



AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND VALUE CHAIN ENHANCEMENT PROJECT (ADVANCE)

FY2020 Quarter Two Report





FTF ADVANCE II FY2020 QUARTER TWO REPORT

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Acronym List

ACDEP	Association of Church-Based Development Nongovernmental Organizations
ADVANCE	Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement
FAW	Fall Armyworm
FTF	Feed the Future
FY	Fiscal Year
GCX	Ghana Commodity Exchange
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
МТ	Metric Ton
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
ОВ	Outgrower Business
PFJ	Planting for Food and Jobs (Program)
RAD	Rural Agro-dealer
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VA	Village Agent
VAA	Village Agro-input Agent
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WAATCO	West Africa Agro Tech Company Limited
YARO	Youth Advocacy on Rights and Opportunities

Executive Summary

The Feed the Future Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement Project (FTF ADVANCE II) ended its field activities on January 31, 2020, and focused on supporting the outgrower business (OB) networks to sustain their activities. In addition, the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) team strengthened OB networks' capacity to manage their businesses and network data and information using a system based on the open data kit system. Field implementation focused on two main activities: (1) refresher training on key topics to help manage and sustain the networks, and (2) development and dissemination of resource materials to OB networks as part of the project's knowledge management legacy. For the refresher training, the team visited seven locations, covering nine zonal OB networks, with total attendance reaching 123 actors (70 OBs and 53 field agents) including eight women. The team covered nine topics: network members' management and development; third-party service providers; agricultural productivity and environment; business and office management; field management; OB office management; OB field management; market linkages; and general network issues.

The resource materials handed over to the networks included a binder with 13 printed quick-reference documents and 95 electronic documents on a flash drive. Network members can also access the documents via a cloud storage drive. The printed documents are organized into five categories: i) network management and development; ii) agricultural productivity and environmental stewardship; iii) business and financial management; iv) women and youth empowerment and inclusiveness, and v) deployment of information and communication technology (ICT), data management and participatory monitoring and evaluation.

The project monitored OB networks' activities over the quarter and observed that the networks continue to implement activities without project support. They hold regular meetings, support their members, negotiate deals with buyers, and engage with stakeholders. Two zonal networks, Bemoni OB Network in Karaga and Wa Zonal Network, celebrated International Women's Day and commended the contributions of women in agriculture.

During the quarter, the project worked with 18 OBs (including one woman) that mainly provide shelling and transportation services to 3,338 smallholder farmers, including 2,054 women (62 percent) and 797 youth (24 percent). This brings the total number of participants in fiscal year (FY) 2020 to 6,699, representing 134 percent of the target of 5,000 for the fiscal year. Additionally, OBs provided services to over 1,750 "walk-in" smallholder farmers; these farmers do not hold a unique identification previously provided by the project, hence they are not recorded as current project participants.

The project monitored the performance of village savings and loan associations (VSLAs) that started saving in the first quarter of FY2020. This includes 167 VSLAs with 2,810 members, including 1,793 women (64 percent) and 739 youth (26 percent). Most of the youth participating in VSLAs are women (56 percent of VSLA youth). With these results, the project achieved almost three times (281 percent) the FY2020 target for working with VSLA members.

As the project has promoted women's financial inclusion through the VSLA model, women currently constitute 64 percent of all project participants enjoying increased access to productive economic resources such as savings and loans. This achievement is significantly higher than the project's FY2020 goal of 20 percent. In addition, youth constitute 28 percent of participants accessing production resources; this is significantly higher than the project's FY2020 target of 15 percent for this indicator.

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¹ Youth members are predominantly young women (415) aged 18–29.

In the 2019 crop season², 16,107 project-assisted smallholder farmers cultivated 12,856 hectares, of which women planted 48 percent. Farmers planted 81 percent of land with maize and 19 percent with soybeans. On average, individual farmers planted 0.92 hectares of maize and 0.64 hectares of soybeans in 2019. Total production of maize and soybeans was estimated at 64,273 metric tons (MT). Participants produced 58,303 MT of maize and 5,970 MT of soybeans. The total quantity of produce sold was 57,772.32 MT, which amounts to 90 percent of what smallholder farmers produced during the 2019 cropping season. The total value of sales is estimated at \$10,646,119. 86 percent (\$9,160,552) of all sales was of maize and 14 percent (\$1,485,567) of soybeans. The results are consistent with the volumes produced in the 2019 crop production season. The average prices for maize and soybean were \$177.89/MT and \$273.36/MT respectively. Sales among female farmers amounted to 47 percent (\$5,602,178) of overall sales. These sales achievements represent 111 percent of the FY2020 target of \$9,624,000.

Average maize and soybean yields for smallholder farmers in the 2019 production season were 5.62 MT/ha and 2.49 MT/ha, respectively. OBs obtained greater maize yields (21 percent) than their smallholder farmers. These achievements compare favorably to the targets of 4.0 MT/ha for maize and 2.5 MT/ha for soybeans. The significant increase (53 percent) in smallholder farmers' average yield for maize from the previous season may be attributed to input support from buyer-sponsored outgrower schemes with OBs and their outgrowers; the government's input subsidy program Planting for Food and Jobs (PFJ); and the success of project interventions against fall armyworm (FAW).

All project participants applied one or more improved technology and/or management practice, including crop genetics, soil-related technologies, pest management, and cultural practices (planting in rows, and approved density and crop rotation) during the 2019 production season.

² The following information comes from validation of productivity survey data conducted from July 2019 to March 2020.

A. Introduction

This report covers a period of limited field activities through January 31, 2020, when the project closed its field offices in the northern regions and started closeout activities. After the closure of field offices, the project team in Accra maintained regular communication with OB networks by telephone and through social media platforms (WhatsApp and Facebook).

In addition, the project tracked produce sales, monitored and recorded data, and conducted other MEL activities, including two learning studies conducted by independent consultants on women's participation in VSLAs and the capacity of OB networks.

The project also validated the 2019 productivity survey results and conducted sales data analysis.

The report presents a complete view of the impact results for this quarter in the section titled "Summary of Results." The section on "Progress with Technical Delivery" describes the activities and approaches that the project deployed as well as direct outputs achieved during the quarter. Direct outputs are laid out according to the three key sub-components of the project: increased agricultural productivity in targeted commodities; increased market access and trade of targeted commodities; and strengthened capacity for advocacy and activity implementation, in addition to project support activities, including gender mainstreaming, environment, and MEL.

