

ADVANCE II Quarterly Report



SUBMITTED TO:

Pearl Ackah
AOR, USAID/GHANA
P.O. Box 1630
Accra, Ghana
packah@usaid.gov

SUBMITTED BY:

ACDI/VOCA
Dr Emmanuel Dormon
Chief of Party
P.O. Box KD 138
Accra, Ghana
edormon@acdivocaghana.org



WITH:

Association of Church Development Projects
(ACDEP)
PAB Consult
TechnoServe

April 30, 2015

This report covers activities under USAID
Cooperative Agreement No. AID-641-A-14-00001

Contents

Acronyms	iii
Executive summary	1
1 Introduction	3
2 Project management.....	3
2.1 Linkage to other programs.....	3
2.2 Collaboration with MoFA and other projects and programs.....	5
3 Summary of results	5
3.1 Project direct beneficiaries	5
3.2 Gross margins and new technologies application	6
3.3 Number of firms operating more profitably	7
3.4 Value of sales (and incremental sales) disaggregated by crop and gender.....	7
3.5 Value of agricultural and rural loans and new private sector investments.....	7
3.6 Capacity building of organisations.....	7
4 Progress with technical delivery	8
4.1 Sub-purpose 1: Increased agricultural productivity in targeted commodities.....	8
4.1.1 Actor supported demo sites.....	8
4.1.2 Standard crop production protocols.....	9
4.1.3 Field management program	9
4.1.4 Pre-season agribusiness forum	10
4.1.5 Farmer mentor program	10
4.1.6 Input/equipment access improved.....	11
4.1.7 Farm business planning.....	11
4.1.8 Outgrower business management.....	12
4.1.9 Financial services	12
4.1.10 Input dealer business development program.....	13
4.1.11 Smallholder investment	13
4.1.12 Land for women	13
4.1.13 Climate smart conservation agriculture.....	14
4.2 Sub-purpose 2: Increased market access and trade of targeted commodities.....	15
4.2.1 Market linkage development.....	15
4.2.2 Lead firm competitiveness.....	17
4.2.3 Trade association support.....	17

4.2.4	North Ghana rice milling	19
4.2.5	Regional/cross border trade and transport	20
4.2.6	Community based market systems strengthened	20
4.3	Sub-purpose 3: Strengthened capacity for advocacy and activity implementation.....	21
4.3.1	Advocacy group development	21
4.3.2	Advocacy capacity for national organisations strengthened.....	23
4.3.3	District assemblies plans for agricultural development.....	23
4.3.4	Capacity development for program implementation	24
4.3.5	Capacity development for FBEs	25
4.3.6	GAMSAP	25
5	Program support	27
5.1	Gender Program.....	27
5.1.1	Women’s access to land.....	27
5.1.2	Establish women as NFs.....	27
5.1.3	OBM and women’s leadership and entrepreneurship	28
5.1.4	Women VSLAs and link to market opportunities.....	28
5.1.5	International Women’s Day	28
5.1.6	Women’s access to information and communication technologies.....	29
5.2	Environment Support.....	29
5.2.1	General environmental compliance.....	29
5.2.2	Improving agrochemical management	30
5.2.3	Climate smart and water management	30
5.3	Grants Program	31
5.4	Public Relations and Communication	32
6	Monitoring, evaluation and learning	33
	Annex 1: Indicator table.....	35
	Annex 2: Partnership with private sector entities for the demo sites.....	41
	Annex 3: Identified areas of support after the OCAT findings.....	42

Acronyms

AEA	Agriculture Extension Agent
APO	Agricultural Productivity Officer
APPDF	Agriculture Private Public Dialogue Forum
APSP	Agricultural Policy Support Project
APSP	Agriculture Policy Support Project
ASWG	Agriculture Sector Working Group
ATT	Agriculture Technology Transfer
BDS	Business Development Services
BUCOBANK	Builsa Community Bank
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDO	Capacity Development Officer
CILSS	Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
DAIP	District Agricultural Investment Plan
DCD	District Coordinating Director
DCE	District Chief Executive
DCE	District Chief Executives
DVCC	District Agricultural Value Chain Councils
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FaaB	Farming as a Business
FBE	Farmer Based Enterprise
FBO	Farmer Based Organization
FinGAP	Financing Ghanaian Agriculture Project
FY	Fiscal Year
GAIDA	Ghana Agro Input Dealers Association
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice
GGC	Ghana Grain Council
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPRTU	Ghana Private Road Transport Union
GPS	Global Positioning System
IP	Implementing Partner
KML	Knowledge Management and Learning
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
(M)SME	(Medium) Small and Micro Enterprise
MWRS	Manual Warehouse Receipt Software
NBSSI	National Board for Small Scale Industries
NF	Nucleus Farmer
NSAICU	Northern Sector Agriculture Investment Coordination Unit
OB	Outgrower Business
OBM	Outgrower Business Management
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PEF	Private Enterprise Foundation

PFI	Partner Financial Institution
PHH	Post-Harvest Handling
SADA	Savannah Accelerated Development Authority
SAPO	South Agricultural Productivity Officer
SARI	Savanna Agricultural Research Institute
SEEDPAG	Seed Producers Association of Ghana
SEG	Small Equipment Grant
SfL	School for Life
SHF	Smallholder Farmer
SMFM	Sell More For More
SOW	Scope of Work
SRI	Intensive Rice culture System
SSP	Spray Services providers
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat analysis
TMO	Trade and Marketing Officer
UDP	Urea Deep Placement
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WFP	World Food Program
WRS	Warehouse Receipt System

Executive summary

During the second quarter of FY2015, the project supported 6,046 individuals through training activities, provision of development services, loans and linkage to markets. A total of 3,540 of these beneficiaries were male (58.5%) and 2506, female (41.5%), which is greater than our target of 40% of female participation. Among the individuals supported, 6,000 (of which 41.7% were female) attended one or more agriculture and food security training, including Sell More for More, Farming as a Business, and Women's Leadership. Throughout this quarter the project dedicated more resources to the identification and profiling of 27,049 new potential project beneficiaries. ADVANCE II also supported 406 private enterprises, producer organizations, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) through training and business development services.

The results of the FY14 gross margin and technologies application survey were completed as of the current quarter. Gross margin values are at 839.98 USD/ha, 638.67 USD/ha and 676.4 USD/ha for maize, rice and soy crop respectively. Overall, 29,914 farmers and others (of whom 61% are male and 39% female) applied improved technologies and management practices in FY14. The high application rate (over 80%) allowed the ADVANCE II project to overachieve its FY14 target of 14,000 and even our FY15 target of 25,000 beneficiaries applying improved technologies and management practices. As a corollary, the project has also overachieved its target of 20,000 ha under improved technologies with the current actual value of 45,066 ha. These figures will be compared with the FY14 baseline values that will be released during the next quarter.

Thanks to the facilitation by ADVANCE II, a total of 256,000 GHS (USD 68,449) of cash loans were disbursed during the reporting period to four male beneficiaries and also to one married couple, jointly. Total loans disbursed, year to date, are USD 522,530, which represents 65.3% of the target for FY15. The project currently has 1,750,683 GHS (valued USD 468,097) in the pipeline, waiting for approval and disbursement.

In addition, Q2 activities were mainly focused on the preparation of the upcoming 2015 agriculture season. Two-hundred sites for maize, rice and soya demonstrations are being selected in the North, and an additional 50 sites have been identified in the North exclusively for GAMSAP demonstrations of 30Y87 and 30F32 maize hybrid seeds. A total of 22 agribusiness firms (input dealers, aggregators, processors) and 105 Outgrower Businesses (OBs) – Nucleus Farmers (NFs) and established Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) – have already confirmed their willingness to partner with the project to provide land, land preparation services, seeds, fertilizers, agrochemicals and other resources towards the successful implementation of 108 of the demonstration sites. In the South, 37 OB leaders were supported to identify more than eighty-one (out of the targeted one hundred) locations for demonstrations in the coming major season during the current reporting period.

The Pre-season Agribusiness Forum took place in Tamale during Q2 and included the participation of over 800 people. It was led by the Agriculture Technology Transfer Project (ATT) with the active collaboration of ADVANCE II and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), focusing on pre-season priorities including inputs, equipment, finance, messaging services, crop insurance and crop income potential.

Also during the current reporting period, 10 contracts were facilitated between buyers and farmers/groups. Four of them, on maize and soybean, and with open pricing, dependent on prevailing market price, were signed between BASA Agro business Enterprise and four nucleus farmers in the Gushegu District during a trade mission. A total of six outgrower contracts were executed between three rice millers and six smallholder farmer groups in the Lonto area of the Kpandai district in the Northern region. Under this agreement the millers will supply 4Mt of Jasmine 85 seeds to the farmers for the 2015 production season. The farmers will pay the millers back, in-kind, with 45.5 Mt of paddy rice at harvest.

As part of efforts to equip advocacy groups with relevant knowledge and understanding of agricultural policy issues, nine Agricultural Policy Education and Sensitization Forums were organized jointly with the Agriculture Policy Support Project (APSP) in the Northern and Upper East regions. The forums educated 610 participants (including farmers, FBOs, an assembly member), out of whom 23% were women, about the Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II) and its implementation plan – the Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP).

Furthermore, during the quarter, 14 district assemblies have signed MOUs with ADVANCE II for support in the development and promotion of district agricultural investment plans.

International Women’s Day was also celebrated during this period. ADVANCE II organized this event in Binaba, Upper East region, with the theme *Women: Making it Happen in Agriculture*, in consistency with the global theme. The event attracted around 300 people, including school children and other community members, farmers and dignitaries from the District Assembly and MoFA. The day was used to highlight and celebrate the contributions and successes of women along the value chain.



Photo 1: Award Ceremony in Binaba - Quiz winners

1 Introduction

This document presents the main achievements and key activities implemented by ADVANCE II during the second quarter (Q2) of FY15. It is organized by Sub-Purpose of the project and includes the activities of the program support components and the Monitoring and Evaluation and Learning unit, leading to:

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

Most of the activities undertaken during this period were focused on the preparations for the upcoming 2015 agriculture season, including the selection of demo sites, the organization of the pre-season event, further training of project beneficiaries, and profiling of new potential beneficiaries. The project also continued efforts started last year and in the previous quarter to improve the linkages between farmers and the market, and their integration in the value chain. The capacity building preparation activities of our partner organization are also ongoing.

On March 1, the project's Chief of Party, Tom Carr, departed the project. Dr Emmanuel Dormon was subsequently approved by USAID as the Chief of Party, a key personnel position, on the ADVANCE II project. Dr. Nirinjaka Ramasinjatovo received approval to fill Dr Dormon's previous position of M&E and Learning Specialist, also a key personnel position.

2 Project management

2.1 Collaboration with other programs

ATT

ADVANCE II continues to reinforce collaboration with the Agriculture Technology Transfer Project (ATT) in preparation for the upcoming crop season. Protocols for maize, rice and soya productions were developed with ATT during this Q2. These protocols will be used by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture's Agricultural Extension Agents (MoFA's AEAs) and ADVANCE II Lead Farmers to train smallholder farmers. Both projects shared plans and preparations on Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA), specifically on the introduction of an implement to be used for minimum-tillage, planting and fertilizer application, with testing scheduled for this season. Plans to jointly establish three Learning Centers on CSA were also discussed during the current reporting period. Another opportunity for collaboration also occurred during Q2, with the organization and implementation of the Pre-Season Event, hosted by ATT, with the active collaboration of the ADVANCE II project.

