FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND VALUE CHAIN ENHANCEMENT FEED THE FUTURE ACTIVITY (ADVANCE II)

FY 18 ANNUAL WORKPLAN

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AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND VALUE CHAIN ENHANCEMENT FEED THE FUTURE ACTIVITY (ADVANCE II) FY 18 ANNUAL WORKPLAN

OCTOBER 1ST, 2017 – SEPTEMBER 30TH, 2018

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT NUMBER:

AID-641-A-14-00001

AOR USAID: PEARL ACKAH

CHIEF OF PARTY: DR. EMMANUEL DORMON

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Acronyms

ACDEP	Association of Church-based Development NGOs
ADVANCE	Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement
ASWG	Agriculture Sector Working Group
BDS	Business Development Service
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program
DCA	Development Credit Authority
DAIP	District Agricultural Investment Plans
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FASDEP II	Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy II
FBE	Farmer Based Enterprise
FBO	Farmer Based Organization
FinGAP	Financing Ghanaian Agriculture Project
FTF	Feed the Future
FMP	Field Management Program
GAIP	Ghana Agricultural Insurance Program
GAPs	Good Agricultural Practices
GCX	Ghana Commodity Exchange
GDA	Global Development Alliance
GGC	Ghana Grains Council
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	German Development Cooperation
GPRTU	Ghana Private Road Transporters Union
GRIB	Ghana Rice Inter-Professional Body
GSA	Ghana Standards Authority
Ha	Hectare
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFDC	International Fertilizer Development Center
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
METASIP	Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan
MIS	Market Information Services
MM	Mobile Money
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipality, and District Assembly
MoFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MSMA	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
MT	Metric Ton
NF	Nucleus Farmer
NGRP	Northern Rural Growth Program
OB	Outgrower Business
OG	Outgrower
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan
PPRSD	Plant Protection and Regulatory Services Directorate
QPM	Quality Protein Maize
RaFIP	Rural and Agricultural Finance Program
RFBO	Regional Farmer Based Organizations
SARI	Savanna Agricultural Research Institute

SASL	Sinapi Aba Savings and Loans
SEG	Small Equipment Grant
SIL	Soybean Innovation Lab
SMFM	Sell More for More (market tool for FBOs)
SSP	Spraying Service Provider
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Associations

Introduction

The ADVANCE II Project was awarded to ACDI/VOCA on February 5th, 2014 under the Cooperative Agreement # Aid-641-A-14-0001, and is scheduled to end on September 30th, 2018. The project is a follow-on to the Ghana Agricultural Development and Value Chain Enhancement (ADVANCE) project which ended on March 13th, 2014. ADVANCE II is one of the flagship projects under the USAID Ghana mission's Feed the Future (FTF) program.

This 2018 implementation plan was conceptualized, discussed and deliberated by the full complement of all ADVANCE staff, as well as senior managers from the implementing partners, who met for a week, from 19th to 23rd June 2017 in Sunyani.

This implementation plan for 2018 touches on all aspects of the project's three main components including agricultural productivity, trade and marketing, and capacity development, and ensuring that issues of gender, application of Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools are applied, the environment is not negatively impacted and all of this done to ensure sustainable gains. The plan was drawn starting with a thorough analysis of the results from previous years and adjusting developing strategies based on the lessons learned. The plan also includes strategies for collaborating with other Feed the Future implementing partners to ensure synergies and avoid duplication of efforts.

The plan briefly describes the project approach, how this will be monitored during implementation and a conscious effort to document the processes, outputs and immediate outcomes to ensure effective learning for adaptive management. Specific activities that will lead to the achievement of the broad objectives have been identified for each of the project's three sub purposes and the cross cutting themes (gender, environment, grants, using ICT T tools, and nutrition sensitive agriculture) are also presented as well as an elaborate monitoring, evaluation and learning plan.

The 2018 implementation plan has been designed keeping in mind previous results and learning experiences, however, in keeping with our adaptive management approach, there may be a need to modify some of the strategies as new learning occurs during implementation. Any modifications in implementation strategies will not affect the targets but rather enhance their attainment in the most efficient manner that ensures sustainability.

1.0 Project Management

1.1 Implementing Partners

The ADVANCE II project is managed by ACDI/VOCA as the prime contractor with a well-balanced and experienced project team, some of who have been retained from the initial ADVANCE project. ACDI/VOCA, has three implementing partners: ACDEP, PAB Consult and TechnoServe, all of who have extensive experience managing development projects across Ghana. All the partners have great experience working in northern Ghana and the technical capabilities to manage the project. Together, the implementing partners have a combined total of 148 full time staff working on the project and posted to various locations within the intervention zones.

ACDI/VOCA provides overall management, technical direction, administrative services; reporting to USAID; coordination with other donor activities; and oversight of sub-awardees' activities. Coordination among partners ensures maximum benefit of each partner's technical expertise, and is driven by the Chief of Party (COP) through the ADVANCE Management Steering Committee comprised of the leadership of the implementing partners. The committee meets quarterly to review project progress on results and objectives. The committee also serves as an avenue to resolve any contractual issues that may arise, update staff requirements, and assess project approaches and activities.

1.2 Office Operations & Staffing

The project has five office locations. The ACDI/VOCA Country Office in Accra houses the ADVANCE Project office where the COP (Emmanuel Dormon), and two DCOPs for Operations and Quality Assurance (TBD), and Grants (Philip Ataarem), are based. Also, based in Accra is a strong monitoring, evaluation and learning (ME&L) team comprising the ME&L Manager (Eric Sunu), Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator (Samuel Akoi Wontumi), Project Database Manager (Robert Sackey), and the Program Specialist for Public Relations/Communications (Francis Ainoo). A few other senior staff also operate from Accra including the Director of Administration and Finance (Wise Agbetsiafa), Senior Accountant (Patrick Addai), Technical Leader for Trade and Marketing (Nicholas Issaka Gbana), Geographic Information Systems Specialist (Regina Brown Mensah).

The Tamale office is the main hub for project implementation in the North. The DCOP Technical (Allan Pineda), directs all technical programs in the field, along with Technical Leaders for business services (Doris Owusu), Policy and Advocacy Specialist (Ernest Aayel), capacity development (Chrysanthe Ataarem), ICT Specialist (Lynda Stephens), environment (Victor Mombu), and Grants Specialist (Agatha Ayirewogye).

Regional teams are led by Regional Coordinators (RC) who are very experienced staff with both technical and administrative skills. The regional technical team based in Wa (Upper West Region) is led by Charles Yaro, the Bolgatanga team (Upper East Region) is headed by Michael Amaniampong, and the RC for the Northern Region team in Tamale is Francis Essuman. Sunyani

office serves as the coordination point for the maize belt of Brong Ahafo and Ashanti Regions, and covers 25 districts, and the RC (Peter Asibey-Bonsu) is supported by an M&E Officer, a Business Service Officer, and a Marketing Officer. The Kumasi office now only has a Marketing Specialist whose focus is on the market catchment areas in the Ashanti Region. Both the Kumasi and Sunyani offices are shared with the USDA funded Ghana Poultry Project to promote efficient use of resources and proper accounting records are kept to ensure accurate billing for each project.

1.3 Development Partner Coordination

ADVANCE will continue to play an active role in collaborating, coordinating and leveraging on the other FTF projects namely; Agricultural Technology Transfer (ATT), Financing Ghanaian Agriculture Project (FinGAP), Resiliency in Northern Ghana (RING), the Agricultural Policy Support Project (APSP), the World Bank/USAID Ghana Commercial Agriculture Project (GCAP), as well as the Natural Resource Management Project. The COP will participate actively in the FtF COPs' meetings that are held regularly to coordinate and avoid duplication of activities in our respective work plans and grants programs, among others, and ADVANCE will continue to play an active role in these coordination efforts in the coming year.

ADVANCE will also continue to participate in other technical sub-groups from the various Feed the Future (FTF) projects that meet regularly. The groups include Public Relations and Communication (PR&C), Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), and Grants. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Technical Support Services (METSS) project coordinates all the FTF projects' effort on knowledge management and learning (KM&L) and ADVANCE will continue to support that effort.

The ADVANCE project management team will continue to work closely with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) at the district and regional levels, and collaborate with the Northern Sector Agriculture Investment Coordination Unit (NSAICU) under the Savannah Agricultural Development Authority (SADA). With the large number of value chain initiatives in the north, there is a significant need to ensure consistency across technical assistance programs and for carefully measured investments grounded in sound market development practices that put local partners and private sector actors at the forefront of planning and implementation. As we have seen, this can best be achieved through coordination efforts. This will entail periodic collaborative review meetings, joint workshops with key value chain stakeholders in the three target crops, as well as the annual preseason and pre-harvest agribusiness fairs.

Another important area that the project will coordinate with MoFA and other projects and organizations is the control of the Fall Armyworm (FAW). The Fall Armyworm was identified in 2016 when they invaded maize farms in northern Ghana, and quickly spread to the south. The pest continued to attack maize crops in 2017 and is likely to persist in the country for the next couple of years. The project has set up pheromone traps for early detection of the presence of the FAW moth, collaborated with MoFA and used the Agricultural Extension Agents to monitor and collect data on a weekly basis. This collaboration will continue in 2018 and will include other

organizations like CABI, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) among other.

2.0 Implementation Strategy

2.1 Background

Despite marginal improvements in Ghana's macroeconomic environment, the country continues to face challenges from many years of poor economic performance. Annual inflation rates have dropped from about 18% in 2016 to 11.9% in July 2017 and forecasted to fall further to 11.6 by August 2017. Interest rates however remain high at above 30% per year for banks and up to 50% for non-bank financial institutions. Agricultural growth rates dropped from 5.7% in 2013 to 3% in 2016. Northern Ghana faces greater challenges than most parts of the country with complex interrelated economic, health, environmental and educational challenges that have contributed to this disparity for the majority of its 4.3 million people (about 17% of total Ghana population). Low levels of literacy, poor nutrition, inconsistent weather patterns, geographic isolation from market centers, periodic insecurity, inaccessibility of inputs, and a low adoption of modern farming practices have contributed to persistent low productivity. Smallholder farmers, especially women are even more disadvantaged due to limited access to and control over land and production resources, lower education levels, and access to training. Analysis of data collected by the project in 2015 showed that only 32% of women in the project's area of operation had access to any form of credit or financial service (input credit, savings and loans, grants, mobile money etc.), and this constrains their ability to invest in production inputs and improve their productivity.

In the past five years, Ghana imported on average 480,000 MT of rice, more than 14,000 MT of soy products, and almost 15,000 MT of maize. With urban populations and incomes generally on the rise, demand for such staple foods is increasing. The economic conditions, although challenging, presents some opportunities for the North, where the economy relies heavily on the production of these key staple food crops. The Ghanaian government and development partners, as well as the private sector, are continuing to explore and invest in commercial agriculture initiatives in northern Ghana to unearth the agricultural potential.

The ADVANCE II project's theory of change posits that there are three functions of value chain competitiveness—agricultural productivity, market access and trade, and an enabling environment—which are catalyzed by three enablers of competitiveness - *clear incentives for investment, strong local capacity and mutually beneficial relationships* (see Figure 1). Underpinning the theory is that private sector actors, including men and women farmers (both large and smallholders), are the drivers of competitiveness, while the government and local stakeholders are facilitators, who can be supported through ADVANCE II investment in capacity building and promotion of innovation.

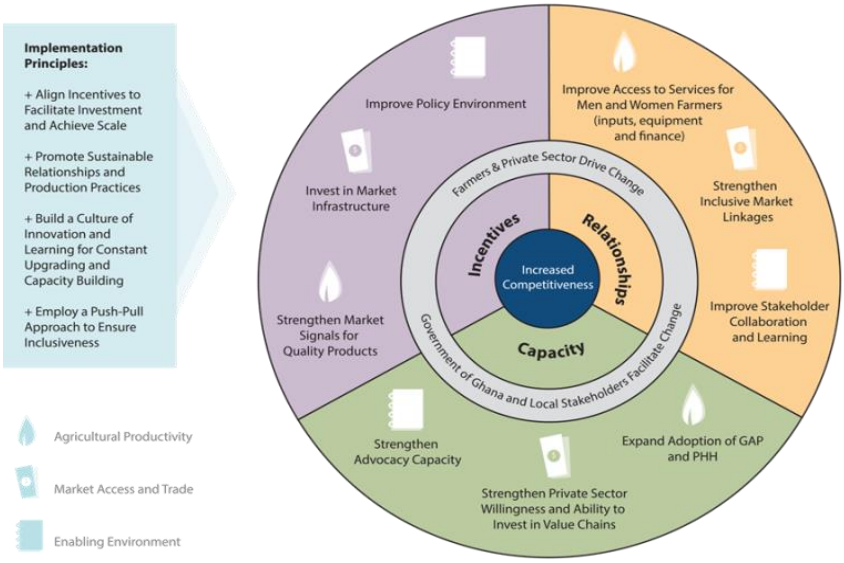


Figure 1: ADVANCE's theory of change

The 2018 implementation plan is designed to expose targeted male and female farmers to new commercial opportunities. access long term markets, while strengthening existing supply chain relationships with businesses investing in the value chain, improved access to market information, improved access to services and products including financing, high-quality inputs, new technologies, mechanization services, and improved ability to meet market quality requirements. The result will be increased productivity and profitability for both large and smallholder farmers.

The central approach is to focus on end-market opportunities that provide compelling incentives for businesses throughout the value chain to invest in the chain, including upgrading their own performance. For example, competition from imported rice should drive investment in Ghana's domestic rice value chain by (i) upgrading mills through expanding their capacity and the quality of the product; (ii) by traders to develop dedicated smallholder farmer suppliers; (iii) and by farmers to improve productivity through the efficient use of quality inputs and improved varieties.

ADVANCE II's strategic focus on growing end-markets also attracts investment from businesses in supporting markets such as financial institutions, input dealers, and equipment service providers who recognize the potential to grow their own businesses by servicing actors in these value chains. Ultimately, upgrading the value chains sustainably, will benefit smallholder farmers by building their capacity and improving their access to markets, information and services. To encourage businesses to make these investments, ADVANCE II employs a facilitative approach. The project targets lead firms in the value chains and supports markets that are able to impact large numbers of smallholders and are willing and able to invest in performance upgrades. ADVANCE II ensures that targeted lead firms demonstrate considerable commitment and exert ownership of the upgrading process.

2.2 Technical Challenges

The ADVANCE II project targets smallholder farmers through business service providers that provide the farmers with either in-kind or cash-up-front services. These providers (processors, commercial farmers, aggregators, input dealers) reach large numbers of smallholders and are willing and have the cash flow to invest in upgrading the value chain. Of the farmers participating in the ADVANCE II project, 99 percent are smallholders with an average farm size of 1.0 ha; and each farmer is linked to one or more service providers. The project ensures that women are targeted for training and to receive productivity enhancing services.

The project's target smallholder male and female farmer population face many challenges including poor infrastructure, high cost of borrowing, inadequate access to production inputs, machinery, and markets, and therefore the project is implemented with these constraints in mind. The technical interventions described in this implementation plan are designed to consolidate the gains from ADVANCE I and the first four (4) years of ADVANCE II, and leverage where momentum is occurring in new technology adoption, more efficient use of mechanization (using rippers), stronger and more sustainable links to end markets, and actors' willingness to invest in the value chain and industry.

2.3 Lessons learned from project implementation

An important strategy of the ADVANCE project is to use an adaptive management approach, where the project team consistently assesses the project strategies vis-à-vis the outputs, outcomes and impacts, and consequently adjusts the implementation strategies accordingly, where necessary, to ensure that the desired long-term results are attained in the most effective and efficient manner.

Recognizing the complexity of increasing productivity and incomes of smallholder farmers the project's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system is structured around a data collection and analysis cycle that utilizes a knowledge management and learning environment. The cycle involves a planning, implementation, monitoring, studies and research to learn, and subsequent re-examination of actions. The process also involves a series of feedback loops that provide the project managers and decision-makers with information on the outcomes of their choices, results of past management decisions and on present conditions. Our learning agenda integrates with the project's standard indicator monitoring and effectiveness evaluation methodologies. Feedback and dialogue among beneficiaries is a central component and learning reviews are scheduled to ensure that everyone can continuously examine results and learn from the project's experiences.

One of ADVANCE's key intermediate goals is to improve smallholders' productivity. The project works to achieve this by working through Outgrower Businesses (OBs). ADVANCE has been implementing the OB model since 2011 as one of its key intervention models to build and strengthen a system that will sustainably and significantly increase the agricultural productivity of the project's smallholder beneficiaries and enhance their access to market.

In line with the project's adaptive management policy, knowledge management and learning (KM&L) constitutes an important part principle of managing the project. Therefore, the first step in our planning process is to reflect and assess the reach, depth, and elements of the OB model that should ensure its sustainability. For that purpose, the project team analyzed survey data, routine monitoring data, as well as case studies. Some data was also collected through the annual gross margin surveys, in-depth interviews of smallholders and outgrower businesses, as well as profiling and other data reported by beneficiaries as their experiences with the project. The findings, which are summarized in the rest of this section, has informed the strategies that will be adopted in the coming year.

Reach of the OB service provision to the OGs

Presently, the project works with 370 Outgrower Business (OBs), 32 of them are owned and led by women. In 2016, on average, an OB was linked to 271 outgrowers (47% women) and directly supported about half of them with plowing services and production inputs on credit. Other support includes post-harvest handling, training, marketing, and transportation service. The most common service provided was plowing, followed by training (extension), then fertilizer and seed credit. The least common ones were shelling and threshing, harrowing, transportation, and warehousing.

