

Mid-Term Evaluation Report

Project Victory against Malnutrition - ViM

Prepared By

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AGRODIA	Association des Grossistes et Détaillants d'Intrants Agricoles
APIL	Action pour la Promotion des Initiatives Locales
ARR	Annual Results Report
ATAD	Alliance Technique d'Assistance au Développement
ATAZ	Agricultural Technical Assistance Zone
AZND	Association Zood Nooma pour le Développement
BCC	Behavioral Communication Change
BCRW	Burkina Faso Coalition for Women's Rights
CBDF	Coalition Burkinabè pour les Droits des Femmes
CF	Complementary Food
CHA	Community Health Agent
CLTS	Community Led Total Sanitation
CMAM	Community Management of Acute Malnutrition
COP	Chief of Party
CRA	Chambre régionale d'agriculture
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSB	Corn Soy Blend
CSPS	Centre de Santé et de Promotion Sociale
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DD	Detailed Design
DGPER	Direction Générale pour la Promotion de l'Economie Rurale
DIP	Detailed Implementation Plan
DRRAH	Direction Regionale des Ressources Animales et Halieutiques
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FFP	Office of Food for Peace
FFS	Farmer Field School
FY	Fiscal Year (October 1st through September 30th)
GoBF	Government of Burkina Faso
HQ	Headquarters
IEC	Information Education Communication
IGA	Income Generating Activities
INERA	Institut de l'Environnement et de Recherches Agricoles
INSD	Institut National de la Statistique et de la Démographie
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
IR	Intermediate Result
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
LIP	Local Implementing Partner
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAH	Ministère d'Agriculture et de l'Hydraulique
MCHN	Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition
ML	Mother Leaders
MFI	Micro-Finance Institution
MRA	Ministère des ressources animales
MTE	Mid Term Evaluation
MYAP	Multi-Year Assistance Program
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNS	National Nutrition Survey
OP	Organisation Paysanne (Producer Organizations)
P4P	Purchase for Progress

PAFASP	Programme d'Appui aux Filières Agro Sylvo Pastorales
PDQ	Partnership Defined Quality
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan
PLW	Pregnant and Lactating Women
PM2A	Preventing Malnutrition in Children under Two Approach
PNC	Pre-Natal Consultation
PoNC	Post-Natal Consultation
PREP	Pipeline and Resource Estimate Proposal
PRESEA	Projet de Renforcement des Services d'Eau potable et d'Assainissement
R2	Second Generation Seeds
RCPB	Réseau des Caisses Populaires du Burkina
REGIS-ER	Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel Enhanced Resilience
RUSF	Ready-to-Use Supplementary Food
SBC	Social Behavior Change
SC+	Super Cereal Plus
SCI	Save the Children International
SECOPA	Société d'Etude et de commercialisation de produits Agricoles
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SO	Strategic Objective
SONAGESS	National Society of Food Security Stock Management
SPAI	Sous Produits Agro-Industriels
STO	Specialized Technical Officer
ToR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
UDPN	Union Départementale des Producteurs de Niébé
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	Value Chain
ViM	Victory against Malnutrition
VVV	Vulgarisateur Volontaire Villageois (Volunteer Village Vaccinator)
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WSC/DRS	Water and Soil Conservation / Defense and Restoration of Soil

Executive Summary

General presentation of the project and strategy. Burkina Faso is a Sahelian country whose economy is mainly based on agriculture and livestock farming¹. The population's diet depends heavily on agricultural production, which is concentrated over a period of few months as a result of the seasonality of rainfall. Moreover, every year rural families and communities face structural food insecurity during the lean period from May to September. The nutritional situation of children in Burkina Faso is closely linked to this food insecurity and, therefore, it is characterized by endemic chronic malnutrition. The project Victory against Malnutrition (ViM), scheduled to last five years (08/2011 - 12/2016), which is financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Food for Peace (FFP), is directed by ACDI/VOCA in partnership with Save the Children International (SCI) and the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV). Its purpose is to “reduce food insecurity among vulnerable rural populations in the province of Sanmatenga.” It has been implemented in four target communities in the province of Sanmatenga in the Central Northern region of Burkina Faso (communes of Kaya, Barsalogho, Pissila and Namissiguima). It involves three complementary strategic objectives, while paying particular attention to the issues of gender equity and sustainable development. The three strategic objectives (SOs) are:

SO1: Increased and diversified agricultural production

SO2: Improved household income

SO3: Reduced chronic malnutrition among children under five and pregnant and lactating women.

ACDI/VOCA is in charge of the general, administrative and financial coordination of the project. A primarily administrative team has been established in Ouagadougou.

SO1 and SO2 are being implemented in the field by three Local Implementing Partners (LIPs) recruited at the beginning of the project by an ACDI/VOCA operating team based in Kaya. SO3 is being implemented directly by a SCI team based in Kaya.

The first two objectives have been pursued through the following main approaches: targeting six priority value chains (cowpea, sorghum, small ruminants, poultry, tomato and onion), selecting groups of producers based on criteria aiming to reach the most vulnerable population, technical training through field schools, guided visits, organizational strengthening of groups through specific training, in particular for endogenous trainers, and implementing a value chain-approach that links the various actors in the sector. For this reason, support activities have been organized through partnerships to enable the involvement of agro dealers (through fairs), as well as technical support from government officers (vaccination campaigns, supervision and support of field school activities and guided visits), and joint commercialization operations. The objective of sustainability is pursued by strengthening LIP teams and linkages between local actors and local micro finance institutions.

¹ INSD, 2011

The SO3 strategy is based on the World Health Organizations's 1,000 days initiative, around the following: Prevention of Malnutrition Among Children Under Two (PM2A), strengthening knowledge, institutional support and notably the Partnership Defined Quality (PDQ) to improve access to health services, Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), to improve hygiene and sanitation practices with an emphasis on building and using latrines, stop open defecation and promote hand washing, accompanying CLTS by constructing or rehabilitating community hygiene and sanitation infrastructures.

The Project seeks to integrate the three strategic objectives, and for this purpose it gives priority to SO3 beneficiaries in selecting SO1 and SO2 beneficiaries, but also through the mechanism of small grants.

Objectives of the evaluation and methodology. The methodology was designed around an assessment matrix. This consists of assessment questions divided into broad topics: information to be collected, source of the information, collection tools and methods to analyze information. Three types of sources for information were defined: (i) project documents and preparatory studies, activity reports, annual reports, including Indicator Performance Tracking Tables (IPTT) tables (ii) interviews (focus groups, individual interviews), (iii) self-analysis workshops with team members (iv), and observations in the field. The mission took place from November 17, 2014 to January 20, 2015.

Assessment of SO1 and SO2

Achieved results and progress

The project achieved satisfactory results after only two years of implementation:

- 600 groups, including a total of 16,985 producers operating in the six promoted value chains, supported by the project in the technical and organizational fields;
- The agricultural and livestock practices proposed by the project are highly appreciated by the producers, who can test these innovations in their own land and on their animals;
- The framework for training and the dissemination of techniques is particularly well adapted to an overwhelmingly illiterate population, and enables a good appropriation of the practices;
- The fairs have allowed producers to acquire input to implement all the improved technical itineraries on small areas and witness for themselves the productivity of the new techniques;
- The improved cowpea and sorghum seeds are widely distributed, beyond the beneficiaries of the fairs;
- The vaccination campaigns have improved the animals' health and growth;
- Cowpea and tomato producers have carried out group commercialization operations;
- There are 60 hectares of low-lands and irrigated land under development;

- An agreement was signed with popular credit unions network to install village banks and give women access to credit;
- The non-agricultural micro-projects and the diversification of the production activities are beginning, through the small grant program.

The achievement rate of project targets range between 70 and 170%. However, the achievement of these objectives may be undermined by a number of obstacles:

- The organizational strengthening of the groups is still limited;
- With regards to consolidating value chains, the links between different links are still required;
- For rainfed crops, the improved technical itineraries are mainly applied on the area covered by subsidized inputs, but certain structural difficulties (lack of funds) still prevent the adoption of these practices across the entire farm;
- Livestock fairs have only had a moderate success, due to the rising prices in certain sites and the non-availability of animals;
- For rainfed crops, the drop in subsidies for inputs in the second year caused the level of participation in fairs to fall. This suggests that pursuing fertilizer supply will be limited for the most vulnerable producers.

Thus, the objectives of improving agricultural and livestock production have already made several achievements. The subsidized plots of land are proving successful; however the constraints on access to production inputs remain, notably for rainfed crops.

The linkages with agro-dealers and the market depend heavily on strengthening producer organizations. The project has identified this challenge, and had begun a self-diagnosis of the groups, to ensure targeted and strengthened support in this area.

Analysis of the results, approaches and strategy

The analyses of the implementation strategy have led to the following conclusions:

- The value chain approach must enable cooperation among the different links of the sectors in order to improve their development. To achieve the project's objectives, this strategy brings both strengths and weaknesses:
 - o The various approaches of the project (organizing fairs, facilitating marketing) contribute to linking producers to the other actors of the value chain:
 - Relationships were established between producers and distributors thanks to the fairs, but they need to be strengthened by correcting the insufficiencies identified in the current report;
 - Facilitating access to the market mainly concerns the value chains of cowpea, tomato and onion. The unions create a more relevant level of structuration for this activity, as already demonstrated by the project, while strengthening the groups that compose these unions;

- The resilience of the agricultural farms is based on a production system that combines polyculture and breeding, and makes it possible to reduce the risks and diversify the sources of income. In this regard, achieving the SO1 would benefit from integrating the various value chains essential for the zone, to have an impact on the entire production system.
- The approach of working through the farmers' groups allows coverage for a higher number of producers and multiplies the effects of the support (for example through the dissemination of the improved seeds). However, their potential for developing services for their members has not been sufficiently exploited;
- Farmer knowledge and the reality of the constraints of production systems are not taken into consideration in a systematic top-down approach of technical itineraries that are "ideal" but not always applicable by producers, due to limitations of equipment, workforce and access to inputs.
- Access constraints to production factors (land, equipment, organic manure, inputs) specific to women are an additional obstacle to enable them to implement the proposed techniques, especially for rain-fed crops. Food security of the family rests largely on the family field managed by the head of exploitation.

This way, achieving the objectives of the project and sustaining the results requires consolidating the conditions for intensifying and structuring the value chains. The project must therefore emphasize the most structuring activities, to ensure that objectives are achieved:

- access to credit;
- strengthening producer organizations, from the level of groups to that of departmental unions;
- water-agricultural infrastructure (lowlands and vegetable gardening irrigation perimeters) and diversifying sources of income (agricultural and non-agricultural);
- partnerships with other actors, to mutualize the support and consolidate the project's exit strategy.

This approach has targeted far too many groups, and has paid too little attention to their potential. Many groups have a small scope for progression due to their initial state, support framework and requirements for close support.

The main recommendations, most of which have already been implemented by the project, are the following:

- Strengthen the current self-diagnosis and support of groups, through a strategic analysis of the services that some are developing and of their environment;
- Strengthen selectively support for farmers' unions in their support function to groups particularly marketing;
- Promote farmers' knowledge and practices, and use the typology of agricultural farms to better adapt the technical itineraries proposed for each type of constraint;
- Monitor and consolidate the framework to give women access to credit, and develop a framework to give holding managers access to credit.

Cross-cutting issues common to SO1 and SO2 (Environment, Gender, Capacity Building).

The SO1 and SO2 component also comprise cross-cutting topics: gender, environment, strengthening partners' capacities, sustainability and exit strategy.

Gender. The activities surrounding gender have been carried out in partnership with the Coalition Burkinabè pour les Droits de la Femme (CBDF), which trained the field officers on this topic. However, the training of trainers on these sensitive topics, in addition to the significant turnover of field teams, does not appear to have brought the expected results. The following recommendation must be taken into account:

- Strengthen the measures for raising awareness on gender, using interactive tools and including community leaders..

The environment is taken into consideration, through the Water and Soil Conservation / Defense and Restoration of Soil (WSC/DRS) training and the (Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan) PERSUAP study for the use of phytosanitary products. However, though the zaï and half-moon techniques have been improved, the stone bunds have only been partly implemented due to the lack of means to transport the stones for the majority of the villages. Moreover, to protect the crops, the project has exclusively promoted chemical products to the detriment of agro-ecological techniques, despite their availability (association of crops, using local products, tobacco, pepper and garlic), which could be combined in an integrated pest control system. The following is recommended:

- Develop partnerships to strengthen the environmental component, by supporting the transport of the stones and promote biologic pest control techniques, notably for vegetable crops.

For the partners' capacities building, and mainly the LIPs, despite the numerous skills and tools acquired by their staff, the institutional strengthening of those local Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) and the partners remains limited for the following reasons:

- The collaborations are based more on providing services than on a real upgrading of the internal skills of the partners;
- The funding, management and planning procedures contribute to weaken the partners in terms of cash flow and organization of the LIP teams;
- The LIPs have seen a significant turnover of their field teams, which implies a considerable loss in skills.

The following recommendations should be considered:

- Strengthen the follow up and the reinforcement of new staff capacities on strategic themes;
- Ensure that the LIPs effectively apply the salary scales agreed with the coordination of the Project since mid-2014.

The sustainability of the interventions is not fully guaranteed at this stage:

- The application of new techniques remains limited due to structural constraints in the production systems (including access to credit, level of equipment and access to organic manure);
- Once the project is no longer operating, the groups will experience great difficulties in obtaining high quality and affordable products;

- The obstacles faced by the groups (capacities for management and coordination with external actors) have barely been alleviated and can still have repercussions on the commercialization at the end of the project, despite the contacts established by the project;
- The LIPs are not capable of maintaining a close support and advice service for producers beyond the duration of the project;
- As regards the technical services by government officers, in view of the human, logistic and financial resources, doubt can be expressed on the continuation of the local advice and support services, which are currently being provided following the implementation of the project.

The **exit strategy** is already being implemented, and its relevance is confirmed by this mission, which suggests that emphasis should be placed on the following points to ensure sustainability and minimize the aforementioned constraints:

- Reinforcing strategic partnerships with other actors in the zone (NGO/projects, technical services, Micro-Finance Institutions (MFIs), producer unions, etc.) to strengthen the framework conditions to intensify the production systems: access to credit, storage/conservation infrastructures, technical support, etc.
- Reinforce support for groups, notably those with the greatest potential.
- Identify the unions of groups with the greatest potential for development, with a view to reinforcing and complementing their initiatives, to progressively transfer the technical assistance, supply and commercialization duties to them.

Evaluation of SO3

Achieved results and progress

For the targeting of beneficiaries, a census of households in the target area was carried out from January to March 2012. This enabled the creation of a database of households in the intervention zone. From March to June 2012, the community bodies aimed to support the project were formed. In December 2014, the following community bodies were functional:

- 46 village committees in charge of managing the food in the community warehouses and distributing it;
- 42 village committees implementing the CLTS;
- 248 care groups, composed of 2,325 Mother Leaders (MLs) trained by 29 Health/Nutrition promoters;
- 2,325 neighborhood groups trained by MLs, implemented progressively from December 2012.

The activities under SO3 at the community level began with the implementation of the CLTS in March 2012 in 42 villages, followed by the distribution of food rations in September 2012, benefiting 199 villages across 46 distribution sites. The activities of the neighborhood groups directed by the MLs started later, in December 2012. The institutional support to improve the quality of health services enabled the training of the Community Health Agents (CHAs) from 60 villages on various topics including Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM), Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), and Water and Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). The PDQ has been carried out in two pilot Centre de Santé et de Promotion Sociale (CSPS) (Guiendbila and Damesma) since December 2013.

The targeting of activities, actors and beneficiaries have generally been very appropriate. The distribution of food, whose relevance is fully justified by the high rates of malnutrition in the zone, has been a real lever that has promoted all other activities of the project under SO3. The activities of Information Education Communication (IEC)/ Behavioral Communication Change (BCC) on good practice in health, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation by the community actors (MLs and sanitation committees) respond to the needs and contexts of the communities. The mass media, and notably theater and video projections, have been greatly useful for the population, despite their limited use.

The main achievements in the promotion of maternal nutrition and health practices are satisfactory. In November 2014, the project had 2,325 MLs that provided IEC/BCC for 23,694 mothers, with a participation rate that varied between 80 and 100%. The impact of the MLs' on practical activities is visible in all communities especially in terms of hygiene and sanitation. The mothers are now highly familiar with the recommended practices for breastfeeding, which still need to be put into practice to raise the exclusive breastfeeding rate, currently estimated at 47%. The food distribution program is supported by an efficient logistics system, which has prevented shortages. Nevertheless, the expected targets of the program have been exceeded: in 2014, the implementation rates were 224.8% for pregnant/lactating women and 179.7% for children. All actors involved agree that the provision of food has had a very positive influence on the nutritional status of women and children. Unfortunately, the monitoring indicators (calculated based on the population of children from 0 to 59 months) do not reflect this reality. For example, the rate of low weight dropped from 24.7% to 18.8% between 2012 and 2014, after a slight increase in 2013 (IPTT, 2014).

With regards to the improvement of the quality of health services, a positive evolution was observed across all the indicators. Thanks to the motivation inspired by the food distribution, the proportion of mothers having had at least four Pre-Natal Consultations (PNCs) passed from 38.8% in 2012 to 58.5% in 2014 (IPTT, 2014). Among children, the total immunization rate rose from 39.1% in 2012 to 79.5% in 2014 (IPTT, 2014). The implementation of PDQ has been successful in the pilot CSPA. In Guiendbila, according to the estimations by nurses, the program has led to a rise in assisted childbirth from 50% to 90%. Unfortunately, this has not been accompanied by the necessary equipment, which could have optimized the care.

The CLTS has been implemented in the 42 targeted villages, and has been adopted by the population. The village sanitation committees are functional, and have driven the rate of households with access to latrines from 12 to 23.4% between 2013 and 2014 in the villages in which the CLTS has been implemented. The latrines are built using local materials and techniques. The main limit is the sustainability of this construction, due to the weak resistance of the wooden planks commonly used. In the village of Dem, for instance, the committee estimated that out of ten latrines built out of wood, an average of four collapsed after a rainy season. Success stories such as the more resistant stone slab should therefore be reproduced on a large scale.

In 2014, 12.7% of persons were estimated to be familiar with the main stages of hand-washing. Contrary to these statistics, the mothers receiving the food have a good knowledge of these stages, as do the pupils of the village of Dem. The main obstacle in terms of water, hygiene and sanitation is the lack of drinking water: for example, in Pissila a 20-liter container of water was sold for 75 or 100 FCFA during the dry season. In addition to this, there is a shortage of soap, which is replaced by ash for hand-washing.

Analysis of the results, approaches and strategy

An analysis of the strategies and approaches implemented by SO3 led to the following observations:

- Strategies and approaches to promote health and nutrition are globally satisfactory. The beneficiaries of the food still need to be accompanied by strengthening the exit strategy, which implies a strong synergy between the SO1 & SO2 and SO3.
- Mothers have a low capacity to value local foods in a balanced diet. The scheduled IEC/BCC sessions by MLs on complementary foods are expected to partly address this weakness, but the availability of household food in quantity and quality should continue to be improved through SO1 and SO2.
- There is no indication of the MLS activities being sustainable; the risk is so high that the neighborhood groups activity will not survive over the end of the project.
- The performances of the health centers have significantly increased by the ViM project, which promotes the monitoring of maternal and child check-ups and care, by providing food rations. Now that the mothers have perceived the use of the care at CSPS, it is highly likely that this dynamic will be maintained at the end of the project.
- The implementation of the PDQ approach is successful a priori, despite the shortage in equipment to support it. By capitalizing the experience of CSPS pilots, it could be scaled up on the medium or long term.
- The CLTS approach has been adopted in the 42 selected villages, and has a certain guarantee of sustainability. However, the coexistence of other approaches, including subsidies in the project zone, is an obstacle.
- The main weakness of the local sanitation infrastructure is sustainability, while local knowledge such as using stone slabs has not been disseminated.
- Households have severe shortages, to the extent of lacking soap on a permanent basis, and the drinking water points do not cover the population's needs.

The following recommendations can be made, based on these observations and the issues that they raise:

- Improving mothers' knowledge capital regarding complementary food, placing more emphasis on the second component of the IEC/SBCC on complement foods.
- In addition to raising awareness, provide specific support to mothers for IGAs, to improve the food availability.
- Combine the activities of the ViM project with those of other projects likely to make drinking water available or promote water purification techniques as a palliative solution.

- Make soap production a synergic action between Strategic Objectives for IGAs to fund, to improve hygiene practices and disseminate promising local practices such as stone slabs for the construction of lasting latrines.
- Install a community system to manage MLs and give autonomy to the care groups, by integrating them further into the activities of SO1 and SO2, and notably subsidizing non-agricultural activities.
- Improve the community's contribution to the project's activities through regular meetings to raise awareness that recognizes the work by community volunteers.
- Improve the integration between SO1/SO2 and SO3 to reach a greater proportion of beneficiaries of SO3, by facilitating access of SO3 volunteer actors to the services provided through the project SO1 and SO2.

Management, monitoring and evaluation

The management of the project is marked by:

- Insufficient appropriation and common understanding of the project by the members of the team;
- Parallel implementation of the two components of the project and an insufficient coordination between the ACIDI/VOCA and SCI teams.
- Insufficient accountability of the field teams in the project's strategic orientations;
- Certain obstacles due to procedures and validation of decisions, which delay the implementation and hinder the effectiveness of the actions and credibility of field teams.

Finally, the implementation adheres too closely to the project document, and does not sufficiently seize the reorientation opportunities that emerged from the reports on implementation in the field. This undermines the initiatives to introduce corrective and adaptive measures.

Integration is a dimension that has been sought since the conception of the Project.

However, the lack of cross-referenced data of the two components makes it impossible to quantify the degree of integration of the beneficiaries for the two components. All the qualitative data collected during the evaluation suggests a weak level of synergy for mutual strengthening. This implies notably an insufficient involvement of actors in SO3, and in particular the volunteers in the village committees in charge of managing and distributing the food and sanitation, in the agricultural and non-agricultural activities of SO1 and SO2.

The mechanism of *small grants* is supposed to stimulate and build integration by supporting activities upstream and downstream of the production. However, the review of the projects undergoing validation demonstrated that there are not yet any projects that sufficiently integrate the various components, and that support sustainability.

Monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management The system is coherent, corresponds to good practices in the design of monitoring and evaluation systems, and provides a large quantity of information which is updated annually.

The main shortcomings of the system are:

- The weakness demonstrated by the analysis of evolutions: difficulties faced in passing from output to outcomes, analysis of difficulties and propositions for improvements.
- Team members' poor knowledge of certain IPTT indicators.
- Doubt regarding the relevance and reliability of the information provided by certain outcome indicators, as the subsequent annual surveys on a sample are not controlled.
- A large amount of information to be collected, in particular relating to activities (and processes), which implies an overload of work for the LIP officers. There is therefore doubt regarding the cost/opportunity of collecting certain information.
- Weak organization of the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system, undermining the capacity of M&E directors. (i) to ensure the alignment of the two databases; (ii) assume the responsibility of the reliability of all the data integrated into the indicators.

In terms of the management of knowledge, lessons and achievements are not sufficiently shared and analyzed by the concerned parties for the implementation of the project. On another scale, there is sufficient exchange between the ViM Project and institutions pursuing similar objectives.

Creating synergy with Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel – Enhance Resilience (REGIS-ER). The ACDI/VOCA team, following a presentation of the REGIS-ER, made and shared with REGIS-ER the list of the activities that can favor synergy of action in the field. The REGIS-ER branch in the North Central took the initiative of presenting and discussing its project preparations (2014), and took into consideration the achievements of the ViM Project and the potential that these represent for its own objectives. These are recent initiatives, which demonstrate the will for complementarity, with good perspectives.

General and complementary lessons and recommendations

Regarding the management of the team and coordination of all stakeholders

- Further accountability of the operational teams: improving communication, confidentiality and collective responsibility.
- Improve overall coordination and the integration system: Organize review and planning meetings of the two sub-teams coordinated by the COP every three months and then every year. The main local partners (LIPs, health and hygiene promoters) will take part in these meetings.

Regarding the Monitoring and Evaluation

- Continue and put into practice the reflection and agreements carried out by ACDI-VOCA and SCI in order to enhance the functionality of the monitoring and evaluation system, by assigning the director of M&E to supervise the entire system.
- Reduce the indicators and information collection sheets: Exchange workshops involving an M&E officer from the ACDI/VOCA headquarters, the local M&E team, the Project team and the directors of the main Partner structures, for an in-depth reflection on the indicators and the alignments of information collection sheets.

- Improve the qualitative dimension in Monitoring and Evaluation: an annual review of the various components of the Project (SO1, SO2, SO3) to identify the strengths and factors that favor or hinder sustainability, carried out under the direct involvement of the directorate of Monitoring and Evaluation in collaboration with the Directorates of the SOs, LIPs and health and nutrition promoters.
- Improve the sharing of information from the Monitoring and Evaluation and strategic planning: Organization of two joint workshops to finalize the annual reports (based on a draft prepared by the Director of Monitoring and Evaluation and the Chief of Party), and on sharing and discussion, after validation by USAID.
- Enhance capitalization and sharing of knowledge: Define, during yearly review exercises, important topics on which exchanges must be capitalized and organized, within the Project team, for SO1 and SO2 as well as SO3. In the same regard, the successes recorded by other partners, in the North Central region and outside, can be disseminated and led to targeted visits, where necessary.

Creating synergy with REGIS/ER.

The connection could be achieved by formalizing a collaboration protocol between REGIS/ER and ViM, at a national level. The Directorates of the REGIS/ER and ViM Projects must design “Guidelines” (frameworks for orientation and strategy) that commit them and clarify the strategic focus, new activities to consider and principles for collaboration.

Globally, REGIS/ER could support the implementation of the recommendations regarding the exit strategy from the current evaluation, notably a plan to strengthen both the groups and unions (which are currently not sufficiently considered yet), taking into consideration supporting direct partnerships between the Réseau des Caisses Populaires du Burkina (RCPB) and the Organisation Paysanne (OP)DDin a targeted and experimental manner, supporting SO3 actors and promoting infant flour. REGIS/ER would incorporate the complementary actions required to respond to the strengthened resilience: boreholes for drinking water, pastoral hydraulics and storage infrastructure.

1. Presentation of the ViM project

1.1 General presentation of the Project

1.1.1. Fragile food security

Burkina Faso is a Sahelian country whose economy is based mainly on agriculture and livestock (INSD, 2011). The food for the population is heavily dependent on agricultural production, which is concentrated over a few months as a result of the seasonality of rainfall. Moreover, every year rural families and communities face structural food insecurity during the lean period from May to September. In addition to this are cyclical food crises linked to droughts, flooding and locus invasions, among others. One example was the 2011-2012 crop year, characterized by low rainfall and poor spatial-temporal distribution. This led to a food crisis that severely affected 2.8 million people, mainly in the Sahel, north and east regions.² In the North Central, where the estimated harvests only covered 40% of required quantities, the province of Sanmatenga was the worst affected, and it is estimated that 100,712 persons were living in food insecurity (DGPER, 2012).

1.1.2. A prevalence of acute and chronic malnutrition.

The nutritional situation of children in Burkina Faso is closely linked to this food insecurity and is therefore characterized by endemic chronic malnutrition. According to data from the WHO, the national prevalence of chronic infant malnutrition reached 32.9% in 2006, with a rate of 34.2% in the North Central region and 33.3% in the province of Sanmatenga. The severe forms of malnutrition affect 10.5% of children across Burkina Faso, and up to 13.6% in the North Central region.

As a consequence of the state of food insecurity of households, the nutritional situations in the Center North region could also be explained by inadequate IYCF practices. To illustrate this, the National Nutritional Survey (NNS, 2012) stated that:

- the exclusive breastfeeding rate in the North Central was estimated at only 33% in 2012, against 62% in the North region;
- only 78.7% of children living there had received the colostrum, against a national average of 84.2%
- in that region, the weaning period involves a late introduction of complementary foods among 48.6% of children, and an average of 1.4 groups of food consumed by children between 6 and 23 months;

To summarize: only 4.7% of children between six and 23 months benefit from minimum acceptable dietary practices (NNS, 2012).

1.1.3. Reminder on ViM project (five years: 08/2011 - 12/2016)

The project Victory against Malnutrition (ViM), financed by USAID/FFP, is managed by ACDI/VOCA, in partnership with SCI, Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) and three national Burkina Faso-based NGOs (ATAD, APIL and AZND), and aims to “*reduce food insecurity among vulnerable rural populations in the province of Sanmatenga.*” It has been implemented in four target communes in the province of Sanmatenga in the North Central region of Burkina Faso: Kaya, Barsalogo, Pissila and Namissiguima.

² According to a joint evaluation by DGPER, FAO, FEWS NET and WFP.

The gender and access to inputs components have been implemented in partnership with CBDF and Association des Grossistes et Détaillants d'Intrants Agricoles (AGRODIA), respectively. The ViM project involves three complementary strategic objectives, while paying particular attention to the issues of gender inequity and sustainable development. The strategic objectives are the following:

- SO1 : Increased and diversified agricultural production.
- SO2 : Improved household income.
- SO3 : Reduced chronic malnutrition among children under the age of five and pregnant and lactating women.

These goals correspond to the sources of food insecurity and malnutrition identified in the project's intervention zone:

- limited food availability, due to poorly productive agriculture and breeding systems;
- the difficulty among households to obtain food products, as a result of limited income, lack of information, among others;
- inadequate nutritional and hygiene practices, aggravated by limited access to health services;
- low autonomy and schooling rate and high marginalization among women, among others.

The assessment of the project at this stage, which was geographically concentrated, shows relatively significant interventions for the number of beneficiaries reached. The table below summarizes the main results of the project.

GO: Reduced food insecurity among vulnerable rural populations in the province of Sanmatenga

Directed by: ACIDI / VOCA 168 102 beneficiaries (25 470 households)

	Implementation	Main results
SO1: Increased and diversified agricultural production: IR 1.1 – Improved agricultural practices are adopted IR 1.2 – Improved smallholders’ access to agricultural inputs IR 1.3 - Improved livestock practices adopted	ACIDI / VOCA Local partners: ATAD (Kaya) APIL(Pissila) AZND (Barsalogho and Namissiguima) AGRODIA State services	600 selected groups (total of 16 985 producers, 10,306 beneficiaries have already received a subsidy from the project): - Value chain of onions and tomatoes : 1,755 producers involved - Value chain of sorghum and cowpea: 6,401 producers involved - Value chain of small ruminants: 2,150 breeders involved - Value chain of poultry: 129 breeders involved (vaccination)
SO2: Improved household incomes IR 2.1 – Improved linkages to market IR 2.2 – Improved access to business development services		Building links between groups of producers and buyers. Supporting the development of small artisanal or food production units. Facilitating access to credit for groups of producers Establishing a partnership with FCP to foster women's access to formal credit
SO3: Reduced chronic malnutrition among children under five years of age and pregnant and lactating women (PLW) IR 3.1 – Improved mother s and Children Health and Nutrition practices. IR 3.2 – Improved quality of health services IR 3.3 – Improved hygiene and sanitation practices	SCI State health services; Mass media	2 325 community organizer Leader Mothers trained, 23,694 mothers involved, 60 community health volunteers trained. Monthly distribution of food rations for 27,801 children and 21,555 pregnant and lactating women.³ Family rations distributed for 20,868 households, 42 village sanitary committees established (425 members) / 102 family latrines and 235 hand-washing stations built during FY13⁴, construction /Rehabilitation of 13 public latrines.

Figure 1: Main results of the ViM Project

³ Fiscal year 2014

⁴ The report FY2014 does not provide the figure for family latrines and hand-washing stations constructed

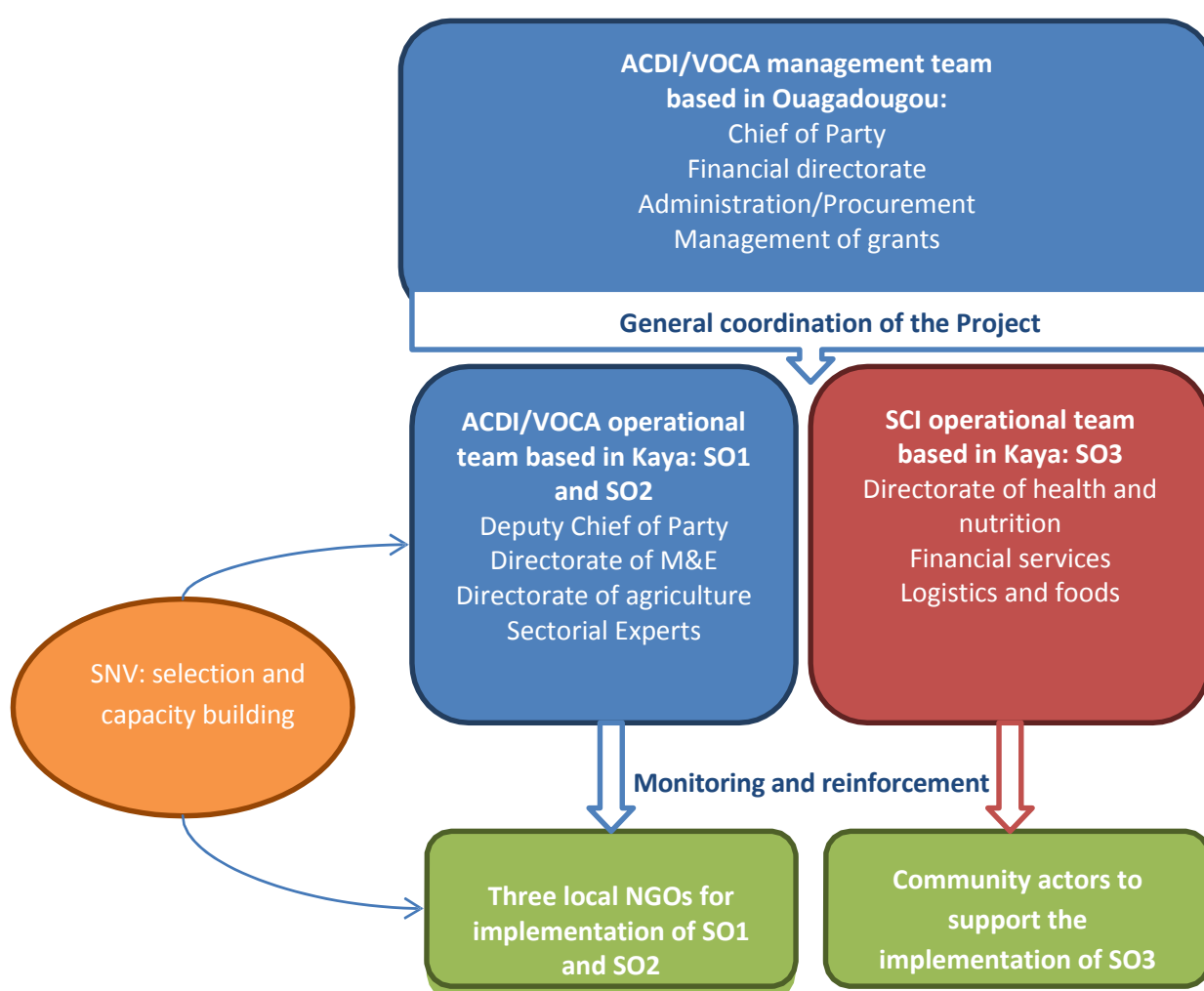
1.2 Implementation framework

The headquarters of ACDI/VOCA conducted recruitment and establishment of the project team (central management and coordination team based in Ouagadougou, technical implementation team in Kaya for objectives SO1 and SO2).

SCI has established the team responsible for implementing the activities linked to objective SO3.

Figure 2 presents the implementation system for the project. The detailed organizational charts for each team are presented as an annex.

