of the intervention’s objective?**

**Pensioners Union Trust of Zimbabwe (PUTZ)**

The intervention will be implemented in collaboration with PUTZ. PUTZ registered as a Trust[[1]](#footnote-1) in 2012. The Trust has a non-executive Board with10 members headed by a Chairman, and currently has more than 20,000 members country wide. The Trust has its headquarters in Harare with provincial offices in four provinces. The day to day operations of the Trust are carried out by the Program Director who is assisted by the Finance Officer, Project Officer, Business/ Evaluation Officer and three administration/office staff. PUTZ has experience with the agriculture sector and has implemented several projects where farmers are being trained and linked to the market. They have a strong focus on securing favourable loans and credits for farmers within their membership base.

PUTZ’s Director Amatus Rwazemba worked with the tea farmers from 1985 – 1990. He was in that period based in Katiyo as an employee of Agricultural Rural Development Authority (ARDO) where he helped the farmers start growing tea and was instrumental in the formation of Honde Valley Tea Growers’ Association (HVTGA) during the period 1985 – 1990.

The role of PUTZ in the project is:

* To visit Mutasa District Administrator and Mutasa Rural District Council and to have meetings with the local leadership, the councilor and other government officials before meeting with the tea growers and the Provincial Tea Growers Executive members. It is of utmost importance that the official structures in Zimbabwe is informed and give their approval of the arrangements.
* To organize a workshop where HVTGA will select three persons among their members for the study tour.
* After the tour to Kenya, PUTZ is responsible for organising a workshop in cooperation with HVTGA to secure that the learnings from the visit are conveyed to the tea farmers. EWB-DK shall produce a film from the visits to Kenya. This film will be used at the workshop.

**Honde Valley Tea Growers Association**

HVTGA is an association of small-scale tea growers in the Honde Valley. All members of HVTGA are members of PUTZ. The association covers 10 tea-growing areas each with a 7-member Committee to administer and monitor the activities of the members in that specific area. One representative from each of the areas is organised in the Honde Valley executive committee (apex committee). HVTGA is member of the national association of tea growers in Zimbabwe. Honde Valley has a representative from the executive committee in the committee at provincial level. Until 2015, the tea farmers in the Honde Valley have been involved in a Danida financed and SNV Zimbabwe implemented agriculture program. HTVGA has demonstrated their capacity for development when they in 2016 were able to secure certification for their black tea production.

**AGRITEX** is the agricultural and technical extension services. They are present in every ward and district and work with the farmers on a daily basis. The current relationship between AGRITEX and NGOs is that AGRITEX is used as a technical service to back-up NGO-funded projects. AGRITEX mobilises farmers, helps to organiwe them so they can receive the service and, working hand-in-hand with project staff, provides advisory services to both project staff and farmers. All private sector agro-service companies work with AGRITEX when extending their commercial services to agricultural producers. AGRITEX personnel mobilises and organises the farming community to facilitate the commercial activities of these private sector companies. Additionally, AGRITEX services are used to provide farmers with technical backup and advice on utilising the technologies.

* **On what have you previously cooperated with your local partner, and how will those experiences be used in the proposed intervention?**

PUTZ is a new partner to EWB-DK. PUTZ facilitated local contact and communication for the implementation of activities during EWB-DK fact-finding mission in 2016 where PUTZ demonstrated solid access to the target group and local authorities.

With funding from CISU, EWB-DK visited Zimbabwe again in July 2019. The visit aimed to strengthen the partnership between EWB-DK and PUTZ. Through exchange of experiences and sharing of knowledge, the visit established a collective understanding of organizational practices, working approaches and technical capacities. An organizational capacity assessment of PUTZ was carried out providing a strong foundation for dialogue about their capacity development needs.

1. **The actual intervention**
* **How do you intend to implement the intervention? What activities will be will be carried out, when and with whom?**

Activity 1

PUTZ visits the government structure and traditional leaders to secure they have knowledge of the project and give their approval. Because of the political situation in Zimbabwe, it is of high importance that local government is well informed about the Kenya tour before the farmers leave for Kenya. Part of the activities is for the director of PUTZ to visit the stakeholders in the Mutasa district. This includes meetings with the district administrator, local leadership, the councillor and other government officials as well as the traditional leaders.

PUTZ, HVTGA and Agritex cooperate on arranging workshop 1 for the tea farmers in Honde Valley. Here the farmers going on the tour to Kenya are selected. Since the majority of the tea farmers are women, at least two of the farmers selected will be women. Selection criteria are:

* respect and trust by their fellow tea farmers
* shown capacity to demonstrate good farming practices and ability to act as trainers of trainer
* recognising their own role in developing white tea production in Honde Valley

Activity 2

The Kenya tour takes place with participation from Zimbabwe of three tea farmers, one person from PUTZ and one Agritex officer. From EWB-DK, one member with technical and engineering background and one member with experience in the value chain will participate.