The data showed that the provision of service by OBs was significantly influenced by gender ($p<0.05$). Male maize farmers had 27 percent higher probability of being provided tractor services by an OB than their female counterpart. This percentage increased to 34 percent for the male rice farmers compared with the female ones, while it was 16 percent, for the male soy farmers. The plowing service, the most common service, is billed at 100kg per acre plowed, irrespective of crop. The preference for plowing for the men can be explained by the higher potential profit from serving them as they have larger farms and the tractors can be utilized on a contiguous piece of land rather than driving it to several small fields.

Service provision is also influenced by crop ($p<0.0001$). Rice and soy farmers had 15 and 35 percent higher chance of being supported by an OB compared to the maize ones. The price per unit weight of soy and rice are higher than that for maize. The prices for soy, rice and maize per 100kg are at $32.7, $34.2, and $23.2 respectively in 2016. Therefore, as the plowing fee does not change for the different crops, plowing a rice field is generally more profitable than plowing a maize farm.

Depth of OB service provision

One of the OB model's assumptions is that the higher the depth of service provision (i.e. the number of services provided to a farmer), the more their productivity will increase, and we have observed this to be true. Among those who received services, 72 percent of the women farmers and 69 percent of the men received only one service. About 18 percent of both gender received two services and between 8 and 9 percent of them received three services.

Table 1: Percentage of farmers by number of services received and by gender

Number of services	Female	Male
1	71.83%	69.41%
2	17.61%	18.44%
3	7.75%	8.94%
4	2.46%	3.77%
5	1.06%	0.84%
8	0.35%	0.00%
Grand Total	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

This trend of low depth was consistent across crops and gender (Table 2). However, a higher proportion of maize farmers received two or more services than the rice and soy ones. The exact reason for this is not known and we will follow up to understand this better.

Table 2: Percentage of farmers by number of services received by crop

Number of services	Maize	Rice	Soy
1	63.46%	76.50%	79.45%
2	20.32%	13.50%	17.39%
3	11.59%	7.50%	2.37%
4	4.81%	2.00%	1.19%
5	0.89%	1.00%	0.79%
8	0.00%	0.50%	0.00%
Grand Total	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

The low depth is also illustrated by the average number of services per farmer at 1.47, varying from 1.3 for female soy farmers to 1.67 for female maize farmers (Table 3).

Table 3: Average number of services per farmer by crop and by gender

Crop	Female	Male	Grand Total
Maize	1.67	1.58	1.59
Rice	1.48	1.30	1.38
Soy	1.23	1.30	1.27
Grand Total	**1.44**	**1.48**	**1.47**

Quality of services

Although the OBs did not provide many services, but when they did, the quality was recognized by the smallholders. Most the farmers rated the services provided by their OBs as excellent or good, whether they were male of female (Table 4). However, more maize farmers than the rice and soy ones rated the OB services as being of average quality (Table 5).

Table 4: Percentage of farmers by reported rating of OB's service quality and gender

Service quality	Female	Male
Excellent	10.56%	12.22%
Good	82.04%	79.07%
Average	8.10%	8.99%
Bad	0.00%	0.00%
Very bad	0.00%	0.28%
Grand Total	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

Table 5: Percentage of farmers by reported rating of OB's service quality and crop

Service quality	Maize	Rice	Soy
Excellent	13.98%	10.55%	8.70%
Good	75.45%	83.42%	84.98%
Average	10.39%	6.53%	6.72%
Bad	0%	0%	0%
Very bad	0.36%	0.00%	0.00%
Grand Total	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**

Payment for services

About 80 percent of the Outgrowers (OGs) reported having fully paid for the services they received. More female rice farmers reportedly paid compared with their male counterpart.

Table 6: Percentage of farmers who reportedly fully paid the services by gender and crop

Crop	Female	Male
Maize	76.11%	80.98%
Rice	84.72%	72.22%
Soy	78.57%	81.10%
Grand Total	**78.96%**	**79.95%**

Direct impact of the OB model on smallholders' productivity

The data shows that the smallholders who received services from their OBs had significantly higher probabilities of applying technologies that would increase their yields. For example, benefitting from OB services almost doubled the probability of maize and rice farmers, as well as female soy farmers to use certified seeds compared to those who did not receive services from OBs (Table 7).

Table 7: Percentage increase in the use of certified seeds by gender and crop

Crop	Female	Male
Maize	86%	95%
Rice	102%	91%
Soy	94%	37%

Female maize farmers had a 24 percent higher chance of applying fertilizers when they received services from OBs. This figure went up to 28 percent for the male maize farmers. However, the provision of services by the OBs did not seem to have a significant impact on the adoption of row planting for the maize and soy farmers, nor for the male rice farmers, as row planting doesn't involve much costs. On the contrary, female rice farmers had 103% chance of applying row planting when they were supported by their OBs, likely because they initially lacked the necessary knowledge without the extension services from the OBs.

Similarly, OB services did not influence the application of fertilizers for rice and soy, probably due to the Government's fertilizer subsidy program and the lack of knowledge on the necessity of fertilizers for these crops.

Thus, benefitting from OBs' support increased the yield of female and male rice farmers by 23 percent and 52 percent respectively, and increased the female and male soy farmers by 54 percent and 38 percent respectively.

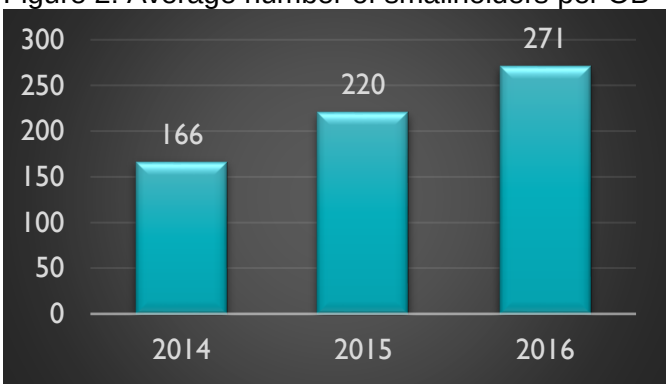
Signs of sustainability

In addition to the findings presented in the above sections, the project has observed signs of the sustainability for the OB model such as the increasing demand for OB services, the OB profitability, and the expansion of services by other actors, which are also key elements of the value chains.

a. Increasing demand for services

The OBs are facing increasing demand from the smallholders. Annually, the number of smallholders connected to each OB increased by 27% (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Average number of smallholders per OB



High demand for improved production inputs and services, including mechanized land preparation, and up-front financing among others. There is room to increase the application of improved technologies among the project beneficiaries as only 42 percent of the FY16 beneficiaries used certified seeds, and 56 percent used fertilizers.

Despite the two to three-fold increase in yields and gross margins across the three crops compared to the baseline figures, the farmers' productivity (at 3.33 MT/ha for maize, 2.9 MT/ha for rice, and 2.28 MT/ha for soy) remains lower than the potential yields. Also, the post-harvest management of the produce needs to be improved. As many as 48 percent of the rice and soy farmers are not using threshers and mentioned that they could not find any, while 41 percent reported they could not afford any. These two issues can be addressed if OBs can expand their provision of such service.

To meet the demand, many of the OBs have significantly expanded their services. Between 2014 and 2016, on average, tractor plowing services grew at 44 percent annually, input credit provision at 28 percent annually, and threshing service provision at 31 percent annually.

From our surveys, the OBs intend to expand even further as 80 percent of them planned to increase tractor services in 2017, 68 percent planned to increase input credit and 84 percent would increase threshing service provision. However, they reported facing challenges hindering their expansion capacity. The top three barriers cited included:

- Lack of finance (mentioned by 75 percent of OBs surveyed)
- Logistics and transport (45 percent)
- Outgrower loyalty (42 percent)
- Weather volatility (42 percent)
- Getting the best price (28 percent)
- Finding ways to grow business (20 percent)

Nevertheless, a certain level of retention of smallholders as customers by the OBs was noticed. Around 89 percent of the OBs reported that "all" or "most" of the farmers they served in 2015 were also served by them in 2016. As many as 92 percent of OBs reported that "all" or "most" of the farmers they supported in 2016 would continue receiving support in 2017. This finding indicates that the OB model has a good chance of being a sustainable model and the project will work to strengthen it further in the coming year.

b. Profitability of the OB

From the service provision alone (without accounting for the sales of the produce a OB sourced from the outgrowers he or she supported), an OB gains over $1,200 per season. Moreover, OBs' annual revenues increased by 13 percent generally.

The outgrower business as promoted by the project, is a new and growing business model. The project has noticed an increasing number of businesses interested in becoming an OB or making their existing OB more organized, strengthened and professional. In 2016, the project had 125 of such businesses being mentored by 25 experienced OBs, while in 2015, 10 OBs mentored 78 of their new peers. The number of OBs working with the project shot up from 156 in 2014 to 370 in 2017. About 86 percent of them have formally registered their business.

The number of end buyers involved in the outgrower scheme increased from one in 2014 to 11 in 2016, illustrating its economic interest and profitability. The end buyers invested over $4.6 million to finance seeds and fertilizers for the smallholder farmers through the OB scheme.

c. Expansion of other actors' businesses

Per USAID ADS 201 Program Cycle Operational Policy, "sustainable development efforts should strengthen local systems inclusive of key local actors, to support their collective ability to produce results over time." The project therefore pays close attention to all the other business actors operating in the maize, rice and soybean value chains to ensure that the system functions efficiently.

The other value chain actors are also key to the success, growth, and sustainability of the OB model and need to grow as the model reaches more people. Agro-inputs dealerships are growing and increasing the availability of improved inputs to smallholders, especially in remote areas. Yara, one of the largest international input firms which partnered with the project, reported an increase of about 5% of their revenues in 2016 compared with the 2015. Heritage Seeds, a much smaller seed dealer reported significant increase in sales (from 69MT to 98MT of certified seeds) from 2015 to 2016.

Another strategy used by the project to increase farmers' access to inputs through the OB model is community input promotions. Hadiola Agrochemical, one of the input dealers engaged during some of these events reported that their turnover increased almost fivefold, from $10,870 to $51,764 in 2016.

Agrochemical spraying service provision has taken off as well, providing valuable services smallholder farmers as well as off-farm incomes for the sprayers. In 2016, 171 young men were trained as spraying service providers and they generated a revenue of $23,517. In addition to providing the young men an income, it also enabled more farmers to access safer and more efficient spraying services.

Furthermore, transport services are becoming more accessible after the project facilitated talks between the Ghana Private Road Transport Union on one hand, with OBs and buyers on the other, and the latter now benefit from discounted fares.

Other actors such as ICT service providers (e.g. Esoko, Voto Mobile etc.), financial institutions, radio stations among others, have seen an expansion of their businesses or at least more diversification of their products to suit the farmers and OBs' needs.

Applying the learning from these studies

Based on the above findings, the project will support the OBs to increase their reach and depth of their service provision to improve their impact. Examples of interventions will include:

- Sensitizing OBs further on the other potentially profitable and impactful services and strengthen their business management skills and tools
- Training the OBs and supporting them to keep and interpret records to enable them better assess, plan, and strategize on the type and number of farmers they should serve, and the types of services they should provide
- Promoting and facilitating the expansion of the end buyers' outgrower scheme to increase the availability of up front financing at the level of the OBs and the farmers
- Continuing gender sensitization activities with the OBs, the farmers, the communities at large and making the business case for working with women and supporting them grow their businesses.
- Continue supporting farmers to secure other sources of funding and knowledge that will reduce the pressure and the dependency on the OBs (through VSLA, extension services, etc.)
- Continuing the support to women to access land and financial resources

3.0 Strengthening the Value Chains

The overall goal of the ADVANCE Project involves scaling up private sector investment and involvement in the maize, rice and soybean value chains to achieve greater food security, while increasing competitiveness in these respective commodity value chains.

The project is organized into three sub-purposes including:

i) increased productivity in targeted commodities;
ii) increased market access and trade; and
iii) strengthened local capacity.

The project also has crosscutting areas including gender, environment, nutrition sensitive agriculture, and a strong monitoring, evaluation, and learning, component. Detailed activity plans and tracking progress are presented in Annex 1**Error! Reference source not found.** while the i ndicator targets are presented in Annex 2.

3.1. Sub-Purpose 1: Increased Agricultural Productivity in Targeted Commodities

Objective 1: Adoption of improved productivity-enhancing technologies, services and practices by women and men farmers increased.
Objective 2: Sustainable [business] systems for financial, advisory, aggregation and on-farm, post-harvest service provision and input distribution strengthened.
Objective 3: Incentives for smallholder investment in new productivity enhancing technologies, services and practices strengthened.

3.1.1 Increased Adoption of improved productivity-enhancing technologies services and practices

Field Management Program

The Outgrower Business (OB) model is the project's main intervention strategy. From what we know through our learning studies, outgrowers (OGs) who received services from their OBs had significantly higher probabilities of applying technologies that increased their yields. Also, over 90% of smallholder farmers who received services from the OBs rated the quality of the services as good or excellent. However, the number of services provided by OBs per each smallholder farmer was on average only 1.5, which we consider low, therefore, the project will adopt strategies to improve on this in the coming year.

The Field Management Program (FMP), which is part of the sustainability strategy for OBs, aims at improving OBs' management capacity to reach out effectively to their outgrowers with more services. To achieve this, the project is encouraging OBs to invest in a field manager who will be

trained, and where necessary, the project will provide mobility (tricycle or motorbikes) through in-kind grants to facilitate movement to the various communities. Project management anticipates that investing in a field manager would improve the timeliness of inputs support to the OGs, effective supervision and technical assistance to the OGs, and subsequently improve repayment rates. The FMP have been incorporated in the business plans developed with and for OBs and is part of the Outgrower Business Management (OBM) curriculum for training OBs. The project will review the curriculum and introduce additional modules to address new challenges faced by OBs. One such addition will be a module on staff management and retention, and labor protections (fair wage, benefits, legal requirements, hiring etc). The project will identify and collaborate with an appropriate agricultural training institution to train the field managers and certify them.

We observe that there is a significant gap in OBs recruiting women as field managers. We have observed that the few female lead farmers are doing a great job in facilitating linkages between OGs and the OBs in terms of services provision. The project will therefore encourage OBs to hire more women as field managers and empower them through training to improve their technical expertise.

Illustrative activities that will be undertaken to ensure a successful filed management program include the following:

- Organize capacity building training for engaged filed managers to enable them perform the role effectively and efficiently
- Facilitate delivery of technical Services through field managers. Services would include extension delivery, management of tractor and other mechanization services, input distribution to OGs, post-harvest advice, GAP/PHH training, manage demonstration sites, aggregation of produce at harvest, community liaison, and provide mentorship to community lead farmers
- Organize review sessions with field managers to assess and share experiences on progress with implementing the field management programs, challenges, and successes
- Support the field managers by coaching to use ICT tools (using the smartex application developed by the Grameen Foundation) to train farmers on good agronomic practices as well as help their OBs in managing their business.
- The project will use in-kind grants to catalyze innovative behavior, including support for the field management services and to buy down some of the startup costs. This will be limited to providing motorcycle or “motor-king” to aid in mobility required for the job.
- Together with John Deere, the project intends to send one OB and one staff member to visit and study a mechanization center model being practiced in Nigeria, which has proven successful. The team will be expected to return and share what we can replicable here in Ghana, with a special target towards OBs. We believe this has potential to make the OB model more profitable and sustainable.

Actor-led technology demonstration sites.

Demonstration sites have been and continue to be the best platform to train farmers on Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) including effective control of the Fall armyworm (FAW), and Post-Harvest Handling (PHH) to improve productivity. Five trainings are provided at the demo sites

during each crop season and the time for trainings is fixed to ensure it is convenient for the women to participate effectively. The project collaborates with private agro-input companies and OBs to establish the demonstration sites. The strategy to ensure that this learning platform is sustained beyond the life of the project is to encourage OBs to take the lead role to sponsor demos in the communities where they operate.

Some new communities will be selected for 2018 demo sites however, most demonstrations will be established in communities previously touched, to increase adoption and utilization of technological packages. The project will encourage private sector entities to sponsor inputs for selected demo sites out of the 483 demos, but the OBs will continue provide land, land preparation, and other inputs to supplement the sponsorship to be provided by the input companies. The project will support the OBs to take a lead role in sourcing sponsorship and establishing the demonstration sites in 2018 to ensure sustainability for continued agricultural extension to the smallholders after the project closes.

The project will organize meetings between the OBs and the various input companies who have provided seeds, fertilizer and herbicides for setting up the demonstrations over the year to agree on some level of cost share between the OBs and the input companies. This kind of agreement will provide better comfort that using demonstrations sites as platforms for training smallholder farmers will not discontinue when the project ends. This will also ensure that the appropriate inputs which have proven to improve crop yields are used at the demonstration sites.

We are confident that the input companies will welcome the collaboration with OBs post ADVANCE II, having realized increases in sales through their sponsorship of the demonstration sites because it provides them a market.