SPRING

The projects will make a presence measurement of aflatoxins in the stored maize of 30 ADVANCE II aggregators. The SPRING Project will fund the test kits and ADVANCE II will provide the logistics and implement the tests.

SEND – Ghana

SEND – Ghana is implementing a project called FOSTERING which targets smallholder farmers through the development of cooperatives in the Eastern corridor of the Northern region. A draft MoU has been developed and submitted to SEND Ghana for inputs and finalization: ADVANCE II will train SPRING's Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) in Salaga and Yendi on Sell More for More and Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs).

Concern Universal

ADVANCE II is working with Concern Universal through their Kintampo North office to offer and set up Village Savings and Loans for smallholder farmers in communities in that district.

Northern Sector Agriculture Investment Coordination Unit (NSAICU)

The NSAICU, with support from MoFA, organizes the Agriculture Sector Working Group (ASWG) meetings and workshops for stakeholders in the rice, soya and maize value chains. The ADVANCE II Tamale office has been actively involved in these activities, sharing project interventions and approaches with stakeholders.

World Food Program (WFP)

Ten nucleus farmers (NF) who produce maize in Gushegu have been linked to the WFP. Discussions are ongoing for these NFs to explore the possibility of supplying maize through the Purchase for Progress (P4P) program. Also, Farmer Field Training Days were organized for WFP groups on Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and Post-Harvest Handling (PHH) in the Tolon district.

University for Development Studies

The Faculty of Agribusiness and Communication Science of the University for Development Studies (UDS) collaborated with ADVANCE II to organize the first of a series of Entrepreneurship Seminars for 400 students and lecturers. The seminar was aimed at exposing agriculture graduates from the university to entrepreneurial opportunities throughout the soya, maize and rice value chains in the Northern Region through experience sharing by successful entrepreneurs. Two of the ADVANCE II out-grower businesses, God's Grace Farmers Association and Gundaa Produce Company, delivered presentations, "The experiences of a Female Nucleus Farmer in the Northern Region" and "The Gundaa Produce Company: an Aggregation and Nucleus Farmer Business in the Northern Region".

Masara Na'ziki

The ADVANCE II Upper West office initiated discussions with Masara Na'ziki in the Sissala West District (Gwollu) for Masara to provide input support for the establishment of at least two demo plots in that district. They would also participate in all of the field days held in relation to those plots to facilitate the technology and GAPs delivery to outgrowers in collaboration with MoFA's AEA's.

Environmental Protection Agency

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in conjunction with the Plant Protection and Regulatory Services (PPRS) of the MoFA, collaborated with ADVANCE II to train 71 of our beneficiaries on appropriate use and handling of agro-inputs.

2.2 Collaboration with MoFA

The three Regional Offices in the North are collaborating with MoFA in identifying new actors and establishing field demonstrations in all districts of the regions to train project beneficiary farmers on Good Agronomic Practices (GAPs). MoFA AEAs are also engaged as resource partners in radio agricultural programs to disseminate GAPs, especially on timely fertilizer application, appropriate rates of agro-chemical application and new farming technology messages to farming communities. In addition, MoFA has helped with the development of crop calendars for five radio stations to be used to educate farmers on appropriate dates to plant maize, rice and soya to ensure maximum yields.

Additionally the Upper East Regional office collaborated with MoFA to organize a “durbar” (special gathering under the presence of traditional chiefs) to commemorate International Women’s Day in Binaba.

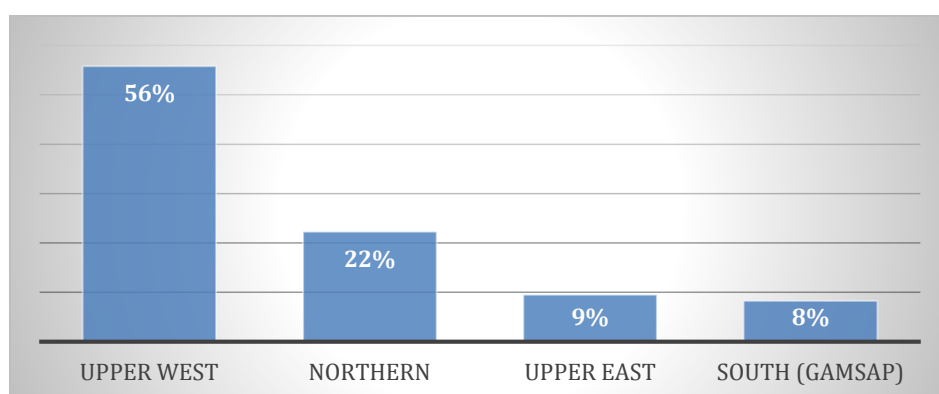
3 Summary of results

This section presents the values of our key indicators realized during the current reporting period as a result of the activities described in Section 4 of this document. The quarter’s results are summarized in the Indicator table in Annex1.

3.1 Project direct beneficiaries

During this quarter, the project supported 6,046 individuals through training activities, provision of development services, loans and linkage to markets. A total of 3,540 of them are male (58.5%) and 2,506 female (41.5%), which exceeds the project’s target of 40% female participation. As shown in Figure 1, the majority of beneficiaries were primarily located in the Upper West region, where the Farming as a Business training took place so far.

Figure 1: Distribution of SHF beneficiaries by region



Among those 6,046 individuals assisted, 6,000 (of whom 41.7% were female) attended one or more agriculture and food security training, mainly the Sell More for More, Farming as a Business, Women leadership ones among others.

During the second quarter of FY15, ADVANCE II supported 406 private enterprises, producer organizations, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) through training and business development services.

3.2 Gross margins and new technologies application

ADVANCE II administered the FY14 gross margin survey on a representative sample (at 95% interval confidence and 5% margin of error) in December 2014. The gross margin values are presented in the Figure 2. The results show a significant difference across sex, indicating that females have lower gross margins, especially in maize and rice. Table 1 suggests explanations of this difference, including the fact that women had lower yield, and higher production costs, which could be due to the fact that there were fewer women applying improved technologies and practices.

Figure 2: Gross margin by commodity and by sex (USD/ha)

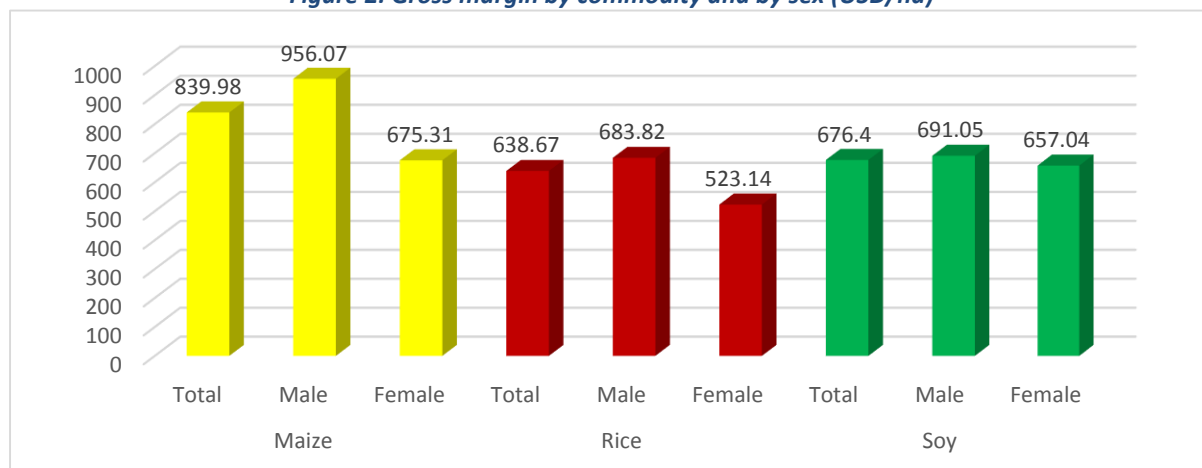


Table 1: Gross margin difference by sex

Sex	Maize		Rice		Soy	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Gross margin (USD/ha)	956	675	684	523	691	657
Yield (Mt/ha)	3.58	3.18	3.04	2.82	1.65	1.49
Production costs USD/ha	193.87	260.48	180.23	261.45	87.09	98.46
% of individuals applying improved technologies/practices	89%	80%	67%	46%	82%	80%

Overall, 29,914 farmers and others (of whom 61% are male and 39% female) applied improved technologies and management practices in FY14. The significant application rate (over 80%) allowed the project to exceed the FY14 target of 14,000 beneficiaries applying improved technologies and management practices. The FY14 total also exceeds FY15 target of 25,000, which was unexpected. As a corollary, the project has also exceeded the target of 20,000 ha under improved technologies with the current actual values of 45,066 ha. These indicators, in excess of annual targets, could be explained by the fact that a vast majority of FY14 beneficiaries were also ADVANCE (I) FY13 beneficiaries. The project team plans to propose a request for a revision of the technologies and practices application related targets in the next quarterly report. This request will also include a proposal of targets on the other indicators following the final baseline survey results and report that will be available during Q3 of FY15.

3.3 Number of firms operating more profitably

This indicator will be reported in the next quarter. Most of the firms that will be surveyed are expected to have completed their annual financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2014 by the beginning of Quarter three.

3.4 Value of sales (and incremental sales) disaggregated by crop and gender

Actual sales made by smallholders for the 2014 production season will be collected and reported in the quarter ending September 2015. Sales for the 2014 production season began at harvest in November/December 2014 and are expected to end in June 2015.

3.5 Value of agricultural and rural loans and new private sector investments

Thanks to ADVANCE II's support, linking our beneficiaries with financial institutions, a total of 256,000 GHS (USD 68,449) in cash loans have been disbursed during this quarter to four male beneficiaries and 1 to a husband and wife (joint). The total loans disbursed, year to date, are USD 522,530, which represents 65.3% of the annual target. Currently, as shown in Table 2, the project has 1,750,683 GHS (valued USD 468,097) in the pipeline, waiting for approval and disbursement by Ecobank, Sinapi Abi Savings and Loans, Bucobank, Agricultural Development Bank and East Mamprusi Community Bank among others. As the season begins, the project will significantly increase the number of beneficiaries receiving loans and will achieve the FY15 target of 20,000 loans disbursed. The financial institutions as well as our OBs will disburse more in-kind and cash loans to the smallholder farmers.

Table 2: Amount of loans pending disbursement in GHS

Facility type	Actor type			Grand Total
	Lead Farmer	Nucleus Farmer	Processor	
Equipment Loan	27,000	302,000		329,000
Equipment loan		7,000		7,000
Inputs		715,683		715,683
Tractor		655,000		655,000
Working capital		30,000		30,000
Working capital			14,000	14,000
Grand Total	27,000	1,709,683	14,000	1,750,683

3.6 Capacity building of organisations

ACDI/VOCA continues to build the capacity of local organizations through subaward and grant mechanisms, with no specific change happening over the past quarter regarding the related indicators values. Conversations were held during the current reporting period regarding plans for the next two quarters to train local organizations on USAID compliance, procedures and documentation in accordance with the USAID Forward initiative.