Figure 2: theoretical framework for project implementation

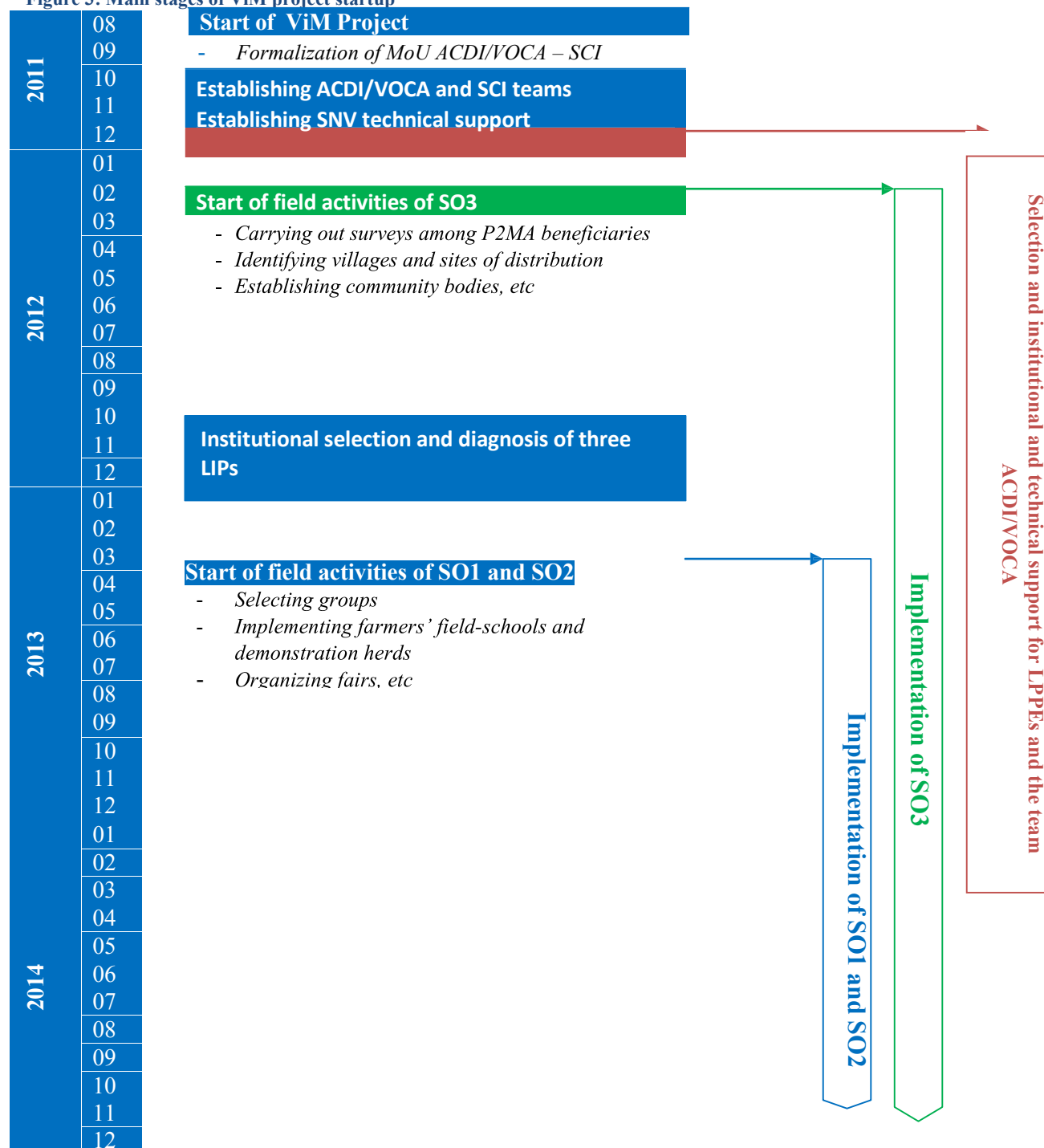


The Dutch NGO SNV, a member of the consortium, was responsible for recruiting partner organizations for implementation (Local Implementing Partners - LIP), and for strengthening the skills of the project team and teams established by the LIPs.

1.3 Background and context

The various stages for project startup are detailed in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Main stages of ViM project startup



Since its start, the project has consisted of the following:

- A shift in the start of field activities for SO3, which began in March 2012, and for SO1 and SO2, which started in April 2013;
- Delays in finalizing certain basic strategic studies: Value chains – January 2012, formative research – February 2012, baseline study – November 2012, strategy for gender and development - March 2013;
- A significant turnover of the ACDI/VOCA and SCI team, whether at the headquarters or in Burkina Faso⁵;
- Difficulties in coordination between the two main components of the project, due to the delayed start of activities and to an insufficiently integrated institutional and organizational system (hierarchical relationships, communications circuit, positioning of the management team – Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) and M&E.

These points will be developed in chapter 5.

2. Goal and Objectives of the evaluation, Methodology

2.1 Mid-term evaluation goal and objectives

The proposed study should be understood as an important contribution to the project's management strategy. By examining its implementation after two years, this participative analysis aims to optimize the operational approach.

In this sense, the objective is not to produce a study of effects/impacts, subject to final assessments or post evaluations, but rather a study that focuses on the conception of the project, the achievements to date (and to what degree) of intermediary results, in relation to the developed intervention strategies.

This exam must also assess the initial design of the project and the eventually necessary adaptation, to ensure complementarity with the REGIS program.

The terms of reference divide the specific questions into three categories⁶:

- Main issues, relating to the relevance of the approaches, strategy, conception, sustainability, quality of the consortium and synergy with other actors, as well as ensuing recommendations. These summarize the two other categories of questions studied below:
- The second category, relating to strategic objectives: SO1/SO2/SO3;
- The third category, relating to the quality of the program and the cross-cutting issues.

2.2 Methodology

The methodology was designed around an assessment matrix. This consisted of the following elements: evaluation issues grouped by broad topics; for each of the latter, the following were successively defined: information to be collected, source of information, tools for collection and methods to analyze the information.

⁵ 3rd DCOP, 3rd director M&E and vacant post since 12/2014, 2nd accountant, 3rd gender specialist, etc.

⁶ See the presentation of the TDR, as an annex

Three types of sources of information were defined: (i) project documents and preparatory studies, activity reports, annual reports, including IPTT tables (ii) interviews (focus groups, individual interviews), (iii) self-analysis workshops with team members (iv), and observations in the field.

The mission met the majority of actors involved in the implementation of the project: members of the project team, consortium members, implementation partners and beneficiaries. For each category of actor, interview guides were designed. In compliance with the project team, a representative sample of beneficiaries and a timetable were determined. Each group had a focus group with 5 to 20 participants, followed by one or two individual interviews. For mixed groups, the interviews were of a man and a woman.

The assessment of SO3 involved focus groups and individual interviews with all the participating actors.⁷

The preparatory mission took place from November 17 to December 3, 2014, and led to the production of a detailed methodological note. The data was collected between December 3 and 14 in the North Central region and in Ouagadougou. After this, exchanges and complementary information collection sessions and targeted restitutions, to discuss findings and share analyses, were held from December 16 to 24, 2014.

The list of villages and visited sites, groups and schedule are annexed. The tools to collect and analyze the data are included in the methodological note, which was reviewed on December 4, 2014 and approved by the Directorate of Monitoring and Evaluation of the ViM Project.

Some remarks from the Evaluation Mission.

Focus of the Mission. A significant part of the working time was devoted to identifying and illustrating the changes in behavior and practices, and analyzing the project strategy, tools and approaches. In this regard, the Mission has paid particular attention to apprehending the self-analyses and perspectives also capitalized by the actors involved in the implementation.

Tools and content of the interviews: an iterative process. In the qualitative surveys, the interview guides have remained flexible. Based on the evolution of the precedent interviews and subjects, complementary data made it possible to gradually refine the issues to be discussed.

The place of other actors within the Evaluation Mission. As this mission is a mid-term external review, aiming to allow free expression and judgments of the actors benefiting, the Project partners, team members of the Project and partners of the implementation were mainly absent during the interviews with the beneficiaries.

Organization of meetings, note taking. At the end of each interview, workshop and focus group, the main points were synthesized. These reports served as a support for the exchanges between consultants, and were subsequently used during the phase of analyzing the data collected.

Triangulation of the information and analysis. The data analysis used the principle of triangulation, by comparing it on the base of an overall consideration of the elements from the sample (multiplicity and representativeness of information and judgments), and considering the data from IPTT (November 2014))

⁷ The detail of the number of focus groups and individual interviews, including the types of actors concerned, is provided as an annex.

The time assigned to the evaluation did not enable a discussion with all the actors to clarify or define certain recommendations. These were then formulated as guidelines to be discussed to determine how to operationalize them.

Based on the reporting plan proposed in the terms of reference, the report is subdivided into seven parts:

- A first part that presents the context, organization and strategy of the Project,
- A second part on the evaluation questions and methodology used,
- A third and fourth parts that present the evaluation of the SO1 and SO2, changes (practices and behavior) detected, followed by challenges and recommendations,
- A fifth part presents the evaluation of the SO3, which discusses the (practical and behavior) changes detected, followed by challenges and recommendations. Also discussed are the issues relating to food management, inseparable from its analysis in the evaluation.
- A sixth part presents the cross-cutting issues (quality of partnership, sustainability and exit strategy, gender, environment, integration and targeting, among others).
- A seventh part addresses the implementation process (monitoring, evaluation, knowledge management and food management), with the recommendations not mentioned in the preceding parts.

3. Evaluation of strategic objectives 1 and 2

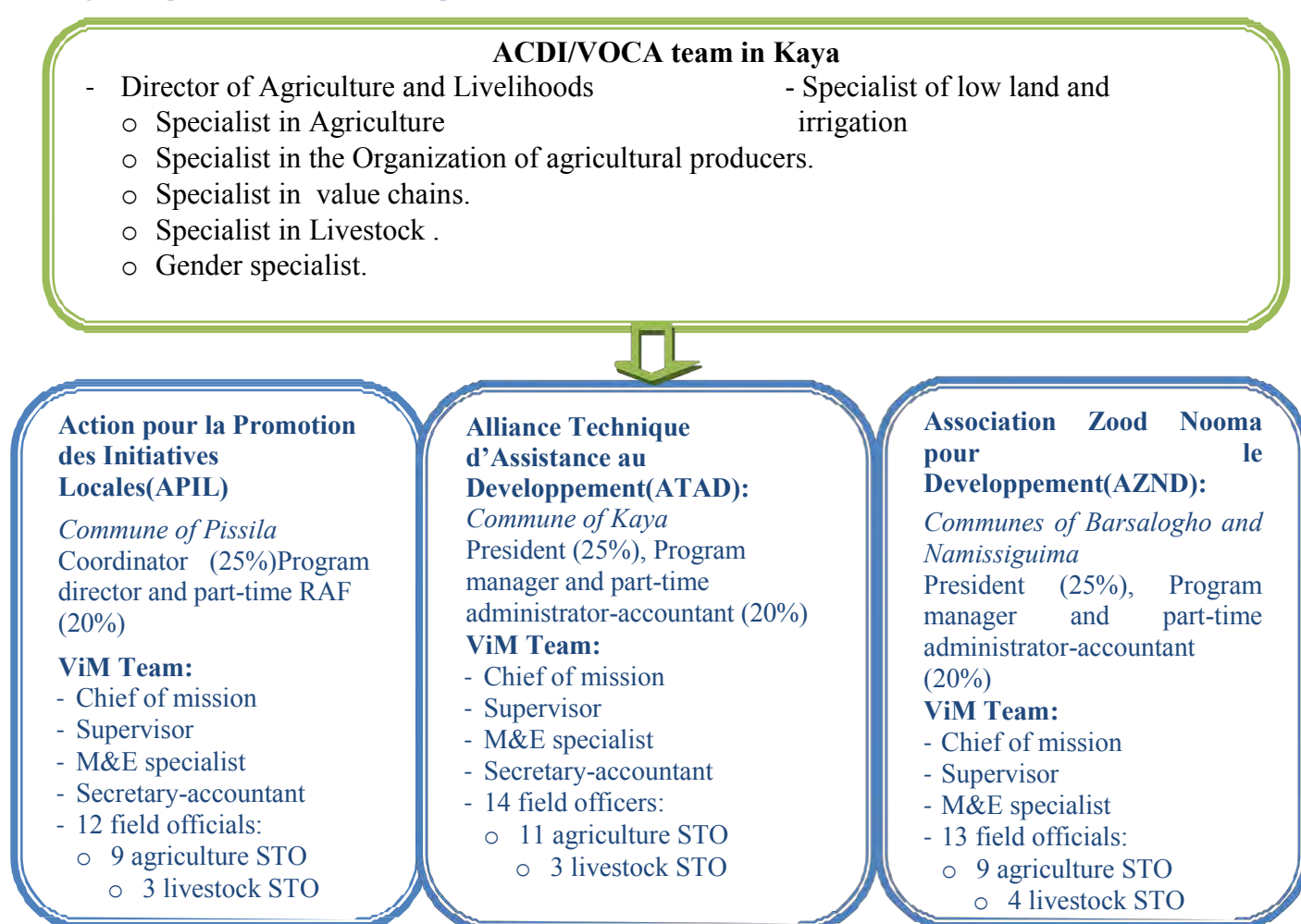
3.1 Framework of implementation

The strategic objectives 1 and 2 are under the responsibility of ACDI/VOCA. In addition to the general project coordination team based in Ouagadougou, an operational team is based in Kaya and supervises the field activities implemented by three local NGOs selected at the beginning of the project. Led by the Director of Agriculture and Livelihoods, the various sectorial specialists of the Kaya team are in charge of designing strategies and tools to implement, train and monitor LIPs. Figure 4 explains the operational system for implementation in the field (based on the Kaya team).

The specialist on low land development and irrigation is under the direct supervision the Chief of Party, as well as the director of monitoring and evaluation and his team, which was initially based in Kaya but has been temporarily based in Ouagadougou since June 2014.

The LIPs were selected in early 2013. The project provides an allowance for three permanent staff of the NGO and a team entirely dedicated to implementing the project. The specialists of monitoring and evaluation of the “ViM project” team of each NGO, and three new field officers, have only been recruited very recently (October 2014). Each LIP is in charge of one or two communes, and all the activities of the SO1 and SO2 under the supervision of the Kaya team.

Figure 4: operational framework for implementation of SO1 and SO2



SNV has been involved at the start of the project with mandate of:

- Providing support to ACIDI/VOCA for the selection of three LIPs:
 - o Develop calls for proposals with ACIDI/VOCA to select organization responsible for implementing activities in the field,
 - o Carry out strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analyses of the three LIPs selected to determine their main strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and produce a plan to strengthen skills;
- Develop training modules and train the ViM team and officers from the LIPs on value chains and participative analysis;
- Participate in the development of the technical curricula of training on the different value chains promoted by the project.

SNV has developed a training plan for the actors: two modules previously identified in the project document (“value chain” and “participative analysis”) were added to other curricula taking into account weaknesses of LIPs that had been identified through the diagnosis. For the implementation of the training activities, SNV has mobilized, in addition to its staff, consultants from the public and private sector, to provide supervision and quality control.

The SNV’s contract, initially for 15 months, was extended for 8 months to complete the process of selecting and strengthening the skills of the LIPs, which experienced significant delays at the beginning of the project.

The current situation of the implementation system for SO1 and SO2 among 600 groups currently supported by the project is presented in Table 1.

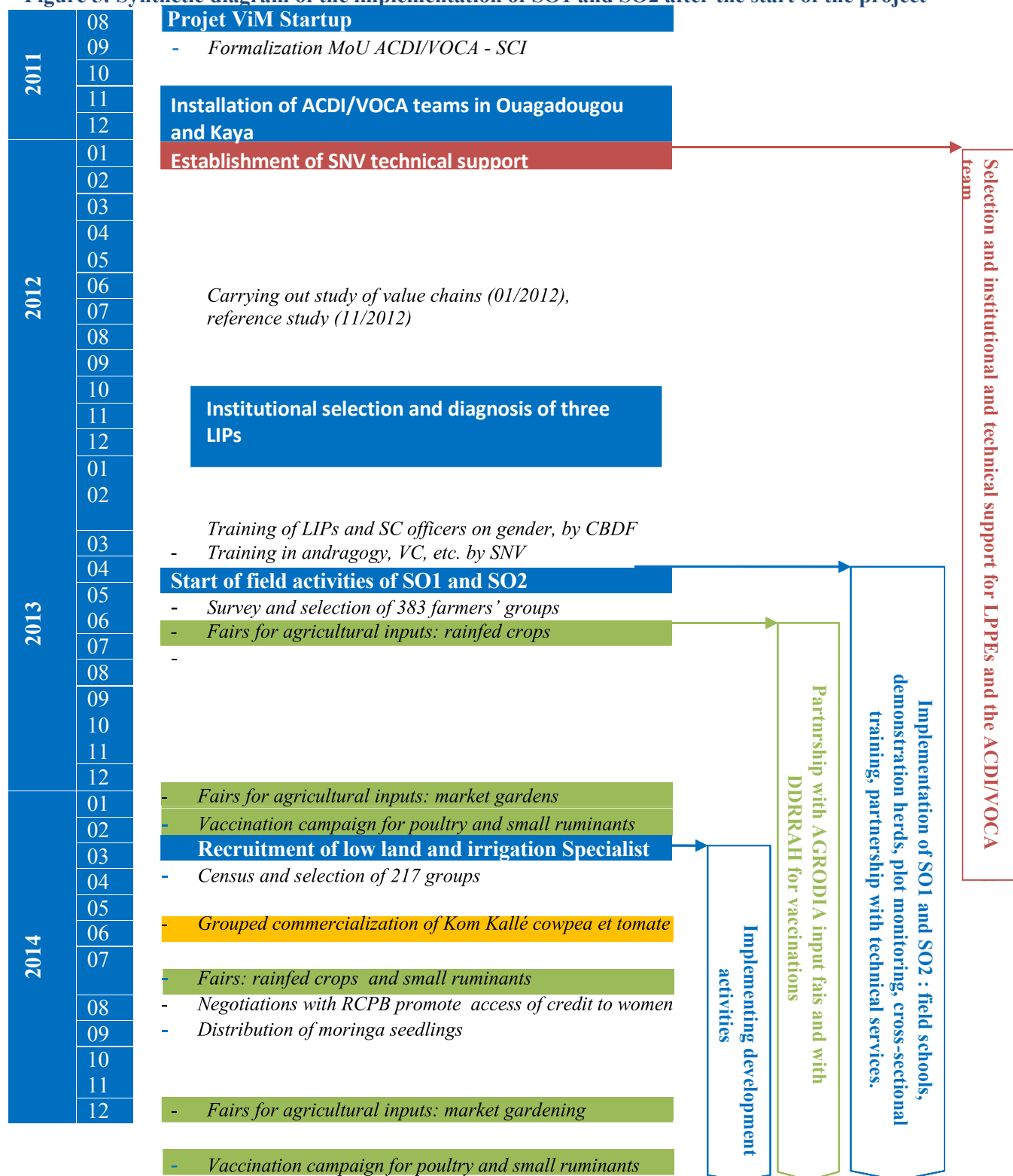
Table 1: Name and type of group, by LIP and agent

LIP	Commune	Distribution of agriculture/livesto	Number of groups monitored sector	Average number by of groups/field officer
APIL	Pissila	9	110 cowpea	17
			16 sorghum	
			24 market gardening	
		3	35 small ruminants	14
			6 poultry	
Total APIL		12	191	16
ATAD	Kaya	11	90 cowpea	16
			30 sorghum	
			51 market gardening	
		3	35 small ruminants	14
			6 poultry	
Total ATAD		14	212	15
AZND	Barsalogho and Namissiguima	9	105 cowpea	16
			11 sorghum	
			27 market gardening	
		4	47 small ruminants	14
			7 poultry	
Total AZND		13	197	15
General Total		39	600	15

The main stages and partnerships implemented for SO1 and SO2 are summarized in Figure 5.

⁸ Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

Figure 5: Synthetic diagram of the implementation of SO1 and SO2 after the start of the project

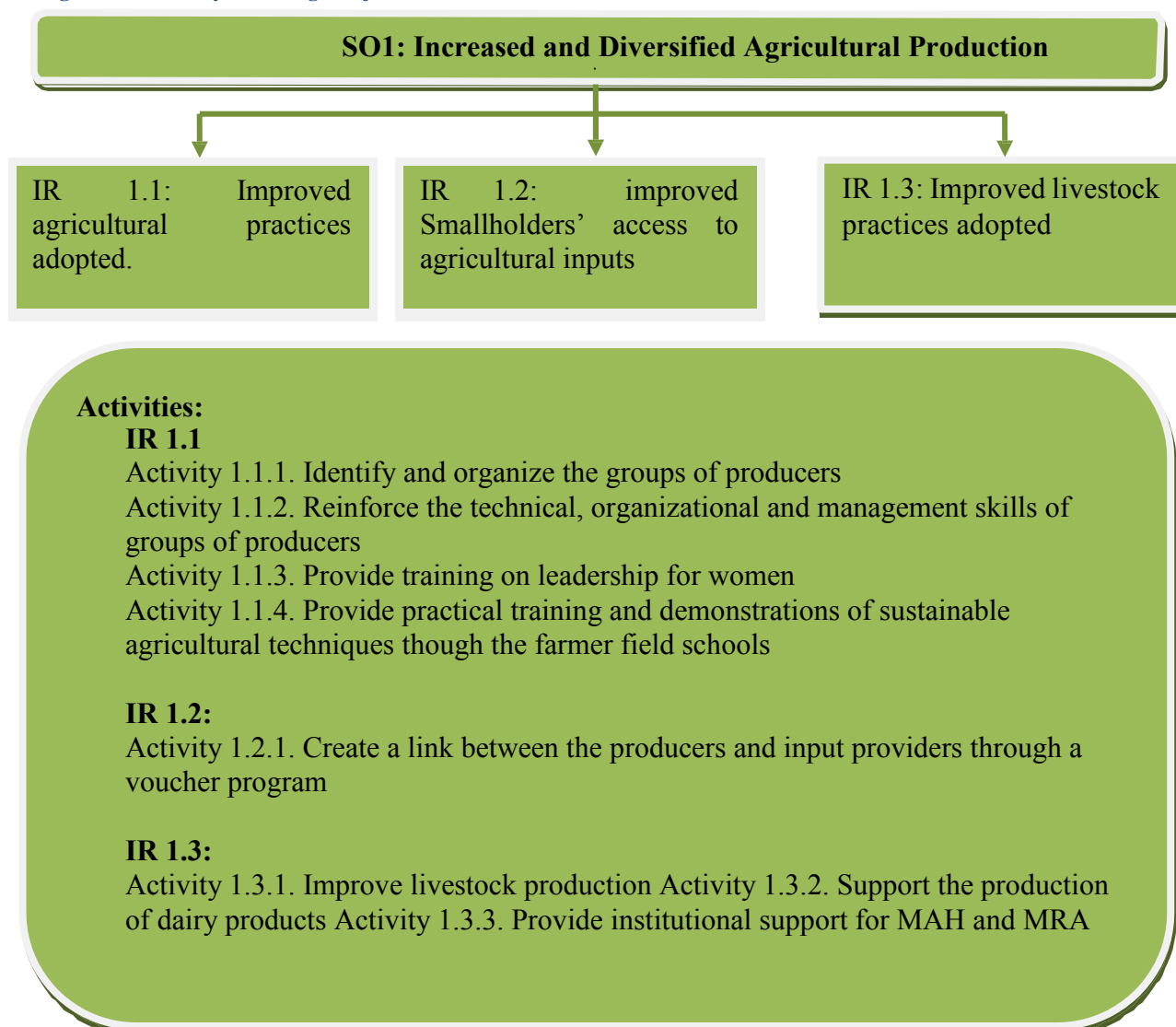


3.2 Strategic objective 1: Increased and diversified agricultural production.

3.2.1 Description: intervention, strategy, approaches and expected results

This strategic objective aims to increase agricultural production through the dissemination of practices and improved technologies. It focuses on six value chains, which were identified during the process of designing the project: sorghum, cowpea, onion, tomato, small ruminants and poultry, chosen as strategic both for the food security of households and their resilience strategies (sorghum, small ruminants, poultry), but also to ensure a better integration into national and sub-regional markets (cowpea, vegetables).

Figure 6: Summary of strategic objective 1



3.2.2 Intermediary results 1.1. and 1.3.: Improved agricultural practices adopted - Improved livestock practices adopted.

These two intermediary results have been grouped together, as the approaches implemented are similar for the groups in agriculture and breeding.

3.2.2.1. Brief description of the intervention

The implementation strategy is based on:

- The entry by the farmers' groups intervening in the six value chains supported by the project. They constitute the body of work to which all the support from the project is directed;
- The prioritization of women in the selection of groups: In order to integrate the three strategic objectives and for the beneficiaries of the food support to be supported to improve their resilience, the groups with the highest number of PM2A beneficiaries are prioritized during the selection;
- The implementation of the activities by the LIPs under the supervision and monitoring of the ViM team in Kaya. The LIP officers benefit from various training sessions on the topics implemented by the project (agricultural and livestock production techniques, value chains, participative diagnosis, gender, etc.);
- Developing strategic partnerships to assist and/or implement certain activities:
 - o Local authorities, agricultural professionals and technical services to identify and select the groups;
 - o Technical services, Institut de l'Environnement et de Recherches Agricoles (INERA) and SNV to produce the curricula for the technical training of producers;
 - o CBDF, to strengthen LIPs' capacities regarding gender;
 - o AGRODIA for the voucher program for agricultural inputs.
- "Farmer Field Schools", "demonstration plots" and "demonstration herds" approach for training on production techniques:
 - o In agriculture, a farmer field school and a witness are established during the first year to carry out, practically and with the farmers, the improved technical itinerary proposed by the project in comparison with farmer practices. During the second year, the two demonstration plots are established to compare the techniques chosen by the group (method of fertilization, seeds, etc.).
 - o In breeding, a demonstration herd comprised of five to ten heads of cattle is also installed, either from a breeder or at the group level to apply the improved methods proposed by the project.
- A close support from a sample of producers, by group, through a technical-economic monitoring of the plots or herds.
- Training «pilot» producers on certain topics: Phytosanitary treatment, seed growers, masonry....
- The value chain approach, with support ranging from providing input to marketing and valorization of production through processing.

An analysis of the intermediary results reviews the activities of the logical framework, except those related to the women's leadership which will be covered in a cross-cutting topic on "gender."

Importantly, activity 1.3.2. had a delayed start, with an analytical study of the dairy product supply sector, but the activity was suspended by recommendation of FFP, therefore it was not reviewed in the analysis.

Partnerships with technical services.

The partnership with the technical services, with the exception of the private sector, was carried out at different levels:

- Collaboration protocols were signed directly between the Provincial Directorates and the LIPs;
- The participation of technical services at fairs;
- Implementing vaccination campaigns by the Direction Regionale des Ressources Animales et Halieutiques (DRRAH);
- Regular participation in workshops and selection committees of the project (validating the training curricula, selecting farmers' groups and micro-projects, selecting low land and irrigation sites to prepare, etc.).

3.2.2.2. Strategy and approaches: relevance, quality, success and challenges

Strengthening the groups

The strategy to strengthen the groups rests mainly on training the directors on the Law 14⁹, and on accounting and financial management.

The high illiteracy rate among the directors makes these trainings difficult to apply. The project therefore includes in its program for 2015 the literacy training of 600 leaders in 20 centers. The operators have already been recruited and the training will begin in mid-February.

Though the strategy provides the director with the bases for the functioning of a group, it is not sufficient to strengthen them properly without a specific assistance linked to the specific activities that they may carry out. In recognition of this obstacle, the project has scheduled a self-diagnosis for 2015.

The “farmer field schools” and “demonstration herd” approach.

The approach of training through practical demonstrations (farmer field schools and demonstration herds) is relevant for several reasons:

- It corresponds to the recommendations by the State technical services and is particularly adapted to an overwhelmingly illiterate public.
- There is high level of participation of beneficiaries, and the producers surveyed have a positive appreciation of this in situ method of training.
- In the second year, the topics applied on demonstration plots were chosen by producers, which confirmed their relevance.
- The guided visits made it possible to disseminate these good practices to other producers in the village and surrounding ones.

Nevertheless, some shortcomings in the implementation are to be noted:

- For the vegetable growing farmer field schools, some delays in the delivery of inputs delayed the implementation of the farmer field schools;

⁹ Roles and responsibilities of the elected persons, direction of group management documents – members and fees book, management book, report of meetings and general meetings, etc.

- For this campaign, the tomato seeds were not delivered on time or in sufficient quantities;
- The demonstration herds experienced difficulties for implementation. Indeed, it is difficult for a livestock farmer to care for and feed only a fraction of their herd, leaving the other animals less well treated to compare the techniques;
- The number of groups per LIP agent is notably higher than the standard recommended for a good follow-up (15 groups/field officer against eight/recommended), which undermines its quality;
- The significant turnover among LIP technicians causes a loss of skills and hinders the quality of interventions;
- The upgrading / orientation of the new hired officers is insufficient¹⁰. Even if they are trained agricultural or livestock technicians and have the basic skills to give the producers technical training, they lack the complementary knowledge on cross-cutting and strategic topics such as participative diagnosis, assisting farmer organizations, andragogy, organization techniques and gender.
- The supervisors give priority to targeting these new officials, but the turnover observed for this position (2/3) also undermines their effectiveness
- The exclusive monitoring of “subsidized” plots skews the results in terms of adoption of improved techniques.

Training of specialized producers

This training involves bricklayers for poultry and small ruminants, improved housing, VVV in the poultry groups, phytosanitary brigades for the vegetable growing groups, and seed growers for the cowpea and sorghum groups. It aims to increase the activities in each group, through the specialized training of a few members (1-3).

The strategy to train specialized producers to disseminate the improved techniques is relevant. This enables the members of the groups, and all the producers of the zone, to have specialized local skills.

However, a few shortcomings should be highlighted for the phytosanitary brigades:

- The option of phytosanitary brigades does not correspond to the practices of vegetable producers encountered. Each one works individually and it seems unlikely that this type of organization should be implemented without complementary assistance;
- There is a problem with the selection of the persons to be trained (old women in two groups out of three¹¹, though their sons are the ones who work). In practice, the trained persons have passed on the acquired techniques to the other members of the group.

¹⁰ Sometimes reduced to two days of training on site, assisting an “old person.”

¹¹ Teegwendé Group of Pissila and Wend-Panga Group of Kamsé Mossi.

The choice of a “value chain” approach to improve the technical itineraries

The restriction to a single value chain per group risks limiting the chances of a sustainable improvement in production systems in polyculture-livestock that combine the various value chains targeted by the project (sorghum, cowpea, small ruminant, poultry, at the minimum; vegetable growing if they have access to irrigated plots). It is therefore more relevant to assist the entire production system and the integration of agriculture and livestock, a crucial condition for the intensification of the farms and the sustainable management of soil fertility. The cross-cutting training (compost production, WSC/DRS, etc.) provided in all the groups contributes to this approach.

Given the limited resources of the project, integration strategies can be proposed (cf. *infra.*).

Partnerships with the government technical services

The technical services are linked to the farmer field schools system through conventions signed directly with the LIPs. The head of zones thus participate in the guided visits and in other interventions in the field-schools. They can develop a topic for complementary training with the producers present there, and permit the dissemination of the techniques taught. This collaboration enables the LIPs to strengthen their collaboration with the technical services and is positively appreciated. The scope of this collaboration is however highly variable, depending on the LIP (from ten to 89 visits per campaign).

The involvement of the technical services has made it possible to standardize the training curricula and ensure the transparent selection of the various actors and projects financed by ViM.

Nevertheless, the regional and provincial directors interviewed believe that they are considered service providers rather than real partners. Under these conditions, they cannot fulfil their function of coordinating the development actions in their sectors of intervention, which would require a global vision of the activities carried out by the project. A workshop was held recently (December 2014) that brought together the partner government technical services and the project. It was decided to move from ad hoc collaborations in an annual plan of work agreed in advance, which would involve planning and collaboration clauses.

Low land and irrigation work

This activity is particularly relevant for developing cash crops and improving household income. Vegetable gardening is also an activity largely carried out by women, who can give small areas a high added value. Finally, it allows for the organization of the producers for the common management of the infrastructure and water.

The process undertaken is based on the existing¹² one and involves the various actors of the sector (local authorities, technical services, LIPs, agricultural professionals) at the different stages of the implementation (identification, selection of the sites, selection of companies, monitoring of the preparation and allocation of plots of land, among others).

¹² Inventory of the sites already listed by the technical services; cross-referencing of lists available in various structures.

Finally, the progressive approach that has been adopted enables the project to capitalize and improve the different stages of the implementation.

The main challenge will be assisting closely the management committees that will be established to organize and maintain the infrastructure.

3.2.2.3. Progress and results

Selection of groups

Table 2 shows the level of results achieved between 2012 and 2014.

Table 2: Number of groups and direct beneficiaries of SO1 and SO2.

Sector	Group number		
	2012	2013	2014
Cowpea	No selection	197	305
Sorghum	of groups	32	57
Tomato	– process of		5
Onion	recruitment	70	97
Small ruminants	LIPs		
Poultry	underway	74	117
		10	19
Total of groups	0	383	600
Number of female beneficiaries	0	6 660	11 934
Number of male beneficiaries	0	3 413	5 051
Total number of beneficiaries	0	10 073	16 985
IPTT target: number of female beneficiaries	1 424	4 271	5 695
IPTT target: number of male beneficiaries	2 135	6 407	8 542
IPTT target of total number of beneficiaries	3 559	10 678	14 237
% of the target achieved	0%	94%	119%

Sources: IPTT and annual reports

The following observations can be made:

- The cowpea groups represent a majority, with 51% of the total of groups, followed by small ruminants (20%) and onion (16%). The choice of these sectors shows the importance of activities of annuity in households' resilience strategies. Tomatoes producer (less than 1% of the groups) and poultry (3%) are in the minority;
- Several of the groups examined were not highly dynamic, and sometimes inactive, before the beginning of the project, and offered very few services to their members¹³;
- There is a high proportion of women (70%, vs. IPTT's target of 40%), resulting from the priority given to beneficiaries of PM2A and women in general in the selection, and their greater propensity to gather in groups.

Strengthening the farmers' groups

The accounts by directors of the groups regarding the benefits of training are limited to a better understanding of their roles and a greater mobilization of members during meetings (an effect that can also be attributed to the presence of the project). However, strengthening

¹³ Potal-SanrgoPeul, Songdoumkieta-Tibtenga, Pengwendebrendretenga-Komsilga, WendPenga-Kamse Mossi, Nabasnoogo-Kamse Mossi, Relwendé-Namissigui.

