The Rural Livelihoods Development Program (RLDP) is a Swiss government funded project working to improve the livelihoods of farmers in the central corridor of Tanzania. RLDP operates in seven poverty-stricken semi-arid regions of central Tanzania and aims to reduce rural poverty in these areas by linking the poor producers and processors with markets. RLDP’s vision is that poor rural households and communities participate in the market economy, improve their material livelihood, and withstand economic shocks by employing their assets and potentials.

The Rural Livelihoods Development Company (RLDC) is a non-profit organisation registered in Tanzania and owned jointly by two Swiss companies: HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (HSI) and Swisscontact. RLDC has managed RLDP since 2004 using a sustainable livelihoods approach. But in 2008 it adopted an “M4P” approach to its work; so it is primarily interested in working with motivated partners in the agricultural sector who are willing to adopt new innovations and techniques and therefore are willing to commit financially and technically to these innovations. RLDP is also mindful of what happens after it has ended its support to partners and they are left to their own devices and strives to design interventions and solutions that are sustainable (i.e. will continue long after RLDP has ceased to exist).
Since 2008, RLDP has impacted the livelihoods of over 100,000 households by intervening in the rice, sunflower, cotton, dairy and poultry sectors. The programme has significantly broadened its outreach by also intervening in the media information services sector (radio sector) and encouraging the production and distribution of radio services aimed at rural/agricultural listeners. RLDP also works at policy level to encourage the creation of an enabling local business environment.

In its final fourth phase which started in April, 2012 and ends in March 2016, RLDP is addressing constraints in three crop subsectors namely Cotton; Sunflower and Rice, along with these subsectors RLDP addresses cross sector themes namely Gender and livelihood, Rural Advisory Services, and Media and Information services.

**RLDP FOCUS SECTORS**

In this phase (2012-2016) RLDP focuses on fewer sub sectors but aims more to scale up and replicate successful pilot interventions of phase III while also introducing new innovations in terms of new interventions through piloting and then replication. The sector strategies
and intervention strategies/stories are designed in such a way they substantially contribute to the economic empowerment of smallholder farmers, through improved productivity and production, access to quality service provision and inputs/output markets; contribute to develop and strengthen private sector actors as a key players for ensuring the foundation of a sustainable economic development in rural areas, as well as being relevant agents in terms of outreaches, and finally contribute at policy dialogue level, to develop and strengthen an enabling business environment.

**Sunflower**

Sunflower is one of the main cash crops in the central corridor but has never been utilised to its full potential. The focus of RLDP interventions is scaling up contract farming, promotion and marketing of quality declared seeds (QDS), strengthening of collateral management system with financial institutions, testing mobile phone based agricultural information system, testing and piloting conversation agriculture and block farming and strengthening
capacity of Tanzania Sunflower Promoters Association (TASUPA). With these interventions it is expected more than 35,000 smallholder farmers will benefit in different ways from accessing inputs (improved seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, agronomic skills and assured markets. Sunflower processors will benefit with improved business practices and access to financial services. The general business environmental will benefit as member business organisation are expected to have capacity to advocate for policy change and positively influence the business environment.

**Rice**

In Central Corridor, Rice is extensively produced in the three regions of Tabora, Shinyanga and Morogoro where favorable growing conditions exist. The other regions of Manyara, Singida and Dodoma have supplementary production in their low lands.

Rice is a particularly important crop in Central Corridor as 48 % of rice cultivated land
in Tanzania is found in the central corridor. The interventions in this sub sector are on
strengthening access to improved seeds, formation and strengthening rice millers’ association,
scaling up village saving and lending associations, scaling up contract farming and testing
community based seed production intervention replicating sunflower Quality Declared Seeds
intervention where over 10’000 rice farmers are expected to be involved along the central
corridor.

These interventions benefit smallholdes farmers with access to new variety of rice seed,
improved techniques of production and ease access to financial services. Farmers will have
strong voice to address issues relevant to their economic and social interest which includes
pricing and market access. Rice millers in the central corridor are expected to be more business
minded and improve the quality of the rice from the central corridor by improving business
environment and adhering to quality standards.
Cotton

RLDP has worked in the cotton sector since 2007, implementing contract farming model with ginners like BioRe and BioSustain and later on MSK Solutions Ltd. The other areas include strengthening farmers’ organisation and piloting weigh and measure for cotton farmers. The latter intervention did not go for scale up because it lacked motivated private sector players to crowd in.