4 Progress with technical delivery

4.1 Sub-purpose 1: Increased agricultural productivity in targeted commodities

4.1.1 Actor supported demo sites

This activity enhances crop productivity and gross margins. While serving as a vehicle for the private sector input companies (who donate 100% of the materials/inputs for the sites) to expand their clientele base and market links, it also serves as the classroom and laboratory for the farmers who learn various GAPs and post-harvest handling (PHH) principles and practices.

In the first quarter, 313 sites were identified out of which the target of 200 sites for maize, rice and soya demos are being selected. The distribution and focus of these 200 demos are planned per table 3:

Table 3: Distribution and focus of planned demo sites

No.	Objectives	Regional Distribution			
		Northern	Upper East	Upper West	Total
	Maize				
1	Superior performance of Pioneer Hybrid Seed	25	10	15	50
2	Superior performance of Pannar Hybrid Seed	5	5	5	15
3	Performance of standard improved practices in maize	15	5	15	35
	Sub-total	45	20	35	<u>100</u>
	Rice				
4	SRI practices on yields and gross margins	15	10	5	30
5	UDP effect on yields and gross margins	5	5	0	10
6	Use of Kumark soluble tablets on gross margins	5	5	0	10
	Sub-total	25	20	5	<u>50</u>
	Soybean				
7	Effect of P-fertilizer and Inoculant on yields	15	2	10	28
8	Drilling versus Spot planting on yields	15	3	5	22
	Sub-total	30	5	15	<u>50</u>
	GRAND TOTAL	100	45	55	<u>200</u>

A total of 22 agribusiness firms (input dealers, aggregators, processors) and 105 Outgrower Businesses (NFs and established FBOs) have already confirmed their willingness to partner the project to provide land, land preparation services, seeds, fertilizers, agrochemicals and other resources to be used to successfully conduct the demonstrations on 108 sites. These firms are also expected to partner with the project in training farmers in GAPs and in general monitoring of the performance of the

demonstrations. Signing of MoUs with the key partnering firms is being discussed to this end. More information on the participation of those firms and businesses participating in this activity can be found in Annex 2.

Moreover, 50 sites have been identified across the three northern regions exclusively for use of GAMSAP to demonstrate the superior performance of the 30Y87 and 30F32 hybrid seeds.

GAP and PHH training will take place during the next two quarters. Preparation is under way to meet the targets of 1,000 trainings and 15,000 training beneficiaries as planned in the project workplan.

4.1.2 Standard crop production protocols

A joint activity with ATT to develop standard crop production protocols for each of the crops began in the first quarter. Initial drafts of i) lead farmer production manuals (handbooks), ii) A2-sized farmer posters (one per crop) and iii) Trainer/extension flip charts for field training of farmers by trainers (ADVANCE II Agricultural Productivity Officers (APOs), collaborating MoFA AEAs, and OB field agents) on the production protocols are being reviewed for second drafts to be shared at a one day workshop with MoFA and SARI.

In addition, 10,000 SMS, 5,000 voice messages, 25 radio stations, 20 radio dramas and 150 listener groups are targeted for the dissemination of key GAPs topics by the end of FY15.

Key GAP topics for ICT-based dissemination:

- Farming as a Business – Why do I need to plan my farming operations?
- Benefits of using improved seeds
- Timely planting and its advantages
- Plant spacing and its benefits
- Appropriate fertilizer application methods for improved yields
- Crop Management/ Maintenance
- The essence of harvesting at the right time
- Importance of using tarpaulins during threshing and drying of produce

4.1.3 Field management program

The nucleus farmer field management program is meant to facilitate the field management services of the OBs. Key to delivery of these services is the engagement of a field manager or agent who will champion, on behalf of the OB, services including tractor service management, Outgrower (OG) input distribution, post-harvest mechanization, GAP/PHH training, demo site management, product collection and aggregation, community liaison, lead farmer development and marketing. OBs that engage field managers will receive motorbike/motor-king grants as incentives to offset start-up cost and help meet the transportation needs of the job.

To date OBs have hired 49 of the FY15 target of 50 field managers. The next two quarters will be used to encourage and facilitate expansion and quality of services delivered by these OBs through compact arrangements, training and the small equipment grant packages. In addition, the number of OBs with field offices expanded to 37 this quarter. OBs are continuously encouraged to set up small office units from which they can manage their operations, specifically to enable them to keep up with record keeping and management tasks. To enhance this, 60 OBs will be given laptops under the project's grants program to allow them to computerise their operations.

None of these OBs, however, have benefited from the incentive grant package for motorbikes or motor-kings. Applications have been submitted and are being reviewed per the requirements under the grant program.

4.1.4 Pre-season agribusiness forum

The Pre-season Agribusiness Forum took place in Tamale and included the participation of over 800 people, out of whom 345 from the North were sponsored by ADVANCE II including 163 NFs, six lead farmers, 36 FBOs, four aggregators, seven processors, 16 input dealers, nine financial institutions, four equipment dealers and 14 representatives of IT companies such as TIGO, MTN and Esoko, other project partners and our staff. In addition, 50 individuals, including 41 OBs from the South, took part in the event. It was led by ATT with the active collaboration of ADVANCE and MoFA, focusing on pre-season priorities including inputs, equipment, finance, messaging services, crop insurance and crop income potential.

"In fact this pre-season has helped me a lot, I met Sinapi Aba which has expressed interest to support my farmers' production loans this forthcoming season so I will meet them tomorrow 31st March 2015 for further discussion in Wa". – OB John Mulnye

ADVANCE and ATT hosted a stand to sensitize the participants on concerns and activities under climate smart agriculture being pursued by ADVANCE. Pioneer/GAMSAP also hosted a booth to create more awareness of the Pioneer hybrid seed varieties and to provide pre-season intelligence.



Photo 2: Press Conference showing ATT's Acting COP answering questions



Photo 3: Exhibition time with some participants examining some seed varieties

4.1.5 Farmer mentor program

Six outgrower businesses (OB) embarked on mentorship visits to Gundaa Produce Company and Yong Dakpemyili. The OBs took the opportunity to learn marketing and storage activities in an outgrower business from Gundaa and production operations from Yong Dakpemyili.

4.1.6 Input/equipment access improved

Linkages facilitation is critical towards securing wider distribution of and access to improved production inputs and equipment for the production activities of OBs and their outgrowers or the smallholders who constitute the membership of FBOs.

During this quarter, meetings, on access to finance through experience sharing by Sinapi Aba Savings and Loans and beneficiaries on pilot input credit during the 2014 production season, were held with the participation of NFs, OGs, and financial institutions (FI) including rural banks.

Various meetings took place with 6 end markets (Royal Danemac, United Edibles, ANS Rice mill, Premium Foods Limited and Aframsco Aggregator group), 4 input dealers, 5 FIs and farmers on the provision of inputs and equipment for farmers during the 2015 cropping season.

NFs have been linked to Ecobank and Sinapi to access credit worth over GHS 744,000 to acquire 9 new Massey Ferguson and John Deere tractors to improve and expand mechanization services to outgrowers. Those loans will be disbursed soon.

The tractor service operators and maintenance training program, originally planned for October to March, was restructured and rescheduled to May when the soil moisture levels would be suitable for practical field practice. A total of 6 workshops (2 per region) are planned, targeting a total of 240 people, made up of 120 tractor owners and 120 operators.

4.1.7 Farm business planning

In the period under review, 31 new actors have also had their business plans developed for them and another 41 have had the Business Diagnostic Tool administered on them.

OBs are continuously being encouraged to register and legalise their operations with the Registrar General's Department. Twenty two (22) OBs have had their businesses registered during this reporting period.

One hundred and twelve (112) OBs have received assistance in developing crop budgets and have also been taken through the cost - benefit scenarios with regards to in-kind lending of inputs and tractor services to small holder farmers.

During the period under review, the project continued to provide content for the 20 partner radio stations airing agricultural programs and linking them to experts from MoFA, EPA and SARI. Topics of focus during the current reporting period include record keeping, proper land preparation methods, granting women access to fertile lands and access to credit for farming. The smallholder farmers formed a total of 217 radio listeners' clubs, consisting mostly of women in the three northern regions to encourage group listening of the agricultural shows.

Six partner radio stations, namely North Star Radio and Radio Gaakii in the Northern region, URA Radio and Radio Builsa in Upper East as well as Radio Upper West and Radio FREED in Upper West, were contracted to air jingles on crop insurance to boost sales of the product.

4.1.8 Outgrower business management

OBM modules

1. Understanding value chain concepts, end market trends and how to operate and compete effectively
2. Business planning and financial management
3. Outgrower management
4. Marketing, contracts and contract negotiating
5. Demonstration farm management and outgrower extension services
6. Tractor operation and management
7. Post-harvest handling and storage
8. Women's entrepreneurship and leadership

The business team has designed an Outgrower Business Management (OBM) curriculum to train actors on how to plan and run their business operations efficiently and profitably. The curriculum covers eight modules and includes a dedicated session for female OBs.

The training sessions will be run around the cropping calendar so that the knowledge acquired will be immediately useful to the beneficiary. Each module takes two days and participants will be given a certificate of competency.

4.1.9 Financial services

The project team has identified new Partner Financial Institutions (PFI) who will support the actors with inputs financing for the 2015 season. Opportunity International is now supporting ADVANCE II rice actors in the Kintampo area. Following the merger of Fidelity Bank and Pro Credit, discussions are being held with the financial inclusion unit of the bank to see how best they can provide financial support to project beneficiaries. Also, ADVANCE II is also providing support to Ecobank to identify Rural and Community Banks which they will provide funds to, for onward disbursement to small holder farmers in the rice, maize and soya value chains. Bonzali RCB and Bucobank have currently been selected for the pilot phase.

During Q2, 15 PFIs which are located within the projects' operational zones were selected and trained by USAID FinGap on how to Manage Risks associated with Agricultural Lending. Root Capital also invited 18 SMEs to participate, including three of ADVANCE II's SMEs, and built their capacity on Financial Management, so they can strengthen their ability to raise incremental capital.

Rural savings and financial inclusion in mainstream banking is also vigorously being pursued. Actors are encouraged to save with financial institutions or undertake transactions on the mobile money platforms. 13 new NFs are being set up on the MTN Mobile money platform, 20 others are also being registered on the Fidelity Smart Account while other 15 also are in the process of opening savings accounts with UT Bank and Sinapi Aba Savings and Loans. The 13 actors in the three northern regions were trained and will be set up as MTN Mobile Money agents to serve outgrowers in their communities. This has encouraged local savings of smallholders on their mobile phones for input purchase during the 2015 cropping season.

In Upper East, 12 community sensitization forums were conducted by MTN involving 408 smallholders on mobile savings. As a result, 208 farmers, including 68 males and 120 females are being registered on MTN mobile money.

A nucleus farmer in the Northern region, Nante Muyo, paid for 40 MT of soya worth GHS 56,000 bought from his outgrowers through MTN Mobile Money for his end market, Vestor Oil Ltd.

Four (4) actors who borrowed money (GHS 230,000) from some FIs in the Upper West to finance input for outgrowers are struggling to repay their loans, as recoveries have been poor. This is because most of the outgrowers had much lower yields due to the long drought experienced during the 2014 production season.