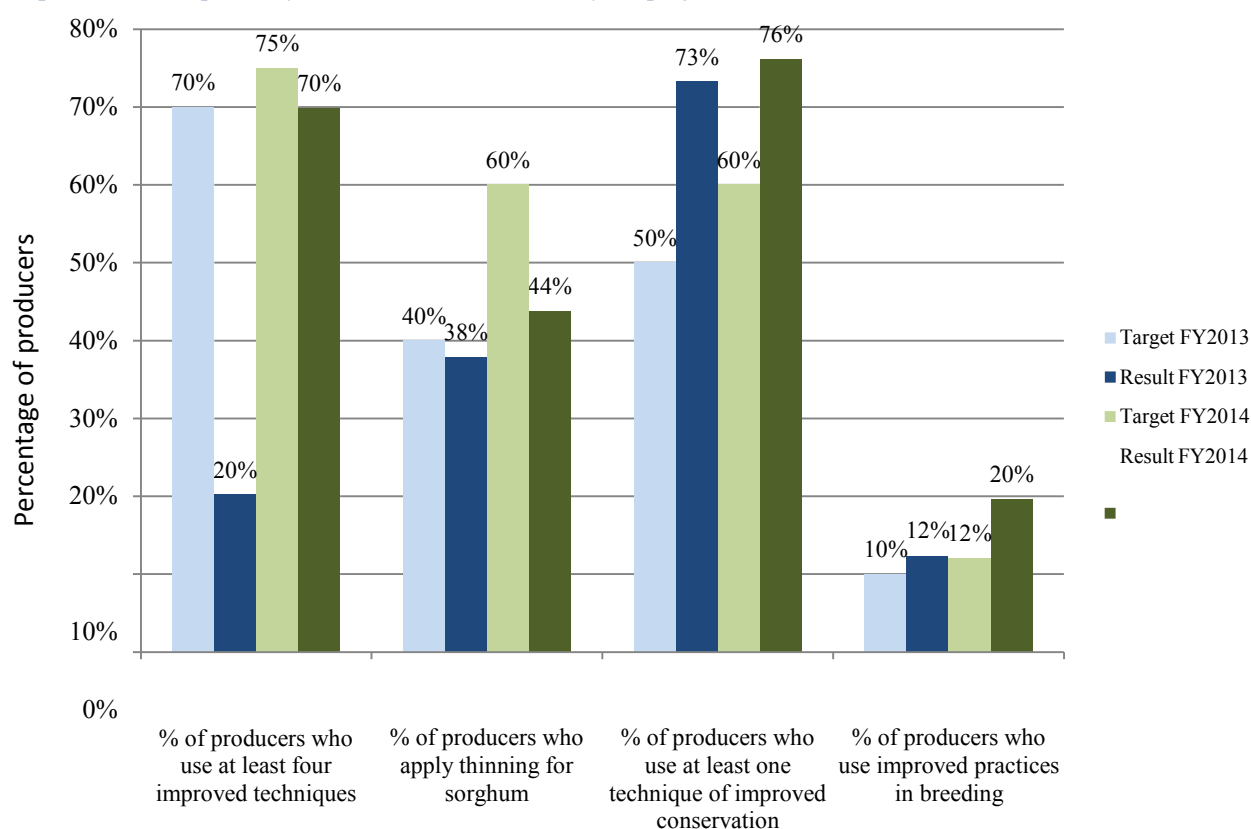
the groups in terms of complementary activities established, document management and strengthening of management has not yet been verified.

In terms of structuring, though certain cowpea groups joined the departmental union of cowpea producers during the operation of joint sales (cf. SO2), they did not receive a specific assistance to integrate them into the union's activities¹⁴.

Intensification practices

Graph 1 presents the main results achieved in the adoption of intensification practices measured by the project.

Graph 1: Results expected by the results indicators used by the project



The producers interviewed highly appreciate the new techniques learnt. Among the techniques mentioned most frequently are:

- Short-cycle seeds proposed for their precocity, productivity and tasting value;
- The windrow composting technique;
- Seeding in lines, respecting spacing;
- The burying chemical fertilizer technique;

¹⁴ For example, the directors of the Relwendé group of Dibilou had difficulties establishing links with the departmental union to which they belong. They pay a contribution to the union without knowing what services it can provide for them.

- The slash-and-burn technique in market gardens to eliminate the parasites in the ground;
- The water and soils conservation techniques – WSC - (stone barriers, zaï, half-moons); The practical method of teaching and improving the technique based on the slope of the plot;
- The cowpea conservation techniques in triple-layer bags;
- Mowing and conservation of fodder: Mowing period and hay-making technique to conserve the nutritional value of the hay; salting technique to improve the appetite and storage,
- Rationing techniques for small ruminants,
- Hygiene of chicken coops, care for poultry and small ruminants.

This way, the project remedies the deficiencies of the state technical services in terms of disseminating the improved techniques and intensifying production systems. It has been observed that at least 15% of the groups interviewed are familiar with the innovations proposed, thanks to the support of the technical services or unions.¹⁵

The producers put into practice the technical itineraries on the plots that receive the subsidized inputs from the project and obtain higher yields in comparison with their traditional practices.

However, a number of constraints to the adoption of improved techniques remain, and notably:

- Problems with labor and equipment to apply intensive techniques in labor (making and applying compost, respecting seeding in lines, timetable for weeding, etc.);
- Problems with water and access to organic matter, notably for women, for composting;
- Access to inputs (fertilizer, seeds, feed for cattle and poultry, etc.). limited due to their cost and quality, which is not guaranteed on the markets;
- Problems in access to land, in particular for women;
- Problems with transport of the stones, when it is located far from the fields, for the stone bunds;
- Conflicts concerning the cultural calendar for the mowing for forage, problems with availability of fodder in the zones experiencing land saturation and buildings for storing hay in good condition;
- Poultry and small ruminants, improved housing that are poorly or not built, due to the high costs and labor to produce the bricks (notably for women).

Thus, the adoption of improved technologies focuses primarily on the plots that have received the subsidized inputs. On the other fields, they are only partially implemented due to lack in the time, inputs and equipment required for a complete application of the technology package. This is particularly the case for women, who have less priority over the family fields and access to production factors.

¹⁵ For example, the Namanegbzanga Group of Poullale and Namanegbzanga Cooperative of Niangado.

Training of specialized producers

The results of this training are generally only partially achieved:

- In the groups interviewed, the “phytosanitary brigades” are not installed. However, the training and equipment distributed have been ceded to the persons applying the treatment. The market gardeners also declare that they organize themselves, individually but at the same moment, to limit the pests’ pressure on the entire area;
- The bricklayers are little used. We have observed that only a few barns and chicken coops have been built so far.
- The only seed producer that we have met¹⁶ did not have access to the foundation seed early enough in the season, and preferred not to produce during this season.

Low land and irrigation work

A hydraulic civil engineer was recruited in February 2014 to implement this sector. He proposed an action plan that is currently underway.

Following the process of identifying sites, several visits allowed validating the technique feasibility of the work, social and land conditions, population’s motivation to participate in the work and then reconstitute the final selection of the first phase of this work.

Two types of infrastructure were proposed:

- Irrigated areas using the semi-Californian type downstream of Lake Dem;
- Preparation of low lands, in order to improve rice cultivation during rainy season.

The approach adopted is progressive with a first phase of improvements and 40 hectares of low-lands (two sites of 25 and 15 hectares) and the preparation of 20 hectares of irrigated areas.

Tenders were called to conduct the Direct Distribution studies and the development works, with the support of the populations (searches, aggregates and rubble.) The works are currently underway. Despite a delayed start, 60 hectares should be developed during the 2015 fiscal year on the 100 hectares initially planned.

The establishment, training and monitoring of management committees for the areas are planned to take place at the reception of the work. The developments are destined to be ceded to the Direction Régionale de l’Agriculture et de la Sécurité Alimentaire at the end of the project, to ensure the sustainability of their monitoring.

¹⁶ President of the Namanegbzanga group of Niangado..

3.2.3. Intermediary Result 1.2.: Improved smallholder access to agricultural inputs

3.2.3.1. Brief description of the intervention

Two types of activities were conducted to facilitate access to agricultural and livestock inputs:

- Agricultural input fairs were organized in partnership with AGRODIA:
 - o Two fairs for rain-fed crops in June 2013 and 2014;
 - o Two fairs for market gardens in November 2013 and October 2014;
 - o A small ruminant and Sous Produits Agro-Industriels (SPAI) fair organized in June 2014;
- Vaccination and deworming campaigns were held in partnership with DRRAH:
 - o Three campaigns for poultry in December 2013 and January¹⁷ and December 2014;
 - o Three campaigns for small ruminants in December 2013 and January and December 2014.

Agricultural inputs, heads of cattle and veterinary products were subsidized as follows:

- 80% for men and 90% for women in 2013 (year 1) for agricultural inputs;
- 40% (older groups) and 60% (new groups) in 2014 (year 2) for agricultural inputs;
- 50% in 2014 for the small ruminants fair (heads of cattle, SPAI, salt).

For cowpea and sorghum, the producers would receive inputs for 0.25 or 0.50 hectares and for market gardens, for 625 or 312.5 m². For small ruminants, breeders could receive two heads of small ruminants, salt and SPAI (cotton or cubed bran meal).

At the fairs, the Directorate General of Vegetable Production (DGVP, which includes the National Seed Service, BUNASOL and the Vegetable Protection Service) is responsible for verifying the quality of inputs proposed. This participation is the subject of an entire separate protocol. The technical services also assist producers in their choices by raising awareness about the importance of high quality inputs in production, the proper use of these inputs and above all, the adequate management of pesticides and their packaging after use.

3.2.3.2. Strategy and approaches: relevance, quality, success and challenges

Establishing relationships with input providers

Establishing relationships with input providers through fairs and subsidies are relevant insofar as they give producers a physical and financial access to inputs. They can thus put into practice the new technical itineraries acquired, and thus check their productivity in their own fields.

This strategy is part of the value chain approach implemented by the project, and also aims to strengthen the groups in their function of supplying inputs.

¹⁷ The first two campaigns in December 2013 and January 2014 correspond to primo-vaccination and booster.

However, the close partnership between links that characterizes the value chain approach and the function of joint supply that the groups could develop are not supported by a close assistance for these functions. The current diagnosis should help personalize the support given to the most dynamic groups, to support them in that manner.

Involvement of technical services

The involvement of the technical services guarantees the quality of the inputs and vaccinations used. Nonetheless, if the budget of the DRRAH is not raised, this structure will not be able to take charge of this activity, as it lacks its own budget and is heavily dependent on external financing.

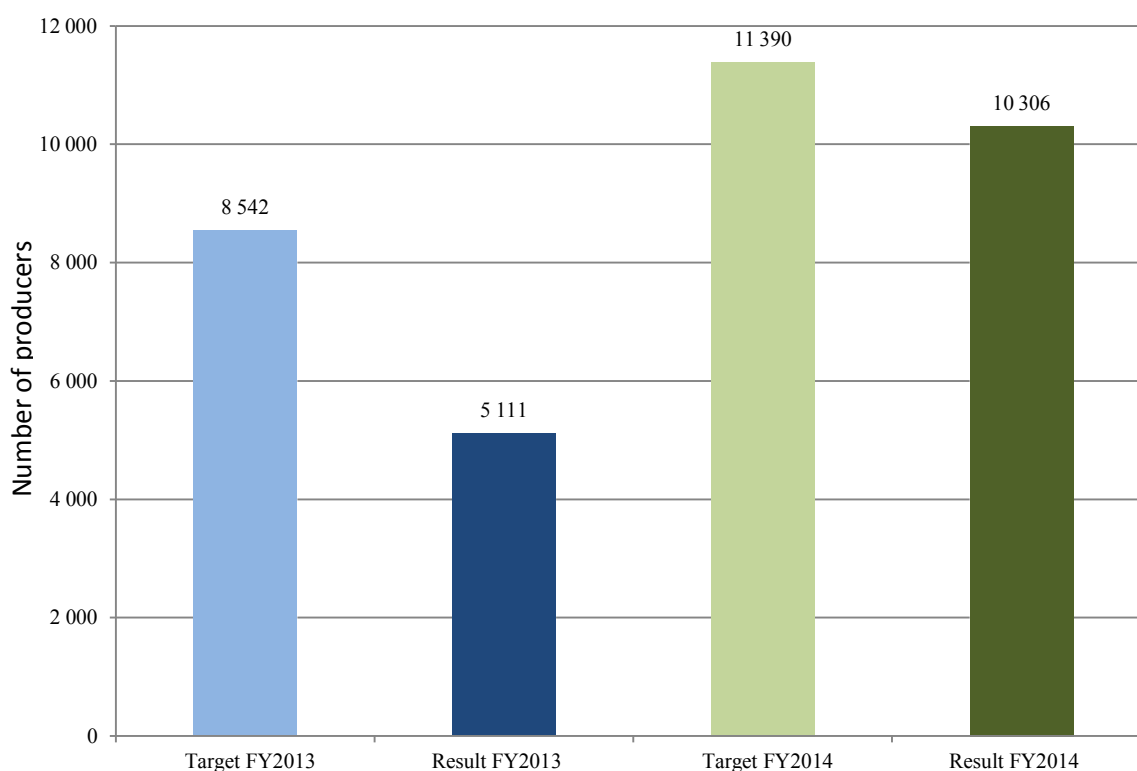
3.2.3.3. Progress and expected results

Establishing relationships with inputs providers

The number of producers benefiting from inputs fairs is presented in graph 2:

- In year 1, 51% of the producers benefiting from the project took part in the (only agricultural) fairs;
- In year 2, which included “zoo-technical” fairs, 61% of producers participated in the fairs.

Graph 2: Name of producers receiving inputs in 2013 and 2014



The fairs have had very positive results:

For producers:

- There was a strong participation in agricultural input fairs during the first year, thanks to a high level of subsidies;
- The quality of agricultural inputs is highly regarded by the producers;

- The fairs give them access to more affordable improved short-cycle seeds for sorghum and cowpea, and chemical fertilizer. This enabled producers to put into practice, on the 0.25 or 0.50 subsidized hectares, the intensive technical itineraries learnt;
- After the first year, the beneficiaries of the fair disseminated the second generation (R2) improved seeds to the non-beneficiary members, then to villagers who did not belong to the groups.

For agro-dealers:

- Agro-dealers were able to advertise their products and distribute their business contact details to numerous producers;
- The provincial section of AGRODIA increased its membership, and the number of agro-dealers taking part in the fairs increased from 7 to 11 between 2013 and 2014.

Small ruminant fairs have variable success according to the sites:

- At certain fairs, the price of small ruminants was judged to be prohibitive by breeders. For example, in the Pengdwendé Bedretenga group from Komsilga, only 14% of members bought animals and SPAI, because the price of small ruminants was over double the local market price.
- The price of SPAI was also considered to be higher (7,500, against 5,000 FCFA/bag);
- The organization by AGRODIA suffered from a few deficiencies:
 - o In the Noongtaaba group of Koglobaraogo, 59% of members had access to the products sold at the fair: There was not enough sheep for all the buyers, and the sellers then brought goats, which did not interest the breeders;
 - o Salt was available, but no lick-blocks that contain more minerals.

In general, the actors mention the following deficiencies:

- An increase in the price of inputs in comparison with the market price was reported in most fairs;
- The low diversity of the inputs on offer. Thus the “boutique”¹⁸ system established in the commune of Kaya in the second year was appreciated, as it permitted a greater diversity of choice for market garden inputs.
- The creation of relationships varied by group, in particular for the groups of women, who seemed less motivated to establish contact with the agro-dealers present at the fairs,
- An erosion of the participation in fairs in the second years due to the reduced subsidies, notably for women and rain-fed crops. This was confirmed by the representatives of AGRODIA, who sold less fertilizer in year 2, despite the increase in the number of fairs.

¹⁸ This system was tested in the commune of Kaya: the producers could go directly to the boutiques of the agro-dealers who were partners of the project in Kaya and pay for the inputs that they wanted with their vouchers.

Table 3 details the level of participation in the sample of groups interviewed.

Table 3: Number and percentage of participation in inputs fairs in the groups of the sample.

Village	Groups	Number of members		Sector	Number of participants in the fairs			
		Women	Men		Year 1 Number	%	Year 2	%
Darkoa	Nabooswendsongré	8	12	Cowpea	19	95%	15	75%
Dibilou	Relwendé	60		Cowpea	22 ¹⁹	37%	22	37%
Niangado	Namanegbzanga	8	9	Cowpea	10	59%	10	59%
Tansablougou	Sougrinooma	7	14	Cowpea	18	86%	9	43%
Korko Mossi	Nongtaaba		33	Sorghum	13	39%	1	3%
Namissigui	Relwendé	26	19	Sorghum	39	87%	21	47%
Poulalle	Namanegbzanga	6	13	Sorghum	16	84%	16	84%
Kamsé Mossi	Wendpenga	7		Tomato	7	100%	6	86%
Pissila	Teegwendé	32	3	Onion	35	100%	35	100%
Sidogo	Relwendé	8	9	Onion			13	76%
Koglobaraogo	Nongtaaba	10	19	Small ruminants			17	59%
Komsilga	Pengwendé Bedretenga	20	15	Small ruminants			5	14%
Namissignuima	Teegwendé	26		Small ruminants			23	88%
Sanrghe Peul	Potal	25	15	Small ruminants			40	100%

This way, among the sample of groups interviewed, the groups that participated in two successive fairs noted a level of participation of 80% in year 1, against 57% in year 2.

The decline in the level of participation is not significant for the market gardener groups. Indeed, purchasing seeds is almost obligatory for these productions, and using chemical fertilizer is also much more frequent (85% according to the RGA 2006-2010). The dry season production period follows the first harvests, which provided producers with a cash flow to procure gardening inputs

For rainfed crops, the majority of producers did not buy improved seeds in year 2, and preferred to use the total amount of the voucher to purchase fertilizer and use R2 seeds for their fields. The varieties proposed by the project are not hybrid, which favors the use of the second generation. However, measures must be taken to conserve the variety purity of these seeds over time. In this regard, the project is promoting micro-plots to be implemented by the producers to conserve it. The feasibility needs to be tested, after which it can be adopted by the producers.

For these crops, the decreasing level of participation poses doubts regarding the capacity of the majority of producers to continue to purchase fertilizer without subsidies. This way, just as the improved technical itinerary is only predominantly applied on the plot receiving the inputs, it is likely that the cost of fertilizer will become a limiting factor, if not prohibitive for most producers. If certain, wealthier farmers can continue to purchase it for their rain-fed crops, the sustainability of disseminating these improved techniques depends heavily on

¹⁹ The poor turnout of members at the two fairs can be explained by a problem with enrolment during the census. A burial took place at the same time, and the majority of the members of the group were not present for the census. This group was not taken into account in the calculation of the total participation rate

producers' access to credit. Indeed, in a context in which the lean period corresponds to the beginning of the rainy season, it is difficult for the majority of producers to have the necessary cash flow to buy inputs. Merely establishing links between producers and agro-dealers is therefore insufficient, and providing access to these credit systems is necessary to pursue the proposed intensification methods. (These are in the start-up phase with the RCPB partnership – cf. *infra*).

Finally, the “service completed” payment obliges AGRODIA members to pre-finance the inputs on credit from the suppliers. Moreover, the forecasts offered by the project have proved to be overvalued, and these providers have been left with unsold stocks which they must sell at severely reduced rates (up to 33% of fertilizer and 39% of the onion seeds in 2013).

Vaccination campaigns

The vaccination campaigns carried out by the DRRAH are highly appreciated by beneficiaries. Vaccinations were generally given in villages, but by itinerant veterinarians with doubts about the quality of the products and at random frequency. The campaigns by the ViM project use certified products, are carried out by confirmed officials and include deworming animals and providing vitamins (for poultry). The breeders underline the benefits of these treatments for improving the growth of their animals.

However, the last campaign was considered to be late and certain groups, who were awaiting the campaign to vaccinate their herds or poultry, suffered from high mortality rates²⁰. For small ruminants, the number of heads vaccinated was also lower than the provisions, for two main reasons: the delay in the campaign, which led certain breeders to vaccinate their animals before the apparition of epizootics²¹ and the fact that their herds did not return from the winter transhumance or watering zones.²²

The vaccination campaigns and the associated training have improved the health of the herds and the frequency of treatment, but the problem remains of the quality of products on the market when the project ends. Furthermore, there is doubt surrounding the persistence of systematic deworming and vitamin provision practices after the project finishes. In the case of small ruminants, it is likely that only feeder animals will benefit from these treatments.

Regarding the partnership, the DRRAH has also complained about its obligation to pre-finance the veterinary inputs, as it does not have its own financial resources (supplier credit with the project guarantee). For this vaccination campaign, the DRRAH estimates that 30% of the stock of vaccinations were not used, which creates difficulties between the structure and its supplier.

Provision of small tools

In terms of the small tools provided to the farmers groups for WSC/DRS activities, the beneficiaries judge them to be standardized and too few for the number of members.

²⁰ For example, the members of the Wendbénédo group from Barsalogho for poultry and the Potal group from Sanrgho Peul for small ruminants.

²¹ PengdwendeBendretenga Group, Komsilga.

²² Nongtaaba Group, Koglobaraogo

These are used for the zaï and composting, but do not allow the stone barrier sites to be implemented, with the exception of the villages with a nearby source of rubble, such as the Sougrinooma group in Tansablougou.

3.2.4. Lessons and recommendations from SO1

3.2.4.1. Strengthening the groups

1) Completing and assisting the self-diagnosis of groups and typology of agricultural plots.

A self-diagnosis exercise has been scheduled for the groups, to rank them based on their performances. However, the suggested framework for diagnosis should be more qualitative and analyze with more precision:

- The services developed by the groups for their members;
- The environment of the groups: trade union membership, support from NGOs: types and methods of support, commercial partners, etc.;
- The main constraints to the intensification of production systems.

A study to establish a typology of the farmer groups and of the farms of the project beneficiaries is also scheduled. It is important that these two exercises be supervised by a confirmed expert in OP support and analysis of the production systems to conduct the data analysis. Indeed, only a fine comprehension of the problems experienced by the groups and farm managers will allow for the to definition of a strategy to develop the services provided by the OP and adapt the technical support.

2) Analyze the environment of the groups and unions to develop strategic partnerships

An analysis of the environment of the groups must also help to consolidate the project activities and refine the exit strategy, by strengthening partnerships and synergies with these other actors. For example, unions of cowpea producers already provide many services to their members (technical support, supply of inputs and improved seeds, marketing, warranting in certain groups), and the NGO FERT also intervenes to help these unions and their member groups. A union of onion producers was created recently, supported by the NGO TRIAS, whose activities could be complemented by those of the project. Other programs with a national scope - Projet d'Appui aux Filières Agricoles, Programme d'Appui aux Filières Agro Sylvo Pastorales (PAFASP), etc. - intervene on strategic topics such as building storage facilities, which could work in synergy with the activities of ViM (cf. SO2, etc. This work of establishing links and synergy would gain from being developed further by the end of the project.

3.2.4.2. Intensification practices

1) Integrating the various value chains of the production system

The intensification of production systems would become more efficient in a systemic approach rather than a value chain approach. Providing support for the various productions selected, developing the agriculture-livestock integration by searching for practical and feasible solutions to value organic manure (taking into account the water-related constraints), intensifying double-objective crops (food and fodder), diversifying production, would make it easier to achieve the resilience of households sought by the project. Given the limitations in the project's human and financial resources, cross-sectorial training and visits could be organized in the villages in which groups from different value chains are supported by the project.

2) Putting emphasis on onion conservation to improve the profitability of the crop.

Regarding the onion production, a focus should be given to conservation techniques (at the level of production: increasing organic fertilization and the rational use of urea, during the harvest: drying and conservation techniques and infrastructures). Indeed, the prices at the harvest, which

are generally low, hinder the profitability of the sector. A conservation of three to four months can guarantee a doubled price. This is already planned by the project in 2015, and deserves to be accelerated.

3) Strengthen support for livestock

The requirements for cereals during the lean period are generally covered by the sale of small ruminants. Raising small cattle is also an activity that women can carry out with less difficulty.

The breeding techniques are less innovative than those used in agriculture, and the “demonstration herd” approach has had certain limits²³. Demonstrations of rationing (for example, using fodder resources versus SPAI), with the creation of associated operating accounts, prevents discrimination against herd animals, and enables the effectiveness and profitability of various rations to be tested.

The intensification of supports in this sphere, with adaptations to women’s constraints and practices, would allow the consolidation of these income producing activities and important factors of household resilience.

4) Recycling or strengthening the support-advice of new officials on strategic topics

The new officials need to strengthen their capacities on the project’s cross-sectorial topics: gender, assisting the OP and andragogy. This updating can be done either through close support-advice by sectorial specialists of the project, or through recycling training.

5) Assisting the existing system of seed producing groups

The departmental unions of cowpea producers in the region implemented seed growing groups, which enable them to benefit from certified seeds produced in the region. The project will continue its assistance, through the effective integration of seed growers in the existing systems.

6) Enhance local practices to reduce the cost of infrastructure and treatments

In the current perspective, the knowledge is transferred to the producers based on a top-down process without considering their constraints, strategic needs but also their local knowledge and practices. The lack of experience of the LIP officials, who are mainly young, prevents them from responding to the expectations but also take into account the experiences, needs and realities of the producers.

²³ Cf. supra

This local knowledge should be capitalized and valued, both in techniques and infrastructures, to adapt the technical training and innovation to the realities of the production systems (risk management, limited equipment and labor, property resources, seed management, among others.)

This strengthens the need for advanced expertise to accompany the process of diagnosing groups and production systems (cf. point 1).

3.2.4.3. Facilitating access to inputs

1) Ensure a qualitative monitoring of the system of small credit for women.

The collaboration with RCPB for small credit for women is scheduled for 2015. It must urgently be concretized, to consolidate a long-term financing system for women and eventually assume the management of the fairs. The monitoring and analysis of the data must be established to check the spheres of activity chosen by women and their level of profitability, and thus provide elements of strategy to support and improve women's income.

2) Develop a strategy and partnerships for access to credit for men

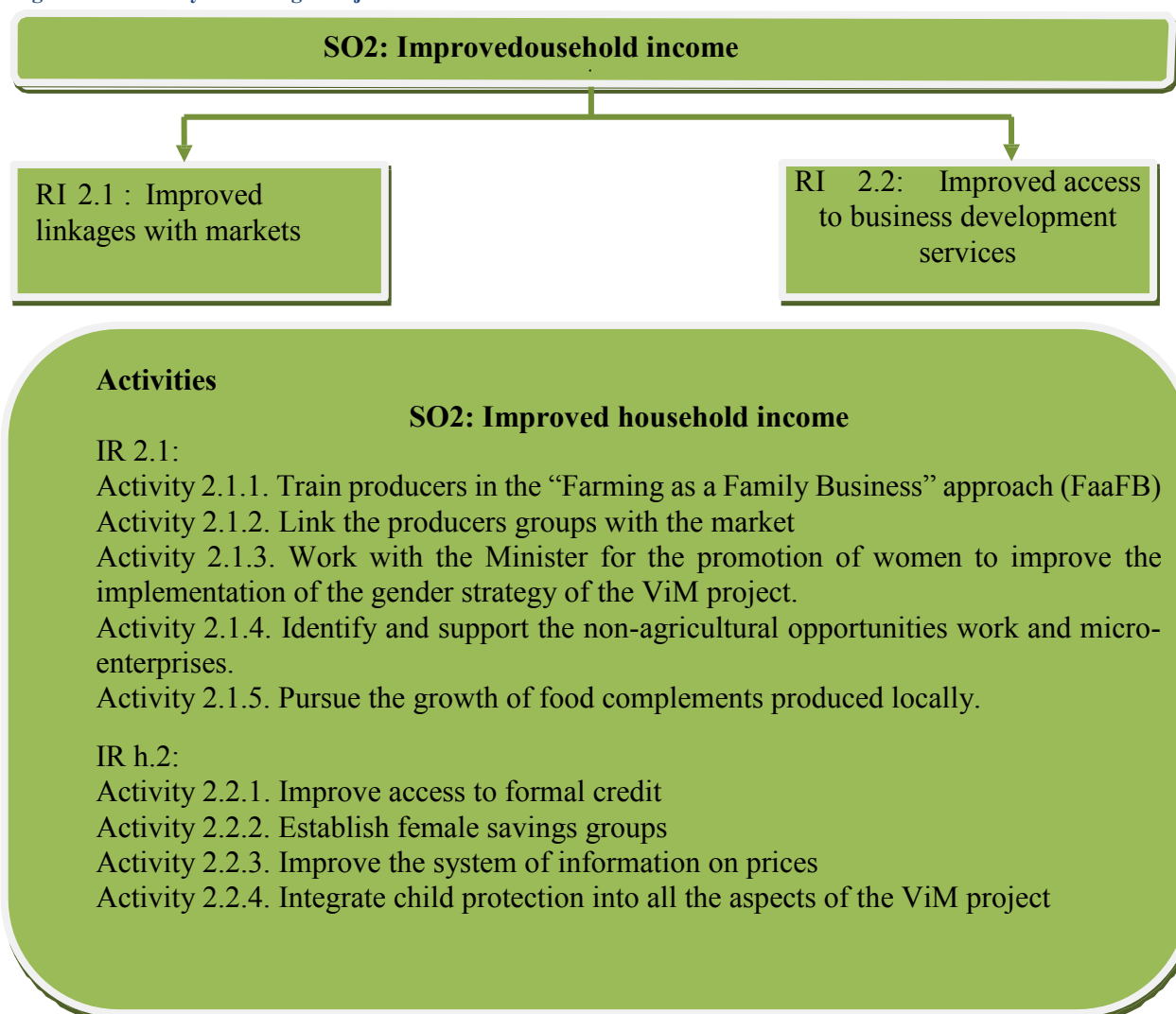
Household food security is based first and foremost on the family field managed by the head of the farm. In this regard, supporting heads of farms is crucial to improve it significantly. "Input" and "equipment" credit are long-term means to increase the intensification of production systems. If numerous credit systems exist in the region, their access is still limited by the credit conditions (level of guarantee, interest rate, etc.). It is therefore necessary for the project to capitalize on the experience carried out by other actors in terms of facilitating access to credit for agricultural producers and develop an implementation strategy to assume management of input fairs and go beyond the medium-term credit systems (equipment). This will help to increase the impact on production systems and household resilience. Pilot experiences through Unions or viable groups are a possibility, to strengthen the mutual knowledge and trust between financial institutions and the OPs.

3.3 Strategic objective 2: Improve household income

3.3.1. Description: intervention, strategy, approaches and expected results

This strategic objective is a continuation of the SO1 in the project's six value chains of intervention.

Figure 7: Summary of Strategic Objective 2



Brief description of the intervention

The implementation strategy is based on:

- An intervention among groups identified for the SO;
- Developing partnerships with:
 - o Commercialization structures (projects/programs and private traders);
 - o Unions of cowpea producers for marketing;
 - o The network of local banks of Burkina Faso for women's access to credit;
 - o The minister for promotion of women and the CBDF to strengthen women's leadership instead of access to land;

- Developing new income opportunities through the diversification and subsidizing of non-agricultural activities.

This objective is supported in a cross-sectional manner through the FaaFB (Farming as a Family Business) approach, which aims to rationalize economic management of households and encourage producers to better evaluate their income and expenditure.

As for SO1, the activities specific to the cross-sectional problem of gender are addressed in Part.

3.3.2. Intermediary result 2.1.: improved linkages with the market

3.3.2.1. Strategy and approaches

Training in “FaaFB”

Training in “agriculture as a family business” addresses the aspects of planning and managing agricultural activity that support the other activities developed. However, in a context in which the majority of producers are illiterate, the application of operating accounts is problematic. The literacy campaign planned by the project is a first response to this challenge.

The “value chain” approach

Establishing links with markets completes the value chain approach of SO1. This is particularly relevant for cowpea, with the variety improvement promoted by the project, which opens new market perspectives for producers and market gardens, which are naturally cash crops. The sorghum value chain is still mainly destined for self-consumption, and the livestock value chains are still too atomized for links to be formed.

For rainfed crops, the approach for access to markets targets specifically the unions, which have a greater power of negotiation and can self-finance the operations through a debit on the sold quantities. Though the entry by group is relevant for SO1, the access to markets involves working simultaneously to strengthen the structure of producers, from the groups to the unions. This challenge has already been perceived by the project, which has linked around 20 groups of cowpea producers to the Union Départementale des Producteurs de Niébé (UDPN) of Pissila. A closer partnership between the project and the most active unions of the zone would help to strengthen this strategic activity.

Nonetheless, for off-season crops, the farmer groups are the most suitable division to organize the joint sales. Indeed, the market is both volatile and competitive, and the different experiences of contractualization of marketing often result in failures. For onion crop, creating a common infrastructure for storage would significantly favor the joint commercialization of production. Producers who store their onions in a same building can organize their joint sales when the prices have risen at the end of the dry season.

Support for non-agricultural activities and micro-enterprises, and diversification.

Support for non-agricultural activities, which are eligible for small subsidies, seem relevant in view of the limits on the credit access, amounts granted and conditions (six months). Not only are small subsidies directed to men, but they can remove certain obstacles to the intensification of livestock production systems.

In the context of insecurity and climatic uncertainty in this zone, the diversification of agricultural and non-agricultural activities contributes to the objective of improving households' incomes.

3.3.2.2. Progress and expected results

Entrepreneurial management of agricultural land

The main achievement mentioned by producers regarding this training, which was undoubtedly strengthened by the results from the field schools and “subsidized” plots, is reducing the areas cultivated in order to intensify the practices. The producers also highlight an improved, more rigorous management of food stores, to avoid waste during celebration and even daily in calculating rations for the family. However, operating accounts are rarely applied. Indeed, this tool requires being literate and undergoing close monitoring.

Facilitating access to markets

This activity mainly concerned the cowpea and market garden sectors. The project value chains specialist has carried out a prospection among buyers and producer unions in the targeted sectors.

The project has prospected several potential markets including the “Purchase for Progress” (P4P) Project of the World Food Program (WFP), the National Society of Food Security Stock Management (SONAGESS), and private traders.

For tomatoes, the project linked a storeowner from Ouagadougou with two producer groups in the project zone.

For cowpea, the link with a buyer was established through the Sanmatenga Provincial Union of Cowpea Producers. Indeed, the society SECOPA approached the Provincial Union to obtain supplies of “kom kallé”²⁴, the variety promoted by the ViM project among its cowpea groups. The proposed price was higher than the market price (320 Fcfa/kg, against 280 Fcfa/kg on the market), but the society demanded a quality assurance of the delivered product: absence of foreign bodies and grains that were broken, perforated or of the wrong color. SECOPA provided sieves for the union to facilitate this sorting process.

The project thus encouraged the cowpea groups of Pissila to deliver their product to the Union Départementale des Producteurs de Niébé (UDPN), which centralized the order and ensured the quality of the production. The groups of Barsalogho, on the other hand, delivered directly to SECOPA. The director of the company was satisfied with his collaboration with the UDPN of Pissila, which delivered in accordance with the norms required. However, it was obliged to resort the cowpea delivered by the groups from the department of Barsalogho, as it was not clean enough. The groups refused to resort the cowpea in response to the quality norms demanded by the buyer, though the proposed price included this requirement.

²⁴ K VX 442

This way, while the links with the union were effective in the commune of Pissila, where approximately 20 “ViM” groups adhered to the UDPN, this was not the case in Barsalogho, perhaps due to a less effective union. As already observed, this experience shows the importance of changing the scale for the commercialization operations.

The ViM project financed the participation of representatives of sorghum and cowpea producer groups at the last “Grain Exchange” event of Afrique Verte (December 2014). In a same group²⁵, one producer went to the fair on behalf of the UDPN of Pissila, with around 100 tons to negotiate, while the representative of the group sent by ViM only had two tons to offer. This example also shows the lesser effectiveness of level grouping for cowpea commercialization operations: The quantities proposed at that level do not provide sufficient bargaining power with buyers. Moreover, doubt also remains on the ability to estimate the available quantities, as this data is still questionable at a union level.

At the level of the P4P, the ViM project integrated their cooperation framework, which brings together representatives of several partners on commercialization (Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Ressources Hydrauliques, de l'Assainissement et de la Sécurité Alimentaire, SONAGESS, Oxfam, etc.). This framework enables the various partners to carry out their activities in synergy and pool their resources to build infrastructures, provide equipment, etc. A certain amount of training is also offered by P4P, but which also works at the union or even federation level. Indeed the minimum quantity to deliver is 50 tons. The quality requirements are also crucial to deliver to P4P.

Support for non-agricultural activities and micro-enterprises.

Support for non-agricultural activities is currently being implemented.

It targets two sectors:

- 30 members of groups, by LIP, were selected to be assisted in the production of improved stoves. The activity will be carried out in partnership with GIZ/Fafaso, to produce improved ceramic stoves. The training is scheduled for January 2015:
- A call for propositions was launched for “small subsidies”: The selection criteria are: being a resident in the project intervention communes, being involved in the activity for at least a year and being enrolled in the eligible activities: activities to support agricultural production and breeding upstream²⁶ and downstream²⁷, handcraft²⁸ activities, processing²⁹, promotion of maternal and infant health and nutrition in rural³⁰ areas, in line with SO3 objectives. It targets both individuals and groups.
- A study of non-agricultural activities took place in 2014.