The capacity building mission shall give an opportunity to obtain:

* Technical and management learning from the smallholder tea farmers’ growing hub of Eldarado.
* Organisational learning from East African TEA Trade Association EATTA, which runs the Mombasa Tea Auction floors where the smallholder farmers’ tea is sold. In 2015, the EATTA was serving 10 countries.
* Technical learning/organisational learning from the tea processing factories. The smallholder farmers, through their association, owned 66 tea factories in 2015.
* Technical and management input to access markets from the AFRICERT, a certification Audit organisation.
* Inspiration and documented effect on livelihood from visits to NANDI Hills. The farmers visit Sireet Out growers Empowerment and Producers company Ltd and Sireet Tea factory.

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| **Day** | **Time** | **Purpose** | **Involved** |
| Day 1:  | Travelling and arrival in Nairobi | * Introduction
* Work through expected outputs and learning outcomes from the field visit
 | EWB-DK delegate(s)Zimbabwe delegation |
| Day 2: | Morning: Transport to tea production area in Nandy Hills | Meet with farmers producing white tea. Sireet Out growers Empowerment and Producers company Ltd and Sireet Tea factory | EWB-DK delegatesZimbabwe delegation |
|  | Afternoon: First meetings | Meet with white tea producers.  | EWB-DK delegatesZimbabwe delegation |
| Day 3:  | Travelling to Mount Kenya slopes | Meet with individual farmers marketing their own white tea. Smallholder farmers growing hub of Eldarado | EWB-DK delegatesZimbabwe delegation |
| Day 4: | Travelling to Mombasa |  | EWB-DK delegatesZimbabwe delegation |
| Day 5: | Visit auctions in Mombasa | EATTA. AFRICERT. Look into the value chain of white tea | EWB-DK delegatesZimbabwe delegation |
| Day 6: | Morning: Internal meeting | Discussion on findings. | EWB-DK delegatesZimbabwe delegation |
|  | Afternoon: Internal meeting | Conclusion on findings and description of way forward. | EWB-DK delegatesZimbabwe delegation |
| Day 7: | Travel back to Nairobi and fly out |  | EWB-DK delegatesZimbabwe delegation |

Two persons from EWB-DK will meet the Zimbabwean delegation in Kenya. Their role is to evaluate the technology and production process of white tea as well as gain insight into the value chain of white tea and make initial arrangements for taking the model to Zimbabwe. The EWB-DK project group has contact to associate professor Martin Skrydstrup at the CBS Sustainability Centre for Business and Development Studies in Denmark. We are going to use his contacts in Kenya to visit both tea farmers and infrastructure in the tea business.

Activity 3

PUTZ, HVTGA and Agritex cooperate on arranging workshop 2 for tea farmers in Honde Valley to disseminate the learnings from the visit to Kenya. A film from the visit shall be used to help the understanding of the findings. The HVTGA organization will be discussed with respect to strong leadership and financial transparency.

EWB-DK has secured collaboration in the project by the Danish partner TE & KAFFE Specialisten, who will test samples from Zimbabwe to ensure that the future product has the needed quality. Since it makes more sense to find a local solution to the quality tests, this will be looked into. The full value chain will be developed at a later stage once the quality product has been produced.

The project will initiate a dialogue with the Eastern Highland Plantation, who currently do not possess the expertise for white tea production, about possibilities for cooperation between the HVTGA on marketing and selling white tea.

* **Which groups will benefit from the intervention? How many persons are these groups composed of? How will they participate in the intervention?**

The greater target group is the small-scale tea growers organised in the HVTGA. In 2019, there were 423 farmers in the association composed of 242 women and 148 men, out of which 33 are youth. The project aims to involve 50% of the farmers in the training activities facilitated by the project. A total of 210 tea growers will be the primary target group. With an average of six persons per family, over 1,200 people are going to directly benefit from the project.

The three persons chosen among the HVTGA members will benefit from getting a first-hand experience and contact to people already having success with white tea production. They will get insight in the whole production line and will be able to copy this at home. Furthermore, they will gain knowledge of the organisational and economical set-up in parallel associations and thereby gain a point of departure for the development of the capacity of HVTGA.

The 210 farmers will benefit from participation in workshops where they learn the important new skills. This will enhance the knowledge level and strengthen cohesion in the HVTGA and furthermore pave the way for strong leadership and knowledge sharing within the organisation. The remaining approx. 210 tea growers organised in HTVGA also benefit from the project, as they will be organised in a stronger association and get the opportunity to be trained by one of the trained tea growers after the project has ended. The initiative will pay special attention to the group of 33 young tea farmers. A large number of youths migrate to the urban centres because they lack a prosperous future in the countryside. To ensure that the youth benefit from this initiative, special attention will be paid to their active involvement in the workshops, where emphasis will be put on increased income based on new skills. The results and learning from the Kenya tour can give the farmers the initial knowledge to develop the white tea production in Honde Valley.

1. Three organizational types define NGOs in Zimbabwe and these are Private Voluntary Organisations (PVOs), Trusts and Common Law Universitas. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)