

Annex 1: Chat Questions and Answers raised during Session 3: Liberia ebola experience

Questions Received by Webinar Chat	Answers provided by the presented after the webinar
<i>As part of your Business Continuity Planning, at what point did you plan to shut down operations entirely?</i>	We had 9 levels of alert. Only level 9, triggered by multiple cases of ebola inside our ringfenced areas, would have ceased operations. Level 8, ebola prevalent in the immediate vicinity, still included some basic care & maintenance operations. Level 7, individual cases of ebola nearby, maintained slowed operations. We never reached higher than level 6, which was cases around us but not in immediate vicinity, and imported cases only in our vicinity. The precautions held at that alert level and we operated almost normally.
<i>How did you relate with government to overcome possible lethargy as a result of the environment where officers could claim danger from Ebola and even now with COVID 19?</i>	Worked extremely closely at the very local level. Most interaction was with Medical personnel. Overall, there were majority of government people who did their duty.
<i>How were you able to manage the psychological challenges faced by employees. Did they face stigma and what steps /measures did you take to manage the same?</i>	We think this worked by the personal leadership of a number of our senior people. On stigma, we had only a few rumours-cases (“nnn family has ebola”), which turned out wrong and were cleared after 3 weeks waiting period. Persistent repeat communication on how to stay safe and the need for quarantine if symptoms, helped reduce any anxiety
<i>What are the permanent changes in your factory setting and communities in post Ebola time?</i>	Hygiene, hand washing especially. This had a lasting impact on general health.
<i>How do you deal with camps (50 employees) do you have any insight on how to deal with camps</i>	We did have company accommodation. Strict ringfencing/cordon sanitaire agreed with everyone. Strict protocol of communicating anyone with symptoms. For a period, we did restrict movement between outside villages and our housing areas. We would recommend the same in the current context
<i>Were there practical measures to take around transporting workers to site?</i>	Multiple transports to avoid crowding, then very systematic entry screening (as described on the call).
<i>Any good practices/guidelines to share regarding management of workers accommodation?</i>	Strict ringfencing/cordon sanitaire agreed with everyone. Health visits every other day to every household. Hand washing stations at every house door.
<i>How can we make sure social distancing is understood and</i>	Indeed difficult. Can only suggest repeat, repeat, repeat. Get union and community leaders as well as

<i>respected by community workers on farm ?</i>	community association leaders onside to spread the messages
<i>How did you deal with community education?</i>	Very active approach. Community team visited chiefs, women's chiefs, youth leaders every week at start. Placed posters around, provided sanitation supplies, educated on handwashing. Again, repeat, repeat, repeat
<i>Behaviour change especially in COVID 19 (handwashing and physical distancing) is a slow process, what are some of the key initiatives that enabled you to ensure a sudden change in behaviour during Ebola reponse</i>	Indeed difficult. It was made into a "supervised" regular activity – upon entering work, upon food breaks, at toilet facilities, at office doors, at going home., at company school.
<i>Do you think that employee temperature control is realistic and relevant in the context of farm businesses?</i>	Yes. We did it fully, in case of company managed areas. It was done as part of muster and daily checkrolling. It was crucial in ebola. May be less effective with COVID since carriers may be asympomatic or without fever, but still worth to do as a discipline and to communicate to employees and communities that the company takes this issue very seriously
<i>Would be great to get this list of practical access control actions from Viganeswaran</i>	As discussed on the call and in the summary notes.
<i>Are there interventions from FAO that can support small businesses in aggregation to scale.</i>	Addressing the prevalent export barriers – high fees, permits, port delays – on a very practical level.
<i>What entails a secured supply chain?</i>	In our case it meant working closely with a number of suppliers and truckers. When these were family-owned businesses, they took the relationship and problem solving seriously.
<i>Main COVID19 challenges in the coming month?</i>	Ensure you are prepared to address human and business risks - as discussed on the call, particular emphasis on education, safe treatment/isolation areas; business risk and response escalation plans (Threat Identification Framework), even evacuations of your domestic (capital city based) and foreign "expats".
<i>Main challenges will be worker housing on agricultural estates, and how to protect, support, and mitigate in worker housing and surrounding communities</i>	See above, we did see those measures working.
<i>How do keep distances</i>	Coaching, lead by example. For COVID consider also requiring masks (even homemade cotton fabric) as a strng reminder.

<i>The biggest challenge at plantation companies to cope with emergency will be adequate availability of PPEs for frontline healthcare workers and respirators at estate hospitals.</i>	Yes. Order what you can ahead of time. Connect in advance to local/ regional hospitals in case escalation / transfer required. Recent research shows that even homemade masks are better than none (e.g. NY Times and Washington Post articles). Maybe engage local seamstresses and tailors to make them.
<i>A big challenge is that forest communities have limited access to information on how to protect themselves, income to buy provisions and/or health care. We need to advocate on their behalf with government partners and the private sector. We would like to know if the create an emergency fund to support the most in need to purchase provisions, health care, etc..</i>	Agreed, interesting idea for individual companies and region groupings, governments to consider. In the case of ebola, the EPMSG that we discussed was very important.
<i>How to keep communication with workers and wider communities with a ban on travels and trainings?</i>	If there is such a ban, it is possible that business cannot operate, unless government gives waiver. Apply in advance/ as early as possible. Urgent communication and training BEFORE such ban would be a valuable proactive action.
<i>Remote workers in plantation and logistics regarding raw material and product export</i>	
<i>What about medium to longer term impact and how to plan for and address that now?</i>	This will be very company specific. Our recommendation would be to start planning for how and when to revert to “normal” operations as the crisis abates
<i>or future, understanding what to do regarding long term shutdowns and impacts on staff will be very useful. How to function when the lockdown prevents functioning of the company over a long term</i>	This again will be very company specific and will likely involve many difficult decisions linked to the company’s cash reserves and its ability to survive the lockdown. One view is to find a way to operate despite the lockdown, eg in smaller “operating cells” or ringfenced areas, by permission.
<i>Looking for more info about Management of big (crowdy) housing camps</i>	See above, but also need to impress upon leaders in the camps to impose hygiene rules, social distancing (for Covid) and to be an early warning system for issues – medical or social. Give messages, coach, repeat x10