Demonstration sites will be selected strategically to ensure easy access (close to communities) to female farmers, and based on productivity maps for each of the crops. The maps show the best locations for production for each crop. In the case where factors like low pH persist, lime will be applied to the soil though donations by the private sector input suppliers present in the north.
The following specific tasks will be performed at each demonstration site:

- Training for GAPs and PHH will be held at all sites (and selected farms) with private sector firms, OBs and MOFA AEAs where possible.
- Demo sites will be monitored and data recorded regularly
- Establish 15 model farms to showcase ripping for land preparations and other mechanized practices at commercial level
- Disseminate GAPs information through SMS/Voice messaging service providers, call centers, and other media especially radio and radio listener groups. Sensitize radio listenership groups to tune in to agricultural programs on radio.
- Facilitate direct linkages between listenership groups and operating radio stations which broadcast in various communities to create lasting relationships and ensure continuous flow of agricultural information to farmers.
- Encourage partner agribusinesses to sponsor agricultural programs on radio and link the programs to the trainings conducted at the demonstration sites. The project recognizes that

female smallholders have low access to mobile phones, disempowering them from accessing information from various ICT platforms. The project will work with the telecom providers to identify cheap priced phones with adequate features to receive messages.

Climate Smart Agriculture.

Since 2014, ADVANCE has been implementing a Climate Smart Agricultural (CSA) strategy to mitigate the impacts of the erratic rainfall patterns. In 2015 and 2016, the project made immense progress in disseminating CSA techniques, including providing in-kind grants for rippers (land preparation with minimum disturbance made to soil). In 2017 land preparation using the rippers was up scaled to the level of OBs, who also supported their OGs.

The implementation of the model farm concept in collaboration with John Deere and its local distributor AFGRI Ghana enabled the project to showcase the benefits of mechanization and especially ripping on large commercial scale.

Some specific activities to be undertaken include the following:

- Conduct new minimum tillage demonstrations and maintain previous ones
- Promote expansion of the area under minimum tillage by facilitating ripping for interested OBs and OGs
- Organize a no-burn policy campaign in all regions in collaboration with the District Assemblies and MoFA
- Contract with relevant service providers to provide weather forecasting through SMS and other ICT tools.

Management of pest disease outbreaks

New agronomic challenges are encountered each season, some of which there is no precedent. A case in point is the Fall Armyworm (FAW) invasion that affected maize crops in 2016 and 2017 and is likely to persist in the country for the next couple of years, per experts observation. It is therefore important to establish a system where farmers can consult an expert when they encounter new pests, diseases or other challenges.

Fall Armyworm Control

The outbreak of fall armyworm in Ghana was first noticed in mid-2016 and the incidence worsened in the 2017 crop season. To help farmers deal with this new pest in Ghana, the project has already undertaken several activities and will continue in the coming year. They include:

1. A monitoring system involving the use of pheromone traps and standard field scouting to gather information for immediate advice to farmers and for long term planning
2. Education and creating awareness, including training of agricultural extension professionals and farmers, radio campaigns, distribution of posters to farmers and their communities, and
3. Pesticide observations to determine the best options and times of application.
4. Pest and Disease management in collaboration with CABI

To detect the presence of the pest in a timely manner, 27 Heliothis traps were mounted with fall armyworm and African armyworm lures to monitor prevalence of fall armyworm as well as African armyworm moths. This monitoring system constitutes an early warning system to alert farmers to scout their farms for signs of the pest and take appropriate actions when moths are detected in

the traps. Agric Extension Agents from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture are monitoring and collecting data from the pheromone traps on a weekly basis. They also scout the farms on which the pheromone traps are located using a standard scouting protocol for signs of FAW, including damage on leaf window panes, holes and infested whorls. The proportion of these signs on the farm informs the actions that are recommended to the farmers within that locality. In 2018, this monitoring system will be expanded to cover the entire country in collaboration with CABI and MoFA-PPRSD. The information generated will be shared with stakeholders for broader action.

The specific steps will include the following:

- Procure traps and enough pheromones for one year's monitoring
- Train AEAs and other Agricultural Extension Professionals on how to set up trap, field scouting and data collection (these professionals will monitor the remaining regions of the south not covered up to now)
- Develop weekly and monthly maps to show trends of prevalence
- Share data with National Armyworm Task Force - formalize relations and ensure visibility
- Disseminate information on the pest-publishing/CABI
- Collaborate closely with PPRSD/SARI to ensure sustainability
- Analyze pesticide residue levels on maize grains - in collaboration with Nestle
- Expand monitoring to cover the whole country

Education and awareness of the Fall Armyworm

In 2017, the project trained over 180 Agricultural Extension Professionals. In collaboration with MoFA, the project also trained OBs and OGs, and started radio campaigns and voice messaging to farmers on FAW control. The project also printed and distributed 37,000 posters in farming communities in northern Ghana. In 2018, these activities will continue to be implemented and will be expanded to include a video production and broadcasts to farmers. A conscious effort will be made to target women farmers for the training to enure they are disadvantaged in any way.
Some specific tasks that will be undertaken include the following:

- Collaborate with CABI on video production and dissemination
- Radio education through jingles and Live Presenter Mentions
- Include FAW in GAPs trainings
- Special training for OBs and OGs involved in outgrower schemes
- Include FAW awareness in all trainings and meetings - using posters and videos

Establish Pesticide Observation Sites

Ghana has little experience with FAW control because the pest is new to the country. There are presently no standard prescriptions to FAW control. There is a risk for insect resistance, overdose of insecticides and ineffective control options and methods. To overcome these risks, the project set up an observation field using some active ingredients recommended by MoFA and listed in the PERSUAP for FAW control to determine the effective dosage, effective spray time, and the maize growth stages that are critical for effective control of the FAW. The project will set up additional observation fields in Kintampo using PERSUAP compliant products in 2018. Data from the observation plots will be analyzed and used to develop pesticide prescriptions for farmers.

Pest and Disease management in collaboration with CABI

Since 2016, the project has adopted the idea of 'plant clinics' in its work plan to support farmers with disease control in a structured way. This idea will be expanded to include the training and certification of plant doctors to support farmers in disease and pest management. The Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI) is an international not-for-profit organization which works closely with MoFA-PPRSD on matters related to invasive species. It has a curriculum and material to train and certify 'Plant Doctors', who are agricultural professionals trained to manage pests and diseases. With the support of MoFA-PPRSD, they have established a network of Plant Doctors in the southern part of Ghana who conduct periodic plant clinics to help farmers solve new problems faced on their farms. In collaboration with CABI, Field Agents who support the work of OBs with extension services to outgrowers will be trained and certified as plant doctors. The work of the plant doctors will be coordinated by Regional Plant Protection Officers of MoFA.

The specific strategies to achieve this will include:

- Training field agents to become Plant Doctors
- Training selected Project Staff to become Plant Doctors
- Establishing coordination units in Upper East and Upper West Regions
- Promote activities of plant doctors using publicity materials such as banners etc.
- Link plant doctors to PPRSD for technical support
- Facilitate cluster meetings of plant doctors
- Involve plant doctors in radio discussions
- Organize plant clinics using Plant Doctors
- Link the work to be done by plant doctors to the spraying service providers to target women farmers

3.1.2 Strengthen sustainable systems service provision and input distribution

Digital Financial Services

The ADVANCE II project promotes adoption of Digital Financial Services (DFS) to improve efficiency in carrying out business. Presently, 65 OBs and input dealers have been signed up as mobile money merchants linked to 5,207 subscribers. The mobile money platform has enabled OBs who aggregate produce from their OGs to make payments to them without the risk of carrying cash from their banks in the town centers to the villages while serving as a savings platform for the OGs thereby making them financially included. Input dealers who have signed up have also expanded their business and improved smallholders' access to inputs by establishing community agents at the communities/villages without their physical presence. The agents take orders from farmers and sends it to the retailer in the city; the items are delivered by the nearest and earliest means of transport, and payment is made using the mobile money platform.

These actors, beyond making transactions through mobile-money to pay their OGs, also have the option of becoming merchants or mobile money agents in the communities where they live. In

2018, the project will work with mobile money service providers and encourage them to visit more rural areas to set up the system there. Some specific activities to be undertaken include:

- Link Actors to Mobile Money Service providers (MTN, VODAFONE, TIGO, AIRTEL) to register as Merchants-and incorporate e-wallet into their operations
- Register/Setup Actors including the smallholders as merchants or subscribers
- Encourage value chain Actors to incorporate DFS into their operations
- Work with the telecom companies to provide basic cheap phones to women smallholder farmers to enable them access the DFS

Business Planning and Management Practices

In 2016, the project started classifying OBs based on their performance, using a categorization tool developed for the purpose. The tool rates the OBs by various business characteristics, and their scores determines the type of business support they will receive from the project. Outgrower businesses with a three star (medium performing) and four star (high performing) will be supported to develop four year-strategic plans aimed at consolidating gains they have made so far, and planning for the next growth stage of their business. Those in other categories will be provided specific services based on their needs. Specific tasks to be undertaken include

- Administer a business diagnostics tool to OBs prior to their planning process to identify significant strengths and weaknesses of their operations
- Guide OBs to implement plans that have been developed with them and support them to adjust as their circumstances change over time.
- Develop Medium Term Strategic Plans (4 years) for OBs identified as well-established and having entrepreneurship skills.

The OBs that are rated 1 and 2 stars will enter the mentorship program, a peer learning program for low performing OBs to be mentored by high performing colleagues.

Outgrowers will also be supported with business development services during GAPs trainings offered by the production team. The aim of this is to show the OGs how much impact the adoption of any of the technologies they are trained can make on their productivity, yield and income.

Facilitate OB Networking.

ADVANCE II facilitated the establishment of the first OB networks in 2015 to ensure impact and sustainability of the project's OB concept/model. The main objective is to foster linkages among OBs to learn "best practices" for managing their outgrower businesses, advocate for common interests and create economies of scale for bulk purchases and sales, when the opportunity arises. The project will continue to encourage and facilitate the formation of new networks, and strengthen the existing ones. The OB networks will be trained and sensitized to mainstream the project's gender strategy in their programs to ensure gender equity.

Some specific activities to be undertaken include:

- Following up on the 10 most active networks to facilitate their planning and help determine their common goals
- Identify their strengths and weaknesses to enable the project provide appropriate support

- Guide the existing networks to implement their advocacy activities
- Encourage OBs who do not yet belong to any OB network to join one

Outgrower Business Management

The OB model has proven successful and will be strengthened further in the coming year to make the OBs more robust. The eight-module outgrower business management training will continue with emphasis on good business planning for profit, understanding value chain dynamics, the roles played by all the actors in the value chain, the vulnerabilities/risks they are exposed to and the measures they need to take to mitigate against any risks, as well as adopting strategies to compete profitably. The project will also Assist OBs to put in place effective records keeping systems to ensure that OBs take sound business decisions.

Topics for training will be identified and implemented on a demand basis from the list below:

- Value chain concepts and how to compete profitably
- Business and Financial planning
- Outgrower Management
- Demonstration farm Management
- Tractor Operation and Maintenance
- Post-Harvest Handling
- Contracts, Marketing and Negotiation
- Women Entrepreneurship and Leadership

Another area of the OBs' operations that the project will pay attention to in the coming year is the utilization and management of their assets. The OBs own assets like tractors, shellers and threshers which they use on their own farms and to provide mechanized services for their OGs'. These assets are usually costly and mostly paid for with borrowed funds. Often, the OBs are unable to fully utilize these assets efficiently to generate enough income to pay back their loans on time. The project has developed an asset utilization analysis tool to help OBs ascertain, for instance, how many acres a tractor must plow to breakeven or how much it costs to shell a bag of maize so they can develop strategies to utilize these assets fully. The project will train OBs to use the asset utilization tool for their mechanization equipment to illustrate to them the number of OGs and acreage they must cover to become, or remain profitable.

Outgrower Businesses' Office Program.

Keeping proper business records remains a challenge for some OBs. The project introduced OBs to keeping proper and accurate records for their business on computers. On a pilot basis, the project provided 56 OBs with laptop computers through in-kind grants and were trained on how to use them with a sales tracker software installed. The software was to enable them manage their OGs, track sales and credit, and store and share their records as required. This however did not yield the desired results as most of the OBs could not afford to pay for the services of a computer literate assistant to support them. Thus, the concept was revised and emphasis placed on supporting OBs to keep proper records manually based on templates developed on excel sheets with a proper filing system.

The project will continue to support the OBs to set up proper office systems where all transactions are recorded and filed, and accounting systems put in place, so that these records can be interpreted to make sound business decisions, and be verifiable and auditable. The project will provide one-on one support to individual OBs. The project will also continue to use interns from Universities to support OBs and their managers implement new office systems and procedures, especially regarding record keeping.

Improved Access to Financial Services

Access to finance is a major hurdle for project beneficiaries and Ghanaian businesses in general. The OBs invest mainly in acquiring capital asset (tractors and shellers) and farm inputs for production. A large proportion of these investments are financed through bank loans with prohibitive interest rates and this sometimes limits their capacity to expand and grow their businesses.

Despite this challenge, improved access to finance is key to the adoption of new technologies that will improve productivity, crop yields and incomes, especially among women OGs whose land sizes are relatively small. The project has therefore adopted a five–pronged approach to improve access to finance by;

- Encouraging OGs' to make savings to invest in production inputs
- Scaling up the VSLA concept (200 more groups to reach another 5000 OGs in the coming year)
- Promoting agricultural finance through tripartite arrangements involving buyers and Financial Institutions (FIs)
- Linking OBs to FIs based on investment gaps
  Encouraging more digitized payments on the mobile money platform especially between OBs who aggregate produce for sale to end market and their OGs.
- Increasing the uptake of crop insurance in the face of erratic rainfall and pest invasion (example is the FAW) especially for those who will access credit to purchase production inputs.
- Organizing in-community input promotions, taking advantage of VSLA share outs

Upscale of Village Savings and Loans Associations

In 2015 access to credit for production was a challenge as FIs were not willing to lend and where they did, the interest rates were prohibitive, sometimes up to 4% per month. Therefore, OGs especially were encouraged to save some of their income to invest in production inputs for their farms. The Village Savings and Loans (VSLA) concept was therefore introduced to some 4,890 beneficiaries (214 groups) in the three regions of the north. For the first year, the savings accrued was GHS 394,598, (about $92,000), 20% of which was spent on inputs for production.

The concept proved very popular in 2016 and an additional 500 groups reaching 12,425 (3,835 males,8490 Females) beneficiaries. As at June 2017, 826 VSLA groups have been formed and monitoring of 571 showed that they had saved GHS 1,063,847.5 ($247,8710. The volume of

savings has been tremendous and while only about 20% has gone into production it is still encouraging as OGs are themselves surprised at how much they are capable of saving. The OGs saving for their own production will reduce their dependency on the OBs for input credit and afford the OB the opportunity to expand their business while improving the relationships between the two partners.

In 2017, the 826 groups will be encouraged to continue savings and 200 new groups will be formed targeting mostly women to save towards adopting new technologies especially the use of quality seed.

Input Dealer Business Development Program

With the project's interventions, input companies are extending their services into rural communities which enables smallholder farmers access, especially in remote areas. Yara, one of the largest and international input firms which partnered with the project, Heritage Seeds, a much smaller input dealer and Hadiola Agrochemical, one of the input dealers engaged by the project have all reported increases in their revenues.

The project will adopt a strategy to improve farmer access to inputs by supporting input companies to expand their services and improve their management practices. The focus in 2018 will be to link more Community Agents to Input Retailers/Wholesalers to bring inputs to isolated communities where access to inputs is constrained and costly. The agents will be encouraged to use mobile money transaction to reduce risks. Where necessary, the project will support input dealers to develop business plans and build their business management capacity to enable them expand their services. The project will facilitate a wider distribution of certified seeds and agrochemicals through improved linkages between dealers and community agents and out-grower business, FBOs and OGs.

Some specific activities to be undertaken include: -

- Strengthening relationships between existing agents and input dealers, while reinforcing that the business made by these community agents will be on the mobile money platform.
- Strengthening the capacity existing Spraying Service Providers (SSPs) to access spraying equipment and protective gear
- Facilitating linkages between MoFA, existing Input Agents and Input Dealers.
- Holding sensitization fora for SSPs, Community Input Agents, Input dealers, OBs and farmers.
- Facilitate linkages between Local input dealers, OBs and SSPs
- Organize training to build the capacity of project staff to dispel the wrong notions of hybrids being GMOs

3.1.3 Strengthen incentives for smallholder investment

Pre-Season Agri-Business Forum

This preseason event is co-managed by ADVANCE II, ATT, and other programs/institutions and is focused on pre-planting priorities including inputs, equipment, technology, finance, messaging

services among others. The project will invite all OBs and viable FBOs to participate in the event. specific tasks that will be undertaken include the following:

- Facilitate participation of OBs and viable FBOs, especially headed or dominated ones
- Facilitate participation of input companies, financial institutions, equipment and other services providers
- Conduct after-event evaluation with actors (OBs and FBOs) to assess the relevance and document deals that were brokered.