B. Collaboration

Collaboration with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA)

The project worked with MOFA and the decentralized district units of the Department of Agriculture to ensure that the OB networks continue to receive support to sustain their activities and development.

Collaboration with Other Partners

WEST AFRICA AGRO TECH COMPANY LTD, TATA AFRICA HOLDING DEALERS OF JOHN DEERE EQUIPMENT, AND BARCLAYS BANK/ABSA

This partnership/consortium intends to provide OBs with access to equipment loans as part of its Commercial Asset Facility. During the quarter, the project organized meeting between OB networks in Tamale, Bolgatanga, Wa, Karaga, and Gushegu with Barclays Bank, TATA Africa Holdings dealers of John Deere tractors, and West Africa Agro Tech Company Limited (WAATCO) dealers of Sonalika tractors to discuss the scheme.

PREMIUM FOODS

The project initiated discussions with Premium Foods Limited, a food processor based in Kumasi, to introduce the firm to the OB networks and promote an expanded produce procurement arrangement. While Premium Foods conducted business with individual OBs earlier in the project, this was the first time the company had worked with OB networks. As result of meetings with network executives in Wa, Tumu, and Tamale; Premium Foods agreed to buy 245 MT of maize worth GHS26,950 (\$5,085) from OB Emmanuel Ahaa (Jirapa OB Network, 35 MT), OB Mashood Dori (Wa Zonal Network, 60 MT), Big Ajar Company (Wa Zonal Network, 90 MT), and OB Mahama Tia (Northern Business Association-Tamale Network; 60 MT).

C. Summary of Results

Individual Participation

During the quarter, the project worked with 18 OBs (including one woman) that mainly provided shelling and transportation services to 3,338 smallholder farmers, including 2,054 women (62 percent) and 797 youth (24 percent). This brings total participation in FY2020 to 6,699, representing 134 percent of the target of 5,000 for the fiscal year. Additionally, OBs provided services to over 1,750 "walk-in" smallholder farmers; these farmers do not hold a unique identification previously provided by the project, hence they are not recorded as current project participants.

Table I: FY2020 Q2 participants by gender and age

Gender/Age	Female	Male	Total
Smallholder Farmers ³	2,054	1,284	3,338
Youth (Smallholder Farmers)	440	357	797
Outgrowers	1	17	18
Total	2,055	1,301	3,356

Number of Individuals Participating in Group-Based Savings

During the quarter, the project worked with 167 VSLAs with a total membership of 2,810, including 1,793 women (64 percent) and 739 youth (26 percent)⁴ in the zone of influence. Most of the youth participating in VSLAs are women (56 percent). With 2,810 members, the project achieved almost three times (281 percent) the FY2020 target of 1,000 VSLA members.

Proportion of Female Participants in USG-Assisted Programs Designed to Increase Access to Productive Economic Resources

In line with the project goal of promoting women's financial inclusion through the VSLA model, women currently constitute 64 percent of all project participants enjoying increased access to productive economic resources such as savings and loans. This achievement is significantly higher than the project's FY2020 goal of 20 percent. As results from the project's study on female participation in VSLAs show, VSLAs have become very attractive to women and youth in target communities for several reasons. Among these, both younger and older women successfully expanded their on- and off-farm productive activities as a result of VSLA membership. VSLAs also serve as an effective platform for members to access diverse market system stakeholders.

Youth Participation in USG-Assisted Programs Designed to Increase Access to Productive Economic Resources

Youth constitute 26 percent of all VSLA members; this is significantly higher than the project's FY2020 target of 15 percent. Most of the youth participating in VSLAs are women (56 percent). VSLA membership

³ Including adults and youth.

⁴ Youth members are predominantly young women (415) aged 18–29.

is attractive to youth community members as the groups provide access to resources to help youth expand their on- and off-farm productive activities.

Average Yield, Sales, and Technology Adoption - 2019 Crop Season

Following the USAID FTF Indicator Handbook, the project conducted a productivity survey with a random sample of 901 participants (852 smallholder farmers, including 330 women, with 49 OBs) selected from project-assisted maize and soybean farmers in FY2019 (Tab 2). The project computed the average yield and extrapolated for the 16,107 participants⁵ who cultivated maize and/or soybeans in the 2019 crop season. The figures presented in the sections below cover sales and technology application from the survey results, based on project data for the 2019 crop season.

Table 2: Participants by crop, gender, and age, 2019 Productivity Survey

Gender / Age	Maize	Soybean	Total			
Female						
Adult	5,258	2,200	7,458			
Youth	1,057	895	1,952			
Male						
Adult	4,601	525	5,126			
Youth	1,222	349	1,571			
Total	12,138	3,969	16,107			

Table 3: Sampled participants by crop, gender, and age, 2019 Productivity Survey

Gender/Age	Maize	Soybean	Total				
Smallholder Farmers	Smallholder Farmers						
Female							
Adult	110	137	247				
Youth	41	40	81				
Male							
Adult	262	110	372				
Youth	110	42	152				
OBs							
Female	1	1	2				
Male	42	5	47				
Total	566	335	901				

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⁵ Participants who received services from OBs and had data captured on specific crops planted. Other participants were either

[&]quot;walk-in" farmers or VSLA members who did not provide data on their production in the 2019 season.

HECTARES PLANTED

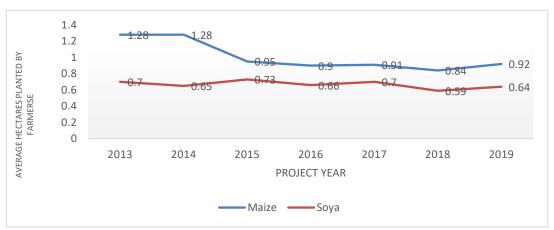
In the 2019 crop season, 16,107 project-assisted smallholder farmers cultivated 12,856 hectares, of which women planted 48 percent. Farmers planted 81 percent of land with maize and 19 percent with soybeans (Table 4).

