



Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement Project (ADVANCE)

FY16 Quarterly Report – Q2



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Acronyms

ACDEP	Association of Church-Based Development Projects
ADVANCE	Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement
AEA	Agriculture Extension Agent
APO	Agricultural Production Officer
ASWG	Agriculture Sector Working Group
ATT	Agricultural Technology Transfer
BDS	Business Development Services
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDO	Capacity Development Officer
CoP	Chief of Party
CRI	Crop Research Institute
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
DAIP	District Agricultural Investment Plan
DCA	Development Credit Authority
FaaB	Farming as a Business
FBE	Farmer-Based Enterprise
FBO	Farmer-Based Organization
FI	Financial Institution
FTF	Feed the Future
FTFMS	Feed the Future Monitoring System
FY	Fiscal Year
GAIP	Ghana Agricultural Insurance Pool
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice
GGC	Ghana Grain Council
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPRTU	Ghana Private Road Transport Union
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
GSA	Ghana Standards Authority
IP	Implementing Partner
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
KML	Knowledge Management and Learning
MMDA	Metropolitan Municipal and District Assemblies
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
(M)SME	(Medium) Small and Micro Enterprise
NF	Nucleus Farmer
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NPK	Nitrogen, Phosphorous, and Potash
NRGP	Northern Rural Growth Program
OB	Outgrower Business
OBM	Outgrower Business Management
OCAT	Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool
OG	Outgrower
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
PEF	Private Enterprise Federation

PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan
PFI	Partner Financial Institution
PHH	Post-Harvest Handling
RC	Regional Coordinator
RING	Resiliency in Northern Ghana
SARI	Savanna Agricultural Research Institute
SEG	Small Equipment Grant
SMFM	Sell More For More
SOW	Scope of Work
SSP	Spray Services providers
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WATH	West Africa Trade Hub
WFP	World Food Program
WRS	Warehouse Receipt System

Executive summary

This report presents the main achievements and key activities implemented by the USAID Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement (ADVANCE) project during the second quarter of FY2016 (January to March 2016).

This second quarter of FY16, ADVANCE directly reached 31,447 individuals out of which 33.7% are women, 31,119 are smallholder farmers, and 4,093 are members of producer organizations. Over 79% of them are continuing beneficiaries while about 21% were enrolled during FY16. Through these individuals, ADVANCE reached 28,641 rural households, and 24,761 vulnerable households. A total of 11,965 of those reached individuals (51% of whom are women) were trained in good agronomic practices (GAPs), numeracy, Farming as a Business (FaaB), outgrower business management (OBM) among others. Also, a total of 5,827 of these individual beneficiaries (61.54% of which are female) received business development services related support from the project this quarter.

ADVANCE supported 452 Outgrower Businesses (OBs), other private enterprises and FBOs through training, business development services, linkages with buyers and other technical assistance.

A total of GHS 1,160,400 (\$301,280¹) of cash loans from formal financial institutions was disbursed to the project beneficiaries for the purchase of equipment and inputs for production as well as for other working capital needs. In addition, 334,730 GHS (\$86,907.5) of capital investment were made by the project beneficiaries.

This report also presents the *provisional* figures for the 2015 crop season gross margin and area under improved technology application. Rice farmers realized the highest gross margin at \$1,117.94/ha. Gross margin for maize and soy was \$615.20/ha and \$512.35/ha respectively. The project overachieved the gross margin targets for all three crops in the reporting period. In total, 58,567 ha of land was under improved land based technologies.

The maiden Annual Southern Ghana Pre-harvest Agribusiness event was held in Kumasi on March 3, 2016 under the theme “Quality Sells More”. Hosted by the Ghana Grains Council, it attracted 228 registered participants including exhibitors, buyers, transporters, input dealers, financial institutions and maize OBs from the ADVANCE South operational area.

ADVANCE also celebrated the International Women’s Day with the theme “Stand for Gender Parity in Agriculture” in Janga, a village in the West Mamprusi District of the Northern Region. The event was hosted by Mahama Tia, a nucleus farmer who brought together over 500 women and men.

A total of 52 contracts were facilitated between buyers and OBs during the reporting period. These contracts are estimated to cover 21,185.80 MT of maize, paddy, and soybean.

Finally, 234 production and post-harvest handling equipment worth \$211,000 were awarded to 154 beneficiaries in the Upper East, Upper West and Northern Regions under the matching grants program.

¹ Exchange rate used throughout the report is \$1=GHS 3.851566667

1 Introduction

This report presents the main accomplishments of USAID ADVANCE's implementing organization, ACDI/VOCA and its sub-awardees ACDEP, PAB consult, and Technoserve during the second quarter of FY2016 (January to March 2016). The report is organized by the project's intermediate results

1. Increased agricultural productivity in targeted commodities
2. Increased market access and trade of targeted commodities
3. Strengthened capacity for advocacy and activity implementation

The report includes activities and achievements by the project and starts with the collaboration ADVANCE had with its partners and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), followed by a summary of key results. It also covers the project cross cutting activities including gender, environment, grants as well as monitoring, evaluation and learning.

2 Collaboration with Other Programs and MoFA

During the reporting period, the project actively collaborated with other programs and projects operating either in the same geographic locations or involved in the same commodity value chains. The sections below summarize the significant collaborations during the quarter.

2.1 Collaboration with Projects and Organizations

ASA/ADRA and AMPLIFIES ASA/ADRA visited four ADVANCE supported Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) in the Saboba district and Yendi Municipality. The aim of the visit was to introduce AMPLIFIES to the soya smallholder members and link the later to the poultry value chain for the supply of soya for chicken feed processing. This is a first step to continued collaboration regarding the preparation of those FBOs to supply soya and potentially yellow maize to AMPLIFIES feed processor beneficiaries.

Agricultural Technology Transfer project (ATT)

ADVANCE has collaborated with ATT to organize the Pre-Season event that was held in April.

Also, the project conducted a rapid survey of its OB beneficiaries to gauge the amount of certified seeds used in the last season. The resulting information was provided to ATT to estimate the potential market for certified seeds in North Ghana as part of its efforts to support the seed sector.

The collaboration with ATT continues also on conservation agriculture through joint distribution of selected cover crops seeds to implementing communities and learning centres.

Another area of collaboration is the introduction of manual planters and fertilizer applicators to women farmers that are members of FBOS or of women groups. The equipment was jointly tested last crop season. As next steps, ATT will take care of the importation, and ADVANCE women beneficiaries will access those tools through ATT's grant scheme. The identification of a local distributor is planned as well.

Farmer-to-Farmer

ADVANCE requested a volunteer from the Farmer-to-Farmer project to support Akandem Farms (an OB) in the Upper East Region. This farm is planned to be a model farm in mechanization, conservation agriculture and good agronomic practices (GAPs) as well as pilot agroforestry practices. The volunteer,

Dr Seth Asare completed his assignment during the quarter. He assessed the 388 acres of farm land developed, in 2015 and provided recommendations for the remaining 122 acres to be developed this year.

Ghana Agricultural Insurance Pool (GAIP)

Through a collaboration with GAIP, ADVANCE's OB beneficiaries as well as other actors were introduced to crop insurance products.

Grameen Foundation

ADVANCE and Grameen Foundation are jointly implementing an innovative pilot activity on using tablet as a tool for extension provision as part of OBs' support to their outgrowers. Smartex, the related tablet application was designed by Grameen based on training materials developed by ADVANCE, ATT, MoFA and Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI) on maize production and post-harvest practices. The OBs and their agents who received the tool are being backstopped by Grameen from the technical side and monitored by ADVANCE south.

Currently benefitting 39 ADVANCE OBs and their agents in Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions, this activity will be extended to northern Ghana and will reach 120 OBs this year.

METSS (Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Support Services)

This reporting quarter, ADVANCE supported METSS during the preparation and implementation of a survey METSS implement with the World Food Program (WFP) to assess the outgrower business model. The support consisted of provision of the ADVANCE OBs and outgrowers lists to serve as population frame for the survey sampling as well as introduction of the survey team to the sampled beneficiaries.

N2Africa

Prof. Samuel Adjei Nsiah, from N2Africa, facilitated a training on soya production for more than 18 participants from the Northern region, 18 from Upper East, and 19 from Upper West Regions made up of ADVANCE field staff, MoFA Agriculture Extension Agents (AEAs), Nucleus Farmers (NFs) and field agents. The training focused on site selection, seed, plant density and population, diseases, field management, fertilizer, yields and post-harvest management of soybean.

Planned areas of collaboration with N2Africa for the upcoming cropping season were presented at the 2016 N2Africa/IITA (International Institute of Tropical Agriculture) Annual Planning Workshop. They include:

- Establishment of soya demos
- Training of Smallholder farmers on soya production
- Dissemination of soya production information using radio
- In community input promotion of inoculants

NASWG (Northern Agriculture Sector Working Group)

ADVANCE continues to participate in the NASWG meetings and activities. One of them was the SADA International Trade Fair where ADVANCE mounted a stand to exhibit its activities and achievements.

RING (Resiliency in Northern Ghana)

Preliminary brainstorming was done between Gender Specialists of both projects to see the possibility of working on

- Soybean cooking demonstrations
- Dissemination of time-saving technology for soybean production and harvest
- Nutrition based soybean processing into local dishes as an extra income for women during off-season

Concrete planning-scheduling is being done for the joint activities.

SPRING

This quarter saw the implementation of maize sampling by SPRING from 21 ADVANCE aggregators' maize in the Northern and Upper East regions, in order to estimate the quantity of aflatoxin in the maize produced and stored in north Ghana. A second round of samples will be taken in the next quarter to measure any changes in the conditions of stored maize.

University for Development Studies (UDS)

ADVANCE organized the second in a series of agribusiness seminars for the UDS students in Nyankpala campus. Heritage Seeds Company Ltd and Timtooni Agrochemicals made various presentations of their business start-ups and operations to 150 agribusiness students and interacted with them. The purpose was to give the students the opportunity to learn from operating enterprises, spark their entrepreneurial thinking, and expose them to some opportunities in the agriculture sector as they complete their course at the university.

World Food Programme (WFP)

Through a collaboration with WFP, ADVANCE supported 75 women members of the WFP assisted Sorugu and Sagnarigu groups, through training and setting up their Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). The objective was to help them mobilize capital for their farming operations during the 2016 cropping season and other economic activities that can improve their livelihoods.

Besides, WFP Kobli Kom Maize Farmers Association in Gingani has been linked to and received training by Bonzali Rural Bank on account opening and management, savings, and access to credit. As a result, 40 of the group members have opened an account with the bank and are saving weekly towards the 2016 cropping season.

World Vision and Community Self-Reliance Centre

Two VSLA groups in Binaba, Bawku West District were jointly set up with World Vision and the Community Self-Reliance Center. ADVANCE took care of the sensitization and logistics while the other two organizations conducted the training.

2.2 Collaboration with Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA)

The regional offices continue collaborating with MoFA in their operational areas, involving the MoFA AEAs in activities such as GAP trainings held this quarter.

Thirty two MoFA AEAs from the West Mamprusi, Tolon and Gushegu Districts as well as two regional MoFA staff were trained on soy and rice production as they collaborate with the project to train smallholders on the field. Also, the AEAs were trained as trainers on grain quality standards and are expected to support the project to train 40,000 smallholder farmers in the course of the year.

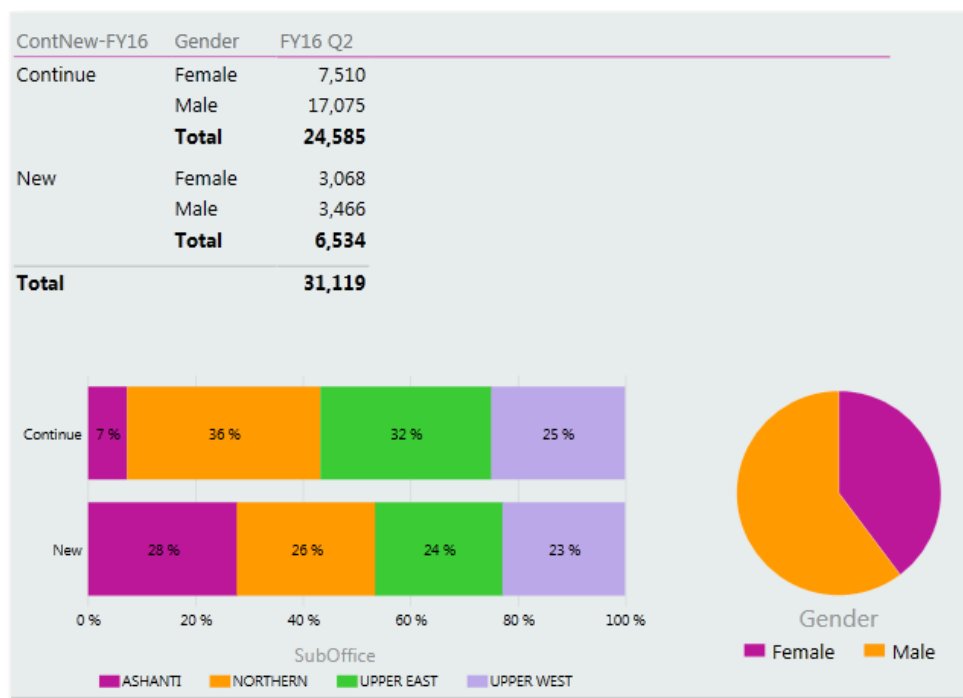
3 Key Results

This section presents the achievements with respect to key indicators during the current reporting period. The results for the quarter are summarized in the Indicator Table in Annex 1.