Fidelity Smart Account Set Up

To enhance the transactional operations, savings and reduce risk of cash payment by agribusiness firms along the soya, rice and maize value chains, 20 smallholder farmers in Salaga and Lonto area will be signed on to Fidelity Smart Account. This is an interest bearing savings account by Fidelity Bank and provided with Mobile and Internet banking.

4.1.10 Input dealer business development program

In collaboration with ATT, 100 agro input dealers have been identified – 75 of them in the three regions of the North and 25 in the GAMSAP zone – to be trained on technical and business skills. ATT will train the actors on the technicalities of handling agro inputs while ADVANCE II provides support on strengthening their business operations. Trainings are programmed to be conducted in April.

4.1.11 Smallholder investment

The Ghana Meteorological society has announced that the rainfall period for 2015 will be shorter, and from the long drought spell experienced in some parts of the project locations in 2014, small holder farmers are continuously being sensitized on mitigating production risk by purchasing a crop insurance policy from GAIP (Ghana Agriculture Insurance Pool). This sensitization will continue until sales of insurance policies close by then end of May 2015.

GAIP Market Officers have been linked to nucleus and smallholder farmers, financial institutions and input dealers through forums and meetings to introduce Agriculture Insurance products to the farmers and other actors. As a result discussions are ongoing to embed crop insurance with input credit modules being developed with Sinapi, Ecobank and Zabzugu Rural Bank.

4.1.12 Land for women

A total of 596 NFs, chiefs, and landlords comprising of 504 women and 92 men located in various communities in Binaba, Yendi, Saboba, cheriponi, Walewale, Pwalugu, Kongo, Binaba, Koligo and Fatue were sensitized on the need for women to have access to productive lands that were closer to homes. As a result, 206 women in the project were facilitated to access 216 acres of fertile lands for

their agricultural production activities. In addition, ADVANCE promoted messages on women's access to inputs to enable them better engage in those activities.



Photo 4: USAID Acting Mission Director and MoFA Regional Director at the ADVANCE's CSA stand

4.1.13 Climate smart conservation agriculture

The promotion of Climate Smart Agricultural (CSA) production systems and management practices rolled out from Quarter 1 was continued during this second quarter.

Activities carried out under the CSA included the following:

- 2 rippers and 2 no-till planters were delivered to facilitate large scale conservation agriculture practices by OBs;
- Exposure visit and training in conservation agriculture were given to 16 APOs as the technical agenda during a team meeting on Jan 12-16, 2015;
- Special training on the use of rippers and no-till planters was carried on 27-29 January 2015 with the collaboration of John Deere (AFGRI Ghana). The beneficiaries were tractor operators of 3 leading OBs (one from each region). They were each accompanied by an APO to the training to ensure sharpening of their own capacities to enable them give some technical backstopping support to the beneficiary OBs;



Photo 5: Team takes lessons on the operations of a roller crimper



Photo 6: APOs observe structural changes in soil that has been under cover crops

- 30 demonstration sites have been dedicated to minimum tillage (use of ripper and no-till planter) in the 2015 season;
 - Committees with oversight responsibility for the promotion of climate smart practices within 6 communities (2 per region) have been supported by a cover crop consultant. These are the communities in which, by means of community managed demonstrations, the project targets to build conscience on the damage caused by burning of crop residues as against the benefit of use of cover crops;
- Asaki farms at Zebila will serve as pilot Learning Centres during the 2015 season. Activities in this centre will be jointly monitored and supported with ATT that has now engaged the services of the cover crop expert. It will also receive the technical support of the Centre for No-Till Agriculture based in Kumasi and will also serve to multiply seeds of cover crops.

- The climate smart agenda was also showcased at the pre-season event jointly with ATT.

4.2 Sub-purpose 2: Increased market access and trade of targeted commodities

4.2.1 Market linkage development

New Buyers Identified: 24 new buyers were identified and profiled during the period. Some of these buyers have expressed interest in undertaking trade missions to ADVANCE production areas in the North and South to meet with farmers and aggregators.

Table 4: New Buyers Profiled by Type and Origin

Firm Type	Ashanti	Brong-Ahafo	Greater-Accra	Northern	Upper East	Total
Aggregator	2	2		1	1	6
Poultry Farm	3	4		1		8
Processor Feed Mill			2			2
Processor Foods	1	1				2
Processor Rice Miller	4			1		5
Processor Soybean	1					1
Total	11	7	2	3	1	24

Trade Mission: 1 trade mission was facilitated during the period involving BASA Agro Business Enterprise, a Tamale based aggregator, and 4 soybean and maize nucleus farmers in the Northern Region.

Contracts: 10 contracts were facilitated between 4 buyers and farmers/groups. The contract values are all yet to be determined. 4 of them, on maize and soya and with open pricing, dependent on prevailing market price, were signed between BASA Agro business Enterprise and 4 nucleus farmers in the Gushegu district during a trade mission. 6 outgrower contracts were executed between 3 rice millers (ANS Rice Mills, Ejura and Afranso Women's Rice Marketing Groups) and 6 smallholder farmer groups in the Lonto area of the Kpandai district in the Northern region. Under the agreement the millers will supply 4Mt of Jasmine 85 seeds to the farmers for the 2015 production season. The farmers will pay back with 45.5 Mt of paddy rice at harvest time.

Table 5: Contracts Facilitated

Type of Contract	Number of Contracts	Quantity (Mt)
Closed with Deferred Pricing	4	10
Outgrower	6	46
Total	10	56

Market Information System: Esoko Ghana Ltd has been contracted to provide market information to 20,000 smallholder farmers. A total of 235 (of whom 35 are female) nucleus farmers, lead farmers, FBO leaders and aggregators and 217 male outgrowers received training on how to access the price alerts on their mobile phones and interpret the messages.

Sales by Outgrower Businesses: Data received from 59 outgrower businesses (out of 151 OBs) indicates that a total 4,283 Mt of sales valued at GHS 4.3 million was made, largely in January and February 2015. Some OBs have deferred sales to later months in expectation of higher prices.

Table 6: Sales of 59 Outgrower Businesses

Commodity	Quantity (Mt)	Sales Value (GHS)
Maize	3,014	2,576,959
Rice	483	512,440
Soybean	766	1,207,917
Total	4,263	4,297,315

Key Market Developments: ADVANCE tracking of prices across 30 market locations in the three Northern regions indicates a downward trend in the prices of all commodities between January and March 2015. Notwithstanding the overall decline in prices, some local markets recorded price increases based on local demand and supply. In general commodity prices have risen in market locations which are marginally production areas for a particular commodity, and hence have low supplies.

Table 7: Price Trends in 30 Market Locations in Northern Ghana

	# of Market Locations	Average Price per 100kg bag		
		Beginning of January 2015	Ending of March 2015	Change
Maize	26	92.4	91.3	-1%
Northern	6	94.0	88.0	-6%
Upper East	10	93.0	91.5	-2%
Upper West	10	90.2	93.0	3%
Paddy Rice	22	91.7	89.2	-3%
Northern	6	94.0	78.0	-17%
Upper East	10	84.5	79.3	-6%
Upper West	6	100.0	110.0	10%
Soybean	22	158.6	151.5	-4%
Northern	5	146.7	128.0	-13%
Upper East	7	163.0	133.3	-18%
Upper West	10	165.0	176.0	7%

There was a slowdown in soybean demand from processors as a result of the ban on the importation of day old chicks from Europe on account of avian flu. This affected demand from the poultry sector for maize and soybean cake. The ban was lifted in mid-March 2015.

South based rice millers like Naawin, ANS Mills and Hawa Rice Processing who source paddy rice from the North shifted to sourcing supplies from the fresh harvest of the Volta and Ashanti regions. The buyers indicate the moisture content of harvested rice in Northern Ghana in January – March is too low and suitable for only parboiling.

The buyers also indicate that whilst farm gate prices for paddy in the North and the South are the same it costs more to transport from the North. In response to this trend, ADVANCE is facilitating linkages between rice farmers and Northern based aggregators and rice millers.

4.2.2 Lead firm competitiveness

12 buyer firms were provided various forms of support in addition to assistance to source commodity supplies from farmers. In addition, 10 firms were assessed to identify areas of support beyond supply chain linkages to farmers. The principal needs that have emerged are finance and the development of outgrower schemes.

Table 8: Buyer Firms Supported Beyond Supply Linkages with Farmers

Firms	Region	Type of Firm	Status of Engagement
Premium Foods	Ashanti	Processor Foods	STTA for development of nucleus estate farming model in Central Gonja district is ongoing
Royal Danemark	Ashanti	Soybean processor	Facilitated a GH¢200,000 working capital loan; Support on a grant application for a generator
Akati Farms & Trading Company	Ashanti	Poultry Farm	Support to upgrade and expand existing maize outgrower scheme in the Upper West region
High and Mighty	Brong Ahafo	Maize processor and aggregator	Developing SOWs to procure 2 STTAs to upgrade food processing methods; and implement accounting software
Yedent Agro Group	Brong Ahafo	Foods processor (maize, soybean)	Developing SOW to procure STTA for marketing strategy and action plan
Naawin Enterprise	Ashanti	Rice miller	Developing SOW to procure STTA to improve production floor and storage layout
Royal Golden Egg	Brong Ahafo	Poultry farm	Developing SOW to procure STTA for marketing strategy and action plan for broiler meat
ANS Mill	Ashanti	Rice miller	Facilitating input credit for seed to rice outgrowers in the Northern region
Vester Oil Mills	Ashanti	Soybean processor	Facilitating market linkage to Dormaa Poultry Farmers Association
G. Bosomtwe Ventures	Ashanti	Maize aggregator and soybean processor	Facilitating finance in collaboration with FINGAP; Facilitating input credit for seed and fertilizer support to maize and soybean farmers in Upper West region
Inter-Grow	Greater Accra	Soybean processor	Facilitating working capital finance
Oseboba	Greater Accra	Maize processor	Facilitating finance for equipment and working capital

4.2.3 Trade association support

Ghana Grains Council

The Ghana Grains Council (GGC) continued implementation of various activities under its Grant Agreement with ADVANCE covering 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/WRS.

Market Access Initiatives and Warehouse Receipts Program

- 2 warehouse receipts were issued by the Savanna Farmers Marketing Company (SFMC) for 250Mt soybeans valued at GHS480,000;
- GGC concluded negotiations with Esoko to expand service delivery to its members. The contract between GGC and Esoko has been renewed for the period 1st March, 2015 to 28th February, 2016;
- The warehouse of Savannah Farmers' Marketing Company's (SFMC) was inspected and its license renewed. The Manual Warehouse Receipt Software (MWRS) was upgraded to enable the warehouse operator receipt milled rice and soybeans. A similar upgrade was carried out at the warehouse of Gundaa Produce Company;
- A stakeholders' review of the draft soybean poster prepared under a consultancy was carried out. Discussion with a consultant on the development of a poster on milled rice is at a final stage. The contract will be limited to milled rice since Ghana is currently working on paddy rice standard;
- Draft handbooks on maize, rice and soybean prepared under a consultancy were reviewed and feedback provided to the consultant for the preparation of a final draft;
- Work began on a consultancy to carry out a comprehensive Financial Viability Study of WRS. A Draft Implementation Plan has been submitted by the consultant for GGC's review. The report on GGC WRS Risk Management System is yet to be submitted by the consultant.

