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FEED THE FUTURE AGRICULTURE POLICY SUPPORT PROJECT

QUARTERLY REPORT (DECEMBER – MARCH 2014)
PROJECT YEAR 1, QUARTER 1

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The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chemonics International is pleased to submit this first quarterly report to USAID/Ghana, covering the period of December, 2014, to March 2014. The main goal of the APSP is to improve the food security enabling environment for private sector investment, and do so by increasing the capacity of GOG, the private sector, and civil society organizations to implement evidence-based policy formation and implementation, research and advocacy as well as perform rigorous monitoring and evaluation of agricultural programs implemented under the METASIP.

The Project has three components:

- a. Policy formation and implementation, aimed at improving Ghana's agricultural sector policy process for evidence-based decision making related to food security;
- b. Policy research, aimed at making available increasing rigorous policy analysis capacity for evidence-based policy making, and;
- c. Policy advocacy, aimed at strengthening the institutional and technical capacities of private agribusiness organizations, civil society organizations and the media, enabling them to increase their participation and amplify their voice in the public policy process.

During the first quarter, the APSP team met with key stakeholders to collect their views to develop our work plan. This engagement also provided a platform to explain the Project and to have a broad understanding of stakeholder programs to be supported during the first year of implementation.

Generally, the broad areas of support and the approach for achieving them have been identified with the stakeholders, including the need to develop short and long-term plans to revamp METASIP; training in agricultural questionnaire design, data collection and analysis; developing implementation plans for the seed and fertilizer law; training of three Councils to oversee implementation of the seed and fertilizer law, and support for the public sensitization of the gender strategy of MOFA, among others.

We have mapped a number of CSOs and FBOs and engaged with them. A draft manual for selecting private organizations as potential project beneficiaries has already been developed. We also met with other existing grantors to share their experiences leading to the development of a draft manual for implementing the Project grants scheme.

In the development of our work plan and identification of stakeholder programs for support, we collaborated with a number of projects/organizations, including AGRA, BUSAC, FAO, GCAP and other Feed the Future projects including ATT, ADVANCE II, Africa Lead, METSS, and FinGAP.

The challenge now is to clear with MOFA's management the context where the APSP is going to work and by doing so pave the way for implementing agreed programs during the second quarter. We understand and appreciate that USAID is working hard to secure a meeting with MOFA management towards this end.

ACRONYMS

AESD	Agricultural Engineering Services Directorate
AGRA	Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa
APD	Animal Production Directorate
APPDF	Agricultural Public Private Dialogue Forum
APSP	Agriculture Policy Support Project
ASWG	Agriculture Sector Working Group
BUSAC	Business Sector Advocacy Challenge Fund
CDI	Center for Development and Innovation
CEPA	Center for Policy Analysis
COP	Chief of Party
CSD	Crop Services Directorate
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DAEA	Department of Agricultural Economics & Agribusiness
FAGE	Federation of Associations of Ghanaian Exporters
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FBO	Farmer-Based Organizations
GAWU	Ghana Agricultural Workers Union
GFAP	Ghana Federation of Agricultural Producers
GNAFF	Ghana National Association of Farmers and Fishermen
GNAPF	Ghana National Association of Poultry Farmers
GOG	Government of Ghana
GRIB	Ghana Rice Inter-professional Body
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
ISODEC	Integrated Social Development Center
ISSER	Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research
ISU	Iowa State University
METASIP	Medium Term Agriculture Sector Investment Plan
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MOFAD	Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development
MOTI	Ministry of Trade and Industries
NAFCO	National Buffer Stock Company
NASWG	Northern Agriculture Sector Working Group
NBBCU	Northern Bread Basket Coordinating Unit
PEF	Private Enterprise Federation
PFAG	Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana
PPMED	Policy Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate
PPRS	Plant Protection and Regulatory Services
SADA	Savannah Accelerated Development Authority
SAKSS	Strategic Analysis and Knowledge Support System
SPEG	Sea-freight Pineapple Exporters of Ghana
SRID	Statistics Research and Information Directorate
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAAPP	West African Agricultural Productivity Project
WIAD	Women in Agriculture Development