3.1 Direct Project Beneficiaries

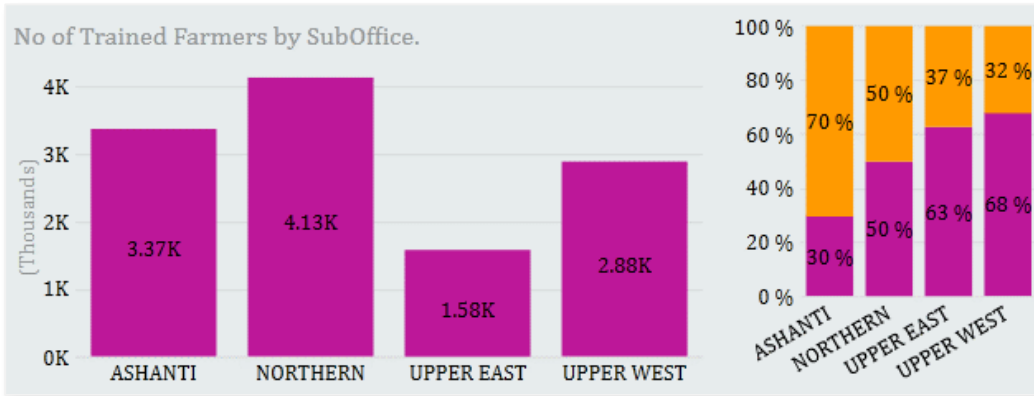
This second quarter of FY16, ADVANCE directly reached 31,447 individuals out of which 33.7% are women, 31,119 are smallholder farmers (**Figure 1**), and 4,093 are members of producer organizations. Over 79% of them are continuing beneficiaries while 21% were enrolled during FY16. Through these individuals, ADVANCE reached out to 28,641 rural and 24,761 vulnerable households.

Figure 1: Smallholder beneficiaries breakdown



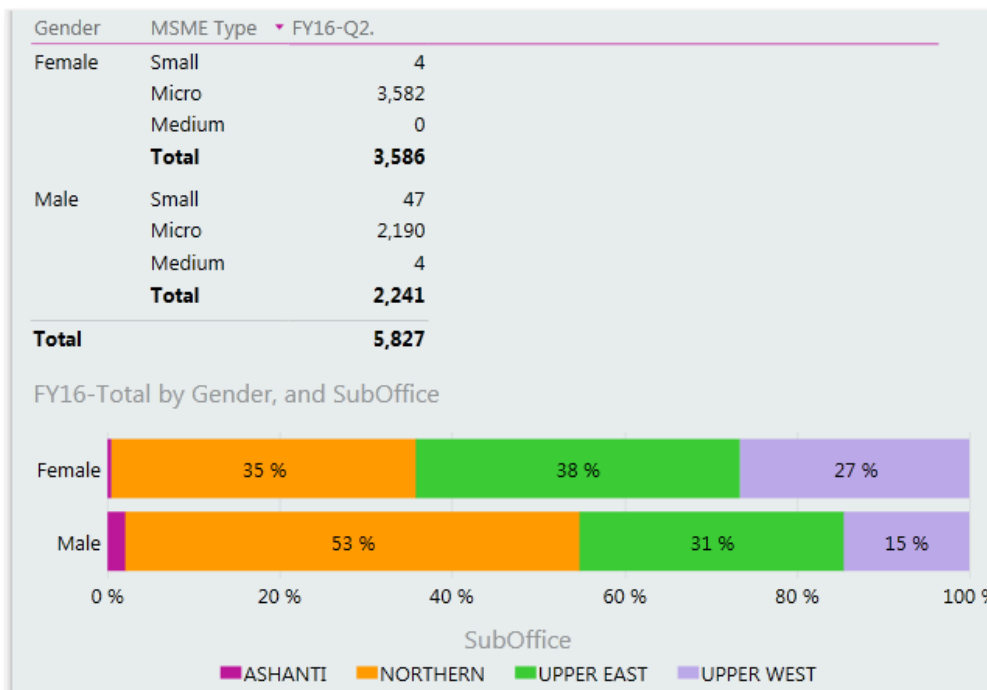
A total of 11,965 of those individuals (51% of whom are women) benefitted from trainings in Good Agronomic Practices (GAPs), numeracy, Farming as a Business (FaaB), outgrower business management (OBM) among others (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2: Training beneficiaries breakdown



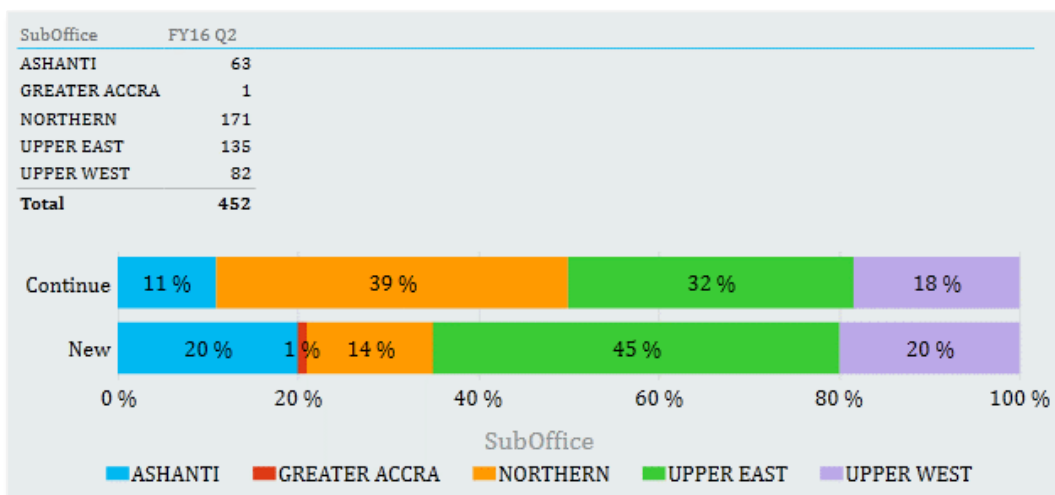
Also, a total of 5,827 of these individual beneficiaries (61.54% of which are female) received business development services related support from the project this quarter.

Figure 3: Business development services beneficiaries



Furthermore, ADVANCE supported 452 OBs, other private enterprises and FBOs through training, business development services, linkages with buyers and other technical assistance.

Figure 4: Entity beneficiaries



3.2 Value of Agricultural and Rural Loans and New Private Sector Investments

The project continues to support actors to access finance from financial institutions, where necessary, for purchases of farm equipment and working capital. However, because it is still early in the season, the banks are still appraising most of the facilities. This quarter, a total of GHS 1,160,400 (\$301,280²) of cash loans from formal financial institutions has been disbursed to the project beneficiaries for the purchase of equipment and inputs for production as well as working capital (**Table 1**).

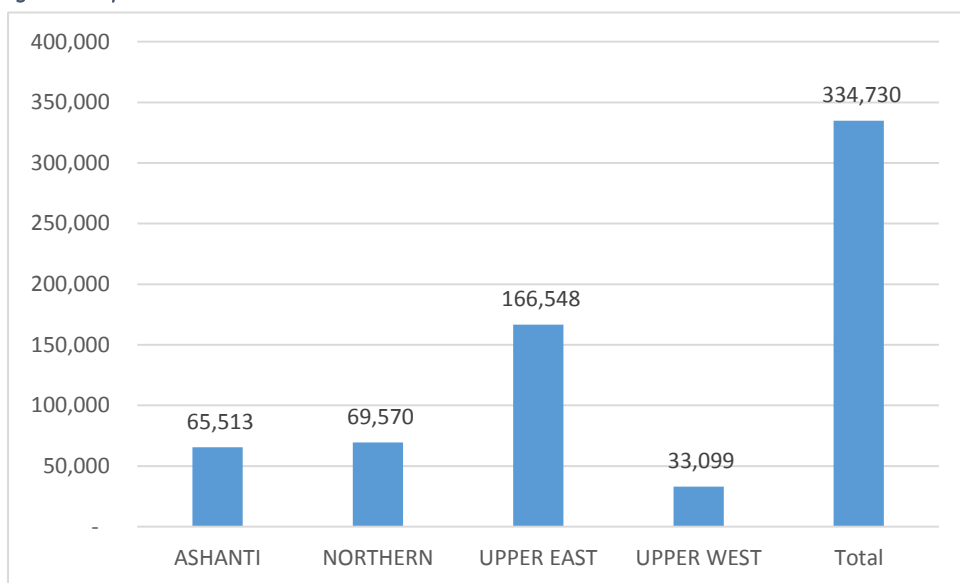
Table 1: Agricultural loans disbursed

Name of actor	Gender	Type of facility	Financial institution	Amount (GHS)	Status
Obiri Yeboah	Male	Production loan	Sinapi Aba	60,000	Disbursed
Mary Alamisi	Female	Production loan	Sinapi Aba	20,000	Disbursed
Kusi Baffour	Male	Production loan	Opportunity International	27,400	Disbursed
Sumaila Guri Bajello	Male	Equipment	Sonzelle Rural and Community Bank	37,000	Disbursed
Richard Akoka	Male	Equipment	Sinapi Aba	120,000	Disbursed
Inter-Grow	Male	Working capital	UT Bank	896,000	Disbursed
Total				1,160,400	

In addition, a total of 334,730 GHS (\$86,907.5) of capital investment were made by the project beneficiaries, majority of the investment happened in Upper East as seen in **Figure 5** below.

² Exchange rate used throughout the report is \$1=GHS 3.85156667

Figure 5: Capital investments



3.3 Gross margin – 2015 crop season provisional figures

The 2015 crop season gross margin *provisional* figures were produced and presented during the reporting period. The related data was collected through a quantitative survey of 3,200 randomly selected smallholder farmers (2,400 were from the north and 800 from the south). The survey was conducted in two phases, the first phase, which happened in June for the South and July-August for the North, consisted of measuring the area planted using GPS devices, collecting inputs and planting costs, and demarcating a sample area. The second phase implemented in August for the South and November-December for the North was to gather the remaining inputs costs, and harvest the sample area to estimate the yield.

Figure 6 below shows that rice is the most profitable crop with a gross margin of \$1,117.94/ha. Maize gross margin stands at \$615.20/ha and soy at \$512.35/ha. (Figure 7). The project has overachieved its FY16 targets for all three crops.

Figure 6: Gross margin per crop

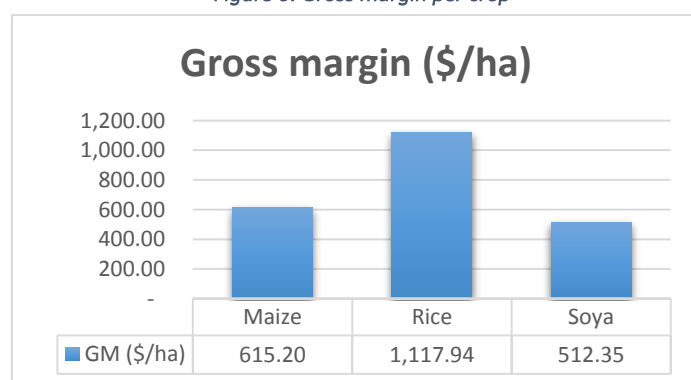
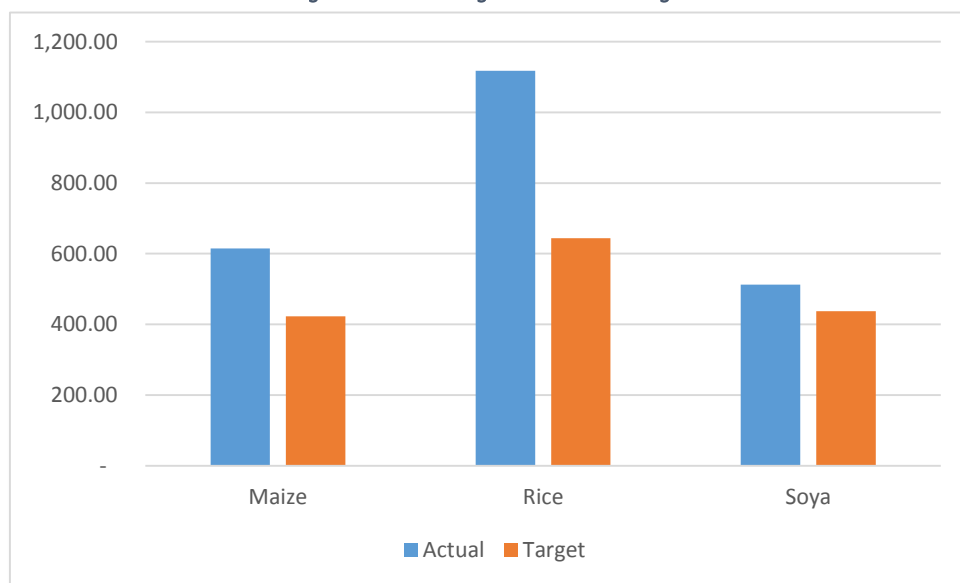


Figure 7: Gross margins – actual vs. targets



Compared to the gross margins obtained for the 2014 season, rice is also the crop with the highest increase as its gross margin almost doubled. As seen in **Table 2** below, this is due to a higher yield as the rains were better and also a higher selling price as farmers planted the higher valued and better priced aromatic rice varieties in the irrigation sites which were shut down in 2014 due to low levels of water in the dams. Despite higher yields, soy and maize gross margins decreased due to lower selling prices and higher inputs costs, caused mainly by the significant increases in inflation and devaluation of the Cedi. For maize, the 2014 data is compared to the 2015 data from the North as only the North was surveyed in 2014. The south activities started at the end of FY14.