Members Benefits and Diversified Service Delivery

- 127 actors comprising agro input dealers, financial service providers, nucleus farmers, processors and traders nation-wide were introduced to GGC's services in one-on-one presentations and meetings. 14 new member applications have been received and are being processed;
- A new membership tier, Diamond, has been added to the existing membership tiers. The regular tier has been relabelled Bronze. This brings total membership tiers to 4;
- New promotional materials i.e. a member kit and GGC periodicals that detail member benefits, updates and key messages are being developed;
- A revamp of GGC's website to fully represent the new direction of GGC as the lead trade association for grains and financially sustainable entity began;
- GGC participated in the 2015 Pre Season Event held in Tamale on Thursday March 26, 2015. An exhibition booth was mounted which attracted more than 150 visitors. Information on GGC services and membership were shared;
- 75 grain actors, comprising existing and prospective members in the Northern Region, participated in a half-day forum held in Tamale after the pre-season event. The objective of the forum was to share GGC updates with existing members in the Northern Zone and additionally offer information on benefits to prospective members;
- An internal marketing and communication guideline was prepared to raise general brand awareness of GGC in all regions of Ghana.

Policy Influencing through Advocacy

- GGC met with the USAID APSP project to discuss the way forward on policy support to GGC. The conclusion was that GGC should complete and submit a grant request outlining its specific policy interventions and demonstrating a clear distinction from the Agricultural Public Private Dialogue Platform hosted by the Private Enterprise Federation (PEF);
- GGC participated in a meeting between the Private Enterprise Foundation (PEF) and USAID APSP to discuss a proposal on the Agriculture Private Public Dialogue Forum (APPDF) submitted by PEF.

Organizational Strengthening

- The GGC Executive Council approved 5 Year Strategic Plan (2015 – 2019) for implementation to commence;
- The Consultant developing the GGC Operational Manual has submitted a draft report for review;
- 2 new staff were hired comprising a Head, Marketing, HR/Administration and a Business Development Officer;
- 3 interns were engaged and assigned to the Finance, Marketing and Warehouse Operations departments.

Assessment of Trade Associations

An assessment of the regional branches of the Ghana Agro Input Dealers Association (GAIDA), Seed Producers Association of Ghana (SEEDPAG) and Ghana Private Road Transport Union (Cargo wing) in the Upper West and Upper East regions was carried out to identify areas of support and collaboration with ADVANCE. A customised OCAT was used for the assessment. The key findings from the assessment are presented as annex to this report.

4.2.4 North Ghana rice milling

AVNASH's 150,000Mt per year mill in Nyankpala is incomplete. As a result the company did not buy paddy rice. Feedback obtained from the company is that water supply to the mill is the main outstanding issue to make it operational.

Two rice millers in the Upper East regions have been targeted for grants to expand their processing capacity and upgrade their equipment. Below is an update of progress of work.

Table 9: Firms Identified for Milling Expansion and Upgrade

Firms	Location	Existing Processing Capacity (mt per hour)	Established Milling Upgrade Needs	Status of Work
Sambey Enterprise	Bolgatanga, Upper East region	0.13	A rice mill with a bigger capacity	Grant application including business plan completed and submitted for consideration of ADVANCE Grants Committee
Procom Company	Bolgatanga, Upper East region	0.60	Colour sorter	Development of business plan and concept note is in progress

In the Northern region, 5 other rice millers were assessed to identify their areas of need, and their willingness and ability to raise the counterpart funding. Areas for upgrading vary from new structures, colour sorter, destoner, conveyor belt, parboiling vessels, a grader and a whole complete mill. A shortlist of 1 to 2 will be selected for further development of a business plan and grant application.

4.2.5 Regional/cross border trade and transport

Cross Border Trade: Two separate meetings were held with Borderless Alliance and the West Trade Hub Project to explore the possibility of monitoring cross border trade. Borderless Alliance does not have this activity as part of its agenda. WATH is dependent on CILSS of Burkina Faso for periodic reports of trade flows in agricultural commodities. Both organizations indicate that regular and periodic monitoring of cross border trade is an extremely challenging task that requires considerable resources. Accordingly, ADVANCE will rely on the periodic reports prepared and disseminated by CILSS rather than carrying out direct monitoring itself.

Update on Collaboration with GPRTU Cargo: ADVANCE field offices in Tamale and Bolga respectively worked with the Northern and Upper East regional branches of the Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU) to develop transport fares chart from 34 locations to various destinations in Southern Ghana. The fare charts and contacts of GPRTU officers in the districts are being shared with NFs, aggregators and processors who transaction business in the respective regions.

The list of GPRTU contacts and fare chart enabled a nucleus farmer, Muyo Farms of Saboba, to access information on transport back haulage opportunities from Saboba to Kumasi from the GPRTU branch in Saboba. The information enabled him time the delivery of a soybean consignment to a buyer in Kumasi to coincide with a returning cargo vehicle thereby saving 50% of the transport cost of hiring a vehicle from Yendi to Kumasi to convey the consignment

4.2.6 Community based market systems strengthened

The ACDI/VOCA Sell More For More (SMFM) approach and training was adapted and reviewed to fit Ghana context of Farmer Based Organizations. This training program, "Sell More product by increasing quantity For More revenue by increasing quality" is targeted to FBOs and consists of 4 modules (Money, Marketing, Membership and Management), given in 8 different sessions to 2 groups of a

maximum of 15 leaders and potential leaders of each FBO. During the quarter, 1,997 individuals (of which 47% are female) from 108 FBOs in 60 communities were trained by 39 trainers.

As part of the strategy in strengthening community based market systems, SMFM has been designed to train female FBO leaders. As a result, a group in Gushiegu who were all male members before the training have decided to add up women to their group after they were taken through the topic of gender equity and the importance of women in a group.

It is expected that the knowledge gained in membership, marketing, money and management of farmer based organizations will help strengthen farmer groups and individual farmers for the achievement of social and financial goals.

In addition, a 4-day Farming as a Business (FaaB) training of trainers' workshop was organized in Tamale for 20 trainers in collaboration with School for Life, the implementing organization for the FaaB training, and facilitated by Mr. Robert Alela, a volunteer from Kenya. The objective of the training was to equip trainers with facilitation and farming business skills to enable them transfer the knowledge to beneficiaries during the community level training which is expected to benefit 10,000 smallholders. During the quarter, 2,630 individuals from the Upper West Region were trained.

4.3 Sub-purpose 3: Strengthened capacity for advocacy and activity implementation

4.3.1 Advocacy group development

As part of efforts to equip advocacy groups with relevant knowledge and understanding of agricultural policy issues, 9 Agricultural Policy Education and Sensitization Forums were organized in Northern and Upper East regions.

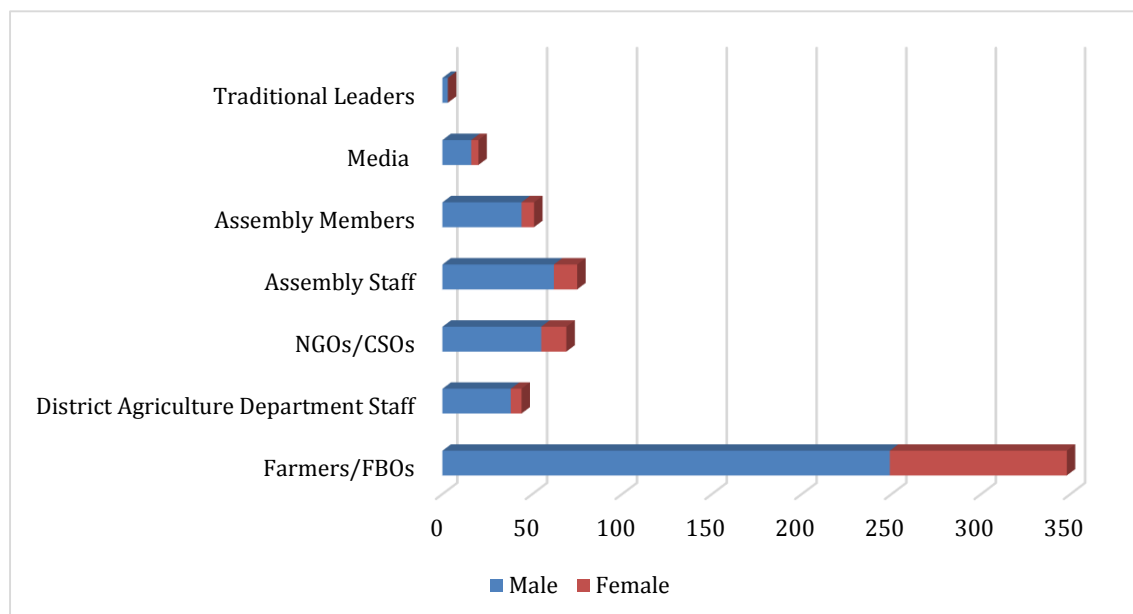
The purpose of the forums were mainly to educate the 610 (out of which 23% are women) participants (farmers, FBOs, Assembly member, and others related) about the Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP II) and its implementation plan – the Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan (METASIP). This would enable them to participate effectively in the implementation and monitoring of agricultural policies at the local level. The forums were also meant to stimulate the establishment of platforms for the public and private sectors to discuss the development of agriculture in the context of the agriculture policy and its implementation plan.

The forums sought to create awareness among District Assembly members about the need to allocate more resources for the development of agriculture in the districts. Finally they sought to encourage district administration to create an enabling environment for private sector investment in the agriculture economic sector in the districts.

6 out of the 9 forums were organized jointly by ADVANCE and APSP sharing the costs. The participants included Farmers, FBOs, District Agriculture Department Staff, NGOs/CSOs, Assembly Staff, Assembly Members, Media and Traditional Leaders.

Majority (57%) of the participants were farmers and FBO leaders. The figure below shows the gender distribution of participation in the forums. Two out of the nine forums were organised in Northern region (Tolon and Savelugu districts) and six (6) forums were organised in Upper East region.

Figure 3: Participation in the Agricultural Policy Forums



Local and national media covered the forums. The local radio stations at the districts reported the issues raised at the policy forums and some called the DCE, District Agricultural Officers, and others related to respond to some of the issues raised. Other report them as news, for instance, Tanga Radio in Upper East region included the forums in their morning (7:00am) and evening (7:00pm) news bulletins. The Ghana News Agency reported two of the forums (refer to the following link for more information: www.ghananewsagency.org/science/stakeholders-in-kassena-nankana-hold-agriculture-policy-forum-87945).

Key issues emerging from the forums

One of the critical concerns of District Chief Executives (DCEs) and District Coordinating Director (DCD) was expanding the audience of the forums. They saw the need to expand the audience to include all assembly members particularly the new assemblies, chiefs, opinion leaders, etc. Some of assemblies expressed willingness to contribute to such forums. For many of the participants, including assembly technical staff, this was the first time they had a comprehensive view of agriculture in the district. They recommended holding regular forums of this nature to address pertinent issues in agriculture in the district.

Some of the other critical issues that emerged from the forums included:

- The establishment of agricultural subcommittees in district that do not have them;
- A meeting with District Agricultural Department to review their budget request;
- Proposal for support to APSP to develop District Agricultural Investment Plan (DAIP) in districts that are not covered by ADVANCE II DAIP proposal;

- Referral of the issues of Fulani herdsmen destruction of farms and illegal logging along the White Volta to the District Security Task Force;
- The need to have regional network of commercial farmers;
- Capacity building for the District Agricultural Value Chain Councils (DVCC) to effectively participate in policy process at the local level.