A. PROGRESS BY COMPONENT

A1. Component 1: Policy Formation and Implementation

This Component is aimed at improving Ghana's agricultural sector policy process for evidence-based decision making related to food security. This result is to be achieved through pursuing four main pillars as follows:

- To improve capacity for policy analysis and evaluation by core METASIP implementing institutions by standing up the SAKSS node
- To enhance implementation of improved policies/regulations/administrative procedures as outlined by Government of Ghana (GOG)-endorsed policy documents and agreements made between GOG, donors and private sector
- To improve policies that enable private sector develop, commercialize and use improved agricultural inputs to increase smallholder productivity and incomes, and
- To improve execution of METASIP.

A1a. Progress to date

In the first quarter, we generally initiated action on many of the deliverables agreed upon for this component, paving the way for their implementation during the second quarter.

Workplan preparation. A number of meetings were held during the first quarter with potential collaborators and partners of the APSP project, including Directorates within the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), Ministry of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development (MOFAD), Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), National Buffer Stock Company (NAFCO), Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Business Sector Advocacy Challenge (BUSAC) Fund etc., USAID embedded Technical Advisors at Ministries Finance (MOF), Trade and Industries (MOTI) and MOFA and [REDACTED], Seed Expert from Iowa State University (ISU), among others.

An extensive number of meetings were also held with [REDACTED], our Project COR. The objective of these meetings was to receive inputs into the elaboration of the first year work plan and mostly, receive an overall assessment of the institutional and political environments with regard to agriculture development and policy programs under implementation. The work plan itself was developed through a consultative process in February, 2014, and submitted to USAID the same month. After going through the work plan, the COR and his Assistant, visited the Project offices to discuss the document and to make their comments. Based on the discussions and comments, a finalized version of the document was submitted to USAID.

Proposed support to project partners. Since the approval of the work plan, the Project has had further consultations with the Policy Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate (PPMED), Statistics Research and Information Directorate (SRID), Women in Agriculture Development (WIAD), Plant Protection and Regulatory Services Directorate (PPRS), Crops Services Directorate (CSD) and the Agricultural Engineering Services Directorate (AESD) all of MOFA and with MOFAD, among

others. The purpose of these meetings was to have a broad understanding from these institutions on which areas of their respective work areas could receive the Project's support. Additionally, in order to improve our understanding of the agricultural sector policy context, the COP and the Senior Policy and Institutional Development Specialist attended the last two meetings of the Agricultural Sector Working Group (ASWG).

From the meetings, the Project has initially identified specific priority areas of work, which relate to activities to be implemented during the first year with PPMED, SRID, WIAD, PPRSD, CSD, MOFAD and AESD.

Improving METASIP execution. The PPMED has invited the Project to support the METASIP Secretariat to develop short-term and long-term plans for the revival of the METASIP and SAKSS concept. By its own plan, the METASIP Secretariat intends to organize a 2-day workshop during May, 2014, to develop the short-term plan. The short term plan is to be reviewed in August, 2014, and a longer-term plan put in place. The two plans are expected to provide a roadmap for improving the execution of the METASIP and SAKSS and to generally improve capacity of METASIP implementing agencies in policy analysis and valuation.

Training in agricultural data collection and analysis. Improving agricultural data credibility is one main output of the Project. In this connection, the Project will work with the SRID to achieve improved data quality. From our engagement with SRID, the Directorate has identified training of its staff as its priority during the first year of implementation. It has therefore invited the Project to provide technical assistance to train its staff in areas of questionnaire design, efficient data collection techniques, data analysis, data dissemination and management. To be able to carry out its mandate more efficiently, SRID is also requesting some equipment for data collection and analysis.

Support to Women in Agriculture policy strategy. WIAD is inviting the Project to support it to launch its revised strategic policy document in an awareness creation exercise. The West African Agriculture Productivity Project (WAAPP) supported WIAD to revise the document and it is now appealing to the APSP to fund the next stage of sensitizing the public on the strategy document. Additionally, WIAD is also requesting technical support from the Project to train its staff nationwide to monitor gender compliance, build their capacity to be more efficient in their roles, and build capacity of its IT staff in data analysis and management.