Table 2: Gross margin values – 2014 vs. 2015

	Maize north		Rice		Soy	
	2014	2015	2014	2015	2014	2015
Gross margin \$/ha	734.54	629.88	564.09	1,179.94	582.75	512.35
Yield MT/ha	3.44	3.71	3	3.98	1.59	1.83
Average price \$	268.41	232.19	243.88	342.36	414.47	326.88
Inputs costs \$/ha	187.79	231.95	167.4	245.67	75.49	85.1

Across gender, in line with the baseline survey findings, female farmers in the North had a higher maize gross margin due to their higher selling price and lower input costs, despite the fact that they had lower yield. For the other crops and maize in the South, male farmers performed better.

Table 3: Gross margin values by gender

	Maize north		Maize south		Rice		Soy	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Gross margin \$/ha	846.45	572.3	385.99	506.02	1,008.72	1,179.14	472.63	540.03
Yield MT/ha	3.65	3.73	2.54	2.79	3.81	4.07	1.8	1.86
Average price \$	291.96	216.6	232.35	247.29	335.29	347.11	308	337.71
Inputs costs \$/ha	219.55	263.65	204	184.5	270	233.23	82.73	87.83

3.4 Application of technologies – 2015 crop season provisional figures

Data on application of improved technologies and management practices are collected during both phases of the gross margin survey. **Table 4** below presents the main findings. Almost all project beneficiaries apply one or more improved technology(ies)and management practices. However, the application rates vary across technologies and gender. Cultural practices is the technology type that is applied the most. It includes row planting, transplanting and other cultivation practices. Post-harvest practices are the least applied.

Across technologies, female application rates are lower than the males'. The biggest gaps are seen on application of post-harvest, information and communication technologies (ICT), and climate management. In addition, the number of hectares under improved technologies cultivated by men is almost three times higher than the women's. Women plant smaller land and in addition, they apply improved technologies on a smaller portion of that land.

In total, 58,592.9 ha are under improved land based technologies by 51,425 farmers. The indicator related to this number of hectares is underachieved. This is because the assumption underlying the setting of the target was that the average hectares cultivated by the smallholder farmers would be 1.5. However, this figure turned out smaller at 1.14ha during the 2015 crop season.

The total number of beneficiaries that applied improved land based and non-land based technologies and management practices is 52,577, which is 96.29% of the FY16 target.

Table 4: Application of technologies

Technology type	Application rate men	Application rate women	# of men applying	# of women applying	Hectares men	Hectares women
Crop genetics	54.75%	48.63%	16,121	11,540	27,927.54	7,887.28
Soil related	63.49%	57.21%	18,694	13,577	33,141.64	10,290.01
Cultural practices	79.24%	75.13%	23,330	17,831	37,483.61	13,366.01
Pest management	75.96%	68.08%	22,367	16,156	35,307.92	11,401.22
One or more land based	98.42%	94.58%	28,979	22,446	42,659.63	15,933.27
ICT	54.05%	43.79%	15,915	10,393	--	--
Post-harvest	31.46%	23.76%	9,264	5,638	--	--
Climate mitigation	40.13%	31.15%	11,816	7,393	--	--
One or more tech.	99.47%	98.14%	29,287	23,290	--	--

Those findings will inform project strategies and implementation, going forward.

4 Progress with Technical Delivery

This section is organized broadly under the three main project sub-purposes.

4.1 Sub-Purpose 1: Increased Agricultural Productivity in Targeted Commodities

For this sub-purpose, the main focus during the quarter under review were to:

- (i) Set up demonstration sites for training farmers
- (ii) Set up farm clinics
- (iii) Use ICT to disseminate production technologies
- (iv) Ensure access to inputs and equipment
- (v) Train OBs on OBM
- (vi) Provide business development services

4.1.1 Demonstration sites and GAP trainings

Actor-supported demonstration sites

Crop demonstration plots continue to be the project's main teaching and practical learning sites. They are established jointly through collaboration with private input importers, distributors and retailers and with OBs and FBOs. The key principle adhered to by ADVANCE is to have the input dealers and the OBs donate 100% of the inputs and other materials needed to establish the sites. They provide a marketing opportunity for the input companies, allowing them to expand their customer base and sell more products. The private input companies lead in defining the demonstration protocols to be tested and applied on the plots in order to obtain the best results from the use of their inputs/innovations.

During the quarter under review, out of the 400 targeted sites, a total of 375 sites were identified across Northern, Upper East, Upper West, Ashanti and Brong Ahafo regions. **Table 5** below gives the distribution of these sites by commodity.

Table 5: Identified demo sites by commodity

	Targeted	Achieved
Maize	210*	229
Rice	35	42
Soya	70	71
Maize under CSA	45	33
Total	360	375

* 40 more are planned for the south during the minor season

Three major input importers, two local seed companies, six local input distributors, and three research institutions are collaborating with the project and providing inputs for the planned demos (**Table 6**). Yara, RMG, Dizengoff/SipCam, Heritage Seeds, and M&B Seed have all committed to supporting the 2016 demos with varying quantities of seeds, fertilizers and crop protection chemicals. In addition, 40 OBs promised to support demos with seed and fertilizers in addition to the normal contribution of land and land preparation.

Table 6: Demo sites input sponsors

	Company	Location	Type(s) of Inputs
Input Importers			
1	RMG Ghana	Accra	Pannar Maize seed, Herbicides
2	YARA	Accra	Fertilizers

	Company	Location	Type(s) of Inputs
3	Dizengoff/SipCam	Accra	Pioneer maize seed, Maize, Rice & Soya fertilizers, Soybean inoculant
4	Green-ef	Tamale	Soybean inoculant
Local Seed Companies			
5	Heritage Seeds	Tamale	Seed for Maize & Soybean
6	M&B	Ho	Maize Seed
Research Institutions			
7	IITA-N2 Africa	Tamale	Soybean Inoculant
8	Crop Research Insitute (CRI)	Fumesua	Maize and Rice seeds
9	Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI)	Tamale	80-Day maturity Rice seed
Local Input Distributors			
10	SKY 3	Kintampo	Herbicides
11	Timothy Agrochemicals	Kintampo	Selective Herbicides
12	Antika Co. Ltd	Wa	Seed maize, fertilizers
13	18 th April	Wa	Weedicides

Delivery of inputs for approximately 80 maize demo sites for the major season in the south (Ashanti and Brong Ahafo) has begun. YARA has so far supplied 70 bags of fertilizers, RMG has supplied 36 litres of glyphosate and 32 kg of Pan 53 seed, and M&B has provided 20kg each of Opeiburo and yellow Abontem maize seed. In addition, Dizengoff and RMG have made presentations on their inputs/innovations, and protocols to the ADVANCE South team at a meeting in Kumasi.

GAPs and Post-Harvest Handling (PHH) trainings

During the period under review, a total of 4,595 smallholder farmers, made up of 44.9% females benefitted from pre-planting GAPs training. They went through an overview of the production cycle and how to plan and achieve higher productivity and gross margins.

During the period under review 2,286 smallholder farmers, made up of 1,499 males and 787 females received training in harvest and post-harvest handling in collaboration with the Ghana Grains Council (GGC). The topics covered included grains storage, quality standards as well as warehouse management.



Picture 1: Training in Voggu Kpalsogu, Northern Region

Crop production manuals

The standard crop production manuals produced in collaboration with ATT were validated in a workshop with experts from the Crops research Institute (CRI), Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) and the Savannah Agricultural Research Institute (SARI). Final edits were made and printing will be completed by the end of April. These protocols will be used by the project's agronomists for the rest of the project's lifespan to train OGs, in conformity with a training guide document developed by the

project.. The training materials will be disseminated to MoFA AEAs and the soft copies are available for use by any other partners.

4.1.2 Farm clinics

Farm clinic is a technical activity during which an expert is brought by the project to solve a specific problem in a community or farm. These problems are thought to be new challenges experienced in areas such as new pest infestations, spreading of diseases etc., that can't be addressed by the team. The expert assesses the issue in the presence of the benefitting farmers and proposes solutions for them to implement.

One farm clinic was organized in the Yamfo area in Brong Ahafo to address challenges of wrong application of agrochemicals, potentially leading to inefficient agrochemicals use and lower returns as well as serious health problems. The clinic, which benefitted 68 farmers, was carried out with MoFA. It addressed the issue of dosage and placement of fertilizers and included a practical demonstration of calibration and mixing of agrochemicals.

4.1.3 ICT outreach for production technologies dissemination

Support to listenership clubs

During the period under review, three new radio stations, Eagle FM in Walewale, Source FM in Bawku and Dastech Radio in Zebilla were profiled to collaborate with the project. Through a partnership with Farm Radio International, the project's 25 radio station partners were trained to enhance their expertise in producing agricultural programs. In order to ensure continuous listenership of these radio programs by the smallholders and hence access to agricultural information, the project provided radio sets to 838 radio listenership clubs. Over 70% of the members are women (Table 7).



Picture 2: Female listenership club at Kukua presented with solar radio set

Table 7: Radio listenership club potential beneficiaries

Region	# of radio listenership clubs	# of female members	# of male members	Total # of members
Northern	352	15,535	4,916	36,513
Upper East	254	2,862	1,893	4,755
Upper West	232	5,746	1,942	7,688
Total	838	24,143	8,751	32,894

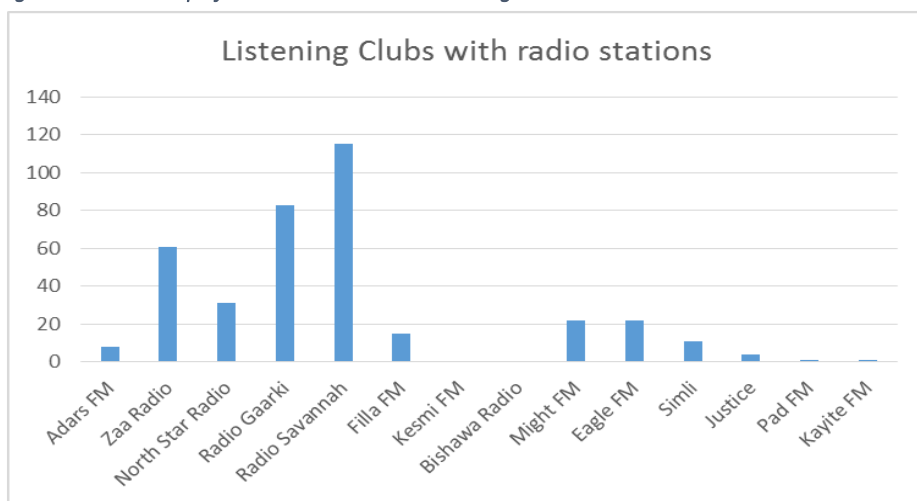
“The women in this community will now be more united because we will meet every evening as a club to listen to the radio and learn how to increase our yields. This is my first time I am seeing this type of support in this whole community”, Patience Bakime, Tinoyl Women’s Group, Gulumpe community, Kintampo

“We women cannot own radios but now we have one that we can meet as a group and listen to the production of crops and also animals. We are always busy during the day so we don’t listen to radio but now we can meet in the evening to learn about production issues. As you can see we are all smiling because of this support. We were educated on the need to form this club and we thought it was a joke but now we see it is not a joke”. Afia Afra, Suronuase, Kintampo North

“We won’t burn our fields after harvesting produce [again], after learning this from the radio discussions on Radio Gaarki.” Jagri Abukari, M-pesam, Saboba

During the distribution of the radios, the Northern Region team conducted a small survey to find out the radio stations that are most popular among smallholder farmers in the region. The data indicated that the most listened radio station is Radio Savannah followed by Gaarki, Zaa and North Star radio (**Figure 8**). Farmers in Saboba and Chereponi Districts, including part of Yendi Municipal, mostly listen to Radio Gaarki for their agriculture programs. This will inform future targeting of stations and capacity building activities.

Figure 8: Listenership of radio stations in Northern Region



ICT based extension services

ADVANCE, in collaboration with Grameen Foundation, has been training selected community agents working under OBs in Brong Ahafo and Ashanti Regions on the use of Smartex, a tablet based application that facilitates the delivery of agricultural advisory services.

During the quarter under review, 39 agents were trained, alongside the 39 OBs that engaged them, in the Ashanti and Brong Ahafo Regions to register, profile and train 100 OGs each. To assist them, each of these agents was provided with a Samsung Galaxy Tablet and a Pico projector. The field agents have started profiling farmers for the 2016 planting season and providing trainings.

This pilot activity will be extended to the North this upcoming crop season. For that purpose, 85 potential agents working with OB beneficiaries in the North have been identified to be trained on Smartex in the next quarter.



Picture 3: An agent making a point during the Smartex training in Techiman

4.1.4 Improved access to inputs/equipment

Among the efforts to improve smallholders' access to inputs and equipment for their farming activities, ADVANCE promotes the concept of community input agents, spraying services providers, linkages between OBs and input dealers, as well as tractor service operators and maintenance training program.