Meeting with SADA

The policy and advocacy team had a meeting with the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) to understand the policy issues within the areas related to agriculture. They indicated they are partnering with FinGAP to support district assemblies profile briefly the agricultural potential for their upcoming agricultural investment forum. They also outlined the activities of other projects in the SADA zone.

4.3.2 Advocacy capacity for national organisations strengthened

The ADVANCE Policy and Advocacy Specialist has been seconded to Ghana Grain Council (GGC) to support it in establishing a research and policy unit. In this direction, the Policy and Advocacy Specialist led the development of Terms of Reference for establishing a research and Policy desk at GGC. He also led the development of two grant proposals to BUSAC and APSP. Positive feedbacks have been received and efforts are still running to finalize them. These are to help secure funding for a policy desk set up. The Specialist also contributed to the development of other grant proposals including the grant proposal for setting up GGC training institute.

The Policy and Advocacy Specialist is advising the Managing Director of GGC on issues related to policy and advocacy. Thus, he is part of the team set up to oversee the development and publication of GGC journal and new letters.

4.3.3 District assemblies plans for agricultural development

ADVANCE seeks to support the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to tackle constraints that inhibit agribusinesses at the local government level. As part of efforts aimed at achieving this objective, ADVANCE II intends to support District Assemblies to document and market the agricultural potential of their districts to local and international investors. ADVANCE is therefore proposed to support District Assemblies to develop District Agricultural Investment Plans (DAIP).

The DAIP will contain an analysis of the current situation regarding agriculture in the district, particularly its needs and potential. It will also contain a statement of objectives and analysis of ongoing as well as new agricultural investment businesses and programs within the purview of the districts. The plan would be prepared in a participatory process involving various organizations, actors and stakeholders to identify the agricultural potential of the district as well as key areas for private sector and public-private partnership investment. The Plan intends to achieve the following:

- An investment plan that would motivate and attract investors to invest in the agricultural value chains in the district;

- Facilitate acquisition/access to land, and other resources to support investors seeking to invest in agriculture in the district;
- Facilitate cooperation between the Public and Private sectors in investing in Agriculture and new emphasis on improving the investment climate for agriculture;
- Create and sustain awareness on the need to invest in agriculture in the District.

In this direction, 14 district assemblies have signed MOUs with ADVANCE to be supported to develop and promote district agricultural investment plans. The table below shows the district assemblies that have signed MOUs with ADVANCE.

Table 10: Status of Engagement with District Assemblies on the development of DAIPs

No.	DISTRICT	Expressed need for DAIP	MoU Signed
1	Wa West	√	√
2	Lawra	√	√
3	Jirapa	√	√
4	Lambusie	√	Pending
5	Sawla-Tuna-Kalba	√	√
6	Nadowli-Kaleo	√	√
7	Wa East	√	√
8	Sissala East	√	√
9	Builsa North	√	√
10	Builsa South	√	√
11	Kassena Nankana	√	√
12	Bawku West	√	√
13	Guru-Tempene	√	√
14	East Mamprusi	√	√
15	Bunkpurugu Yunyoo	√	√

Applicant consultants have been shortlisted and interviewed to develop the DAIP. Two of them have been asked to submit technical and budget proposals by 24th of April 2015. Each successful consultant will initially develop one DAIP, with the possibility of doing more after delivery of one complete DAIP.

4.3.4 Capacity development for program implementation

A local organization (School for Life) has been selected to carry out the numeracy training activity. 49 trainers have been identified and trained to start the training of learners by April 2015. 10,000 outgrowers linked to various NFs have been mapped out to benefit from this training in the 3 regions. 6 Peace Corp Volunteers were trained in numeracy skills to assist in training a total of 300 learners.

In addition, as previously mentioned, the Farming as a Business (FaaS) training, targeting 10,000 SHFs is on-going in all targeted communities for outgrowers of NFs to inculcate the idea that farming can become a business activity rather than just a subsistence one among SHFs. Sfl has been contracted to implement this activity. FaaS trainings would be completed by the end of April.

4.3.5 Capacity development for FBEs

Over 100 FBOs have been targeted to be nurtured into Farmer Based Enterprises (FBEs) through various activities:

- 108 FBOs were trained in SMFM which is geared towards equipping the FBOs with the requisite skills to become FBEs;
- A total of 29 FBOs (Upper East- 5; Upper West- 9 and Northern- 15) will host demonstration sites to learn new agronomic practices that could be transferred to enhance their productivity;
- 500 female FBO leaders are currently going through Female Leadership/SMFM training;
- A number of FBO leaders attended this year's pre-season hosted by ADVANCE.

4.4 GAMSAP

The key agribusiness activities of the reporting period include the harvesting and marketing of the minor season maize crop and some facilitated demos by farmers, procurement, processing and/or stocking in warehouses of maize by buyers, (aggregators and processors). In March, farmers started preparatory activities for the 2015 major cropping season. These preparations which include search for credit facilities and partnerships for investments into their farming activities are being facilitated by SAPOs and BSO of GAMSAP as outlined in the relevant sections below. A greater part of staff effort also went into sensitization and animation of target groups on the program in the new areas of existing zones as well as the Afram Plains where the fourth SAPO has been posted. The following sections outline details of program tasks on these activities especially in the regions of the south. Reports on the implementation progress of GAMSAP is an integral part of the body of reports in the Upper West, Upper East and Northern region.

4.4.1 Increased adoption of hybrid maize seed and related good agricultural practices

Performance on key planned tasks during the reporting period are outlined below:

Recruitment of a fourth SAPO

The planned coverage area expansion to include other high maize production areas in the south was achieved in the reporting period. A fourth SAPO for the Program was recruited in February and has since taken post at Konongo from where he is serving the maize growing areas in the Kwahu and Sekyere Afram Plains area. This is the area where most of the large/commercial maize farms have been established. The SAPO underwent induction on program strategy, organizational processes and procedures at the Accra and Ejura offices prior to taking post. The SAPO has among his tasks the identification of at least twenty-four locations for demonstrations on hybrid maize during the upcoming major season. More than four hundred and thirty actors, (OB-leaders and OGs), including six of the targeted fifteen OBs, have so far been identified and being profiled by the SAPO.

Commercially available seed from Dizengoff

A first batch of more than 24Mt of Pioneer 30Y87 hybrid seed was imported in March 2015 for sale to interested farmers. GAMSAP supported the out-dooring of the seeds at the promotional and pre-season events held at Kumasi and Tamale respectively. GAMSAP is also supporting the appointed

agent of Dizengoff to market the seed stock through identification and facilitation of sales by community-based agro-input dealers. So far, seed worth more than GHS10,000 (\$2,900) for the cultivation of more than 41 acres has been sold directly through GAMSAP staff. Four input dealers have been identified to take part in the consignment sales of hybrid seed with Dizengoff.



Photo 7: OGs of Baffour Kusi receiving their hybrid seed at Kobedi

4.4.2 Training

During the reporting period, outgrowers were supported in selecting suitable sites for their main farms and/or demonstrations for hybrid maize by SAPOs. Thirty-seven OB-leaders were supported to identify more than eighty-one (out of the targeted one hundred) locations for demonstrations in the coming major season during the reporting period. The remaining locations will be identified by mid-April. Soil samples have been taken from all such identified sites for the needed analysis to facilitate interpretation of eventual results.

In February, a one-day training on the innovative use of SMS was organized for 28 participants including OBs and selected out-growers from the program's catchment. Resource persons from Esoko were in attendance to market the benefits of these technologies. More than 300 phone numbers have since been taken from various actors for inclusion on the Esoko alerts on commodity prices and the weather.

During this quarter, GAMSAP beneficiaries benefitted also from the FaaB training mentioned in the previous section. Seven OBs, had the training and support on their businesses on what is an out-grower business and calculating returns on investment (ROI), and when using new technologies. In attendance were more than five-hundred and seventeen out-growers of these OBs. Participants were also trained on how to access the agro-financial products of the partner financial institutions Sinapi Aba Savings and Loans Ltd and Opportunity International Bank who provided the resource people at the trainings.

Two senior Pioneer agronomists trained 30 OBs on agronomy of maize production based on new learning and available inputs and how to set up the comparative demos of hybrids and farmers own seed for the major cropping season of 2015.

4.4.3 Women OB participation

Five out of the fifty OBs profiled to date are women. Even though all five focus on aggregation of grain, they also have farm holdings and have invested in outgrowers in their supply chain. The success of these women will serve as examples for the land for women program. One woman has been identified for a tractor grant to boost her investment into supply chains.

4.4.4 Increased market linkages with end buyers

A total of 15 firms located in the GAMSAP zone in southern Ghana were identified and profiled by the trade and marketing support officials during the reporting period. All of the buyers mentioned

interest/preference to purchase yellow maize because the primary use for their maize purchase is for poultry feed production. The total annual maize requirements from these firms is 88,358 Mt.

4.4.5 Promotional Event on the GAMSAP

In March, an event to publicize GAMSAP to stakeholders in southern Ghana was held in Kumasi. The occasion was addressed by program partners from the USAID-Ghana Mission, DuPont-Pioneer and the Regional Director of Agriculture from the MOFA. More than 200 people attended the event from the maize industry.

Outgrower Businesses Supporting Smallholder Farmers

Two OB-leaders, Baffour Kusi and Johnson Kyere, have successfully linked twenty-nine of their trusted OGs to Opportunities International Savings and Credit Ltd and will receive loans from this institution. Baffour Kusi is a poultry farmer who is investing in SHF production of high quality yellow maize to meet his feed demands. Johnson Kyere aggregates for sale to institutions for human foods. Johnson's interest is to get enough maize to meet his contractual obligations to customers.

Part of the credit facilities will be used to finance the purchase of high quality Pioneer hybrid seeds for the SHF outgrowers of the OB. In total 226 similar loan requests, facilitated by GAMSAP during the reporting period, are pending approval at various financial institutions in the three regions of the South.

5 Program support

5.1 Gender Program

5.1.1 Women's access to land

As previously mentioned, The ADVANCE II project facilitated access to 216 acres of fertile land for 206 women. Several sensitization activities were conducted in regards to the need for women to have access to productive lands that are closer to their homes, targeting 504 women and 92 men NFs, chiefs, and landlords.

5.1.2 Establish women as NFs

The annual target for female NFs in North Ghana has been met with the identification of four female NFs in the first quarter thus bringing the total number of female NFs in the programme to 6. In addition, as mentioned previously, 5 out of the 50 OBs profiled to date in the South by GAMSAP are women. The focus this quarter has been to support these women with capacity building and other resources such as tractor grants to enable them succeed in their businesses. One woman in the South has been identified among others for a tractor grant to boost her investment into supply chains.

The project is promoting women lead demo sites. As a result, 10 women lead farmers have been identified to host crop demonstrations on soybean, maize and rice fields in the upper East region. The other regions are still in the process of identifying and providing information on female-led demos.

5.1.3 OBM and women's leadership and entrepreneurship

A module specifically targeting women NFs and aggregators has been designed and included in the regular OBM modules. However, all the existing female NFs joined their male counterparts in receiving training on the regular OBM modules. In May, a separate training on women's leadership and entrepreneurship will be organized for female NFs, female lead farmers and aggregators. During the training a personal SWOT will be carried out with the aim of identifying areas of strengths and weakness where the women will need individualized targeted support.

