

Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement Project (ADVANCE)

FY16 Quarterly Report – Q1



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Acronyms

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

OG	Outgrower
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PCV	Peace Corps Volunteer
PEF	Private Enterprise Foundation
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan
PFI	Partner Financial Institution
PHH	Post-Harvest Handling
RC	Regional Coordinator
RING	Resiliency in Northern Ghana
SAPO	South Agricultural Productivity Officer
SEG	Small Equipment Grant
SMFM	Sell More For More
SOW	Scope of Work
SSP	Spray Services providers
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
TMO	Trade and Marketing Officer
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WATH	West Africa Trade Hub
WFP	World Food Programme
WRS	Warehouse Receipt System

Executive summary

This report presents the main achievements and key activities implemented by the USAID Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement (ADVANCE) project during the first quarter of FY2016, October to December 2015.

This quarter, ADVANCE directly supported 31,174 individuals including 10,757 women (34.5%). Among those individuals, 30,925 are smallholder farmers, 34.72% of them are women and 9.6% are members of producer organizations. This number represents 39.65% of the FY16 target of 78,000 smallholders to be supported. This brings the total number of smallholders served by the project so far to 69,934 or almost 62% of the project's overall target of 113,000.

Through these individual beneficiaries, 24,479 vulnerable households were supported, making the project achieve 62.77% of its FY16 target and 86.5% of its life of project target. ADVANCE reached 28,099 rural households this quarter (51.46% of its FY16 target), bringing to 51,898 the total number of rural households served so far (65.61% of overall project target). Also, the project trained, 11,422 individuals in good agronomic practices, post-harvest handling, outgrower business management, and marketing among others. A total of 5,711 (50%) were women.

Furthermore, 420 private enterprises, including end buyer firms, producer organizations, and trade associations were supported by the project, representing 93.33% of the FY16 target of 450.

During the reporting period, \$64,304 cash loans were disbursed to beneficiaries. A total \$22,177 have been invested in capital by outgrower businesses (OBs). Moreover, \$150,517 were invested as production support to their outgrowers (OGs), including weedicides, fertilizers and cash to pay for needed farm labor. Similarly to loans, more investment are expected to happen in the next quarters.

A total of 2,509 micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) received business development services during the quarter. Services include business plan development and reviews, business diagnostics, training, and market linkages among others. Majority of the enterprises supported were microenterprises owned by women.

The team continued managing 364 actor-supported demonstration plots (238 maize, 35 rice, 65 soybean and 26 on climate smart agriculture) set up during the 2015 crop season and seven trials with N2 Africa.

The Fifth Annual Northern Ghana Pre-Harvest Agribusiness Event was successfully held in Tamale on October 15, 2015 under the theme "*Discovering Opportunities for Expansion*". The event attracted 930 registered participants including farmers, buyers, processors, transporters, input dealers, farm machinery dealers and financial institutions.

Furthermore, 57 contracts, estimated to cover 6,091MT of maize, paddy, and soybean, were facilitated between buyers and OBs during the reporting period.

1 Introduction

This report presents the main accomplishments of USAID ADVANCE's implementing organization, ACDI/VOCA and its sub-awardees ACDEP, PAB, and Technoserve during the first quarter of FY2016 (October to December 2015). The report is organized by the project's intermediate results

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

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

2 Collaboration with Other Programs and MoFA

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

2.1 Collaboration with Projects and Organizations

Agricultural Technology Transfer project (ATT)

ADVANCE collaborated with ATT to work jointly with nucleus farmer James Adawina and his smallholder outgrowers in the Upper East Region and trained them to adopt labour-saving and productivity enhancing technologies, private sector input market linkages, and market access for their produce. About 400 smallholder farmers (out of which 90% are women) linked to James will benefit from interventions out of this collaboration.

Also, an important agreement between the two projects was reached to introduce new technologies already tested: hand-planters and fertilizer applicators, especially for ADVANCE female outgrowers, as well as mechanical planters, and soil rippers for ADVANCE outgrower businesses.

Competitive Africa Rice Initiative / John Kufour Foundation

ADVANCE partnered with the John Kufuor Foundation and Technoserve, the implementing partners for the Competitive Africa Rice Initiative (CARI) project in Ghana, to provide technical and financial support to GRIB to organize the 2nd Ghana National Rice Festival in Accra in November 2015. The event is organized to promote locally produced rice to the Ghanaian public and encourage patronage.

Mickey Leland International Hunger Fellows Program

In October 2015, the project welcomed Leland Hunger Fellow Michael Wilcox. The Leland Hunger fellowship gives fellows the opportunity to work on field based food-security projects. As a fellow, Michael is working with the ADVANCE team to improve training methods and better understand the challenges facing smallholder farmers in Upper North, Upper East, and Upper West. He started documenting the trainings and is currently compiling technical specification sheets on ADVANCE practices. In 2016, Michael will train the staff on behavior change and barrier analysis to facilitate sustainable adoption of project taught practices.

N2Africa

ADVANCE made a presentation on the effects of and access to phosphorus fertilizers in northern Ghana at a forum organized by IITA/N2Africa project for all stakeholders in the soya value chain. The forum was attended by input dealers, nucleus farmers, development partners and staff from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

Northern Rural Growth Program

In collaboration with ACDEP/NRGP, ADVANCE organized market linkage meetings in Salaga, Gushegu, Tamale and Walewale for AVNASH, a rice processing company, to meet with rice producers. This linkage provides a market for the farmers and a source of paddy supply for AVNASH. In addition, ACDEP/NRGP is using ADVANCE demo plots to train their own beneficiaries.

Peace Corps

Four Peace Corp volunteers have arrived in country and will be actively involved with ADVANCE. They will, among other tasks conduct training in numeracy and Farming as a Business (FaaB) during off-season and GAPs training through demo sites. For that purpose, ADVANCE will provide them with a training of trainers' course. Also, two of the volunteers have a business background and will be helping OBs to improve their management practices.

USAID/WATH

At the invitation of WATH, a member of the ADVANCE trade and marketing team participated in a sub-regional workshop on "Best Practice on Contracting" in Lome, Togo, from November 23 to 25, 2015. The workshop brought value chain actors from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Togo and Senegal. The knowledge acquired by ADVANCE will be applied in facilitating the largely informal cross border trade between Ghanaian farmers and buyers from neighbouring countries.

World Food Programme (WFP)

ADVANCE trained 650 farmers belonging to ten FBOs working with WFP were trained on contracting, negotiations and marketing. The training was done in collaboration with WFP/Purchase for Progress (P4P) project to provide the farmers with the skills to engage with WFP for the sale of their produce.

WFP supported a rice field day in Gingani for ADVANCE smallholder farmers to improve on production practices and increase yields. Also, WFP encouraged the farmers to adopt what they have learnt at the demo to improve yields and income.

2.2 Collaboration with Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA)

Donations from ADVANCE towards the Farmers Day celebration were made to one district per region in the north, and project staff actively participated in the events honouring male and female farmers. Moreover, 16 MOFA agricultural extension agents (AEAs) from Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions were trained by YARA Ghana Ltd Specialists on soil fertility and nutrition, as part of YARA’s collaboration with ADVANCE in setting up Demos during the 2015 crop season.

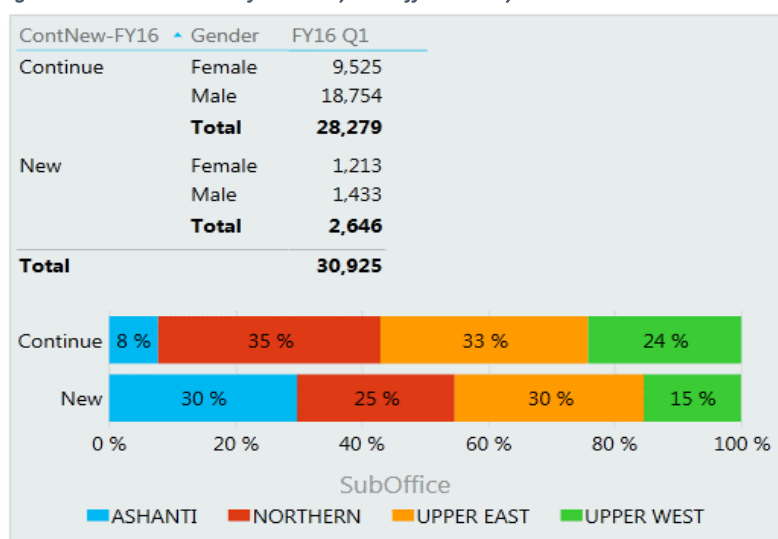
3 Key Results

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

3.1 Direct Project Beneficiaries

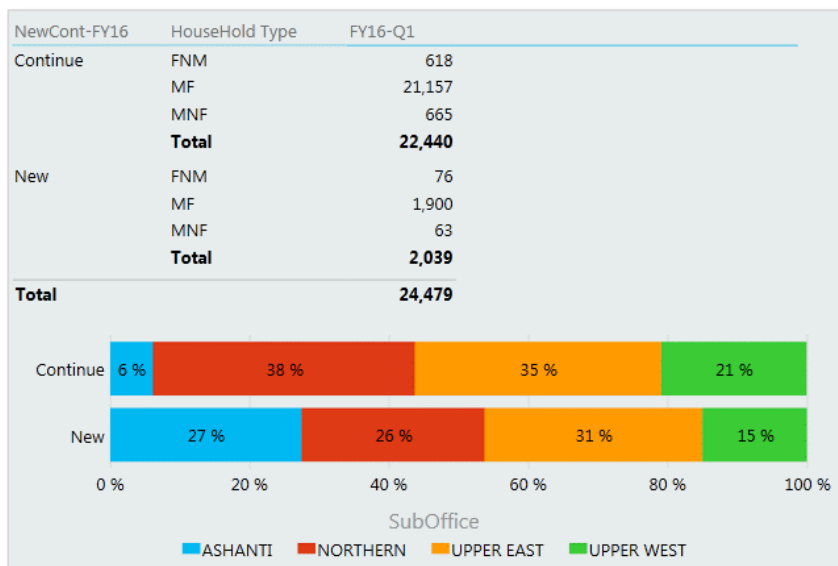
This first quarter of FY16, ADVANCE directly reached 31,174 individuals including 10,757 women (34.5%). Among those individuals, 30,925 are smallholder farmers, 34.72% of them are women and 9.6% are members of producer organizations. This number represents 39.65% of the FY16 target of 78,000 smallholders to be supported. This brings the total number of smallholders served by the project so far to 69,934 or almost 62% of the project’s overall target of 113,000. Most smallholders (91.44%) are continuing ones, i.e. they benefitted from the project since previous year(s). Only 2,646 of them started benefitting from the project this FY16 (Figure 1). This quarter’s achievement in terms of number of smallholders reached represent 39.65% of the FY16 target of 78,000. They increase the total number of smallholders reached by the project so far to 69,934 or almost 62% of the project’s overall target of 113,000.

Figure 1: Smallholder beneficiaries by sub-office and by duration



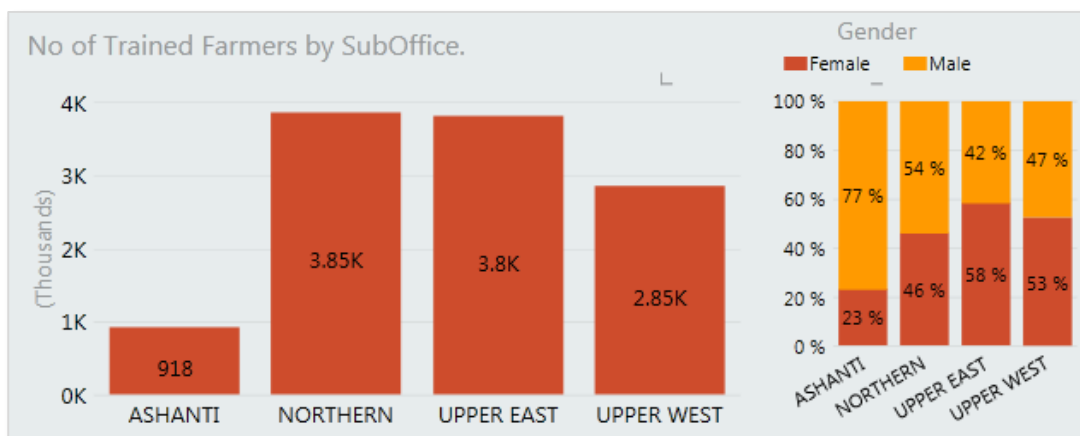
Through these individual beneficiaries, 24,479 vulnerable households were supported (Figure 2), making the project’s achievement arrive at almost 62.76% of its FY16 target and 86.5% of its life of project target. Moreover, ADVANCE reached 28,099 rural households this quarter (51.46% of its FY16 target), bringing to 51,898 the total number of rural households served so far (65.61% of overall project target).