During the quarter under review, facilitation process started for setting up 18 community input agents. In addition, 14 Spray Services Providers (SSPs) were profiled while an additional 33 were constituted around 40 OBs and 18 input dealers.

Arrangement for a second set of eight training workshops for 120 tractor operators and 80 new tractor owners is being planned with John Deere/AFGRI.

4.1.5 Outgrower business management

Outgrower business management (OBM) training

During the reporting period, 208 OBs (197 males and 11 females) were trained on business and financial planning to enable them plan for the 2016 season and make better decisions especially with regards to accessing credit at the current very high interest rates. This training is part of the Out grower Business Management curriculum developed by the project. OBs were trained on:

- Understanding value chains and how to compete effectively
- Understanding business planning and the steps to follow
- Records keeping
- Financial Management
- Financial planning and budgeting
- Determining cash flows
- Sourcing for business finance
- Managing credit

In the south, 41 OB were trained on the project's records keeping template to enable them keep proper records and make better business decisions.

A total of 86 OB staffs (78 males and 8 females) were trained on the Concept of Outgrower Business Management to help them manage their outgrower business and be able to service their OGs on a timely, efficient and profitable manner.

The OBM modules are deliberately run along the cropping calendar and in this case, just before the planting season, so that OBs can have a thorough understanding of how they can plan, access credit and better operate their businesses.

Field management program

Outgrower businesses are anticipated to increasingly expand their services to smallholder farmers. These services are to go beyond tractor services to include OG inputs distribution, post-harvest mechanization, GAP/PHH training, demo site management, product collection and aggregation, community liaison, lead farmer development and marketing. Key to delivery of these services is the engagement of a field manager or agent who would champion, on behalf of the OB, these services and with special focus on technical/extension services.

ADVANCE commits to facilitate this program with capacity development support to the OBs in the area of motorbike/motor-king grant incentives towards offsetting start-up cost and to help meet the transportation needs of the job.

As a results, during the period

- A total of 75 agents were engaged by OBs across the regions to assist them deliver various services to the outgrowers
- In addition, 70 of the agents were trained on good agriculture practices on the targeted commodities of maize, rice and soybean to sharpen their technical capacities to train outgrowers of the OBs on the right practices

OB office program

During the quarter, 16 more OBs have set up offices to manage their businesses from.

4.1.6 Business development services

Business planning

During the quarter, ten new actors have had a business plan developed while 33 additional OBs have had the business diagnostic tool administered on their operations, pending the development of new business plans. A total of 78 OBs have had crop budgets developed with them and also been taken through the cost-benefit scenarios with regards to in-kind lending of input and tractor services to smallholder farmers.

Financial services

So far, three OBs in the South have received GHS 107,400 (\$27,885) as production loans to support their outgrowers at a monthly interest rate of 4% for six months to be paid back in two instalments,

OBM concept training topics

- What an outgrower business is
- Hiring of staff for OB operations
- Selecting and engaging lead farmers
- Selecting outgrowers
- Providing services to OGs
 - Tractor services
 - Input credit
 - Extension services
 - Shelling/threshing services
 - Determining prices
 - Procuring/aggregating from OGs after harvest
 - Achieving higher repayment rates from OGs.

from Opportunity International and Sinapi Aba. The loans were disbursed in line with crop budgets developed with the OBs.

Two OBs in the North have also received GHS 157,000 (\$40,473) for the purchase of equipment. In the meanwhile, production loans in the three regions of the North are now being appraised by the financial institutions as the season is yet to begin.

The project also supported one end buyer to access a loan of GHS 896,000 (\$232,633) for his working capital.

To increase financial access and encourage savings for investment into production by outgrowers, two organizations were contracted to train OGs and form 180 VSLAs (30 in Upper East, 50 in Upper West

Training topics

- Formation of Village Savings and Loans Association and group dynamics
- Leadership and election of leaders
- Drafting and adoption of a group constitution
- Development of Policies and Rules for Social Fund

and 100 in the Northern Region). The 180 groups are made up of an average of 23 members each, potentially benefitting 4,191 farmers (1,216 males, 2,975 females).

The Upper East regional team further collaborated with Community Self Resilient Centre (CSRC) to establish and train two groups made up of 60 smallholder farmers (out of which 56 are female) in Bazua in the Bawku West District. All beneficiaries were trained before they were set up as groups to start mobilizing savings.

This brings to date a total of 199 VSLA groups comprising of 4,566 members (1291 males, 3275 females) that the project has helped to be established. The groups make savings of between GHS 1 and GHS 5 (\$0.26 to \$1.30) per share per week and a social fund contribution of GHS 0.20 to GHS 0.50 (\$0.05 to \$0.13) per person per week depending on their constitution.

A monitoring visit to 148 of the 182 VSLAs revealed they had saved a total of GHS 196,582.10 (\$51,039.5) from January to March.

“Savings on my own has always been difficult and I always thought I was too poor to save until now. Now I have enough money to buy inputs for this season”, Joseph, from Labaalo in the Sabooba District

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

Under sub purpose two, the project focused on the following areas during the reporting period:

- (i) organising a pre-harvest event in the south
- (ii) developing capacity of OBs to better engage with the end market buyers
- (iii) supporting lead firms to become more competitive
- (iv) support to trade associations and cross border trade and transport of produce, and
- (v) strengthening community based market systems

4.2.1 Southern Ghana Pre-harvest event

The maiden annual southern Ghana pre-harvest agribusiness event was held in Kumasi on March 3, 2016 under the theme “Quality Sells More”. Modelled along the lines of the Northern Ghana pre-harvest event, the purpose of the event was to bring ADVANCE maize OBs in the Southern zone of

influence to interact with maize buyers, input dealers and other actors based in the South, particularly in the Ashanti and Brong Ahafo Regions. It was hosted by the Ghana Grains Council and attracted 228 participants including exhibitors, buyers, transporters, input dealers, financial institutions and maize OBs from the ADVANCE South operational area.

The main event was preceded by a training session on grain quality standards for OBs, which was organized in partnership with the Ghana Grains Council and facilitated by a resource person from the Ghana Standards Authority.

GGC worked with ADVANCE to generate revenues of GHS 27,910 (\$7,246) from the event including GHS 25,000 (\$6,491) in sponsorship. AFGRI Ghana, the dealers of John Deere farm machinery, was the headline sponsor. The revenues generated were used to offset part of the cost of organizing the event.

4.2.2 Market linkage development

New buyers identified

Five new buyer firms were identified and profiled during the quarter (**Table 8**). One of these buyers, Regis Commodities, based in Accra, carried out trade missions and consequently signed maize purchase contracts with OBs in the Upper West, Ashanti and Eastern Regions.

Table 8: Buyers identified per region

Firm Type	Region of Origin			Total
	Greater Accra	Northern	Upper East	
Aggregator	1		2	3
Processor - Foods		1		1
Processor - Soybean			1	1
Total	1	1	3	5

Trade missions

Nine trade missions were facilitated for seven buyers and 34 OBs and farmer groups during the quarter. Two missions were intra-regional and involved buyers from the Northern Region visiting OBs based in the same region.

Table 9: Trade Missions Facilitated

Name of Buyer	Region of origin	No of participating OBs ³	Regional coverage of OBs	Commodity
Tiyumba Women's Rice Processing Center	Northern	1	Northern	Paddy
Nyebi Bu Yoona Women's Rice Processing Center	Northern	1	Northern	Paddy
Habiba Adama Ent*	Ejura	9	Upper West Region	Maize
Gold Coast Grains*	Greater Accra	5	Upper West Region	Maize
Regis Commodities Ltd	Greater Accra	4	Upper West Region	Maize
Ans Milling Ent	Ashanti	1	Upper West Region	Paddy

³ An OB typically participates in different trade missions with different buyers to provide alternative contracting and sales choices for the OB

Name of Buyer	Region of origin	No of participating OBs ³	Regional coverage of OBs	Commodity
Regis Commodities Ltd	Greater Accra	13	Eastern, Ashanti, Brong Ahafo	Maize
Grand Total		34		

**Habiba Adama Ent. and Gold Coast Grains participated in two different trade missions each at different times in the Upper West Region.*

As a result, contracts were made between the buyers and OBs. A summary of them is presented in the section below.

Contracts

A total of 52 contracts were facilitated between buyers and OBs during the quarter (**Table 10**). These contracts are estimated to cover 21,185.80 MT of maize, paddy, and soybean.

Table 10: Contracts Facilitated

Type of Contract	Number of Contracts	Volume of Goods (MT)	Value (GHS)
Closed	28	616	738,047
Purchase and Sales Agreements	24	20,570	TBD
Total	52	21,186	738,047

Closed contracts are definitive and binding agreements between buyers and farmers for the sale of a specified quantity of produce at a specified price within a specified period. Purchase and sale agreements are open-ended contracts and non-binding with key items like price and quantity to be finalized between the parties at a later date. These contracts have been a key feature of trade missions.

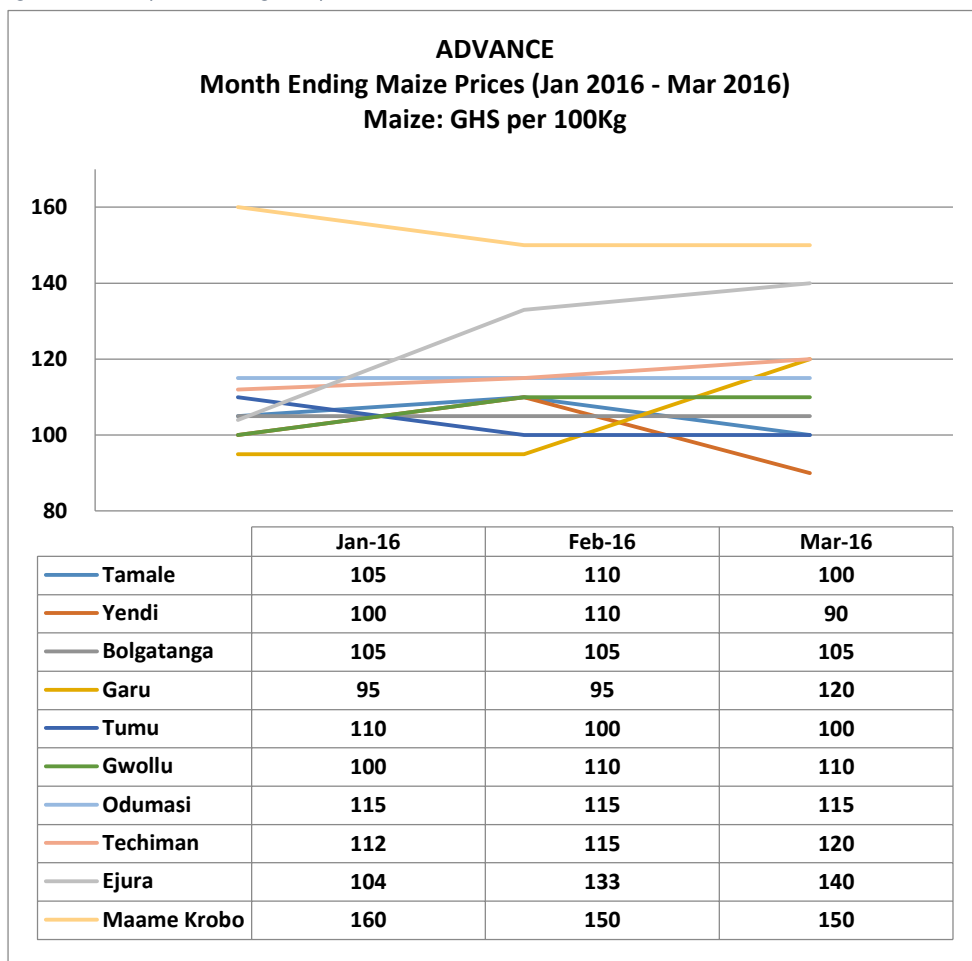
Key market development

Maize

Maize prices were fairly stable in most markets over the period. The slight decline in prices on the Tamale and Yendi markets have been attributed to the increase in supply of the crop, as a result of the eagerness of farmers to sell part of their stock to enable them prepare for the new season.

Increases in the prices on the Techiman and Ejura market has been explained as the result of farmers holding onto their grain stocks in anticipation of higher prices. Southern maize buyers, especially poultry farmers in the Brong Ahafo Region, switched to a cheaper source of maize from neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire.