5.1.4 Women VSLAs and link to market opportunities

Initial meeting to collaborate with World Vision on training and establishment of Village Savings and Loans for more than 350 women working with Gundaa Produce and Yakubu Tia (two nucleus farmers in Gushegu and Karaga) took place during the period.

Concern Universal an NGO operating in Kintampo North has commenced training for 4 groups mainly women to set Village Savings and Loans for the groups to serve as saving mobilization drive and increase access to financial services.

More than 280 women smallholder farmers working Busaka Agribusiness Centre have opened accounts with Sinapi Aba Savings and Loan with total savings mobilization of more than GHS 14,000.00. As a result, the bank is in the process of approving production loan of more than GHS 80,000.00 for the group to purchase seed and fertilizer for rice production.

5.1.5 International Women's Day

This year's International women's day was celebrated in Binaba, Upper East region. The theme for the day –*Women: making it happen in Agriculture* was adopted from the global theme. Chief Moses Abare and Binaba Women's Association hosted the programme. The event attracted up to 300 people including school children and other community members. Out of this number, approximately, 2/3 were women and 1/3 were male farmers and other dignitaries from the District Assembly and MoFA.



Photo 8: Cooking competition in Binaba

The day was used to highlight the contributions and also celebrate the successes of women along the Value chain. In line with the theme, the event was used to raise awareness on what women were already doing and drew attention to the persistent gaps that needs to be filled to make them more productive. Chief of Binaba, Moses Abare re-committed himself to supporting women to make it happen in agriculture. The women were inspired most by the experiences shared by Hajia Teni a female NF from Pawlugu and Janet Ali (a women's group leader from Nakolo).

The event was also sponsored by the private sector such as MTN and a local input dealer. There was media coverage during the whole event.

Nucleus Farmer John Mulnye, seeing the benefits of celebrating IWD based on past experience, took it upon himself and organized 200 women outgrowers from 5 communities to celebrate the day. The programme was centred on raising awareness on women's access to land and why men should support their wives and other female members of their communities to access land for productive activities.

5.1.6 Women's access to information and communication technologies

217 radio listenership clubs, largely constituting female members were formed during the quarter. Access to market and weather information through Esoko and Ignitia respectively was promoted through women's groups and also through radio jingles. The project has also been raising awareness among women that even simple and cheaper mobile phones are a business tool women should invest into. Gender access to mobile phone is largely in favour of men.

5.2 Environment Support

5.2.1 General environmental compliance

This quarter, 76 outgrower businesses and input dealers were trained on how to set up spray services as part of their businesses or to collaborate with existing Spray Services providers (SSPs) in their operational areas. Participants were taken through topics and practical sessions to increase their awareness of the safety requirements required in pesticide handling and application and the role of SSPs in preventing a large number of farmers from direct contact with pesticides.

Topics covered during the training:

- General Policy on Pesticides in Ghana
- Pesticides Handling
- Effects of Pesticides on Health
- Hazards Levels of Pesticides
- Label Advice
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Purchasing of Pesticides
- Transportation of Pesticides
- Storage of Pesticides
- Calibration
- Preparation and Application
- After Application
- Containers and Obsolete Products
- First Aid
- Uses of Pesticides
- Uses of PPEs



Figure 4: A participant making a contribution at the training

5.2.2 Improving agrochemical management

PERSUAP update

In line with the requirements of regulation 216 – Part 216.3 – the project completed and submitted a Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP) to USAID. A total of 21 active ingredients, effective for the control of field and storage pests in maize, rice, and soya, are recommended for use on the project. They are made of 8 insecticides, 2 fungicides, and 11 herbicides. Ten (10) safer use actions have been identified in ADVANCE's PERSUAP.

The Agricultural Production Officers (APOs) will train farmers on topics identified in the PERSUAP during field days at demonstration plots. Between field days APOs are expected to provide advice to farmers on pesticide related issues as and when pest and disease conditions arise on demo fields. For that purpose, technical staff in the 3 ADVANCE offices of the North were trained on how to apply the PERSUAP and provide training and advice to farmers on specific instances. Pesticide use monitoring will be conducted on farms that host demonstration plots.

Container disposal program

ADVANCE is currently working with ATT to develop a system that will effectively remove and properly and safely dispose of all pesticide containers from farms that receive technical assistance from the two projects. The system will take advantage of the structures facilitated under the outgrower business model to ensure that containers are collected at a central point for disposal.

5.2.3 Climate smart and water management

Check dam assessments

Check dams are relatively small reservoirs constructed across a water course by creating a barrier that impounds water. In Ghana, Check dams are classified in the category of small reservoirs and dugouts¹. Dams generally serve the primary purpose of retaining water. The reservoirs created by dams provide water for various needs including irrigation, human consumption, fish farming, watering of livestock, etc. They also help in suppressing floods and reducing erosion. Small dams may also be created from gravel pits during road construction, often found along highways.

In order to better appreciate the state of dams and how they can possibly contribute to the objectives of ADVANCE, especially during the off-season, 69 dams were assessed in the 3 regions of the north to determine the volume of water they hold, current uses with particular emphasis on the amount and nature of irrigation currently taking place.

¹ IWMI working paper 142: Typology of irrigation systems in Ghana (2010), and Ghana Strategy Support Program (GSSP) Working Paper No. 0027. March 2011

5.3 Grants Program

Innovation and Investment Incentive Grants

Tractor and Laptop Grants: 13 nucleus farmers have been shortlisted to benefit from the tractor grant arrangement. Four of these potential beneficiaries are from the Northern Region, three from the Upper East Region, three from the Upper West Region and three from the GAMSAP regions. ADVANCE has also procured a first set of 60 laptop computers, as well as printers for distribution to nucleus farmers in order to help them improve their OBM.

Table 11: # of tractors and laptops beneficiaries by region

Equipment	Northern	Upper East	Upper West	GAMSAP South	Total
Tractors	4	3	3	3	13
Laptops	18	16	19	7	60

Small Equipment Grants (SEG): The SEG scheme awarded a total of 303 pieces of equipment to 143 actors as at the end of the second quarter. A few of the equipment were delivered to the beneficiaries during the first quarter.

Table 12: Small equipment delivered

Equipment	# of direct beneficiaries	# delivered	Total Value (GHS)	Total Value (USD)
Multi-purpose Sheller's/Threshers	54	54	726,700.00	207,628.57
Tarpaulins	102	230	195,500.00	55,857.14
Weighing Scales	5	6	6,000.00	1,714.29
Bullock Ploughs/Tractor Ploughs	4	5	19,500.00	5,571.43
Reapers	3	3	17,200.00	4,914.29
Planters	2	2	8,050.00	2,300.00
Power Tillers	3	3	54,000.00	15,428.57
Total	173	303	1,026,950.00	293,414.29

Local Partnership Grants

Ghana Agricultural Insurance Pool (GAIP): ADVANCE awarded an operational grant of about US\$60,000 to the Ghana Agricultural Insurance Pool (GAIP) to support an expansion of its activities within the 3 northern regions. GAIP is partnering ADVANCE to increase competitiveness in the selected value chain commodities by using marketing officers to introduce agricultural insurance to many more farmers in the north to reduce uncontrollable risks (drought, pest infection, crop failure etc.). An amount of \$15,000 has been disbursed for this activity during the quarter.

Ghana Grains Council (GGC): The Grants Program has also continued to support the Ghana Grains Council to scale up the success of the first phase of the program. The program's implementation strategy is built on scaling up aggregator/outgrower models that enable and incentivize smallholder upgrading. Upgrading includes the adoption of grades and standards, expanded certification of a large

number of warehouses, further development of warehouse receipt systems and other forms of value chain finance. A total amount of US\$86,000 was disbursed to the GGC during the reporting period.

5.4 Public Relations and Communication

The Public Relations & Communications (PR & C) continued to ensure visibility of the ADVANCE Project and USAID; and highlighted the project's activities, progress impact and successes.

Contribution to USAID & ACDI/VOCA Communications: During the reporting period, 11 informational bullets were submitted to USAID. Two stories "Greater Access to Land for Women Farmers in Ghana" and "Weather Apps Gives Farmers in Ghana Timely Information" are also published on the ACDI/VOCA website. Link to the stories:

- <http://www.acdivoca.org/site/ID/success-ghana-weather-app-gives-farmers-in-ghana-timely-information>
- <http://acdivoca.org/our-programs/success-story/greater-access-land-women-farmers-ghana>

Quarterly Newsletter: The March edition of the Project's "Quarterly Newsletter" illustrating USAID/ADVANCE's continued support and impact have been published and distributed to more than 1,000 recipients including partners, clients and actors involved in the project, in both electronic and printed form.

Photos, videos and media coverage: The project continues to collect high quality photos following trainings held for staff as well as with the support of a Peace Corps Volunteer assigned to the project with the task of taking photos and generating videos telling the project's story during this quarter. Thirty high quality photos were submitted to ACDI/VOCA's 8th Annual Photo Contest held in March, the results of which will be shared when the contest is completed. Additionally, two video productions, "Pre-harvest" and "Connecting Farmers to Markets", have been developed depicting project work and achievements.

- The ADVANCE II project was seen in the media during the current reporting period in the following places: A story on the USAID/ADVANCE GAMSAP promotional event held in Kumasi was published at <http://thebftonline.com/content/%E2%80%98support-efforts-combat-food-security-threat%E2%80%99>
- A story on the USAID/ADVANCE – GAMSAP promotional event in the Wednesday, 18 – Thursday, 19, March 2015 edition of the Business & Financial Times page 29 (see Annex);
- A story on the USAID/ADVANCE – GAMSAP promotional event in the Tuesday, March 10, 2015 edition of the Daily Graphic page 3 (see attached);
- A story on the celebration of the International Women's Day in the Wednesday, March 18, 2015 edition of the Daily Graphic page 13 (see attached);
- A story on the 5th Annual Northern Ghana Preseason Networking and Planning Forum published at :
 - m.peacefmonline.com/pages/news/social/201504/237458.php
 - www.youtube.com/watch?v=aRtq_gcCDXA

6 Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Knowledge management and learning (KML): Michelle Stern, a Senior Technical Director in ACDI/VOCA HQ’s Technical Learning Advancement Division, worked on the project to draft a guide on the development of the project’s internal KML system. Based on that guide, two Knowledge Forums per region will be held with staff and the project’s main stakeholders by the end of FY15. These forums will serve to allow participants to share knowledge about pre-determined topics. Three learning topics have been identified to date, and each will be subject to an assessment study, the SOW for these assessments is currently being finalized. One of the studies will be conducted by ADVANCE II staff, one by an intern, and one jointly with a fellow from the Obama Youth African Leader Initiative.

During the current reporting period ADVANCE II staff participated in the KML group meeting led by METSS who aimed to create awareness of existing (and opportunities for further) collaboration among Implementing Partners (IP) and providing understanding of USAID branding. ADVANCE II staff also attended the IP meeting organized by USAID which gave us the opportunity to better identify further opportunities for collaboration among IPs, to share information about experiences and gain knowledge from the others.