Figure 2: Vulnerable households supported by duration, household type, and region



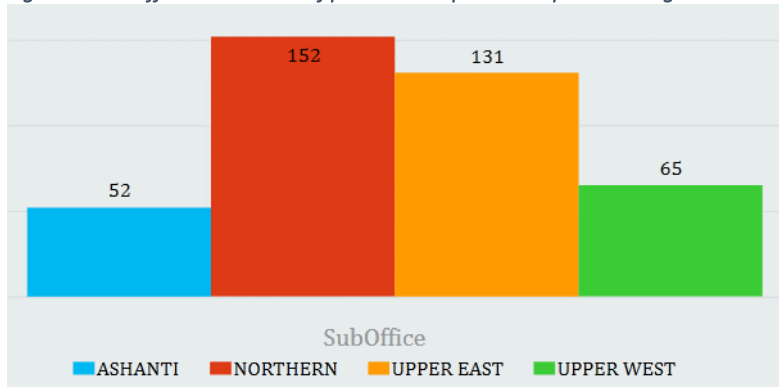
During the period, 11,422 individuals were trained in good agronomic practices and post-harvest handling, outgrower business management and marketing, of which 5,711 (50%) of them were women. As seen in Figure 3 below, most of the trainees are from Northern and Upper East regions.

Figure 3: Training participants by sub office and gender



Furthermore, 400 private enterprises and producer organizations were supported by the project. Additionally two trade associations (Ghana Grains Council GGC and Ghana Rice Inter-Professional Body GRIB) which received grants and technical assistance and 18 end buyer firms also received business development services. This total of 420 entities is 93.33% of the FY16 target of 450. Figure 4 below gives the distribution by sub-office of the 400 private enterprises and producer organizations. Most of them are from Northern Region, where the project has the highest number of smallholders reached.

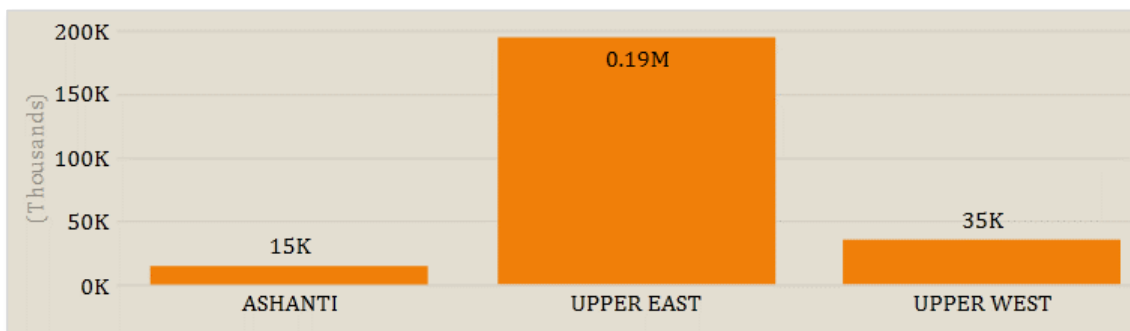
Figure 4: Sub-office distribution of private enterprises and producer organizations supported



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

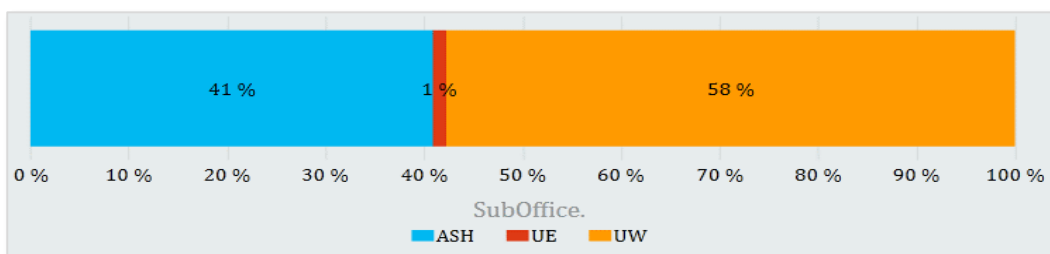
This quarter, GHS 244,000 (\$64,304¹) of cash loans have been disbursed to beneficiaries as seen in Figure 5. More loans will be applied for and disbursed in the next quarters as the next season starts and buyers and OBs invest in the value chains.

Figure 5: Agricultural and rural loans disbursed (GHS)



Hundred and forty five micro-enterprises had access to cash and in-kind loans, most of them from Upper West and Ashanti regions (Figure 6). This illustrates the fact that 1% of the borrowers, who are from Upper East, borrowed 79.5% of the total loans amount. Most of it was to fund aggregation of produce.

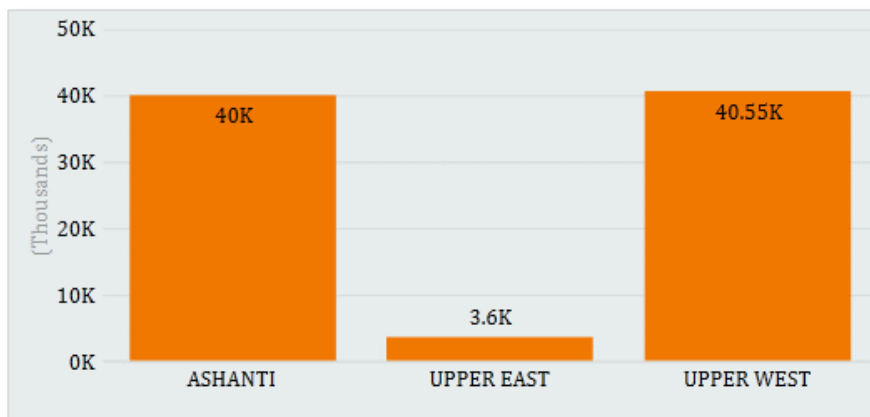
Figure 6: Access to loans by sub-office



¹ Exchange rate used throughout the report is 1\$ = GHS3.7945

A total of GHS 84,150 (\$22,177) capital investments was made by OBs. Most of the capital investment was made in the Upper West and Ashanti Regions and consisted of tractor purchases. Moreover, GHS 571,138.5 (\$150,517) was invested by ADVANCE South OBs as production support to their OGs, including weedicides, fertilizers and cash to pay for needed farm labor.

Figure 7: Capital investment by sub-office



3.3 Business development services

A total of 2,509 micro, and small enterprises received business development services during the quarter (Table 1). Services include business plan development and review, business diagnostics, trainings, and market linkages among others. Majority of the enterprises supported were microenterprises owned by women. More will be supported in the next quarters as the crop season starts.

Table 1: MSME beneficiaries of business development services

Gender	MSME Type	FY16 Q1
Female	Small	3
	Micro	1,479
	Medium	0
	Total	1,482
Male	Small	25
	Micro	1,000
	Medium	2
	Total	1,027
Total		2,509

In addition, 16 micro, small and medium end buyer firms were also supported through business plan design, business diagnostics and market linkages. This brings the total number of MSME beneficiary of this activity to 2,525.

4 Progress with Technical Delivery

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

The main focus during the quarter under review were training in post-harvest handling (PHH), farmers' gross margin data collection, and yield analysis on demonstration and trial plots. Activities enhancing crop productivity and outgrower business development, farmer-to-farmer mentorship as well as promotion of climate smart agriculture were pursued.

4.1.1 Demonstration sites and GAP trainings

Actor-supported demonstration sites

During the quarter

- The team continued managing 252 actor-supported demonstrations plots (126 maize, 35 rice, 65 soybean and 26 on climate smart agriculture) and seven trials with N2 Africa which were set up during the last quarter of FY15.
- There were joint monitoring visits with demo input sponsors (including YARA and N2 Africa) to over 15 demo sites across the three northern regions.
- The demos were also used by ACDEP/NRGP to train other farmers, non-ADVANCE beneficiaries, within Northern Ghana.

Table 2 below shows initial findings from the demo plots yield analysis.

Table 2: Demo plots yield analysis - preliminary findings

	Demo Objective	# of harvested demos	Yield(MT/Ha)				Comments
			NR	UER	UWR	Average	
1.0 Maize							
1.1	Superiority of Pioneer Hybrids (30F32)	23	5.10	5.06	6.56	5.32	
1.2	Superiority of Pioneer Hybrids (30Y87)	24	5.88	7.53	7.29	6.77	1*
1.3	Superiority of Pan 12 Hybrid	7	6.51	4.43	6.05	6.19	2 *
1.4	Superiority of Pan 53 Hybrid	7	4.76	6.21	-	5.95	
1.5	Standard improved practices ²	65	3.73	4.43	5.22	4.45	3*
2.0 Rice							
2.1	Nursery and Transplanting	12	5.42	7.35	6.75	6.51	4*
2.2	Direct seeding	14	4.33	4.84	5.04	4.74	
3.0 Soya							
3.1	P-fertilizer & Inoculant effect	48					

² Certified seeds, row planting, two to three applications (deep placement) of fertilizers, weeds and pest control, harvesting at optimal moisture content

	Demo Objective	# of harvested demos	Yield(MT/Ha)				Comments
			NR	UER	UWR	Average	
3.1.1	Triple superphosphate		2.24	1.77	2.04	2.50	
3.1.2	Inoculant		1.37	1.72	1.86	1.83	
3.1.3	Triple superphosphate + Inoculant		2.50	1.45	2.40	2.69	
3.1.4	Control ³		0.92	1.03	1.20	1.27	
3.2	Drilling versus Spot planting	8					
3.2.1	Spot Planting		1.72	1.18	1.75	1.91	
3.2.2	Drilling		1.84	2.01	2.25	2.63	5*

*Comments

1. Superiority of Pioneer Hybrids (30Y87): the average demo yield of 6.77MT/Ha represents over 40% higher yield than the 4.45 MT/Ha average for all the local OPVs and hybrids. It represents 96.8% higher yield than the 3.44MT/Ha average of ADVANCE actors (based on FY14 gross margin values) and close to 400% higher yields than the regional average of 1.38MT/Ha as seen in the project baseline report.
2. Superiority of Pan 12 Hybrid: the average 6.19MT/Ha represents over 30% higher yield than the 4.45 MT/Ha for all the local OPVs and Hybrids.
3. Standard improved practices: the overall average yield of 4.45MT/Ha for standard improved practices in maize transferred by the project through the demos represents over 200% higher than the regional average of 1.38MT/Ha reported in the ADVANCE baseline study.
4. Both transplanting and direct seeding in rice yielded higher (6.42MT/Ha and 4.77MT/Ha respectively) than the 3 MT/Ha achieved by ADVANCE actors based on the FY14 Gross margin values. The average regional yield for rice in the ADVANCE project area was 1.61 MT/Ha at baseline.
5. Drilling versus spot planting: drilling across all the regions gave over 30% yield higher than spot planting at the spacing of 60cm X 10cm X 2 seed/hill. It is expected that the gain in yield will more than compensate for the cost of the extra seed that would be required.

GAPs and PHH trainings

Overall, 5,622 individuals (out of which 2,626 are women) were trained on GAPs and 6,031 (including 3,306 women) on PHH during this quarter, (see Figure 8 and Figure 9). The Northern and Ashanti offices concentrated their efforts in GAPs trainings while Upper East and Upper West focused more on PHH, based on regional priorities and training needs of their respective beneficiaries.

The trainings took place at demo sites and were jointly facilitated with MoFA Agricultural Extension Agents (AEAs). Topics comprised an overview of the crop cycle to point out the important practices at each stage of plant growth and their contribution to improving yields: site selection, land preparation, germination test and nursery management, fertilizer application, weed control, through to harvesting and post-harvest handling.

³ Plot next to the demo plot, that is planted by the farmer, applying his or her usual practices

Figure 8: GAPs training beneficiaries by region

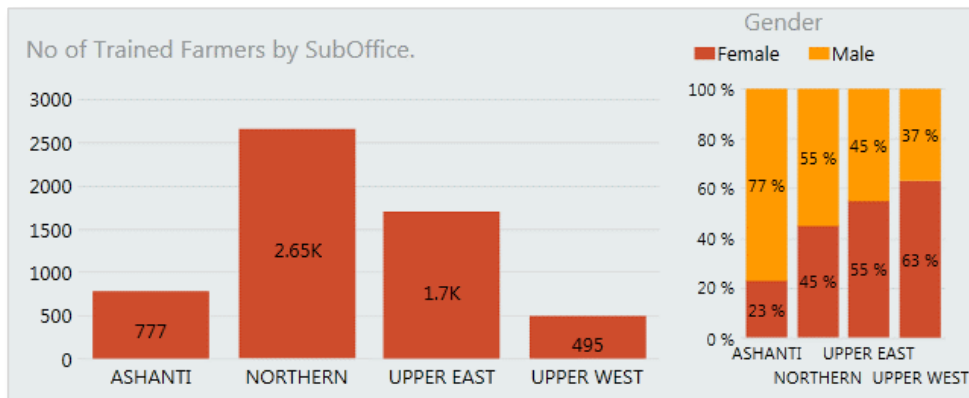
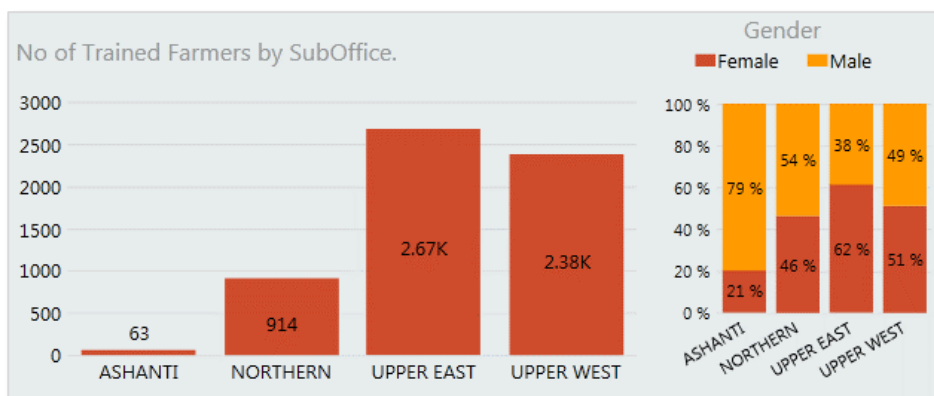


Figure 9: PHH training beneficiaries by region



Testimonies from a number of training beneficiaries confirm significant increases in yields achieved by those who adopted technologies introduced to them by the project.