Figure 9: Maize prices during the quarter



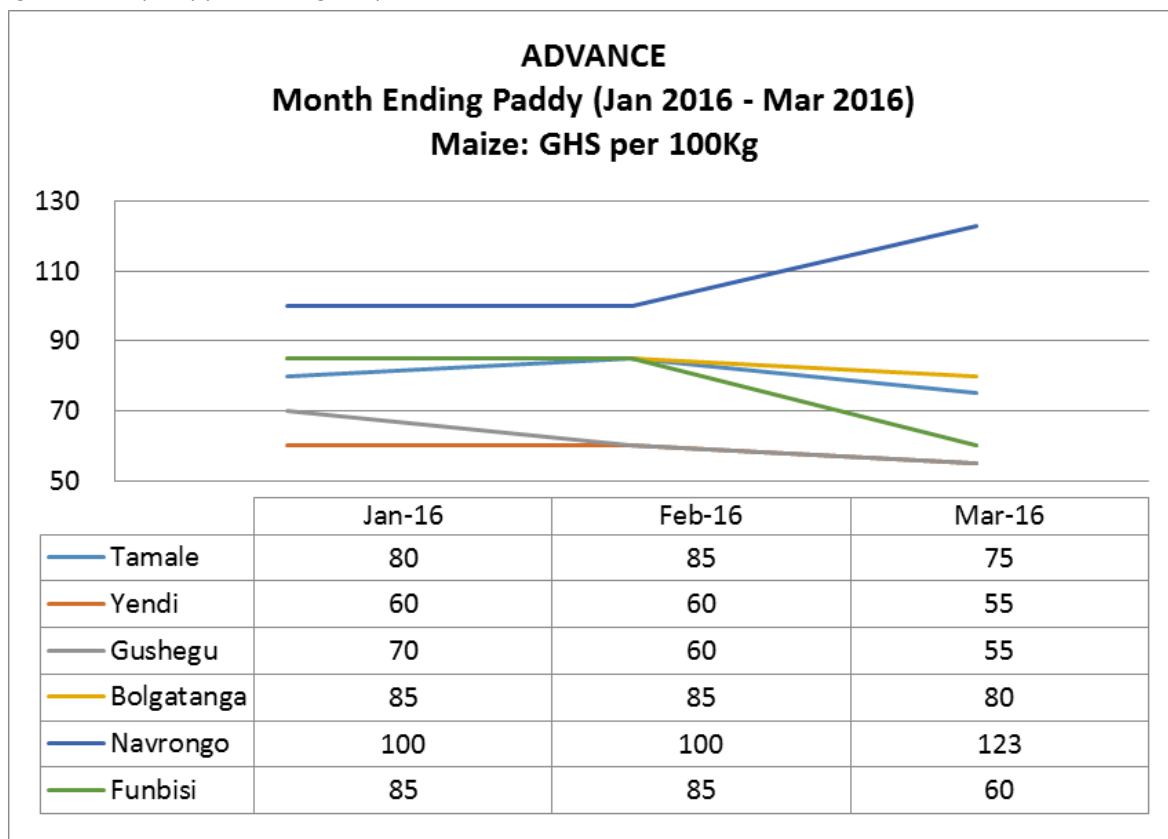
Source: ADVANCE market monitoring

Rice paddy

Average paddy prices generally declined in most markets because of lower demand. Most buyers of paddy from the South prefer straight milling and this requires high levels of moisture in the paddy. As a consequence, they shifted their demand from northern sources to the south.

Prices in Navrongo however were highest. Compared to other rice producing areas, paddy from Navrongo is generally in high demand because farmers in the irrigated areas have access to combine harvesters to harvest on time at the level of moisture suitable for straight milling.

Figure 10: Rice paddy prices during the quarter



Source: ADVANCE market monitoring

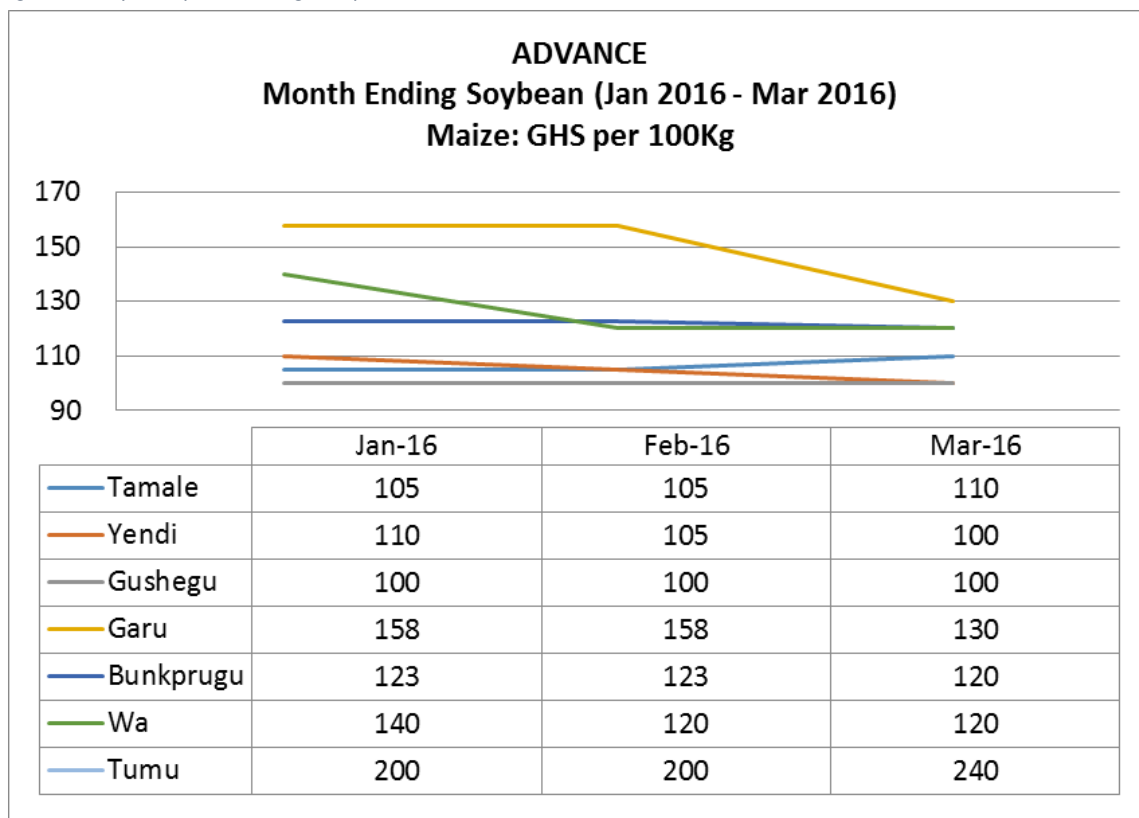
Soybean

There was general decline in prices of soybean during the period. This is because of a decrease in the demand for local soymeal by poultry farmers in preference to imported soymeal which resulted in a depressed demand for soybean by processors.

Prices in the Upper East was sustained by purchases from Burkinabe traders.

The volume of soybean produced in the Upper West is low so demand far it exceeds supply. The incidence of very high prices for the product in Tumu is because of their proximity to Burkina Faso which gives farmers the option to sell across the border when prices are relatively low in Ghana.

Figure 11: Soybean prices during the quarter



Source: ADVANCE market monitoring

4.2.3 OB capacity building

During the quarter, 36 OBs from the Ashanti and Brong Ahafo Regions were trained on marketing, contract management and negotiation (**Table 11**).

Table 11: Marketing, contract management and negotiation training

Zone	# of OBs trained
Techiman	12
Sunyani	9
Ejura	15
Total	36

Moreover, preparatory works on training of smallholders on grain quality standards began during the quarter. A trainer of trainers (ToT) workshop was conducted for 36 community trainers in the Upper East, Ashanti, and Brong Ahafo Regions. It is expected that these community trainers will further train 4,652 and 8,000 smallholders in the Upper East Region and in the South respectively.

Table 12: OG Quality Standards Training

Operational Area	# of community trainers	# of targeted OG communities to be trained	# of targeted OGs to be trained
Upper East Region	16	56	4,652
South	20	133	8,000
Total	36	189	12,256

4.2.4 Lead firm competitiveness

Support for buyer outgrower development

Buyer outgrower development is where the buyer provides input credit to the farmer in the form of ploughing services, seed, fertilizer, etc. In exchange the farmer pays back with a specified quantity of produce at harvest. Monitoring support on recovery payments was provided to the six buyer outgrower schemes facilitated for the 2015 farming season. Except for the Premium Foods scheme, which suffered reverses from lower than expected recovery from OBs, produce repayment from farmers for the other schemes remained on track (Table 13).

Table 13: Status of outgrower support for 2015 farming season

Buyer Name	Number of OBs/Groups Supported	Crop	Type of Support	Status of Recovery at March 31, 2016
Premium Foods	32	Maize	Seed, fertilizer	55%. OB s are gathering produce to repay
ANS Mills	2	Paddy Rice	Jasmine seed	Completed in full
Aframso Rice Buyers Group	2	Paddy Rice	Jasmine seed	Completed in full
Ejura Women Marketing Group	2	Paddy Rice	Jasmine seed	Completed in full
G. Bosomtwe Ventures	1	Maize and Soybean	Seed, fertilizer	Completed in full
Akate Farms	670	Maize	Seed, fertilizer	90% complete, on track

Business development services

Various levels of support was provided to nine buyer firms during the period. Table 14 below presents a summary of the status of these assistances.

Table 14: Status of BDS Support

Name of Firm/ Organization	Home Region of Firm	Source of Technical Assistance	Nature of Technical Assistance	Status of Engagement at March 2016 ending
Asamoia & Yamoia Farms, Kumasi, poultry farm	Ashanti	ADVANCE	Support to resolve dispute with ADVANCE OB resulting from supply of products with underweight bags	Complete
			Advise on outgrower/ supply chain development	Ongoing
Inter-Grow, soybean processor, Tema	Greater Accra	ADVANCE	Concluded GHS 2.0 million working capital financing (overdraft and revolving credit) from UT Bank	Firm has begun drawdown on bank financing to purchase soybean
REGIS Commodities	Greater Accra	ADVANCE	Support for trade missions and contracting with OBs in the North and South, and prospecting for warehousing facilities in Afram Plains	Trade missions completed. Maize purchases from OBs ongoing. Warehousing facilities identified and discussion on leasing with owners ongoing

Name of Firm/ Organization	Home Region of Firm	Source of Technical Assistance	Nature of Technical Assistance	Status of Engagement at March 2016 ending
Royal Danemark	Kumasi	ADVANCE	Advise on business strategy, and way forward on critical business issues	SOW completed to engage STTA for training on the operation and management of soybean oil refinery
G. Bosomtwe Enterprise	Kumasi	ADVANCE	Advise on business case to expand product lines	SOW completed to engage STTA for poultry concentrate development
E-GABs	Sunyani	ADVANCE	Support to resolve dispute with ADVANCE OB resulting from supply of poor quality soybeans Advise on acquisition of grain cleaner	Complete Firm has obtained quotes from vendors in readiness to procure equipment
Agricare Ltd	Kumasi	ADVANCE	Support to develop Outgrower scheme in 3 northern regions and south operational area	Selected farmers are due to meet with firm in April 2016 to conclude on details of support
Soybean Processors (Royal Danemarc, Vester Oil, Inter-Grow, G. Bosomtwe)	Various	ADVANCE	Identification of preliminary causes for depressed sales of soymeal	SOW completed to engage STTA for product quality audit of local soycake using imported soymeal as benchmark
Ampofo Farms	Dormaa Ahenkro	ADVANCE	Support to source concessionary financing for capital expenditure	Began work on financing application

The project assessed four buyer firms to identify areas where they need technical assistance beyond supply chain linkages to farmers.

Table 15: BDS Assessment of Buyers

Name of Firm	Home Region of Firm	Firm Type	Key Needs
Clean Grain Ltd	Brong-Ahafo	Aggregator	Firm requires working capital financing
Yabco Focus* Company Ltd	Upper East	Processor Soybean	Firm requires a focused business strategy, and marketing plan and support for execution Equipment for soybean processing into soymilk
Total Foods*	Northern	Processor Foods	Requires a marketing plan Equipment for processing maize and soybean into 'breakfast cereals'
Bee World Enterprises*	Northern	Processor Foods	Soybean processing equipment and cold storage facility to complement existing facilities for production and storage of soy ice cream

*Firms are candidates for North Ghana processing upgrades

4.2.5 Trade association support

Ghana Grains Council

GGC continued implementing its activities under the 2nd year grant agreement amounting US\$350,000 executed on July 2, 2015, for 12 months ending June 30, 2016.

The second year grant has the following objectives.

- Enhance grains market development by up scaling grain actors' participation in the GGC Warehouse Receipt System (WRS) to trade in graded grains
- Optimize GGC member benefits through the development of diversified service delivery packages
- Policy influencing through advocacy of major issues that limit the efficiency of the grains sector and WRS.

A summary of the activities implemented and results achieved during the quarter are presented below.

Market Access Initiatives and Warehouse Receipts Program

As mentioned in section 4.1.1., GGC, in collaboration with ADVANCE, trained nucleus farmers and smallholders in the Northern and Upper West Regions on best practice in grains storage, grains quality & standard assessment and GGC WRS. In addition smallholders were trained on grain quality standards in the three Northern regions.

Second Tier Manual Warehouse Receipting (MWR)

GGC has developed warehouse receipts booklets which will be filled-in manually at the approved community warehouse level. Subsequently, the team carried out field trips to institute the use of these booklets at ten selected warehouses.

Receipt of grains under the manual warehouse receipt system commenced at warehouses in the Upper West and Northern Regions with 28 depositors. Receipted quantities are presented in **Table 16** and **Table 17** below.

Table 16: Receipted grains - UWR

Type of Grain	Quantity (kg)	% of Receipted Grains
Yellow Maize	20,000	31%
White Maize	41,800	65%
Soybean	2,300	4%
Total	64,100	100%

Table 17: Receipted grains - NR

Type of Grain	Quantity (kg)	% of Receipted Grains
Paddy Rice	1,100	2%
White Maize	55,300	91%
Soybean	4,662	8%
Total	61,062	100%

Also, GGC identified 25 community warehouses in the Brong Ahafo Region as potential candidates for participating in the 2nd tier WRS. The average storage capacity of those warehouses is 100MT, giving an estimated total storage capacity of 2,500MT. Most of them were built with USAID funding by

Technoserve. Additional nine community warehouses with a total storage capacity of 900MT have been identified as feeders for the Techiman maize market.