Starting 2009, Tanzanian Cotton Board (TCB) led the sub sector reform under the Tanzania Cotton and Textile Development Programme (CTDP). As the results of this reform contract farming model is compulsory to all cotton growing zones (East and West) and therefore more crowding in by other players like Tanzania Gatsby Trust (TGT).

With this reform, RLDP has three intervention areas; scaling up contract farming; commercialization of farmers’ organisations like Oridoy, BOFA and KIHAMA to access...
high value markets and access to financial services; strengthening Tanzania Cotton Growers Association (TACOGA) for advocacy and lobbying.

Scaling up contract farming and commercialization of farmers organisation interventions aim to access new markets and benefit from inputs and advisory services to raise productivity and improve quality. While strengthening TACOGA helps build capacity of the farmers’ organisation and cotton growers individually. Therefore the purpose of this intervention is to build capacity of cotton growers in the central corridor and in the country at large for better representation of producers in policy dialogue and regulation given the nature of the crop itself. Therefore with this intervention RLDP envisions a well-functioning cotton growers’ association by strengthening the existing TACOGA.
CROSS CUTTING THEMES.

Gender and Livelihood (Poultry)

This sector is one of the cross cutting sectors under RLDP in this fourth phase, this sub sector envisions to work in all three crop sectors of rice, cotton and sunflower. It aims to complement interventions in these crop sectors without an additional burden and have more focus to women economic empowerment. Already existing women groups are supported and form a chain of women groups that have capacity for vaccination, food mixing, and supplemented by village saving and lending groups for solving their financial difficulties and linked to poultry buyersy.

The interventions in the poultry cross-cutting sector are commercialization of poultry keeping using lead farmers model (farmer to farmer knowledge transfer), commercialization of poultry keeping using booklet, and commercialization of poultry keeping using radio
programme (Kuku ni Mali). These interventions aim at making poultry keeping as profitable venture for rural households

**Media and information services**

The media and information services sector remain to be transversal sector and aims at conveying message to large audience at one and with multiple messages. The programme continues to use its in house radio capacity to scale up and replicate its achievements in its sectors’ interventions. On the other side, with results from INUKA and AMKA commercial and women economic empowerment rural radio programmes respectively, RLDP replicates the radio intervention with Tabora based CG FM Radio on a generic radio programme targeting rural producers. This intervention is pilot at local community radio programme. The intervention addresses topics on good agronomic practices, accessibility to loans, weather forecast, pricing and marketing and so forth.

Rural Livelihood Development Programme (RLDP)
The interesting element in the media and information services especially radio sector is on the design of the programme and its contents to rural producers where sponsors and advertisers have interest to advertise their products with the radio stations. Designing a radio programme with segmentation elements meant to work towards transforming the entire radio programming to focus the rural producers who are majority (more than 70 per cent of total population resides in rural Tanzania; according to 2012 Tanzania Population and Housing Census); therefore this itself brings sustainability to radio stations by attracting commercial advertisement and sponsorship. At the meantime ensuring rural communities have sufficient farming information delivered to them timely using the most popular medium of communication, a radio set.

**Rural Advisory services**

This is cross cutting services sector aims at complimenting all other crops sectors. The purpose of rural advisory services is to build capacity to all those needs of smallholder farmers
to acquire and use not only extension services, but also better agronomic practices and services that add value during crop farming. Under this theme, RLDP works to strengthen already existing network of lead farmers in rice sector, also pilot system of rice intensification (SRI) intervention in rice sub sector that aims at utilising set principles in rice farming for higher production. In the cotton sub sector, RAS envisions building capacity of cotton sector training facility (the facility that trains and equip private sector extension agents and the government extension agents up-to-date with modern cotton farming practices include organic cotton). In the sunflower sub sector, RAS works to strengthen capacity of QDS producers to better produce quality seeds by demonstrating the use of fertilisers and go further to working with other smallholder farmers in establishment of demonstration plots to show the performance of improved seeds against conventional seeds.
HIV/AIDS and Gender

This transversal theme applies to all other crops and cross-cutting services sectors. The focus of the theme is to complement all other sectors and embed the concept of gender and social equity in their interventions. RLDP targets to reach 40% of its primary beneficiaries to be women. To reach such an ambitious target the programme set targets to each intervention and collaborate with institutions and local government focal persons at the districts level. These focal persons are the ones that work with partners in training on gender and social inclusion.

On the domain of HIV, the theme aims at reminding the importance of refraining from all acts that will lead to new HIV infections to smallholder farmers. The programme collaborates with organisations that deal with HIV/AIDS to train partners on the issues pertaining areas of HIV prevention and encouraging voluntary counseling.