Farmer Mentor Program

The mentorship program was introduced in 2015, and has proved to be a persuasive “seeing is believing” methodology for new OBs and for those averse to expanding their business due to risk factors. A more structured methodology has been followed since 2016, in which the mentors are trained, to have the biggest impact of the mentoring sessions. The project will make every effort to identify female mentors to support women’s groups and potential female OBs, especially in areas where for cultural reasons men and women do not easily interact. Specific tasks that will be undertaken in 2018 include the following:

- Identify well-established OBs and invite them to mentor new ones, on the benefits, risks and how to mitigate those risks.
- Train the mentors on "Effective Mentoring".
- Identify and establish the capacity gaps of prospective mentees (new and old), and appropriately align them the right mentors for training.
- Organize groups of prospective OBs with specific capacity gaps to visit well established OBs for first-hand experience in what a multi-service operation looks like.
- Organize visits to HYBRID MAIZE sites (especially on ADVANCE Model Farms) to see and appreciate the merits of using quality hybrid seed for promote adoption
- Organize visits to CSA model farms to learn application of the best farm practices and their benefits

Crop Insurance

Crop insurance is relatively new in Ghana and there are no established firms providing such services. Since 2014, the ADVANCE II project has collaborated with the Ghana Agricultural Insurance Pool (GAIP) to implement a crop insurance scheme that mitigates some of the risks farmers face. The project expects that reducing risks will provide incentives for farmers to invest in productivity enhancing inputs on their farms. One of the main challenges GAIP faces in reaching out to farmers with crop insurance is the number of staff they have and the geographic area they must cover. T overcome the challenge with coverage, ADVANCE II supported GAIP to train 35 VSLA agents to act as sales persons to educate and sell crop insurance to farmers in communities in the Northern Region on a pilot basis. This was to improve on GAIP’s visibility and accessibility in the communities. Though sales made by these agents in the current crop season is low, more farmers have been sensitized on the need to mitigate against drought by purchasing crop insurance. The Bonzali Rural Bank and Opportunity International Savings and Loans company (OISL) were also engaged to take policies to cover the production loans they made out during the

season. To make it more affordable and attractive, GAIP has also reduced the premium, which is based on production cost, from 10% to 5% for drought insurance and 3% for multi-peril insurance.

In the coming year, the project will sensitize OBs and buyers who invest in outgrower schemes to include insurance in the production package provided to their selected OGs. Specific activities will include the following:

- Increase the number of Village Agents and train them as sales persons to sensitize various Actors in the value chains to purchase crop insurance to mitigate against drought
- Partner with radio stations to host programs that educate farmers on the benefits of crop insurance
- GAIP to acquire a toll-free number that farmers can call in to access information on crop insurance and pay for their policies on the mobile money platform.

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

The ADVANCE project's strategy for increasing access to markets and trade is guided by the three enablers of competitiveness described in the theory of change. The project will continue to identify end market opportunities for lead firms, OBs, FBOs, and other value chain actors, and build their capacity to also identify and respond to these opportunities.

There are three objectives under this sub-purpose, as follows:

Objective 1: Availability and use of affordable/sustainable services increased.
Objective 2: Capacity of women and men (and firms) to participate in markets improved.
Objective 3: Private sector investment and innovation to support value chain development increased.

The focus of the trade and marketing component in this final year of implementation is to assist buyers and OBs to strengthen the business relationships that have been developed to date, and sustain them after the end of the project. The project will continue to provide technical assistance to market lead firms to address specific business challenges, particularly relating to supply chain development, finance, marketing, quality management and food safety. In addition, the project will continue the initiative to support the growth of small and medium (SME) agro processors who have, or will receive processing upgrade grants.

The support to selected trade associations like the Ghana Grains Council (GGC), Ghana Rice Inter-Professional Body (GRIB) and Borderless Alliance, to deliver services to their members and value chain actors, as well as undertake advocacy on enabling environment constraints will be assessed and continued for those that show great potential going forward. The project will develop and promote structured trade in open markets which began in 2017, with a focus on key maize markets in the Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo Regions. The project will also assist maize traders' associations in the Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo Regions to undertake advocacy campaigns, especially with district assemblies, on improving the infrastructure in markets.

3.2.1 Availability and use of affordable/sustainable services increased.

The project will continue to support GGC, GRIB, Borderless Alliance, and maize traders' associations in key markets in the south. The support to these groups will be done with a focus on ensuring that they continue providing services and engaging in advocacy activities that improve the enabling environment for business.

The open-informal market represents a major sales distribution channel for grains produced by farmers. In June 2017 ADVANCE designed an activity to promote structured trade, particularly the use of weights and measures in the open markets. The activity will be carried out with the maize traders' associations in key markets particularly Techiman, Wenchi, Badu, Ejura, Odumase, Nkoranza, Atebubu and Kintampo.

The project will consider a proposal to support the annual Rice Festival organized by GRIB. This event has gradually established itself as an important forum for the promotion of local rice brands. GRIB will also be supported to implement their advocacy activities

In 2017, ADVANCE received a grant application from GRIB to establish a Rice Business Center (RBC) in Navrongo in the Upper East Region to sell inputs and provide mechanization services to farmers. The RBC responds to a key need of GRIB's members who are farmers. It is also an income generating activity for GRIB. Since this activity has a high chance of impacting on the livelihood of smallholder farmers, the project will ensure that if approved, it will target at least 60% women farmers and women groups and this will be monitored closely to ensure adherence.

The project will continue to work with Borderless Alliance on its advocacy programs to reduce barriers to cross border trade in West Africa. In 2017 ADVANCE actively participated in meetings of the Ghana Chapter of Botherless Alliance to establish advocacy priorities which included goods clearance / import procedure at ports, road checkpoints, and border crossings. As in previous years, staff of ADVANCE will participate in the annual conference of Borderless Alliance to be held in 2018 in a West African country.

3.2.2 Capacity of women and men (and firms) to participate in markets improved.

Our market linkages activity has generated some key lessons. First, trade missions involving buyers visiting and interacting with farmers in their communities and on farms, has enhanced buyers understanding of the key constraints to farmer productivity particularly low access to finance and good quality inputs. The project believes reciprocal visits by farmers to buyers will in turn improve farmers understanding of the supply chain needs of buyers, and their quality demands. Secondly, buyers and farmers with established relationships are undertaking trade missions and negotiating contracts on their own without further support from the project. Thirdly, the training provided to smallholders on quality standards for maize and soybean has led to improvement in the quality of produce supplied by farmers as evidenced by the few complaints about poor quality produce received from buyers in 2017 compared to 2016. Fourth, our collaboration with Nestle Ghana on assisting three nucleus farmers and their smallholders reduce mycotoxins in maize has made significant progress as shown by laboratory tests results shared

by Nestle. This collaboration indicates that where a buyer offers a premium price, farmers become incentivized to apply the requisite knowledge in production and post-harvest handling and incur additional costs to produce high grade produce.

The overall focus of developing market linkages is to find reliable markets for farmers and get them to develop sustainable business relationships with buyers. This is done through the following:

- Two-way trade missions. The emphasis in this last year of implementation is to facilitate reciprocal visits by farmers to the buyers to enable the OBs to familiarize themselves with the buyer's location and operations, and obtain a first-hand assessment of quality requirements with a vision of sustainable relations.
- Pre-Harvest Agri-Business Conference and Exhibition. With the focus on sustainability, ADVANCE will explore using an event organizer to assist with planning and organizing the 2017 event. The project recognizes that in the absence of projects, there will be the need to raise adequate funds through sponsorship to underwrite the costs of the pre-harvest event, and therefore the event organizer will be charged with raising funds through sponsorship to make event self-financing in future.
- Contract facilitation. Our work on contract facilitation will be minimal where the parties have well established trading relationship. However, the complexity of outgrower contracts, where the buyer provides input credit to the OB in exchange for produce at harvest time, requires heavy facilitation from ADVANCE for the parties to arrive at mutually acceptable terms. The project will continue to facilitate new business relationships to establish and conclude contracts in the coming year.
- Training of OGs in Produce Quality Requirements. The project will continue the training on quality standards for soybean and maize. In addition, ADVANCE will begin, for the first time, to train farmers on paddy rice standards (GS 1122:2016). In addition, the project will continue its ongoing collaboration with Nestle Ghana Ltd to assist three nucleus farmers and their smallholder farmers in the Northern Region produce high quality maize to meet the company's quality requirements.
- Quarterly market intelligence reports. The preparation and dissemination of the quarterly report analyzing market trends in the maize, rice and soybean sectors at the global, West Africa and national level will be continued.

3.2.3 Increase private sector investment and innovation to support value chain development.

Buyers have learned that the best way to secure adequate supplies of produce, at competitive and stable prices is to develop outgrower schemes where they provide farmers with input credit in exchange for produce at harvest time. For these schemes to be sustainable, it is important for buyers to spend time from the beginning in direct face to face engagement with farmers on contract discussions, farmer mobilization and farmer field monitoring, rather than depending on the project's facilitation. Buyers also build trust with farmers when they openly share information and discuss the cost components of their input and services support, and produce recovery rates that will sustain the relationship. This enables farmers to weigh the cost and benefits of participating in a buyer sponsored outgrower scheme vis-à-vis other options for financing production.

Market Lead Firm Competitiveness

The market lead firms, which are mainly processors and poultry farms, are concentrated in the Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo Regions. The Trade and Marketing Specialist based in the Kumasi field office will continue to play a key role to provide technical assistance to these buyers.

In this last year of implementation, the project will not seek new buyers per se but will focus attention on the existing ones for supply chain development. The project will support buyer outgrower schemes where the buyers will pre-finance cost of production inputs for the farmers and obtain produce at harvest as repayment. In 2017, ADVANCE with a view towards sustainability, encouraged buyers with a substantial number of outgrowers, and accompanying financial investment, to hire or assign dedicated staff to oversee these schemes. This will continue in 2018 and the project will train the officers hired or assigned by the buyers. We have learned from previous years that women are generally more likely to repay for services from their OBs hence we will sensitize the Buyer's field officers to target more women.

ADVANCE will also support at least two Outgrower schemes with the salary of six months of one of the field officers hired, to demonstrate to the buyer the benefits of such investments. Other activities will include the following:

- ADVANCE will organize meetings between the buyers and their outgrowers to discuss strategies and actions to ensure sustainability when the project ends.
- Facilitate access to finance for Buyers with financing needs for capital investments and working capital for both debt and equity capital. ADVANCE will collaborate with FINGAP to conclude such financing where necessary.
- The project will provide needs based technical assistance in the areas of product development, marketing, quality improvement, financial and operations management. Where necessary, will engage consultants to complement ADVANCE staff to deliver these services.
- Grant applications that were either concluded at the end of 2017 or are under consideration will be carried forward into 2018 for procurement. The targeted items include plant upgrades and some laboratory equipment for processors.

Upgrade North Ghana Processing Capacity

The rationale for this activity is to support processing and value addition in northern Ghana, and thereby expand the economic base. Accordingly, as in previous years, the focus is to provide technical assistance and where necessary, grants for processing upgrades to small and medium agro processors.

Rice processing is one of the major economic activities undertaken by women farmers in northern Ghana. The first step in processing is to parboil the paddy to minimize breakage during milling. The process of parboiling rice is tedious and time consuming. Therefore, to help reduce the drudgery with this economic activity, ADVANCE has spent considerable time trying to identify suitable vessels and stoves that significantly reduces the time taken and fuel consumed to parboil paddy rice. Having identified suitable vessels, the project intends to promote their use. In 2017, in-kind grant applications were received and are being evaluated. Selected women's groups and

small scale processors will be supported in the coming year with these cost-share in-kind grants to improve their processing operations.

Many agro processors have expressed the need for various business development services, especially technical assistance for product development and diversification, marketing, quality improvement, financial and operations management. The project intends to engage consultants and volunteers to address these business issues in the coming year.

Strengthen Community-based market systems

To increase market participation and influence by smallholders, ADVANCE will continue to build the capacity to FBOs to take advantage of identified market opportunities through collective purchases and marketing, post-harvest handling and storage. The project will work to increase the capacity of farmer Based Enterprises (FBEs) and FBOs to market produce collectively through affiliated nucleus farmers, OBs, and aggregators connected to large institutional buyers, or directly to processors. To achieve this, the project will assess the impact of the 'Sell More for More' (SMFM) training given to beneficiaries in previous years, and if necessary run refreshers to focus on gaps identified through the assessment. The project will also train FBOs on SMFM for those that have the potential to become FBEs and help them transform as quickly as practicable. The project will also mentor and coach beneficiary FBOs on good administrative and management practices, facilitate learning visits among potential FBEs to learn and share experience.

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

There are two major objectives that will be pursued under this sub purpose. They are the following:

Objective 1: Strengthen advocacy capacity of value chain actors and their respective associations to address identified value chain-specific enabling environment constraints particular to the north; and
Objective 2: Strengthen local institutions to implement inclusive value chain development.

3.3.1 Strengthen advocacy capacity to address enabling environment constraints

Through policy fora organized in previous years, policy and advocacy issues such as limited access to productive lands for women, indiscriminate bush burning and other negative environmental practices, inappropriate handling and disposal of agrochemical containers, limited access to government subsidized fertilizer due to smuggling across borders, inadequate support for agricultural extension by (Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), limited access to quality seeds, inadequate farm machinery and skilled operators, among others, were identified. Based on these issues, NORTHCODE, a local NGO, was selected through a competitive process from a list of other NGOs that submitted advocacy grants proposals for support. NORTHCODE is therefore implementing an advocacy action aimed at influencing traditional authorities in 16 selected communities in Mion, West Mamprusi, West Gonja and

Sawla/Tuna/Kalba Districts to set aside 1600 acres of productive lands for the creation of *land banks* for the sole use of women. To ensure maximum and productive use of the reserved land, NORTHCODE as part of the project will rigorously engage with private and public sector input dealers to make the necessary inputs available to the targeted 1000 women who will use the reserved land banks.

The project will address indiscriminate bush fires and other negative environmental practices using a community-based targeted approach. Therefore, four Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) were identified and recruited to provide consultancy services to influence their respective District Assemblies to pass, gazette and support the enforcement of their CREMA bye laws to curb bushfires.

A review of advocacy proposals submitted under our first call for proposals revealed that many of the NGOs that submitted proposals lacked adequate skills and knowledge in writing advocacy proposals and budgeting. The Request for Proposal Template was also too demanding leading to the submission of poor quality proposals as only one (1) proposal (NORTHCODE) out of twelve (12) met the criteria for support. Also, Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCAT) and Advocacy Capacity Assessment (ACAT) conducted in the past showed a low capacity for financial and grants management for local NGOs. Some of the NGOs also lacked a good understanding of the USAID grants making processes, as well as the regulations. To address the budgeting, financial and grants management capacity gaps of NGOs, Chito Padilla, Vice President of Global Support and Award Management of ACDI VOCA organized training on Fundamentals of Grants Management and Procurement for 10 local NGOs. We anticipate that the training will result in an improvement in the quality of proposals and NGOs selected to undertake any assignment in 2018 will do so effectively and efficiently.

In 2018, the project will identify and address specific enabling environment constraints in the rice, soy beans and maize value chains by supporting local NGOs, Farmer Based Organizations, OBs Networks, and Trade Associations to undertake advocacy actions. It will also seek to enhance the advocacy and managerial capacity of Farmer Based Organizations, OBs Networks and other value chain actors to initiate advocacy actions, and finally, build the capacity of MMDAs to develop District Agriculture Investment Profiles to promote and attract agricultural investments to their districts.

Identifying and addressing specific enabling environment constraints.

The existence of an appropriate enabling business environment is critical for accelerated growth of businesses, especially agribusinesses. In view of enabling environment constraints in the rice, maize and soy beans value chains, ADVANCE to support innovative advocacy initiatives that influence policies, programs and practices towards improvements in the business environment for agriculture growth especial in the project areas of operation. Where appropriate, the project will use various types of grants to fund advocacy actions that address specific advocacy issues that are considered critical for agribusiness development. Specifically, the following tasks will be carried out:

- Award grants to selected Local NGOs that demonstrate innovativeness in initiating

advocacy actions that address specific advocacy issues constraining development of the rice, soybeans and maize value chains. Grant applications that were received in 2017 and are under evaluation, will be completed and grants made to implement various advocacy actions with sound reasoning.

- Monitor and evaluate the results and outcomes of the advocacy actions to be undertaken by selected local NGOs.
- Train and support grantees to develop long term advocacy strategies to address specific agribusiness enabling constraints.
- Support the Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) societies in Kunlog, Chakali Sumaalu, Builsa Yenning and Moagduri Wuntamluri Kouwomsaasi to engage the district assemblies to pass and gazette CREMA by-laws to check bush fires. To ensure the success of this advocacy action, ADVANCE will monitor the progress of activities and provide technical backstopping where necessary.
- Support trade associations to undertake advocacy actions to address trade specific advocacy issues.
- Support at least one (1) FBOs Network to undertake an identified advocacy action on a specific identified issue
- Collaborate with MMDAs to address the conflicts between cattle herdsmen and crop producers, which affects productivity

Build capacity of OBs and FBOs on policy and advocacy

Farmer Based Organizations and OBs' networks are critical for sustaining the gains made by the ADVANCE project in improving the agribusiness environment. Significant progress was made in the previous years to form zonal level OB networks across the three northern regions, and in some cases, regional level FBO Networks. Fourteen Zonal OB Networks were formed in the three northern Regions, two district level FBO networks in Kintampo North and South and one regional level FBO network in Upper West Region.