Data Capture Interface software (DCI): This tool has been developed to mainstream and facilitate data entry and analysis of some key, routinely collected data. During the second quarter, the design of the DCI was finalized. A total of 50 staff members throughout the Accra and regional office will be involved in data collection and were trained on the system’s use. All of the FY14 beneficiaries’ data have been restructured and uploaded in the system. The DCI includes a smart card system that allows for the use of smart cards to uniquely identify each of ADVANCE II’s beneficiaries and fasten data entry through the card readers.

To date, over 27,000 new individuals have been profiled. Data entry of those profiles in the DCI is ongoing. Several interns and national service personnel have been engaged to help with the collection and the entry. Printing and distribution of the cards has begun, and by the end of the next quarter, the system will be up and running with all data backlog and any system errors addressed.



Figure 5: Snapshots of the DCI screens

Sales Tracker: This software, in its structure, is in many ways similar to the DCI. It is being developed to collect, store and analyse data on sales and services provided by the OBs to their outgrowers. The Sales Tracker is a user friendly management tool for the OBs to better track and use their operational

data. FY15 is a pilot phase for the tracker, which will be tested with the 60 OBs that are receiving laptops as part of the grant program. These OBs and ADVANCE II staff will be trained on its use during the Q3.

FY14 gross margin and application of technology survey: Data has been analysed and the related indicators values have been shared with the technical staff. Further analysis has been done to explain the gross margin figures difference between sex and across the fiscal year. The findings are currently informing the priority activities for the next quarter.

Baseline: The draft report of the ADVANCE II northern Ghana baseline survey by BIRD has been received and comment have been recorded. The final version of this report will be shared with USAID in Q3. Regarding the South one, Data collection for the southern Ghana survey has ended, BIRD is currently analysing the data. The final report for the southern region will be available in Q3 as well. Based on the findings from both studies, the project will submit a request for approval to USAID for the finalization and revision of some our indicators targets.

Data Collection Instruments: After one year of implementation, several lessons were learned, which informed the M&E Unit to revise some data collection tools such the Smallholder Farmers, Nucleus Farmers, Aggregator, FBO profiling, Gross Margin and GIS tools. Also a new instrument such as the OB Support and the Pesticide Monitoring Tools were also developed within the period under review. The OB Support Tool will collect information on people working for OBs as managers who are playing very significant facilitation roles. The Pesticide Monitoring Tool collects information on pesticide usage on the demonstration plot farms.

Geographic Information System (GIS): In Q2 the GIS Specialist conducted a GPS and spatial data documentation training for the GAMSAP southern-based Agricultural Productivity Officers. Several spatial data collection and analysis activities were also undertaken during this quarter, they resulted in the production of the maps below:

- Nine maps of average maize, rice and soya yields overlying their respective soil-crop suitability
- Basemaps of check-dam locations to support the check-dam surveys for the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions
- A map of the districts visited by the Policy and Advocacy team during the DAIPs consultation meetings
- Nine maps of the rice, maize and soya suggested demonstration sites
- A 2014 rice production map for the ADVANCE II districts and a map of rice cultivable area based on MoFA data.

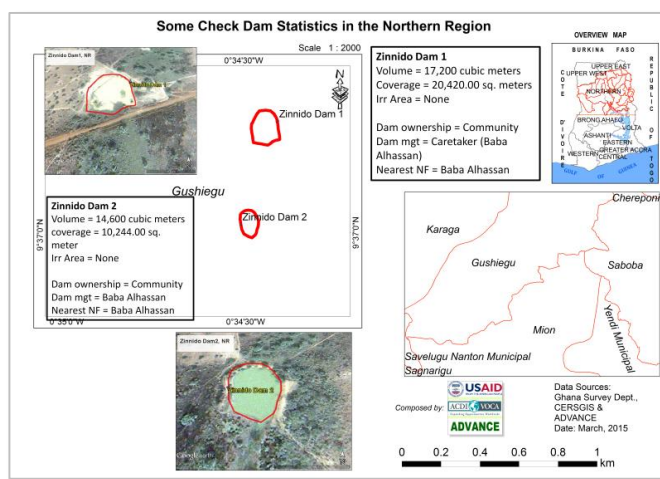


Figure 6: Example of check dam map

Annex 1: Indicator table

* Achievement rate for all reported indicators will be available when the database is fully operational in Q3. Without the database being fully populated, given the high number of records, merging Q1 and Q2 data will likely cause some double counting.

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY2015 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	% Achievement*	Comments
			Target	Achieved					
CI	OP1	Number of direct project beneficiaries	50,000	37,022	6,046				This period, the project focused on the identification and profiling of new 27,049 individuals. More individuals will benefit from the project from the next quarter
		Male	30,000	21,792	3,540				
		Female	20,000	15,230	2,506				
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	400	95	419				
FTF	OP3	Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security trainings	30,000	7,121	6,000				The target for this indicator will be achieved based on results thus far. More trainings are planned after the season starts (GAPs, SMFM, Faab, numeracy etc.)
		Male		3,574	3,498				

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY2015 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	% Achievement*	Comments
		Female		3,547	2,502				
FTF	OP4	Value of agricultural and rural loans	\$800,000	\$454,081	\$68,449			65.3%	\$ 468,097worth of loans is pending disbursement
		Male			\$14,973				
		Female			0				
		Joint			\$53,476				
FTF	OP5	Value of new private sector investment in agricultural sector or value chain (US\$)	\$800,000.	\$144,662	\$514.70			18%	Grants leverage and other capital expenses will occur from Q3 when the season starts
FTF	OP6	Number of MSME including farmers receiving USG assistance to access loans	20,000	5	5				Loans disbursed during the period were for lead actors involved in aggregation. More loans will be pursued for smallholders in the next quarter when the season starts
FTF	OC1	Gross margins per hectare for selected crops US Dollar under marketing arrangements fostered by the activity							Those are FY14 data. Targets will be set after the final baseline report, expected in Q3

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY2015 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	% Achievement*	Comments
		Maize			840				
		Rice			639				
		Soy			676				
FTF	OC2	Number of hectares under improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	20,000		45,066				FY14 data
		Technology Type							
		Crop Genetics			42,236				
		Pest Management							
		Soil Related			41,628				
		Water Management			17,544				
		Climate Change and Mitigation							
FTF	OC3	Number of farmers and others who have applied new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	25,000		29,914				FY14 data
		Sex							
		Male			18,243				

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY2015 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	% Achievement*	Comments
		Female			11,671				
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	150	32	190				
FTF	OC5	Value of incremental sales (collected at farm-level) attributed to FTF implementation							Actual sales data will be collected and reported in September
		Maize							
		Rice							
		Soy							

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY2015 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	% Achievement*	Comments
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	30						Data will be available in Q4 report.
FTF	OC7	Score, in percent, of combined key areas of organization capacity amongst USG direct and indirect local implementing partners	70%						Score of 9 selected organization will be reported annually
CI	OC8	Number of organizations/ enterprises identified as high potential for future awards	4						Four (4) organizations have been selected and their performance tracked
CI	OP8	Number of organizations/ enterprises receiving capacity building support against key milestones	9						Capacity building program is yet to start with the selected 9 organizations
F	OP9	Number of awards made directly to local organizations by USAID	NA						
FTF	OP10	Number of Rural Households benefiting directly from USG interventions	25,000						Market linkage and Training services yet to start

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY2015 Target	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	% Achievement*	Comments
FTF	OP11	Number of vulnerable households benefitting directly from USG interventions	10,000						Market linkage and Training service yet to start
FTF	OP12	Number of members of producer organizations and community based organizations receiving USG assistance	4,000		2,323				Market linkage and Training service yet to start
FTF	OP13	Number of MSMEs including farmers, receiving Business Development Services as result of USG assistance	20,000	983	6,195				Several BDS will be conducted in coming quarters, especially after the season starts

Annex 2: Partnership with private sector entities for the demo sites

List of sponsors

	Private Company	Location	Type(s) of Inputs
1	Wienco	Accra	MR seeds, Fertilizers, Herbicides
2	DuPont Pioneer/GAMSAP	USA	Seed Maize
3	YARA	Tamale	Maize & Rice fertilizers
4	Heritage Seeds	Tamale	Seed for Maize & Soybean
5	Lexbog Seeds	Tamale	Rice Seed
6	IITA-N2 Africa	Tamale	Soybean Inoculant
7	Golden Stork/LDC	Tamale	Fertilizers
8	Timtooni Agrochemicals	Tamale	Herbicides
9	Markteshim Agan	Tamale	Herbicides
10	ANS Ent.	Konongo	Rice seed
11	Ejura Rice Marketing Group	Ejura	Rice seed
12	Aframso Rice Aggregating Group	Ejura	Rice seed
13	Sadia Rice Mills	Ejisu	Rice seeds
14	Enapa Ventures	Kumasi	Fertilizer
15	Kumark Agro Company Ltd	Kumasi	Fertilizers for rice
16	SKY 3	Kintampo	Herbicides
17	Timothy Agrochemicals	Kintampo	Selective Herbicides
18	Abaare Enterprise	Zebila	Seed maize, fertilizer, crop protection chemicals
19	Meridian Agric Services	Bolga	Maize seeds
20	Simple Prince	Bolga	Seeds, fertilizers & herbicides for maize and rice,
21	Antika Co. Ltd	Wa	Seed maize, fertilizers
22	18 th April	Wa	Weedicides

of OBs supporting the setup of demos for their outgrowers

REGION	# of OBs	# of Demos by OBs
Northern	25	25
Upper East	15	18
Upper West	65	65*
Total	105	108

* OBs do not fully cover all input needs of the demos

Annex 3: Identified areas of support after the OCAT findings

Ghana Agro Input Dealers Association (GAIDA): GAIDA's primary goal is to provide services and training to input dealers and promote the development of a competitive agro-input market. The following areas of potential support were identified:

1. Lobby the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and MoFA to enforce regulations covering the registration and certification of input dealers
2. Facilitate access to finance for members
3. Strengthen the regional secretariat and executives in the areas of governance, financial management, membership mobilization, communication and advocacy
4. Expand the association to the district level
5. Train members in leadership, business and financial management, marketing, and safe and effective use of agro-inputs
6. Access to radio sensitization programs to market their products and carry out advocacy
7. Facilitate access to bulk fertilizer suppliers and producers outside the region for business relationships
8. Provision of office equipment for the regional secretariat

Seed Producers Association of Ghana (SEEDPAG): SEEDPAG's vision is to unite and empower seed producers in Ghana to influence policy and to produce good quality certified seed for the growth of the seed industry. The potential areas of support are:

1. Use of radio and ESOKO platform to promote certified seed use to farmers
2. Collaborate with MoFA Seed inspectorate Unit to intensify monitoring and production of high quality seeds
3. Reorganization to attract and sustain the interest and commitment of members
4. Access to finance for members
5. Update of members knowledge on modern trends in seed production
6. Strengthen the regional secretariat and executives in the areas of governance, financial management, membership mobilization, communication and advocacy
7. Access to weather data to aid seed development
8. Provision of office equipment for the regional secretariat
9. Acquisition of soil testing kits

Ghana Private Road and Transport Union (GPRTU) Cargo Wing: GPRTU Cargo has expressed interest in deepening the collaboration with ADVANCE II in the following areas:

1. Provide greater access to ADVANCE II farmers to market their haulage services
2. Capacity building of executives on general administration of the union and advocacy.