Implementation of Plants and Fertilizer Law/Policy. The development and passing of the Plants and Fertilizer Law was a joint effort by the PPRSD and the CSD of MOFA. On its passage, PPRSD is presently responsible for implementing the fertilizer component of the Law while CSD has the responsibility to implement the seed component. The appropriate seed policy and fertilizer policy has also been developed by CSD and PPRSD. For both Directorates, implementation of the Law/Policy is their priority this first year. CSD is receiving assistance from AGRA and from the Center for Development and Innovation (CDI) of Holland to develop the Seed Policy into implementable project ideas. The support from AGRA and CDI will pay for local consultancies and other local activities involved in the process. CSD is requesting the Project to provide a senior expert to lead this process. The Directorate is also

requesting support to embark on a national sensitization to create awareness of both the seed law and policy.

On the other hand, PPRSD has invited APSP to support it to develop an implementation plan for the fertilizer law and policy. PPRSD is further inviting the Project to support it in its sensitization exercise to create awareness of the fertilizer law and policy. Additionally, PPRSD has requested support to build up the capacity of the three newly inaugurated Councils to oversee implementation of the Plants and Fertilizer Law.

Development of Fisheries Policy into bankable projects. FAO has assisted MOFAD to develop a fisheries policy, which now requires to be formulated into investment projects. MOFAD is inviting APSP to grant support in this regard.

Formal request for support from APSP. The CSD and the PPRSD have both submitted formal requests and budgets to the Project for consideration, while the other MOFA Directorates and MOFAD are expected to submit their requests and budgets in early May, 2014.

Trade policy support. We have had an initial discussion with the embedded Technical Expert at the MOTI on ways that APSP could support some of the Ministry's policy initiatives. The issue of commodity exchange and warehouse receipt system came up strong in the discussions. Since then, soft copies of the draft legislative instruments have been sent to us but no further discussions have gone on yet. We do however understand that the draft may not go to Parliament until sometime next year.

Embedding a Policy Analyst and Researcher at MOFA's PPMED. One of the important and quick activities slated for the first quarter of the project was to embed a Policy Analyst and Researcher within MOFA's PPMED to provide capacity building to PPMED staff and also serve as a liaison between the Ministry and the Project. CEPA is our main local partner on all issues pertaining to the policy process. To this end, the Project worked with CEPA to agree on the qualifications and job description of the Policy Expert and after due consultation, an individual was identified. However, the process of hiring the expert has been put on hold up until USAID and MOFA meet and the context of the APSP is fully explained to MOFA leadership.

A1b. Challenges and recommendations for adjustments and corrective action

Attempts have been made by the USAID office to meet with the management team of MOFA to formally introduce the project to them and to seek their concurrence and commitment for its implementation. So far, the meeting has not taken place. This development has slowed some of the initial momentum developed during work planning consultations with MOFA. For example, our projection to support METASIP Secretariat to develop short and long-term plans was slated to start in March 2014, and completed in May 2014. While we work to reestablish the connection with MOFA leadership, the start date for this activity and others has been reviewed to May 2014.

Nonetheless, the MOFA directorates have been cooperative and collaborated with APSP and worked with Directorate staff to identify potential interventions and support for Directorate-specific policies.

A1c. Outcomes of high-level meetings held and field visits

Meeting with PPMED and MOFA Directorates. The COP and the APSP technical team were invited to a meeting at MOFA on March 14, 2014, to explain the APSP scope of work to representatives of the MOFA Directorates. The presentation was generally well received and the chairman of the meeting, PPMED's current Acting Director, requested a brief write-up on APSP, including any activities identified for the first year to support MOFA. This brief, which provided guidelines for further engagement between the Project and the relevant MOFA Directorates, was sent to MOFA officials the next day.

Meetings with COPs managing USAID/Ghana's Feed the Future Projects. The COPs of all USAID/Ghana Feed the Future projects have decided to meet regularly with the purpose of identifying common areas of work, avoid duplicating efforts and promote mutual collaboration amongst each other thus increasing the impacts of USAID's development efforts. This group unofficially named the "Collaborative Circle of Chiefs of Party" (CCC) demonstrates the willingness of the different contractors/cooperators to work together towards the development outcomes of USAID/Ghana while complying with their respective contractual obligations with the USG. The CCC is an institutional innovation that puts project coordination as a priority that comes along the main tenets of the USAID Forward vision.