In 2018, the project will strengthen the internal structures of the OBs and FBO Networks that have been formed, supporting them to develop advocacy strategies on identified advocacy issues for policy advocacy establishing linkages with duty bearers (MoFA, District Assemblies and other government agencies) for policy advocacy. The project will also strengthen them to adopt collective purchases and sales of agricultural inputs and produce; train them on the concepts and practices of advocacy and the functions of District Assembly structures and sub-structures; agriculture policy education; development of action plans; and formation of additional FBO networks. Specific tasks to be undertaken include:

- Train leaders of the FBO networks on basic advocacy skills, local governance systems and policy processes at the local level
- Coach the leaders and members of the OB networks to strengthen their internal governance structures
- Continue supporting Zonal OB networks to identify specific advocacy issues and develop advocacy plans to address them
- Train identified Trade Associations on the concepts and practices of effective advocacy

- Organize Regional level OBs and FBOs Fora to interface with Metropolitan, Municipality, and District Assemblies (MMDAs), MoFA and other Duty bearers such as the Environmental Protection Agency
- Support OB and FBO networks create awareness among themselves and their communities to promote women's access to productive farm land

Support the Development and promotion of District Agricultural Investment Plans (DAIP)

In 2015, the project supported two District Assemblies to develop District Agricultural Investment Plans (DAIPs), which they exhibited at the 2015 pre–harvest event organized by ADVANCE. Important lessons learned from the pilot process provided guidance on how ADVANCE will engage with other MMDAs to develop and promote their own district agriculture investment profiles. In 2018, ADVANCE will facilitate four (4) regional level trainings for selected technical staff of MMDAs on how to develop and promote DAIPs to attract agricultural investments in their districts. Consultants with expertise and experience in facilitating the development and promotion of DAIPs will be contracted to train and support staff from interested MMDAs. Subsequently, MMDAs who are willing to commit resources to the development and promotion of the DAIPs will be supported by ADVANCE, in collaboration with the Ghana Investment Promotion Council (GIPC) and investment consultants to develop and promote the DAIPs. The project will facilitate the promotion of DAIPs through exhibitions and linkages to Ghana Investment Promotion Council and monitor the outcomes and lessons from their agribusiness investment promotion activities.

3.3.2 Strengthen Local institutions to implement inclusive value chain development

The second objective of the third Component of the project has two parts. They are

(i) To build capacities of Local Institutions and FBOs, and therefore, activities have been designed for the targeted local institutions and FBOs.

(ii) The second part of this objective is focused on FBOs, and as such, some of the activities have been previously mentioned under sub-purposes one and two.

The project aims to transform non-commercial farmer based FBOs into farmer based enterprises (FBEs). The FBOs will be classified into two distinct groups: (1) Those that are informal community groups linked/affiliated to an outgrower business which are assisted to become more formal FBEs with the aim of distributing inputs or aggregate produce through the OB structure, with their members also being counted as OB beneficiaries. (2) Those FBOs that are independent of an OB, or those that wish to become independent, and strive to deliver commercial services to their members with the ultimate objective of becoming a registered FBE (which would act like an OB).

Build capacity of local organizations

In 2017, the project conducted Organizational Capacity Assessment using the OCAT tool and shortlisted 12 local institutions for capacity building in proposal writing. A one-day training was organized for them and, eight of the institutions have presented various proposals in advocacy activities. One of the institutions (NORTHCODE) has been awarded a grant to carry out an advocacy on access of farm lands for women, which is on-going. Apart from this, four have been shortlisted and are being considered for award of grants to implement specific activities.

The project will strengthen FBO networks through mentoring, coaching, sensitization and training on group dynamics, record keeping, project monitoring among others to build their capacity building to source and manage funding from both ADVANCE, District Assemblies and other donor organizations to implement activities.

Capacity development for program implementation.

In previous years, the project has trained thousands of beneficiaries in Farming as a Business (FaaB). In 2018, the project will train another 8,500 project beneficiaries in this subject area, targeting project beneficiaries who have not benefited from this training. The impact assessment conducted on beneficiaries of FaaB showed that beneficiaries could recall training issues captured in the pictorial chart than in the training manual. The pictorial chart would be reviewed and contemporary issues that affect farming would be incorporated to enhance the in-depth understanding of beneficiaries. Contemporary issues such as Fall Army Worm, ripping verses ploughing, VSLA as a means of saving to fund agriculture and enhance productivity.

The project will also continue training beneficiaries, mostly women, to acquire numeracy skills. The women are mostly targeted due to their vulnerability when it comes to marketing agriculture produce, especially scales are used and most rural women cannot read or recognize numbers. The numeracy curricula would be reviewed to reflect current needs of smallholder farmers. The review would incorporate identification of dates and reading weights on scales to enable tothem keep proper records. In all, the project will train 11,000 beneficiaries in numeracy skills in 2018.

Capacity development for FBEs

The project works with two main types of farmers' organizations. We have farmer groups that are linked to OBs and as well as independent groups that are not linked to an OB. Almost all these FBOs operate as noncommercial oriented groups but rather their members operate more on individual bases than in groups. To enhance the performance of these groups, the project embarked on transforming them into business entities known as Farmer Based Enterprises (FBEs). This should promote collectiveness in their agriculture activities. FBEs would be more profit-oriented than FBOs and are more proactive in doing business. They can market more volumes of produce and attract end buyers or processors to engage them in businesses when they manage appreciable volumes of produce. The FBEs mostly engage in collective sales of their produce, collective purchase of inputs, serve as collateral for agriculture financing for members, render collective mechanization services to members and many other activities that are not common with FBOs.

In 2016, the project conducted an assessment on existing FBOs in the project area and identified various gaps that hinder the transformation of the FBOs into FBEs. These include low or no records keeping culture, inadequate or no funding, non-registration of groups with the appropriate institutions or agencies, low yields due to low adoption of productivity enhancing inputs and practices among other shortfalls. The project selected 45 FBOs out of the 100 identified, assessed and categorized them into 4 categories namely:

(i) Formative Stage;
(ii) Early Transition;
(iii) Mid-transition and
(iv) FBE model, to be piloted in the transformation derive.

The project coached, mentored, sensitized, trained and organized exposure visits in 2016 to the factories of various produce buyers. To date, 30 of the FBOs have been transformed into model FBEs, whilst 15 are in mid-transition.

In 2017, a new batch of 90 FBOs were identified, assessed and categorized as above. The project is building the capacity of these FBOs in the areas of group dynamics, record keeping, leadership training, and financial management to enhance their performance.

The program will continue to visit, mentor and coach these potential FBEs to provide basic services such as plowing or mechanization services, financial services, input credit for members, collective purchasing of inputs, and collective marketing among others. A quarterly assessment is conducted on these selected FBOs and so far they are showing signs of progression into model FBEs. Per our assessment, 94 FBOs in all are in the model FBE category. The project will engage the services of a consultant to assess and evaluate the FBEs to identify those that have completely been transformed and those that are at various stages of transformation. As part of the project's exit strategy, the project will train the FBEs using the OBM curriculum to be enable prepare business plans and sustainability plans for their groups. The project will also continue to facilitate linkages between the FBEs and various service providers such as financial institutions, input dealers, buyers among others.

The project will train 405 FBE leaders from 135 FBEs (3 leaders per an FBE) on sustainability, group dynamics and other thematic areas that will be identified as relevant to their growth and development. Peer learning is key to the sustenance of FBEs since they are not all at the same level. The project will encourage and promote learning visits among FBEs and potential FBEs to mentor each other and promote healthy competition.

4.0 Program Support

The project has a program support component that ensures that the three commodity value chains are developed in a holistic manner. This cross-cutting component includes gender, environment, public relations, integration of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) tools, and grants that support innovative activities across the value chains. The cross-cutting activities are implemented seamlessly as an integral part of all project activities, ensuring that project beneficiaries are reached in an equitable, effective and efficient manner. This section is therefore presented for the sole purpose of explaining the strategies the project adopts in implementing the cross-cutting issues and should therefore not be seen as standalone activities.

4.1 Gender Mainstreaming

The project has over the years, integrated gender in all its activities with a vision to create equitable and sustainable opportunities for women and men along the target value chains. We have undertaken studies to understand the 'how' and 'why' we can promote women empowerment-based activities. We have learned through a gender study in 2016, that the low participation of women as OBs is due to cultural norms, as women in the project areas tend to be risk averse, lack technical skills to manage outgrower businesses, and lack the resources required. However, we have also realized that despite the challenges, when given the right support in an enabling environment, they are willing and capable of running successful outgrower businesses. Since 2015, the project has undertaken various learning exercises to understand women's level of empowerment in the project zones, using the WEAI as a measure to inform and guide us on areas to focus on. WEAI data, along with ADVANCE studies, inform the direction and strategies that the project adopts going forward.

ADVANCE II will continue to mainstream gender equity across all project sub-purposes, following appropriate approaches for the various zones and in specific communities, where targeted activities and resources will be deployed towards bridging the gaps between women and men. The project will build public and private sector awareness and capacity through advocacy, strengthen networks of individuals and organizations promoting gender parity by providing grants for their activities, and target investments in areas that will ensure that women benefit as much as men from project activities. Where necessary, the project will adopt relevant affirmative actions to ensure equity among all project beneficiaries irrespective of their gender.

The project staffing structure and programming has been designed to ensure gender integration across all activities. The Gender Specialist oversees the mainstreaming of gender throughout the life of the project and facilitates gender-equity and women's empowerment training for all ADVANCE II staff to ensure that all activities are designed and implemented so that female smallholder farmers are able to access information, skills, equipment and finance to improve their livelihoods. The Gender Specialist has access to ACDI/VOCA's gender community of practice and consults with colleagues, uses materials from similar programs and builds on lessons learned. The ACDI/VOCA Senior Director of Gender and Social Inclusion provides frequent

backstopping from the head office to the AVANCE II Gender Specialist to ensure he stays up to date on current gender issues.

4.1.1 Gender equity training linked to technical support

In ADVANCE II, it is everyone's responsibility to integrate gender-equity thinking in all activities. All staff members are aware of (1) how gender influences their own assumptions and actions, (2) why gender awareness and integration is important to the project, and (3) how they can and should integrate gender into their daily work. All project staff will receive a refresher training in 2018, along with any new staff, to ensure that everyone adopts a gender sensitive approach. Some of these trainings will be integrated into other staff trainings, workshops, or team meetings to reinforce the importance of unbiased gender equity in their work. The project will coordinate with government, donor and civil society organizations carrying out gender-related activities in the field to avoid duplication, expand outreach and share success stories and lessons learned.

The ADVANCE II gender and M&E staff will continue to gather and analyze data to assess progress and to identify gender issues that arise during the year. The information from the data analyzed will contribute to designing and implementing timely strategies to address the identified gender issues or gender barriers. This ongoing analysis will also serve to identify new activities to expand women's empowerment and participation in the value chain, such as increasing the number of female OBs and women-run businesses, and promote women's leadership in value chain governance. Based on lessons learned from last year, the project will build the capacity of female lead farmers of OBs, and promote the concept of the associate nuclear farmers through training on OBM, mentorship visits, and encourage them to participate actively in the OB/FBOs/FBE networks.

4.1.2 Child Labor

The value-chain beneficiaries of the USAID-funded ADVANCE II program in Northern Ghana are smallholder farmers, nucleus farmers, aggregators, processors, input dealers and financial institutions. ADVANCE works closely with farmers, businessmen and women to ensure that they upgrade and invest in their agribusiness operations to improve crop productivity and processing, increase purchases and sales through market linkages, and ultimately improve household incomes. By doing so, the project supports these families to earn incomes that enable them to invest in their children's primary and secondary education for both boys and girls. Since 2016 the project has implemented activities that alert beneficiaries to the safe use, storage and disposal of hazardous agro-chemicals, and the correct use of agricultural equipment to ensure children's safety on the farm or business, and safe spraying practices by adult men.

The project discourages the involvement of children as 'farm-hands' and the application of agrochemicals by women due to the hazards involved. The project also encourages and promotes women's engagement in alternative livelihood activities that will increase their income and keep their children in school.

4.1.3 Women engaged in increased agricultural productivity

For every activity (training, grant, etc.), women will be encouraged to participate actively. The project will support women who show interest in becoming OBs or lead farmers by training them

to acquire leadership and entrepreneurship skills required to manage Outgrower networks and link them to formal structured markets.

Other major activities the project will implement are summarized below:

- Encourage women OBs and female lead farmers to host environmentally friendly technology demonstrations to expose farmers to the benefits of adopting GAPs using a 'learning-by-doing' methodology. All OBs are encouraged to set up demo sites so their OGs can learn good practices that will increase their productivity and can repay their in-kind loans
- Promote the use of women friendly equipment (manual planters, dibblers, shellers, threshers, tarpaulins etc.) to reduce drudgery and the time they spend on the farm
- Link women farmers and women groups to OBs to access technologies, enhanced services and training. This includes tractor services, agro-input, planters, post-harvest mechanization, GAP/PHH training etc.
- Organize hands-on training for women farmers and actors (OBs, FBOs, FBEs, Lead farmers) to enable them use labor saving implements to enhance productivity.
- Mount campaigns against women pesticide application and encourage them to access commercial service providers.
- Having learned from our studies that there is a positive correlation between women trained on numeracy and project outcomes, the project will continue to organize numeracy training for women in 2018.
- The project will continue to build the capacity of women farmers by training them on improved technologies in general, and value addition, as well as in Farming as Business (FaaB).
- Support women to invest in their livelihood by encouraging village savings and loan groups for women and men, and link these groups to agro-input companies and market opportunities.
- Raise awareness on land rights. Since 2015, this activity has led to over a 1000 women accessing lands that they otherwise would not have accessed, therefore this activity will be continued in 2018. The project will continue to raise awareness regarding the importance of land ownership/larger land size for women through campaigns; organizing informal meetings in villages or clusters; promoting success stories to demonstrate impact on the community, and organizing community meetings.
- Facilitate women's access to land using the existing outgrower structures, as well as the traditional authorities. The project has given more impetus to this land program and it will be working with NORTHCODE to create land banks for further 800 land resource-poor women.
- Ensure women have access to information. The promotion of appropriate technologies such as the use of mobile devices and women's listenership clubs to disseminate information including weather forecasts, market prices, GAPs, as well as women's specific information needs, will continue and/or be intensified during 2017.

- Build the capacity of radio host of agricultural programs in gender mainstreaming: The project will continue working with local radio stations to increase female audiences through listenership clubs and to be more responsive to their needs.

4.1.4 Increase women market access and trade of targeted commodities

Women play an active role in the trade of agricultural produce. The project will support the women to ensure that they have access to market opportunities that will be identified during the year. The project will specifically:

- Build capacity of women to access markets by training them in business, financial and IT skills to women's business owners and group members.
- Facilitate market linkages between women farmers and women's groups (e.g., self-help groups, village saving and loans groups, women's producer groups) and put in place structures to help them maintain control over their income.
- Build women's leadership capacity by training them in leadership at different levels of the value chain (producer/marketing groups, associations, business manager, etc.).
  - Conduct awareness campaigns targeting both men and women on the benefits of having women in decision-making positions in cooperatives, associations, or other groups.
  - Take women on exposure visits to places where they see their peer women in leadership roles to raise their aspirations and confidence.
  - Create opportunities for women to speak in public at events such as conferences and fairs or around International Women's Day or other such days

4.1.5 Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture

Since the inception of the project, some activities, including the promotion of quality protein maize and soybeans have been incorporated to improve nutrition at the farmers' household level. This activity was intensified in 2017 and will be scaled-up in 2018 to improve the nutrition of women, children and the household in general. The nutrition-related activities will include the promotion of household consumption of soybean, through sensitization and training to identify strategies that can be incorporated in the project's value chains to promote improved nutrition for the smallholder beneficiaries.

Some specific tasks to be undertaken include:

- Promote the production of high yielding protein maize varieties by women farmers through demonstrations and in community promotions
- Promote production of soybean as farm family protein source
- Facilitate training in soybean utilization for various kinds of meals by women farmers
- Integrate household food budgeting into the VSLA groups to promote improvement in household nutrition
- Train male and female farmers on techniques to
- Continue to collaborate with other projects and MoFA's Women in Agriculture Development Directorate (WIAD) to build capacity of women FBO groups, female OBs, and women farmers on soy and cereal nutrition formulation that benefits both children and adults alike; and
- Link women's groups to ICT firms (Esoko, Voto Mobile, Radio stations) for dissemination of

nutrition messages on soy, rice and maize formulations.

4.2 Information, Communication Technology Tool for Outreach

Developments with Information, Communication Technology (ICT) has not only changed the way the world works and communicates but has contributed significantly in the dissemination of information. The ADVANCE II project has adopted various ICT tools to communicate messages effectively and efficiently to beneficiaries over the years. The project will continue to use ICT tools in all program areas to improve communication and the efficiency in attaining project objectives.
Over 1000 Farmer Listenership Groups have been trained and linked to Partner Radio Stations across the project's operational zones and receive farming information through agriculture programs on Radio. Additionally, Anti-bushfire and FAW campaign have been broadcasted to beneficiaries through the radio. The project has disseminated information using Short Messaging Service (SMS)/ Voice Messages (VM) for GAPs, Weather, Markets, Presence/Control of Pests and nutrition information through Mobile Service Providers and Radio Stations to farmers. OBs/OGs extension services (communication) through Voice Messaging Service and digital financing services through Mobile phones.

4.2.1 Lessons Learned from ICT Interventions

The project has disseminated information through radio listenership groups to beneficiary farmers to improve their knowledge on agriculture. However, lessons learned from this intervention is that although this medium has built the capacity of some smallholder farmers to increase the efficiency of their farming businesses and is one of the most efficient, cost-effective and sustainable means of communicating with farmers. Another lesson from the radio planning meetings held with stakeholders is that radio campaigns through Live Presenter Mentions are more effective than Radio Jingles, therefore subsequent campaigns such as the current FAW radio campaigns are a combination of the two.

Feedback the project has received from previous beneficiaries of GAPs, weather and market tips showed that voice messaging in the local languages is more effective than SMS because of high illiteracy level. On the contrary, farmers explained that they can interpret prices for the SMS market tips because of the numeracy trainings they have received from the project. Another observation is the low mobile phone ownership by project beneficiaries which affects the total number of beneficiaries who access information through mobile phones.