“I applied row planting and other agronomic practices after supporting and participating in a field day at a demo plot in Kpaturi. My yields have increased from 8 bags to 16 bags per acre this season”, Abdulai Tahiru bagging and weighing his maize at his farm at Glysiyia in Nanumba North



Final revision of the maize and soya standard protocols jointly produced with the Agriculture Technology Transfer (ATT) project was completed during the first quarter. They have been shared with Esoko and partner radio stations. Print outs and distribution are expected in the next quarter.

Furthermore, in collaboration with Yara, the biggest importer of fertilizer in Ghana and sponsor of 130 demos on the 2015 crop season, ADVANCE organized a one day training on “Crop Nutrition and Fertilizers” for 16 AEs from the three northern regions, 20 ADVANCE agronomists (north and south) and six supervisors.

4.1.2 ICT outreach for production technologies dissemination

The project partnered with 25 radio stations to broadcast information on harvest and post-harvest handling between October and December 2015. Topics discussed included harvesting techniques for maize, rice and soya, use of tarpaulins, proper drying and storage. Farmers used the radio platform to share experiences in best practices for the benefit of the other farmers.

Text messages were also sent through Esoko to 105 OBs against bush burning, as well as advice on harvesting, drying, and storage.

“Shell your harvested maize and winnow to remove all the bad ones and chaff to make the grains clean for longer storage”, one of Esoko text messages.

In collaboration with Grameen Foundation, ADVANCE is piloting the use of Smartex for provision of extension services, outgrower business management and data collection. Smartex is a tablet based application developed by Grameen, the content has been provided by ADVANCE, based on the standard crop protocols developed in partnership with ATT. Though the piloting is done in the south, discussions are underway to extend it to the north in 2016.

4.1.3 Climate smart agriculture

The promotion of Climate Smart Agricultural production systems and management practices entered its second year this quarter. The aim is to encourage farmers to adopt more sustainable and profitable farming systems that will both mitigate negative impacts of climate change and progressively reduce cost of production.

This reporting period, 26 climate smart specific trials (including three unsuccessful ones) were. Table 3 below presents initial findings on the trials.

Table 3: Initial Results of Yields from Climate Smart Demos

Demo Objective	# of Demos	Maize average yield (MT/Ha)				Comments
		NR	UER	UWR	Project Ave.	
Minimum Tillage	23					
Ripping		2.81	3.93	4.68	3.74	About 37% higher yield than ploughing
Ploughing		1.95	3.23	3.08	2.73	
Cover Crop intercrops vs. Sole crops	4					
Maize + Dolichos (20 days after sowing)		1.60	1.93	2.10	1.87	Good compensation (when added to the dolichos output) compared to stand alone main crop

Demo Objective	# of Demos	Maize average yield (MT/Ha)				Comments
		NR	UER	UWR	Project Ave.	
Maize + Mucuna (20 days after sowing)		2.01	1.28	1.53	1.61	Low yield
Maize + Cajanus (0 day after sowing)		1.41	1.03	1.79	1.41	Low yield
Maize + Cajanus (20 days after sowing)		2.73	1.93	2.04	2.23	Good compensation (when added to the cajanus output) compared to stand alone main crop
Maize + Cowpeas (0 day after sowing)		1.70	-	-	1.70	Good output (when added to the cowpeas output) comparing to stand alone crop
Maize + Cowpeas (20 days after sowing)		1.99	4.12	-	3.05	Comparable to stand alone main crop
Maize + Cowpea (55 days after sowing)		-	3.34	4.12	3.73	Cowpea was 75 day maturity variety. Higher yield
Maize + Cowpea (75 days after sowing)		-	-	3.33	3.33	Comparable to stand alone main crop
Sole Maize		1.87	4.64	3.09	3.20	

Post-season training has been organized to enhance capacity of project staff in ripping as an alternative land preparation method. This is to get the field team ready for upscaling CSA in the 2016 planting season. Measurements of efficiency in ripping were done, including fuel consumption when ripping a plot for the first time.



Demonstration of land preparation using rippers

Also, ADVANCE encouraged adoption of ripping on a much larger and commercial scale. More than 100 acres of land have been offered by interested farmers across the three regions for more commercial size demonstration plots of between 1 and 20 acres each for ripping as the alternative land preparation method. Eight acres of these were ripped during this first quarter with 15 acres to be ripped with three farmers (five acres each) in the Tumu district alone during this second quarter. The remaining 77 acres, will be ripped from May to June.

Following the announcement by the Ghana Meteorological society that the rainfall period for 2015 would be shorter, and the long drought spell experienced in some parts of the project locations in 2014, smallholder farmers were extensively sensitized on mitigating production risk by purchasing a crop insurance policy from GAIP. As a result, 109 drought index policies were purchased valued at GHS

10,835. However, only one OB in Upper West who had a dry spell received a pay out of GHS 983.60 (\$259) this quarter.

The seasonal forecasts and daily weather alerts from Ignitia ended in December 2015, at the end of the season. All 5,000 farmers who received the subscription will be graduated to a self-subscription module in the 2016 planting season where they will pay for the daily alerts. A new set of farmer beneficiaries will be given the opportunity in 2016 to benefit from this service for the first time.

4.1.4 Improved access to inputs/equipment



Field days at Hamile

During the field days, many of the agricultural input importers, wholesalers and retailers were invited and participated to backstop ADVANCE's field staff and promote their products, comparing the superior crop performance of the demo to the farmer's practice plot. Linkages were made between these input providers and the OBs and their Lead Farmers to guarantee the supply for next season through the closest retailers or community dealers.

Conversations with Yara were initiated to advise them on the best locations for their shops/agents to facilitate access by ADVANCE beneficiaries to Actyva fertilizer, which showed very positive results during the demos. A map is being designed by the project for that purpose.

Furthermore, the project collaborated with three financial institutions (FIs) namely Sinapi Aba Savings and Loans, GN Bank and Opportunity International Savings and Loans Bank to organize a financial linkage forum for 35 OBs who expressed interest in acquiring tractors through equipment financing for the 2016 farming season. The forum created the opportunity for financial education on equipment finance, networking and for the farmers to share experiences with the FIs. Thirty OBs are expected to access tractors, which will allow 5, 530 smallholders benefit from improved and more efficient tractor service provision.

Meetings and collaborative arrangements with ATT resulted in ten spring loaded rippers, four mechanical planters, 200 hand planters for maize, and 200 simple hand fertilizer applicators that ATT will grant to 14 OBs and more than 300 women OGs among ADVANCE beneficiaries.

Also, as mentioned in section 2.1., ADVANCE collaborated with IITA/N2 Africa and ATT to organize a stakeholders' meeting on sustainable supply of legume inputs including certified seeds, inoculants and phosphorus fertilizers. The objective was to develop strategies for sustainable supply of legume inputs to farmers in soya producing communities in northern Ghana. Ten ADVANCE actors made up of input dealers, nucleus farmers and a seed company participated in this workshop.

4.1.5 Outgrower business management

Outgrower business management training

During the reporting period, 26 OBs were trained on marketing and contracts.

Farmer mentorship

During the quarter, ten experienced nucleus farmers mentored 52 relatively new OBs. These included one female nucleus farmer in Upper West Region who mentored and inspired female OB aspirants. The mentorship involved ten visits. The main focus was on the success and failure factors that underlie OBs' operations. Mentees, through the concept of "seeing is believing" have been taken around and exposed to the scale and quality of operations and investments of the mentor.

Furthermore, 65 nucleus farmers from the north were taken to visit ADVANCE South hybrid sites to expose them to the potentials of the pioneer hybrid varieties.

Field management program

During the period, nine more OBs (including 2 women) were profiled alongside 439 smallholder farmers as their outgrowers, with over 2220 smallholder farmers more that will be profiled during Q2.

One OB in Upper West Region engaged the services of a field manager. All the 15 field agents engaged by OBs in the Upper East Region benefitted from a joint PHH training with the Ghana Grains Council (GGC). The training built their capacities in the following areas: grain storage, sales, weights and standards.

In addition, lead farmers that doubled as agents of OBs in the Northern Region who were supported to set up nine demos were also backstopped by ADVANCE staff and MoFA AEAs to train smallholder farmers of their respective OBs.

There were 21 grant applications for motorbikes which are expected to facilitate OB's outgrowers input distributions, tractor services management, investment tracking, post-harvest mechanization, in-kind recoveries and aggregation as well as GAP/PHH trainings. These are being processed.

OB office program

To enhance their businesses, 53 OBs were given laptop computers, printers and power surges under the project's grants scheme to computerise their operations. A business software called 'Sales Tracker' was installed on these laptop computers to enable them keep track of all their financial transactions. Follow up monitoring on OB usage of these equipment and software indicated that OBs were now keeping excellent and verifiable records that can be used to make better business decisions.

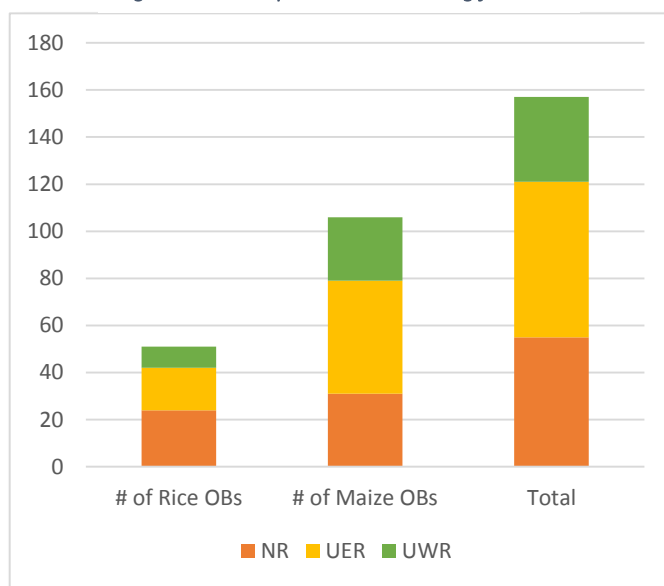
Also, following the project's recommendation, four OBs have set up small office units from where they manage their operations more professionally.

OB network

A special OBs’ advocacy session was organized on the eve of the 2015 pre-harvest event to sensitize and give information on networking benefits to a total of 157 maize and rice OBs (see Figure 10).

Presentations included “Networking systems and Advocacy” and “Networking System – Rationale and Experience Sharing”. A member of the Northern Nucleus Farmers Association, Mohammed Zion, shared the experience of the Northern Nucleus Farmers Association (NNFS), the first association currently running in the Northern Region, on lessons and challenges from their own beginnings.

Figure 10: Participation at networking forum



4.1.6 Business development services

Business planning

In the period under review, nine new actors have had business plans developed with them. Additional nine OBs had the business diagnostic tool administered to them, pending preparation of their business plans. Eight OBs have had their businesses registered during this reporting period.

Financial services



Opportunity International staff opening account for the OGs

The project team has identified two new partner financial institutions (PFIs), Tizaa Rural Bank and the GN Bank, which will support ADVANCE OBs and OGs with financing for inputs, trade credit and savings. These two PFIs, together with the existing ones, sensitized OBs and OGs on their services and products and also on the need for them to save. As a result, 564 OGs and three OBs have so far opened bank accounts with them.

Fidelity Bank and First Allied Savings and Loans Limited are the new partners in the project’s objective of expanding financial access. These two banks have signed Development Credit Authority (DCA) agreements with USAID.

To further encourage rural savings among smallholder farmers, especially women, the project contracted Sung Foundation and YARO, two local NGOs, to train and set up a total 130 Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) in the three regions of the north (50 each in Northern and Upper West Regions and 30 in Upper East). This is expected to benefit 3,250 OGs and FBO members.

This VSLA activity is a follow up to the success of 17 groups who were trained and set up in the Kintampo area of the Northern Region. These groups of 425 members were able to mobilize savings of GHS 41,518 (\$10,942) and also disbursed GHS 5,300 (\$1397) as loans to 35 members to enable them buy sacks for packaging harvested produce, hire labour, and pay their children's school fees among others.

During the loan disbursement session, a member, Abena Afra remarked: *"I use[d] to engage family labour in harvesting which usually delays the process and eventually causes losses [as well as] grains stored on the floor and in basins which reduce the quality. This year I will harvest early by hiring labour and bagging the rice to exclude foreign materials hence improving the quality of the rice".*

Cashless services

The three regional offices engaged MTN in community sensitizations and registrations. In Upper East, 175 (85 males, 90 females) smallholder farmers linked to nucleus farmers Sulley Adongo, Akukubilla Ayamga and Vitus Yelzaalem were trained on use of mobile money, how to send and receive money, pay for agro inputs and receive payments for produce supplied. As a result, 28 smallholders comprising 18 males and 10 females registered as subscribers onto the Mobile money platform.

In the Upper West Region, smallholder farmers using MTN Mobile Money services transacted business totalling GHS 181,997.55 (\$47,964) out of which GHS 72,799.02 (\$19,185) are cash-in with male and female customers of 785 and 741 respectively and GHS 109,198.53 (\$28,778) are cash-out, with male and female customers of 422 and 607 respectively.