Table 4: Hectares planted in 2019 by crop and gender

Gender/Age	Maize (Ha)	Soybean (Ha)	Total (Ha)
Female	4,379	1,777	6,157
Male	6,035	665	6,700
Youth	2,209	764	2,973
Total	10,414	2,442	12,856

On average, individual farmers planted 0.92 hectares of maize and 0.64 hectares of soybeans in 2019. Female farmers increased their farm areas by about 10 percent compared to the 2018 production season for both crops, even while cultivating smaller areas compared to their male counterparts: 38 and 25 percent less for maize and soybean, respectively, for the season. Overall, the average number of hectares planted by maize farmers, which had continuously decreased each year from 2015 to 2018, increased by 10 percent in 2019. The number of hectares planted with soybeans also increased by eight percent after decreasing between 2015 and 2017. While the project generally advises producers not to hasten expansion but to apply their limited resources efficiently—which explains the general reduction in average land size cultivated over

Figure 1: Average hectares planted by farmers



the previous years—the 2019 increases in area planted for both crops may be attributed to input support from buyer-sponsored outgrower schemes and the PFJ program. These two schemes provided inputs that farmers would have otherwise had difficulty paying for with their very limited resources.

PRODUCTION

The project estimated that total production of maize and soybeans in the 2019 production season was 64,273 MT (Table 5). Participants produced 58,303 MT of maize and 5,970 MT of soybeans. Female farmers produced over two times more soybeans than their male counterparts. Inversely, male farmers produced about one and a half times more maize than female farmers. This is consistent with the proportion of female and male farmers who cultivated soybean and maize, respectively.

Table 5: Total production by smallholder farmers in 2019 per crop and gender in MT

Gender	Maize (MT)	Soybean (MT)	Total (MT)
Female	23,723	4,140	27,863
Male	34,580	1,830	36,410
Total	58,303	5,970	64,273

YIELD

Average maize and soybean yields for smallholder farmers in the 2019 production season were 5.62 MT/ha and 2.49 MT/ha, respectively. These achievements compare favorably to the targets of 4.0 MT/ha for maize and 2.5 MT/ha for soybeans. The significant increase (53 percent) in smallholder farmers' average yield for maize in 2019 may be partly attributed to the inputs obtained through buyer-sponsored outgrower schemes with OBs and their outgrowers; the PFJ program; and the success of project interventions against FAW. Similarly, OBs obtained higher maize yields (21 percent) than their smallholder farmers. Table 6 shows that both male and female maize farmers obtained higher yields in the 2019 production season than in the previous season.

Table 6: Average yield by gender and crop in MT/ha

Gender/Age/Farmer Type	Maize (MT/ha)	Soybean (MT/ha)		
Smallholder Farmers				
Female	5.43	2.32		
Adult	5.39	2.31		
Youth	5.53	2.39		
Male	5.67	2.64		
Adult	5.90	2.37		
Youth	5.21	3.22		
Average (weighted)	5.62	2.49		
Outgrower Business				
Female	6.30	2.75		
Male	6.80	1.77		
Average (weighted)	6.80	1.98		

SALES

The total quantity of produce sold in 2019 was 57,772.32 MT, which amounts to 90 percent of what smallholder farmers produced during the 2019 cropping season. Over 90 percent (52,239.54 MT) of all sales were for maize and ten percent (5,532.78 MT) for soybean (Table 7).

Table 7. Quantity sold by smallholders in 2019, by crop and gender (MT)

Gender	Maize	Av. Price	Soybean	Av. Price	Total
	Vol sold (MT)	Av. Price (\$)	Vol sold (MT)	Av. Price (\$)	Vol sold (MT)
Female	20,985.71	190.69	3810.86	260.49	24,796.57
Male	31253.83	165.08	1721.92	286.23	32,975.75

Total ⁶	52,239.54	175.36	5,532.78	268.50	57,772.32

The project estimated the total value of sales in 2019 at \$10,646,119. 86 percent (\$9,160,552) of all sales was of maize and 14 percent (\$1,485,567) of soybeans (Table 8). The results are consistent with the volumes produced in the 2019 crop production season. The average prices for maize and soybean were \$175.36/MT and \$268.50/MT, respectively. Sales among female farmers amounted to 47 percent (\$5,602,178) of overall sales. These sales achievements represent 111 percent of the FY2020 target of \$9,624,000.

Table 8: Value of sales by smallholder farmers in 2019 by crop and gender

Smallholder Farmers	Maize (\$)	Soybean (\$)	Total (\$)
Female	4,001,833	992,693	4,994,527
Male	5,158,719	492,874	5,651,593
Total	9,160,552	1,485,567	10,646,119

APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGIES AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Table 9 shows the level of application of improved technologies and management practices based on the 2019 productivity survey. All 16,107 project participants applied one or more improved technology and/or management practice. The project promoted technologies and management practices including crop genetics, soil-related technologies, pest management, and cultural practices (row planting and spacing) during the 2019 production season. The project achieved 81 percent of the target of 20,000 hectares.

Table 9: Application of technologies by male and female farmers

Technology Type	Application Rate Women (%)	Application Rate Men (%)	# of Women Applying	# of Men Applying	Area Applied by Women (ha)	Area Applied by Men (ha)
Crop genetics	50	53	4,716	3,565	3,542	3,600
Soil related	100	100	9,410	6,697	6,157	6,699
Cultural practices	98	98	9,204	6,566	5,467	6,000
Pest management	66	67	6,226	4,496	4,579	7,394
One or more technologies	100	100	9,410	6,697	6,157	6,699

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⁶ Weighted average for prices

D. Progress with Technical Delivery

FINAL REFRESHER TRAINING FOR OB NETWORKS

The project conducted a final round of training activities in January intended to prepare OB network members to carry out activities previously undertaken by FTF ADVANCE II staff. The project designed sessions as refresher trainings, featuring a question and answer (Q&A) session as a major component. A team of specialists conducted the training sessions at eight locations: Wa, Tumu, Yagaba, Bawku, Nalerigu, Karaga, Gushegu, and Yendi. During the session, attendees discussed a variety of topics, including OB network management and development; third-party service providers; agricultural productivity and environment; OB office management; OB field management; market linkages; and general issues, including gender and youth inclusion and ICT. In total, 123 individuals, including 70 OBs and 53 field agents (eight women and 115 men), attended the sessions.