²⁵ Namanegbzanga Group, Poulalle

²⁶ Metallic and wood carpentry; forge; flour trade, providing various services (sanitation, among others); aviculture (brooders, among others); and sheep and goat fattening (straw cutter, among others)

²⁷ Transformation of cereals, fruit and vegetables; production of infant flour, soap and shea butter making; soubala production; dairy transformations; animal product transformations; apiculture and other productions based on local natural resources.

²⁸ Leather good (with leather and skin); weaving; dying and others.

²⁹ Activities to foster community hygiene.

³⁰ Activities to produce food for children or pregnant or lactating women.

ACDI/VOCA has assigned a budget of approximately 30 million FCFA to finance this first operation of the small grant program. The maximum amount of the contribution of ACDI/VOCA for each project is three (3) million FCFA.

Thus, though at first the small subsidies only concerned upstream activities of the sectors, the decision was finally taken to add breeding activities, notably to provide support for equipment, which is necessary for the intensification process.

To date, the projects have not yet been implemented.

Agricultural diversification, food complements

Various activities have been carried out:

- Training for the LIPs, the ACDI/VOCA team, Catholic Relief Services, the Misola Faso association and 160 producers of flour enriched with local products.
- Training of LIP officials on the production of sweet potato with orange flesh, whose demonstration plots will be established in the market gardens during the 2015 dry season;
- The distribution of five moringa plants to each member of the groups supported by the project, and the MLs under SO3.

The first two activities are recent and could not yet be analyzed. Regarding the distribution of the *moringa* seedlings, several deficiencies existed:

- The availability of seedlings was problematic, causing delay in distribution, and no distribution in certain cases;
- The survival rate was low, due to the late planting, supply difficulties and the early end of rain;
- The knowledge transmitted on the nutritional value of the moringa is limited: the producers interviewed do not perceive the connection with infant nutrition.

3.3.3. Intermediary Result 2.2.: improved access to business development services

3.3.3.1. Strategy and approaches

Access to credit for women

The partnership with the RCPB is a relevant approach to develop this focus of the project. It provides support from an experienced MFI, whose positive results³¹ confirm its professionalism.

Important to mention is the delay in implementing this strategy activity to achieve SO2.

³¹ 98% reimbursement rate; 512 local banks at a regional level.

3.3.3.2. Achieved progress and results

Access to credit

The improved access to credit is based on a partnership with Burkina Faso's network of local banks and the extension of its specific program of village banks providing credit for women. Negotiations appear to have lasted several months, with a call for proposals sent to the RCPB of the North Central region in July 2014. The network proposes to integrate 39 villages into its current system in 2015 (with five organizers, who are already in post).³² The activities will begin in 2015.

3.3.4. Lessons and recommendations SO2

3.3.4.1. Facilitating access to inputs

1) Improving framework conditions for joint commercialization and continuing to assist producer unions.

Facilitating access to markets must be accompanied by improving the framework conditions of joint marketing:

- strengthening producer unions,
- access to storage infrastructures and equipment for quality.

The project must achieve a true partnership with the departmental unions of cowpea producers in the concerned communities. Indeed, they are experienced in both technical support for producers (the interviewed groups belonging to the union had already had various technical training proposed by ViM), in supplying inputs and marketing. Moreover, they comprise groups of seed producers who ensure their supply of high-quality seeds. They are members of the Fédération des Professionnels Agricoles du Burkina Faso and thus benefit from support through this affiliation (training and markets of the P4P program, warrantage operations, among others). Some are also accompanied by other partners, who can be interesting relays for the project.

Both to consolidate the project's actions in terms of marketing, and as an exit strategy, the project must continue to foster the cowpea groups' adhesion to their departmental union. Inversely, the project must also encourage the unions to integrate into these groups as part of their assistance system. Indeed, in Pissila 20 groups out of 70 have agreed to the marketing operation with SECOPA, which represents an increase of around 30% of its membership. It is important that the project should seek to look beyond this project, for a real assistance of the umbrella organization and its base groups, to consolidate their partnership and the union's services to its members. A pilot operation could be carried out with the Pissila union, which seems to be the most advanced one.

2) Developing strategic partnerships

Similarly, formalizing cooperation with the NGO FERT is important in order to improve coordination with ViM as part of support for cowpea producers. The opportunities offered by the agreement framework of the P4P should also be exploited, to develop partnerships with other actors in the sector, in training, equipment and infrastructure.

³² The first objective of 199 village banks in the first year was reduced, in light of the human resources available at the region level.

Regarding the onions, joint marketing will be favored by building storage infrastructures. ViM carried out a budgetary readjustment in response to this concern, but the allocation remains very limited in relation to the need. There must be further capitalization of the experience of PAFASP and development of the partnerships with REGIS-ER and other actors of the sector, in order to concretize this component.

3.3.4.2. Facilitating access to credit

1) Establishing a qualitative monitoring of the Savings Groups and favoring the integration of SO3 volunteers

The activities to establish village banks for savings and credit have not yet begun. It is important that a quantitative and qualitative monitoring system be implemented to measure the impact of the credit on the activities and income of the women concerned.

Targeted actions to raise awareness among the volunteers of SO3 (MLs and female members of CVD) must be organized to encourage them to sign up to the program, and offer them the possibility to develop income-generating activities.

2) Develop a strategy to facilitate men's access to credit

There are numerous banks in the region, but often lack of knowledge of the systems and conditions of access make it difficult for men to obtain credit. The ViM project could also explore the potential offered by the MFI of the zone for rural credit and equipment, and develop a strategy for men.

3.3.4.3. Support for non-agricultural activities and micro-enterprises

1) Promoting the local production of infant flour

Similarly, specific support for processing activities for infant flour would strengthen integration with the SO3. Targeted actions to raise awareness among MLs, some of whom are already demanding this type of support, would facilitate access to this component.

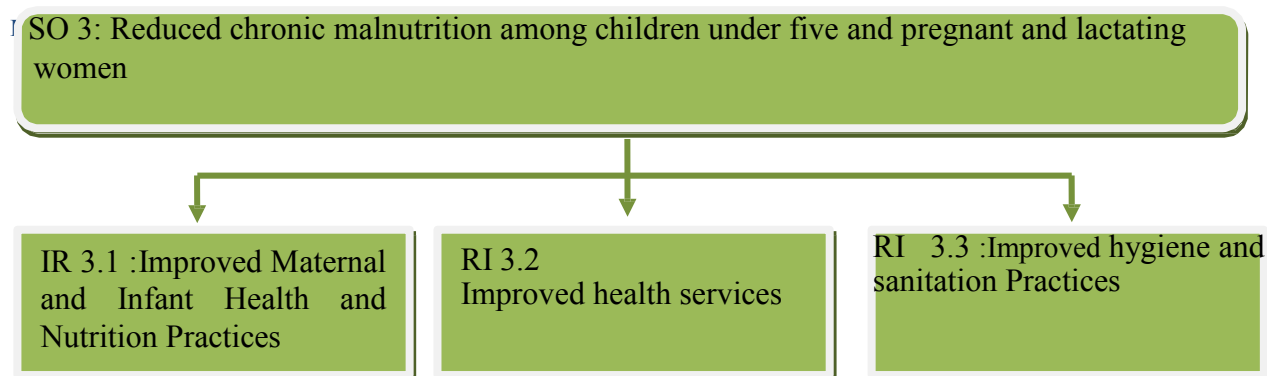
In this case as well, partnerships and capitalizing experiences should be extended: Nutrifaso/ Groupe de Recherche et d'Echanges Technologiques, the new component of P4P, etc.

4. Evaluation of strategic objective 3

4.1 Description: action, strategy, approaches and expected results

4.1.1. Objectives, expected results and activities

Strategic objective 3 (SO3) aims to reduce chronic malnutrition among children under the age of five and pregnant and lactating women, by improving health practices and maternal and infant nutrition, quality and access to health services for women and children, and access to adequate hygiene and sanitation facilities. The expected results and activities are summarized in Figure 8.



Activities

IR 3.1:

- Activity 3.1.1 Carrying out formative research into key practices in health and nutrition
- Activity 3.1.2 Promoting community mobilization and mass communication.
- Activity 3.1.3 Establishing a change in individual and community behavior through the organization by MLs.
- Activity 3.1.4 Supporting children under two and pregnant and lactating women with food rations.

IR 3.2:

- Activity 3.2.1 Supporting health initiatives and services
- Activity 3.2.2 Strengthening the Community Response to Acute Malnutrition (CMAM)
- Activity 3.2.3 Implementing the PDQ process
- Activity 3.2.4 Community management of diarrheic diseases
- Activity 3.2.5 Integrating community health officials (ASC) into the sanitary system
- Activity 3.2.6 Supporting food security and nutrition policies and programs
- Activity 3.2.7 Contributing to national IYCF and community health policies

4.1.2. Strategy, approaches and implementation system

The strategy of implementation of activities under SO3, based among others on the conceptual framework of the causes of infant malnutrition of the United Nations Children's Fund , draws largely from the WHO's 1000 days initiative. It is based on the following approaches:

- Preventing Malnutrition among children under two years old (PM2A);
- Strengthening knowledge and acceptance of key practices in maternal and infant health and nutrition, to fight malnutrition
- Technical support, notably the PDQ to improve the quality of services provided in peripheral health centers;
- Prevention of Malnutrition among children under two (PM2A), strengthening knowledge, institutional support and notably PDQ to improve access to health services, CLTS, to improve hygiene and sanitation practices with an emphasis on building and using latrines, to end open defecation and promote hand washing, accompanying CLTS by constructing or rehabilitating community hygiene and sanitation facilities.
- Accompany the CLTS by building or rehabilitating institutional and community hygiene and sanitation facilities.

The general framework for the system implemented to carry out the SO3 activities is presented in Figure 9. To summarize, it can be observed that:

- After the beginning of the project and the formalization of agreements, a framework team was installed in September/October 2011 in Kaya. During November/December 2011 Health and Nutrition Supervisors (5) and WASH facilitators (2) were recruited. During the same period, 25 health promoters were recruited, and this team then grew to 29.
- Formative research, to inform the Project on the social and behavior change strategy, was carried out. The report produced by this formative study has been available since February 28, 2012, and has enabled the Project to finalize its strategies and approaches, by adapting them to the context.
- At the same time, a census of households in the coverage zone took place from January to March 2012. This census permitted the creation of a database on households, which is used to enroll the beneficiaries of the activities within SO3. This database is also used for the activities within SO1 and SO2.
- From March to June 2012, the community bodies to support the project were formed. More specifically, this is:
 - o 46 village committees in charge of managing food in the community warehouses and distributing it;
 - o 42 village committees for the implementation of the CLTS;
 - o 248 Care Groups, composed of the MLs, are organized by 29 Health and Nutrition promoters;
 - o 2,325 neighborhood groups organized by MLs (MLs) were progressively formed from December 2012.
 - o Collaboration conventions were signed with village committees for the temporary storage of food on the distribution sites, and community warehouses were made available to the Project by the communities.
- In the timeline of the implementation of the community activities, the CLTS began effectively in March 2012, followed by the distribution of the food in September 2012.

In 2014, a study of the quality of food aid called the Food Aid Quality Review carried out by the Tufts University (USA) was added to the ration distribution activities under SO3. This study aimed to test the effectiveness and relative profitability of the four supplementary foods. Moreover, since April 2014, the rations have been amended to introduce these four types of food as follows:

- Group 1: Corn Soy Blend (CSB) 13 to replace CSB
- Group 2: CSB 14 to replace CSB
- Group 3: Super Cereal Plus (SC+) to replace CSB and oil
- Group 4: Ready-to-Use Supplementary Food (RUSF) to replace CSB and oil

The current composition of the rations based on the type of beneficiary is given in the table 4.

The implantation of this study required a reorganization of the logistics for the management of food in the ViM Project. However this study, which was conducted in cooperation with the IRSS, is not properly integrated as a component of the ViM Project.

Table 4: Composition of the rations by type of beneficiary

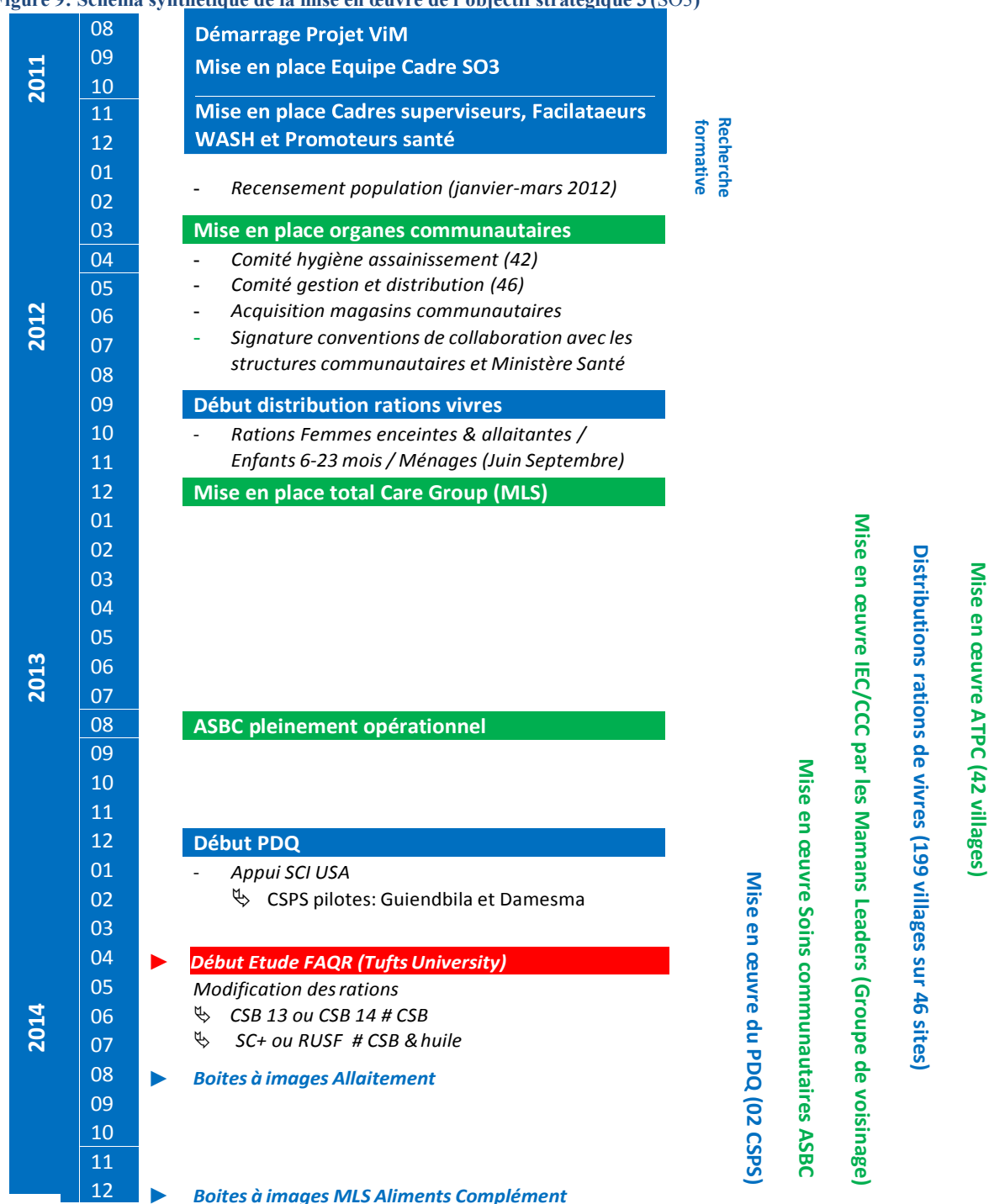
	Type of Rations	Composition of Rations	Quantity/month (kg)
Group 1	Pregnant and Lactating Women	CSB 13	4,05
		Vegetable oil	0,46
		Split peas	1,50
	Children 6-23 months	CSB 13	2,25
		Vegetable oil	0,46
	Households (June September)	Split peas	10,00
		Vegetable oil	3,67
Group 2	Pregnant and Lactating Women	CSB 14	4,05
		Vegetable oil	0,46
		Split peas	1,50
	Children 6-23 months	CSB14	2,25
		Vegetable oil	0,675
	Households (June September)	Split peas	10,00
		Vegetable oil	3,67
Group 3	Pregnant and Lactating Women	SC+	4,80
		Split peas	1,50
	Children 6-23 months	SC+	3,66
		Split peas	10,00
	Households (June September)	Vegetable oil	3,67
Group 4	Pregnant and Lactating Women	RUSF	3,90
		Split peas	1,50
	Children 6-23 months	RUSF	3,00
		Split peas	10,00
	Households (June September)	Vegetable oil	3,67

- The activities of the MLs began late in December 12, due to long discussions (approximately six months) to replace the grandmothers with MLs as organizers of neighborhood groups.
- Making contextualized flipcharts available has also caused a significant delay, due to the long negotiations to increase the budget to produce these tools, but also delays in production. This way, the MLs who were trained on Exclusive Mother Breastfeeding from June 2014, received the Exclusive Breastfeeding flipcharts in August 2014.

While waiting for this tool, the MLs were trained without flipcharts(flipcharts) and organized their neighborhood group meetings without images, notably for lessons 1 (role of the Care Group), 2 (children, our priority), 3 (the manner of being a MLs) and 4 (using USAID/FFP food).

- The MLs were provided with the second flipchart on complementary food (CF) in December 2014. Given that this flipchart is organized into six lessons, the training of the MLs by the promoters will last four to five months. The editing of the third flipchart on WASH is finished, and the training of the MLs is scheduled for June 2015, which will give the promoters the time to complete the training on the CF flipchart.
- On the topic of improving the quality of health services, the CHA of 60 villages were trained on various subjects, such as CMAM, IYCF and WASH. These CHAs were fully operational by August 2013.
- The implementation of the PDQ in two pilot CSPA (Guiendbila and Damesma) began in December 2013. This activity, which was supported by SCI US, will be evaluated in January 2015.
 - There are plans to extend the experience to ten other CSPA in the coverage zone of the project.

Figure 9: Schéma synthétique de la mise en œuvre de l'objectif stratégique 3 (SO3)



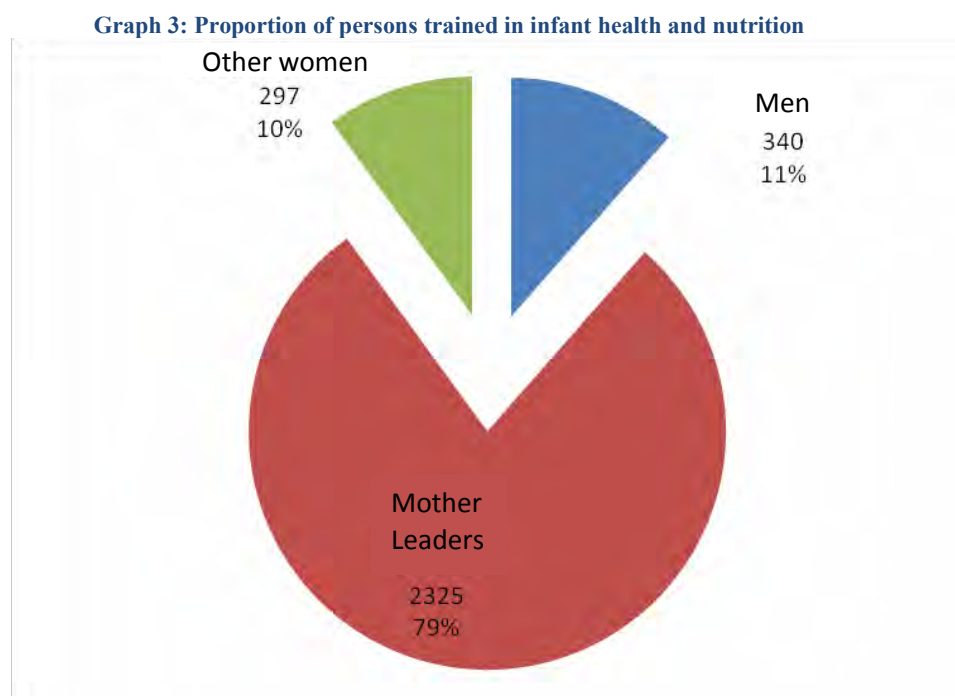
4.2 Results

The evaluation of the completion rates takes into account the activities that could be assessed objectively in the field. For other activities, the performance statistics (quantitative data) are derived from the project reports rather than field observations.

4.2.1. Activities of MLs through neighborhood groups

4.2.1.1. MLs and neighborhood groups

To conduct activities to improve health and nutrition practices, the recruitment of 1,237 MLs was initially scheduled. In November 2014, 2,325 active MLs were recorded on the project database, which is twice the amount foreseen. They represented 79% of the persons trained in infant health and nutrition in 2014 (Graph 3). The MLs have reached, through the neighborhood groups, 23,694 persons, therefore an average of 10.2 women per group. It has been observed in the field that the size of the groups is indeed approximately ten mothers. However, this figure can vary, such as in Pissila, where the MLs interviewed had small groups of six mothers or large groups of 17 mothers.



Source: IPTT 2014

4.2.1.2. Operation of neighborhood groups

The MLs organizes an average of two group sessions per month, and the participation rates are satisfactory: estimated at between 80% and 100% by the mothers interviewed. This high enrolment of mothers can be explained on one hand by their interest in the session, and on the other by the mobilization strategy, as stated by a MLs interviewed in Pouallalé: *“to mobilize women we needed a great deal of humility, at the beginning... our strategy was to visit the absent women to ask why they had not taken part. We then proposed to fix the date and place of the next meeting based on their availability...”*. Men’s participation in their activities

was a very determining factor, insofar as the latter could encourage their partners to take part in the group.

The MLs claimed to have a successful collaboration with the grandmothers, even if they are not their target in the initiatives to raise awareness. In general, they adhere to their recommendations, despite a certain “competition effect” that leads grandmothers to disengage themselves somewhat from maternal and infant care. This is well illustrated by this quote from a grandmother in Koglobaraogo: “*the CSPS and MLs are replacing the grandmothers now.*” Since grandmothers play a crucial role in maternal and infant care, it is important to no longer consider them “secondary targets” in the second half of the project. Indeed, at the end of the project they might resume their social role, which would equate to returning to square zero if they have not been trained.

However, the issue of the mobilization of mothers is crucial during the rainy season because of field work. With the exception of certain MLs in Pissila who stated that they maintained the rhythm of two organization sessions per month, all the others limited themselves to one session per month. Participation rates also dropped during the rainy season, due to the displacement of mothers in the cultivation areas. Because of the intensity of the agricultural work, the meetings are held at night. The problem with this is lighting, which is managed by each MLs based on the means available. As a result, almost all of the MLs have submitted a request for lighting equipment from the project, to support them in their activities. Purchasing batteries was mentioned as a difficulty; therefore it would be preferable to give the MLs solar lamps, where possible.

4.2.1.3. Organization tools of neighborhood groups.

The flipcharts are the main organization tools of the neighborhood groups. The two flipcharts available, which cover the entire IYCF topic, are of very high quality. Indeed, they were designed based on the realities observed in the zone highlighted, notably through the formative research conducted upstream of the project. The content and presentation are very relevant and accessible. This shows that the project has a certain expertise on the topic, which should be used in the framework of other projects, and notably REGIS-ER.

Observations made in the field demonstrate that the MLs use the flipcharts on maternal breastfeeding proficiently, and have therefore been well trained. To test their skills, they were asked to explain the images selected randomly. All the MLs interviewed managed to complete this exercise, as they knew how to:

- introduce the topic correctly;
- explain clearly the message conveyed in the images;
- answer the trick questions, notably those relating to the decoctions recommended by the mothers-in-law.

However, with the exception of one literate MLs interviewed in Sidogo, the MLs were not familiar with the images to illustrate the proverbs to help the activity, because they were not trained on the content of the flipcharts. In view of the relevance of this approach, which uses proverbs suited to the context, it is recommended that this deficiency be corrected in future training.

Before receiving the flipcharts in August 2014, the MLs organized talks without props on the four first lessons, which discussed generalities, which made their task problematic as the mothers found it more difficult to learn without the visual support. However, they consider that with the first flipcharts on maternal breastfeeding, they understood the concepts better. In turn, they find it easier to organize the groups. They unanimously recognized that the mothers assimilated and memorized the recommendations more easily.

The MLs who received the second flipchart on CF in December 2014 have high expectations of the future training on this tool, as they are aware that they lack knowledge on this topic. For example, the MLs of Sidogo, Pissila and Guiendbila recognized that they were incapable of giving advice to prepare the porridge flour or foods to substitute the CSB to the mothers whose children had been part of the program.

- As the complementary food provided through local foods is crucial to guarantee the long-term effectiveness of the knowledge acquired in the project, the possibility of training all the MLs on this topic by June 2014 should be welcomed.

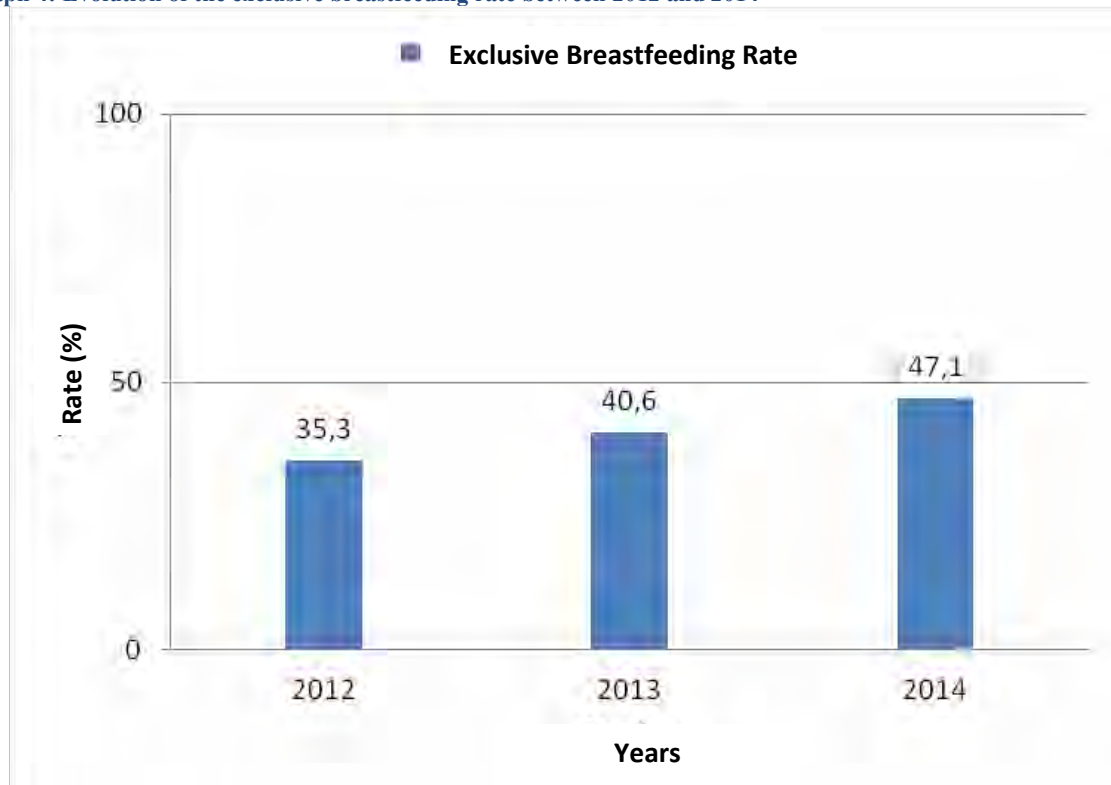
4.2.1.4. Impact of MLs activities on breastfeeding practices

Mothers' levels of knowledge on breastfeeding practices were tested by using the first flipchart devoted to the subject during the focus groups with the beneficiaries in the eight villages visited. In general, mothers have a good knowledge of the principles of exclusive breastfeeding, and all the breastfeeding mothers stated that they applied them, giving no other liquid to the child before six months of age.

On the delicate question of the decoctions generally promoted by the grandmothers, they claim to refuse them, in knowledge of the ill effects of these on the baby's nutrition. These are due to the reduction in the quantity of milk drunk by the baby because of these drinks. They also declare that they do not give the baby water to drink before six months, as they are convinced that the milk contains enough water.

According to the statistics of the IPTT, there is a progression in exclusive breastfeeding rates, which rose from 35.3% in 2012 to 47.1% in 2014 (Graph 4). Despite this progress, efforts still need to be made to increase exclusive breastfeeding, notably because it is practiced by less than 50% of mothers, contrary to the opinion of the mothers collected in the field during the evaluation.

Graph 4: Evolution of the exclusive breastfeeding rate between 2012 and 2014



Sources: IPTT 2014

In fact, according to the health staff and CHA interviewed, the mothers have a tendency to present the recommendations learnt as their own practices, out of fear of criticism from the health staff. This was confirmed by certain mothers, who claim to never give water to their babies, but cannot guarantee that their mothers-in-law or the child's other caregivers do not. According to the MLs, the recommendation to not give water to the child before six months is very difficult to respect. Many mothers would do so, but refuse to admit it unless they are seen giving water to the baby.

The weakness of this indicator proves the need to maintain education and CBCC on the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding. Hope can be expressed, as the MLs believe that the primiparas (first-time mothers) are more receptive and follow the practice more closely. Moreover, certain mothers who have observed the positive impacts of this practice begin to adopt it, according to the MLs, nurses and ASC interviewed.

4.2.1.5. Constraints and expectations of the MLs

To be more skillful in their activities, the MLs have asked to be equipped with material for their cooking demonstrations. This allowance, which is not yet operational and would serve as support to the second flipchart, is justified as there is a real need to valorize local food to fill the vacuum at the end of the food distribution program.

The MLs of certain localities have been granted *moringa* plants, such as Guiendbila, where each care group received five young *moringa* seedlings, which were planted but cannot be used for food yet. Unfortunately, in other localities such as Sidogo, Namissiguima and Koglobaraogo, the care groups have not received any *moringa* seedlings, despite this being promised to them. This action is to be recognized, because of the high nutritional value of the moringa leaves. It would also be helpful to complement these allowances with training and sheets on the nutritional values of the *moringa* leaves. First and foremost, it is crucial that all the groups receive the seedlings, in the interests of equity and effectiveness.

→ The non-allowance being linked to a failure by the supplier, this problem can easily be solved, notably by diversifying the sources of supply and collaborating more with the environmental services to include *moringa* seedlings nurseries as activities within SO1 and SO2. This would allow to extend the benefits to the neighborhood groups.

When carrying out their activities and in awareness of the voluntary nature of their activity, the MLs are required to invest their own funds in expenses linked to communication, travelling, buying batteries, pens, etc. In Sidogo for example, the MLs claimed to have rented a room for their training, because the building owner was convinced that they would be paid during the training. The problems associated with training and discussion sites have been a concern shared by all MLs. The evaluation noted that in Dem they held their meetings under a tree, sitting on stones, loincloths or empty bags. This issue is experienced by the beneficiary mothers and the men. Moreover, in Namissiguima, an opinion leader commented that: *“other projects, which are less “strong” than ViM have left traces in the region by building stores or discussion halls...”* This is evidence of a real need to raise awareness among the population of the intervention philosophy of the ViM project. This failing, the populations will increasingly believe that *“ViM can, but it refuses to...”*, as was stated by a participant of the focus group with men from Pissila.

In addition to the doubt of certain persons regarding the voluntary character of their activities, the MLs feel left out of the other activities of the ViM project. As they are involved in the information on food ration beneficiaries, certain MLs believe that it was not logical to give their time and sometimes their money to fulfil these tasks and receive nothing in return. They also asked for facilitated access to the services offered by the SO1 and SO2 components of the Project. This criticism is justified, as out of the 43 MLs interviewed at the focus groups in Dem, Pissila, Sidogo and Namissiguima, only 11 were members of the groups receiving support for the activities comprised in SO1 and SO2, with an inclusion rate of 26.6%.

They also wanted to benefit from the activities of SO1 and SO2, as a sign of recognition by the ViM Project. Since they have a limited access to the land, they expressed a particular interest in the fattening of small ruminants and off-season market gardening. With this support, the MLs believe that they can face the expenditure implied by their functions. This will also favor the long-term effectiveness of the activity.

Finally, among the relevant claims submitted during the assessment is the need for training in processing techniques, and financial support to begin IGA such as producing soap or infant flour enriched with local cereals, which will help to ensure the long-term success of the ViM project activities in nutrition, hygiene and sanitation. As such, it can be recommended that this concern be considered within the small grant program for micro-projects under SO2.

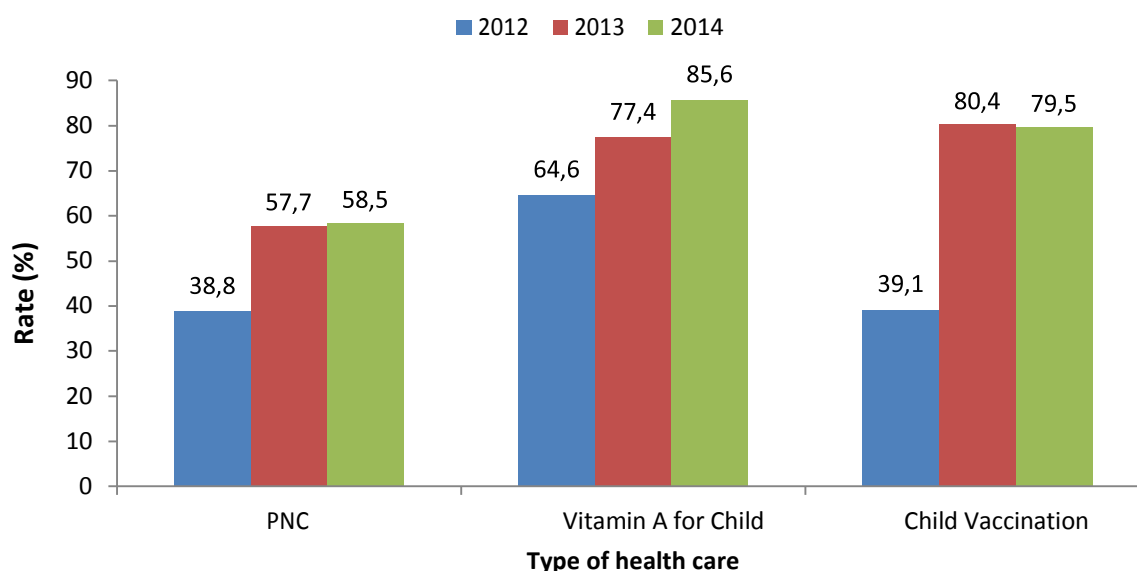
4.2.2. Activities to improve the quality of health services

4.2.2.1. Completion rates

According to the project statistics, there was a positive evolution in all the indicators assessing the quality of health services. To illustrate this, the proportion of mothers who had at least four PNC evolved very significantly from 38.8% to 57.7% between 2012 and 2013; thus exceeding the project's objective of 44.8% (Graph 5). As a result, the project reviewed its objective for 2014, raising it from 49.8% to 72.7%.

In terms of infant care, despite the positive evolutions observed, completion rates were below the forecasts for 2013: 77.4% for the Vitamin A supplement, and 80.4% for the total immunization by vaccination. In 2014, the performances were improved to reach 98.9% and 83.9% of the completion rate respectively for the Vitamin A supplement and the total immunization.

Graph 5: Evolution of the rate of Prenatal consultations (PNC), of Vitamin A supplements and completely vaccinated children.



Sources: IPTT 2014

4.2.2.2. Implementing the PDQ

In terms of improving the quality of health services, the project implemented the PDQ process. This approach was established in the CSPS of Guiendbila (Sanitary district of Barsalogho) and Damesma (sanitary district of Kaya), which were targeted because of the difficulties experienced in these sanitary areas, which limited the use of the center.

The evaluation of the achievements of the CSPS in Guiendbila notably showed that the PDQ approach has overcome the main barriers. Indeed, the interviews with users and health staff reveal that the problems encountered (reception, availability, quality of care, etc.) and the solutions were proposed by both parties. This made it possible to clarify misunderstandings, with a significant increase in the attendance rates of CSPS for curative care and assisted births.