Ghana poultry sector meeting at USAID. At the invitation of USAID, the COP and the Senior Policy and Institutional Development Specialist attended a meeting at USAID to listen to a presentation by poultry experts from the US Soybean Export Council on planned studies and strategies aimed at salvaging the Ghanaian poultry industry. Based on the presentation, the Project took the decision to wait for the outcome of the study before deciding on which type of support may be relevant, to either MOFA or the private sector or both.

Meeting with the Parliamentary Select Committee on Cocoa, Food and Agriculture. At the initiative of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), a working lunch was organized for selected members of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Cocoa, Food and Agriculture. The Senior Policy and Institutional Development Specialist was invited to the meeting during which time the Project was explained to the members. Members were happy with project objectives and suggested that they would invite project officials for a full briefing before the full committee, on resumption from the parliamentary break.

Meeting with AGRA head office Policy Advisor. The APSP team had a meeting with AGRA's headquarters Policy Advisor, based in Nairobi, Kenya and other local AGRA's representative, to discuss collaboration between the two organizations. It was generally agreed to work together for the reactivation of MOFA's METASIP/SAKSS and other policy issues of common interest. To this end, AGRA and the Project decided that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be elaborated for study and signature. This MOU will guide our proposed work collaboration.

A1d. Planned activities for next quarter

The Project will work with MOFA and MOFAD Directorates on the activities already identified. These include:

- Embed a Policy Analyst and Researcher within MOFA's PPMED
- Provide support to METASIP Secretariat to organize workshops and develop short and long term plans to improve its execution
- Undertake an updated capacity needs assessment of METASIP implementing institutions, the Policy Planning and Policy Analysis Units of MOFA's PPMED and appropriately train all relevant staff
- Support METASIP Secretariat in implementing some "quick-wins" identified in the short and long-term plans
- Provide technical assistance to train SRID staff nationwide in areas of questionnaire design, data collection, analysis and dissemination
- Support WIAD in its sensitization effort to create national awareness of its policy document and train the staff to be more efficient at work
- Provide technical assistance to assist PPRSD to develop the implementation plan for the fertilizer law/policy and also build capacity of the three Councils to oversee the implementation of the Plant and Fertilizer Law
- Support CSD in creating national awareness of the Seed Law and Seed Policy and to provide technical assistance to develop the policy into implementable projects
- Provide technical assistance to MOFAD for the development of its policy document into investment/bankable projects.

A1e. Assessment of progress against the objectives and results

Activities planned for the first year have been initiated during the first quarter and this is quite encouraging, although actual implementation has experienced slight delay because the APSP is yet to be cleared by MOFA management. However, given the level of effort put in, we consider that by identifying specific areas of intervention, significant progress has been made and implementation of activities during the next quarter will be based on solid background.

A2. Component 2: Component 2: Policy Research

Component 2 aims at making available increasing rigorous policy analysis capacity for evidence-based policy making and this is to be achieved through the enhancement of high quality policy research capacity.

A2a. Progress to date

Appointment of Grants Manager. The appointment of a Grants and Sub-Contracts Manager to develop a grants concept paper and the eventual grants manual was one of our deliverables during the first quarter. Applicants for the position have been interviewed and the appropriate qualified person identified. The hiring of this resource will be finalized during the second quarter. In the meantime, we have started mapping

similar grant-awarding organizations and studying their operations as well as those of other grantees.

Research on other grant programs. We have made contact with STAR-Ghana which is providing grants for monitoring district level governance issues and also for monitoring operations of the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) in the northern part of Ghana. We have also met with BUSAC to discuss their grant scheme.