Furthermore, GGC activated the bids & offers feature on the Esoko platform for its members with Agriaccess Ghana Ltd offering 1,000 MT of yellow maize for sale on the platform. Though the bids made did not meet the offer price, a considerable number of phone calls were received indicating strong interest in the service.

Members Benefits and Diversified Service Delivery

GGC, with the support of ADVANCE, hosted the 1st Annual Southern Ghana Pre-harvest Agribusiness Event in Kumasi on March 3, 2016. As part of the programme GGC organized a training programme on the preceding day for 54 OB staffs on maize quality standards.

Also, membership care visits were carried out to 16 members in the three northern regions. At the end of December 2015, the GGC had 110 members with about 75% of them in good financial standing. Total membership fees realized for 2015 was GHS 147,400 (\$38,270).

Policy Influencing through Advocacy

GGC continued its collaboration with the Ghana Standards Authority (GSA), Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt of Germany and other industry stakeholders on the development of paddy rice standards through participation in the meeting of the Agricultural Produce Technical Committee of GSA.

Also, GGC pursued its work on grain pricing policy with funding from the Business Sector Advocacy Challenge Fund and technical support from ADVANCE. During the reporting period, GGC engaged 1,113 farmers and aggregators from grain producing communities within the three northern regions of Ghana in a series of public forums to discuss the influence of the National Buffer Stock Company on grain pricing, effects of grain quality on pricing, and the use of weighing scales and other standard measures.

Engagement with other trade associations

The organisational capacity assessments (using the modified Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) was updated for the following trade associations.

Brong-Ahafo based Maize Traders Associations

- Techiman Maize Traders Association
- Wenchi Maize Market Cooperative
- Odumase Market Association
- Bedu Market Associations

North based Associations

- Seed Producers Association of Ghana (SEEDPAG) – Upper East and Upper West regional branches
- Ghana Input Dealers Association (GAIDA) – Upper East and Upper West regional branches

The capacity needs identified for each of the trade associations will be the subject of interventions in the coming quarter till the end of project year 2016.

4.2.6 North Ghana processing upgrade

Rice milling upgrade

Below is an update of progress of work on two rice mills targeted in the Upper East Region for expansion and upgrade.

Table 18: Status of rice milling upgrade activities

Firms	Location	Existing processing capacity (MT/h)	Milling upgrade needs	Status at the end of March 2016
Sambay Enterprise	Bolgatanga, Upper East region	0.13	New and bigger capacity mill with components	The procurement and grant process was ongoing with the owner visiting the preferred vendor to inspect the milling components and also obtain advice on the roofing of the mill house
Procom Company	Bolgatanga, Upper East region	0.6	Acquisition of color sorter	A further review of the business case and re-assessment of equipment options is required given the high cost of color sorters

Maize and soybean processing upgrade

A business needs assessment of the following firms for processing upgrades was conducted as outlined in **Table 15**.

- YABCO Focus of Bolgatanga, Upper East region
- Total Foods of Tamale, Northern region
- Bee World Enterprises, Northern region

4.2.7 Regional/cross-border trade and transport

Collaboration with Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU) Cargo

ADVANCE collaborated with the following branches of GPRTU to update haulage fares from various locations in the Northern and Upper East Regions and the South operational zone to market destinations in southern Ghana:

- Upper East Region: Garu, Bolga and Paga
- Northern Region: Tamale, Yendi, and Chriponi
- South: Techiman, Wenchi, and Ejura

The collaboration with GPRTU in the Upper East Region resulted in some buyers benefiting from a 25% reduction in haulage fares to various destinations. The cargo union is yet to fix new haulage fares after fuel price adjustments were made during the quarter.

Cross-border trade

The project facilitated its first cross border trade for the sale of 15MT of soybean valued at GHS 21,000 (\$5,452) by an OB in the Upper West Region to Agro Technologie Due of Leo, Burkina Faso. In the Upper East Region, a Burkinabe soybean aggregator, who actively trades in the Bolga market has been identified to undertake a trade mission to OBs.

4.2.8 Community-based market systems strengthened

In line with community based market system strengthening, a supplementary Sell More for More (SMfM) training was organized for four FBOs in Kpandai District. A total of 133 FBO members benefited from this intervention which is to empower farmer organizations do better marketing of their farm produce among other objectives.

ADVANCE continued to strengthen the FBOs that benefited from SMFM training in FY15 through coaching and mentoring to ensure that they are well positioned to be transformed into Farmer Based Enterprises (FBEs). Potential FBEs are poised in attaining the status of FBEs through services they render to members and activities they do together to achieve common goals. In the Norther Region, eight potential FBEs were able to collectively sell 52.20 metric tons of maize valued at GHS 61,340 (\$15,926). Eight FBOs were also sensitised on the need to register their groups with the department of Cooperatives in Tamale.



Picture 4: A cross-section of SMFM participants during training in Lonto

As the season approaches, potential FBEs have been working with the project to acquire tractor services, access inputs and other services for their members.

4.3 Sub-Purpose 3: Strengthened Capacity for Advocacy

Under sub-purpose three, the project focused on

- (i) Development of advocacy groups,
- (ii) Development of district agricultural investment plans,
- (iii) Capacity development for program implementation, and
- (iv) Capacity development for farmer based enterprises

4.3.1 Advocacy group development

Advocacy issues affecting the value chain actors, primarily smallholders, OBs, FBOs, commodity aggregators, processors and transporters were collated and prioritized during the previous quarter. The first seven of the disabling environment issues were selected to be addressed.

The organizations that were assessed with Advocacy Capacity Assessment Tool (ACAT) have been ranked and the top three organizations selected from each of the three northern regions will be supported.

Build advocacy capacity of OBs and FBO networks

Consultation meetings were held with six secondary FBOs in the Upper West Region to discuss the establishment of a regional FBO network. The network will serve as a grassroots advocacy group to promote agribusiness and influence policies at the local and regional level.

Formation and strengthening of OB networks

OBs networks allow OBs to effectively engage policy makers, influence agricultural policies and improve the agribusiness-enabling environment. The networks could also help to improve production and marketing of agricultural produce through collective purchases of inputs, collective sale of produce, sharing of ideas, among others.



Picture 5: First OB network meeting in Bawku

The networks could also help to improve production and marketing of agricultural produce through collective purchases of inputs, collective sale of produce, sharing of ideas, among others.

A total of 13 zonal networks were formed, four each from Northern and Upper East Regions and five from Upper West. All of them have since elected executives and adopted constitutions. They have also agreed on registration fees and dues, and one network has opened a bank account.

4.3.2 District assembly plans for agricultural development

ADVANCE is supporting the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to document and market the agricultural potential of their districts to local and international investors. As a pilot, two districts, Kassena Nankana Municipal and Sissala East District, are being assisted to develop their District Agricultural Investment Plans (DAIPs).

Both DAIPs were validated during workshops attended by the District/Municipal Chief Executives, the Planning Officers, District Gender Officers and Officers from the District Department of Agriculture, farmers, FBOs, agro-based NGOs, ICOUR and financial institutions.

4.3.3 Capacity development for program implementation

This quarter, ADVANCE organized training for trainers on numeracy and Farming as a Business (FaaB) trainers from the three regions of the north. In all, 64 numeracy trainers (out of which four were Peace Corp Volunteers) and 51 FaaB trainers attended the ToT in Tamale.



Picture 6: Group discussion during numeracy ToT

Training of the smallholders have started in all regions as shown in the

Table 19 and

Table 20 below. A total of 1,094 of them have been trained in numeracy so far, out of the 10,000 targeted while 1,387 benefitted from the FaaB trainings out of the 12,000 targeted.

Table 19: Numeracy training status

Region	# of males	# of females	Total trained
UWR	222	326	548
UER	83	126	209
TOTAL	305	452	757

Table 20: FaaB training status

Region	# of males	# of females	Total trained
UWR	164	77	241
UER	206	329	535
TOTAL	370	406	776

4.3.4 Capacity development for FBEs

ADVANCE continued strengthening potential FBEs through mentoring, coaching, consultation and technical assistance. The project started the following with the potential FBEs during the reporting period:

- Facilitated the linkage of FBEs with tractor owners for them to negotiate for services
- Input promotion with some of the FBEs to ensure that they get certified inputs for production during the coming season
- Identification of sites to host demos and to established group farms for the purposes of learning and mobilizing revenue. In all, 50 sites have been selected for demos and model farms (33 demo sites in Norther Region, and seven in Upper West, ten model farms in Upper East)
- Revenue mobilization drive commenced with these FBEs to mobilize resources for the coming season. A number of them are involved in VSLAs to save money which would be used to purchase inputs for members, or loaned out to them.

As part of the process of exposing these FBEs to new ideas, especially on farming, a total of 79 radio sets were given to them to listen to programs that can positively impact their farming businesses and also serve as a rallying point for members to gather for meetings.

5 Program Support

Program support covers the cross cutting activities that focus on gender, environment, grants M&E and learning and public relations and communication.

5.1 Gender Program

5.1.1 OBM and women's leadership and entrepreneurship

Four new female nucleus farmers (NF) were profiled during the reporting period. The new NFs have participated in outgrower business management (OBM) trainings and their outgrowers are undergoing training on numeracy, FaaB and introductory GAP trainings.

Fati Seidu is from the Tamale municipality, she owns a tractor and has 139 out growers (130 female, 9 males) into maize and soya production.

Hajia Maria Kobzie is from the Sissala West district of Upper West, owns a warehouse, sheller, tractor and motor king and is involved in aggregation and storage of maize and soya. She works with about 85 OGs. She grows maize (10 acres) and soya (4 acres), and her OGs are also involved in VSLA.

Gladys Awuni, from Garu district, owns bullocks & ploughs, tricycle, and a water pump. She provides services to mainly women groups, and cultivates maize (6 acres), rice (4 acres) and soybean (3 acres). She provides plowing services with the aid of bullocks & animal driven plough to outgrowers.

Grace Alo Wuni Grumah, is from Nalerigu, and cultivates rice (53 acres) and maize (55 acres). She owns a tractor and a corn sheller, and provides ploughing and shelling services to outgrowers.

5.1.2 Women's access to land

One sensitization forum was held at Gbankurugu in the Bunkurugu – Yunyoo district for women's access to fertile land, with the help of a male OB, Henry Konlan. In attendance were opinion leaders, elders, and male and female smallholders. Issues discussed were:

- Control over land,
- General crops cultivated,
- Land usage by women
- Inputs support to women
- Security of land been used by women.

At the end of the forum, the landlords and husbands promised to assist women with inputs (seed and fertile land) to grow their own crops. ADVANCE will follow-up and track progress.

5.1.3 Women VSLAs and access to financial services

As mentioned in section 4.1.6., the project supported the formation of VSLAs that will benefit 2,975 women and will facilitate their access to micro savings and loans.

5.1.4 Women's access to improved technologies

"Trainings like this from USAID ADVANCE have made me and my business strong like a nail and even at a point when I was sick and hospitalized, my money was working for me". Mary Anabiga, Manager of Mary's Grains and Nuts

During the quarter under review, 35 female OBs, lead farmers and FBO leaders benefitted from the Women and Technology trainings conducted by the project. The purpose was to expose the participants to efficient agricultural implements that are timesaving, affordable and handy, and reduce drudgery. They pledged to transfer knowledge to other women farmers, and also save towards acquiring some of the implements.



Picture 7: Women taking a closer look and trying the multi-crop thresher and manual planters

Also, as mentioned previously, to enhance women's access to quality agricultural information, the project supported the formation of 838 listenership clubs that involve 24,143 women. Each club received a solar radio set.



Picture 8: A VSLA group that is also a listenership club

5.1.5 International Women's Day

ADVANCE celebrated this year's International Women's Day with the theme "*Stand for Gender Parity in Agriculture*" in Janga, a community in the West Mamprusi District of the Northern Region. The event was hosted by Mahama Tia, a nucleus farmer who brought together over 500 women and men, under the sponsorship of Mahama Tia, MTN and Heritage seeds. In attendance were the Janga Chief and representatives from MoFA, the District Assembly and the District Health Directorate.

Smallholder farmers of Mahama Tia staged a drama highlighting how a female smallholder farmer working with an outgrower business successfully became a lead farmer, and then got promoted to an associate nucleus farmer. It ended with how she became empowered economically and contributed to household decision making and family support.

The festivities included distribution of awards in recognition of special efforts and achievements made by women farmers and their groups. The Tizaa Buni Women's group was adjudged the Best Women Group for application of good agricultural practices such as the use of improved certified seeds and agro-chemicals, support in setting up a demonstration farm, 100 per cent repayment of credit and regular attendance at meetings. The group received three 100 kg bags of Yara fertilizer, one litre weedicide and a nine kg pack of certified rice seed.

Five women, Dahatu Mamatia, Azaratu Solomon, Yakubu Memunatu, Rose Yildana and Dahamatu Braimah, cultivating an average of 2.6 acres of rice, were also given awards for their good farm maintenance, active participation in demonstration activities, prompt repayment for services delivered, and application of good practices resulting in increased yield. They each received a six yard wax print, a mobile phone and MTN souvenirs.