Sub-Purpose I: Increased Agricultural Productivity in Targeted Commodities

SUPPORT TO IMPROVE SERVICE PROVISION

The project conducted the following activities and tasks to improve the productivity of smallholder farmers:

- Conduct and assess field demonstrations
- Practice "no tillage" to reduce soil degradation
- Combat bushfire and its effect on soil fertility
- Mainstream gender in service provision

At the refresher trainings Project participants discussed the use of the field demonstration assessment tool, which is designed to establish standard indicators for performance, and asked questions about field days, type of participants (whether sponsors should always be present), and documentation. The discussion on tillage centered on the availability of ripper equipment for smallholder farmers, as the project highly recommends its use. The popularity of the ripper is indeed increasing among OBs and smallholder farmers as a ripper conserves soil moisture, prevents erosion, and encourages early field preparation thereby reducing demand for ploughing at the onset of rains.

The bushfire meetings offered an opportunity to discuss the outcomes of zonal OB network-led campaigns, which were executed without direct project involvement for the first time. Most participants were unable to determine whether the campaigns had a positive effect on the number of bushfire occurrences, but they agreed that information and knowledge increased in the communities and that community leaders and members can provide necessary support.

The training on gender mainstreaming in service provision covered topics such as targeting women and youth as part of a sustainability plan and identifying the needs of women and youth. The discussions showed that all networks are considering amending their constitutions and adjusting their initiatives, such as including buyer-sponsored outgrower schemes, trading on the Ghana Commodity Exchange (GCX) platform, and supporting a general membership drive to increase female participation. They expressed a willingness to pursue these initiatives during the dry season when they have fewer urgent activities to attend to.

SUPPORT TO IMPROVE OB AND FIELD MANAGEMENT SKILLS

The project team conducted refresher training for network members on management of OBs and their field activities. The main objective was to encourage OBs to completely move toward formalization of operations for future growth and to increase their ability to access financial resources. The project also trained members on office management, particularly staffing and recordkeeping, and field management, particularly outgrowers' management, field data collection, and access to information through ICT platforms. OBs consider staffing, in particular, to be a low priority area during planning, as cash flow issues inhibit OBs from considering additional staffing. Facilitators discussed digital solutions as a way to increase business efficiency, including the utility of smartphones in increasing business communications and transactions with smallholder farmers.

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF THIRD-PARTY SERVICE PROVIDERS

The project's third-party service providers are groups of project participants affiliated with OBs and zonal OB networks that work together to ensure demand for services in the geographical area is met. They include input dealers, safe spray providers, VSLAs, rural agro-dealers (RADs), village agro-input agents (VAAs), digital agricultural information providers, crop insurance companies, and financial institutions. During the quarter, the team focused on building clusters of VSLAs and ensuring that they have access to village agents (VAs) when they require support, especially on training executives or new entrants. The project collaborated with three local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), SAVE-Ghana, Youth Advocacy on Rights and Opportunities (YARO), and Sung Foundation, to build the capacity of those clusters' VAs. SAVE-Ghana trained 15 VAs in 12 communities covering 25 associations in the Sissala Area in the Upper West region; YARO trained 14 VAs who cover 55 groups in 37 communities in the Wa Area of the Upper West Region; and Sung Foundation trained 26 VAs in 79 communities where 230 associations operate in the Northern Region. Each organization organized a refresher training for the VAs and introduced each VA to its allocated VSLA cluster. The refresher training included the following topics:

- Formation and training of VSLAs
- Election of VSLA leaders, and drafting and adoption of constitution
- Share-out management
- Recordkeeping and reporting
- Monitoring of other VSLA operations in catchment area.

Sub-Purpose 2: Increased Market Access and Trade in Targeted Commodities

The project conducted the following activities related to sub-purpose 2:

- 1. Product labelling and traceability
- 2. Buyer-sponsored outgrower schemes

PRODUCT LABELLING AND TRACEABILITY

The project conducted trainings on produce labelling and traceability system for 123 OB network members, including eight women. The participants discussed progress on implementing the system after harvesting and processing, with a focus on why the coding did not include information on or trace back to smallholder farmers. The team explained that when OBs re-bag after purchasing from smallholder farmers, OBs take

responsibility for the produce quality. The OB should keep records of the smallholder farmers who supplied produce. During the training, nine OBs took the opportunity to order the code stamps from the vendor in Tamale.

BUYER-SPONSORED OUTGROWER SCHEMES

The team conducted refresher trainings on outgrower schemes. Most of the networks' executives and members are conversant in this topic and contributed much to the discussions, which focused on arbitrary changes in agreed-upon arrangements or products by buyers/sponsors, as well as the lack of information on new products. The participants agreed that there are currently very few issues with grain quality and quantity supplied, and that they enjoy good relationships with buyers/sponsors.

Sub-Purpose 3: Strengthen Capacity for Advocacy and Activity Implementation

To enable the networks to operate efficiently and improve their organizational capacity, the project included the following topics related to sub-purpose 3 in the final refresher trainings.

RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITH OTHER ACTORS

The project team discussed the value of business relationships with network members and the means by which these relationships can be consistently nourished and improved. The team focused on customers (smallholder farmers, aggregators, buyers) as well as suppliers (input dealers, input-credit sponsors, financial institutions) within the chain. Discussions also centered on relationships among OBs and how they can be improved to facilitate business and network interventions. The team included exercises where participants rated their relationships with various value chain actors and government entities. The participants were very confident of their relationship with MOFA, and indicated that relations with GCX and the National Board for Small-Scale Industries were improving.

COACHING ON ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

The team discussed the need for networks to formalize and document their processes for conducting advocacy campaigns. Currently, most network lobbying and advocacy activities, especially with district-level authorities and stakeholders, are verbal, and processes are undocumented. While the team provided tips on how networks could establish their own formal processes for advocacy campaigns, more specialized training is needed for this area.

SETUP AND FUNCTIONING OF ZONAL NETWORK OFFICES

The team discussed progress made in acquiring office space, equipment, and staff. All networks now operate from an office with designated staff, except for the Upper East Regional OB Network, which does not have a designated office and is negotiating with the regional MOFA directorate for a rental office. The offices used by the Jirapa zonal network and the Northern OB network (Sagnerigu/Tamale area) are the offices of individual OBs that are also used as zonal network offices.