Since the impact report is currently being produced, the consolidated data was not available to support these facts. However, the nurse responsible for the CSPS estimated that previously 50% of births were not assisted. After the PDQ, this rate dropped to 11%.

The nursing staff was trained to improve the quality of care. However, there is still a conspicuous lack of equipment in this CSPS. For example, the maternity unit only had one functional bed, without a mattress. Implementing the PDQ would therefore be more effective if it were accompanied by a minimum allowance of equipment. Unless it takes responsibility for the equipment for the PDQ, the Project would do well to create a better synergy with the programs of the Ministry of Health, which comprise this component. Indeed, as stated by the head nursing officer in Guiendbila, *“we cannot work to a high standard without a minimum level of equipment... for example in the maternity unit, out of the three beds only one has a mattress, so after giving birth the women are hospitalized on the matts that they bring...”*

The mothers benefiting from the food who were interviewed during the focus group in Guiendbila recognized that the quality of care at the CSPS had evolved very positively. The reception was improved, though mothers judged to be “too dirty” are sent away.³³ They also said that the PNC, the birth and the Post Natal Consultation (PoNC) take place in better conditions. They commented that the staff had been strengthened but were still overstretched, and this particularly as the number of women attending the CSPS is increasing. Men shared the same opinion, and according to one of them: *“no and days, if you go to the CSPS on weighing day, it is like a market.”*

After confirming the success in implementing the PDQ approach in the two pilot centers, demonstrated notably by the documentary reports, the Project’s aim to extend it to ten other health centers is likely to be formalized, as according to the nurse from Guiendbila, his peers in other CSPS are already very interested. The experience could eventually be extended to the entire sanitary region.

4.2.3. Community management of diarrheic diseases

The community management of diarrheic diseases is the least effective activity of the project. The execution rate of 3% in 2013 led to project to reduce the target of 12,982 to 3,254 beneficiaries for 2014 (IPTT, 2014). Despite this dramatic decrease, the achievement rate was 38.5% in relation with the target of 12,982. Though this counter-performance, linked to the lack of inputs (oral rehydration salts and zinc), can be explained by the delay in implementing the activities of the *Micronutrient Initiative* (MI); it also leads to question the definition of the indicators for activities that do not depend solely on the ViM project (Annual Results Report [ARR] FY 2014). The communities interviewed (men and women) have showed little interest in the community management of diarrheic diseases as an activity of the ViM project. They view this issue as the responsibility of the CSPS. This can be explained by the fact that this activity is taking place in 60 villages out of 199.

4.2.4. Activities to improve hygiene and sanitation practices

4.2.4.1. Implementing the CLTS by village committees

According to the Hygiene and Sanitation Facilitator, the CLTS is being implemented in the 42 villages targeted. Village sanitation committees, consisting of a male/female pair per neighborhood, the CHA and a bricklayer, were established in all the villages. This was verified in Dem, Poullalé, Sidogo and Koglobaraogo, where the evaluation mission observed

³³ According to the statements made by the Mothers during the focus group interviews

that committees, which each has image kits for raising awareness, were in place in each of these four villages. It is arguably regrettable that the images are fairly small (A5 format) in comparison with those from the MLs flipcharts.

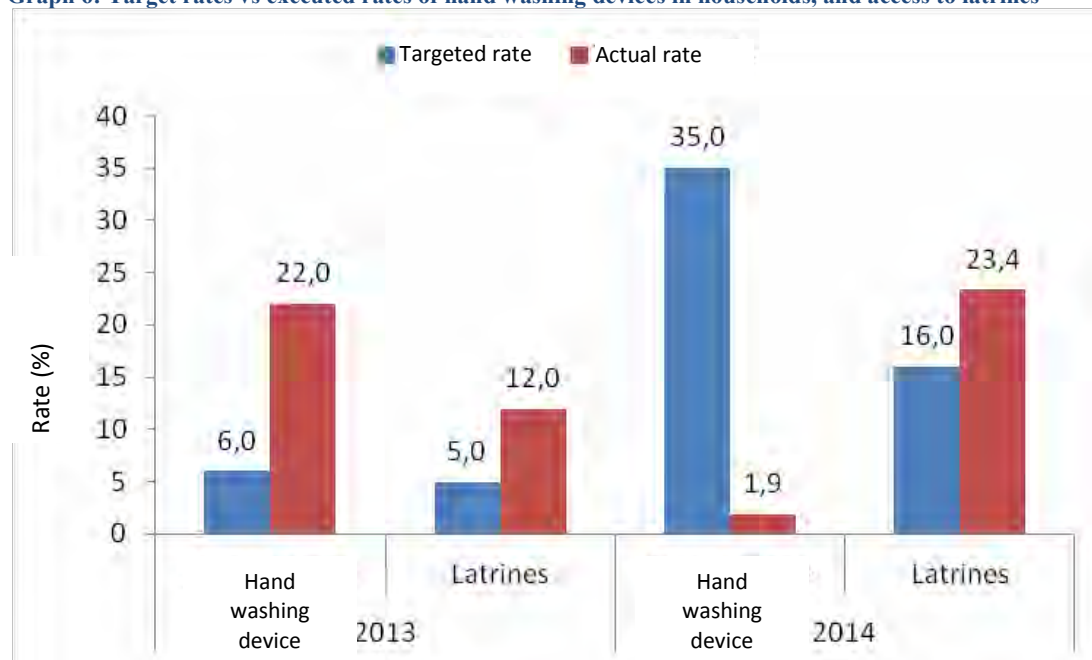
A rapid evaluation of the abilities to interpret the kit images showed that in general the members of the sanitation committees used the tool effectively. They state that they organize awareness sessions every week, alternating between the village's neighborhoods.

In Sidogo, the evaluation mission noted the effectiveness of the community sanitation map and the use of red and white scarves to indicate the households and sites with good (white) or bad (red) practices.

4.2.4.2. Households' hygiene and sanitation infrastructure

In terms of hygiene and sanitation infrastructure, it appears that the target rates for 2013 were fairly low. To illustrate this, the projected proportion of households with a device for hand washing was 6%, and access to latrines was 5%. These targets have been exceeded considerably (respectively 22 and 12%), and the target rates have increased for 2014: 35% instead of 9% for hand washing, and 16% instead of 8% for access to latrines. By the execution, these rates have been largely overestimated for the hand washing devices, unlike access to latrines, where the predictions were exceeded.

Graph 6: Target rates vs executed rates of hand washing devices in households, and access to latrines



Sources: IPTT 2014

In Koglobaraogo, the committee estimated that it had contributed to the construction of 26 family latrines. The sanitation committees of Dem, Poullalé and Sidogo did the same, but the number of latrines built could not be specified for those localities. The latrines built by these communities were generally paved with wood (tree trunks) covered with earth.

They also have a relatively short lifespan, as high-quality wood that can last over five years is rare in that zone. Given the very limited lifespan of the slabs of wood, the pits are dug to a depth of 2 meters, and they therefore fill up fairly rapidly.

In Dem, for instance, the committee estimated that out of ten latrines built out of wood, an average of four collapses after a rainy season. There are several palliative solutions such as the stone flag designed by a municipal counsellor in the village of Issao in the rural commune of Namissiguima (cf. Figure 10 illustrates the construction of the latrine with a stone flag in Issao).

Figure 10: Construction of a latrine with a stone slab



4.2.4.3. Households' hygiene and sanitation infrastructure

Within the component Construction and Rehabilitation of institutional water and sanitation facilities, the project built or rehabilitated 13 latrines in institutions (school, markets, health centers), as planned (IPTT 2014).

The school in Dem, which benefited from the latrine program, was visited by the mission. This infrastructure, composed of two blocks of three cabins (one block for girls and another for boys) is managed by a committee of six members: two teachers (including the director) and four members of the students' parents association. The committee benefited from training in hygiene-sanitation, notably on maintaining latrines.

A hand washing system has also been implemented, but it is not used. The reason given by the director is that as the school is not surrounded by a fence, the system was being used by all passersby. As the only alternative was to place a padlock on the door, the Dem school preferred to use kettles, which were distributed in all the classes.

The everyday maintenance is maintained by the pupils, using the equipment available (buckets, brushes, gloves, boots, etc.) and disinfectant provided by the ViM Project. This makes it possible to keep the latrines in a clean state, as they were found during the visit. This support in maintenance equipment and products was highly appreciated by the Director, whose only complaint was that the boots were too big to be used by elementary school pupils.³⁴

To complement this infrastructure, the topic "hygiene and sanitation" was integrated into the teaching program. Unfortunately, the teachers do not have any tool (such as a flipchart) to support this teaching program. An evaluation of the levels of knowledge among pupils in their

³⁴ During its visit to the school, the Mission observed that the students were responsible for maintaining the latrine.

third grade of Elementary school showed that they are familiar with the key stages of hand washing, the consequences of defecating in the open air (diarrheic diseases), the importance of body hygiene, etc.

Thanks to the availability of latrines at school, defecation in the open air during school time did not tend to occur. All the pupils interviewed stated that they systematically use the latrines when they are at school. Unfortunately, out of ten pupils interviewed, only two had latrines at home.

4.2.4.4. Institutional hygiene and sanitation infrastructure

The proportion of persons with knowledge of the key stages of hand washing remains very low in 2014 (12.7 %, according to the IPTT 2014). Contrary to these statistics, the mothers receiving food interviewed during the assessment were very familiar with the aforementioned key stages. This knowledge was acquired mainly through the activities held by the MLs and the IEC/BCC during the pre- and post-natal consultations. Nevertheless, in practice they do not manage to follow the recommendations, in particular when they are outside their home. Moreover, soap is not always available, and they use ash as an alternative.

The lack of water is a considerable constraint in the coverage zone of the ViM Project. Indeed, it was cited as the main factor limiting good practices in hygiene and sanitation. In Pissila, the mothers receiving food declared that during the dry season (April to May) they buy a 20-liter can of water for 75 or 100 FCFA, and can spend two days without a barrel of water. The situation is no better in the other villages, where women spend all day at the pump just to obtain a barrel of water. In these conditions, surface water is drunk after a simple filtration through a piece of cloth, as was observed in Dem.

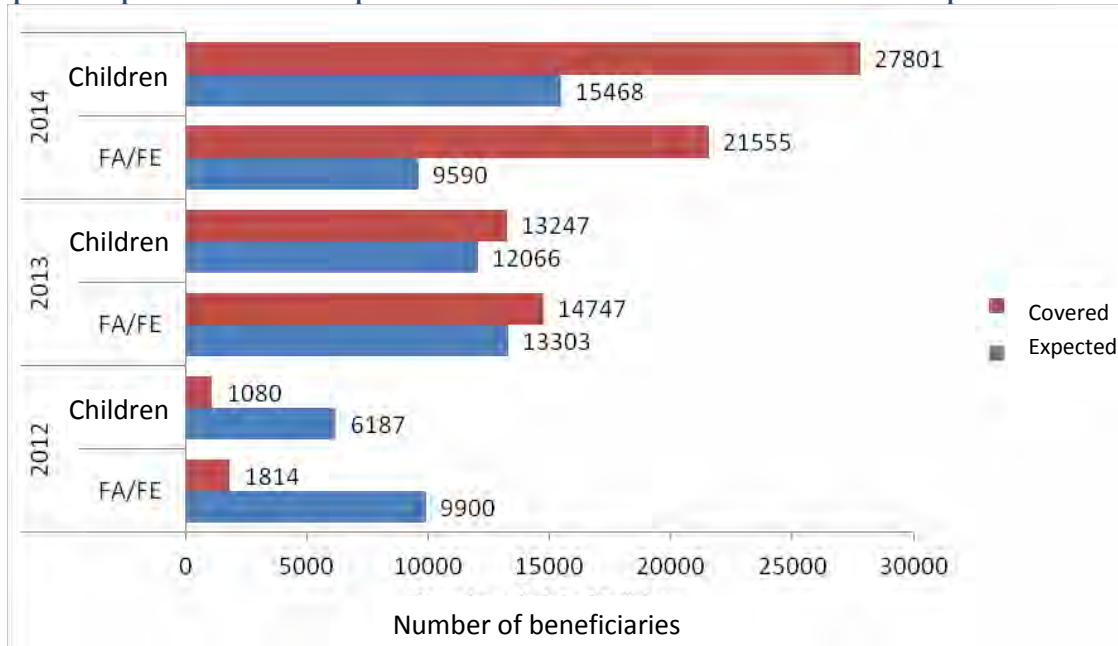
4.3 Food management

4.3.1. Support through food rations for pregnant/lactating women and children

Coverage rate in food rations

The support provided for children under two years old and pregnant/lactating women in the form of food rations, which began in September 2012, was intended to reach approximately 60% of households in the four localities. These estimations, which were produced based on the levels of pregnancy and total number of population/households, were exceeded considerably at the moment of execution. Graph 7 compares the targeted number of beneficiaries versus the number of covered persons.

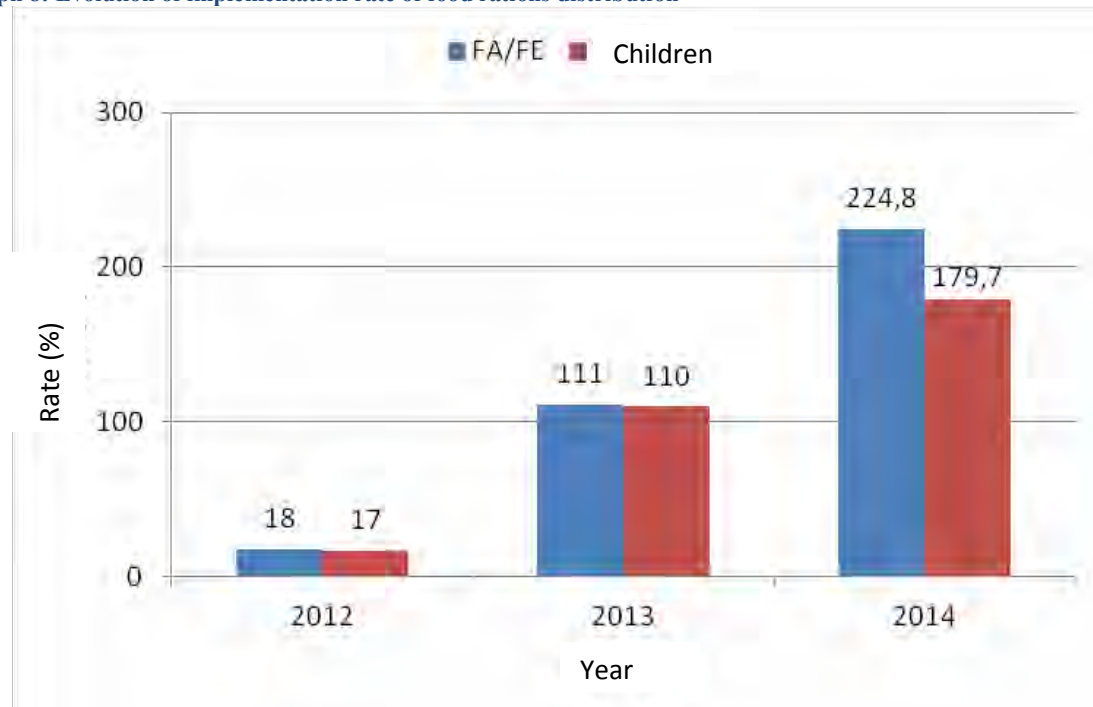
Graph 7: Comparison between the expected number of beneficiaries versus number of covered persons.



Sources: IPTT 2014, ARR FY 2012-2014

An analysis of the evolution of the achievement rates (Graph 8) shows that in 2013 the project reached 100% of execution and in 2014 the program integrated over double the number of PLWs initially planned.

Graph 8: Evolution of implementation rate of food rations distribution



Sources: IPTT 2014, ARR FY 2012-2014

4.3.2. Logistics of food management

The logistics of food management appears to work effectively between the teams of ACDI/VOCA and SCI. Despite the relatively long period between the request for food and the reception, estimated at six months, no rupture has been observed. This was confirmed by the village committees and the beneficiaries, who indicated several small delays of 24 hours, or less frequently 48 hours, generally linked to the transporter (trucks breaking down). Notwithstanding this performance, which avoids ruptures, there are still inaccuracies in the database for food management, according to the M&E Director, which the SCI team describes as misunderstandings linked to the interpretation of figures, notably evolutions based on execution periods.

The food, notably the CSB and split peas, are pre-packed in Ouagadougou before being sent to the site. According to the village committees, this process facilitates the distribution and ensures that quantities are respected. They judge that the plastic used for pre-packing is of good quality and resistant. This opinion is shared by the beneficiaries, who reuse it for various purposes (wrapping condiments, storing utensils, carrying documents, etc.) Though the pre-packing is appreciated by the committees and beneficiaries, there remains the delicate question of its environmental impact. Since the pre-packing sachets are not biodegradable, even if they are reused they end up discarded in Nature once they are unusable. This issue deserves to be mentioned, in particular since Burkina Faso adopted a law prohibiting non-biodegradable plastic bags in May 20, 2014³⁵.

→ ACDI/VOCA has been informed about this law (in force from January 1, 2015) on the importation/use of biodegradable plastic bags, and discussions with partners (SCI and Tufts) and the providers are underway regarding the availability and costs of biodegradable bags for the elaboration of the project's IY5 budget.

The process of transporting food to the distribution sites is directed by the monthly order forms issued by the team implementing SO3. The pre-packed food from Ouagadougou is then sent directly to the sites by authorized transporters and delivered under supervision of the health promoter and food management and distribution committee, in exchange for a delivery form signed by the various parties. This process, checked by the mission in Pissila, is a guarantee of transparency.

The food is then stored for a maximum of 72 hours in a store made available by the community and monitoring is ensured thanks to the stock records. However, before the rainy season, the food for four months is pre-positioned in inaccessible sites such as Namissiguima.

According to the philosophy of the ViM Project, the storage is part of the contribution of communities. Moreover, depending on the availability and capacity of sites, the warehouses are of variable quality. The mission therefore observed that Pissila displayed good storage conditions, in the warehouse made available by the Catholic mission. On the other hand, in Namissiguima, the warehouse lent by SOS Sahel was in a state of advanced disrepair due to a termite invasion.

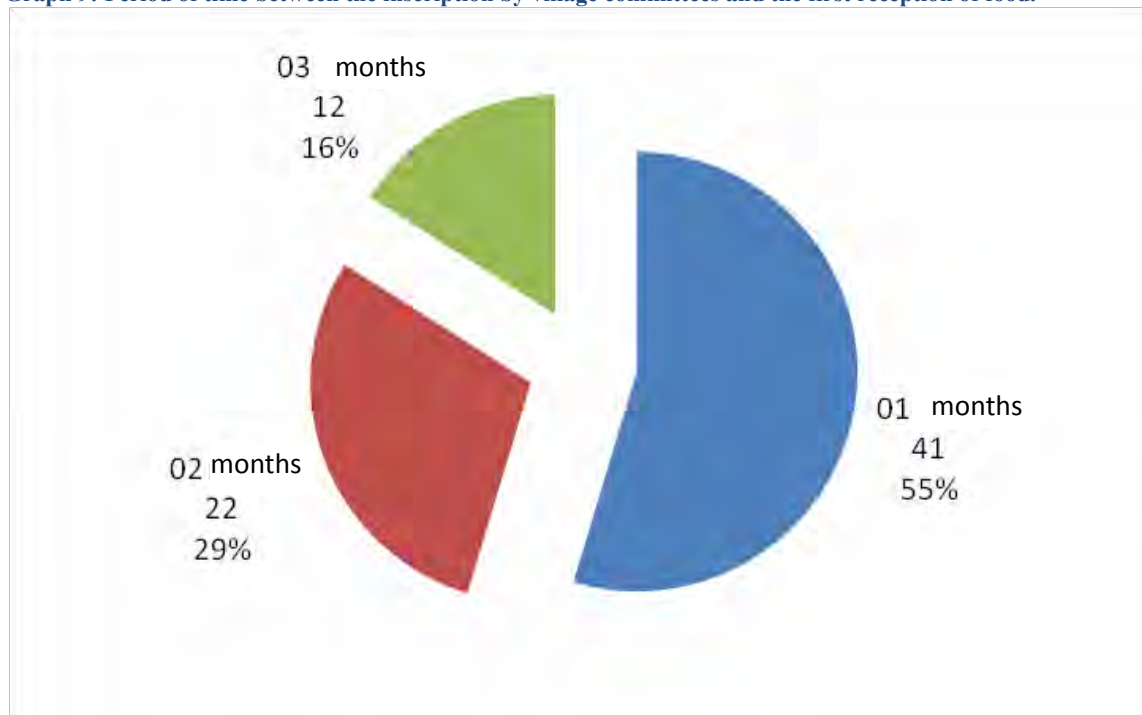
³⁵ LAWOI N° 017-2014/AN Prohibiting the production, importation, commercialization and distribution of non-biodegradable plastic wrapping and bags..

→ In view of the requirement to guarantee the quality of the food, the ViM Project invested approximately 9 million FCFA to refurbish 18 pre-positioning warehouses. However, efforts remain to be made as, apart from the food management and distribution committees, the communities are very little involved in the maintenance of the warehouses.

4.3.3. Distribution of food by village committees

The distribution process begins with the village committee signing up potential beneficiaries on a list, which is transmitted to the SO3 framework team. In principle, one month after the inscription on the lists of village committees, the pregnant women who fulfil the conditions should receive their first rations. Out of the 75 beneficiary mothers interviewed during the discussion groups, this was the case for 55% (Graph 9). Nonetheless, 29% received their rations after two months and 16% three month after their inscription on the village committee lists. As this situation is linked to the mistakes shared and recognized by both the village committees and the framework teams of the SO3, corrective measures could be provided by improving the fluidity of exchanges and quality of monitoring documents.

Graph 9: Period of time between the inscription by village committees and the first reception of food.



Source: Focus group with beneficiaries.

To facilitate the distribution process, and taking into account the accessibility and storage capacities of various sites, the Project identified 46 distribution sites to cover the 199 villages and sectors. This effort made it possible to have a maximum number of beneficiaries less than 10 km from the distribution site. This is a reality for most of the beneficiaries interviewed. However, the zone of Sidogo is an exception: the village stretches over approximately 17 km and the village of Saaba is situated over 12 km away.

In the opinion of most beneficiaries interviewed, the displacement to receive the food is not a major problem during the dry season, though over half do not have any means of transport. During the rainy season, however, the beneficiaries face numerous difficulties, mainly in certain zones, such as Koglobaraogo, where they must cross wetlands to access the distribution sites.

The monthly distribution sessions last an average of four to five days, during which the villages follow a schedule. The day generally begins at 8am, and ends at 6pm. According to the beneficiaries, the organization was faulty at the beginning, which caused several women to spend a whole day at the site. This malfunction was corrected by the committees: each village has its own day, and an order of passage (pregnant women - lactating women - children) was established. To the satisfaction of the beneficiaries, this new structuring of the sessions has reduced waiting times to two or three hours.

The delays observed in the distribution are essentially linked to oil which is not pre-conditioned due to the availability and prohibitive cost of packaging. As the content of the cans needs to be shared out among the beneficiaries using a measuring tool to calculate the rations, this process takes time. To accelerate the process, the Pissila committee uses a distribution barrel borrowed from the CSPS, in which several oil cans are tipped over and poured into the measuring tool through the tap.

4.3.4. Impact on the nutritional state of women and children

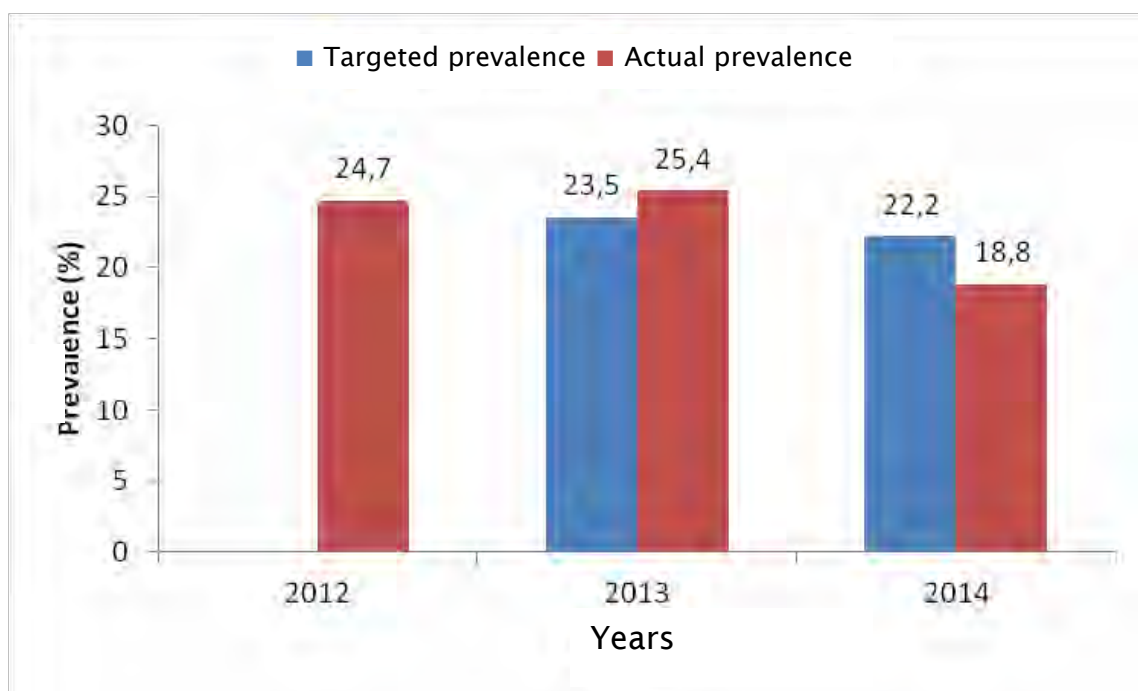
All the categories of respondents (mothers, men, CHA, nurses) were unanimous in recognizing that the food rations distribution program for pregnant/lactating women and children has had a very positive effect on their nutritional state. Indeed, the nurse interviewed in Pissila stated that there are very few new cases of malnutrition in his sanitary area. The nurses and CHA met in the villages of Guiendbila, Namissigui, Namissiguima and Pissila agreed with this statement. A verification of the “CHA consultation record” of the CHA of Namissiguima showed that in 2014 the latter had only recorded one case of severe malnutrition and four cases of moderate malnutrition.

The communities visited also recognize that malnutrition has decreased considerably in the zone thanks to the food from ViM and the changes in behavior of the mothers fostered by neighborhood groups and care groups. To summarize the general opinion of the population, an opinion leader spoken to in Poullalé can be cited: *“there is a clear difference between a ViM child, who is receiving rations, and a non-ViM child”* The impact of the food rations is thus visible in beneficiary children. However, there is concern that the non-beneficiaries are less well fed, a sign that the communities have not yet a real capacity to manage without this assistance.

An analysis of the anthropometric indicators of the project (IPTT, 2014) shows that the prevalence of underweight dropped from 24.7% to 18.8% between 2012 and 2014, after a slight rise in 2013 (Graph 10). Though the downward trend confirms the statements of the persons interviewed, with a rate of 18.8% of underweight in 2014, it cannot be affirmed objectively that malnutrition is a rare phenomenon in the zone.

However, this indicator does not appear to be adapted, as its numerator corresponds to all children between 0 and 59 months. It therefore includes in the calculation children over two years not targeted by the Project activities, and notably food distribution.

Graph 10: Comparative evolution of targeted and real prevalence (%) of underweight (weight per age index).



Sources: IPTT 2014

No anthropometric data illustrating the nutritional state of mothers being available, the evaluation was based on the opinion of beneficiary mothers. As a whole, they consider that the food rations from ViM have had a very positive effect on their diet and their health. In terms of tangible effects, certain have affirmed *“with the food rations, they no longer feel faint during their pregnancy.”* They perceive these foods as very energetic, and that *“just one portion of CSB porridge would fill them up for the entire day.”* Interviews with lactating women also reveal that the food received improves the quality of breastfeeding: *“the mothers are more capable of producing milk in quantity and quality.”*

Since the PNC and PoNC are sine qua none conditions to obtain rations, the Project would gain from exploiting the CSPS’s anthropometric data. Moreover, an evaluation of the weight at birth of children born to women who received rations while they were pregnant was considered a good indicator of monitoring, as it depends in great art on the nutritional state of the gestating mother.

The men interviewed in Dem, Poullalé, Sidogo Namissiguima and Koglobaraogo mentioned a collateral benefit of the food rations: improved family relationships. According to them, the women receiving the food rations request less food and this has alleviated numerous conflicts in the couples. This is particularly visible during the lean period, when the households receive the rations.

4.3.5. Constraints and expectations of the village committees

Of all the community actors in the ViM Project under SO3, the management and distribution committees say that they are the least motivated. Indeed, all the committees interviewed in the eight sites visited stated that they were not aware of the extent of the task when they signed the agreements. This is well illustrated by a quote by a member of the Namissiguima committee: *“at first we thought that it only involved coming to distribute the food...”*

The main constraints evoked by the committees are, firstly, the lack of furniture (tables, chairs, etc.) and stationery (pens, date stamp and ink, calculators, etc.) to carry out their activities. They therefore borrow the furniture from various sources such as churches (Guiendbila), schools (Dem), businesses (Namissiguima); or they simply make tables and chairs from boxes and empty oil cans. The documents for the warehouse management are kept in cardboard boxes, which expose them to termites. Furthermore, they do not have any means of light, though the reports on the distribution days are finalized at night.

The mobilization of the beneficiaries and travel to receive and distribute the food force them to pay for telephone communication (estimated as an average of 2,500 FCFA per month) and fuel. In response to this lack of motivation, few members are really active (an example is Sidogo, where only three out of nine members are active).

The members of village committees estimated that the food management and distribution takes between five and seven days per month. As they are farmers, this corresponds to an inactivity of 15 to 21 days during the three months of intense agricultural activity. This gap in their income is not compensated by the benefits of the SO1 and SO2 activities, and they feel resentment when not a single member of their family receives the food. In certain communities such as Guiendbila and Pissila, they are burdened with the unflattering moniker “*unpaid officials*.”

A facilitated access for members of the food management and distribution committees in activities within SO1 and SO2 would be a motivating alternative, as on average only two or three persons out of ten are concomitantly members of the groups supported by the ViM Project.

4.4 Critical analysis of the strategy, approaches

4.4.1. Analysis of the strategies and approaches in health and nutrition

The strategies and approaches to promote maternal and infant health and nutrition, the result of tried and tested practices, are globally satisfactory. They have thus helped to achieve the expected results, to a great extent. However, the provision of food rations is not complemented by a real exit strategy with regard to the weak synergy between SO1 and SO2, and SO3. The main deficiency is that the beneficiaries of SO3 are not all members of the groups supported by SO1 and SO2. The estimation carried out among mothers receiving the food rations shows that less than half were members of the groups supported. Alternatives must therefore be sought to increase the inclusion of beneficiaries of SO3.

At the current stage, the beneficiaries have a weak capacity to use local food to prepare balanced meals, notably enriched porridge for children. This deficiency will be partly bridged by the activities scheduled by MLs on complementary foods. It will then remain to manage the availability of food in quantity and quality in households.

There is no indication of the long-term effectiveness of the MLs (a pillar for promoting good practices) as the communities are not prepared to take over the project to sustain this activity. Indeed, the communal and traditional authorities are very little involved in the functioning of the groups, and there is a real risk that the neighborhood groups will not survive the end of the project. This issue is less crucial for the CHA, which are institutionally attached to the CSPS.

4.4.2. Analysis of the strategies and approaches for service quality

The intervention of the ViM Project has brought a significant improvement of the functioning of health centers, by encouraging persons to attend them by offering food rations. This approach had had a very positive effect on the perception of the usefulness of the care at CSPS: all the mothers interviewed during the evaluation consider that this dynamic will be maintained without the food rations.

The PDQ approach in two pilot health centers appears to be successful, according to the observations made in the field. Nonetheless, the support through equipment, not considered in the Project, has been shown to be indispensable and must be provided, either on a small scale, or by establishing synergies with Projects that provide equipment. By capitalizing on the experience of the pilot CSPS, a scaling up can be considered, which would improve the quality of health services throughout the entire coverage zone.

4.4.3. Analysis of the strategies and approaches in hygiene and sanitation

In terms of hygiene and sanitation, the CLTS approach was successfully implemented in the 42 selected villages that used it. However, though the CLTS has the advantage of offering certain sustainability, it is hindered by the coexistence of other interventions offering subsidies in the zone, such as PLAN Burkina through its project *Projet de Renforcement des Services d'Eau potable et d'Assainissement (PRESEA)*. The agreement protocol between SCI and PLAN, which seeks to implement the CLTS activities as a complement to the PRESEA activities, should be finalized.

One of the main problems faced by the CLTS is the sustainability of the constructions made using local materials. One example of this is the latrines built from poorly resistant wooden planks, due to the difficulty to obtain solid wood. As a result, some latrines last less than two years. Another problem is the dissemination of knowledge such as stone slabs for more resistant latrines. Moreover, households have such a low income that they cannot purchase soap to wash their hands. However, the crucial issue remains the availability of drinking water, which is not guaranteed in the project's coverage zone.

4.4.4. Analysis of community involvement

The process to establish the community bodies (general assemblies and other social marketing meetings) have enabled a successful implantation of the Project in the communities. The involvement of community actors in food distribution has been a guarantee of transparency for the population.

Nonetheless, the level of involvement of the communities remains low or non-existent. This is very noticeable at the level of the distribution program, where the activity is considered to concern only the committee. As a result, the latter say that they are *“physically and financially exhausted, working for the benefit of a community that is not always grateful.”*

The various committees established by the Project to carry out the activities within SO3 work in parallel rather than in synergy in almost all of the villages visited. The only clear instance of cooperation is the involvement of the MLs in the information on beneficiaries, though the food distribution committees. As a point of reference, the CHA, MLs and sanitation committees carry out awareness activities on the same issues of water, hygiene and sanitation using different tools. There is a risk of overexposing the population to the same issues, and in the worst case scenario, contradiction between actors of the same cause.

4.5 Lessons and recommendations for SO3

1) *Improvement in the quality of care in health centers*

- Implementing the PDQ would therefore be more effective if it were accompanied by a minimum allowance of equipment. This would permit health centers to respond more efficiently to the increased demand for health services engendered by the Project.
- After confirming the success in implementing the PDQ approach in the two pilot health centers, demonstrated notably by the documentary reports, the Project's aim to extend it to ten other sanitary establishments is likely to be formalized, as according to the nurse from Guiendbila, his peers in other CSPS are already highly interested. The experience could eventually be extended to the entire sanitary region.

2) *Hygiene and sanitation*

- The issue of the resistance of the wood must be resolved to maintain and guarantee the success of the CLTS approach in a context in which NGOs such as PLAN are subsidizing the slabs. It would therefore be highly relevant to disseminate the knowledge of local engineering such as stone slabs.
- The availability of drinking water and sometimes soap is not always guaranteed in the households. Integrating a module on the techniques to purify water, as proposed in the annual program, and creating initiatives for the local soap production will improve hygiene and sanitation practices.

3) *Food management and IEC/nutrition/IYCF*

- Take into account the entire family environment (notably men and grandmothers, who have so far been considered secondary targets) in the project's activities to raise awareness. For this purpose, mass media such as theater and projections are to be used in all the communes. For this purpose, the Project's aim to produce 40 theater plays/projections should be increased significantly. It could propose either two performances per food distribution site, or one performance in each of the 199 villages covered by the Project.
- To guarantee long term sustainability, the MLs propose that the project activities include literacy sessions and a translation of the content of the tools into the local language, Mooré, with literacy initiatives as the Project intended. This proposal should be analyzed carefully, as this could enable the MLs to train future MLs, for the sustainability of the activity.
- If there are no new buildings, the warehouses made available by the communities must be rehabilitated to respond to the minimal norms required for storage. According to the food management and distribution committee in Pissila, the period of time that the Catholic mission agreed to lend the storehouse has expired, which means that its use is suspended. To avoid similar situations occurring, it would be advisable to consider renting warehouses to stabilize the long-term activity of the Project.