Picture 9: Tizaa Buni women's group receiving the input awards and Dahamatu Braimah receiving her Overall Best Women Farmer award

5.2 Environment Support

Environmental activities for this quarter focused on revising the project's Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan (PERSUAP) as well as continuing the promotion of better agrochemical management among project actors as well as climate smart technologies and practices.

5.2.1 General compliance

The project revised its PERSUAP. Thirty six new products have been proposed for addition. They include nine insecticides, two fungicides, and 25 herbicides. Eleven products, including three insecticides, one fungicide and seven herbicides, from the 2015 PERSUAP, lost their Ghana registration status and were removed. The total number of pesticide products proposed in the revised PERSUAP is now 66, made of 18 insecticides, five fungicides and 43 herbicides. There are 26 active ingredients in total.

5.2.2 Improving agrochemicals management

Among its strategies for a safe use of pesticides, the project is promoting the services of trained commercial spray service providers (SSPs) and linking them to OB beneficiaries and input dealers. During the quarter, 42 OBs have formed a total 33 spray service groups made of approximately four individuals per group. **Table 21** below gives the current regional distribution of the SSPs.

Table 21: Regional distribution of SSPs

Region	# OBs	# Continuing SSPs Groups	# New SSP groups	Total SSPs groups	Total individuals involved
Northern Region	17	17	0	17	19
Upper East	15	7	12	19	66
Upper West	19	6	13	19	70
South	8	0	8	8	32
Totals	59	30	33	63	187

5.2.3 Climate smart agriculture

The objective of the ADVANCE climate smart agriculture (CSA) program is to increase farmers' awareness and adoption of climate smart strategies that enhance productivity and income, make cropping systems more resilient to climate change and contribute to mitigating the impact of climate

change. The strategy has three focal areas: minimum tillage, cover crop systems, and agroforestry. This quarter's activities concerned minimum tillage and agroforestry systems.

Minimum tillage



Picture 10: Ripper implement demonstration during the training

This year, the project aims to promote minimum tillage through 47 demonstration plots and a number of model farms, and increase the total acreage under minimum tillage from eight acres to 400 acres using ripping. During the reporting quarter, three OBs and six outgrowers in Techiman received hands on training on the use of the ripper as a tool for land preparation.

Twenty-one OBs in Upper East and West have so far pledged ripping areas totalling 316 acres.

Agroforestry

Two OBs in the Upper East Region have had their farms assessed for agroforestry consideration. A mahogany nursery has since been set up to raise 200 seedlings for boundary planting in Chief Moses' farm. The strategy for Maxwell Akandem is being finalised based on recommendations given by a Farmer to Farmer volunteer expert on land development who assessed the farm during a two week period in March.



Picture 11: Mahogany tree nursery in Zebilla

5.3 Grants Program

The project continued to work on processes for the selection, award, and delivery of agricultural equipment to farmers through matching grants to facilitate production and post-harvest handling of ADVANCE's select crops. During the quarter, a total of 234 production and post-harvest handling equipment were awarded to 154 project beneficiaries.

Innovation and Investment Incentive Grants (I-3)

During this reporting period, the project provided small equipment grants awards, and they are currently paying the 30% leverage on the cost of equipment directly to vendors of the equipment. Delivery of the equipment is ongoing.

Table 22: Regional distribution of the small grants equipment grantees

Equipment Type	Northern Region	Upper East Region	Upper West Region	Total
Tarpaulins	80	56	47	183
Weighing Scale	6	3	9	18
Moisture Meter	2	1	2	5
Deep placement Fertilizer Applicator			4	4
Disc Plough	3		3	6
Power Tiller	10	2	1	13
Bullock Plough		5		5

Equipment Type	Northern Region	Upper East Region	Upper West Region	Total
Total	101	67	66	234

In addition, as part of the collaboration with Grameen Foundation to train outgrower businesses to use ICT to provide extension services to their outgrowers. Thirty nine OBs were provided Samsung tablets. The purpose is to help them expand and improve the quality of the extension service they provide to their out growers. Grameen Foundation funded the trainings and will assist with the monitoring process.

Furthermore, ADVANCE commenced the process to award about 20 tractors and implements to a few OBs to facilitate timely land preparation this cropping season, and is in the process of selecting the OB beneficiaries. The Northern Region will benefit from ten tractors, while the Upper East and Upper West will get five tractors each. Also, the project is working on procuring multi-purpose shellers and threshers, pneumatic planters, rippers and dryers, to assist farmers in the coming season. The process has also commenced to provide a modern rice mill to process rice from the Fumbisi and Tono catchment area to reduce the losses incurred by transporting paddy to Kumasi for processing.

Ghana Agricultural Insurance Pool (GAIP)

The first phase of grant support to GAIP ended in December last year. ADVANCE, together with USAID's Financing Agriculture Project (FinGAP), funded GAIP to implement programs that increase farmers' access to crop insurance through marketing officers. The agricultural insurance scheme is designed to buy down associated weather risks, which deter farmers from investing in their farm activities, and is aimed at making them more competitive at the national level. GAIP has rolled out good outreach messages on well-developed agricultural policies to mitigate risks and motivate new and existing farmers to sign on to crop insurance policies. The process has commenced to extend this grant support to GAIP to continue with the program. Focus will be placed on the issue of sustainability, so an exit plan will be drawn to make GAIP self-sustaining when grant support ends.

Ghana Grains Council (GGC)

During the reporting period, about \$90,000 was disbursed to GGC for implementation of their activities as defined in the grant agreement and mentioned in the section 4.2.5.

New initiatives

A major focus of the Grants activities in the coming quarter will be the provision of farm equipment that enhances productivity and introduces appropriate innovations to mitigate climate change risk. The introduction of rippers will contribute greatly towards conservation of moisture in the soils and reduce the impact of the perennial problem of inadequate rains for crop production. In this wise, the project will promote the use of rippers through matching grants for their purchase. This will invariably promote climate smart agriculture and contribute towards the achievement of ADVANCE's objectives.

The grants program will also aim at strengthening the management of outgrower businesses by encouraging them to engage farm managers and supporting them with the provision of motor bikes to deliver advisory services and monitoring. This will greatly improve the smallholder - OB linkage and lead to increased recovery of investments and incomes.

The use and impact of the production, harvesting and processing equipment provided to farmers for the various commodities will be closely monitored during the quarter. Renewed efforts will also be

made through the project's seasonal events to create direct contacts and build relationships between ADVANCE stakeholders and equipment vendors to ensure sustainability and after sales support.

5.4 Monitoring and evaluation

The monitoring, evaluation and learning (ME&L) unit during the period under review focused on capacity building, work planning, regular monitoring, data analysis, as well as profiling new beneficiaries.

Quarterly work planning

The project held its quarterly technical review meeting in Tamale in January 2016. Each region and each technical and administration components presented the previous quarter's achievements and challenges and discussed the activities and strategies to implement during the second quarter.

Gross Margin Data analysis

The second phase of the gross margin data collection was completed in December 2015. This quarter, the team cleaned and analyzed the data and shared the provisional findings with USAID in February.

Capacity Development

All the technical staff members received a two day training, conducted in each regional office, on the indicators definitions, collection and calculation, report writing as well as navigation through the project dashboard that provides live access to the indicator values.

The APOs and the field M&E team were also taken through the demo plot management database. This new tool will help them collect and report quality and exhaustive data that will inform them on their daily implementation of activities on the demo plots. .

A quarterly M&E review meeting was held as well. Lessons from the previous quarter performances were reviewed. New forms were introduced for new activities (Radio Programs, Sales Surveys) to adequately collect project data. The team was also introduced to statistical tests and design of mobile based data collection questionnaires. These new tools will be used to improve the efficiency and timeliness of data collection and processing.

Sales survey

A survey is currently underway to collect January to March sales data from the smallholders that were surveyed in 2015 during the gross margin survey. Collection is made by phones to reduce costs. Spot checks at the level of a sample beneficiaries will be conducted to verify the quality of the collected data, which will be used to report on the incremental sales indicator and update the gross margin values.

Profiling

The project is currently identifying and enrolling new smallholders, OBs and other value chain actors. Additional short term staff were recruited and trained for this purpose. During the quarter under review, 18,427 individuals have been profiled. Tablet based profiling questionnaires are currently being tested for a full roll out next FY.

Learning activities

Eight learning topics will be studied this FY. Related SOWs were developed and the procurement process has started.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

At the beginning of the quarter, the project organized training across all sub-offices on the use of the Global Positioning System (GPS) and photo taking for drivers and other technical staff on the project

In addition, the following maps were produced for the use of the technical staff:

- Proposed input dealer location map
- Crop demonstration locations over soil-crop suitability maps
- Demonstration crop yield over soil-crop suitability maps
- Grantee maps
- Beneficiary farmers map
- Profiled farmers map
- Demo plots yield

5.5 Public Relations and Communications

Bi-weekly bullets

During the reporting period, 11 informational bi-weekly bullets were submitted to USAID and ACDI/VOCA. The bullets demonstrated USAID ADVANCE's major activities, emerging results and impact.

Success stories

Six "Telling our Story" write up and personal interest stories were submitted to USAID and ACDI/VOCA as part of this report.

Quarterly Newsletter

The March 2016 edition of the ADVANCE Newsletter was published and distributed to more than 1,000 recipients including partners, clients and actors involved in the project, in both electronic and printed form. The newsletter was also posted on the ACDI/VOCA ASPIREglobal community "Learning Champions" page to increase awareness of project's impact. An interactive version of the newsletter has been posted on the ADVANCE project page on the ACDI/VOCA website under a newly created headline "Latest News". Link to the newsletter: <http://acdivoca.org/node/2472>

Building public awareness

ADVANCE involved the electronic and print media at key project activities to build public awareness of USAID's support, progress, accomplishment and impact. Media coverage for some of the activities are as follows:

- A story on the first annual southern Ghana pre-harvest agribusiness event - "25% of food lost through poor post-harvest handling"
 - Business & Financial Times, Wednesday, March 9 – Thursday 10, 2016, Page : 4
 - Links to electronic publications:
 - The Finder, March 10, 2016
<http://www.thefinderonline.com/News/USAID-co-hosts-agribusiness-pre-harvest-event.html>
 - News Ghana, March 4, 2016
<http://www.newsghana.com.gh/usaids-and-ghana-grains-council-to-hold-agric-forum-in-kumasi/>
 - African Press Organization, March 4, 2016

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- <https://appablog.wordpress.com/2016/03/04/usaids-co-hosts-first-annual-southern-ghana-agribusiness-pre-harvest-event/>
 - Ghana Business News, March 5, 2016
 - <https://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2016/03/05/usaids-holds-first-agric-pre-harvest-event-for-southern-ghana/>
 - Ghana.gov.gh
 - <http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/media-center/news/2547-invest-in-agriculture-for-poverty-alleviation-usaid-director-urges-government>
 - West Africa Wire Reports, March 6, 2016
 - <http://westafricawire.com/stories/510699371-usaid-holds-pre-harvest-event-in-southern-ghana>
 - A story on the International Women’s Day celebration – “ USAID ADVANCE Marks International Women’s Day”
 - Ghana News Agency, March 11, 2016
 - <http://www.ghananewsagency.org/social/usaids-advance-mark-international-women-s-day--101433>

Annex 1: Indicator table

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY16 Target	FY16 Q2 Actuals	FY16 Actuals	% FY16 Achievement	Comments
CI	OP1	Number of direct project beneficiaries	78,000	31,119	39,373	50.48%	The progress made so far shows that the target for the year will be achieved
		Male	42,900	20,541	24,081		
		Female	35,100	10,578	15,292		
FTF	OP2	Number of private enterprises (for profit), producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) receiving USG assistance	450	452	492	109.33%	
FTF	OP3	Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security trainings	58,500	11,965	22,413	38.31%	More individuals will be trained as the crop season starts later in the year
		Male	32175	5,953	10,979		
		Female	26325	6,012	11,434		
FTF	OP4	Value of agricultural and rural loans	\$1,000,000	\$301,280	\$362,685	36.27%	More loans will be applied for and disbursed when the season starts, later this year
		Male		\$296,087			
		Female		\$5,193			
FTF	OP5	Value of new private sector investment in agricultural sector or value chain (USD)	\$800,000	\$86,907	\$109,084	13.64%	More investment will occur when the season starts, later this year

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY16 Target	FY16 Q2 Actuals	FY16 Actuals	% FY16 Achievement	Comments
FTF	OP6	Number of MSME including farmers receiving USG assistance to access loans	10,000	28	175	1.75%	More MSMEs will access loans as the season starts
FTF	OC1	Gross margins per hectare for selected crops US Dollar under marketing arrangements fostered by the activity (USD/ha)					Only provisional data are available. Final data will be reported in Q4
		Maize	423				
		Male	416				
		Female	435				
		Rice	644				
		Male	648				
		Female	625				
		Soy	437				
		Female	474				
FTF	OC2	Number of hectares under improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	81,900				Only provisional data are available. Final data will be reported in Q4
FTF	OC3	Number of farmers and others who have applied new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	54,600				Only provisional data are available. Final data will be reported in Q4
		Male	30030				
		Female	24570				