SETUP OF INTERNAL CAPACITY-BUILDING GROUP

Zonal OB members identified as resource persons

During the quarter, FTF ADVANCE II worked with all 10 zonal OB networks to strengthen their ability to train members and outgrowers on topics previously covered by project staff. In the last quarter of FY2019, project staff identified 17 topics of importance in building the capacity of zonal networks (Table 10). Staff selected 64 network members to serve as trainers, coaches, and mentors for other network members.

Table 10. Topics identified for improving performance of network members and resource persons/facilitators

	Identified Topics for Training	Number of Trainers/Coaches/Mentors Identified
1	Crop production activities	12
2	Crop protection including FAW	13
3	Customer service and staff management	1
4	Filling and recordkeeping	3
5	Gender awareness and mainstreaming (inclusiveness)	9
6	Grain quality standards to meet buyer requirements	3
7	Hazards of bushfire and prevention	11
8	Labelling, packaging, and traceability	3
9	Marketing, negotiation, and contracting	3
10	Network and OB financial management	3
11	Planning, setting up, and managing field demonstrations	13
12	Post-harvest management activities	14
13	Safe use of pesticides	11
14	Soil and water management (including use of ripper, planting basins)	11
15	Stakeholder engagement and advocacy to bring benefit to members	3
16	Support OB network on fundraising activities	3
17	Total Quality Management	3

Resource materials

The project prepared resource materials to support the OB networks in becoming more professional in pursuit of their objectives. The materials exist in physical form stored in binders and in electronic form (flash drive and virtual Google drive). They are grouped under the categories shown below (Table 11).

Table 11. Content of resource materials

Item No.	Category	Number of documents
1	OB network management and development	25
2	Agricultural productivity and environmental stewardship	19
3	Business and office management	15
4	Field management	6
5	Market linkages, marketing, and contracting	4
6	ICT	8
7	Gender and youth mainstreaming	4
8	Participatory monitoring and evaluation and data management	14

The quick reference binder was organized under the following headings:

- OB network management and development (five documents)
- Agricultural productivity and environmental stewardship (two documents)
- Business and financial management (six documents)

- Women and youth empowerment and inclusiveness (two documents)
- Deployment of ICT (one document)

Project staff organized briefing sessions to disseminate and familiarize network members with these materials. The OBs present interacted with staff and expressed appreciation for the initiative.



Network members from NOBA

Navuni Sunti (East Mamprusi) Zonal OB Network

ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY OB NETWORKS AFTER PROJECT FIELD ACTIVITIES ENDED

Project staff in Accra monitored the activities of OB networks after field activities ended. OB networks conducted these activities without project involvement or support. The following sections present the information gathered on these activities.

Network Management and Development

Meetings: Networks have organized an increasing number of meetings since the end of project support. The Tamale network NOBA met twice in one month, and records from the Wa Zonal OB network show that

they had one executive meeting and three general meetings during the quarter. The Upper West regional network organized one executive meeting during the same period, while most OB networks organized at least one general meeting within the quarter.

According to their records, OB networks held meetings to discuss the following topics:

- Payment of dues
- Office rent payment due
- Follow-up on ABSA Ghana-WAATCO facility
- Recovery of input credit from smallholder farmers
- Introduction of new members

Business and Financial Management

Five networks, including the Wa Zonal OB Network, the Jirapa OB Network, the Beimoni (Karaga) OB Network, the Yendi OB Network, and NOBA (Tamale) are engaged in discussions with the ABSA Ghana-WAATCO group. During the quarter, the networks either met or scheduled meetings with this group to discuss loan facilities. The outbreak of COVID-19 led to the postponement of some of the meetings.

Marketing and Market Linkages

Currently, network members can only deal with the GCX warehouse at Wa (138 km away) or the newly built warehouse in Sandema (94 km away) in the Builsa North district in the Upper East region. However, The Sissala Area Network was given access to a warehouse facility by which GCX could operate in Tumu. The warehouse is yet to be rehabilitated for use.

Status Input Credit Recoveries: The input credit recovery period is almost complete, and most networks report "satisfactory" performance. Currently, recovery for Agricare and DEGAS stands at 80 percent and 70 percent, respectively. The shortfall regarding Agricare is related to the losses suffered by four members whose farms were affected by bushfires. The Sissala Area Network also reported 80 percent recovery for Agricare. According to the Beimoni (Karaga) OB network, it has achieved over 90 percent recovery.



GCX warehouse-to be at Tumu

E. PROGRAM SUPPORT

Gender Mainstreaming

CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BY OB NETWORKS

In honor of International Women's Day, Wa Zonal OB Network and Beimoni OB Network celebrated female smallholder farmers with whom network members work. These celebrations took place at Nassah and Kpasablo in the Wa East and Karaga Districts of the Upper West and Northern Regions, respectively. The celebration at Nassah, held on March 8, brought together 95 participants from three communities, while the celebration at Kpasablo, held on March 10, brought together 160 participants from 10 communities.

Participants included members of two OB networks and their field agents; smallholder farmers, including many female farmers who were celebrated for their contributions; MOFA officials; traditional leaders; district assembly members; representatives from NGO Empowerment for Life (E4L); and the media. Mavis Derigubah, the Wa East MOFA district director, and Abdulai Sulemana Tanko, the Karaga district deputy chief coordinator, spoke about the role of women in agriculture and encouraged them to continue to contribute to the sector and pursue farming as a business to increase their income and livelihoods. Ms. Derigubah cited



Participants at the International Women's Day Celebration organized by the Beimoni OB Network in Kpasablo (Karaga District in the Northern Region).

herself as an example of a woman who farms as a business, while calling on women to continue to work hard to achieve their dreams.

The audience heard motivational speeches from other stakeholders, including several well-established female OB owners from the Beimoni OB network. Fati Zakari shared her own story on how she successfully progressed from being a smallholder farmer to become an OB owner who supports 90 smallholder farmers, 60 of whom are women. All the female speakers appealed to stakeholders to improve gender equality and women's access to farmlands.

During the celebration, OB networks recognized outstanding female smallholder farmers who applied improved technologies on their farms and increased their production capacity. The following female farmers received awards: Alima Fuseini, Amina Issahaku, Mariama Yakubu, Ayi Sulemana, Fulera Sulemana, and Tolhatu Yakubu.

F. MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

OB NETWORKS CAPACITY BUILDING

During the quarter, the project built the capacity of outgrower business network administrators and selected members to manage the network's data and dashboards. The project invited these individuals to attend a data management training session. At the training, 31 participants, including nine field agents, eight administrators, seven network executives, and seven additional members from all 10 networks, learned how to collect and collate. After the training, network administrators felt particularly confident in their capacity to extract data from the dashboards.



Data management training in Tamale

PRODUCTIVITY SURVEY PHASE III DATA COLLECTION

The project completed the third phase of the FY2019 productivity survey in March 2020 by collecting additional sales data to triangulate the initial data captured during the second phase of the survey in October 2019. During the annual survey in October, the project collected data on input costs, technology application practices, production and yields, smallholder farmer household storage systems, and initial sales from 901 participants, including 852 smallholder farmers (328 women) and 49 OBs (two women) in the maize and soybean value chains. The key results section of this report includes final productivity annual results.

ROUTINE DATA CAPTURING AND VERIFICATION

The project performed monthly data verification to authenticate the shelling data collected and presented by the agents, OBs, and administrators. The project highlighted and discussed challenges, such as the need to capture complete data on walk-in customers and timely data collection, with all network members. The project emphasized the need for networks to support their own administrators in effectively taking over the validation and verification roles to ensure consistent production of quality data.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The project conducted two studies to assess the capacity, impact and sustainability of specific approaches, including the OB networks and women's participation in VSLAs.

The OB networks' study showed that OB networks have successfully formalized their operations and enhanced opportunities for their members to access finance, enter into contracts with buyers, and engage with key stakeholders and other value chain actors. Network leaders have developed the capacity to identify issues of interest to their business operations, and know how to leverage their networks, institutional ties, and relationships to address value chain constraints. The project identified the following key findings from this study:

- Network leaders have strengthened their capacity to support their members.
- Networks have established relationships with a wide range of value chain actors and stakeholders.
- There is evidence that all network members are targeting women and youths in their service provision.
- Network leaders are confident in their ability to assemble, use, and share relevant data and information with their members.

All network leaders and members expressed optimism that their networks will thrive and grow.

Results from the study on women's participation in VSLAs showed that both younger and older women successfully expanded their on- and off-farm productive activities as a result of VSLA membership, and that VSLAs serve as an effective platform for members to access diverse market system stakeholders. Relationships developed through VSLA membership appear to positively impact women's confidence in building business opportunities. The project identified the following key findings from this study:

- Access to cash enables women to improve their farming practices.
- VSLA membership expands production opportunities for women of all ages.
- Through VSLA membership, women have broader access to information and services.
- Market system stakeholders are motivated to work with female VSLA members.
- Female VSLA members, particularly youth, are increasingly engaging in post production and offfarm activities.
- Female group members are sharing best practices and other information.
- OB networks have a role to play in VSLA sustainability.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS (PR&C)

Bi-weekly bullets

During the quarter, the project submitted four informational bi-weekly bullets (updates) to USAID. The bullets highlighted field activities, including the second phase of the productivity survey; the actor-led demonstration of post-harvest handling, organized by OB networks; training of village agents and refresher training of VSLAs by local NGOs to support sustainability; closeout of the Tamale office; final training of OB networks; production of video documentary on OB networks; promotion of markets for OB networks on GCX platform; OB networks' linkage to Ghana Agricultural Sector Investment Program for outgrower scheme; project support to OB networks to set up capacity-building groups; effective private sector/government engagement; capacity-building support for OB networks related to operational/financial management skills; advocacy and fundraising training; leveraging ICT tools for productivity; and the inclusion of women and youth in entrepreneurial activities for improved livelihoods.

Success stories

The project produced two success stories on expansion of market access and trade for OB networks through participation in GCX, and the impact of professionalization and adoption of good agricultural practices on OB operations.

Events and field visit

Commemoration of International Women's Day

This event is described in the Gender Mainstreaming section.

Annex I: Indicator Table

FTF ADVANCE PROJECT INDICATOR TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS — FY2020

Indicator	Indicator	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY20	FY20	% FY20	Comments	
Source	Type		Targets		Achieve		
				Actuals	ment		
GFSS	OP1	Number of individuals participating in USG	5,000	6,699	134%	Outgrowers were particularly interested in	
		food security programs				green field days organized on 17 demo sites	
		Female	2,500	3,645	146%	from colleague farmers with good and	
		Male	2,500	3054	122%	promising yields as well as benefiting from shelling services provided by OBs 167 VSLA	
		Youth (Female and male)		1,084		groups also begun savings very early in the	
		Non -SHF		88		quarter. These accounted for the over	
		SHF		6,611		achievement of the indicator	
GFSS	OC1	Yield of targeted agricultural commodities			140%	The significant increase (53 percent) in	
		among program participants with USG				smallholder farmers' average yield for maize	
		assistance				in 2019 over 2018 (3.68MT/ha) may be partly attributed to input obtained through buyer sponsored outgrower schemes with OBs and their outgrowers and government's input subsidy program PFJ, and the success of project interventions against FAW in 2019.	
		Maize	4.0	5.62			
		Male		5.67			
		Female		5.43			
		Youth	NA	5.30			
		Soybean	2.5	2.49			
		Male		2.64			
		Female		2.32			
		Youth		2.8			
GFSS	OC2	Number of individuals in the agriculture	20,000	16,107	81%	Almost all project participants applied one	
		system who have applied improved				or more improved technology and	
		management practices or technologies with				management practices. Data is based on	
		USG assistance				productivity survey of 2019 production	
		Male	10,000	6,697		season.	