Meeting with academia on agriculture research. We had meetings with the Head of Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness (DAEA) and with the Director of the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER), both of the University of Ghana, to understand their perspective on setting agricultural research agenda. The Provost of the College of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences and the Director of ISSER both serve on the METASIP. While ISSER is occasionally invited to provide research support to MOFA, DAEA has much closer work relations with the Ministry and carry out regular research assignments for MOFA. ISSER assured its preparedness to work more closely with MOFA. Presently, the DAEA is also running a PhD program in agricultural policy for African professionals, with support from AGRA.

Potential research support to private organizations. We have met with farmer umbrella bodies like the Federation of Associations of Ghanaian Exporters (FAGE), Sea-freight Pineapple Exporters of Ghana (SPEG) and the Private Enterprise Federation (PEF). These are private sector organizations pursuing various policy interests in the agricultural sector but have weak research base. We are in discussions over what level of research support, including training in policy research they may need.

A2b. Challenges and recommendations for adjustments and corrective action

By the present agricultural policy process, the METASIP/SAKSS is crucial in identifying relevant agricultural research topics for research to work on. Therefore, the present inactivity of the METASIP/SAKSS has not been helpful and poses a challenge for the implementation of this component.

We are however optimistic that once the short and long-term plans for the revival of the METASIP are completed and implemented, it will allow the project to support appropriately identified agricultural research topics. In the meantime, APSP is moving ahead with other activities such as developing the grants manual, working with universities on MOUs that may help to support post-graduate students' research topics and reach out to other stakeholders.

A2c. Outcomes of high-level meetings held and field visits

Meeting with Agriculture and Agribusiness Unit (AABU) of MOF. At the instance of USAID, a meeting was called to discuss potential support that the Project could provide to AABU. Present at the meeting were the embedded Technical Advisors at MOFA and MOF. The meeting agreed to have AABU's members incorporated into the planned training programs for MOFA's PPMED in order to build their capacity for policy research and analysis.

A2d. Planned activities for the next quarter

The following activities will be carried out during the second quarter:

- Hire the Grants Manager
- Develop a grant concept paper and manual for approval of USAID
- Train the field office staff on the grants manual
- Set up the grants management system
- Establish a small grants fund
- Map out potential grantees
- Agree with METASIP on important research topics
- Train staff of the AABU

A2e. Assessment of progress against the objectives and results



A3. Component 3: Policy Advocacy

This component is intended to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of the private agribusiness organizations, civil society organizations, including farmer-based organizations (FBOs) and other civil society organizations as well as the media, to enable them increase their participation and amplify their voice in the public policy process.

The project's immediate activities are to map CSOs and private sector agribusiness organizations and to develop criteria for selection of eligible CSOs and private sector organizations for participation in agricultural public private dialogue forums (APPDFs). The project will also conduct an overall assessment of their organizational and technical capacities to do public advocacy and strengthen their capacity for engagement in the agriculture policy process.

A3a. Progress to date

In keeping with this project component of establishing the framework for amplifying the voice of the private sector in the public policy process, progress is as follows:

Mapping of civil society and private organizations. Recognizing that Ghana has many civil society and private organizations with weak institutional governance regimes and fragile structures, mapping of civil society and private organizations has been a necessary activity during the quarter. The mapping exercise included holding initial consultative meetings and visits to private and civil society organizations such as:

- Ghana National Association Farmers and Fishermen (GNAFF)
- Ghana Rice Inter-professional Body (GRIB)
- SPEG
- PEF

- Ghana National Association of Poultry Farmers (GNAPF)
- Ghana Federation of Agriculture Producers (GFAP)
- Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAG)
- General Agriculture Workers Union (GAWU)
- FAGE
- Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA)
- Northern Agriculture Sector Working Group (NASWG)
- SEND-Ghana
- OXFAM
- Northern Ghana Network for Development
- Rural Media Network (RUMNET)
- Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC)
- Northern Bread Basket Coordinating Unit (NBBCU).
- Gender-sensitive civil society organizations such as ABANTU for Development, Network for Women’s Right (Netwright) and Women in Law and Development Africa (WilDAF) were also visited as part of the mapping exercise.

This mapping exercise was also extended into secondary sources such as reviewing documents from the Africa Lead Institutional Mapping and List of Champions of Change, MOFA’s FBO Desk, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection’s Department of Social Welfare. This activity started during the first quarter, and is still on-going with the primary objective of producing a compilation of all the information sources, documents and field reports.

