Report on morning webinar DSAT tool
2 Dec 2021 at 8.00 - 9.30 hrs CEST (10-11h30 in East Africa)

The Dairy Sustainability Assessment Tool serves to reflect on the people, planet and profit dimensions of dairy development

1. Welcome and introduction on NEADAP

Rinus van Klinken, project leader NEADAP, welcomed the 71 participants in the webinar. NEADAP started as an exchange platform for Dutch and East Africa dairy stakeholders. Its 1st phase was about learning from experience on fodder, quality milk systems, extension. The new 2nd phase has a 'product' approach with a focus on scaling a number of proven technologies and approaches. NEADAP aims to sharpen the insights in these products and support the upscaling in the East African context. The DSAT tool is an example, still in its testing stage. *See attached flyer on NEADAP2 for more information.*

2. Presentation on the DSAT tool

Jan van der Lee (WUR Livestock Research) referred to the many differences in ideas about sustainability. Important to keep those different aspects and angles in mind. The DSAT tool has three steps: a) identify the main threats to sustainability, b) score the current performance and c) generate further discussion on pathways and actions towards increasing sustainability. A review of existing tools inspired the choice for in total 14 sustainability aspects with 41 indicators. The tool is designed to be used with a group of stakeholders who jointly agree on the system and boundaries to be assessed, then select and score the priority threats to sustainability (aspects) and indicators to assess them. These indicators are then scored. Scores are visualised in a spider web showing the collective ideas of performance on priority aspects.
See presentation and 20minute summary video clip

3. Testing the DSAT tool in SNV-TIDE programme Uganda

Asaah Ndambi, WUR Livestock Research, led the first test run, engaging with 14 stakeholders of the Southwest dairy sector. In the first step, 4 aspects such as 'biodiversity' and 'animal welfare' were dropped. In the second step, participants gave relatively high scores to aspects such as the 'enabling environment' and 'access to markets' and low scores to 'livelihood opportunities (aging farmers, gender issues)' and 'water management (causing seasonality in milk flow)'. Doing the first 2 steps consumed a lot of time, leaving limiting attention for the third step.
In this case, the tool helped get more insight in the environmental aspects. Also it facilitated dialogue between policymakers and practitioners. Participants like the tool and may use its results to shape their work (on loan packages, extension or education). A next test run will take place in Ethiopia in week 6 Dec.

In conclusion, the tool employs a self-assessment (not an outsider measurement) and offers a framework for priority setting. It is tailored to East Africa, and defined broad enough for the diversity in that region. It may be tailored to different levels and stakeholder types. The tool will be further tested and improved in 2022.

4. Reflections on this tool for dairy sustainability

Richard Businge (MEL advisor SNV TIDE) participated in the test run. The tool can help TIDE focus on people-planet-profit dimensions at the start of an intervention. SNV's partners do the same when adapting their products or services. The tool may improve on indicating the type of farming system and on clarity in terminology for the diversity of stakeholders.

Atze Schaap (dairy business expert Power in Partnership) notes that dairy sectors in both Europe and East Africa are on the brink of large transformations: good to see that the sector takes a proactive approach towards the SDGs. This tool uses the social capital of the sector (many stakeholders) and bridges between policy and practice. The next step is to translate the results into a positive action perspective for the dairy actors. A suggestion is to use the global IDF platform for broader support.

Erik Slingerland (1st secretary food & nutrition security, EKN Addis) and responsible for BRIDGE and NEADAP. For the embassy, dairy is important as nutritious food for people at the bottom of the pyramid, although there are concerns with emissions and with the profitability for smallholders. He is pleased to hear that the financial sector got interested in the tool and how the resulting insights may boost supply of finance for the dairy sector and further development. Looking forward to further testing in the context of Ethiopia and the resulting policy dialogue on the dairy sector.

5. Q & A with the audience

For Jan, the reflections indicate the tool addresses a need, and he welcomes the suggestions to engage IDF and GDSF in next steps. Meanwhile, some work is still needed as Richard noted.

The chat shows a number of questions about intended users. The tool design is flexible enough to zoom out to a wide audience (from producer to consumer) or to zoom in to a particular level in the dairy chain, although focus is more on farming side than on retail/consumer side. This choice of level depends on the objective of the exercise, is it the complete dairy sector or a specific set of actors in their context. This tool is not assessing capacity if individual organisations, there are other tools for this.