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY20 Targets	FY20	% FY20 Achieve	Comments
				Actuals	ment	
		Female	10,000	9,410		
GFSS	OC3	Number of hectares under improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance	18,000	12,856	71%	All project participants applied one or more improved technology and management
		Male		6,699		practices. However smallholder farmers
		Female		6,157		planted smallholder farmers' hectares than anticipated by the project.
		Youth		2,973		Data based on productivity survey of 2019 production season.
GFSS	OC4	Value of annual sales of farms and firms receiving USG assistance (USD)	9,624,000		Average yield for the season was 40% higher	
		Producers(farms)		11,833,879		than the target for 2019 production season. This accounts for higher sales for smallholder farmers in the season.
		Maize	8,704,000	9,160,552		
		Male		5,158,719		
		Female		4,001,833		
		Soybean	920,000	1,485,567		
		Male		492,874		
		Female		992,693		
GFSS	OP2	Value of agriculture-related financing accessed as a result of USG assistance	20,000	Nil		Participants did not make capital investment in FY2020. However, \$301,758 was obtained in the no cost extension (NCE) phase.
		Male				in the no cost extension (NCE) phase.
		Female				
		Youth				
GFSS	OC5	Percent of organizations with increased performance improvement with USG assistance (%)	NA	80		Eight OB networks expanded opportunities in marketing and trade with major buyers.

Indicator Source	Indicator	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY20	FY20	% FY20 Achieve	Comments
Source	Type		Targets	Actuals	ment	
GFSS	OC6	Number of individuals participating in group-based savings, micro-finance or lending programs with USG assistance	1,000	2,810	281%	VSLA members increased their appreciation of saving benefits. Hence, instead of waiting after December, as they used to, 167 groups started to attend meetings and save within
		Female		1,793		this quarter to boost their share value at
		Male		1,017		share-out.
		Youth		739		
		Savings (\$)		7,677		
GFSS	ОС7	Percentage of female participants in USG - assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources	20	64	320%	The dominant female proportion in the VSLA membership accounted for the over achievement.
GFSS	OC8	Percentage of participants in USG- assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources who are youth (19-29)	15	26	173%	The project made a deliberate effort to reach out to the youth.
GFSS	OC9	Number of value chain actors accessing finance	NA	NA		There was no target for this indicator

PROJECT LOP INDICATOR TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS AS AT SEPTEMBER 2019

Indicat or Source	Indica tor Type	Indicator/ Disaggregation Number of direct project beneficiaries	LOP Actuals	LOP Target	% LOP Achievement so far	Comments
	OII	Male Female	68,142 63,351	67,000 60,000	102%	
FTF	OP2	Number of private enterprises (for profit), producer organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) receiving USG assistance	1,228	1,100	112%	The overachievement is due to the project targeting more producer enterprises and training them on product quality standards.
FTF	OP3	Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security trainings Male Female	124,572 63,344 61,228	120,000 63600 56400	99.6% 109%	More smallholder farmers received trainings in GAPs, FAW preventive measures, product quality standards during the production seasons.
FTF	OP4	Value of agricultural and rural loans	4,863,150	4,300,000	113%	

Indicat or Source	Indica tor Type	Indicator/ Disaggregation	LOP Actuals	LOP Target	% LOP Achievement so far	Comments
FTF	OP5	Value of new private sector investment in agricultural sector or value chains (\$)	3,731280	4,000,000	93%	OBs and other value chain actors invested in machinery such as tractors, rippers, motorbikes, tricycle. However, end-buyers and processors did not invest in new plants and machinery to support their operations as expected.
FTF	OP6	Number of MSME including farmers receiving USG assistance to access loans	52,775	56,500	93%	There were no incentives to seek loans because of high interest rate, perception of FIs that agribusiness is risky and general volatile financial sector in Ghana in FY19/FY20
FTF	OC1	Gross margins per hectare for selected crops US Dollar under marketing arrangements fostered by the activity (\$/ha)				
		Maize	781.43	835		
		Male Female	829.98 704.32	900		
		Rice	886	814		
		Male	752	867		
		Female	1,038	760		

Indicat or Source	Indica tor Type	Indicator/ Disaggregation	LOP Actuals	LOP Target	% LOP Achievement so far	Comments
		Soybean Male	535.43 514.78	700 800		
		Female	548	600		
FTF	OC2	Number of hectares under improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	303,881.64	312,200	97%	The project's strategy is to encourage farmers to intensify instead of expanding production area. It enables farmers to invest their limited resources on the appropriate land size and apply good agronomic practices and improved technologies leading to increased yields.
FTF	OC3	Number of farmers and others who have applied new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	93,784	101,700	92%	
		Male	47,520	55,935	85%	
		Female	46,264	45,765	101%	
FTF	OC4	Number of private enterprises (for profit), producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) that applied new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	852	800	107%	The overachievement was due to all firms applying at least one of the management practices promoted by the project.

Indicat or Source	Indica tor Type	Indicator/ Disaggregation	LOP Actuals	LOP Target	% LOP Achievement so far	Comments
FTF	OC5	Value of incremental sales (collected at farm-level) attributed to FTF implementation	\$110,055,05 6.52	\$67,880,000	162%	Overall most farmers maintained their plot sizes and applied more improved technologies which enabled them to increase yield. Also farmers increased their sales volumes over the years.
		Maize	\$106,623,67 6.67	53,840,000	198%	
		Rice ⁷	(\$2,238,556. 27)	9,730,000	-23%	
		Soybean	\$3,431,379. 85	4,310,000	80%	
FTF	OC6	Number of firms (excluding farms) or Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) engaged in agricultural and food security-related manufacturing and services now operating more profitably (at or above cost) because of USG assistance	379	225	168%	Many more firms than anticipated needed support and were supported by the project to improve productivity.
CI	OC8	Number of organizations/ enterprises identified as high potential for future awards	13	8	163%	The project identified more opportunities to work with local organisations to engage in advocacy and activity implementation.
CI	OP8	Number of organizations/ enterprises receiving capacity building support against key milestones	46	50	92%	

 $^{^{7}\,\}mathrm{The}$ project discontinued support of rice value chain from 2017 production season.

Indicat or Source	Indica tor Type	Indicator/ Disaggregation	LOP Actuals	LOP Target	% LOP Achievement so far	Comments
FTF	OP9	Number of awards made directly to local organizations by USAID	5	5	100%	
FTF	OP10	Number of Households benefiting directly from USG Assistance	121,455	79,100	154%	More households than expected benefitted from the project.
FTF	OP13	Number of members of producer organizations and community-based organizations receiving USG assistance	19,445	9,000	216.%	The overachievement was due to the project targeting more FBO members and providing them with capacity building on farming as a business and product quality standards.
FTF	OP14	Number of MSMEs including farmers, receiving Business Development Services as result of USG assistance	109,292	45,200	242%	The overachievement was due to more farmers receiving capacity building on savings through the VSLA schemes.
CI	OC9	Value chain actors accessing finance	590	300	196%	The overachievement is due to value chain actors' readiness to leverage the grants incentive to invest in their businesses.