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY16 Target	FY16 Q2 Actuals	FY16 Actuals	% FY16 Achievement	Comments
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	338		NA	NA	Data will be reported in Q4
FTF	OC5	Value of incremental sales (collected at farm-level) attributed to FTF implementation	\$22,080,000	NA	NA	NA	Due to the agricultural calendar, data will be provided in Q4
		Maize	\$8,720,000				
		Rice	\$9,190,000				
		Soy	\$4,170,000				
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	50	NA	NA	NA	Survey will take place in Q3 and data will be reported in Q4
CI	OC8	Number of organizations/enterprises identified as high potential for future awards	4	NA	NA	NA	Activities will start in the third quarter
CI	OP8	Number of organizations/enterprises receiving capacity building support against key milestones	20	NA	NA	NA	Activities will start in the third quarter
F	OP9	Number of awards made directly to local organizations by USAID	3	NA	NA	NA	Activities will start in the third quarter

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY16 Target	FY16 Q2 Actuals	FY16 Actuals	% FY16 Achievement	Comments
FTF	OP10	Number of Rural Households benefitting directly from USG interventions	54,600	28,641	35,900	65.75%	The progress made so far shows that the target for the year will be achieved
FTF	OP11	Number of vulnerable households benefitting directly from USG interventions	39,000	24,761	31,363	80.42%	The progress made so far shows that the target for the year will be achieved
FTF	OP12	Number of members of producer organizations and community based organizations receiving USG assistance	6,750	3,690	4,093	60.64%	The progress made so far shows that the target for the year will be achieved
FTF	OP13	Number of MSMEs including farmers, receiving Business Development Services as result of USG assistance	31,200	5,827	8,332	26.71%	More MSMEs will receive BDS as the season starts
CI	OC9	Value chain actors accessing finance	225	5	14	6.22%	More actors will access loans as the season starts

Annex 2: Success stories and case studies



SUCCESS STORY

Anti-bush fire campaign records successes



An official of Ghana National Fire Service educating on the effects of bushfire

Photo credit: Adam Aronow, Peace Corps Volunteer with the ADVANCE project

“I think all the measures we took to stop bushfires in the communities have helped a lot in reducing the incidences this year,” said Camilo Ibkan, spokesperson for the Sentu Chief

Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

Farmers in Northern Ghana dread the harmattan season not only because of the dryness and dust that come with it but also the bushfires that are usually experienced during the period. Every year, many farmers lose their produce before harvest due to fires. There are cases where farmers have lost almost 100% of their produce to the fires. Apart from the loss of produce, bushfires destroy soil nutrients, especially organic matter, disturbs the soil structure and reduces the soil’s capacity to hold moisture for plant nourishment.

USAID ADVANCE is supporting the maize, rice and soybean value chains to achieve increased competitiveness. As part of this goal, the project is pursuing a climate smart agricultural strategy that focuses on promoting minimum soil disturbance and cover crop systems. Cover crop systems involves providing soil cover, protecting the soil surface while at the same time providing organic matter to the soil. However, bushfires pose a challenge to maintaining the cover crop systems. To help address this perennial problem, USAID/ADVANCE embarked on an aggressive anti-bushfire campaign in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency, National Disaster Management Organization and the Ghana National Fire Service (all government agencies), chiefs, opinion leaders, farmers, community members and the media, in Northern Ghana to draw public’s attention to the devastating effect of bushfires on food production and how to prevent them. The campaign involved broadcasting radio messages in both English and local languages against setting bushfires, hanging banners inscribed with “Stop bushfires” at vantage places, sensitizing farmers on the prevention of bushfires during field days and community forums.

Four months into the campaign, the effort has yielded some results:

At Sentu and surrounding communities in the Lambussie Karni District of the Upper West Region, known for its frequent bushfires, recorded a 25 per cent decline in the 2015/16 harvesting season.

Before the campaign, between 65 to 70 percent of the community’s vegetative cover was destroyed due to bushfires. The Chief and leaders of the Sentu community drew up several measures comprising punitive actions against offenders, setting up a monitoring fire vigilante group, engaging community members in discussions on how to stop bushfires among others.

In Loggu in the same region, a USAID ADVANCE outgrower business owner Mac Adams reported that 70 of his female smallholder farmers did not burn their field as their normal practice to clear it due to the campaign. *“For the first time in many years, about 210 acres of field were not burned. Thank you ADVANCE for your campaign. I hope gradually farmers will come to understand the effect of bushfires and stop them”*, said Mac Adams.

The Upper East Region recorded a 40 per cent decline in the two communities – Kapania and Gani - where the campaign took place. The Chief of Kapania, Ben Akanmoroba confirmed that after the launch, the community held a meeting to further inform the people of the need to prevent bush fires. As a result, no burning occurred there after the launch. *“See how the trees are looking green, we can get fruits from the trees and our animals do not go far to feed”*, he said.

In Gani, Abannyogre, Ayamigu, a youth leader reported that an accidental bush fire was started, but the community members quickly came together to put it off preventing it from spreading. *“Previously, this would have been nobody’s business. However, this thinking has changed because the people are seeing the benefits of no bush fire. Our animals get feed around here and this can be testified by their droppings littered all over. The droppings will be used as manure for our crops,”* said Abannyogre, Ayamigu, a youth leader at Gani community.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GHANA

FIRST PERSON

Setting an example to Ghanaian youth to enter Agriculture – Prince Danso



Prince at one of USAID ADVANCE supported agricultural event

Photo credit: Adam Aronow,
Peace Corp volunteer with
ADVANCE Project

“I recently completed a 16-bedroom house at Ejura and am taking care of the education of four siblings. I have become a role model for the young men in Ejura who approach me to learn from my experience. I advise the youth that farming is good and rewarding, especially if one applies the best agricultural practices, he will get good yields. Farming is not only for old people, young people like you can also go into it,” said Prince.

Telling Our Story

U.S. Agency for International Development
Washington, DC 20523-1000
<http://stories.usaid.gov>

Despite numerous strategies adopted by the Ghanaian government and other agricultural stakeholders to attract the youth into agriculture, most young people in Ghana shy away from farming with the perception that farming belongs to the elderly. Therefore when USAID ADVANCE discovered 27 year old Prince Owusu Danso engaged in commercial farming, the project took a special interest to support him.

The USAID ADVANCE project led by ACDI/VOCA and supported by Technoserve, ACDEP and Pab Consult, is a key part of the Feed the Future initiative in Ghana. It is targeted to reach 113,000 maize, rice and soybean smallholder farmers to achieve greater food security. The project builds the capacity of commercial farmers through an outgrower business model it has developed to enable them better manage and expand business service operations that profitably assist smallholder farmers.

Prince Owusu Danso is the youngest nucleus farmer working with the USAID ADVANCE Project. After completing his technical education in 2007, Prince started his own farm at Ejura in the Ashanti Region. He cultivated an acre maize farm with seeds and fertilizer bought on credit. From that one acre, he harvested 0.8 Mt. Happy with that yield, Prince increased his acreage to two the following year.

After eight years of hard work, Prince has a 45-acre maize farm and works with 239 smallholder farmers who he provides fertilizer and weedicide on credit. Though Prince was making some improvement in his farming business, he acknowledges that coming into contact with USAID ADVANCE in 2015, has taken his business to the next level. The project has trained him and his smallholder farmers on best agronomic practices including row planting, use of certified seeds, and proper application of fertilizer as well as other agro chemicals. Through the training, his smallholder farmers are realizing good yields which enable them repay him for the services he provides them. The project also assisted him to prepare a business plan and linked him to Esoko Ltd and Ignitia Ghana Ltd which to receive weekly SMS on agronomic tips, market prices of commodities and weather information respectively to better plan and organize his planting and schedule other agronomic practices. The project connected him to two buyers – Spice Farms and Akate Farms- both poultry farms. Last year, he supplied 10 Mt of maize valued at GHC135,000 (US\$3,750) to Spice Farms. Arrangements have been made to supply Akate Farms this year.

USAID ADVANCE has also supported him with a Samsung Galaxy Tab and a Pico projector which he uses to profile his farmers, teach them good agronomic practices and keep records. He counts on us for more knowledge and innovations.



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

GHANA

SUCCESS STORY

Mary Anabila – An epitome of Women Empowerment



Mary Anabila sitting on her tractor.

Photo credit: ADVANCE Project, Bolga office

“ADVANCE has opened my eyes to become more business minded. Now I know how to manage my business better. I am a widow but I can afford to buy anything I want to support my family. I am even taking care of the needs of other family members. I advise all women to be hardworking and honest in whatever they do so that they will become great in future,” remarks Mary.

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In Northern Ghana, farming equipment such as power tillers, rotary weeders, donkey carts, reapers, tractors and warehouses are usually owned by men. Even the matching grant scheme run by USAID ADVANCE to enable beneficiaries purchase such farming equipment are more easily accessed by men. So when in July 2015, 58 year old Mary Anabila, project beneficiary aggregator raised an amount of GHC40,000 (US\$11,351.77) as 30 per cent leverage to acquire a tractor, the project saw it as a great achievement and a positive step towards women empowerment.

USAID ADVANCE, implemented by ACDI/VOCA together with Technoserve, ACDEP and PAB Consult, among other things supports beneficiaries with matching grants to purchase various farm equipment including tractors, power tillers, harvesters, threshers, rice mills, planters, dibblers, donkey carts among other small equipment (tarpaulins, moisture meters and weighing scales). Beneficiaries pay 30 per cent of the cost of the equipment whereas USAID ADVANCE pays the remaining 70 per cent.

Usually, grantees either borrow or access credit from financial institutions to pay their part of the leverage. In the case of Mary Anabila, she paid the leverage from savings she had made from her aggregation business.

“I decided to get a tractor to help provide timely ploughing for the smallholder farmers from whom I buy maize. When they get their fields ploughed early enough they will be able to plant at the right time so that I can buy from them at the right time. The timely ploughing service can even let them increase their acreage so that I can get more grains to buy.” says Mary.

Mary indicated that apart from using the tractor to provide timely ploughing services for her smallholder farmers, the tractor helps convey farmers produce from the farm to either the warehouse for storage or market for sale. She charges for that service which is giving her extra income. “*All I need to do is to fit a trailer to the tractor and it is ready to carry produce to the warehouse and other places for those who hire it,*” says Mary.

Mary works with 430 (258 females and 172 males) smallholder farmers from whom she buys maize. She started working with USAID ADVANCE in 2011 during the project’s first phase. Project interventions she has benefitted from include an 80 mt warehouse, a sheller, a tarpaulin, a moisture meter and a weighing scale. All these equipment are helping her maintain product quality for her end market. In addition to the 80 Mt warehouse, she has two other improvised storage facilities to meet the storage needs of surrounding communities.

As part of the project’s gender strategy, USAID ADVANCE is mainstreaming gender equity at all levels of the project. It continues to sensitize and pursue equitable access to resources by all genders especially women smallholder farmers to increase productivity, income and wellbeing of their families and Mary is an example of this effort.



FIRST PERSON

Improved agricultural practices increase yield



Sayibu is happy with the yield he got from an acre maize farm. Behind him are the bagged maize.

Photo credit: Adam Aronow, Peace Corps volunteer with the ADVANCE Project

“The other farmers are impressed with the yield I got and are committed to do same on their farm in the upcoming planting season. I am going to invest more money in buying seed, fertilizer and other agro chemicals for a two acre farm I intend to do in the next season. Investing in technology is very good. We cannot overlook it,” says Sayibu Abdul Rahman

The skills and basic knowledge acquired by farmers, through training on good agricultural practices has significantly improved their yields and their income.

Sayibu Abdul Rahman is a farmer in Dindo, a rural community in the Kumbungu District of the Northern Region. He had been cultivating an acre and an acre and half of maize and rice respectively for the past seven years, but lacked the skills and knowledge to increase his yields and get a sustainable income to support his family. Sayibu, like many smallholder farmers, employed traditional methods of farming: using seed saved the previous year from his farm without proper spacing. *“I broadcasted [throwing the seed onto the field] the maize before the tractor will plough the field and that buried the seeds. Sometimes I dibbled (poked holes) and put in the seed by hand – the spacing was not even. In some part of the field, the plants will be crowded. I did not know how to apply fertilizer properly either,”* said Sayibu.

The USAID Ghana Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement (ADVANCE) Project, implemented by ACDI/VOCA, with support from Technoserve, ACDEP and PAB Consult, trains farmers and farmer-based organizations (FBOs), to increase the scale and efficiency of their farms with improved production and post-harvest handling practices. This ranges from using improved seed varieties and other inputs, to mechanized shelling and threshing, storage, and facilitating market access.

In 2015, Sayibu was one of 11,653 smallholder farmers USAID ADVANCE, in partnership with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, trained on good agricultural practices and post-harvest handling using demonstration plots. The farmers learned row planting and spacing, using improved seeds, proper application of fertilizer and other chemicals. They also learned about shelling harvested maize on a tarpaulin to reduce contamination and losses, as well as basic business practices like negotiating prices for their produce and keeping proper records of their farming activities. *“The training on good agricultural practices and post-harvest handling has helped me know the importance to plant my maize in rows for easy weeding, pest control, fertilizer application and harvesting,”* remarked Sayibu.

Applying the good agricultural practices learned on a one acre maize farm more than doubled Sayibu’s yield from 0.6 mt to 1.4 mt. Sayibu is convinced that applying good agricultural practices leads to increase in yield. He intends to invest in seed, fertilizer and agro chemicals for increased yield.

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