4.2.2 Use of ICT tools in 2018

The project will continue to use and adapt appropriate ICT tools to disseminate information in all technical areas based on the lessons learned from the previous years. The tools will include technology platforms (Short Messaging Service, Voice Messaging Service, and Radio Stations), ICT-Based extension delivery and promote the use of digital financial services. To maximize the impact of information to actors in the value chain, especially women farmers who cannot read, the project will shift from SMS-based information delivery to a combination of SMS and Voice based information delivery with emphasis on the Voice Messaging in local dialects. Agronomic and weather tips will be disseminated voice messaging in local dialects while market price tips

will remain SMS-based. Market price tips will remain SMS-based because it is easy for farmers to interpret the prices in figures due to the numeracy trainings they have been receiving from the project. Campaigns such as control of the FAW and anti-bushfire will be sent through voice messaging only.
The project will continue to collaborate with partner radio stations to disseminate information through their agricultural programs to farmers. In order for farmers to utilize this service effectively, Radio Listenership Clubs will be sensitized on the benefits of the agricultural programs and groups will be linked to the radio stations serving their communities. The project will continue campaigns on anti-bushfire, FAW and other topics on partner radio stations.

The project will continue to collaborate with the Grameen Foundation to promote the use of ICT tools for agricultural extension. The project will support Field Agents through mentoring and coaching to use ICT tools to train farmers and support their OBs/NFs manage their farming businesses. Additionally, successful agents will be linked to less successful agents for support and mentorship. The project will collaborate with mobile phone companies to promote the sales of simple phones in 2018 to increase phone ownership of beneficiary farmers to improve access.

4 3 Environment

The project will focus on three major areas in 2018. These are (1) General compliance with USAID environmental regulations and procedures, (2) Improving agrochemical management, and (3) promote climate change adaptation strategies

The project will continue to ensure compliance with United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) environmental regulations through the implementation of the Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP) and the Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP), while ensuring that all sub-grants are implemented within the Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) of the Project. To ensure compliance, the project will encourage farmers to use the services of trained Spray Service Providers (SSPs) to significantly reduce unsafe agrochemical applications. Refresher trainings will be held for existing SSPs to improve their services. The services of SSPs will be complemented with container management centers located especially in the irrigated areas. To build climate resilience among farmers, the project will focus on minimum tillage through ripping and the use of planting basins.

4.3.1 General environmental compliance

ADVANCE will continue to collaborate with the media, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and agrochemical retailers to ensure that Outgrower Businesses and their outgrowers receive technical support on safe pesticide use and management, especially to recognize unregistered and banned products. The project will update the approved pesticide list based on approved PERSUAPs and the revised EPA Register and train field staff and farmers, as well as all grantees, to ensure compliance.

4.3.2 Improving agrochemical management

In 2016 and 2017 the project trained and equipped over 700 individuals as Spray Service Providers (SSPs) to provide commercial spray services to smallholder farmers. In collaboration with PPRSD of MoFA, the project will monitor the operations of the SSPs and provide refresher training based on areas that require improvements, including financial management training. The project will also facilitate linkages between SSPs and input dealers through input promotion activities to ensure sustainability. The project will further improve the visibility of SSPs through radio jingles on safe use of pesticide.

Some specific tasks that will be undertake include the following:

- Develop content for radio jingles and Live Presenter's Messages on safe pesticide use
- Encourage and promote patronage of SSPs.
- Monitor and report on the impact of SSPs.
- Follow up activities with SSPs; focus on linkages to input companies, input promotions, financial management etc.
- Complete container management centers in irrigated areas.

4.3.3 Climate Smart Agriculture

Climate Smart Agriculture(CSA) practices can address some of the challenges with degraded soils, and especially in areas with high land pressure. Conservation agricultural practices can provide and preserve organic matter for carbon sequestration and moisture retention, and reduces the need for inorganic fertilizers. The project's CSA strategy will focus on promoting minimum tillage through ripping as a technique which yields results immediately when implemented because of the water collection and moisture retention impacts. Ripping improves soil drainage by opening the soil and allowing water to infiltrate at a faster rate. This reduces surface runoff which causes soil erosion, and conserves moisture. Ripping also increases soil aeration which stimulates soil microbial activity, accelerates the breakdown of soil organic matter, and provides plant roots with sufficient oxygen. The project started promoting minimum tillage in 2015 on eight acres, this increased to 200 acres in 2016 and 1391 in 2017. In 2018, the project is targeting over 5,000 acres. Ripping further facilitates row planting, one of the Good Agriculture Practices (GAPs) promoted by the ADVANCE project.

Other activities that will be implemented under the project's CSA program will include the following:

- Document and share lessons learnt from CSA activities.
- Support anti-bushfire activities.
- Scale up the No-Bushfire campaign in each of the regions of operation through radio campaigns and signposts/banners
- ADVANCE staff will participate in an international conference to be updated on the latest technology on minimum-tillage and/or conservation agriculture at commercial level

4 .4 Grants

Grants will be utilized to support value chain actors to adopt innovative technologies, including for instance CSA. Project staff will assist OBs and other major actors to identify equipment gaps within the business plans from a purely business perspective and recommend OBs and other actors in the targeted commodity value chains for grant support. The project will also use part of the grants to support local organizations to build their capacity to play advocacy roles to improve the business enabling environment, provide services to their members, or implement specific activities the project will identify and assign to them.

The project's grant program has two parts, namely:

i) The Innovation and Investment Incentive (I-3) fund and
ii) The Local Partnership Grants (LPG).

4.4.1 Innovation and Investment Incentive

The Innovation and Investment Incentive grant is a flexible financing mechanism to reduce risk associated with investing in new technology and business approaches, foster innovation, leverage resources, and provide incentives to stimulate private sector investment and mitigate constraints in the targeted value chains in northern Ghana. In 2018 the project will assess the use of equipment provided to actors in previous years. This will inform the type of activities that will receive priority attention for the very limited grants that may be provided in the remaining period.

The grants team will also monitor all equipment use, facilitate with the Agriculture Production and Business Services teams to train actors on record keeping and determine the equipment value as a profitable asset to the farmer/aggregator business.

4.4.2 Local Partnership Grant

The Local Partnership Grants enables ADVANCE II to engage local NGOs, BDS providers, trade groups and other actors to directly provide services to VC actors while building the capacity of the local institutions through the grant management process. The DCOP in charge of Grants will manage both the I-3 and the LPG funds, in collaboration with the DCOP in charge of Technical activities.

The project will provide small grants to the Ghana Agricultural Insurance Pool to strengthen their operations and with an emphasis on building a sustainable crop insurance business. The project will collaborate with FinGAP in this respect.

All the local partnership grants will be closed out by end of March 2018. The project team will ensure that all financial and technical reports are submitted and any assets disposed of appropriately.

4.4.3 Impact assessment of the grant program

The project assesses the impact that the grants have had on beneficiaries and the attainment of project objectives. The grants team will prepare quarterly grants reports and updates highlighting

funds obligated to the various value chains and private sector resources leveraged, and these will be disaggregated by value chain and geographic location.

5.0 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

The project's monitoring, evaluation and learning component comprises of two interrelated areas: (i) monitoring, evaluation and reporting and (ii) knowledge management and learning.

For this last year of the project, in addition to its usual activities, the MEL team will focus on assessing and documenting further ADVANCE's impacts and the signs of their sustainability. The project will also develop and implement exit strategies to ensure sustainability of the achievements made by the project.

5.1 Monitoring and Evaluation.

In FY18, ADVANCE will focus on the following M&E activities:

- Improving the databases and the data collection forms
- Capacity building of the team
- Routine data collection and cleaning
- Annual surveys
- Mapping and spatial analysis
- Data quality review

Improvement of databases and data collection forms

ADVANCE will create new data collection forms to better track the impacts of the project and the signs of the sustainability of those impacts, such as contracts between end buyers and OBs that haven't been facilitated by the project, spillover results of the key activities (e.g. VSLA, GAPs trainings), the growth of the value chain actors (e.g. input dealers and their distribution channel) among others. The database will be improved accordingly to accommodate the entry, analysis and reporting of these data.

Microsoft will disable Access Web App, one of the tools ADVANCE uses to enter its data, from April 2018. ACDIVOCA will transition the project's data into an internal server at HQ. The process will done in a way that it won't affect the data collection forms' overall look and functioning.

The project will start using PowerBi, a Microsoft suite that will significantly smoothen the analysis and improve visualization of the data and formatting of the dashboards.

Capacity development in M&E

The M&EL team will train all relevant staff on the new forms. All new staff and enumerators will also be trained on the use of Global Positioning System devices. The team will also conduct a refresher training for the agricultural productivity staff in each region on the use of Demosys. Demosys is the project's demonstration sites data management system where location and yields of, treatments applied and activities implemented on, and any other notable event/information about the demonstration sites are collected, stored and analyzed.

The M&EL team will continue having its quarterly review meeting. This is a three day meeting during which issues from the past quarter are discussed, activities for the following quarter are prioritized, and new or updated tools (forms, dashboards, donor's guidance documents etc.) are

presented. The last day of each meeting will be dedicated to train the team on advanced data collection, analysis, visualization and reporting.
Before each survey, the team will train all recruited enumerators as well as all technical staff that will be involved in the related data collection.
The M&EL team, with assistance from the Business Services team and the Trade and Marketing team, put in place Sales Tracker, a tool that helps the project supported OBs to track the support they provided to their OGs. Every year, the M&EL team train a dozen interns on the Sales Tracker to assist the OBs. In FY18, that activity is planned to take place in May for the South and June for the North.
In addition, the project's Chief of Party as well as the M&E Specialist will attend the annual M&E Community of Practice meeting organized by ACDIVOCA HQ.

Routine activities
The team will continue supporting the technical staff during the routine data collection. As usual, the team will also oversee data cleaning and import into the databases, as well as the enrolment and printing of the smartcards that the technical staff will distribute to the beneficiaries afterwards.

Annual surveys
ADVANCE II conducts its annual gross margin survey in three phases. The first phase happens at planting and collects the first occurring input costs and data on application of technologies, and sets the demarcation area for the crop cut procedures. The second phase takes place at harvest and collects the production data and the remaining input costs and applied technologies. For both phases, approximately 2,400 maize, rice and soya farmers are surveyed every year. They are randomly selected from the beneficiaries of the fiscal year in the project's database. The data is collected through interviews and recorded using mobile devices. The third phase is conducted by phone in April and July on a sample of the two phases' respondents to collect the January to March and April to June sales data respectively.

ADVANCE will conduct the second and third phases of the 2017 season gross margin survey for the North in FY18. However, due to the project's expected end date of September 2018, the 2018 season gross margin survey will happen for the major farming season in the South only.
In addition to the gross margin survey, ADVANCE conducts every year a firm profit survey to report on its indicator "number of firms operating more profitably". The application of technologies data by these firms and the OBs will be collected concurrently.

Specific activities routine monitoring
The project is supporting the country to mitigate the potentially devastating impacts of the FAW outbreak it is facing. To facilitate the related decision making processes and ascertain the progress made, ADVANCE will continue collecting, analyzing, and mapping the data obtained from the hotlines and the surveillance system. Moreover, additional FAW questionnaires will be

administered during the gross margin surveys to obtain more representative snapshots of the situation.

The M&E team will also monitor the implementation and the impacts of the VSLA activities. Membership, savings amounts, amount and purpose of loans taken by each VSLA group will be routinely tracked. In addition, further assessment will be conducted to ascertain the extent to which membership of VSLA influences application of technologies, especially improved inputs (seeds, fertilizers, agrochemicals), and yields. The assessment will have a gender lens to account for any gender issues and possible differences on how the VSLA affects each gender.

Improving the availability of inputs is one of ADVANCE' strategies to increase smallholders' agricultural productivity. Since the previous year, the project implements community inputs promotions that coincide with the VSLA share-out activities and supports input dealers to expand their agency. The team will routinely track the amount of inputs purchased and sold during these events, the number of agents set up and the geographical expansion of the dealers' presence in the communities.

To determine the extent of the listenership group activities' impacts, the project will continue tracking the listening frequency of the groups' members, the topics they listened to and their relevance, what they changed in their behaviors following the sessions etc.
In collaboration with Grameen, to monitor the use of the Smartex initiative, a web-based tracking system has been put in place. ADVANCE will continue supporting Grameen to improve the system and analyzing the data to base decision on the assistance the agents need. This system shows the performance of each agents, the farmers' situation before and after their interaction as well as project wide aggregates.

The project assesses every year its impacts on the empowerment of its women beneficiaries through an adapted Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index. For that purpose, a full questionnaire has been developed and administered along with the gross margin survey. The questionnaire addresses four out of the five empowerment domains: production, resources, income, and leadership. The analysis of the collected data will give the level empowerment in each domain and overall, as well as the extent to which it influenced women's yields.

Mapping and spatial analysis
The M&EL team includes a Geographic Information System (GIS) unit. Apart from the GPS trainings, collection and processing of the project's spatial data, the unit will continue assessing the data needs of the team and producing the corresponding maps. Examples of maps are on the calls received through the FAW hotlines, the FAW traps' location and scouting results, beneficiaries' location, demo plots' location, input suppliers' location etc. Maps will also be produced to facilitate the planning and implementation of the different surveys.

Data Quality Review
Data quality review is a key activity of the M&EL team and will be implemented both by the field team and the Accra team. Field data quality review will consist of verification of the quality of the

data collected and reported by the field team. This will be done through spot visits to the beneficiaries and verification of the support and benefits they received against the regional records. In addition to the field level, the Accra team will visit the regional offices, will observe the documentation and filing of the forms, assess the regional capacities and will verify the regional records against the central database. Tools have been developed to help the team conduct the reviews. Each review is documented in a report that is shared with all relevant staff and which includes an action plan to address any noted shortfall.

5.2 Knowledge Management and Learning

The learning activities that will be implemented during FY18 will consist mainly of:

- Conducting learning studies
- Quarterly technical review meetings
- Project evaluation
- Documentation and public sharing of the project's activities and successes

Learning studies

In FY18, the project will undertake one study per regional office on average, totaling four studies for the year. Like every year, the learning topics will be identified by the program specialists and technical leaders with the regional coordinators during the first quarterly technical review meeting of the fiscal year. They will be oriented towards the assessment of the project's impacts and the attributability of the noticed positive changes to the project. The findings from each study will be shared with all relevant partners and stakeholders during the knowledge forums in each region.

Quarterly technical review meetings

Every quarter, the project will organize a technical review meeting that will see the participation of the program specialists, technical leaders, regional coordinators and ADVANCE's senior management. During the meeting, each project component and each region discuss the achievements, challenges and lessons learned from the previous quarter, review the strategy and prioritize the activities for the next quarter.

Evaluation by METSS

The evaluation of ADVANCE is planned to take place in early 2018. The whole exercise will be led by USAID/METSS with the support by and preparation of the project.

Public relations and communication

The PRC unit in the M&EL team will continue documenting and communicating the project's results and activities through:

- Three to four success stories every quarter
- Quarterly newsletters of which 1,000 copies are edited and shared with the project's main stakeholders. The newsletters are also published on ACDI/VOCA' website
- Weekly bullets to USAID
- Production of four videos
- Organization of media events

5.3 Exit strategy

Sustainability is a core principle and inherent in all the ADVANCE project's strategies. Therefore, there are many achievements and activities that are already at a level that will be sustained beyond the life of the project. Examples of sustainable achievements include the functioning of the outgrower business model. The results of our profitability studies on the OB model (presented in section 2.3) provides the best evidence that the model is a sustainable business model that will outlive the project.

However, there are other areas that require additional effort to ensure they become sustainable by the close of the project. These include capacity building of new OBs and the process of transforming FBOs into FBEs to become businesses that provide services to their members and their communities in the same manner as the well-established OBs. The OBs' networks will be strengthened to ensure they support their members stay in business and engage other actors in the value chains effectively and efficiently.

There are also areas where ADVANCE continuously explores new markets for the OBs, provide market intelligence information for decision making by OBs and OGs, and facilitates relationships between the value chain actors. Other areas where strategies would be adopted to ensure sustainability are the implementation of the warehouse receipt system by GGC and crop insurance by GAIP. The project will organize a stakeholder's workshop in collaboration with FinGAP to discuss the findings of a consultancy commissioned by FinGAP to provide guidance in developing a sustainable crop insurance industry in Ghana.

The project will organize fora with all project stakeholders, including USAID, to brainstorm and assess existing strategies and modify them where necessary, to ensure that all aspects of the project are taken up by actors and stakeholders before the project closes in September 2018. At least one workshop will be held in each region to deliberate and act on this matter.

Finally, the project will provide grants to several local organizations that have been trained to enable them continue pursuing the advocacy issues that have been started. These include those relating to lobbying chiefs and community leaders to reserve suitable land for female farmers, agribusiness-friendly by-laws and those that protect the environment, and basic infrastructure that facilitates investment in agriculture.