“*The Advocate*”, published by RUMNET and “*Citizen Watch*” published by SEND Ghana have been identified as media houses to work with on amplifying the private sector capacity to advocate for agriculture policy.

As part of the project start-up consultative meetings and mapping exercise, the project field team used the opportunity to create awareness about the Project and solicit the support and buy-in from CSOs, private sector and media houses to further learn about their status, challenges and identification of areas of collaboration.

Development of guidelines for selecting public-private consultative groups and formation of Agriculture Public Private Development Forums (APPDFs). In order to identify credible and capable CSOs and private sector actors on the existing APPDFs and any other forums to promote private engagement in the policy process, a draft guideline has been developed in the first quarter to assist in the selection process. Currently, there are a number of forums at the national, regional and districts levels. Notable among them are the following:

- Agriculture Sector Working Group (ASWG) which comprises mainly development partners and MOFA at the national level
- Private Enterprise Federation (PEF) operating at the national level in Accra
- Northern Ghana Agriculture Sector Working Group which is an initiative from the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) and comprises NGOs working in the agriculture sectors, development partners, agribusiness enterprises, service providers and public sector (MOFA) working in the three northern regions

- Food Security Policy Advocacy Network (FOODSPAN)
- Technology forum led by USAID-ATT Project
- Ghana Trade and Livelihood Coalition led by the Peasant Farmers Association of Ghana (PFAAG) and the agribusiness forum, among others.

The guideline was developed through consultative meetings with some major stakeholders like PEF, BUSAC Fund and FOODSPAN to share their experiences. The development of the guideline received inputs from an extended research into secondary sources.

The project's staff and representatives from PEF are presently reviewing the draft document. Further consultations will be held with other Feed the Future Projects.

A3b. Challenges and recommendations for adjustments and corrective action

The high level of interest generated by the APSP poses a potential challenge in managing the expectations of the major stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Most of the farmer organizations and CSOs mapped have weak structures and problems with governance and representation. This poses a potential challenge to their adequate representation on the dialogue forums since the leadership of these organizations seem to represent themselves and not their constituents. To overcome this challenge, more time and resources need to be used to strengthen membership participation in the organization. This will lay the groundwork for further capacity building in association management, leadership and governance systems.

In addition, with a number of different grants programs ongoing for support to agriculture advocacy, the challenge for APSP will be to target unique and unmet demand and to collaborate effectively with other programs. We will avoid duplication of efforts and will contribute to expand project impacts by working together with other development partners.

A3c. Outcomes of high-level meetings held and field visits

Meeting with PEF. The project team had a meeting with PEF's Chief Executive Officer to discuss the revival of the APPDF and the role that the Project could play in the development of a sustainable initiative and in the provision of support to the forum itself and to its member organizations. The major outcome of the meeting was understanding the high level of interest shown by PEF in the project and the belief that we could help build the capacity of the forum to contribute meaningfully to the agriculture policy process. The APPDF, which is spearheaded by PEF, has been dysfunctional for some time now due to lack of capacity to continue its activities.

Meeting with BUSAC Fund. The purpose of the meeting was to familiarize with each project's mandate and area of focus and finding common grounds/interests for collaboration. The major outcome of the meeting was the identification of potential areas of collaboration such as the following:

- Promoting self-regulation in Foundation and Certified Seed production and distribution. The idea is to have the private sector exercising supervisory and

regulatory mandates to ensure quality of certified seed production. With the concurrence from MOFA, the Project would then provide technical assistance to the private sector to carry out this mandate.

- The Project is preparing guidelines for grant support. In this respect, it was agreed to coordinate on the terms for grant provision as well as to draw on the experiences of the BUSAC Fund on criteria for eligibility of applicants.
- Issues around access to finance and cost finance also emerged but both parties agree that this a complex matter to tackle with and could be an area of interest for FinGAP.

Field visits to the North and the SADA zone.