A big issue in the chat is why sustainability (and priority action) is defined by the wisdom of stakeholders and not linked to an external benchmark. There is no objective comparison of performance as better or worse than similar interventions. There are two motivations: this tool is not about static numbers but about the trends and directions. Second, the tool is to generate discussion towards a common agenda. If further action requires a baseline measurement, additional assessment may produce the hard facts and actual numbers.

Asaah adds an insight from the Uganda test: sharing the spider web with results prompted lively reflections and discussions among participants.

He confirms that good facilitation is important, in the test run the external facilitator (Asaah) worked with Richard who already knew the actors and the local context. One suggestion from the Uganda test is that the tool could also be used to think through different options at the start of an intervention.
In the test, a wide variety of stakeholder categories were included, but the scores were not separated between stakeholder categories and organised consumers were not present. Analysing differences in scores may give deeper insight and increase mutual understanding between stakeholders. For example, Richard explained the low score on livelihood in Uganda due to aging dairy farmers, women excluded from farm ownership and youth restricted to odd jobs.
The level of analysis is also a matter of optimal use of available time. Asaah recommends for the next test in Ethiopia to save time on the first steps and keep the full afternoon for exciting discussions in response to presenting the results.

The tool will be published around February in a usable format. It is free for use, but the idea is to train a number of facilitators in the region to guide further introduction and further improvements based on practical experience. One future option is to tailor it to specific stakeholders.

6. Closing words
Rinus van Klinken thanked everybody. He noted that NEADAP is committed to further develop and encourage the uptake of this tool. The DSAT tool has a practical application and it contributes at the policy level as it gives insight to the crucial issues in dairy development.

Annex
- powerpoint
- flyer NEADAP
- video recording of presentation.
- Q&A : Selected questions below with *answers in italic*

DSAT Dairy Sustainability Assessment Tool - questions in the chat.

Ad Merks (HollandDoor): How are conflicts (or even war situations) between tribes or regions, included in the DSAT?
Conflicts over water and power issues in the chain are addressed, external shocks and stresses are not.

Simone van Vugt (WCDI): The stakeholders influence a lot your choice and the weight per indicators: How do you deal with this? And: Variety vs Positioning of different stakeholders; whose voice counts? Indeed discussions can diminish bias.
By careful selection of workshop participants beforehand and by good facilitation
The facilitator of this tool should have knowledge of the sector, the group dynamics, insights in the situation / position of the individual, etc : Is it an idea to train some facilitators per country? A guide for facilitators could help *Great idea.*
Dealing with the differences and the weights of scoring; is there also other evidence "backing up" perceptions of the different groups? A form of triangulation of results.
Divergent scores need to be discussed. If additional evidence is needed, group can decide to act on that

I can imagine that this tool also can help to find the leverage points which have the

biggest effect on the dairy system? And develop interventions with different sector players in order to contribute to different dynamics. *Indeed*

Biruh Tesfahun: How did you manage differences of scoring for indicators that come from individuals? *See above*
Is there any baseline to choose indicators important for a given production system? *Tool focuses on trends rather than on absolute value.*

Gerrit Brummelman PUM : Can the question how resilient is the farm/cluster /sector be added to the indicators or in the final conclusion? *Could, but this is a discussion on a different level*

Hink Perdok: If the scoring by this group is representative of reality then it is alarming to see that livelihood is scoring lowest. What is the major reason for this? Are milk price and price of culled animals major explanatory factors for this?
Focus of indicators was on age of farmers, gender, youth and socially acceptable. Wording of this aspect may need review
Did you zoom in on the apparently low economic efficiency of milk production? That could be done using management tools such as Rumen8.

Ad Merks (HollandDoor): I support the questions of Hink. What is the influence of high food prices for the consumers and low farmer milk prices on the scores?
These are addressed under aspects "Productivity/contribution to livelihood – "dairy income" and "Acceptable and competitive dairy prices"

Samuel Kamau: what aspects of sustainability does animal welfare contribute to?
Economic: cow comfort positively impacts productivity
Social: well-kept animals improve social acceptance of dairy

Mona (KIT): Very useful tool. The value and level of discussion would largely depend on the group composition and skill/knowledge of the facilitator. Would have to look at the tool closely - to ascertain how the assessment would help identify specific interventions. Might help to test the tool in a 360degrees manner with different stakeholder groups and then align priorities.
Asaah: I also see this use for progress monitoring and policy influencing

Mona (KIT): I reckon the tool highlights tensions, tradeoffs and complementarity across the different components (people-planet-profits) *Thanks, agreed*
Mona (KIT): to what extent are the subsystems addressed? for example, fodder/forage value chains, processed product value chains etc.
In terms of Access to inputs and services – quantity and quality