Annex 1: ADVANCE II Implementation Plan Tracking Sheet - PY 2018

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
1	SUB-PURPOSE 1: INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY IN TARGETED COMMODITIES																
1.1	Increased Adoption of improved productivity - enhancing technologies, services and practices by women and men farmers																1
1.1.1	ACTOR LEAD TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATION SITES	TLA/RCs/APOs	483 Demos established														0
1.1.1.1	Select sites strategically aided by the project database and productivity maps with consideration for easy access by farmers, qualified lead farmers, and productivity factors	APO/M&E	483 Demos established														483
1.1.1.2	OBs assisted to procure required demo inputs from input dealers for Demos setup.	APO/SAPO/RCs	20 private sector partners identified														0
1.1.1.3	Monitor pesticide use on demos	ES/APOs	483 demos monitored														483
1.1.1.4	Conduct off-demo and demo-site GAPs training with private sector firms, Nucleus Farmers and MOFA-AEAs where possible.	APO/SAPO/M&E	48,300 farmers trained on GAPs														31395
1.1.1.5	Conduct PHH training with private sector firms, Nucleus Farmers and MOFA-AEAs where possible.	APO/SAPO/M&E	48,300 farmers trained on PHH														31395
1.1.1.6	Conduct Model Farms to showcase ripping at	APO/SAPO/M&E	200 Hybrid Seed Ripped Demos established														0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
	commercial level for land preparations																
1.1.1.7	Disseminate GAPs information through SMS/Voice messaging services providers, call centers, other media mainly through radio and radio listener groups. Sensitize radio listenership groups on radio agric program Link listenership groups to radio stations Sponsorship for radio agric program	ICT	5 new radio stations/500 listenership groups to be sensitized.	Continuous dissemination of GAPs information through Radio Agric Program to educate farmers on the best farming practices. Link listenership clubs to radio station to create a lasting relationship ensure continuous flow of information from radio stations to farmers even after the ADVANCE project. Sponsorship to ensure sustainable Radio Agric Program to educate farmers and to inform farmers of available and access to inputs.													0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
1.1.1.7.1	Support Radio stations to develop content for radio shows. Radio planning sessions with radio partners and stakeholders	ICT	1 planning session per region	To deliberate on how to continue supporting farmers to create a lasting working relation among all stakeholders													0
1.1.1.7.2	Organize focus groups / surveys to determine contribution of radio shows in increased productivity. Link Field Agent to listenership groups for monitoring purposes	ICT	Facilitate training of selected Agents	This is to ensure continuos support from Field Agents to Radio Listenership Groups for dissemination of GAPs information													0
1.1.2	FIELD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM			OB better manage their business, improve investment by Obs, improve quantity and quality of services to Ogs, Ogs adopt improved TMP, Ogs increase yield and GM, sustainable OB model													0
1.1.2.1	Organize capacity building training for engaged agents	APO/BSO	60 Outgrower businesses adopting the FMP														156
1.1.2.2	Facilitate delivery of technical Services through field agents which should include extension and tractor																0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
	service management, OG input distribution, post-harvest mechanization, GAP/PHH training, demo site management, production collection and aggregation, community liaison, lead farmer development																
1.1.2.3	Organize review meeting with agents for review of plans, progress, challenges, successes and lesson sharing																0
1.1.2.4	Promote the use of ICT tool for Ag extension with Grameen Foundation	ICT	Support 90 Field Agents to use ICT Tools to train at least 10,000 SHFs	Support through monitoring and coaching to use the ICT tools in training farmers on good agronomic practices as well as help their Obs in managing their business.													0
1.1.2.4.1	Conduct monitoring visits and report on progress of the FMP	ICT	90 visits 1/agent. 25 visits per each quarter Continuous interaction with field agents and remote assistance on the regional WhatsApp platforms	To monitor the progress of the field activities													0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
1.1.2.4.2	Organize review meeting with agents on the Smartex program with Grameen for review of progress, challenges, successes and lesson sharing	ICT	8 meetings. 2 meeting per each region	To review progress, successes, challenges and lesson sharing													0
1.1.2.4.3	Support the Field Agents to monitor usage of the Tablets	ICT	All Agents														0
1.1.2.5	Organize Pre and Post - Seasonal meetings between Outgrower Businesses and Community Lead Farmers																0
1.1.2.5.1	Services include tractor service management, OG input distribution, post-harvest mechanization, GAP/PHH training, demo site management, production collection and aggregation, community liaison, lead farmer development																0
1.1.2.6	Grant program to be used as incentive to start field management services and to offset startup costs - limited to motorcycle or “motor-king” to aid in necessary mobility required for the job	Grants/APO	35 grants to OB s $200,000														0
1.1.2.7	A visit will be made to Nigeria to see a successful model of mechanization service provision, to see what could be replicable in Ghana to make the OB model more profitable and sustainable, especially the side related to equipment.	TD/ RC	2 staff members														0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
1.1.3	PROMOTE CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE			Building capacities, increasing demand and offer of CSA inputs/equipment/innovations, increasing application of ITMP, mitigate the negative impact of climate change, sustain yields and GM													0
1.1.3.1	Conduct cover crop demonstrations																0
1.1.3.2	Maintain and monitor 2017 ripped plots																0
1.1.3.3	Facilitate no-burn policy campaing in all regions District Assembly, MOFA and policy to coordinate																0
1.1.3.4	Establishment of demo plots of minimum-tillage (using rippers in the demo plots)	APO	30 CSA new demos established														30
1.1.3.5	Field days to teach farmers on Climate Smart Agriculture and the benefits it will bring considering the erratic precipitation of last years,	APO	30 CSA field days organized														30
1.1.3.6	Promote Model farms (At least I per region)	APOs	3 model farms facilitated														3

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
1.1.3.7	Upscale the no-burn campaign. Facilitate no-burn policy campaign in all regions District Assembly, MOFA and policy to coordinate Collaborate with Ghana National Fire Service to form community Volunteer squads.	ICT/ES	2 community durbars in each region radio campaigns in at least 3 districts/region 4 banners/region 200 posters/region Wellington Boots, Cutlasses, Fire Beaters, Protective gear	Community fire volunteer squads to help educate communities on the harmful effects on burning on the environment and to serve as watchdogs in their communities.													0
1.1.3.7.1	Carry out more radio jingles for no-slash and burn campaign	ICT/ES	2 Jingles produced														0
1.1.3.7.2	Organize relevant information from EPA	ICT/ES															0
1.1.3.8	Draft and air messages on safe pesticide use	ICT/ES															0
1.1.3.9	Provide weather forecasting through SMS technology	ICT	10,000 new users receiving weather forecasting	This will only be for the South and it will start from Feb - July													10000
1.1.3.9.1	Identify new users from M&E database	ICT/MIS		New users from the South													0
1.1.3.9.2	Support Farmerline to deploy technology	ICT															0
1.1.3.9.3	Monitor usage by new users and document successes through focus groups	ICT	50%	To assess the impact of the weather tips on their farming activities													0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
1.1.4	ORGANIZE FARM CLINICS			Appropriate diagnostics of farms' issues, appropriate solutions proposed by the experts, increased capacity of staff and Obs, better services for Ogs, increased application of IMPT, yields, GM													0
1.1.4.1	Identify the critical production issues in the communities targeted	APO/TLA	13														15
1.1.4.2	Coordinate with experts at regional MoFA-PPRSD offices																0
1.1.4.3	Coordinate with experts/research to assess those within their capacity and beyond MoFA																0
1.1.4.4	Organize Farm Clinics with support from PPRSD and Plant Doctors, especially on FAWs																0
1.1	Strengthened systems for financial, advisory, aggregation and on-farm, post-harvest service provision and input distribution																0
1.1.5	DIGITAL FINANCE SERVICES																0
1.1.5.1	Link OB/OG to Mobile Money Service providers	BSO/ICT/APO/TMO/GS	60 OB's/5000 OG's No. of OB's/OG's linked														5000
1.1.5.2	Register/ Setup OB/OG/promote mobile	BSO/ICT/APO/TMO/GS	60 OBs as merchants/5000														0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
	phone usage among out growers		OGs as subscribers														
1.1.5.3	Coach OB's/ OG's to incorporate service into operations	BSO/ICT/APO/TMO/GS	60 OBs as merchants/5000 OGs as subscribers	To help all partners in the value chain focus on electronic money contributing to the success of their businesses.													0
1.1.5.4	Monitor service usage	BSO/ICT/APO/TMO/GS	60 OBs as merchants/5000 OGs as subscribers	To monitor the progress of electronic transaction in their activites.													0
1.1.6	IMPROVED ACCESS TO BUSINESS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES	BS Team		Good business plans lead to better OB management, improves access to credit, lead to increased investment, increase quantity and quality of services, increased application of ITMP by Obs and Ogs, increased profitability of Obs, yields and GM													0
1.1.6.1	Administer Business Diagnostic Tool on new OB's	BS Team	150 BDT administered														152
1.1.6.2	Develop Business Plan	BS Team	200 BP's developed														200

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
1.1.6.3	Continue and make adjustments to BP's when necessary	BS Team/APO's	100 No. of BP's reviewed														100
1.1.6.4	Develop Long Term Strategic Plans(4 years) for OB's identified as well-established leaders	BS Team/APO's	50 No. of strategic plans developed														52
1.1.7	FACILITATE OB NETWORKING	APO/ES/GS		Sharing experiences and knowledge, bulk procurement, bulk sale, leading to improved OBM capacity, advocacy capacity, application of TMP by OB, increase of investment and profit, better and more services for Ogs, application on ITMP by Ogs, improved yields and GM, sustainable OB model													0
1.1.7.1	Follow up on the 10 most active networks to help in planning	APO/AS															0
1.1.7.2	Guide them in their advocacy activities with bi-annual support meetings	APO/SAPO/AS															0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
1.1.8	OUTGROWER BUSINESS MANAGEMENT			Increased capacity leads to better OB management, improves access to credit, lead to increased investment, increase quantity and quality of services, increased application of ITMP by Obs and Ogs, increased profitability of Obs, yields and GM													0
1.1.8.1	OBM training will take place during the crop calendar.	BSO/APO/TMO	300 OB's No. of OB s trained														300
1.1.8.2	Assist OB's to put in place records keeping system	BSO	300 No. of OB's using and maintaining records														300
1.1.8.3	Follow up to monitor application and progress of skills transferred	BSO/APO/TMO	300														300
1.1.8.4	Asset utilization and profitability assessment through the Asset Utilization Tool																0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
1.1.9	OB OFFICE PROGRAM			Offices allow better organization of admin system, image and reputation, enhanced visibility and credibility, confidence of SHF and end market, leading to enhanced access to credit, enhanced sale and access to OGs, increased investment, increase quantity and quality of services, increased application of ITMP by Obs and Ogs, increased profitability of Obs, yields and GM													0
1.1.9.1	Encourage OB's to set up office	BS Team	100 No. of offices established														100
1.1.9.2	Interns from University of Development Studies (UDS) will be assigned to OBs to assist the OB manager with new office systems and procedures	BS Team/RC	50 interns No. of OB's assisted with interns														52