- The staff held consultative meetings with NBBCU and SADA officers where the project's goals and objectives were explained. It was also examined the possible utilization of the Northern Agriculture Sector Working Group (NASWG), which is being coordinated by these organizations, for promoting interaction among development partners, public policy institutions and the private sector in the agricultural sector. Representatives from NASWG indicated their willingness to receive a presentation from the project at their next meeting.
- The staff held consultative meetings with a number of CSOs operating on the Northern Region such as SEND-Ghana, Integrated Social Development Centre (ISODEC), and Northern Development Society (NORDESO), Oxfam-Ghana. The CSOs were briefed on the project and its implementation strategies and they have all expressed interest in collaborating with the project.
- The staff held meetings with key organizers and facilitators of, and participated in, the 2014 annual Northern Ghana pre-season networking forum for agricultural value chain actors and stakeholders. The annual event, organized by USAID's ADVANCE and AGRA's Agriculture Value Chain Mentorship Project could serve as a rallying point for championing of key agriculture policy advocacy issues, especially in the promotion of a public-private dialogue forums in the policy process.

A3d. Planned activities for the next quarter

- Champion civil society and private organizations involved in agriculture related activities (inclusive of gender sensitive ones), will be identified and classified according to the value chains (input supply, production, processing and marketing) to be included in the private public dialogue forums to discuss agriculture policy issues and other vital issues relevant to the development of agriculture in Ghana.
- As part of the mapping exercise, other private organizations such as those working with GCAP, USAID's FTF ADVANCE II and the six private sector Ghanaian agribusiness companies that have signed "letters of intent" with the G8 New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition Initiative to invest in the agriculture sector of Ghana in support of METASIP will be contacted.
- Finalize guideline for the selection of CSOs and private sector organizations for participation in the public-private forums (national and bi-national levels)
- Select CSOs and private sector organizations for participation in the public-private forums at national and bi-national levels

- Develop instrument for assessing the capacity of CSOs and private sector and media for participation in the forums and carrying out advocacy activities.
- Carry out capacity needs assessment of selected CSOs and private sector.
- Participate in stakeholders meeting to revive APPDF at national level
- Participate in the Joint Agriculture Sector Review meetings
- Participate in the Northern Regions Agriculture Sector Working Group Meeting

A3e. Assessment of progress against the objectives and results

The key objectives of the first quarter of Component 3 implementation have largely been achieved. In particular, the mapping of CSOs and private sector agribusiness organizations that are working on agriculture policy and advocacy and the development of criteria for selection of eligible CSOs and private sector organizations for participation in public-private forums have been achieved. The mapping exercise will be continued in the second quarter. The development of guidelines for the selection of CSOs and private sector organizations, which is in the draft stage, will be finalized in the second quarter of 2014. The ground work for continuous implementation of the activities outlined in the work plan for this component has been laid.

B. CROSSCUTTING STRATEGIES

B1. Communications

Chemonics provided a Communication Plan as part of its first year work plan submitted to the USAID. The plan spells out what the Project would do on regular basis to disseminate information on project activities. A Communication Expert is to be recruited to lead in the implementation of the plan. An advertisement, to this effect, has already been placed in the newspapers and the procurement process is on going to appoint the relevant expert during the second quarter.

In the interim, steps have been taken during the first quarter to create awareness about the reach of the Project. During our rounds of engagements with over forty organizations, in both the public and private sector, efforts were made to explain project objectives, purpose, deliverables and components. The contractor took steps to train its staff in monitoring evaluation and learning (MEL) aimed at providing staff with relevant basic communication skills. The official project launch itself would take place during the second quarter, especially after the meeting with MOFA management.

The Project has also been introduced at several fora, including the monthly meetings of the COPs in charge of USAID/Ghana Feed the Future's Projects, unofficially named as the "Collaborative Circle of COPs" (CCC). In March, 2014, two of our staff participated in Knowledge Management and Learning (KM&L) sessions organized in Tamale by the ATT Project and the occasion provided the opportunity to explain the Project to participants, as well as other farmer and civil society organizations visited. One innovation of the CCCs meetings is to adopt a common monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approach and have a common baseline for measurement. To this end, the project responded proactively to the requests of the CCCs by submitting baseline data needs and M&E indicators.