Annex 2: Success Stories

This report only includes two success stories for the shorter period of implementation through January 31, 2020.



Outgrower Business Mac Adams Iddrisu Trades through Ghana Commodity Exchange



A truck being loaded with Outgrower business owner Mac Adam's produce to be transported to Ghana Commodity Exchange in Wa, Upper West Region

MacAdams Iddrisu, an outgrower business (OB) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Maclog Enterprise LTD, an agro dealer and input distributor located in Wa East District of the Upper West Region who has worked with FTF ADVANCE II since 2009, has been instrumental in promoting commodity trading of maize and soybean with the Ghana Commodity Exchange (GCX). Maclog is now both a trader and a broker on the GCX platform and was selected among the eight GCX brokers for a pilot in which Ecobank will grant the brokers a loan of up to GHS200,000 (\$36,364) to enable them to pay their traders upfront for the produce they will trade. The brokers can then wait to trade the produce on the GCX platform later in order to maximize profits. Under this arrangement, the brokers are required to repay the loan in four weeks. Upon meeting the repayment deadline, the loan amount is subject to revision if the broker requires an increment. MacLog Enterprise was able to partner with GCX as a result of keen interest and contributions that the CEO made to the operations of the GCX in the region. It all started with FTF ADVANCE II's training MacAdams on commodity

quality standards and inviting him to participate in a workshop organized by World Food Program (WFP) in September 2018 that addressed issues of quality control, weight and pricing. MacAdams' interactions at the workshop prompted a GCX officer to invite him to discuss further with GCX in November 2018 and register MacLog Enterprise to trade on GCX platform.

As the chairman of both Wa Zonal OB Network and Upper West Regional OB Network, MacAdams mobilizes produce from network members to trade under Maclog Enterprise's registration. Eight OBs belonging to the Wa Zonal OB Network traded about 126 metric tons of grade 1-4 of white and yellow maize on the GCX platform in 2019. The price ranged from GHS55 to GHS81.62 per kilogram, the best price the OBs had ever traded their produce at. They also had the privilege to be paid early through the broker arrangement.

MacAdams is confident that if the networks register as brokers, they will trade more for their members than under his company's registration because the networks are negotiating a financial arrangement with ARB Apex Bank to partially finance trade through warehouse receipt system. This system allows networks' members to present a GCX warehouse receipt representing a certain quality and quantity of stored grains in the GCX certified warehouse to receive loan by the bank, which will be repaid after trading.

Additionally, MacAdams plans to increase traded commodities on the GCX platform and introduce rice, sesame, cowpea, sorghum and cashew. Because of Mac Adams' initiative, there is an increase interest among network members from both the zonal and regional networks to trade on the GCX platform. Sixteen out of the 24 members of the Wa Zonal OB Network are working with him to sell their produce through GCX,

among which three OBs have traded about 100 metric tons of maize as of end of the first quarter of this year. Others have so far mobilized tons of white and yellow maize to trade under MacLog Enterprise's registration.

However, the GCX certified warehouse in WA's inability to store more than 5,000 bags of produce has pushed MacAdams to make arrangement to trade on the GCX Kumasi platform so that some of the OBs' produce can be sent to the GCX warehouse in Kumasi.

Mac Adams made these remarks about the role of GCX in the grains value chain during a video interview:

"No standard market protocol particularly standard weights and pricing is a barrier to trade to every farmer in northern Ghana, but the engagement with Ghana Commodity Exchange has relieved the burden of we the OBs in Upper West Region."





The Rise of Hafiz Deen, an Outgrower Business in Wa

Hafiz Dean is a professional teacher, but also the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of an outgrower business; Sehadaf Enterprise, located in Wa in the Upper West Region of Ghana. Hafiz has been in the farming business for the past ten years and joined FTF ADVANCE II in 2014 with 12 hectares of its own farm and 98 outgrowers operating in two communities: Kukpali in Wa West District and Jenpensi in Daffiemah/Bussie/Issah District.

Through FTF ADVANCE II, Hafiz received training on good agronomic and business management practices. He was linked to input dealers and lead firms such as Agricare which is a major feed mill in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region. Through the project's grant program, Sehadaf Enterprise acquired a used tractor and thresher to increase service provision to 250 outgrowers. By increasing his business capacity, Hafiz was able to pay cash to third-party service providers such as tractor operators and expand its services, operations and profits further. The company has expanded operations to operate in seven communities namely Jenpensi, Duccie, Banugoma, Guonuo, Bujani, Dabo and Kukpali in Wa East, Wa west and Daffiemah/Bussie/Issah districts of the Upper West Region. As of 2019 production season, Sehadaf Enterprise, through the Wa Zonal OB Network, benefited from



Outgrower business owner Hafiz Seidu second from left with two of his lead farmers and a representative from Yara on his farm at Banugoma, Wa East District of the Upper West Region.

outgrower support schemes from two companies, Agricare and Degas which enabled the company to obtain input on credit and expand farming business from 12 to 30 hectares and provide services to 373 (321 male and 52 female) smallholder farmers. Prior to becoming FTF ADVANCE II's participant in 2014, Hafiz's yield was about 1MT/ha. His yield increased significantly to an average of 5.7MT/ha (450 percent) between 2014 and 2019 production seasons, as the project introduced him to good agronomic practices and hybrid seeds, and provided him with equipment grant.

Hafiz's hard work and dedication contributed to his promotion from secretary of the Wa Zonal OB Network to the secretary of the Upper West Regional Network. He has been very instrumental in the management of both networks and plays active role in several networks' committees. He is the lead member of the production committee for both the zonal and regional networks delivering required trainings to networks' members, particularly new entrants. He is the mouthpiece of both networks on radio stations in promoting members' businesses and reaching out for new members.

He has been a great support to the Upper West Regional OB Network's chairman with engaging Ghana Commodity Exchange aggregating members' produce from network members to sell on GCX platform. He was selected by the Upper West Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture as a member of the award-winning selection committee for the 2019 National Farmers' Day celebration.