Northern Region recorded two value chain actors Tyumba Women Processing and Tia Farms receiving mobile money training with their outgrowers. Subsequently, 141 (79 male and 62 female) farmers in four communities were registered as subscribers in Janga, Golinga, Kpanvo, Tolon and Yamah. In addition, six of these farmers were set up as merchants to handle transactions in the various communities.

Input dealer business development program

During the reporting period, five input dealers had their business plans developed, 19 had a business diagnosis tool administered to them while two more are being coached to step up their business knowledge.

4.1.7 Award during Regional Farmers Day



The certificate received by the Upper West Region

The Upper West Region sub-office was awarded a Certificate of Merit by MoFA during the 31st National Farmers Day in the region. Mrs. Hamida Iddisu, one of the sub-office's beneficiaries received a bicycle, protective clothing knapsack sprayer and some quantities of agro-chemicals as recognition of her outstanding contribution to the development of agriculture in the region.

Moreover, 13 male farmer beneficiaries received best overall farmer, best collaboration, and best district farmer awards.

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

4.2.1 Pre-harvest event

The Fifth Annual Northern Ghana Pre-Harvest Agribusiness Event was held in Tamale on October 15, 2015 under the theme "Discovering Opportunities for Expansion". The Ghana Grains Council (GGC) hosted the event with support from ADVANCE.

The event attracted 930 registered participants including farmers, buyers, processors, transporters, input dealers, farm machinery dealers and financial institutions. It provided a platform for farmers to establish business relationships and discuss contracts for the 2015 harvest of maize, paddy and soybean.



Exhibition stand of VODAFONE, the headline sponsor

GGC worked with ADVANCE to generate revenues of GHS 131,848 (\$34,747) from the event including GHS 112,000 (\$29,516) in sponsorship.



Participants at the soybean marketplace forum

Proceeds from sponsorship represent a five-fold increase from the amount of GHS 21,500 generated in 2014. This signals increasing private sector interest in the marketing opportunities presented by the event and a big step for sustainability.

Evaluation of the 2015 Pre-Harvest Event

Highlights of an evaluation conducted by a team from the University of Development Studies involving 154 respondents indicated that:

- 42% of participants were first time attendees
- 30% of participants rated the event as excellent; 59% rated it as good
- The market place where buyers and farmers discussed market developments and contracting expectations was the primary selling point for the event, followed by exhibitions
- 29% of participants rated exhibitions as excellent; 54% rated it as good
- 57% of participants discussed business deals with others
- 100% of participants and 77% of exhibitors want the event to be organized again

Feedback from 39 exhibitors indicated that 33% were first time exhibitors and 67% past exhibitors

4.2.2 Market linkage development

New buyers identified

Thirteen new buyer firms were identified and profiled during the quarter (Table 4). Two of these buyers carried out trade missions, and consequently signed contracts with OBs in North Ghana for the delivery of maize and soybeans.

Table 4: Buyers identified by region

Firm Type	Region of Origin				Total
	Ashanti	Brong - Ahafo	Northern	Upper East	
Aggregator	3		1	1	5
Processor - Foods			2		2
Processor - Rice miller	3		2		5
Processor – Soybean		1			1
Total	6	1	5	1	13

Trade missions

Nine trade missions were facilitated for six buyers and 151 OBs and farmer groups during the quarter (see Table 5). One mission involved an OB from Upper East Region visiting a poultry farmer in Kumasi, who has installed a soybean-processing unit, to understand their business operations and explore opportunities for increased soybean supplies.

OB Abu Jambedu (in smock) during trade mission in Kumasi



Table 5: Trade missions facilitated

Name of Buyer	Region of Origin	No of Participating OBs*	Regional Coverage of OBs	Commodity
Royal Danemac Ltd**	Ashanti	20	Northern, Upper East	Maize, Soybean
Habiba Adama	Ashanti	3	Upper East	Maize
Asamoa & Yamoa Farms	Ashanti	1	Upper East	Soybean
E-GABS Ghana Ltd**	Brong-Ahafo	38	Northern, Upper East	Soybean
Addicent Foods Ltd	Greater Accra	5	Upper East	Paddy
Avnash**	Northern	84	Northern, Upper East	Paddy
Grand Total		151		

* An OB typically participates in different trade missions with different buyers

** These buyers embarked on two-trade mission across two regions

During those trade missions, beyond contracting for supplies, three of the buyers committed themselves to supporting the farmers they met on the trade mission with the following:

- Addicent Foods – Four electronic weighing scales for TICFU and establishment of four purchasing centers for paddy rice in Biu, Bonia, Precast, and Navrongo
- Asamoa & Yemoa Farms – One electronic weighing scale for soybean purchases
- E-GABS – Aggregation finance for soybean supplies

Weighing scale provided by Addicent Foods at Biu



Contracts

A total of 57 contracts were facilitated between buyers and OBs during the quarter (Table 6). These contracts are estimated to cover 6,091MT of maize, rice, and soybean.

Table 6: Contracts facilitated

Type of Contract	Number of Contracts	Volume of Goods (Mt)	Value (GHC)
Closed	11	3,574	4,383,270
Purchase and Sales Agreement	46	2,517	***
Total	57	6,091	4,383,270

Key market development

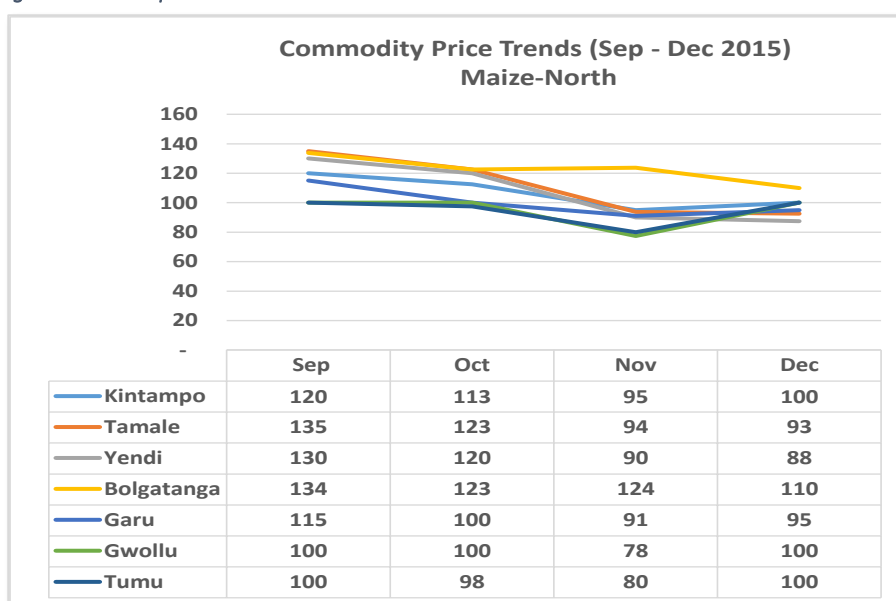
Commodity prices are monitored weekly by ADVANCE in key markets in Northern Ghana and in the ADVANCE South production area covering Ashanti, Brong-Ahafo and Eastern (Afram Plains) Regions. The price data is shared with actors at the annual northern Ghana pre-harvest event. It is also used by the trade and marketing team to guide farmers and buyers in pricing negotiations. ADVANCE intends to broaden the dissemination of this data to value chain actors every quarter through a market intelligence report

In line with historical trends, there was a general decline in prices since farmers at this period of the year sell off grain from the previous farming season crop to raise cash to employ labour to harvest the new crop. Increased supply of grain from the current crop harvest in November and December further depresses prices. The exceptional cases in price trends are explained below.

Maize – northern Ghana

Maize prices in northern markets declined by 17% between September 2015 and December 2015 (Figure 11). Prices in the Upper West markets of Tumu and Gwollu rose in December 2015 on account of lower than expected supplies from farmers. Farmers were still harvesting maize in mid to late December 2015. There are indications of lower yields this year leading to farmers holding back on sales in expectation of higher prices.

Figure 11: Maize prices in northern Ghana markets

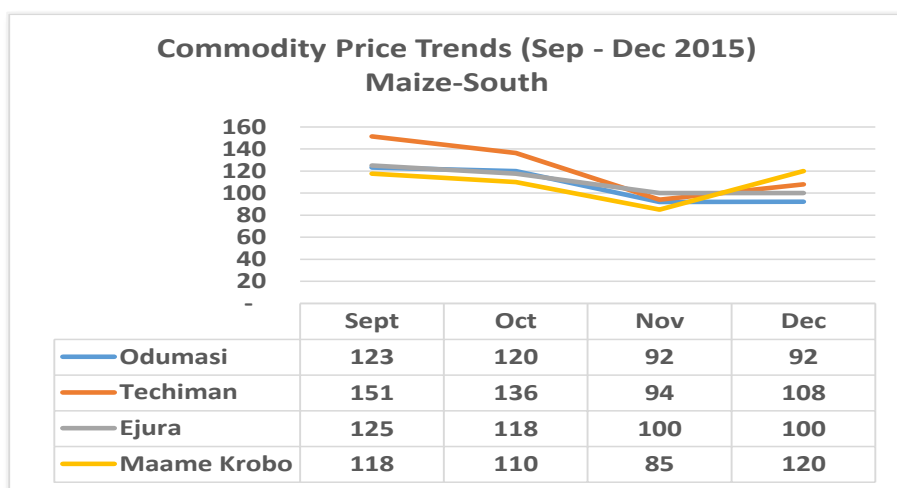


Source: ADVANCE market monitoring

Maize – southern Ghana

Maize prices in four key markets in the ADVANCE South operational area declined by 18% between September 2015 and December 2015 (Figure 12). This could be associated with buyers (especially poultry farms) shifting their demand from southern grain to the relatively cheaper grain in north Ghana and Ivorian sources. Farmers in the south in anticipation of higher prices, generally held onto their major season produce, resulting in relatively higher prices, prior to the north Ghana harvest.

Figure 12: Maize Prices in Southern Ghana markets

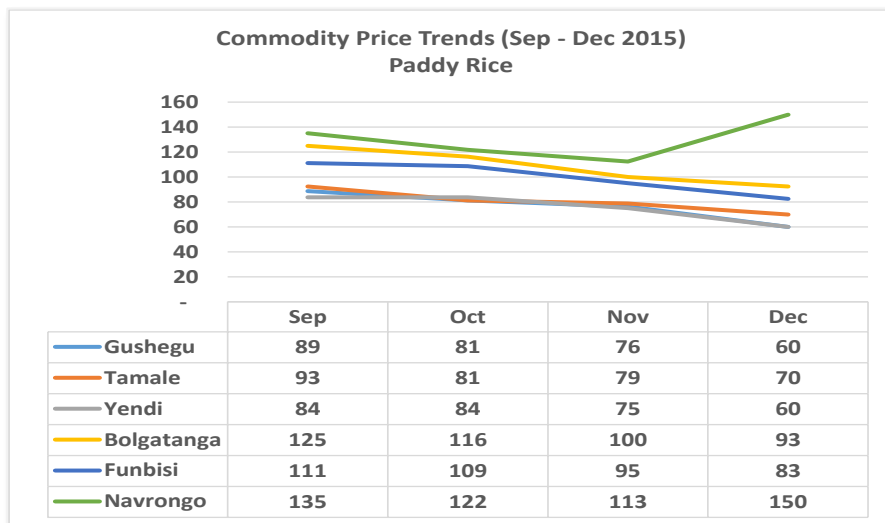


Source: ADVANCE market monitoring

Paddy rice

Paddy price declined by 21% between September 2015 and December 2015 as a consequence of the new crop harvest (Figure 13). In December, prices in the Navrongo market increased by 33% partly on account of the entry into the market of new buyers like Addicent Foods who offered higher prices than existing buyers. Coupled with the arrival of other southern buyers during the same period, prices further increased. Compared to other rice producing areas of the Upper East Region, paddy from Navrongo is generally in high demand because farmers in the irrigated areas have access to combine harvesters to harvest on time at the level of moisture suitable for straight milling.

Figure 13: Paddy rice prices



Source: ADVANCE market monitoring

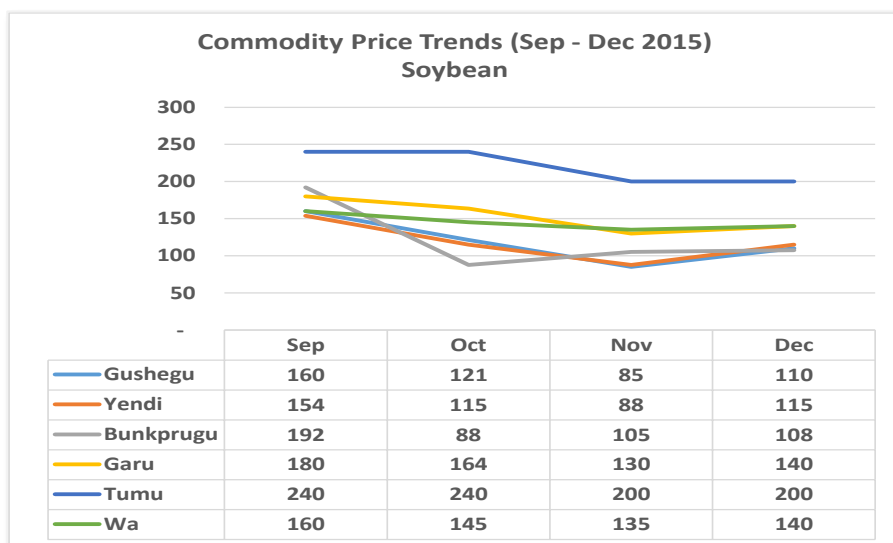
Soybean

Soybean prices decreased by 25% between September 2015 and December 2015 (Figure 14). However the prices in December represent a 12% increase over that of November. The price decline between September and November 2015 was a consequence of low demand by soybean millers, on account of depressed demand for soybean cake from the poultry sector which had not recovered from the avian flu attack in the second quarter of 2015.