- Acquiring the oil distributors for the committees will certainly contribute to reabsorbing the difficulties encountered in distributing that food. This equipment also has the advantage of being more precise than the marked cup-style containers that are currently used.
- The prevalence indicator of underweight must be reviewed to bring the base numerator to the 0 to 23 months age bracket, consisting on one hand (0 to 6 months) of rations granted to lactating women, and on the other hand of “child rations.” A disaggregation of these two groups would permit a better evaluation.
- There is an urgent need for furniture and stationery, which the committees declare that they have already submitted, notably to the health promoters of the Project. They are offended that the signed agreement is displayed each time that the complaints are made, and were surprised to receive a delivery of water cans and waste bins despite not having the minimum level. The mobilization of the beneficiaries and travel to receive and distribute the food force them to pay for telephone communication (estimated as an average of 2,500 FCFA per month) and fuel. It is urgent that the project find a joint solution to these problems to avoid demotivating the committees further.

5. Quality of the Program, management and cross-sectional topics

5.1 Management

5.1.1. Implementation organizational chart

The organizational chart for implementation is clearly established, with the two different levels for execution and overall coordination.

The Project clearly presents the levels of organization: The general coordination responsible for the financial management and the management in Ouagadougou, and a technical team based in Kaya, with two sub-teams: a sub-team consisting of ACDI/ VOCA, in charge of implementing the SO1 and SO2 components, and a sub-team composed of staff appointed by SCI and responsible for implementing SO3. The program had intended for the position of the DCOP to be located in Kaya and involve the technical coordination of the two sub-teams.

5.1.2. Agreement meetings

The two sub-teams carryout meetings for agreement and planning: designing PTA projects, work plans, activity reports, and regular consultation with the management team. This internal consultation for the two sub-teams is strengthened by a vertical supervision from the headquarters of SCI and ACDI/VOCA, who closely monitored the SO3 component.

5.1.3. Support from the headquarters

Overall, the implementation of the activities is in phase with the approved program P Pipeline and Resource Estimate Proposal (PREP) and the detailed implementation plan (DIP). The changes recorded in the IPTT are taken into account.

The team installed by SCI began activities in the field before ACDI/VOCA. The support provided by SCI for the operational team based in Kaya, in charge of the SO3 component, was appreciated.

The implementation of the Project for the components SO1 and SO2 began late for the following reasons: delays in recruiting team staff including the COP, selection process of the LIP teams, familiarization with the USAID financing procedures, delay in the baseline study and the study of value chains. The field activities carried out for SO1 and SO2 thus only began in April 2013.

The support received from the headquarters was effective. Indeed, support was provided for the management team, in one three-monthly mission, with a focus on the financial management and familiarization with the USAID procedures. There was also regular support from the M&E team (support for establishing the base line, designing the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, PMP)

The turnover of local staff (DCOP, Director of M&E) did not facilitate this support and the operation of the project.

5.1.4. Responsibility of the technical team of ACDI/VOCA.

Within the operational technical team established to implement the components SO1 and SO2, though the regular meetings ensure a joint programming and consolidated reports there are a number of deficiencies. In the opinion of several members of the sub-team, the collective responsibility regarding relations with the LIPs is not sufficiently established, which often leads to additional activities being carried out without mutual consultation and support. Finally, there is a relatively insufficient responsiveness to the remarks and recommendation on the work carried out by the LIPs, and on the internal organization of work within the sub-team (logistics management). Generally, the LIP and ACDI/VOCA Kaya teams do not feel that they are properly listened to, and their requirements in terms of M&E and their returns to the field in response to the difficulties encountered are not taken sufficiently into account.³⁶ This feeling translated an expectation among team members of greater collective responsibility vis-à-vis the LIPs, and effective consideration of their remarks and observations by the direction of the Project.

5.1.5. Quality of the consortium and coordination

Though planning documents are produced by the sub-teams, both sides are insufficiently familiar with the work carried out in the field. The PREP, then the PTA, are the result of pooling works carried out simultaneously, without any synergy as a strategic complement being the object of systematic consultation. This situation is largely the result of a lack of leadership and a successful mechanism to coordinate the technical team in Kaya. The coordination of each of the sub-teams works effectively, but not that of the two teams as a coherent whole. The turnover of the management team (DCOP) and its positioning in Ouagadougou have made it difficult to ensure this. The Directors of M&E, who was responsible for this task at one time, did not manage it. In reality, the COP plays a much more operational role than it should, though it is also responsible for representing and producing reports for the headquarters and USAID. Its crucial location in Ouagadougou makes it even more difficult to fulfil its responsibilities.

³⁶ Points of view of the majority of members of the ACDI VOCA team during the provisory feedback meeting of December 22, 2014.

These different factors contribute to an insufficient consultation of the members of the consortium in operational implementation (planning, communication, monitoring, evaluation and sharing lessons), and to a better integration of the objectives of SO1 and SO2 on one hand, and SO3 on the other.

5.1.6. Management procedures

The validation required by the headquarters of ACDI/VOCA and SCI for certain activities appears to burden the project management in terms of time frames and procedures³⁷. This is undoubtedly because all the specifications are not previously comprised in the planned actions, one example being the fairs.

In addition to this are the FFP/USAID procedures, which cause numerous delays and malfunctions.

- the process of creating the PREP takes two to three months to consolidate the various levels of planning and approval: three LIPs and SC team, Kaya technical team, Ouagadougou team, headquarters of ACDI/VOCA and SCI.
- Food management is even more limiting, as the USAID approval procedures require that order be planned five to six months in advance.

In addition to the delays caused in implementing the activities, these burdens in procedures remove flexibility from management and guiding of the local team, which depend on the headquarters and USAID for all strategic decisions.

5.2 Targeting

5.2.1 Targeting of SO1 and SO2

5.2.1.1. Targeting and strengthening of groups:

The project target consists of groups of producers intervening in the six value chains identified. This strategy is particularly relevant for the support for production sought by the SO1: making it possible to rapidly affect a greater number of beneficiaries.

Selection strategy

The first stage consists in identifying and “enrolling” groups in the project.

The groups in the four communes of the project were identified based on the lists provided by the local authorities and the technical services for agriculture and livestock. A census of all the recognized groups of the six value chains was carried out by the LIP agents, using a sheet produced by the specialist of farmer organizations and amended by the Agriculture and Livelihoods department. A communal workshop then brought together the representatives of the local authorities (mayor, prefect), agricultural professionals, technical services and the project (ViM and LIPs), to select beneficiary groups based on the predefined criteria³⁸ but with the flexibility to adapt them to the context and reality of the commune.

³⁷ Report on the telephone interview of the coordinator of the ACDI/VOCA team in Kaya

³⁸ Legal recognition under Law 14, having as sphere of activity one of the sectors supported by the project, having members from households eligible for PM2A, having a minimum of documents, having carried out activities in 2012

In practice, the selection is mainly made based on agreements, seniority, the sector concerned and the number of female members. This flexibility in the strict adherence to criteria was imposed because of the concern of achieving the quantitative objectives of the groups and members benefiting from the Project.

This approach is relevant on many counts:

- The involvement of local actors ensures the transparency of the process,
- The coverage of all the villages in the targeted communes makes it possible to benefit groups in isolated villages, who have received little outside assistance in the past,
- Though the criteria for vulnerability were not taken into account, it was verified that the targeting was generally relevant.

However, a number of deficiencies should be mentioned:

- An in-depth analysis of the organization of the groups was not carried out during the selection. As a result, their level of dynamism, the services provided for the members, their enrolment in unions and the support received from other partners were not considered in the support system;
- In Year 3, the majority of the groups selected had a recent authorization³⁹. The project can be viewed as having an auspicious effect on many persons, which encouraged them to become formalized.

Consequently, the opportunities offered by the partners or services already developed by several groups were not accompanied.⁴⁰

For example, for the groups that had already developed services for their members, there was no assistance for the monitoring of management documents to strengthen the activities carried out (cereal bank, supplying inputs, managing small equipment, etc.).

The targeting and strengthening of the groups was mainly guided by a quantitative objective that neglected the diagnosis and monitoring after the training provided on this topic. This approach did not facilitate achieving the expected objectives, which remain limited in terms of strengthening the internal organization, dynamism, and structuration. These challenges are perceived by the project, which has provided improvements to the strategy by:

³⁹ For example: 12/64, so less than 20% of groups selected in Pissila in 2014 had an authorization before 2013.

⁴⁰ Access to credit – Potal group, Sanrgho Peul, Neerwaya group, Korko Mossi, supply of inputs – Namanegbzanga group, Niangado, joint marketing, warrantage – Niangado and Poulalle groups, cereal bank – Nongtaaba group, Korko Mossi etc.

- An organizational self-diagnosis to establish a typology of the groups and adapt the support to the capacities of each type (currently being implemented).
- the limitation of the number of groups to 600⁴¹, to consolidate the achievements of the last three years of the project.

5.2.1.2. Priority targeting of women

The targeting of women is particularly relevant as regards the breeding and off-season activities. However, for rainfed crops, women have a more difficult access to production factors (land, equipment, labor, organic matter, inputs). They must also work primarily on family plots of land before they work on their own fields, which further limit their working time. They thus suffer from more obstacles to implement the technological packages offered. This places doubt on the relevance of this targeting when the objective of the project is to improve the resilience of the agricultural plots. In this regard, providing support for men, who are the main workers on the plots and owners of production acts, would have a greater impact on the food security of households.

5.2.2. Targeting of SO3

The targeting of activities within SO3 has been relevant overall; the formative research upstream of activities can be viewed as one of the main favorable factors.

5.2.2.1 Targeting of activities

In terms of improving maternal and infant health and nutrition practices, food distribution is undoubtedly the project's key activity. Beyond its extensively justified utility for malnutrition rates, it has been the real drive behind the other activities of the project within SO3. The beneficiaries, community actors and staff interviewed all agree that the food rations are the main reason for the increase in attendance at sanitary services.

Nonetheless, the food supplies are a bias for motivated, meaningful participation in education groups, as women who no longer benefit cease to take part in the latter. Moreover, their impact on IYCF practices can be questioned.

Foods (CSB, green split peas and vegetable oil) that make up the rations are accepted and even highly appreciated by the beneficiaries. According to them, the CSB is definitely the preferred food of the rations, as it is considered to be richer in vitamins and to protect against malnutrition. Its taste is well regarded, which encourages children to eat it in an unprepared state. However, the beneficiaries are not generally familiar with the composition of the CSB. The mothers interviewed state that it is composed of corn flour and vitamins and some think that it contains milk. It has been observed that this lack of knowledge of the composition of CSB leads many beneficiaries to believe that it is superior to all local food, which poses the problem of substituting the rations for local foods.

The activities to promote good practices in health, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation through IEC/BCC by the community actors were judged to be highly relevant insofar as they responded to the community's requirements. Men are however less easy to access through this channel, as they are little interested in the discussions, in particular when they discuss breastfeeding or infant nutrition. This observation can be explained partly by the fact that the activities of IEC/BCC towards secondary targets (including men) have not yet begun.

⁴¹ Approved by FFP.

According to the nurse responsible for the CSPS of Guiendbila, the distribution of food to pregnant women could hinder their activities to promote family planning. Indeed, he states that certain women in his sanitary area have stopped using contraception (by removing the implants) to fall pregnant and receive the food. He also expresses hope that family planning will be integrated as a topic in the discussions by MLs. This opinion is shared by the nurses interviewed at the CSPS of Namussiguima, Pissila, though the latter did not observe any removal of contraceptive implants.

Raising awareness through mass media, and notably theater and video projections was judged by both women and men as excellent means of communication, capable of mobilizing all the actors (women, men, children, etc.) of the communities. Thus, it can be concluded that this channel would be ideal to reach men. Unfortunately, this activity remains fairly limited in view of cost: there were a total of only 24 performances in 2013, and 28 in 2014 across the 199 villages.

Nevertheless, as these mass communication activities cannot singlehandedly cause profound changes in the practices and perceptions, activities based on interpersonal communication organized by the Project as secondary targets remain relevant.

The Project's decision to promote the CLTS is to be encouraged insofar as this approach guarantees sustainability. However, the absence of material support is a limiting factor, notably as other actors intervening in the zone allocate subsidies to build hygiene and sanitation facilities. Within the communities' current perception, the action synergy initiated between PLAN-Burkina and ViM appears to be the best guarantee of success. Finally, it can be noted that the project's ambitions in terms of constructing and rehabilitating institutional and community latrines and hand washing devices (respectively three; six and four in 2012, 2013 and 2014) appear fairly modest in view of the population's needs.

The contribution to national IYCF and community health policies, and the promotion of government subsidies for latrines are activities that could not be evaluated, in particular as the real impact of the project is difficult to measure.

5.2.2.2. Targeting of community actors

To promote good practices in maternal and infant health and nutrition, the 2,325 MLs working as volunteer community organizers were targeted by the ViM agents (29 health promoters) in cooperation with members of the community. Moreover, the opinion leaders of the community were involved in the design of activities to promote good practices, notably by identifying entry doors (occasions to communicate) and the media. The related activities for the management and distribution of food to support children and women in 46 sites are ensured by the village committees based on the principles of involvement in the community. For the implementation of the CLTS, 42 villages were retained in view of their size, degree of isolation, number of latrines, etc. In each village, a village sanitation committee was created by the population, which selected a man and a woman per neighborhood, thus promoting gender equity. This committee also includes a CHA and a bricklayer to support the construction works.

The data collected during the evaluation demonstrate that the involvement of communities in the choice of MLs and members of the village health and nutrition committees has facilitated the implantation of the project. Indeed, the persons retained generally feel proud, as they feel highly esteemed by society. This is a considerable source of motivation, which partly explains their mobilization despite the activities being unpaid. Importantly, regarding the tasks attributed to the MLs that require certain physical strength, the decision to replace grandmothers (as initially planned) with mothers is well-judged.

A main limit to community actors targeting, one can cite the high rate of illiteracy. This weakness is recognized by the latter, who mention it among the difficulties experienced when carrying out their duties. The village committees for the food management and distribution revealed a specific problem: the suspicions of favoritism and/or segregation caused by the differences in delay (one to three months) between the inscription of new beneficiaries and the first delivery of food. This situation is due in great part to the mistakes made by the committee members in the codes and spelling of surnames and first names during the inscription of the new beneficiaries.

5.2.2.3. Targeting of the food beneficiaries

To target the beneficiaries of the food rations (pregnant or lactating women, children under two years and their households during the lean period) of the PM2A period, a census of households was held at the beginning of the project (January to March 2012) by the team of SCI.

However, to receive the rations from the program, the beneficiaries have to regularly follow medical consultations and care in preventative health and nutrition. This is more specifically for:

- pregnant women: prenatal checkups:
- lactating women: postnatal checkups, growth checkups and vaccination of children between 0 and six months old;
- finally, children between six and 23 months: vaccinations, Vitamin A supplements, growth monitoring, etc.

Moreover, the women must take part in the meetings of the Care Groups or neighborhood groups.

The rations are extended to the households (household rations) of the beneficiaries during the lean period (June to September).

Overall, the beneficiaries and other community members interviewed consider that the beneficiary selection criteria for the beneficiaries of food are justified, as they target the most vulnerable groups, and acceptable. Nonetheless, the criteria to limit the participation in the distribution of food to one cycle (that is, a woman cannot benefit twice of rations even if she falls pregnant again during the duration of the project) is highly criticized. Certain men view it as a concealed approach to promote family planning, by limiting births. This hypothesis was mentioned during the discussion groups in Pissila, Namissiguima, Dem and Guiendbila. For mothers, and in particular those who did not benefit from the rations for pregnant and lactating women because they were mothers to a child over six months old at the beginning of the distribution of food in September 2012, there is a certain injustice. They therefore expressed their wish that a second ration be allocated if the following pregnancy occurs three years later.

However, the majority of beneficiaries considered this limitation acceptable, even if was not appreciated, because it enabled “all women to benefit from it.” The beneficiaries and other community members found the selection process transparent and fair: all the mothers and children fulfilling the criteria were integrated into the program. The only cases of non-integration indicated by the beneficiary mothers in Dem, Pissila, Sidogo and Namissiguima were in non-surveyed families.

This was confirmed by the members of the food management and distribution committees in these villages. As this situation could create a feeling of exclusion, conditions to include these potential beneficiaries would be appropriate. Since these cases are relatively rare (two in Dem, three in Pissila and Sidogo), this should not affect the provisions significantly.

5.3 Integration

Integration is a dimension that has been sought since the conception of the Project. “Integration must be perceived as a multidimensional approach that aims to improve the impact of the project on the beneficiaries, as each component is essential but insufficient on its own to resolve the challenges of nutrition and food security.” *In this regard, integration is a process that ensures that all the components are coordinated adequately to form a coherent whole*⁴². This definition gives rise to several simple questions: Do the activities implemented by the two components support each other; do they strengthen each other as a coherent whole; is planning done jointly to ensure a synergy, a mutual strengthening aiming to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition on the long term?

The mission examined the extent to which the beneficiaries of the SO1 and SO2 components are also affected by the actions taken as part of SO3, and vice versa. A small majority of women interviewed who are members of groups are not beneficiaries of these actions, though they are aware of them. In the sample of 17 groups interviewed, 48% of women members were receiving the food. Certain groups had no or very few beneficiary women⁴³. However, this rate does not take into account the beneficiary households, which would increase it significantly.

⁴² Definition of integration by the Project. Note

⁴³ Wendbénédo of Barsalogo - 0%-, Pengdwendebendretenga of Komsilga -5%-, Namanegbzanga of Poulalle

Among the organization staff, few MLs and organizers in the village sanitation committees are involved in the groups and benefited from complementary support and incentive measures. In the villages of Dem, Pissila, Guiendbila, Sidogo, Namissiguima and Koglobaraogo, less than a third of the MLs (two to three mothers out of ten) were members of the groups of SO1 and SO2. The trends are the same for the members of village committees for food management and distribution and sanitation, who are involved as volunteers in activities within SO3.

Thus, the targeting of groups for activities of SO1 and SO2 made it difficult to integrate the volunteer staff of SO3 as beneficiaries of this support. Though they can theoretically integrate into the beneficiary groups (and be taken into account, which was not the case for the new members in Year 2), this remains at the discretion of the board of the groups concerned.

Qualitative information collected from a sample lead the mission concerned about the level of mutual support of the beneficiaries of each of the two components of the Project. A standardization of the codification of the beneficiaries took place in April 2014, but the lack of cross-checking of all the data, made from an integration of the two bases, did not make it possible to provide more precise and exhaustive quantitative data on the integration rate of the two components. Regardless of the results, the complementarity must be improved, to use on both sides the existing opportunities, and contribute to supporting the actors (for example by motivating the volunteers involved in the actions of SO3)

In line with the strategic objectives mentioned above, the ViM project established a program of small grants to assist project developers in developing agricultural productivity and diversification, improving household income, and promoting maternal and infant health and nutrition. This mechanism aims to stimulate and build integration by supporting activities upstream and downstream of the agricultural or non-agricultural production. The composition of the selection teams brings together members of the SO1 & SO2 and SO3 sub teams. Using representatives of public institutions and decentralized financial institutions in the North Central as observers was appreciated. There appears to be an unbalance in the composition of the commission: Only one member of the Health and Nutrition team (not the Director) features in it, though most members of the Agriculture and Livelihoods team, including the Director of that commission, are present in it.

There is delay in the implementation of this activity, as the current stage involves an analysis (phase II) of the preselected applications from group 1. The definitive selection has not yet taken place. The preliminary analysis brings the following observations:

- One project relating the production of infant flour was submitted, and the promoter has not existed for a whole year, though this is a condition for eligibility;
- There is no project relating to the transformation and packaging of products for pregnant or lactating women;
- There is no project supporting the hygiene and sanitation component,
- There is no project supporting the activities of upstream agricultural production, and very few are involved in downstream processing (those that concern this component are mainly related to restoration).

⁴⁴ SERVICE NOTE N° 2014-008/ACDIVOCA/ViM

- The majority of the pre-selected projects concern livestock activities, and leather goods to a lesser extent.
- For a significant number of projects, the administrative and justification files (identity documents, National Identity Card) are lacking.
- Integrating this component with the current beneficiaries has not been verified: to what extent have beneficiaries of SO1, SO2 and SO3 submitted projects?

There is concern that projects that integrate the various components and foster sustainability have not emerged sufficiently from this first group, due to an approach without information and targeted assistance for certain types of actors.

5.4 Strengthening capacities, durability, exit strategy

5.4.1. SO1 and SO2

5.4.1.1. Strengthening capacities – institutional strengthening

The implementation system for SO1 and SO2 also aims to strengthen the LIPs, to enable them to pursue activities at the end of the project or directly receive financing from USAID or other donors to implement their projects in the field

For this purpose, a large-scale system for diagnosing and strengthening capacities was established at the beginning of the project. The SNV, a partner of the project for 18 months, played this role of selecting, institutional and financial diagnosis, analyzing strengths and weaknesses of the selected NGOs, and creating adapted training plans, among others. Other partners were also linked to system to strengthen the capacities of the LIP teams: CBDF for gender and technical services, INERA and agricultural professionals to validate the technical curricula.

A “project” team was hired by each LIP to implement the ViM activities (see Figure 1).

The directors of the three LIPs mentioned highlight the relevance of the project’s methods, tools and intervention systems, which they will subsequently be able to use. With the exception of AZND, whose headquarters is in Kongoussi, the two other LIPs are established in the zone and all benefit from several large-scale partnerships, which enable them to maintain a permanent technical team. A monitoring-assistance system for groups can also be considered to be sustainable at their level, but it will be of a smaller scale than the project.

Moreover, the project provides institutional support by hiring on a part-time basis the permanent posts of the LIPs: coordinator or president (25%), program director and RAF (20%). The project team has also recently been strengthened by three additional officials and a director of monitoring–evaluation for each LIP.

Establishing a specific “ViM” team within each LIP enables ACDI/VOCA to ensure their full availability for the project activities, and to ask them for quantitative results.

However, this system displays the deficiencies indicated by the LIPs in various aspects:

- The project required the recruitment of a specialized team, which is not integrated into the organizational team of the partner. *“It’s a house inside a house,”* which leads the directors to question the real institutional basis of the LIP. According to the LIPs interviewed, the system to diagnose the capacities of the LIPs established at the beginning of the project, the management method, the polyvalence of officials, the system and procedures of the association did not undergo a sufficient diagnosis, or an exam of the Project’s valorization possibilities at its beginning. This has been corrected since February 2014, as flexibility was accorded to LIPs to value their internal skills, provided that they display the qualifications required by the post and that they are technically validated by ACIDI/VOCA.
- This situation can lead to conflicts within the association between permanent employees and the members of the “ViM team”, who are not necessarily treated the same way.
- The trainings only concern the ViM officials, which limits the strengthening of the LIP's capacities for the duration of the project, since it is unlikely that it can maintain these teams at the end of the project. The significant turnover in the ViM teams can thus be attenuated by the permanent staff of each LIP. The opening of training to LIP staff has been corrected since February 2014;
- The service providers to strengthen the LIPs' capacities (SNV, CBDF) did not have a mandate for post-training monitoring, which would have given them feedback on the quality of the training/awareness activities carried out by the field officials. Moreover, the LIP officials are generally young and inexperienced, and the internal supervision of the teams in the field displays deficiencies.
- The method of payment by fixed obligations raises significant issues for institutions without sufficient funds: Indeed, the lack of advance payment of salaries and the basic operating of the officials leads to difficulties in the field: suspending salaries, reducing fuel costs, etc., were indicated by the various actors. This undermines the motivation and effectiveness of the field activities. To solve this problem, a first foundation was established to provide advance payment for LIPs.
- The objectives fixed for the various milestones are high: here again, the quantitative outweighs the quality of the interventions. The LIPs are not sufficiently involved during the planning workshops to calibrate their interventions to their implementation capacities;
- The recurrent turnover of the team staff: project director (1/3), supervisor (2/3), agents (40 to 75% of numbers). Several reasons have been put forward to explain this situation:

- the training of technicians, though these profiles are destined to join the civil service, which is the case of several officials who resigned;
 - in response to this problem with turnover, the salary grid was increased by 25% in 2014, but income levels are not always respected within the LIPs;
 - the operating costs are limited to fuel and maintenance of the motorbikes: After two years of intense activity, the motorbikes are causing increasing costs, which are not always covered by this fixed price. The communication costs are not always borne, though programming activities with the groups requires numerous calls;
 - the new agents, recruited in September 2014, do not always have operating motorbikes: They use their own as they wait, against a payment;
 - the workload is intense and the level of demands, at an equivalent salary, is judged to be more advantageous in the civil service than other Projects. This would undoubtedly be attenuated if the LIPs genuinely applied the treatment granted in the budget approved by ACDI/VOCA.
- In terms of planning, the field officials complain about the lack of anticipation of missions and training organized by the project, which forces them to postpone their field activities.
 - The delays in implementing certain activities⁴⁵ discredit them to the producers and often cause mobilization problems (report on the vaccination campaign in 2014 from September to November, and fairs, absence or delays in delivery of fodder cowpea seeds).⁴⁶

5.4.1.2. Sustainability and exit strategy of SO1 and SO2

At present, the sustainability of the support provided to groups during this first phase of the project requires overcoming a certain number of constraints.

- Strengthening the groups in their function of developing services for members is not effective;
- Appropriating and disseminating the technical itineraries, though more present in market gardening, which is already intensive, are far from confirmed regarding rainfed crops, in view of the significant constraints in terms of access to input, equipment and organic manure;
- Access to inputs is also only moderately sustainable for rainfed crops: The decrease in the number of participants in input fairs resulting from the drop in subsidies from the project between the 2013 and 2014 fairs shows that pursuing supplies of fertilizer paid by the farmers' own funds during the lean period could be limited for the most vulnerable producers.
- Access to credit is not yet operational, and cannot therefore take over from the system to subsidize inputs.

⁴⁵ There are many causes for these delays, but are partly linked to the late response to producers' requirements.

⁴⁶ Pengdwende Bendretenga Group, Komsilga, Teegwendé Group of Namissiguima (delay).

- Access to the market must be consolidated by assisting the producer unions and the development of partnerships to build storage infrastructure and provide equipment to increase the products' quality:
- Two LIPs out of three are sustainable in the zone, but the "ViM teams" are destined to disappear at the end of the project: The sustainability of their support will depend on their capacity to take charge of certain assistance functions. This problem must be addressed as soon as possible by the project, and combined with strengthening the producer unions which are also sustainable structures that can take over certain functions (technical support, supply, marketing, etc.).

The sustainability of the results linked to the intensification and access to the market depends on the following factors:

- Adopting improved production techniques;
- The capacity of OP to carry out negotiations with input suppliers and buyers;
- Access to credit for agricultural campaigns, through a partnership with the OP and financial institutions.

Other challenges faced are maintaining a service for advice and high-quality support of technical service provided by the State and NGOs (for the sustainability of field schools, guided visits, and vaccination campaigns):

- Regarding the LIPs, it appears that the teams composed within them to implement the activities of SO1 and SO2 may disappear in great part after the Project.
- Regarding the technical services of the State, in view of the human, logistic and financial resources, doubt can be expressed on the continuation of the local advice and support services.

In terms of VC the exit strategy implemented by the Project is based on establishing links between the groups and the inputs distributors. In the absence of the project, the groups will suffer significant difficulties in obtaining high-quality and affordable products. In the same regard, for the marketing of cowpea and tomato, the Project sought to establish contacts, but the capacities and constraints faced by the groups must be overcome for them to act themselves at the end of the Project.⁴⁷

5.4.1.3. Additional recommendations for the cross-cutting questions and exit strategy of the objectives for SO1 and SO2.

For the institutional support and strengthening of the capacities of LIPs:

1) Establishing a system to train the new LIP officials:

Either through a close monitoring of the project experts, or by strengthening the supervision⁴⁸ or organization of the recycling sessions on the project's strategic topics. If the option of recycling has been retained, the participation of permanent members of the LIPs in these sessions could contribute to the global strengthening of these organizations.

2) Reexamine the certification methods for LIP activity reports:

In order to consider the quality of implementation of the project, and the adherence to the agreed clauses (salary grid and the agreed allowance for the field officials operations costs)

⁴⁷ See Chapter 3 on the analysis of the sustainability of the results for SO1 and SO2

⁴⁸ Supervisors whose skills also need to be strengthened for 2/3...

3) *Scale down the objectives and increase the milestone:*

To improve the quality of interventions and avoid the LIPs' financial problems.

To strengthen the exit strategy.

To respond to the issues linked to the specific sustainability of SO1 and SO2, we recommend the following orientations:

1) *Working with producer unions*

The objective is to strengthen their skills in various spheres: providing seeds for member groups, technical advice, collecting and storing followed by joint marketing to maximize the potential of the market. The Unions are a space in which skills can be pooled (endogenous trainers, organizers responsible for operations with the market, etc.) and take charge of them⁴⁹; at the group level this is much more difficult. Collaboration with unions should be preceded by an in-depth diagnosis leading to a capacity building plan, including securing viable groups supported until that moment by the ViM Project. Consultations must be held with other partners of the unions to standardize and pool the support. The support for the Unions will consider the capacities for management, marketing, organization of economic activities, but also logistics equipment, in order to achieve the insertion into the market (warehouses, thrashing and sorting machines, among others).

Adapted warehouses⁵⁰ seem necessary to achieve the marketing operations for onions (cf. collaboration with REGIS).

2) *Develop strategic partnerships with other actors in the zone*

In addition to the producers unions, developing strategic partnerships with NGO/projects, technical services and the MFI is necessary to strengthen the framework conditions to intensify the production systems: access to credit, storing/conservation infrastructure, technical support, etc.

Regarding the State technical services responsible for the components (agriculture and livestock, health, sanitation, etc.) a consultation must take place to examine the main constraints that could hinder long-term minimum support-advice for producers and OP. On the basis of an agreement, and considering the Project's possible financing areas, support must be implemented by the end of the Project. The Project has initiated an annual agreement process with each of the partner technical services. These agreements could, where possible, take into account the necessary support of institutional strengthening. This cannot supplant or replace the main role to be assumed by the State of Burkina Faso in this regard.

⁴⁹ The departmental union of Pissila charges 10 Fcfa per kilo of cowpea sold to cover its structural charges.

⁵⁰ The experiences of other projects (including the PAFASP) or other OP can be used in this case.

3) Strengthening the strategy for access to credit for smallholders

Regarding credit, a progressive assistance can be implemented to start financing the agricultural campaigns through the RCPB. On the long term these two partners will grow to know each other and become progressively committed to increasingly large amounts. This implies that in each of the communes, the Project will continue to diagnose the groups and unions; a strengthening plan will then be defined, which takes into account the viable groups and unions. This plan could then be implemented jointly with the support from the ViM Project.

5.4.2. SO3

5.4.2.1 Sustainability and exit strategy of SO3

In response to the issues associated with sustaining the results of the SO3 component, and support the exit strategy, we are recommending the following:

- 1) Providing a variety of foods, knowledge and skills to prepare the enriched porridge. As a result, high importance must be accorded to the second component of IEC/BCC on complementary foods, including flipcharts, which have must been made available for MLs. In terms of availability of food, in addition to the potential impact of the SO1 and SO2 activities, a specific support for MLs for IGA through the small grants program is to be encouraged.
- 2) The low availability of drinking water is the largest obstacle. The issue would therefore be to accompany the activities of the ViM project with those of other projects likely to make water resources available. The promotion of water purification technique (filtration, using Aquatabs-type tablets, etc.) would be a palliative solution to be considered by the ViM Project.
- 3) Including soap production, if it proves profitable, must be considered with attention through the small grants program to contribute to the sustainability of hygiene practices. Moreover, local techniques to construct sustainable latrines should be disseminated.
- 4) Installing a community system to manage MLs, involving communal and customary authorities. Upstream, the capacities of MLs to organize cooking workshops (training and utensils) must be strengthened. Furthermore, an endogenous system to collect food for the cooking demonstrations should be established by the community. The MLs and their groups must also be better integrated into the non-agricultural subsidy activities.
- 5) Improving the community contribution through regular awareness meetings on the philosophy of the Project, during which the effort by the community volunteers is recognized. These meetings must be designed in synergy with all the community bodies established by the Project. To improve the integration of community bodies and optimize interventions, the organization of communal training on cross-cutting topics should be considered.
- 6) Improving the integration between SO1/SO2 and SO3, to reach a greater proportion of beneficiaries under SO3, by facilitating access of SO3 volunteer actors to services provided through SO1 and SO2.

5.5 Gender

Gender is a cross-cutting topic, but concerns more specifically the following activities of SO1 and SO2.⁵¹

- 1.1.3. Provide training on leadership for women
- 2.1.3. Work with the Minister for the promotion of women to improve the implementation of the gender strategy of the ViM project.
- 2.2.4. Integrate childcare into all the aspects of the ViM project

Initially, the activities to raise awareness/strengthen capacities on gender were to be carried out directly by the Burkina Faso Coalition for Women's Rights (BCWR)⁵², with producers and custom and religious leaders. The BCWR has developed two modules (communication within the family and female leadership) and a guide on raising awareness on women's rights destined for the populations, coupled with an implementation strategy (radio commercials and programs, role play, etc.). For budgetary reasons, the methods were finally revised and the BCWR trained the officials of LIPs, ACDI/VOCA and SCI responsible for raising awareness among producers during the technical support activities.

Targeted awareness activities were also carried out during agricultural input fairs, to reach a large number of producers.

This modification in strategy has permitted a decrease in the budget for implementation, but experienced the following difficulties:

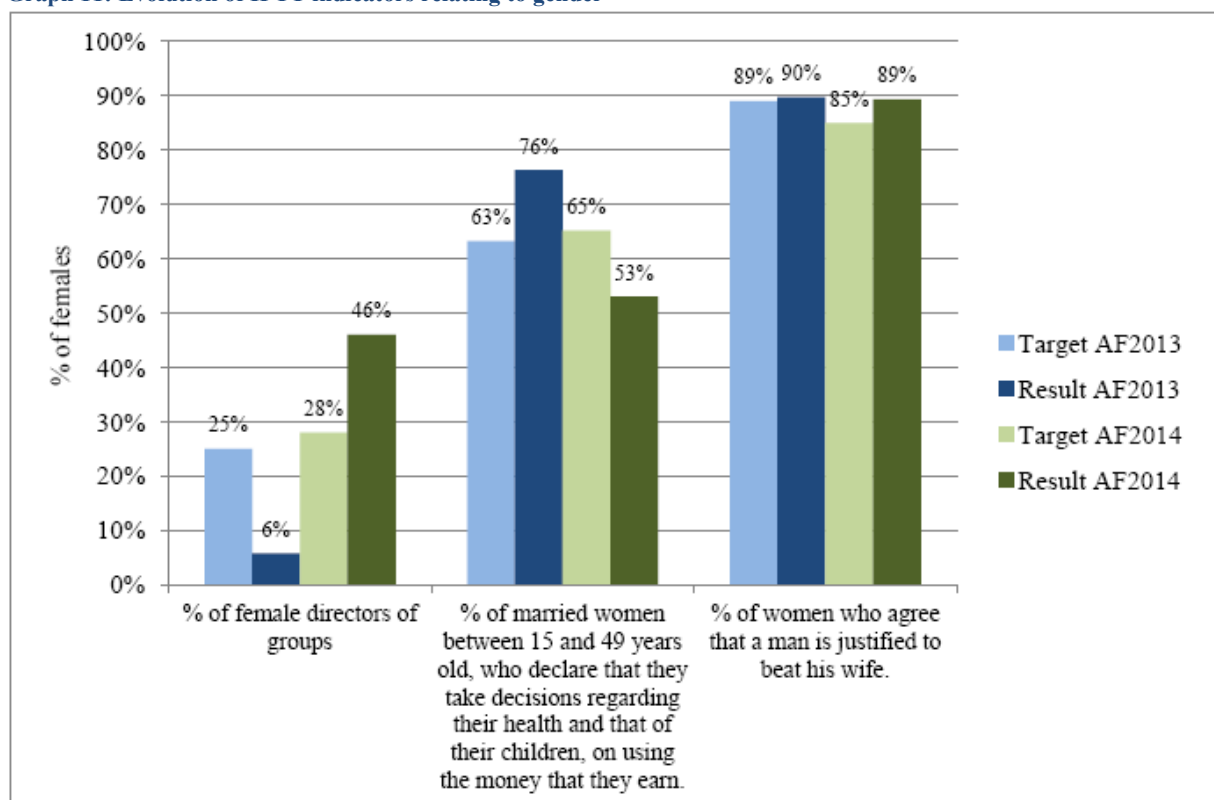
- The BCWR did not have a mandate to monitor the training retransmitted by the LIP officials: The effectiveness of the process can therefore be questioned, given the sensitive nature of this topic.
- The recurring problem of the turnover of LIP officials. The new arrivals, who did not receive the initial training of BCWR, attempt to implement this training using their acquired knowledge;
- activities to raise awareness among community and religious leaders were abandoned, despite them being an important component of these sensitive issues;

In terms of results, Graph 11 presents the results from the main monitoring indicators.