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
1.1.10	IMPROVED ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES			Enhanced access to credit leading to increased investment, increased quantity and quality of services, increased application of ITMP by Obs and Ogs, increased profitability of Obs, yields and GM													0
1.1.10.1	Promote Rural Savings and Loans	BS Team/CDO/GS	200 No. of VSLAs set up														200
1.1.10.2	Encourage smallholder farmers own savings	BS Team/CDO/GS	70% of share outs invested in productions(At least 1,500 members)														0
1.1.10.3	Promote finance through tripartite arrangements	BS Team/APO/TMO	30 tripartite agreements signed														32
1.1.10.4	Link actors to FIs based on investment gaps in business plans especially on inputs and equipment	BS Team/APO	$1,000,000 Value of loans accessed														0
1.1.11	INPUT DEALER BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM			Increased capacity of ID, increased access to credit, improved ID management, increased investment by ID, availability of inputs, increased quantity and quality of													0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
				services by OBs, increased application of ITMP by Obs and Ogs, increased profitability of IDs, yields and GM													
1.1.11.1	Support Input Dealers improve on management systems	BS Team/ES	85 No. of input dealers with improved management systems														85
1.1.11.3	Support input dealers to expand sales channels using the community agent concept and link to them MM	BS Team															0
1.1.11.4	Collaborate with the Ag production team to facilitate access to inputs at the community level.	BS Team/APOs															0
1.1.11.5	Where necessary, develop business plans for input dealers	BS Team/ES	20														20
1.1.12	INPUT ACCESS AT COMMUNITY LEVEL IMPROVED	BS Team/APO/ES		More agents, Increase of availability of inputs, increased use of inputs by Ogs, investment by Obs, application on ITMP by Ogs, improved yields and GM, sustainable inputs													0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
				provision system													
1.1.12.1	Strengthening relationships between existing agents and input dealers	APO/SAPO	80 communities identified														80
1.1.12.2	Strengthening existing SSPs with training and logistics	APO/ES/GS															0
1.1.12.3	Facilitate linkages between MOFA, Existing Agents and Input Dealers	APO/ES/GS															0
1.1.12.4	Hold sensitization fora for SSPs, Community Input Agents, Input dealers, OBs and farmers																0
1.1.12.5	Facilitate linkages between Local input dealers, OBs and SSPs	APO/ES/GS															0
1.1.12.6	Organise training workshops to build the capacity of APOs/SAPOs/CDOs to dispel the wrong notions of hybrids as GMOs	APO/ES/GS															0
1.2	Strengthened incentives for smallholder investment in new productivity enhancing technologies, services and practices																0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
1.2.1	PRE-SEASON AGRI-BUSINESS FORUM	TLA/RCs/ICT	1 Number of pre-season events	Creates linkage between Obs and inputs, equipment and finance providers, increased investment by Obs, improved quantity and quality of services by Obs, increased application of ITMP by Obs and Ogs, higher yields and GM Sustainability strategy will be to Sensitize OB Networks to organize Regional/Zonal Sessions													0
1.2.1.1	Facilitate participation of all OBs and viable FBOs	RCs/APO/SAPO	300 Number of OB/FBO participants														300
1.2.1.2	Facilitate participation of inputs, finance, equipment and other services providers	ICT	Number of private sector exhibitors (40)	The need to engage the services of and introduce local fabricators to beneficiary (sustainability &affordability)													0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
1.2.2	FARMER MENTOR PROGRAM			Mentoring leads to reinforce each other, improves interest and capacity of NFs, application of TMP by OB, increase of investment, better and more services for Ogs, application on ITMP by Ogs, improved yields and GM, sustainable OB model													0
1.2.2.1	Identify established OBs with strengths in the various project intenvention areas for OBM and invite them to mentor new and weak scoring OBs (on the categorization process) to the program benefits and risks	APO	30 Mentors														0
1.2.2.2	Organize training for mentors on "Effective Mentoring"	APO	180 NF Mentees														180
1.2.2.3	Identify and establish the capacity gaps of various prospective mentees (new & old) and appropriately align them to the right mentors	APO															0
1.2.2.4	Organize groups of prospective OBs with certain established capacity gaps to visit OB farms for first-hand	APO															0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
	experience in what a multi-service operation can look like																
1.2.2.5	Organize special visits to HYBRID MAIZE sites to view the merits of high quality hybrid seed for promotion of hybrid seeds adoption	APO															0
1.2.2.6	Organize special visits to CSA model farms to learn application of all the best farm practice and its benefits	APO															0
1.2.3	CROP INSURANCE																0
1.2.3.1	Sensitize Actors to purchase crop insurance to mitigate against drought	BSO	150 Policies														152
1.2.3.2	Based on results of a pilot started in the last quarter of 2017 support to GAIP can be scaled up through Field Agents turned into Promotion Agents of Crop Insurance in the communities they supervise.	BSO	60														60
1.2.3.3	Incorporate communications on drought index insurance schemes on partner radio and ICT firm's platform to educate farmers on the availability and access to the schemes.	BSO/ICT															0
2	SUB-PURPOSE 2: INCREASE MARKET ACCESS AND TRADE OF TARGETED COMMODITIES																0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
2.1	Improve the capacity of men and women (and firms) to participate in markets																0
2.1.1	MARKET LINKAGE DEVELOPMENT																0
2.1.1.1	Two Way Trade Missions	TLT/TMS/TMO	17 Trade Missions														0
2.1.1.2	Pre-Harvest Event	DCOP(T)/TLT	1 Event Organized														0
2.1.1.3	Contract Facilitation	TLT/TMO	100 Contracts														0
2.1.1.4	Training of OGs in Produce Quality Requirements-maize and soybean continued and start rice one	TLT/TMO	20,000 OGs														20000
2.1.1.5	Provision of Market Information & Intelligence Services	TLT/TMS/TMO/GGC	4 Quarterly Market Intelligence Reports														0
2.2	Increase availability and use of affordable/sustainable services																0
2.2.1	TRADE ASSOCIATION SUPPORT																0
2.2.1.2	Promotion of Warehouse Receipts (with GGC)	TLT/TMS/TMO/GGC	Per GGC Year 4 Grant														0
2.2.1.3	Promotion of Structured Trade in Informal Markets in the South	TLT/TMOs/Grants	Number of Traders Applying Structured Trading Elements; Percentage of Traders Applying Structured Trading Elements														0
2.2.1.4	Support for Ghana Rice Festival	TLT/TMS/TMOs	2017 Rice Festival Supported														0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
2.2.1.5	Capacity Building for Trade Associations (Finance, Governance, Advocacy, etc.)	TLT/TMS/PA	5 Trade Associations Supported														0
2.2.1.6	Advocacy on Cross Border Trade.	TLT/TMS															0
2.2.1.7	Staff of ADVANCE will participate in the annual conference of Borderless Alliance	TLT/TMS	2 Staff attending														0
2.3	Increase private sector investment and innovation to support value chain development																0
2.3.1	Market Lead Firm Competiveness																0
2.3.1.1	Support Buyer Outgrower Development	TLT/TMS/TMO/APO/BSO	Maintain 10 Existing Buyer Schemes - Agricare, AVNASH, Akate, Premium Foods, Royal Danemac, Hawa Rice/ANS Mills, Duna Farms, Sahel Grains, G. Bosomtwi Farms, Yedent														0
2.3.1.2	ADVANCE will support large Outgrower shemes with 1 field supervisor for a period of 6 months. The Buyer will then see the benefits of this supervision and will hire the supervisor permanently.	TLT/TD	2 Large Outgrower Schemes supported														0
2.3.1.3	Finance Facilitation for Buyers	TLT/TMS	US$250,000 in Finance Facilitated for Buyers														0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
2.3.1.4	BDS Support to Buyers	TLT/TMS/TMOs	30 Buyers Supported														0
2.3.1.5	Plant and processing upgrade for Buyers	TLT/TMS/TMOs	4 buyers/processing firms accesssing plant and equipment grants														0
2.4	Increase private sector investment and innovation to support value chain development																0
2.4.1	NORTH GHANA PROCESSING UPGRADE																0
2.4.1.1	Food (Maize/Soy) Processing Upgrade	TLT/TMO/Grants	2 Food Processors Upgraded														0
2.4.1.2	Improvement in Parboil Rice Techniques	TLT/TMO/Grants	20 Ent./ groups trained; 20 Ent./ groups accessing SEGs (Parboil Vessels)														0
2.4.1.3	BDS Support to North Ghana Agro Processors	TLT/TMO/Grants	6 North Ghana MSME Agro Processors accessing BDS support														0
2.4.2	COMMUNITY-BASED MARKET SYSTEMS STRENGTHENED																0
2.4.2.1	Assess impact of SMFM on beneficiaries	TL/TMOs/CDOs	65 FBOs														65
2.4.2.2	Mentor and coach beneficiary FBOs on good administrative and management practices	TL/TMOs/CDOs															0
2.4.2.4	Facilitate learning visits among potential FBEs for experience sharing	TL/TMOs/CDOs	24 visits														24
2.4.2.5	Train Potential FBEs under transformation on SMFM	TL/TMOs/CDOs	20 FBOs														20
																	0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
3	SUB-PURPOSE 3: STRENGTHEN CAPACITY FOR ADVOCACY AND ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION																0
3.1	Strengthen advocacy capacity of value chain actors and their associations to address identified value chain-specific enabling environment constraints particularly to the north																0
3.1.1	IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING SPECIFIC ENABLING ENVIRONMENT CONTRAINTS.		Increase in number of policy changes supportive to agriculture; improved enabling environment for Obs and other VC bussineses														0
3.1.1.1	Award grants to selected LNGOs to undertake advocacy actions	PAS	4 orgs awarded														0
3.1.1.2	Monitor and evaluate the results of the advocacy actions by the grantees	PAS, CDOs	5 grantees monitored														0
3.1.1.3	Train and support grantees to develop long term advocacy strategies to address agribusiness environmental constraints		5 Orgs trained														0
3.1.1.4	Monitor the progress of CREMA societies advocacy action on district assemblies passage and gazettement of CREMA by-laws to check bush fires		4 CREMA Societies														0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
3.1.1.5	Support trade associations to undertake advocacy actions	TMOs/PAS/CDOs															0
3.1.2	BUILD CAPACITY OF OBs AND FBOs ON POLICY AND ADVOCACY	PAS, PAO, CDOs , RCS	Networks taking up advocacy issues affecting them; increased reforms & responsiveness of agricultural policies to Obs bussiness														0
3.1.2.1	Train FBO network on leadership, basic advocacy skills, local governance system and policy processes at the local level		4 FBO Networks formed,7 Networks strengthened														0
3.1.2.2	Conduct OBs networks mentorship visits to strengthen their internal structures																0
3.1.2.3	Continue supporting Zonal OBs networks identify specific advocacy issues and develop advocacy plans to address them	PAS & CDOs	14														0
3.1.2.4	Organize Regional Level OBs and FBOs network forum	PAS &CDOs	4 fora														4
3.1.2.5	Support OBs & FBOs networks create awareness among themselve and their communities about women access to productive farm land	PAS, PAO &CDOs	21 FBO Networks and OB networks														0
3.1.3	DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT PLANS	PAS, PAO &CDOs	Increased private & public investment in agriculture in the district														0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
3.1.3.1	Train MMDAs in development and promotion of DAIPs	PAS & TLTM	4 trainings														4
3.1.3.2	Facilitate the promotion of DAIPs through exhibitions and linkage to Ghana Investment Promotion	PAS, & PAO	3 exhibitions per DAIP, 36 Exhibitons														0
3.1.3.3	Collaborate with beneficiary MMDAs to monitor and document the outcomes and lessons from their agribusiness investment promotion activities	PAS, PAO, CDOs & RCs															0
3.2	Strengthen local institutions to implement inclusive value chain development and become eligible for USAID funding																0
3.2.1	BUILD CAPACITY OF SELECTED LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS	TLC															0
3.2.1.1	Organize stepdown training for local NGOs	TLC/CDO	20 organizations														20
3.2.1.2	Facilitate LNGOs access to ADVANCE Grants	TLC/CDO	1 per region														4
3.3.	CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION	TL/CDOs															0
3.3.1	CONSOLIDATE NUMERACY TRAININGS		11000 SHF trained														11000
3.3.1.1	Identify and assess local institutions to conduct ToT	TLC/CDO															0
3.3.1.2	Identify potential trainers based on location	TLC/CDO															0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
3.3.1.3	Organize ToT for community level trainers	TLC/CDO															0
3.3.1.4	Organize trainings at community level for SHF	Consultant															11000
3.3.1.5	Monitor and Evaluate training activities	TLC/CDO															0
3.3.1.6	Assess the impact of numeracy trainings																0
3.3.2	CONSOLIDATE FAAB TRAININGS	TLC/CDO	8,500														8500
3.3.2.1	Identify potential trainers based on location	TLC/CDO															0
3.3.2.2	Organize ToT for community level trainers	TLC/CDO															0
3.3.2.3	Train OG s on FaaB at the community level	Consultant	8,500														8500
3.3.2.4	Monitor and Evaluate training activities	TLC/CDO															0
	Assess the impact of FaaB trainings	Consultant															0
3.4	CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR FBEs (UPGRADE FROM FBOs)																0
3.4.1	Engage a Consultant to conduct final assessment of potential FBEs	TL/CDO	30FBOs														30
3.4.2	Facilitate the linking of potential FBEs to other actors i.e. input retailers, Financial Institutions, Extension services, aggregators/end buyers/processors etc	TMO/CDO	155 FBOs														0
3.4.3	Facilitate FBEs participation in OBM training	BSO/TL/CDO															0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
3.4.4	Support FBOs to establish and sponsor demos	TL/CDO/APO															0
3.4.5	Train potential FBE leaders on sustainability, group dynamics and other thematic areas	Consultant	300 FBE Leaders(3 per FBE x100 FBEs)														0
3.4.6	Support FBOs/FBEs to develop sutainability plans such as Business plans, Succession plans	CDO/BS	30 FBEs														30
4	Program Support - Gender Mainstreaming																0
4.1	Women engaged in increased agricultural productivity in targeted commodities																0
4.1.1	Build capacity of women associate NFs, lead farmers of OBs, through mentorship programs to manage OG networks	GS/APO/BSO	100 additional female leaders														100
4.1.2	Encourage women NFs, associate NFs and lead farmers to host environmentally friendly technology demonstration	GS/APOs/SAPOs	Inclusion														0
4.1.3	Promote further women friendly equipment (manual planters, dibblers, shellers, threshers, tarpaulins etc.)	GS/Ag TL/APO s/TD	500 more grant approved applications														500
4.1.4	Link women farmers and women groups to OBs to access technologies, enhancing services and training. This include tractor service, agro-input , planters, post-harvest mechanization, GAP/PHH training etc.	APO/BSO/GS	Inclusion														0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
4.1.5	Support women farmers (Obs, FBOs, FBEs, Lead farmers) with training on technology	GS/APO	4000 women trained in technology														4000
4.1.6	Support ES in campaigns against women pesticide application and encourage them to access commercial service providers	GS/ES/APOs	Inclusion														0
4.1.7	Actively engage women in capacity building: through various capacity building programs such as FaaB and Numeracy	GS/CDO	10,000 women trained in Numeracy and FaaB														10000
4.1.8	Support women to invest in their livelihood. Encourage village savings and loan groups for women and men, and link these groups to access agro-inputs and market opportunities	GS/CDO/BSO/TMO	40% Men														0
4.1.9	Raise awareness of land rights and land ownership/larger land size for women to farm through organizing informal meetings in communities; promoting success stories	GS/PS/APO	Inclusion														0
4.1.10	Facilitate women's access to land : Use the existing NF-outgrower structures; traditional authorities and other donor partners to help leverage land so it is more readily available for productive women	GS/APO/PS	2000														2000

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
4.1.11	Ensure women have access to information: Promote appropriate technologies such as use of mobile devices and listenership clubs targeted to women's specific needs	GS/ICT	Inclusion														0
4.1.12	Build the capacity of radio hosts of ag. programs in gender integrationExpand Numeracy training facilitated by local organizations	GS/ICT	30 radio stations														0
4.2	Increase women market access and trade of targeted commodities																0
4.2.1	Build capacity of women to access markets: provide training in business, financial and IT skills to women business owners and group members	GS/BSO/ICT	Inclusion 40%														0
4.2.2	Introduce market linkages; link women farmers and women's groups to formal markets and put in place structures to help them maintain control over their income	GS/TMO/CDO															0
4.2.3	Build women's leadership capacity: Conduct skills and leadership training for women at different levels of the value chain (producer/marketing groups, associations and business managers)	GS/BSTL	1000 women trained in leadership														8500
4.2.4	Expand Numeracy training facilitated by local organizations	CDO	10,000 women trained in Numeracy														8500

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
4.3	NUTRITION SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE																0
4.3.1	Promote the production of high yielding protein maize varieties by women farmers through demonstrations and in community promotions	GS/APOs/SAPOs	2,000 women trained and planting high protein maize														0
4.3.2	Collaborate with other projects and WIAD to build capacity of women FBO groups, Female OBs, and farmers on soy and cereal nutrition formulation that benefits value chain actors Households	GS/RING/WIAD	8000 women and their HHs														8500
4.3.3	Link women's group to ICT firms (Esoko, Radio stations) for dissemination of nutrition messages on soy, rice and maize formulations	GS/ICT	8000 women														8500
5	SUB-PURPOSE 5:PROGRAM SUPPORT - ENVIRONMENT																0
5.1	General environmental compliance																0
5.1.1	Revise approved pesticide list based on approved PERSUAPs andRevised EPA Register	Env'tal specialist	4 trainings														0
5.1.2	Conduct environmental compliance trainings for field staff and clients																0
5.1.3	Ensure sub-grant activities are in the scope of the Initial Environmental Examination																0
5.1.4	Conduct pesticide use monitoring on demonstration plots in	Env'tal specialist	Report completed														0

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
	line with the requirements of the PERSUAP.																
5.2	IMPROVING AGROCHEMICAL MANAGEMENT																0
5.2.1	Develop outreach content on safe pesticide handling for radio broadcasts.	ES/ICT	3 program contents														0
5.2.2	Develop content for radio jingles on safe pesticide use - encourage patronage of SSPs		3 contents														0
5.2.3	Monitor and report on the impact of SSPs	ES/APOs	Report completed														0
5.2.4	Follow up activities with SSPs; focus on linkages to input companies, input promotions, financial management.		701 persons supported														0
5.2.5	Complete container management centers in irrigated areas of- Tono, Vea		12 locations														0
5.3	Climate smart agriculture																0
5.4.1	Document and share lessons learnt from CSA activities	ES/APOs															0
5.4.2	Support anti-bushfire activities in 2 Districts for each Region	ICT/GNFS/APOs/															0
5.4.3	Scale-up the No-Bushfire campaign in each of the regions of operation through radio campaigns and signposts/banners																0
5.4.4	Facilitate linkage between farmers already implementing agroforestry systems and nurseries	ES/APOs															25

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
5.4.5	ADVANCE staff will participate in an international conference to see the most recent technology in minimum-tillage and/or conservation agriculture at commercial level	TD/RC/TLA	4 staff trained														0
9.0	FALL ARMYWORM CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT																0
9.1	Establish a Surveillance system and an Awareness Campaign of the FAW																0
9.1.1	MONITORING OF FALL ARMYWORM																0
9.1.1.1	Take delivery of traps and pheromones for one year																0
9.1.1.2	Train AEAs and other Ag Extension Professionals on trap set ups, field scouting and data collection																0
9.1.1.3	Develop weekly and monthly maps to show trends of prevalence	GIS Specialist	208														0
9.1.1.4	Share data with National Task Force - formalise relations and ensure visibility	TD/ES/GIS															0
9.1.1.5	Dissemination of information - publishing/CABI	TD/ES/GIS/CABI/ PPRSD/SARI	5 stakeholder meetings														0
9.1.1.6	Linking with PPRSD/SARI for sustainability																0
9.1.1.7	Analyze pesticide residue levels on maize grains - in collaboration with Nestle	TD/ES/Nestle/AP Os	1 Analysis														0
9.1.1.8	Expand monitoring to cover the whole country	TD/ES	30 locations														30

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
9.1.2	FAW EDUCATION AND AWARENESS																0
9.1.2.1	Collaborate with CABI on video production and dissemination	ICT/PR&C	1 video production														0
9.1.2.2	Radio panel discussions - MOFA staff and others	ICT/RCs	31 radio discussions														0
9.1.2.3	Radio education through jingles and Live Presenter Mentions	ICT/Procurement	19 Radio Stations														19
9.1.2.4	Include FAW in GAPs trainings	TLP/APOs															0
9.1.2.5	Special training for OBs and OGs involved in outgrower schemes	TLP/TMOs/APOs	3 Outgrower schemes														0
9.1.2.6	Include FAW awareness in all trainings and meetings - using posters and videos	All															0
9.2	ESTABLISH A SYSTEM OF INFORMATION FOR FARMERS WHEN NEW PESTS/DISEASES ARE IDENTIFIED																0
9.2.1	ESTABLISH PESTICIDE OBSERVATION SITES																0
9.2.1.1	Set up observation fields in Kintampo and Northern Region using PERSUAP compliant products	TD/ES/APOs/FAW Consultant	2 observation plots														0
9.2.1.2	Compile and analyse data from observation plots	FAW Consultant															0
9.2.1.3	Develop pesticide prescriptions for farmers	FAW Consultant	prescription developed														0
9.2.2	PEST AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT IN COLLABORATION WITH CABI																0
9.2.2.1	Train Field agents towards becoming Plant Doctors	TD/ES/CABI	30 Field Agents														30

	Activity	Responsible	Targets	Path	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
9.2.2.2	Train Project Staff towards becoming Plant Doctors	TD/ES/CABI	30														30
9.2.2.3	Establish coordination units in UE and UW	ES/CABI	2														0
9.2.2.4	Promote activities of plant doctors - publicity materials such as baners etc	TD/APOs	30 Promotions														0
9.2.2.5	Link plant doctors to PPRSD for technical support	ES/CABI	30 linked to PPRSD														30
9.2.2.6	Support cluster meetings of plant doctors	RCs/ES/CABI/PPRSD	12 meetings														12
9.2.2.7	Involve plant doctors in radio discussions	RCs/ES/CABI/PPRSD															0
9.2.2.8	Organise plant clinics using Plant Doctors	RCs/ES/CABI/PPRSD															0

Annex 2: Targets for 2018

Indicator/Disaggregation	Baseline	FY18 targets	Achievements so far*	LOP targets
Number of direct project beneficiaries		75,000	122,134	113,000
Male		*41,250*	*64,064*	*62,150*
Female		*33,750*	*58,070*	*50,850*
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	1,034	600
Number of individuals who have received USG supported short-term agricultural sector productivity or food security trainings		75,000	111,775	100,000
Male		*41,250*	*56,698*	*55,000*
Female		*33,750*	*55,077*	*45,000*
Value of agricultural and rural loans		$800,000	$3,896,648	$4,300,000
Value of new private sector investment in agricultural sector or value chain (US$)		$800,000	$3,577,987	$4,000,000
Gross margins per hectare for selected crops US Dollar under marketing arrangements fostered by the activity (USD/ha)				
Maize		**$800**	**$845**	**$800**
Male	*$ 276.34*	$790	$850	$790
Female	*$ 288.84*	$840	$840	$840
Rice		**$1,350**	**$828**	**$1,350**
Male	*$ 258.58*	$1,400	$867	$1,400
Female	*$ 249.17*	$1,250	$760	$1,250
Soy		**$650**	**$678**	**$650**
Male	*$ 315.02*	$700	$789	$700
Female	*$ 212.18*	$600	$483	$600
Number of hectares under improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance		72,000	131,252	281,600
Male		39,600	89,531	157,505
Female		32,400	41,721	124,095
Number of farmers and others who have applied new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	91.16%**	72,000	85,363	101,700
Male	*90.41%**	*39,600*	46,548	*55,935*
Female	*99.28%**	*32,400*	39,091	*45,765*

Indicator/Disaggregation	Baseline	FY18 targets	Achievements so far*	LOP targets
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	483	450
Value of incremental sales (collected at farm-level) attributed to FTF implementation		$ 17,880,000	$33,657,429***	**$ 63,680,000**
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		100	123	100
Number of organizations/ enterprises identified as high potential for future awards		7	1	7
Number of organizations/ enterprises receiving capacity building support against key milestones		50	10	50
Number of awards made directly to local organizations by USAID		5	1	5
Number of value chain actors accessing finance		225	113	300

**As of July 31, 2017*
***Percent of farmers and other that applied one or more technology*
****2016 season sales are not included, they are currently being collected*

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