Prices recovered in December 2015 with aggressive buying and stocking by major soybean processors like Ghana Nuts, Vesta Oil and Royal Danemac. It is typical for processors to buy and store at this time of the year to avoid paying higher prices in future.

In the Upper East Region, Burkinabe traders were also actively buying soybean in key markets like Bolgatanga on market days, further exerting upward pressure on prices.

Figure 14: Soybean prices



Source: ADVANCE market monitoring

4.2.3 Lead firm competitiveness

Technical assistance to buyers

ADVANCE continued its support to six buyers engaged in outgrower operations in Northern Ghana for the 2015 farming season (see Table 7). These buyers supplied inputs to farmers, particularly seed and fertilizer, under contract farming arrangements whereby the farmers pay back with produce at the time of harvest.

During the quarter, ADVANCE monitored farmers' crop performance and harvesting, and tracked emerging issues that could affect their ability to pay back input credit provided by the buyers. Meetings were also facilitated between some of the buyers and their supplier OBs to discuss the issues and mutually agree solutions.

Table 7: Outgrower schemes for the 2015 farming season

Buyer Name	Firm Type	Crop	Type of Support to OGs	Regional Coverage of Scheme
Premium Foods	Processor Foods	Maize	Seed, fertilizer	Northern, Upper East, Upper West
ANS Mills	Processor Rice Miller	Paddy Rice	Jasmine seed	Northern
Aframso Rice Buyers Group	Processor Rice Miller	Paddy Rice	Jasmine seed	Northern
Ejura Women Marketing Group	Processor Rice Miller	Paddy Rice	Jasmine seed	Northern
G. Bosomtwe Ventures	Processor Soybean	Maize and Soybean	Seed, fertilizer	Upper West
Akate Farms	Poultry Farm	Maize	Seed, fertilizer	Upper West

In addition, two short term technical assistance assignments, which began the previous quarter, were completed during the period. In addition, four firms/organizations were provided with technical assistance by ADVANCE staff (see Table 8).

Table 8: BDS support to buyers

Name of Firm/ Organization	Home Region of Firm	Source of Technical Assistance	Nature of Technical Assistance	Status of Engagement at December 2015
Naawin Enterprise, Konongo, rice miller	Ashanti	STTA Consultant	Improvement of factory floor layout and storage management	Completed
Yedent Agro Group, Sunyani, foods processor	Brong Ahafo	STTA Consultant	Development of brand strategy and action plan (see 'before' and 'after' photos on page 25)	Completed
B. M. Unity Farms, Dormaa Ahenkro, poultry farmer	Brong Ahafo	ADVANCE	Support to access working capital financing	Ongoing
			Support to draft proposal for grant application with West Africa Foods Market programme	Proposal submitted; awaiting feedback
Vester Oil Mills, Kumasi, soybean processor	Ashanti	ADVANCE	Trade mission to Dormaa Poultry Farmers Association to expand market for soymeal	Follow up visit planned
Techiman Maize Traders Association	Brong- Ahafo	ADVANCE	Support to draft proposal for grant application with West Africa Foods Market programme	Proposal submitted; awaiting feedback
Asamoa & Yamoa Farms, Kumasi, poultry farm	Ashanti	ADVANCE	Maize and soybean supply chain development	Ongoing



Improvement in factory floor and storage layout at Naawin enterprise after the STTA

Business assessment

The project assessed five buyer firms to identify areas where they require technical assistance beyond supply chain linkages to farmers. Three out of the five firms expressed the needs presented in the Table 9 below.

Table 9: BDS assessment of buyers

Name of Firm	Home Region of Firm	Firm Type	Key Needs
B. M. Unity Farms Ltd	Brong-Ahafo	Poultry Farm	Working capital financing
G. Bosomtwe Ventures	Ashanti	Processor Soybean	Poultry concentrate development
Ampofo Farms Ltd	Brong-Ahafo	Poultry Farm	Working capital and capital expenditure financing

4.2.4 Trade association support

Ghana Grains Council

The Ghana Grains Council (GGC) continued implementation of activities under the second year grant agreement ending June 30, 2016, for US\$350,000 and the following objectives:

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

During the reporting period, GGC in collaboration with ADVANCE trained 92 OBs in the Upper East Region on best practice in grains storage, grains quality & standard assessment and GGC WRS. GGC completed the design of a Manual Warehouse Receipt (MWR) to be issued at the level of the community warehouse. This is part of a second tier WRS to expand access by smallholders and community warehouse operators. Also, GGC in collaboration with Esoko Ghana conducted training for 31 grain value chain actors on Market Information System (MIS) in Tamale on 16th October 2015.

Moreover, GGC with the support of ADVANCE hosted the 5th Annual Pre-harvest Agro-business & Networking Forum on October 15, 2015 in Tamale. As part of the programme GGC organized a training programme for farmers on maize and rice quality standards.

As part of its marketing and membership drive, GGC mounted an exhibition at the 31st National Farmers Day Celebration held on December 4, 2015 in Bolgatanga, Upper East Region.

The World Food Program (WFP) appointed GGC as a member of its implementing working group for its current Purchase for Progress (P4P) project which ends in June 2016. As part of this engagement, GGC is expected to support WFP rollout a new project expected to begin in mid-2016.

In addition, GGC was assisted by ADVANCE to organize two consultative meetings with value chain actors in Tamale and Techiman on grain pricing with funding from BUSAC. The project aimed at contributing to promoting market access, competitive and efficient grain industry in Ghana. It seeks to encourage the adoption of best practices that can lead to structured trading in grains using grades, standards and measures.

Ghana Rice Inter-Professional Body (GRIB)

ADVANCE provided technical and financial support to GRIB to organize the second Ghana National Rice Festival in Accra from November 13 – 15, 2015 under the theme “Grow, Buy and Eat Quality Ghana Rice”. As part of the programme, ADVANCE team members moderated two policy discussions on branding and promotion of local rice, and access to concessionary financing for rice production provided by the EDAIF funded rice project implemented by MOFA.

ADVANCE staff also participated in the AGM of GRIB as observers and supervised the elections of new GRIB executives.



Aduanehene rice brand on Wienco/GADCO booth at the Rice Festival

4.2.5 North Ghana rice milling

The progress of work during the quarter on the two rice mills targeted in the Upper East Region for expansion and upgrade is presented in the Table 10 below.

Table 10: Firms Identified for Milling Expansion and Upgrade

Firms	Location	Existing Processing Capacity (MT) per Hour	Milling Upgrade Needs	Status at the end of December 2015
Sambay Enterprise	Bolgatanga, Upper East region	0.13	New and higher capacity mill with components	Initiated procurement approval process for the purchase
Procom Company	Bolgatanga, Upper East region	0.6	Acquisition of color sorter	Completed business plan

4.2.6 Regional/cross-border trade and transport

Collaboration with Ghana Private Road Transport Union (GPRTU) Cargo

ADVANCE collaborated with the following branches of GPRTU to update haulage fares from various locations in northern Ghana to market destinations in southern Ghana.

- Upper East Region: Garu, Zebilla, Bolga and Paga
- Upper West Region: Wa
- Northern Region: Tamale, Yendi, Gushiegu

The updated fare charts and GPRTU contacts were provided to OBs and buyers to enable them arrange commodity haulage and negotiate fares. Buyers participating in trade missions also visited GPRTU district offices to build relationships with transporters and discuss their haulage needs.

4.2.7 Price information to outgrower business and smallholder farmer

ADVANCE provides weekly SMS based price alert to its farmers and OBs through Esoko. This quarter, a total of 22,109 beneficiaries received 601,281 alerts. The Esoko platform includes a call center that beneficiaries can use to request information about better and sustainable storage methods, inputs, markets and prices, weather conditions and offers, among others.

At the 2015 pre-harvest event, Esoko staff requested 54 farmers to provide feedback on the services received from them. A majority of the respondents (94.44%) said they were able to understand the messages sent by Esoko. Also, 98.15% said they used the price alerts received weekly to guide their sales. The survey showed as well that the price alerts had impacted positively on most businesses. More than 88% of respondents said the information has helped them to increase quantities of produce sold.

About 90% said they had increased revenue and discovered new markets as a result of these services.

“Selling has been a major problem to me since I engaged myself in farming. I sold at any price without referring to prices in other markets because I had no access to the market flow. Now with this linkage to Esoko, I have discovered new markets – Agricare in Kumasi and EGAP in Sunyani. I have supplied 500 maxi bags of maize and 100 maxi bags of soya to EGAP this season.” Asantanga Awuni Benjamin from Upper East

4.2.8 Community-based market systems strengthened

ADVANCE continued to strengthen community based market systems with the FBOs that benefited from Sell More for More (SMfM) training in FY15 through coaching and mentoring of the groups.

Moreover, some FBOs were linked to end markets: E-GABS and Royal Danemac were linked to some groups in Northern Region; Addicent Food Limited bonded to some groups in the Upper East Region, Savannah Farmers Marketing Company, Vestor Oil and Agrimite were linked to some FBOs in Upper West Region.

In addition, 41 community groups were linked to financial institutions to commence savings with the institutions towards the next crop season.

After linking some groups to financial institutions, a beneficiary farmer had this to say: “It has always been difficult to buy inputs during the farming season. This is because we have not developed the culture of saving money after selling our produce. I am particularly happy because the bank is now made available at our door step. I am confident that we will save enough money to buy inputs to do our farming activities next season” by Mumuni Fuseini.

4.3 Sub-Purpose 3: Strengthened Capacity for Advocacy

4.3.1 Advocacy group development

During the pre-harvest event, OBs were sensitized on the importance of policy advocacy to improving the agribusiness environment and the potentials of OBs particularly as a network to influence the policy environment for agricultural businesses through advocacy. As a follow up, eight meetings were held with 26 OBs in Upper West and Upper East Regions to further facilitate the formation of the OBs Networks.

4.3.2 District assembly plans for agricultural development

ADVANCE is supporting Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to document and market the agricultural potential of their districts to local and international investors. As a pilot, two districts are being supported to develop District Agricultural Investment Plans (DAIPs). The two MMDAs exhibited their draft plan at this year's pre-harvest event. Each district was supported to develop and print 1,000 flyers each on the agricultural investment potential of their district and distributed at the pre-harvest. These draft plans are being refined and finalized.



MMDAs exhibiting their flyers at the Pre-Harvest event

4.3.3 Capacity development for program implementation

Preparations started in this quarter to train farmers in numeracy and Farming as a Business (FaaB). The project identified local institutions and set out the roles of each actor (OBs, OGs and trainers) during the training. Identification of beneficiaries is as well underway in some selected communities. The project targets 10,000 SHF to benefit from FaaB and 12,000 SHF from the numeracy trainings.

4.3.4 Capacity development for FBEs

ADVANCE has been working since 2015 to upgrade 45 FBOs to become Farmer Based Enterprises (FBEs). The project has developed a Tracking Tool to trace the steps of the upgrade of these groups. The tracking tool lists key indicators that should be in place for an organization to be considered an FBE by ADVANCE. These include services rendered to members, bulk purchasing of inputs, collective sales, linkage to markets, linkage to financial institutions, access to credit, ownership of farm equipment, sources of raising revenue for groups, record keeping etc.

Though the groups are picking up well, the transformation into business entities, using the tracking tool shows that some indicators still needs to be improved (see Table 11).

Table 11: FBE criteria score before intervention and end of the reporting period

Indicator	Score before intervention	Score to date
Services rendered to members i.e. tractor services	44.4%	53.3%
Bulk purchasing of inputs i.e. fertilizer, seed, chemical etc.	22.2%	55.5%
Collective Sales	22.2%	60%
Linkage to Markets (buyers)	17.7%	62.2%
Linkage to financial institutions either as individuals or group	66.6%	91.1%
Access to credit (either from financial institutions or group own savings i.e. VSLA)	33.3%	51.1%
Ownership of farm equipment eg power tillers, donkey carts, tarpaulins, water pumps, bullock ploughs etc.)	17.7%	17.7%

Indicator	Score before intervention	Score to date
Regularity of meeting	66.6%	73.3%
Sources of raising revenue ie VSLA, group farm, levy etc.	22.2%	33.3%
Basic Record Keeping	77.7%	84.4%
Registration of groups	33.3%	44.4%

The specific activities and number of FBOs involved are as follows:

- A total of 24 out of the 45 FBOs were able to render services to their members in the form of threshing, shelling and even irrigating in one specific case.
- As many as 27 FBOs have been engaged in collective sales of their produce to some end markets
- Twenty eight of the FBOs were linked to end markets e.g. Savannah Farmers Marketing Company, Agrimites, Addicent Food Limited, Vestor Oil and many others.
- ADVANCE introduced 41 of the FBOs to financial institutions, and their members have started saving proceeds from their sales, to be able to access credit in the following crop season. At the time of reporting, GHS 7,225 (\$1,904) was mobilized as savings with different financial institutions in the three regions. This amount would go higher after all sales have been done.
- Also, 20 of the FBOs were assisted to formalize their registration with the Department of Cooperatives (DoC).