⁵¹ Considering that women are privileged targets of SO3.

⁵² Network of 15 associations that work to promote and protect women's rights.

Graph 11: Evolution of IPTT indicators relating to gender



Source: IPTT 2014

Despite the many actions conducted on this topic, the results have not met the expectations:

- Only the indicator on female leadership has risen significantly, but it does not reflect the exact percentage of female groups among the 600 supported by the project.
- Though women have sometimes been promoted to posts of responsibility in the group offices, they are not able to speak and exert their prerogatives sufficiently, which suggests that it was done merely to satisfy the Project:
- Among the groups interviewed, the activities to raise awareness on gender are only rarely mentioned: the only topics reported on concern communication in the family. Female leadership and childcare were not brought up.

It thus appears that the activities to raise awareness on gender have been difficult to conduct, and have little impact among producers. Moreover, these activities are mainly attended by women, yet they experience the reality and are not the ones who need to be convinced of their rights.⁵³ A redirection towards the community and opinion leaders should have more impact on the population's general awareness.

Discussions are underway with the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, to carry out theater-forums on female leadership in 20 selected villages. It indeed appears more relevant to use interactive media designed by professionals to approach these sensitive topics.

⁵³ Account by the member of a female group from Wend Penga, Kamsé Mossi.

A refresher training for the LIP officials also seems to be necessary, to teach them how to approach the topic and be more effective. The ViM team decided instead on a targeted monitoring and continuous training during the monitoring missions, which needs to be formalized, despite the recent resignation of the gender expert.⁵⁴

5.6 Environment

The environment is also a cross-cutting topic of the project. Related issues have been identified specifically for SO1 and SO2. Environmental subjects are addressed on various levels:

- There have been prior studies of the low land and irrigation works, including a report on the environmental impact, in accordance with decree No. 2001-342/PRES/PM/MEE of July 17, 2001. The work along Lake Dem, at the Ramsar site, is located downstream and will not have any negative effects on the ecosystem. The studies propose measures to attenuate the impact on the environment, which will be implemented during the works;
- For production, the project promotes composting, zaï, sowing perpendicularly to the slope, and stone bunds. These various techniques deserve a better management of workable land, and are among the best practices for adaptation to climate change promoted across Burkina Faso.
- Promoting phytosanitary products in fairs is carried out under PERSUAP (*Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use and Action Plan*), which checks the homologation of the products and proposes measures to attenuate the risks:
- Phytosanitary brigades training highlight the security measures to take during the treatments. Protection equipment (gloves, masks, boots) were distributed among the participants;
- The project promotes triple-layer bags to conserve the cowpea, to avoid using toxic chemical products;
- The doors, windows and accessories of the demonstration pens and chicken coops are built using recycled oil cans distributed as part of SO3.

However, one can indicate the following limits:

- As already mentioned, few construction sites with stone bunds have been implemented by the groups interviewed. The stone sites are often far away, and the producers said that it is difficult for them to transport the stones. Only the fields located close to these sites have been developed.⁵⁵
- The planting of the *moringa* plants has not had the expected success.
- The training only focuses on chemical phytosanitary products, but do not propose an organic or integrate pest control system.

⁵⁴ December 22, 2014

⁵⁵ Villages of Namssigui, Poulalle, Tansablougou, Korko Mossi..

To improve the project's impact on the environment, partnerships must be established to rehabilitate numerous stone bunds in the zone. Indeed, though the communes are already relatively well covered, as several projects and associations have intervened there, they need to be developed and improved (orientation of the slopes, replacing missing stones, etc.).

Finally, capitalizing on and developing the experiences of biologic pest control in the market gardens and cowpea fields through specialized organizations (ARFA, Bioprotect, Terre et Humanisme, APAD, etc.) would make it possible to integrate the most appropriate and effective measures into the technical innovations to propose to producers.

6 Implementation process

6.1 Monitoring and Evaluation and management of knowledge

The strengths of the system are in:

- the existence of a body of indicators relating to each of the Project objectives,
- a baseline study established at the start, and progression targets;
- a system to monitor the progression of indicators through a large amount of quantitative information.

Two types of data are collected:

- Data relating to the process (outputs) and describing the quantitative objectives in terms of activities and beneficiary persons or structures,
- effect or impact indicators.

The process indicators are collected using forms filled out by the field officials throughout the execution of the activities (LIPs for the activities linked to SO1 and SO2), health, nutrition and hygiene promoters for SO3 activities. Annual surveys carried out by the directorate of Monitoring and Evaluation provide information on the effects and impacts. The IPTT matrix is annually updated and thus feeds into the annual reports produced regularly.

The system is coherent, corresponds to good practices in the design of monitoring and evaluation systems, and provides a large quantity of information, which is updated annually. The main deficiency of the system is the weakness of the analysis of evolutions: difficulties faced in passing *from output to outcomes*, analysis of difficulties and propositions for improvements. The annual reports indicate this deficiency⁵⁶. The beneficiaries' use of the knowledge acquired needs to be highlighted to apprehend the dynamics leading to the effects, impacts sustainability actors, and understand the obstacles and difficulties encountered by the actors. Data has been obtained from the annual surveys, but it remains only quantitative. There is no qualitative data that would permit to interpret effectively, highlight and illustrate the changes, identify the difficulties and constraints, and apprehend the remaining challenges to achieve sustainability. The directors of the components have collection tools, which are entrusted to the officials, but this is rarely used. In terms of qualitative studies, in-depth work needs to be carried out on case samples.

⁵⁶ See also "Internal reflections on the three-monthly reports." Note to Direction of Monitoring and Evaluation

The selected producers and plots are those that receive the inputs from the fairs. Though on these plots the improved technical itineraries are effectively applied, they only represent a small proportion of the cultivated areas, and do not represent the majority practices on the plots, with the exception of market gardens. As a result, one should not consider that the yield surveys carried out on the monitored plots can be extrapolated to all the cultivated areas of the producer.

It should also be indicated that while the organized training, including that of SNV, was evaluated by the participants, there is no real evaluation of the level of acquisition of knowledge; this would have required a pre-test then a post-test. Moreover, the level of application of the techniques and know-how, whether it be LIP officials or endogenous trainers, is not known. It should be calculated using a sample of trained persons, a few months after the training and after the first field activities. This would have permitted adjustment and targeted refresher training.

The IPTT matrix comprises 71 indicators. The monitoring reviews have observed the large quantity, and are questioning the relevance of some of them. The evaluation mission has commented that the members of the Project team do not understand or doubt the usefulness of certain indicators. Some of the latter are not fully comprehensible.

Examples of indicators for which the declarations need to be verified

- 1.1.4: % Percentage of farmers who used at least 1 improved storage technique in the most recent season
- 2.3: Average value of a set of assets (including savings, livestock, etc.) per household (CFA)
- 2.1.1: % change in value of purchases from smallholders of targeted commodities as a result of USG assistance
- 2.1.2: % of rural smallholders reporting more than 3 sources of revenue
- 3.2: % of households with access to an improved sanitation facility
- 3.3.3: % of respondents who know all critical moments for hand washing
- Mean number of food groups consumed by women
- % of trained health agents who appropriately apply CCM protocol

Examples of indicators that are difficult to understand

- 1.1.2: % Farmers using intercropping for sorghum, cowpeas, onions, tomatoes
- 1.1.3: % farmers using thinning for sorghum
- 3.3.15: # of person hours of training in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation supported by USG assistance (New)

Examples of indicators whose annual monitoring is not useful, and which can be measured at the end of the Project (in comparison with the state at the beginning), instead of every year.

- 1.1.5: Number of hectares of lowland improved (annual, cumulative)
- 1.1.7: # of farmers who received extension outreach services
- 1.3.3: Number of members of producer organizations and community based organizations receiving USG assistance
- 3.3.17: # of hectares of biological significance and/or natural resources under improved natural resource management as a result of USG assistance (New)

Examples of indicators whose usefulness can be doubted, in line with the Project's direct objectives and activities.

- 3.3.9: % of currently married women age 15-49 reporting that she makes decisions either by herself or jointly with her spouse regarding seeking health services for her own health; seeking health services for her children's health; how to spend money she herself has earned
- 3.3.10: % of women who agree that it is justifiable for a man to hit his wife under one or more circumstances.

The examples mentioned in the box are non-exhaustive and non-definitive preliminary reflections, destined for a questioning process. It is possible to monitor the advances without collecting data on every aspect, but to focus on a small number of indicators and the most relevant information.

The large quantity of information to collect, in particular that relating to activities and processes, causes an overload of work for the LIP officials. Moreover, the forms to fill out require manual writing of all the elements relating to the activity. Consequently, there is doubt regarding the cost/opportunity of collecting certain information. This situation deserves attention; in particular as it is done at the detriment of the time spent on technical support, and is unanimously viewed as a source of stress for the LIP officials.

The Director of Monitoring and Evaluation supervises the annual surveys regarding data on all the components. For the other indicators, he only supervises the data collection for the production of information on the components of SO1 and SO2, but not on the activities relating to health, nutrition and hygiene, for which a M&E expert was hired, who depends on the SO3 coordinator and belongs to the SCI team. He therefore has direct responsibility over some of the indicators characterizing SO3 (those issued from annual surveys) and not sufficiently on others (activity indicators)⁵⁷. The process to pool the two databases (SO1 and SO2 on one hand, and SO3 on the other) being still underway, it is not possible to make requests to obtain cross-referenced data. A homogenous codification has been carried out since April 2014, which is a significant progress. This pooling process needs to be accelerated.

This situation, which is strengthened by the insufficient leadership of the M&E directors, hindered their capacity to (i) ensure the alignment of the two databases, with the possibility of making cross-referenced requests, without suppressing the autonomy of each of the two information systems, (ii) assume the responsibility of the reliability of all the data integrated into the indicators.

The evaluation mission was not able to study the level of reliability of the in-depth data produced. A number of remarks emerged. For annual surveys, a number of questions are sensitive, and in the context of Project beneficiaries, can lead to bias in the responses. One example is the declaration on the level of adoption and application of the techniques, the observation of certain practices (in particular hygiene) of expenditure levels. The absence/deficiency of control processes after the validation of the data, or the verification of certain sensitive data (observation to be made by the interviewer) could undermine the reliability of the information. A later control by the Directorate of M&E among a sample of persons interviewed would strengthen this reliability. This later verification and control would concern the sensitive indicators (see table above with examples of indicators).

⁵⁷ Report in the interviews with the Director of M&E.

As the mission was mainly qualitative, it focused more specifically on the appropriation and use of monitoring and evaluation. It emerged that the updated IPTT table is not well known among the Project team, and completely unknown among the directors of the LIP teams, including the directors of M&E recently recruited. This is also the case for the consolidated annual reports validated by the FFP, and the results of the annual survey. The procedures contained in the *M&E Plan* itself are not applied.

There is also a disconnect between the availability of the updated data on IPTT and the annual report, and the transmission of the narrative PREP, then the creation of the DIP and contracts with the partners. This situation, which is characteristic of the management of FFP funds, requires a certain degree of flexibility in order to reread and amend the DIP and additive remarks on the contracts with partners (in particular LIPs), once the monitoring and evaluation data is made available.

The regular monitoring missions of the team, carried out by the FFP management and supervision team and the headquarters of ACDI/VOCA and SCI have led to the introduction of a number of improvements over time, including cooperating with Producer Unions, beginning an organizational and technical diagnosis process of the groups and unions, introducing small ruminant fairs and recruiting M&E officials within the LIP teams, to refine the training and the specific support plans.

The mobility of the M&E staff, in particular the department Director, has hindered the implementation of an efficient and coherent system, in line with the operation lessons of the Department.

Knowledge management

In terms of knowledge management, monthly meetings are held among the LIPs, during which each official reports and shares their experiences and difficulties. The mission has observed that the lessons, achievements, difficulty factors have not yet been systematized, neither have they been shared to the extent that members expected, according to the interviews with various actors interviewed, and in particular the LIP agents. Thus, within a single LIP, the officials have not yet formalized these discussions, to share their experiences and receive inspiration from the successes, let alone between different LIPs. The same is true of the health and hygiene promoters, as there are not yet enough exchanges between village committees. To illustrate this, the success story of the stone slabs to build local latrines has not been shared with the other sanitation village committees, who are experiencing problems with the sustainability of wooden planks. Little time and investment is devoted to this dimension, as the team is concerned with achieving the Project's quantitative objectives. This dimension should be mentioned more during the LIPs' monthly meetings.

On another scale, there is insufficient exchange between the ViM Project and institutions pursuing similar objectives.

6.2 Creating synergy with REGIS/ER.

REGIS/ER aims to support resilience and growth in the intervention zones. It began actions in the field in the North Central region in April 2014. The team consists of five regional specialists (M&E, Health and Nutrition, Agriculture, Hygiene and Sanitation, NRM), and five polyvalent facilitators per commune. Thus the support guidelines are in line with those of the ViM Project.

REGIS intervenes in 50 villages in three communes. These are two communes located in the province of Namentenga (Bouroum, Nagbingou) and the commune of Barsalogho located in the province of Sanmatenga. REGIS is present in all the villages of the two communes of Namentenga and in 50 of the 63 villages of the commune of Barsalogho (the ViM Project intervenes in all the villages of this commune).

The facilitators from REGIS/ER each cover ten villages. The regional coordinator of REGIS/ER began consultation meeting with the Project/ViM. It took the initiative of presenting and discussing its tentative PREP (2014), and took into consideration the achievements of the ViM Project and the potential that these represent for its own objectives.

The crops that are concerned by the varietal tests conducted by REGIS/ER are cowpea, fodder cowpea, sorghum, millet, peanut and another variety of cowpea. The places of implantation of these demonstration sites were decided in consultation with the communes and CVD. REGIS/ER aims to use the results of the varietal tests to introduce them into the field schools established by the Project/ViM, to feed and complete the training of the agricultural farmers participating in these field schools or involved in the guided visits. It would have been possible to implement these tests in the already existing field schools established by the ViM Project in the Barsalogho commune.

In the village in which the ViM Project intervenes in market gardening, REGIS/ER will support small irrigation, for subjects that need to complete their action (for example, irrigation techniques, fencing in the plots, conservation buildings, among others), while considering the creation or development of the plots in other villages, in which the ViM Project does not intervene.

In the health and nutrition area, complementarity is sought: training combining the promoters and SCI officials has been organized at a regional level in September 2014 then reproduced in the districts. REGIS/ER is also considering small activities (home gardens, allowing plants with a high nutritional value to be grown) to support the MLs (notably those assisting the ViM Project activities) involved in the village activities.

These are recent initiatives that demonstrate the will for complementarity, with good perspectives.

Though there has been a consultation around the Project REGIS/ER activities, the ViM Project has not read the final version of DIP after approval by FFP, at a regional level. Inversely, there has not yet been a process by the ViM Project to present its activity tentative (PREP) to REGIS/ER to examine the possible redundancies and discuss possibilities for synergy. This process is still only one-way. In addition, the meetings are the result of decisions at a regional

level (in the absence of agreement and a formalized framework at a higher level), without clarity regarding the possibilities offered by this consultations, notably regarding information and sharing of the modules and support for training and organization. This is often translated as hesitation and/or insufficient involvement. Within the commune of Barsalogo, the officials of the LIPs and REGIS are not in contact.

6.3 Complementary recommendations

6.3.1 Overall management and coordination

1) Increase accountability of operational teams.

Collective accountability of the sub-team installed by ACDI/VOCA must be established, this improving communication and collective accountability across all the files managed, including the evaluation of the reports provided by the LIPs⁵⁸. This involves an endogenous exercise of self-diagnosis by the sub-team, resulting in proposals to improve the methods of communication and decision-making.

To improve the overall communication and coordination of the team, review and planning meetings must be organized, every three months then every year, involving the two sub-teams coordinated by the COP. The main local partners (LIPs, health and hygiene promoters) will take part in these meetings.

2) Improving the integration system

Improving integration in the management of the Project involves progress in the overall coordination of the two sub-teams in Kaya, to translate into reality the systems and commitments of the agreements between ACDI/VOCA and SCI.

The “small grants” represent an integration tool. In view of the preliminary results of the process of the first group, an analysis needs to be carried out by the Project team, in consultation with the partners, and with the support of the Directorate of M&E, to identify the lessons and improve the conditions and methods of implementing the selection for the second group. It is recommended that the Director of Health and Nutrition also be part of the selection committee of the Projects eligible for “small grants.”

6.3.2 Monitoring evaluation and knowledge management

1) Improving the Monitoring and Evaluation system

It is urgent that the director of M&E be repositioned in a situation to supervise the whole of the system, and sufficiently independent to produce an internal M&E report (work document), which can be used by the Project team for the annual report, depending on the format and content requested by the donor.

In terms of organization, the SO3 M&E specialist should be attached (in functional terms) to the Directorate of M&E, so that the M&E of the Project could be under a common functional body. In other terms, the director of M&E of SCI should ideally depend on the Director of M&E for operations, and be accountable to him. This requires an M&E Director who in addition to technical capacities has a good level of leadership.

⁵⁸ Proceedings of the workshop for the return of the provisional results to the ACDI/VOCA team at Kaya

as it represented one of the significant constraints, since SCI is entirely willing to improve the pooling of the Monitoring and Evaluation.

This will facilitate the method for integrating the two databases, without hindering the relative autonomy of both, as a body and in the parallel data collecting process. It will also help to supervise all the information collecting activities conducted by the SCI team, under the guidance of the SO3 component M&E lead. This process is underway, through the proposals contained in the “ARR” of November 2014, which was submitted to FFP.

In recognition of the weakness of the qualitative dimension of the monitoring and evaluation data, it is recommended that the director of Monitoring and Evaluation be skilled in conducting both quantitative and qualitative surveys. By default, the Project should seek the regular and punctual support of a consultant, to help with the annual surveys under the various dimensions of the Project, in consultation with the teams, to identify the difficulties and lessons, and stimulate sharing, and as a complement to the specific skills within the Monitoring and Evaluation team.

2) Reduce the indicators and information collecting forms

An exchange workshop should be conducted, with the director of M&E from the headquarters of ACDI/VOCA and possibly from SCI, the local M&E team, the Project team, the directors of the main partner structures, for an in-depth reflection on the indicators. This will permit a clarification and explanation by the actors who proposed them. The required indicators from FFP will of course be retained. However, the additional indicators suggested by ACDI/VOCA and SCI will be reexamined with the regard to their utility to provide a true gain at the current stage of the Project, of the time requested for collection and treatment, reliability, regularity of collection, etc.

This workshop should be an opportunity to examine the harmonization of the survey forms. The forms created by the activity leaders, within the ACDI/VOCA team will be analyzed using the following questions: Are they necessary and useful? Are they redundant with the data already collected by the forms created by the directorate of M&E? Are the data collected likely to result from studies on a sample rather than from an exhaustive and systematic method? The objective is to reduce the number of forms used by the officials in charge of collecting information.

The workshop should also define the methods for later control of the data collection, notably certain data from annual surveys, which is delicate to collect. It will also reflect on the current progress targets, in view of the data collected and observed in the field by the Project team and the field officials, and the conclusions from this evaluation. A previous reflection by the Directorate of M&E in close cooperation with the various technical teams (SO1/SO2/SO3) with the support from the headquarters (ACDI/VOCA) to prepare and introduce the workshop will be necessary. Their proposals will then be approved by the M&E departments of the headquarters, in consultation with FFP. These consultations will translate into action the dynamic initiated through the proposals contained in the PREP of January 2014. Moreover, FFP is highly favorable towards it.

It would be pretentious for the Mission, in such a short period of time, to make firm

recommendations without sufficient discussion with the stakeholders. The Mission considers that the orientations and examples provided will facilitate decision-making, through the recommended workshop.

3) Improve the qualitative dimension in Monitoring and Evaluation:

An annual review of the various components of the Project, to identify the strengths and weaknesses, factors that are favorable or unfavorable for sustainability, and lessons learned, will be carried out under the auspices of the Directorate of M&E in cooperation with the Program directors, the LIPs and the health, nutrition and sanitation promoters. A person experienced in qualitative studies within the directorate of the M&E will produce a specific and relative methodology⁵⁹ The necessary information will then be produced and combined with the quantitative data (IPTT matrix) to produce the annual report under the responsibility of the Director of M&E.

4) Improve information from M&E and strategic planning.

Two joint workshops to finalize the annual reports, based on a draft designed by the Director of M&E and the COP, and for sharing and discussion after its validation by USAID should be organized, in accordance with the provisions of the *M&E Plan*.

Based on the consolidated reports from the two sub-teams, completed by qualitative data, the Management of M&E, in cooperation with the Project Directorate, must produce annual reports which must be discussed, revised and shared by all the members of the Project team and the main partners. This will favor the appropriation and use of data to propose strategic reorientations for the program. Failing this, a summarized version could be made available.

5) Enhance capitalization and sharing of knowledge:

During the yearly review exercises, it would be beneficial for the entire team to define the important topics for which exchanges should be capitalized and organized, within the Project team, for both the SO1 and SO2 and SO3 components. The exchange methods must be prepared by the Management of M&E, to carefully define the issues, the strengths, deficiencies, success stories, etc. Identifying cases of success stories will permit the organization of targeted and non-systematic exchange visits, between LIP officials, promoters and groups of producers, among others.

In the same regard, the success reported by other partners, in the North Central region or outside can be disseminated and receive targeted visits, as necessary.

6.3.3. On the synergy with REGIS/ER and strengthening the pooling

1) Formalizing a cooperation agreement between REGIS/ER and ViM at a regional level

The Management of the REGIS/ER and ViM Projects are recommended to produce “Guidelines”, as a framework for orientation and strategy that commit them and clarify:

- The strategic areas of complementarity and of possible field activities, by determining the priorities, taking into consideration the achievements of the ViM Project, the lessons learnt and the remaining challenges in terms of resilience and sustainability.
- The approaches to provide support, the manner of standardizing them, including the terminology and use of concepts.

⁵⁹ Failing this, a consultant will be required for regular mandates.

- The practices in terms of grids for the partner agents and organizations, to avoid or reduce competition that would harm one or the other party;
- The principles of cooperation, and in particular the field of sharing of the reports from Monitoring and Evaluation, training modules and supports, and the related conditions;
- Determining the fields of cooperation in terms of planning and regular reports, and the operational methods of this collaboration;
- The activities that can be organized jointly, and the cost sharing.

This (brief) guide is intended to orient, stimulate and “protect” the regional teams in the field aiming to implement the synergy at a local level. The Mission indicates that fortunately consultations between REGIS/ER, SAREL and FASO PROGRAM and ViM are underway in this regard.⁶⁰ Thankfully, meetings for this purpose are underway between the team of REGIS/ER and ACDI/VOCA in Ouagadougou

2) Identify the complementary support to be developed by REGIS-ER.

REGIS/ER could provide complementary support for the heads of farms in the same intervention zone. The resilience must be supported by the construction of strong agro-ecological plots, which involves greater integration between agriculture and livestock.

The following propositions for complementarity can be made:

- For the integration of agriculture and livestock: support for the development of composting, double-purpose crops, mowing and fodder conservation and the extension of the pilot operation to subsidize small ruminants for women;
- In the sphere of NRM: support for the construction/rehabilitation of stone bunds;
- to intensify the production systems: facilitating access to credit for equipment;
- for the diversification and development of cash crops: pursuing the development of small irrigation areas to permit market gardening in off-season.
- for integration into markets: the construction of storage and conservation infrastructure (notably onions, and cowpea, for the warrantage)⁶¹.

REGIS/ER should continue, though a partnership with INERA, the tests of varieties (cowpea, sorghum) most adapted to the context of the zone.

Globally, REGIS/ER could support the implementation of the recommendations regarding the exit strategy after the first evaluation, notably a plan to strengthen both the groups and unions, and involving supporting direct partnerships between the RCPB and the OP, in a targeted and experimental manner, supporting SO3 actors and promoting infant flour.

Facilitated access for volunteers involved in the SO3 activities, for support services (small irrigation, improved seeds, small ruminants) based on the methods studied, would be recommended, to foster their commitment to the work. The process of adhering to groups could be examined.

⁶⁰ This corresponds to the expectations of the field officials from REGIS/ER, SCI and ACDI VOCA based in Kaya, to better support the initiatives that have already begun. Report of the interviews (REGIS/ER)

⁶¹ The mission notes that this recommendation has already been adopted, and that investments are scheduled to end in 2015.

7 ANNEXES

7.1 List of persons and resources interviewed.

USAID/FFP

- [REDACTED] Director of Food Security Program

Project Team (Ouagadougou)

- [REDACTED] Chief of Party
- [REDACTED] Deputy Chief of Party
- [REDACTED] Director of Monitoring and Evaluation

Project Team (Kaya) /ACDI/VOCA

- [REDACTED] Director of Agriculture and Livelihoods
- [REDACTED] Specialist of Agriculture
- [REDACTED] Specialist of Producer Organizations
- [REDACTED] Specialist of Value Chains
- [REDACTED] Specialist of livestock
- [REDACTED] Specialist of Gender
- [REDACTED] Director of Development and Equipment
- [REDACTED] Assistant Grants Manager

Project Team (Kaya) / SCI

- [REDACTED] Director of Health and Nutrition
- [REDACTED] WASH Promoter
- [REDACTED] D/A Director for Food Management
- [REDACTED] IEC/BCC Specialist
- [REDACTED] IP M&E Specialist

SNV

- [REDACTED] Leader of the Agricultural Sector
- [REDACTED] Director of Agriculture

REGIS/ER

- [REDACTED] Representative of the Project Manager in Burkina Faso
- [REDACTED] Director of Communication
- [REDACTED] Regional Coordinator
- [REDACTED] Director of Health and Nutrition

AZND

- [REDACTED] Head of Programs
- [REDACTED] ViM Head of Mission
- [REDACTED] Secretary-accountant
- [REDACTED] Administrator-accountant
- [REDACTED] ViM Monitoring and Evaluation
- [REDACTED] Agricultural Technical Officer

- [REDACTED] Livestock Technical Official
- [REDACTED] Agriculture Technical Official
- [REDACTED] Agriculture Technical Official

ATAD

- [REDACTED] President
- [REDACTED] Director of the food security department
- [REDACTED] Director of monitoring and evaluation
- [REDACTED] ViM Head of mission
- [REDACTED] ViM Supervisor
- [REDACTED] ViM Monitoring and Evaluation
- [REDACTED] ViM Secretary-accountant
- [REDACTED] Internal Controller
- [REDACTED] Livestock Technical Official

APIL

- [REDACTED] Coordinator
- [REDACTED] Program Coordinator
- [REDACTED] ViM Head of Mission
- [REDACTED] ViM Supervisor
- [REDACTED] ViM Monitoring and Evaluation

AGRODIA

- [REDACTED] President of Kaya Section
- [REDACTED] Secretary General of Kaya Section

Union of Pissila Cowpea Producers

- [REDACTED] President
- [REDACTED] Treasurer
- [REDACTED] Director of Storage and Marketing

Technical services (Kaya/Centre Nord)

- [REDACTED] Regional Director for Animal Resources
- [REDACTED] Provincial Director for Agriculture
- [REDACTED] Livestock Technical Official for Kaya
- [REDACTED] Head Doctor of Kaya Health District
- [REDACTED] District Head Nurse of Guiendbila
- [REDACTED] Head Nurse of Pissila
- [REDACTED] Director of Dem School

PLAN/Kaya

- [REDACTED] Health Coordinator - PRESEA
- [REDACTED] Coordinator for WASH PRESEA

RCPB/Kaya

- [REDACTED] Advisor on credit for women

CBDF

- [REDACTED] Coordinator

PAM

- [REDACTED] Coordinator of P4P Program

SECOPA

- [REDACTED] General Director

Other people-resources

- [REDACTED] Trader Market Analyst II

7.2 List of SO3 villages and timetable

Communes (4)	Dates	Villages	Type of actor / Institutions							
			CVA	CVN/S/D	MLS	ASC	CSPS	GF	GH/Lop	Ecole
Kaya (DS Kaya)	05 December	NAMISSIGUI		01 FG	02 EI	01 EI ^(ViM)	01 EI	01 FG	01 FG	
	06 December	DEM	01 FG	01 FG	01 FG	01 EI ^(ViM)		01 FG	01 FG	01 EI 01 FG
Pissila (DS Kaya)	07 December	POULALLE	01 FG	01 FG	02 EI	01 EI		01 FG	01 FG	
	08 December	PISSILA		01 FG	01 FG	01 EI	01 EI	01 FG	01 FG	
Barsalogho (DS Barsalogho)	10 December	GUIENDBILA*		01 FG	02 EI	01 EI	01 EI	01 FG	01 FG	
	12 December	SIDOGO	01 FG	01 FG	01 FG	01 EI ^(ViM)		01 FG	01 FG	
Namissiguima. (DS Barsalogho)	13 December	NAMISSIGUIMA		01 FG	01 FG	01 EI ^(ViM)	01 EI	01 FG	01 FG	
	14 December	KOGLOBARAOGO	01 FG	01 FG	02 EI	01 EI		01 FG	01 FG	
TOTAL			04 EI	08 FG	04 FG 08 EI	08 EI	04 EI	08 FG	08 FG	01 EI 01 FG

FG= Focus Group

EI= Individual Interview

7.3 List of SO1 and SO2 groups and timetable

Communes (4)	Villages (16)	Groups	Characteristics (group)
Kaya 5-6 December	Tibtenga	Songdoumkieta	Mixed (poultry) 5 H and 10 F
	SanrgoPeul	Potal	Mixed (Small ruminants) 15 H and 25 F
	Namsigui	Relwendé	Mixed (Sorghum) 18 H and 22 F
	Niangado	Coopérative Namanegbzang	Mixed (Cowpea) 21 H and 13 F
Pissila 8-9 December	Poulalle	Namanegbzanga	Mixed (Sorghum) 10 H and 6 F
	Pissila	Tegwende	Mixed (onions) 2H and 33 F
	Dibilou	Relwende	Féminin (Cowpea) 22 F
	Komsilga	PengdwendeBendretenga	Mixed (Small ruminants) 18 H and 18 F
Barsalogho 10-12 December	Kamsé Mossi	Naabasnogo	Féminin (Poultry) 11 F
		Wend-Panga	Féminin (Tomate) 8 F
	Barsalogho	Wend Bénédo	Mixed (poultry) 2 H and 5 F
	Korko Mossi	Nongtaaba	Masculin (Sorghum) 31 H
	Sidogo	Relwende	Mixed (onions) 14 H and 14 F
	Darkoa	Nabonswendsongré	Mixed (Cowpea) 12 H and 8 F
Namissiguima. 13-14 December	Namissiguima	Tegwende	Féminin (Small ruminants) 26 M
	Koglobaraogo	Nongtaaba	Mixed (Small ruminants) 19 H and 11 F
	Tansablougou	Sougrinooma	Mixed (Cowpea) 14 H and 8 F

Each of the groups had a Focus Group and two individual interviews. There were therefore **17 Focus Groups** and **32 individual interviews in the villages.**

7.4 Terms of Reference

Introduction

DESCRIPTION OF ACDI/VOCA

Established in Washington D.C., ACDI/VOCA is a non-profit international development organization that provides technical and managerial assistance in the sphere of agro-business, financial services, entrepreneurial development, community development and food security in order to promote broad spectrum economic growth and a dynamic civil society. More detailed information is available at www.acdivoca.org.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The Victory Against Malnutrition (ViM) Project aims to fight against food insecurity in four communes in the province of Sanmatenga: Kaya, Barsalogho, Pissila and Namissiguima.

The project is financed by USAID through its program Food for Peace (FFP) and has three strategic objectives (SO):

SO1 Diversify and increase agricultural production;

SO2 Increase households' income;

SO3 Reduce chronic malnutrition among children under the age of five and pregnant and lactating women.

OBJECT

This request for propositions aims to recruit a consulting firm to conduct the mid-term evaluation of the ViM Project.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Description of the Project

The project Victory against Malnutrition (ViM) is a Type II Multi-Year Assistance Program (MYAP), financed by USAID/FFP and managed by ACDI/VOCA, in partnership with SCI (SC) and Netherlands Development Organization (SNV). The ViM project aims to “reduce food insecurity among rural populations, in particular pregnant and lactating women and children under the age of five years old” in four target communes of the province of Sanmatenga in the North Central region of Burkina Faso. The mid-term activities and results are designed around three Strategic Objectives (SO) described below:

Strategic Objective 1 (SO): Increase and diversify agricultural production

IR 1.1 Improved agricultural practices are adopted

IR 1.2 Smallholders' access to agricultural inputs is improved

IR 1.3 Improved rearing practices are adopted

Strategic Objective 2 (SO2): Increase households' income

IR 2.1 Links with the market are improved

IR 2.2 Access to business development services is improved

Strategic Objective 3 (SO3): Reduction in chronic malnutrition among children under the age of five and pregnant and lactating women.

IR 3.1 Maternal and infant health and nutrition practices are improved.

IR 3.2 – Quality of health services is improved

IR 3.3 Hygiene and sanitation practices are improved

The project's objectives also address the issues of gender and sustainable environment.

Key partners and coordination of activities

ViM is implemented through a consortium of three international organizations:

- **ACDI/VOCA**, who is the leader and main responsible for the lessor (USAID/FFP) leads the activities of the first and second objectives, in collaboration with local implementation partners (LIPs);
- **SCI**, the leader and first responsible party for implementing the activities, ie. reducing chronic malnutrition;
- **SNV**, to strengthen the capacities of the producer groups.⁶²

Local Implementing Partners (LIPs)

A financing subsidy is awarded to three Local Implementing Partners (LIPs), which implement the activities linked to Strategic Objectives SO1 and SO2 in each of the target communes:

- Technical Alliance for Development Assistance (ATAD) for the commune of Kaya;
- Action for the Promotion of Initiatives (APIL) for the commune of Pissila;
- Zoodnoma Association for Development (ZNAD) which covers the communes of Barsalogo and Namissiguima.

The Local Implementing Partners (LIPs) are responsible for mobilizing and organizing the groups of producers, providing technical support, training producers through the field schools, distributing agricultural inputs and giving technical advice and site visits to strengthen agricultural practices among the target beneficiaries.