B2. Gender

The Gender strategy is also provided for in the first year work plan of the Project. The strategy anticipates possible gender constraints in Ghana's agriculture and the institutional framework for gender integration. The strategy goes further to propose strategies for dealing with potential gender inequalities, including ensuring that gender considerations are interwoven at every stage of the project cycle and coordinating the strategies with other Feed the Future Projects.

To achieve gender sensitiveness among our staff, they were trained during the first quarter in gender responsiveness by experts from Chemonics home office and a locally recruited short-term expert. Accordingly, in developing our GANTT Chart, as part of the work plan, we made sure that almost all activities identified were marked as gender sensitive activities.

C. COLLABORATION WITH OTHER FEED THE FUTURE PROJECTS

- APSP representatives have been actively participating at all of the meetings of the CCCs. The purpose of the CCCs is to share project information and seek common areas of work to avoid duplication and to achieve results in a more cost effective manner.
- We have attended the launching ceremonies of the Africa Lead II initiative in Accra and that of the ADVANCE II Project in Tamale.
- Project staff participated at the KM&L session organized in Tamale by the ATT Project.
- It has been agreed on that the project would be cost-sharing the development of the seed policy into implementable projects with ATT and AGRA.
- The project is also working with Africa Lead II in a cost-sharing arrangement to build capacity of the ASWG Secretariat at the MOFA.
- We are participating fully to undertake a common baseline and establish a composite M&E to serve the purpose of all Feed the Future Projects.
- We have attended a common Baseline and KM&L meetings organized in Accra by ADVANCE II and made the necessary inputs.

During next quarter, we will continue to fulfill our obligations to all the relationship already started and explore opportunities for more. During the second quarter, we will be working with BUSAC, among other things, to promote self-regulation in the seed industry, as part of efforts at re-structuring the industry.

D. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

D1. Human Resources and Recruitment

A Policies and Procedures Manual to guide operations and human resource management was developed over the period applying Chemonics policies and knowledge of the Ghana labor market. To ensure compliance with country specific regulations, this manual was reviewed by a local lawyer. Training will be scheduled to ensure understanding of the procedures and policies and to obtain feedback.

Employment Agreements have been developed, reviewed by a local attorney and have been finalized for use in hiring long term project staff. In arriving at a benefits package for CCNs to be included in the Policy and Procedures manual and Employment Agreements, Chemonics surveyed existing USAID funded projects to ensure that benefits offered were in line and competitive to retain quality staff. Care has been taken to select a private health insurance scheme to cater for health of staff and their dependents.

Recruitment and hiring have been completed for the following positions: Chief of Party, Senior Policy and Institutional Strengthening Specialist, Capacity Building Specialist, Policy Advocacy Specialist and Office Manager.

Interviews have been conducted for the following positions and the process is on-going to recruit these experts to beef up the staff numbers during the second quarter: Agricultural Economist, Communications and Media Specialist, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist and the Grants and Subcontracts Manager.

The Operations Director/Local Capacity Building Specialist, and other support staff such as drivers, receptionist, and administrative assistant have been identified and will join the team during the second quarter.

In all cases, Chemonics followed a competitive recruitment process to identify and select qualified candidates to fill the positions. The processes of identifying candidates included newspaper advertisements; recommendations from other USAID funded projects and stakeholder recommendations.

D2. Procurement

Chemonics' rigorous procurement processes ensure integrity and the best value for money. In the first quarter, the project identified and paid for office space at [REDACTED] in Accra and negotiated housing for the Chief of Party. The contract for office space furnishing has been awarded and the office space will be largely operational by the end of May 2014. Prior to when we move into our permanent location on May 1, 2014, the project has been housed in temporary offices at [REDACTED] in Accra. Procurement processes are advanced for the acquisition of the following: an SUV, laptops and desktop computers, internet and security service and mobile telecommunications

Although the project was registered at the beginning of April, local banking regulations and bank procedures have slowed the opening of the project bank account considerably. The absence of a local bank account has slowed the procurement process, but will pick-up considerably in May 2014.

D3. Finance

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