In addition, 38 of the FBOs have adopted proper record keeping (collective sales records, record of contract agreements, cash books, etc).

FBOs were also encouraged to host demo sites as a way of introducing their members to good agronomic practices. In all, 38 FBOs hosted demo sites for the three main crops (rice- 10; maize- 16 and soy- 12). Members were trained on best practices in harvesting, shelling and threshing, using tarpaulins to maintain quality, and storing at the right moisture content. They were also sensitized on the benefits and hazards of bush fires. The FBOs were encouraged to established group farms as means of raising revenue for the groups.

4.4 ADVANCE maize hybrid program

This section summarizes the maize hybrid program achievements during the first quarter of FY2016 in the Ashanti, Brong Ahafo and Eastern Regions. The reporting period marks the beginning of the second farming cycle since the project started in late 2014. Unfortunately, the season was largely affected by the non-availability of commercial Pioneer hybrid seed as well as erratic and low rainfall distribution.

4.4.1 Increased agricultural productivity in targeted commodities

Demonstration plots and GAP trainings

A total of 112 demos were set up during the minor season to showcase the Pioneer hybrid maize seed 30Y87 and 30F32, 58 of them were planted during the reporting period. The demos sites were led by

42 OBs. Dizengoff (Ghana), provided the Pioneer hybrid seed and 6.5 MT of NPK 23-15-5 compound fertilizers.

A total of 777 farmers (179 women) were trained on agronomic practices at these demonstrations in the past quarter. Topics included

- Post-harvest preparation of harvested maize of major season for best crib/bag storage
- Crop residue management for the conservation of soil fertility
- Comparison of early growth features (emergence, uniformity, refilling, plant vigor) at the established demos
- Basal fertilizer application and appropriate planting densities for hybrids planted in the minor season
- The need and appropriate ways of applying top-dress fertilizers
- Timely weed control

Harvest from these demos are due in January and their performance will be reported in the next quarter.

Business development services

During the reporting period, 26 OBs were supported to compile their actual expenses to update their crop budgets. These budgets will be used to determine the profitability, minimal/profitable sale prices among other economic indices.

The ADVANCE South program continued to work in partnership with the USAID-funded ICT-challenge project which is being implemented by GRAMEEN Foundation, Radio BAR and Digital Green. One of the project's main activity is exploring the use of video and mobile devices as a means of providing extension services by OBs to the OGs, and for data collection. A tablet based application has been developed and is being tested for that purpose. In December, 37 OBs were trained on the use of this application in view of its testing in the field.

Loans and investment

In total, GHS 15,000 (\$3,953) loans were disbursed to three OBs during the quarter. While GHS 571,138.5 (\$150,517) was invested by OBs as production support to their OGs. Inputs provided include hybrid seed, weedicides, fertilizers and cash to pay for farm labor.

In addition, one OB invested in one tractor, at the cost of GHS 40,000 (\$10,541).

4.4.2 Increased access to market and trade opportunities

A new Trade and Marketing Officer, Miranda Osei Agyeman, joined ADVANCE South in October 2015 to support the team on the farmer side of the trade and marketing component of the project. Forty five OBs were trained to use MTN mobile money as a means of improving their efficiency.

4.4.3 Other achievements

Four OBs from ADVANCE South made outstanding international and national achievements during the reporting quarter. Samuel Kusi was invited as guest speaker by Dupont-Pioneer and John Deere at the 2015 World Food Prize Event, held in Des Moines, Iowa, USA, from October 10 to 15. Kusi delivered a speech on the importance of training to the success of smallholder farming.

Three other OBs won awards at the 31st National Farmers Awards Day held on 4th December 2015. Daniel Asomaning was designated Regional Best Maize Farmer for the Eastern region, Johnson Kyere, Regional Best Maize Farmer for the Brong-Ahafo Region, and David Asamoah, Overall District Best Farmer of Tain district.



Kusi delivering his speech

5 Program Support

5.1 Gender Program

5.1.1 OBM and women's leadership and entrepreneurship

Two new female NFs were profiled from Dua & Yelwonko in the Bongo & Bawku West Districts of the Upper East Region. The new NFs are Esther Akabzaa and Rita Ayebo.

- Esther Akabzaa owns a new SAME tractor with implements and currently provides ploughing services to 37 (22 females, 15 males) smallholder farmers; payment is both, in cash and in-kind. She has 30 acres of her own farm under cultivation with rice and maize.
- Rita Ayebo provides finance and inputs to about 250 women belonging to groups and smallholder farmers in the Yelwonko and Binaba communities.

A business diagnostic tool has been administered to the new NFs and a follow-up training and business linkage activities are being undertaken to build their capacity to perform the role of OB effectively.

Capacity building and linkage to market

In addition, in the course of this quarter, 18 women's FBO groups with a total membership of 450 were linked to E-GABs, Addicent foods and AVNASH in South-North trade mission. Discussions were centered on purchase and supply agreement for the season and some led to signing of purchase and supply agreements. Bonia Women's group in the Kassena Nankana District of Upper East Region has so far supplied 13.7MT of Jasmine 85 paddy to Addicent foods worth GHS 17,536 (\$4,621).

5.1.2 Women VSLAs and access to financial services

To enhance access to financial services and promote savings, 50 VSLAs groups are being set up and trained in the Northern Region with approximately 500 smallholder members (out of which over 58% are females). The share out will be planned to coincide with the farming season so that the savings can

be used to purchase inputs for production. A total of 80 more groups from Upper West and Upper East will be trained as well in the next quarter.

5.1.3 Women's access to improved technologies

In collaboration with the ATT Project, ADVANCE tested and promoted some small equipment that would reduce the drudgery for women in some of their farming activities. A total of 318 women smallholder farmers will be provided with manual planters and 200 simple fertilizer applicators through ATT's grant scheme.

5.1.4 International day for rural women



The three honoured women

During the quarter under review, the project, in commemorating the United Nations International day for rural women, honoured three smallholder women farmers from the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions. The women, Yacintha Borgkur, Salamatu Fusheini, and Alice Asekabta, were honored for their contributions towards enhancing agriculture and rural development. They were each presented

with citation and a token prize for their support and contribution towards smallholder women farmers by supporting them to adopt productivity enhancing technologies that increased their yields and incomes.

5.2 Environment Support

Environmental activities for this quarter focused on improving agrochemical management among OBs and climate smart agriculture activities.

5.2.1 Improving agrochemical management

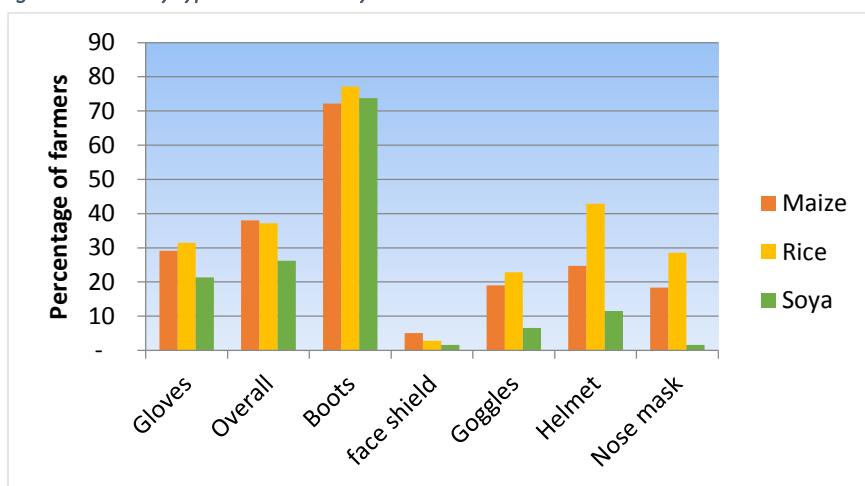
Pesticide use monitoring was conducted for 252 demonstration plots to evaluate the risks, impacts and benefits of pesticide use by farmers as a way of measuring the extent of implementation of the safer use actions recommended in the ADVANCE PERSUAP. It also provided information for revising the PERSUAP in the areas of training topics that will be recommended and who should be trained.

Ants and locusts were the most prevalent insect incidence, particularly on maize and soya farms. A total of 131 demos suffered pest and disease attacks to varying degrees. Weed control accounted for 95% of all pesticide applications. Insect control accounted for the remaining 5%. Twelve active ingredients were applied made of eight herbicides and four insecticides. These active ingredients were recorded for both demo plots and farmers' own farms.

Pesticides application

Out of the 253 farmers managing the monitored demo, 193 of them had at least one type of personal protective equipment (PPEs). Seven farmers had all seven types of PPEs while 60 (23.7%) of them had no PPEs at all. Among farmers who had at least one type of PPE, the most common type of PPE was wellington boots (74 farmers) followed by overalls (35 farmers) and gloves (28 farmers). The least common type of PPE was face shield (4 farmers). The proportion of soya farmers with PPEs was generally lower than maize and rice farmers. A notable observation was the low number of nose masks among soya famers.

Figure 15: PPEs by type and commodity



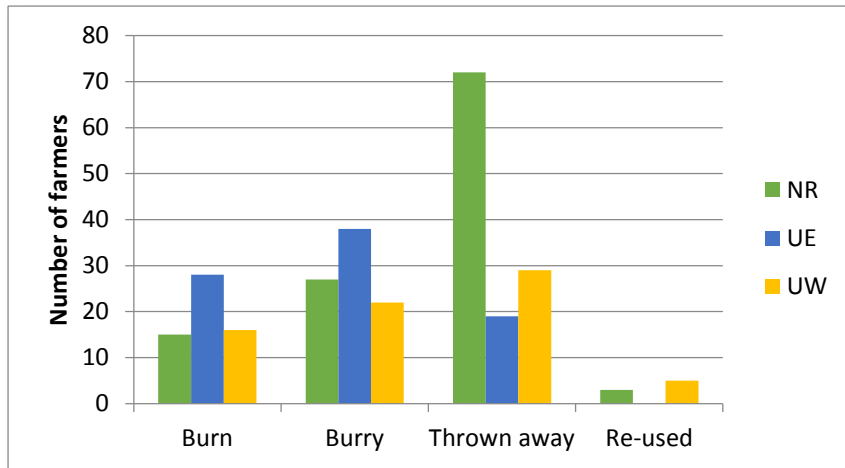
The recommended times for pesticide application are early in the morning or late in the evening when it is less windy. Applying pesticides when it is less windy also minimizes the potential for pesticides to be carried away to non-target areas and become a source of pollution to the environment. It also minimizes the potential for self-contamination. A majority of farmers (90%) who applied pesticides did so in the morning and/or evening. Only 10% of farmers applied pesticides in the afternoon. Also, one community (Zinga in the Bolgatanga Municipality) recorded women and children taking part in pesticide application. It was the only community where children took part in pesticide application. The project will intensify education on safe handling of pesticides in this community in the coming quarter, to avoid a recurrence.

Disposal of pesticides containers

Improper disposal of empty pesticide containers leads to contamination of the environment, animals and human beings. The recommended methods of disposal are burial, burning and recycling. The present recommended methods on the ADVANCE project are burial and burning. Unsafe methods of disposal that may be found include throwing away and using containers for domestic purposes such storing food items, drinking water, and local alcoholic beverages such as pito. Farmers were asked to indicate which of the four methods of disposal was happening in their communities. An average of 52% of the communities are disposing pesticide containers the right way with the Upper West Region leading while 45% of communities are throwing them away and 3% are re-using them.

The number of communities where people are using pesticide containers was zero in the Upper East Region and high in the Upper West Region. Northern Region recorded a greater number of communities where farmers are throwing containers away while the lowest was in the Upper West Region.

Figure 16: Container disposal practices by Region



Evidence of empty pesticide containers on the farms of farmers who hosted demos was generally low. Sixteen farmers had empty containers on their farms. The project will intensify education on safe handling of pesticides and disposal of containers in the coming quarter.

5.2.2 Climate smart agriculture

The ADVANCE Climate Smart Agricultural (CSA) strategy focuses on two main pillars – promoting minimum soil disturbance through ripping, and cover crop systems (conservation agriculture). Cover crop systems serve the purpose of providing soil cover, keeping the soil surface protected while providing organic matter to the soil. A key challenge to maintaining cover crop systems through the dry season is bushfires and cattle grazing. To overcome one of these challenges the project embarked on an aggressive anti-bushfire campaign to educate farmers on the dangers of bushfires to agriculture production and how to prevent bushfires.

The campaign was threefold – radio messages, field days and community forums. Eight radio stations were engaged to broadcast anti-bushfire messages in local languages through jingles, announcements, and panel discussions.

The last two field days for all field demonstrations was also used to educate almost 9,000 farmers on the dangers of bushfires to their farming business and some preventive measures they can adopt to minimise the potential for bushfires.

In addition, collaboration with the Ghana National Fire and Rescue Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Disaster Management organisation, and the Ministry of Food & Agriculture, the project engaged

six communities directly to educate farmers against bushfires. These six communities (two in each region of north Ghana) will be monitored throughout the off-season to ascertain the success of the anti-bushfire activity.



Say No to bushfire campaign

The anti-bush burning campaign

A total of 184 out growers linked to nucleus farmer Richard Akoka at Gaani and Kapania, made up of 88 males and 95 females, participated in one of the community durbars organized on the "No-Burn Campaign" in Upper East Region. Presentations on the negative impact of bushfires, and control and preventions of bushfires were made by EPA, NADMO, Ghana Fire Service and MoFA. Three media partners URA Radio, Nabina Community Radio and Sahel FM covered the program

In the Northern region, durbars were held with outgrowers of nucleus farmers Nante Muyo at Wapuli in the Saboba District, and Ernest Asoi and Nicholas Lambini at Chereponi. Twenty banners with "No Burn" messages were also developed and placed at vantage places in all three regions, in English and local languages.

As part of the efforts to implement climate smart agriculture techniques to help farmers reduce the risk of climate change, radio jingles on the "No Burn Campaign" were developed and aired on eight radio stations in the three northern regions. The selected radio stations were North Star FM and Radio Gaakii in Northern Region, URA Radio and Radio Builsa in Upper East and W93.5 FM in Upper West region.

5.3 Grants Program

This quarter, ADVANCE concentrated on streamlining documentation in response to revised processes and procedures introduced by USAID and ACIDI/VOCA. To complement the technical assistance in the field, the grants program initiated a number of procurements and related activities to support beneficiaries increase production, improve post-harvest practices and storage, as well as introduce uniform standards in marketing of agricultural produce.

Innovation and Investment Incentive Grants (I-3)

During the first quarter, a call was made for applications for in kind grants. A total of 214 applications for small equipment grants (with unit cost below \$5,000) were received and reviewed by the Grants Selection Committee (GSC). Of this number, 192 applications were approved. The process is almost completed for the procurement and distribution of equipment valued at over \$200,000 to potential beneficiaries. Table 12 **Table 12: List of approved equipment** outlines the equipment approved by the GSC for the first quarter, by regions.

Table 12: List of approved equipment

Equipment Type	Northern Region	Upper East Region	Upper West Region	Total
Tarpaulins	130	50	45	225
Weighing Scale	12	3	13	28
Moisture Meter	6	3	3	12
Manual Hand Planter	10			10
Disc Plough	3		3	6
Power Tiller	14		2	16
Dibbler	1			1
Donkey Cart			1	1
Total	176	56	67	299

Applications and concept notes were also received for equipment costing above the \$5,000 threshold. These include tractors and accessories, multi-purpose shellers/threshers, pneumatic planters, grain dryers and seed drills. A requisition has been signed, and the process is on to select suitable vendors to provide the equipment to beneficiaries before the next farming season.

Ghana Agricultural Insurance Pool (GAIP)

The grants program continued to support the Ghana Agricultural Insurance Pool (GAIP) to implement programs to increase farmer's access to crop insurance. This agricultural insurance scheme is designed to buy down weather risks, which normally deter farmers from expanding their farming activities. GAIP has rolled out good outreach messages on well-developed agricultural insurance policies to mitigate risks and motivate new and existing farmers to sign on to the program. A total of GHS 47,000 (\$12,386) was disbursed through the grants program to support part of GAIP's activities for the quarter ending December 2015.

Ghana Grains Council (GGC)

During the quarter, GGC continued receiving grant to support their activities. The objectives of the grant are to scale up aggregator/outgrower models that enable and incentivize smallholder upgrading by strengthening vertical linkages between buyers (aggregator) and suppliers (outgrowers), develop the capacity of aggregators to provide financial, post-harvest and capacity building services, and ensure the incentives for upgrading all along the value chain. This is expected to increase incomes for value chain actors, including smallholder farmers. Upgrading will include the adoption of grades and standards, training on grain storage, expanded certification of a large number of warehouses, further development of warehouse receipt systems and other forms of value chain finance. During the reporting period, a

total amount of \$90,000 was disbursed to the GGC for implementation of the above-mentioned activities.

Future direction

A major focus in the coming quarter will be the provision of farm equipment that enhances productivity and incomes, and contribute towards the achievement of ADVANCE's objectives. Attention will also be paid to monitoring the use and impact of the production, harvesting and processing equipment provided to farmers. The project will continue to support innovative ideas by the technical team that can strengthen linkages along the value chain of the various commodities. While intending to assist farmers obtain needed agricultural equipment the project will make efforts to create direct contacts and build relationships between ADVANCE stakeholders and the equipment vendors for the sake of sustainability.

5.4 Monitoring and evaluation

Annual survey on gross margin and application of technology

The second phase of the gross margin survey data collection took place in November and December 2015. This phase consists of harvesting the demarcated area to estimate the yield, collecting additional input costs, harvest and post-harvest technologies application and sales data. A total of 2,300 farms were surveyed in Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions. The field teams conducted the four weeks exercise with support from seven enumerators. Both project staff and enumerators received a one day training by the M&E Coordinator before data collection commenced.

The survey data is currently being cleaned and the results will be reported in the next quarter's report.

Capacity Development

During this reporting period, eight staff of the ADVANCE South team received a two days refresher training from the M&E team on the following:

- Definition of ADVANCE indicators, data collection processes, calculation mechanism for yield and gross margin analysis responsibilities etc.
- Navigation process to access and view the online indicator results
- Report writing techniques and requirements
- Data quality improvement mechanisms

A similar training will be conducted in in all three northern regions in the second quarter.

In November, a two day monitoring and evaluation performance review meeting and training was held in the Accra office with all 13 members of the M&E team. Performance of the team was thoroughly reviewed and capacity gaps were filled with adequate and appropriate skills and recommendations. This is a quarterly activity and the next meeting is planned for February 2016.

In the same period, the ADVANCE M&E team participated in a two day FTFMS and data quality trainings for all FTF implementing partners, which was organized and facilitated by METSS and the Economic Growth Office of USAID.

Also, the Accra based M&E team were trained on Maggi, a mobile based data collection platform. The training centred on questionnaire design, data collection, accessing and exporting of data from Maggi to other platforms. ADVANCE plans to collect all subsequent major surveys using tablets.

Databases

The project databases are being continuously refined to satisfy its evolving data needs. New forms were created and a few more forms were revised. In addition, all indicator values and disaggregates were put online on Sharepoint so that any staff can access them at any time. Those values are updated on real time whenever data are entered or edited in the databases.

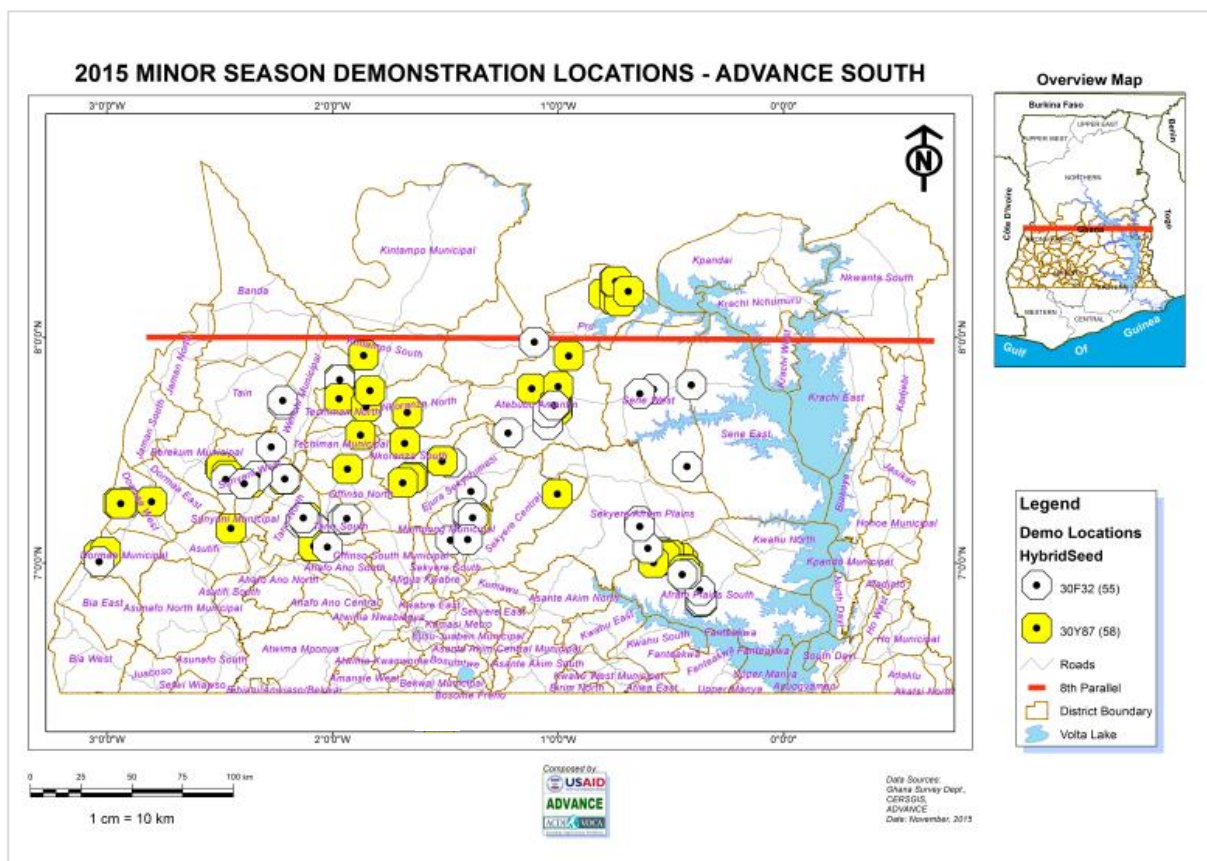
Several data requests were also received and completed from partner projects and organizations (IFPRI, USDA/AMPLIFIES, Fidelity Bank etc.).

Geographic Information System (GIS)

During the quarter under review, several maps were produced, including

- Maps of the maize, rice and soya demonstration plots
- Maps of gross margin surveyed farmers
- Map showing FBO beneficiaries locations
- Map of Profiled FBOs
- Basemaps for each of the three Northern regions
- Maize, Rice and Soya yield comparison maps for 2014
- ADVANCE South Radio Station Listenership coverage map.

Figure 17: One of the maps produced



5.5 Public Relations and Communications

The Public Relations & Communications (PR&C) unit continued ensuring visibility of the ADVANCE Project and USAID, and highlighted the project’s activities, progress, impact and successes.

Bi-weekly bullets

During the reporting period, 13 informational bi-weekly bullets were submitted to USAID. The bullets demonstrated USAID/ADVANCE’s continued impact.

Success stories

Four “Telling our Story” and personal interest stories are submitted to USAID as part of this report. In addition, ADVANCE was featured in the November/December 2015 edition of Frontline, USAID’s magazine, in a story: “Learning the Skills to Flourish No Matter What Comes their Way”. Also, a story on four radio stations attracting sponsorship from ZenoRadio, a U.S based Technology Company, with the support of USAID/ADVANCE was published on ACIDI/VOCA online news.

Links to the stories:

- <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/frontlines/resilience-2015/learning-skills-flourish-no-matter-what-comes-their-way>.

- <http://acdivoca.org/resources/newsroom/news/tech-company-grant-boosts-ghanaian-agricultural-radio-broadcasting>.

Quarterly Newsletter

The December 2015 edition of the ADVANCE Newsletter was published and distributed to more than 1,000 recipients including partners, clients and actors involved in the project, in both electronic and printed form. The newsletter was also posted on the ACDI/VOCA ASPIREglobal community “Learning Champions” page to increase awareness of project’s impact.

Building public awareness

A story on Smallholder Farmers trained in Fertilizer Application by USAID/ADVANCE and Yara Ltd. was published in the following newspapers and websites:

- Graphic Business, October 5, 2015, page : 30
- Business and Financial Times, October 5, 2015, page: 38
- Ghanaian Times, October 2, 2015, page: 27
- Ghana Web, October 2, 2015
<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/regional/Smallholder-farmers-schooled-on-fertilizer-application-385333?gallery=1>
- Kasapa Fm Online, October 4, 2015 <http://www.kasapafmonline.com/2015/10/smallholder-farmers-trained-on-best-agronomic-practices/>
- Africa News Hub, October 8, 2015 <http://www.africanewshub.com/news/3959808-smallholder-farmers-schooled-on-fertilizer-application>
- The Ghanaian Times Online.com, October 2, 2015
<http://www.ghanaiantimes.com.gh/smallholder-farmers-schooled-on-fertiliser-application/>
- Ghana News Agency, October 3, 2015
<http://www.ghananewsagency.org/science/smallholder-farmers-schooled-on-fertilizer-application-95199>
- Myjoyonline.com, October 8, 2015 <http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2015/october-8th/smallholder-farmers-schooled-on-fertilizer-application.php>
- Citifmonline.com, October 2, 2015,
<http://regional.citifmonline.com/2015/10/02/smallholder-farmers-schooled-on-fertilizer-application>
- News Ghana, October 4, 2015, <http://newsghana.com.gh/farmers-benefit-from-fertilizer-application-training>

Video

A video production on the ADVANCE Outgrower Business Model has been developed and is being finalized to explain the model’s implementation to other donor partners and projects.

6 Challenge

The main challenge the project faced during the quarter was the continuing unavailability of the hybrid Pioneer seed that was the only maize seed promoted by the project in the south.

Annex 1: Indicator table

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY16 Target	FY16 Q1 Actuals	% FY Achievement	Comments
CI	OP1	Number of direct project beneficiaries	78,000	31,174	39.97%	The progress made so far shows that the target for the year will be achieved
		Male	42,900	20,417		
		Female	35,100	10,757		
FTF	OP2	Number of private enterprises (for profit), producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) receiving USG assistance	450	420	93.33%	This year's target will definitely be achieved
FTF	OP3	Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security trainings	58,500	11,422	19.52%	More individuals will be trained as the crop season starts later in the year
		Male	32175	5,712		
		Female	26325	5,710		
FTF	OP4	Value of agricultural and rural loans	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 61,405	6.14%	More loans will be applied for and disbursed when the season starts, later this year
		Male		\$ 40,058		
		Female		\$ -		
		Joint		\$ 24,246		
FTF	OP5	Value of new private sector investment in agricultural sector or value chain (US\$)	\$ 80,000	\$ 22,177	27.72%	More investment will occur when the season starts, later this year

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY16 Target	FY16 Q1 Actuals	% FY Achievement	Comments
FTF	OP6	Number of MSME including farmers receiving USG assistance to access loans	10,000	151	1.51%	More MSMEs will access loans as the season starts
FTF	OC1	Gross margins per hectare for selected crops US Dollar under marketing arrangements fostered by the activity (USD/ha)				Due to the agricultural calendar, the data will be reported in Q2
		Maize	423			
		Male	416			
		Female	435			
		Rice	644			
		Male	648			
		Female	625			
		Soy	437			
		Male	474			
Female	383					
FTF	OC2	Number of hectares under improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	81,900			Due to the agricultural calendar, the data will be reported in Q2
FTF	OC3	Number of farmers and others who have applied new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	54,600			Due to the agricultural calendar, the data will be reported in Q2
		Male	30030			
		Female	24570			

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY16 Target	FY16 Q1 Actuals	% FY Achievement	Comments
FTF	OC4	Number of private enterprises (for profit), producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations (CBOs) that applied new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	338			Data will be reported in Q4
FTF	OC5	Value of incremental sales (collected at farm-level) attributed to FTF implementation	\$22,080,000			Due to the agricultural calendar, provisional data will be provided in Q2 report and final data in Q4
		Maize	\$8,720,000			
		Rice	\$9,190,000			
		Soy	\$4,170,000			
FTF	OC6	Number of firms (excluding farms) or Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) engaged in agricultural and food security-related manufacturing and services now operating more profitably (at or above cost) because of USG assistance	50			Survey will take place in Q3 and data will be reported in Q4
CI	OC8	Number of organizations/ enterprises identified as high potential for future awards	4			Activities will start in the second quarter
CI	OP8	Number of organizations/ enterprises receiving capacity building support against key milestones	20			Activities will start in the second quarter
F	OP9	Number of awards made directly to local organizations by USAID	3			Activities will start in the second quarter

Indicator Source	Indicator Type	Indicator/Disaggregation	FY16 Target	FY16 Q1 Actuals	% FY Achievement	Comments
FTF	OP10	Number of Rural Households benefiting directly from USG interventions	54,600	28,099	51.46%	
FTF	OP11	Number of vulnerable households benefiting directly from USG interventions	39,000	24,479	62.77%	
FTF	OP12	Number of members of producer organizations and community based organizations receiving USG assistance	6,750	2,970	44%	
FTF	OP13	Number of MSMEs including farmers, receiving Business Development Services as result of USG assistance	31,200	2,525	8.09%	More MSMEs will receive BDS as the season starts
CI	OC9	Value chain actors accessing finance	225	9	4.00%	More actors will access loans as the season starts



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FIRST PERSON

Female Farmers Honored for Leadership Contributions to Rural Development



USAID/ADVANCE celebrated these women for their contribution to enhancing agriculture and rural development

"I feel very honoured to be recognized for the little contributions in helping other smallholder women farmers to increase their yield and income. On behalf of Alice and Salamatu, we say a big 'thank you' to ADVANCE for this honor in front of all these people," says Yacintha Borgkur, leader, Sawla-Tuna-Kalba Women's Group, Upper West Region.

The USAID-funded Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement (ADVANCE) project, led by ACDI/VOCA and supported by Technoserve, ACDEP, and Pab, is a key part of the Feed the Future initiative in Ghana. It is poised to reach 113,000 maize, rice, and soybean smallholder farmers to achieve greater food security. The project actively engages women and trains them to apply new technologies and/or new management practices and to access finances, information and markets, using various communication technologies and strategies to increase yields and income.

The project makes conscious efforts to celebrate and showcase successful women farmers to motivate other women. To commemorate the 2015 U.N. International Day for Rural Women, the project honored three women smallholder farmers from the Northern, Upper East, and Upper West Regions.

The women—Yacintha Borgkur, Salamatu Fusheini, and Alice Asekabta—were recognized for helping smallholder women farmers adopt productivity-enhancing technologies that enabled them increase their yields and incomes significantly.

Yacintha Borgkur led 125 members of the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba Women's Group to access agricultural inputs and technical training, leading to increased maize yields from 0.3 mt/acre to 1.5 mt/acre as well as the incomes of the women in the group. With project support and Yacintha's facilitation, 30 women from the group were granted access to fertile farm lands close to their homes to enable them work on the farms while taking care of their families.

Alice Asekabta mobilized all 93 members of her women's group to adopt productivity-enhancing technologies on their farms, resulting in an increase in maize yields from 0.4 mt/acre to 1.2 mt/acre. Through her initiative, women in the Buterisa community in the Upper East Region are now engaged in dry-season farming using abandoned community dams to earn additional income. Also, in consultation with the Buterisa Chief, she has mobilized the women to build a community-based health planning service (CHPS) compound that is almost complete.

Sixty-year-old Salamatu Fusheini, leader of the Magnsungsim Farmer group in the Northern Region, repaid her credit on schedule – an example being emulated by the 30 other group members. Her adoption of productivity-enhancing technologies led to an increase in maize yields from 0.4 mt/acre to 0.8 mt/acre.

USAID/ADVANCE presented each of the three women with a citation and a token prize. These women's achievements affirm that "if women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 percent" (FAO, 2011). The project will continue to promote equitable participation of women at all levels by ensuring access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making roles in line with the project's gender strategy.

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



CASE STUDY

Agribusiness Forum Connects Farmers and Buyers to Build Relationships, Increase Trade



At the pre-harvest event, market linkages are facilitated between farmers and buyers

Photo credit: Lauren Bell, Peace Corps Volunteer with the ADVANCE Project

“The Pre-harvest event connects farmers to dealers of various farming equipment. At last year’s event, I established a business relationship with a supplier of polypropylene storage sacks from southern Ghana. I now have a contract with the supplier who supplies me with the sacks without demanding upfront payment from me. Through the profit from the sales of the sacks, I purchased roofing materials to complete my building. The event connects farmers to dealers of various farming equipment,” said Victoria Asaaro, farmer and leader of the Binaba Women’s Group, Upper East Region

Telling Our Story

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The USAID-funded Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement (ADVANCE) project is led by ACDI/VOCA and supported by Technoserve, ACDEP, and Pab. The project is a key part of the Feed the Future initiative in Ghana and is poised to reach 113,000 maize, rice, and soybean smallholder farmers to achieve greater food security. For the past five years, USAID/ADVANCE has supported the annual agribusiness forum usually held in October ahead of the crop harvest season in northern Ghana. The Northern Ghana Pre-harvest Agribusiness Forum is intended to increase market access and trade among its targeted beneficiaries in southern and northern Ghana.

At the event, farmers and buyers share experiences, explore opportunities for market linkages, and discuss issues relating to demand, production forecasts, and pricing of specific commodities. They also make business deals. The forum featured an exhibition by vendors who displayed products such as mobile technology, grain storage bags, silos, combine harvesters, and other farm machinery. Businesses connected directly with their target audiences, and farmers learned about industry trends and technological advances.

Often during the event, buyers and farmers strive to agree on issues such as expected volumes, quality, and price for commodities. The forum provides a platform where commodity-specific farmers and buyers discussed how to collaborate beyond sales and purchases to bridge expectations.

A team from the University of Development Studies evaluated the event and reported on it as follows:

- The event is a good learning opportunity at which value chain actors learn how to do business with each other and get exposed to new ideas, technology, and equipment
- Relationships begin, or get deepened (for existing business partners) at the event. Farmers connect with commodity buyers and service providers, including equipment and input dealers, financial institutions, telecommunications (for mobile money), and other value chain projects

Participation in the agribusiness forum has increased every year, from 260 attendees in 2011 to 960 in 2015. The event has a reputation for being a one-stop shop for business dealings between farmers and buyers for transactions on volumes, prices, contracts, and timing of delivery.

Proceeds from sponsorship increased five-fold from the GHS21,500 (\$5,555) in 2014 to GHS 131,000 (\$33,850), including a private corporate sponsorship of GHS112,000 [\$27,903] in 2015, signalling increasing private sector interest in the marketing opportunities presented by the event.

The event is hosted by the Ghana Grains Council, with support from USAID/ADVANCE and the Agriculture Technology Transfer project.



FIRST PERSON

USAID Promotes Record Keeping Among Farmers



During one of the Outgrower Business training sessions, participants (above) try their hands on manual record keeping using templates developed by USAID/ADVANCE

"I am applying all the business skills ADVANCE taught me. I keep records of my day-to-day business transactions; I know how much I paid as farm wages to all my farm hands during the farming season. I never knew farming is a business, but now I know my farm is my business and will adhere to all business principles," testifies Ibrahim Alhassan

Record keeping is key to assessing profitability and managing sound farming operations yet very few farmers in Ghana attach much importance to it. Farmers typically commit information about their farming activities to memory. They calculate profits from costs and incomes based on guessing rather than from properly kept records. These methods present several shortcomings.

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USAID/ADVANCE is working with its beneficiary farmers to keep accurate record of farm acreage, costs of inputs, labor, equipment cost, purchases, sales, profit, and loss to enable them make better decisions on their farming operations.

In May 2013, USAID/ADVANCE trained 120 outgrower businesses (OBs) on manual record keeping of their farm activities using project-developed templates. In June 2013, the project assigned 35 student interns from the University of Development Studies to provide further support to the OBs until they became conversant in using the templates. In March 2014, 51 OBs were selected by the project to receive laptop computers installed with a sales and service tracker software, through a grant, so that they can computerize their record keeping and have accurate data for decision making.

A year after the training and intervention, 44-year-old Ibrahim Alhassan, an OB beneficiary working with 203 smallholder farmers had this to say:

"I did not know that record-keeping skills [are] crucial to better manage the business — by measuring inputs and outputs and keeping costs down and earn higher incomes. Since I did not keep accurate records of my activities, it became difficult for me to calculate my profitability each farming season and also to expand the business operations. The trainings and the programs installed on the computer [have] enabled me to develop farm budget for farming activities, develop investment data on services rendered to my out growers during the cropping season. It has provided me with a sound basis for decision making in terms of crop selection, costs, and returns on input investments. In addition to this, the student Intern from the University for Development Studies assigned to me supported immensely with new office systems and procedures. I give all the thanks to USAID/ADVANCE for taking me to this level."

Now Alhassan keeps records on field activities – plowing services, input credit distribution and use, asset inventory, and cash books. He is monitoring his income and expenditure, which helps him reduce the cost of production and to increase his income.



SUCCESS STORY

ADVANCE-Supported Radio Stations Disseminate Agricultural Information



Through radio, USAID/ADVANCE reaches farmers with relevant and timely information on good agronomic practices and other agricultural-related issues.

" I always listen to the farmers program on North Star Radio every Saturday evening from 7.00 – 8.00 pm each week. The program showed me how to protect my crops from pests infestation and how to apply weedicides correctly and in the right quantities. This year I had 12 bags on my 1 acre maize farm after doing everything right as taught by the MoFA Officer on North Star," says Sulemana Zakaria, a maize farmer at Saanvuli in the Tolon District of the Northern Region

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It is sometimes difficult for radio stations to provide regular and appropriate agricultural programming due to challenges in attracting sponsorship for such programs. The USAID/ADVANCE project supports 25 radio stations, with a combined listenership of over 200,000, through small grants, training and assistance in content development for the production and airing of agricultural related broadcasting. As part of the project's sustainability strategy, ADVANCE linked some of them to potential partners. This effort has led to a sponsorship from U.S.-based technology company, ZenoRadio.

ZenoRadio is supporting four radio stations – Radio Builsa, Radio Justice, ADRS FM, and W93.5 FM in the Northern, Upper West, Upper East, and Brong Ahafo Regions – to air agricultural broadcasting. In addition, ZenoRadio is providing the stations with free streaming services through their ZenoLive platform. ZenoLive allows radio stations to stream broadcasts live, store streamed content for future access, and utilize a dashboard to manage phone-ins from listeners tuning in from the Internet or a U.S. telephone number at no cost.

The USAID/ADVANCE project and ZenoRadio are looking to scale the initiative and create deeper partnerships with rural radio stations to ensure a wide dissemination of information to smallholder farmers across Ghana.

To allow for more information sharing on best agronomic practices, project beneficiary farmers in northern Ghana have formed 841 listenership groups (90 percent of participants are women) with project facilitation. To allow beneficiaries to listen to the agricultural programs, USAID/ADVANCE has provided the groups with 1,000 solar radio sets.

By 2018 when the project ends, USAID/ADVANCE will reach over 300,000 listeners with timely agricultural information through radio broadcasts in the Northern, Upper East, Upper West, and Brong Ahafo Regions.

Telling Our Story

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