Other local partners for implementation

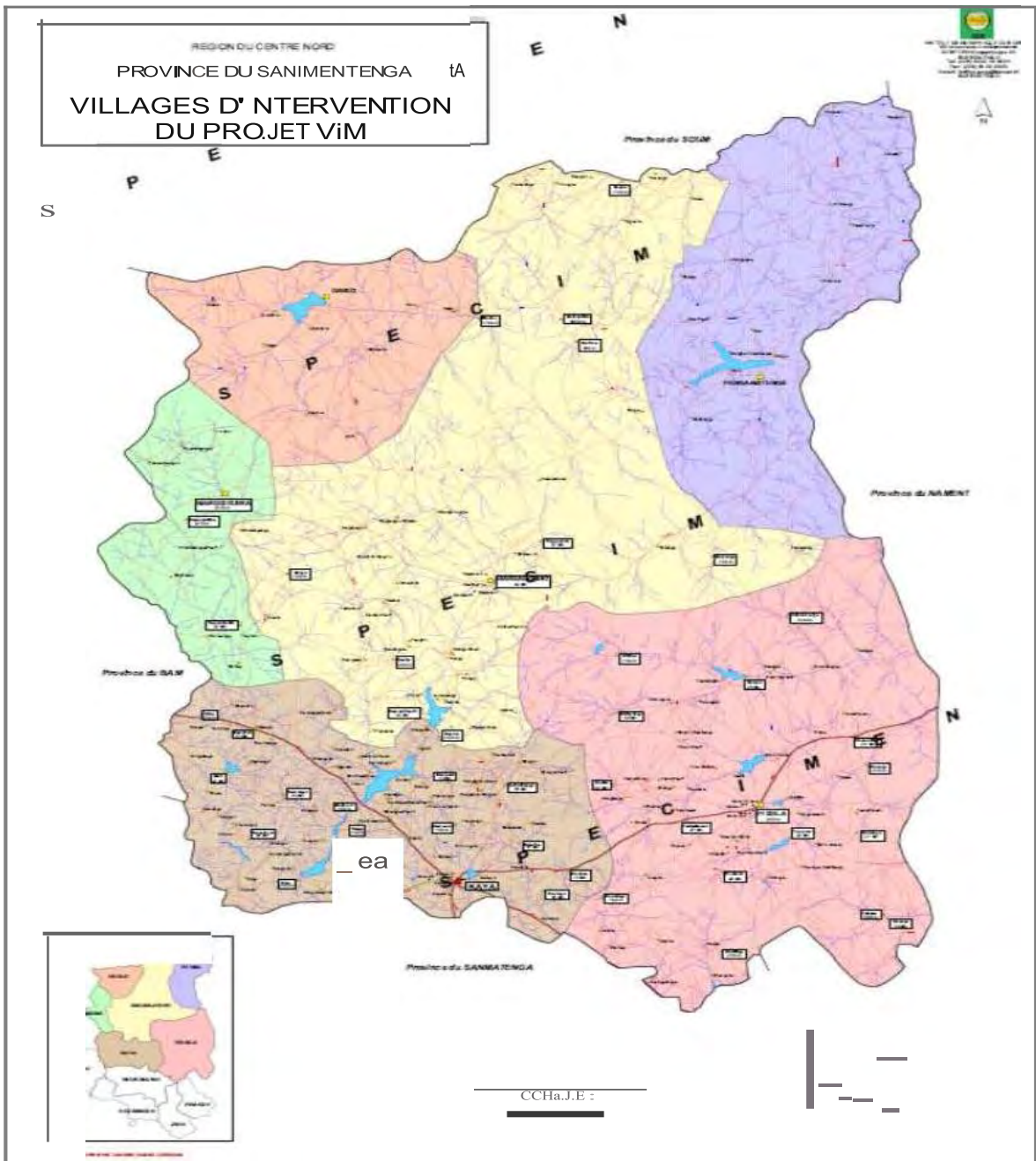
- Association of Wholesalers and Distributors of Agricultural Inputs (AGRODIA) coordinate the supply and distribution of agricultural inputs through their wholesaler/retailer members to the target producers through the voucher program.
- The BCWR to raise awareness on key messages, regarding the roles of women and families in Burkina Faso and carrying out training activities for the staff of ViM, the LIPs, the producers, and traditional and religious heads.

Geographical location

The project was implemented in four neighboring communes: Namissiguima, Kaya, Barsalogo and Pissila, in the province of Sanmatenga (cf. Figure 1 below). ViM targets the communities most vulnerable to food insecurity and with the highest rates of malnutrition. The activities are directed at pregnant and lactating women and children under the age of five years old, in addition to members of the producer groups.

Figure 1. Target groups, beneficiaries and location of the project.

⁶² SNV: contract expired March 31, 2014



1.2. Context

ViM is a five-year project, which began in August 2011 and will run until December 2016. It implements activities aimed at improving agriculture and living conditions, in addition to health and nutrition initiatives through the prevention of malnutrition among children under the age of five years old. In order to guarantee an appropriate integration of its activities, the ViM project:

- Identifies and works with workers groups comprising a significant number of persons benefiting from nutrition and vulnerable household activities.
- Encourages vulnerable households with pregnant or lactating women to participate in activities of the producer groups;
- Uses neighborhood groups of the mothers as vehicles to promote good health and nutrition;
- Supervises the households benefiting from the nutrition component in program activities concerning living conditions, which could potentially be financed through the small subsidy program.

In line with the approach of the ViM project, these are designed around four pillars for the analysis of food security, which include food availability, access, use and women's autonomy.

Food availability: The populations living in the target communities of Namissiguima, Kaya, Barsalogho and Pissila depend largely on agriculture to survive. The agricultural activities include producing rain-fed crops, in particular sorghum and cowpea, and off-season crops such as a tomato and onion. The agricultural activities face challenges such as low agricultural productivity, post-harvest losses, poor and depleted soil, overexploited soil and water scarcity. The popularization services by the Ministry of Agriculture lack the sufficient resources to ensure the transfer of technical knowledge and assistance. The lack of purchasing power limits access to inputs for smallholders. The producers are forced to sell their harvests at a loss, due to the lack of insecticides and appropriate storage infrastructure. The livestock farming is extensive and characterized by a low production, as a result of the lack of suitable food and veterinary care. The highly variable and decreasing rainfall constantly exposes producers to unpredictable harvests, as the soils in Sanmatenga is generally shallow and has been eroded by over pasture or the anarchic use of firewood or methods of agriculture.

Access: Burkina Faso has the capacity to produce enough cereal to cover the requirements of its population. Nevertheless, the low income and lack of knowledge on the market limit the opportunities for acquisition and consumption. Access to food is hindered by the transfer or export of cereals to deficient zones, and the neighboring countries where demand and prices are higher. Despite the decrease in poverty levels since 1998 in the North Central region, the poor experience a vicious cycle marked by natural catastrophes, low harvests, and high global prices. The producers are organized in communal, provincial or regional groups, but there are only weak vertical links and articulations in the value chains. The producers possess little information on the demand of markets and standards. Among the market gardeners, the inadequate infrastructure for storage reduces the producers' negotiation power, and they are forced to sell their products at a loss to business owners to avoid the food perishing. Among the challenges faced by agricultural producers seeking to obtain savings and credit are illiteracy and the lack of guarantees and birth certificates, a crucial document without which it is not possible to obtain a loan. There are opportunities for non-agricultural income, from crafts, food transformation, sewing, equipment and

repairing. However, they are negatively affected by the high illiteracy rate, inadequate qualifications and lack of training.

Adequate use of food: According to the principles and norms of the WHO, the rate of growth stunting rates (40%) and emaciation rates (11%) in 2009 among young children in the North Central region was considered “very high” and “severe”, respectively. Children generally have a poor and undiversified diet, which lacks animals, fruits and vegetables. Moreover, the nutritional practices are often inadequate, which increases malnutrition rates. Anemia, Vitamin A deficiency and the non-regularity of prenatal consultations are among the factors that alter mothers’ health and probably jeopardize that of the young child. In addition to this are the barriers to accessing health services, and more specifically lack of qualified health staff and lack of or non-functioning water and sanitation equipment. Hygiene practices are insufficient, as households in the North Central do generally not have access to soap. This has led to a proliferation of diarrheic diseases, the main cause of morbidity and mortality among newborn children.

Women’s weak capacity for autonomy: A sizeable majority, 80% of women in the Center North have no access to schooling, which exposes their children to chronic malnutrition. Moreover, the literacy rate among women is very low in the project zone. Women do not often take part in the decision-making process, and are consequently only poorly involved in the development actions conducted by the government and other actors. They lack appropriate knowledge on improved production, nutrition, hygiene and sanitation techniques. This results in a very high poverty rate among women, who largely depend on a marginal agricultural production with a few opportunities for off-season activities and limited access to credit. Approximately half of households are polygamous, a status in which women have less decision-making power.

Brief description of the main interventions and activities implemented: During the fiscal year 2013, the ViM project assisted 113,157 beneficiaries in 17,145 households. Using an integrated approach, the interventions on income-generating activities offer opportunities for sustainable improvement of livelihoods. ViM also addresses chronic malnutrition through activities destined at pregnant women and children under two years old (PM2A). ViM’s approach proceeds by an in-depth analysis of the value chains/sectors, to identify the most promising products and the factors likely to increase agro-pastoral productivity through improved practices and technologies, while developing sustainable links between the beneficiaries and the stakeholders of the private and public sectors. The activities implemented by ViM can be summarized as follows, by component:

Strengthening organizational capacity and managerial skills of producer organizations. ViM seeks to strengthen the implementation capacities of its local partners through the Training of Trainers (TOT) approach. The groups of producers belonging to all the sectors promoted in the project are identified and selected to receive technical training and assistance in managing farmer organizations, designing business plans and accessing financial resources. To date, ViM has identified 600 groups of producers (corresponding to 16,985 producers) in consultation with the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Animal Resources, community leaders and local implementation partners. A total of 282 representatives of target groups have been trained. The training modules include health and nutrition elements, and concepts of gender.

Strengthening knowledge and pastoral practices of producers. ViM promotes agricultural inputs by introducing improved production techniques and expanding the use of agricultural

inputs. To do so, the ViM project has also distributed agricultural material kits among the groups of producers, to implement the WSC/DRS techniques. Moreover, the project has organized fairs employing vouchers, in partnership with AGRODIA, an organization that brings together wholesalers and retailers of seeds, fertilizers, phytosanitary products and agricultural equipment. In total, this has concerned 1,755 onion and tomato producers and 5,111 sorghum and cowpea producers. Those from the tomato and onion sectors have been trained on composting techniques, using organic fertilizer and soil conservation techniques. Moreover, 2,216 poultry and small ruminant breeders have been trained on hygiene, diet, habitat and caring for animals. Their poultry and small ruminants have been vaccinated as part of the campaigns initiated by ViM.

Enlargement of the market opportunities for producer groups. The analysis of value chains/sectors conducted at the beginning of the project in 2012 has allowed the identification of local or regional buyers and new opportunities. The project establishes links between producer groups and buyers, to improve the direct access of farmers to local and international markets, thus developing their understanding of the advantages of joint marketing. ViM encourages the members of producer groups to use the networking opportunities organized within the structures of the public and private sphere or NGOs. Potential for non-agricultural activities are studied, and subsidies are granted to foster the development or emergence of small local artisanal or food production units, whether individual or in groups. ViM facilitates producer groups' access to credit and savings by establishing links with sources of credit, through micro-finance institutions. In order to give women direct access to credit, ViM will soon sign a partnership agreement with the Federation of Credit Unions. This agreement will enable ViM to grant a subsidy to the Credit Union to better target the project beneficiaries. As part of this subsidy, the Union will recruit three or four female organizers to work directly with the project, to install savings and credit groups for women.

Improvement of maternal and infant health and nutrition practices. The 29 ViM health promoters in cooperation with influential members of the community, have identified points of entry (for example community events) and modern and traditional means of mass communication to disseminate the key messages on diets for infants and young children (IYCF), notably exclusive maternal breastfeeding, child complementary food, vaccination, Vitamin A and the hygiene, sanitation, health and nutrition of pregnant or lactating women. In each community, the ViM officials, in cooperation with the community members, have identified 2,325 grandmothers to act as volunteer community organizers. They received an adequate training to conduct activities to change behavior among pregnant and lactating women and children under two years old, as well as children under the age of five years old and wet nurses. The organizers are responsible for 1) providing individual advice during home visits; 2) organizing educational group discussions on health and nutritional practices. During the second three-month period of the third year of implementation, the organizers spoke to 26,622 mothers. Through the CLTS approach (Sanitation by the Community), the two facilitators of the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene component work with government popularization officials, elementary and high school pupils and community leaders to raise awareness on defecation in the open air and its negative consequences on health. They also organize discussions and decision-making at a community level on the means to eliminate these bad practices. The two facilitators and community members have promoted messages on changing behavior on hygiene in cooperation with organizers, to strengthen the scope of the messages within the community.

Improving the quality and access to the main services of the mother and child health. ViM provides support for logistics and equipment to the Ministry of Health, to assist community initiatives in health and nutrition. ViM assisted the officials of the ministry of Health as part of the supervision of a two-day vaccination campaign. The 2,325 organizers mobilized the communities around activities carried out by the Ministry of Health for the benefit of mothers and children, such as vaccinations and distributing vitamins and micronutrients. The health promoters train and support the officials of the Ministry of Health to monitor and promote children's growth. Moreover, the health promoters trained 60 community health volunteers on diagnosing and administering zinc and oral rehydration solution to children under the age of five years old suffering from diarrhea (1,304 cases examined during the second three-month period of the project's second year), and detecting and monitoring severe cases of malnutrition (10,454 children examined during the second three-month period of the project's second year). During the fiscal year 2013, ViM provided food support through the monthly distribution of food rations to 13,247 children between six and 2 months, and to 14,747 pregnant or lactating women. Family rations were distributed to 14,151 households during the lean period.

Improvement of access to the infrastructure of hygiene and adequate sanitation. ViM conducted a community map to identify the locations in which defecation in open air is carried out and those which require public latrines, and has built latrines public latrines with hand-washing devices. 20 village sanitation committees composed of 313 members, including 132 women, were installed in 2013 to conduct sanitation activities in line with the Total Sanitation Executed by the Community approach (CLTS) and coordinate the activities of the Sanitation component in the respective villages. In turn, 102 family latrines and 235 hand washing devices were built in 2013 by the villagers themselves. The project is working to complete the government's efforts to promote the construction of individual latrines in the households, by implementing the CLTS and building or rehabilitating 21 public latrines in schools, mosques, health centers and markets.

Main challenges faced during the implementation of the ViM project.

Officially, the ViM project began its activities in August 2011 for a period of five years. Nonetheless, the implementation of the activities of the food security component began seven months later, due to delays in the launch and base study. The ViM project preferred to wait until the end of the base study before implementing the activities. Other major challenges include:

- Complete operationalization of the care groups, to achieve the greatest impact.
- Various training sessions concerning the agricultural and breeding technologies were organized for the producers. However, adoption rates are low, or the practice is only slowly taking hold.
- Though pregnant and lactating women are motivated to participate in the education sessions given by the organizers, there are still cases of diarrhea and malnutrition among children under the age of five years old.

1.3. Objectives of the evaluation

The base study was conducted to establish the reference situation. Regular field visits by the staff have permitted the collection of relevant information on the activities underway throughout the program's execution. Moreover, the program management strategy rests on an operational system involving the monitoring and evaluation of program activities, performances and results. The mid-term evaluation of the program is an essential tool of this

strategy. In line with the policies of USAID/FFP in terms of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and with the M&E Plan of the ViM Project, a mid-term evaluation must take place. It is useful, after two years of operation of the project, to stop and examine the progress made, draw lessons and take corrective measures to guarantee the chances of achieving the objectives specified above. This evaluation is scheduled to take place during October and November 2014, as requested by the detailed Plan of ViM activities for 2014 (DIP 2014).

Objective of the evaluation:

The ultimate goal of the mid-term evaluation is to determine the quality of the approaches applied for the program (field schools, care groups, food management and training), and how they contribute to achieving the objectives. Since the ViM project will be integrated into the REGIS program in Burkina Faso, a second objective of the mid-term evaluation is to review the design of the program through the perspective of resilience, to identify the possible gaps in the design and recommend changes for an effective integration with REGIS. In addition to fulfilling the objectives for food security, the ViM project is expected to develop the target communities' capacities so that these households can overcome the possible impact of food insecurity without depleting their productive resources. The evaluation will also consider the achievements, challenges (linked to the delays) encountered and the degrees of success. The evaluation process will analyze the existing reports and gather additional perspectives through informal interviews, group discussions and other methods. The product of this evaluation will help the program to appreciate the effectiveness of the project and improve its implementation. Moreover, this evaluation will inform the decision-makers (USAID/FFP, management officials) on the necessary corrections to make at this stage. The exercise will not only evaluate the progress recorded to date in achieving the final objectives, but will also identify, if necessary, the adjustments to make to the implementation strategy and activities linked to the IRs.

Objectives of the evaluation

Specifically, the mid-term evaluation aims to:

- Evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the project processes that are used to provide services and transfer technologies, knowledge and skills;
- Examine the validity of the design of the project, in terms of its theory of change and the implementation strategy concerning each intermediary result;
- Examine the effectiveness of the various partnerships;
- Examine the degree of integration of the three strategic objectives at that moment;
- Examine the effectiveness of the M&E unit in the production and transmission of reliable information, and in the speed of implementing the project (including the analysis of the methodologies used and resources in place);
- Finally, if necessary, formulate recommendations to adjust the project activities and management.

The mid-term evaluation does not intend to evaluate the impacts of the project. Mainly, it will highlight the “*processes*.” It will be an opportunity to reflect and learn on what worked and/did not work, to provide corrections and improve the implementation of ViM.

II. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The mid-term evaluation will answer the general evaluation questions, as well as the specific questions for strategic objective and cross-sectional topics. To do so, the qualitative data will be collected and analyzed in combination with the available quantitative data produced through the monitoring and evaluation system.

2.1. Main evaluation questions

- Are the strategies of the ViM project appropriate to respond to the problems of food security identified in the target zones?
- Are the approaches and processes of the project effective? How can they be improved?
- To what extent is the implementation of the activities in keeping with the approved program (PREP narrative), the detailed implementation plan (DIP) and the approved changes that appear in the indication of performance table (IPTT)? What suggestions can be made to improve the implementation timetable?
- To what extent is the project on the right track in terms of implementing the planned activities? What can be done to make up the delay and achieve the expected targets?
- What progress has been achieved to fulfil the project targets?
- How is the project achieving these targets? What success stories have there been, which best practices can be drawn from these, and how can they inspire future activities and be reproduced and shared? Why? What improvements can be suggested?
- Which intermediary results or objectives are likely to be achieved by the end of the project? Which are less likely to be achieved?
- What can be done to ensure the success of the project, and why?
- Are all the activities always relevant?
- Which new activities could be relevant to achieve the objectives, taking into consideration the new REGIS program?
- What is the best strategy to ensure the connection between ViM and the new REGIS program, and which activities need to be established or strengthened during the remainder of the ViM project?

2.2. Evaluation questions by strategic objective

Agriculture and Livelihood Component (SO1 and SO2).

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the agriculture and livelihood component in achieving the expected objectives?
- How does the ViM project use a sector/value chain approach to implement the agricultural activities? What obstacles emerged and what suggestions can be made for improvement?
- To what extent did the producers benefiting from ViM adopt the agricultural technology and practices promoted by the project? Which deficiencies must be remedied? Were the field schools designed around the principles of experimental learning? What challenges were identified during the implementation of the field schools? What can be changed to improve this approach?
- To what extent has the subsidy strategy adopted to distribute the inputs to the agricultural producers been a success? What recommendations can be made to improve producers' access to high-quality inputs?
- To what extent do the producers have access to agricultural inputs (improved seeds, fertilizers) in the best conditions? Which one is the most accessible? Which is the least accessible? Why? Which specific constraints do the producers face in gaining access to improved seeds and fertilizers in the project's target zones?
- Which breeding activities (poultry, small ruminants) are promoted by the ViM project?
- To what extent have the breeders adopted the breeding technologies and practices promoted by the project? Which deficiencies still exist, which must be remedied?
- What capacities do the producer groups have to support the relations established with the buyers, suppliers and retailers? Which were the main challenges faced?
- How does ViM facilitate access to credit for the beneficiaries of the project (small holders, input merchants, wholesalers)? What suggestions for improvement can be made?

- To what extent does the project's technical staff have the technical capacities to implement the activities in the value chains? What are their strengths and what can be done to strengthen their skills?

Health and Nutrition of the mother and child Component (strategic objective 3)

- What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the health and nutrition component in achieving the expected results?
- Does the community understand clearly the health and nutrition services for mothers and children offered by the project? Who is eligible to use them? What is their perception of the quality and effectiveness of the services provided?
- To what extent do pregnant and lactating women put into practice the messages promoted by the project? What are the limiting factors? What can be done to overcome these constraints?
- To what extent do the organizers have the appropriate knowledge and required capacities to deliver the messages? Do they have the necessary equipment, material and methods to carry out their tasks? Were the materials available in the time frame? What can be done to strengthen their capacities and catch up the delay in implementation?
- To what extent has the project contributed to increasing the use of state curative and preventative health services by the project beneficiaries? Why?
- To what extent has the project contributed to improving access and use of good practices in hygiene and sanitation?
- Are the distances that the beneficiaries of food have to cover to reach the distribution centers appropriate?

2.3. Quality of the Program and cross-sectional questions

Quality of the partnership and consortium

- Has the support to strengthen capacities provided to Local Implementing Partners (LIPs) under the mandate of the SNV been effective? Which aspects have been a success, and which require improvement?
- To what extent are LIPs capable of providing the activities attributed to them? Which challenges has the project faced in the selection and beginning of the activities?
- To what extent do the members of the consortium work in synergy to achieve the project objectives? Which bottlenecks and suggestions for improvement emerged?
- To what extent is partnership within the consortium effective in managing the project, such as planning, implementing the activities, discussions on reports and the lessons learnt and decision-making? Which recommendations can be made in terms of improvement?

Targeting

- To what extent has the targeting managed to reach the most vulnerable populations in Sanmatenga?
- Which others persons not targeted initially are now benefiting from the project? How are they benefiting?

Integration

- Are the activities integrated (this notion will be defined by the Monitoring and Evaluation team and shared with the evaluators during the preliminary meetings) in the field and with the beneficiaries? Which challenges were faced in the process of integrating the activities? (planning, sharing resources, feedback, reports and relations between components) Which recommendations can be made for improvement?

Sustainability and exit strategy

- Has the sustainability strategy clearly identified the activities and results that must be sustained? Has the project taken into account the supply, demand and accessibility of goods and services when developing the sustainability strategy? How were the latter implemented? What needs to be done to create the demand for the services currently provided by ViM, and how can this demand be satisfied after the end of the ViM project?
- Which changes in specific behavior introduced by the project need to be supported after the project? Which threats could potentially drive the population back to the previous practices after the project, or instill other bad practices? Which organizations, services and structures are necessary to support the change of behavior?
- To what extent will producers be capable of continuing with the technologies and practices after the end of the project?
- Will the producers be capable of obtaining the support concerning agricultural techniques and the management of natural resources without the assistance of the project (free or subsidized)? If not, what must be done?
- Which physical buildings built or rehabilitated by the project are destined to be pursued after the project ends? Which are the main threats to the maintenance of these infrastructures? What may happen to the latter when the project ends? Which strategies will enable it to overcome these threats?
- To what extent are the technicians from the Burkina Faso government involved in implementing and monitoring the activities?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership with the government of Burkina Faso in terms of support for the project activities?
- Does the ViM project facilitate the vertical and horizontal integration of the producer groups? Do the latter receive appropriate training for these integrations? Which obstacles were faced during this process? Which suggestions for improvement can be made?

Gender

- Does the project have systems in place to facilitate gender equality in access to agricultural techniques and other techniques to manage the natural resources promoted by the project? What could have been done to improve equal participation, distribution of the workload and the benefits obtained from the interventions?
- To what extent is ViM effective in implementing its strategy to facilitate women's access to inputs, equipment and resources in the targeted villages? Is there any evidence of this? Which obstacles emerged during this process? Which suggestions for improvement can be made?
- To what extent does ViM promote women's participation in the producer groups and their representation in leadership positions? Which specific recommendations can be made to improve the trend?
- How are men involved in the learning opportunities regarding mother and child health and nutrition? Are their roles strengthened so as to support their family in terms of these aspects of health and nutrition?
- What is the sustainability of the specific changes (the examples include strengthening men's capacities to support the family in health and nutrition; the husbands no longer beat their wives), if there are any, provided by the project?

Monitoring and evaluation

- Are the targets of the performance indicators reasonable? Are all the performance indicators relevant for monitoring the progress and measuring the impacts? Which

should be kept? Why?

- To what extent is there a system to follow the progress achieved in implementing the activities? Are the field visits documented? Are the reports shared among the actors?
- To what extent does the monitoring and evaluation unit use the appropriate tools and methodologies to collect data to follow the products, results and impacts of the ViM project? Which suggestions can be made to increase their use?
- How much does the project use the results obtained from the monitoring and evaluation system in the decision-making process? Are the monitoring and evaluation results (data and reports) used to support the decision-making process? What suggestions can be made?
- What changes can be made in the monitoring evaluation system to understand the capacity of households and communities to be resilient in the event of shocks linked to food security?

Food management

- Which processes worked well in the pipeline, from the call-forward, through the delivery by boat and storage in warehouses, until the distribution to beneficiaries? Which need adjustment?
- Which problems exist in storehouse management? How is the project solving these problems?
- Is the pre-packing process of food rations an effective and efficient strategy to supply beneficiaries monthly?

Management of ViM Project

- To what measure does the project coordinate the activities?
- Which challenges come from the regional offices and headquarters interviewed?
- Does the project receive technical assistance from ACDIVOCA and SCI?

Environment

- To what extent does the project conform with USAID's environmental rules and norms? Which actions are necessary to increase conformity with regulation 216?
- Were there any unexpected environmental impacts resulting from the project activities?
- If so, have any sustainable attenuation actions been implemented? Which additional measures can be implemented?
- How does the ViM project measure the environmental indicators? Which challenges are there to monitoring it? Which recommendations can help to overcome them?

Behavioral change

- What is the project currently doing to provide a high proportion of beneficiaries with a high-quality service and effective methods to change behavior? What works well and what works less well? Are there any means to modify their approach, to improve the change in behavior?

Knowledge management

- To what extent is the report system, including the interviews with staff and discussion, effective when studying what did not work as expected, the necessary adaptations and the new ideas that could be applied?

III. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH OF THE EVALUATION

The mid-term evaluation will be mainly qualitative and participative. Unlike the base study,

the mid-term evaluation will focus on the beneficiaries. This review will consist of three stages. The first involves an in-depth documentary review, followed by a collection of qualitative data, then a methodical analysis of the information gathered. The evaluation will use the qualitative data collected through the site visits, the review of project documents and reports, interviews with stakeholders, group discussions with the beneficiaries and the interviews with the project staff. The evaluation team will use the qualitative information treated by the monitoring evaluation system, and in particular the results and evolution in the IPTT figures collected through the annual surveys (2013 and 2014). This means that the mid-term evaluation will use the qualitative methods and techniques to complete the quantitative data in order to explain or explore the trends observed. This will enable the evaluation team to better understand the results obtained and discuss the chance of ViM achieving the targets and objectives expected for the end of the project. Moreover, the team will be able to issue recommendations to improve the implementation of the project and its management.

Analyses of the evaluation and observations will also help to understand which successes were achieved, which difficulties were encountered, and to what extent the latter were overcome. A report, which will be shared with the project stakeholders and approved by ACDI/VOCA, will be the main product of this activity.

Methods of data collection will include a minimum of the elements below:

- 1) *Documentary review*: A review of all the projects documents, including the agreement/descriptive document of the project (subsidy, amount in kind, beneficiaries, sub-agreement), reports submitted, such as the annual results report, the changes required by USAID, will be crucial in the evaluation process. The evaluation team will have access to various documents such as those relating to food management, estimations of resources and food, training reports, reports by sub-contracted partners, when required (including the three-monthly and annual reports, the Monitoring and Evaluation plan, routine monitoring data, results of the annual survey, etc.). The evaluation team will closely study all the documents available before finalizing the methodology and collection of all the data in the field. The ViM project will provide all the documents requested by the evaluation team, including notably the following elements:
 - Technical documentation of the MYAP
 - Performance Monitoring Plan and M&E plan
 - IPTT
 - Report from the Baseline Study
 - Report on the program's annual results
 - Annual PREPs for the program
 - Monetization agreements
 - Gender Strategies
 - Report from formative research
 - PERSUAP
 - All relevant reports
- 2) *Interviews with key informers*: representatives of FFP (in Burkina Faso and in the regional office in Senegal), representatives of the communal services, project partners, government technicians (popularization, sanitary service officials, investigators - INERA) and other government structures cooperating with the project.

- 3) *Interviews with the implementation staff*: the key staff of ACIDI/VOCA, SCI and LIPs (CBDF, AGRODIA, ATAD, AZND and APIL). This will allow ViM to identify the weaknesses, strengths and opportunities that could be taken into account to improve the management and implementation of the project.
- 4) *Focus groups*: with the various groups of project beneficiaries (of SO1, SO2 and SO3). The focus groups can provide rich and in-depth information. When they are properly conducted, they create a friendly environment that allows participants to answer the questions more rationally, with their own words and understanding. These thus go further than individual interviews, as the participants interact among themselves. These exchanges must allow an exploration of the potential benefits of the project, the communities' perception, the quality of services, the unexpected consequences and necessary modifications in the design and implementation of the project. In order to account for gender specificities, the evaluation team will ensure that men and women participate in the interviews, to achieve representative results. Moreover, the composition of the evaluation team and the investigator team must reflect gender, to encourage confidence and facilitate the process of collecting data.
- 5) *Direct observations*: In addition to the documentary review, the evaluation team will visit several project sites to confirm the implementation of the practices promoted by the project, collect the success stories for mid-term evaluation and study the results.

Data collection tools will be developed and used in a manner that allows the collection of gender-sensitive data for example specific groups of women will be considered for the focus groups. During the request for proposals and recruiting process, the study offices will be invited to suggest other relevant methods of collecting, to add to those mentioned above.

As the evaluation is primarily qualitative, the data collection at a community level will not be done using a random sample, but based on relevant criteria. The villages that benefited from the ViM activities will be ranked firstly by group, taking account of a certain number of criteria, for example their level of participation in the project, ease of access, demographics, socio-economic conditions of the village, among others. Subsequently, the number of villages in each group will be selected to carry out the data collection. The criteria will be designed by the M&E team with the support of the key staff of ViM, and will be revised by the consulting firm during the process of selecting the villages to visit.

IV. COMPOSITION OF THE EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation will be internal, and involve certain key actors such as USAID/FFP. To facilitate this process, ViM will hire a consulting firm. The evaluation team will include a team lead and sectorial experts.

The evaluation team will be directed by a Team Leader, who will work closely with the M&E Department to implement and plan the study. Solid experience in implementing or evaluating food security projects, and experience as an evaluation mission leader will be determining factors when recruiting the team leader. However, knowledge of the local context and socio-economic, cultural, institutional and environmental situation will also be considered. The Team Leader will be the main intermediary of the M&E unit of ViM, and will be responsible for all the products to deliver. They will be supported by an Expert on Agriculture and Livelihoods, and an Expert on Health/Nutrition and Behavior Change, who will each be supported by an experienced investigator for the collection of qualitative data.

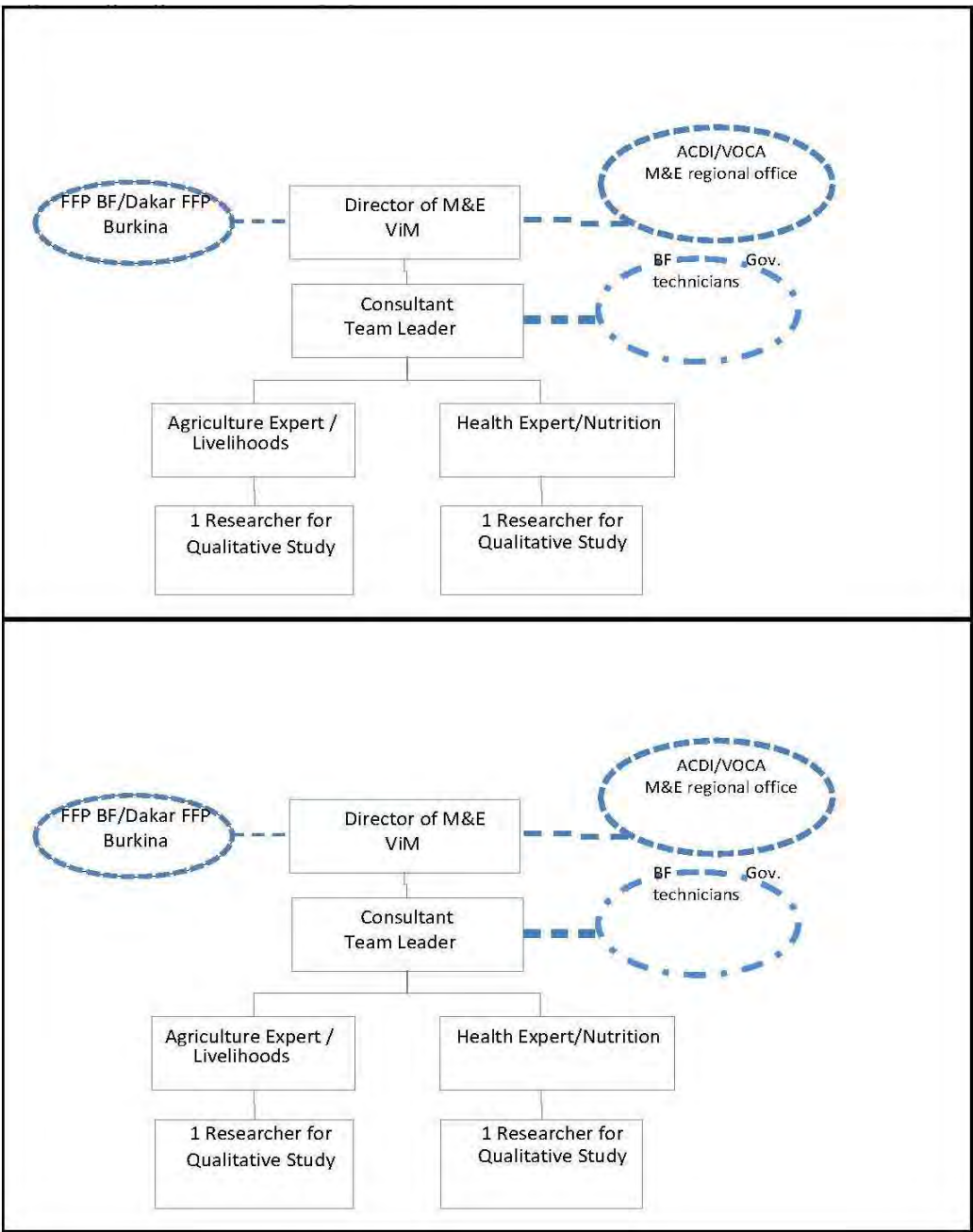
The USAID/FFP mission will be invited to take part in all the stages of the evaluation. The Ministries of Agriculture, Food Security, Animal Resources and Health will be involved in all the stages of the evaluation process through one of their local representatives.

The organizational chart below summarizes the structure suggested for the monitoring and evaluation team.

Figure 2: Organizational chart of the evaluation team

As a key partner, the involvement of FFP/USAID in the mid-term evaluation will include the following elements:

- Review of the current ToR;



- Orientation meeting with the study office, to highlight the issues of interest;
- Participate in field visits, where necessary;
- Debrief with the evaluation team at the end of the field activities;
- Participate in the meeting to present a synthesis of the preliminary observation on the field to the Burkina Faso government, USAID and partners.
- Review of the provisory report;
- And acceptance of the final report.

V. LEVEL OF EFFORT EXPECTED FROM THE EVALUATION TEAM

A maximum of 52 work days will be required of the evaluation team, including:

- Reviewing the project document: Four days;
- Scoping an understanding of the ToR by the consultants: Three days;
- Preparing and planning the mid-term evaluation and development of materials: Twelve days;
- Data collection in the field: A maximum of 13 working days;
- Preparing a synthesis of the preliminary observations in the field, and conducting a meeting to present the synthesis and receive participants' feedback (in one day): Three days;
- Writing the provisory report: Twelve days;
- Revising and finalizing the evaluation report: Five days.

SVP - see part VII (MTE calendar).

5.1. Terms of Reference (ToR) and qualifications required of the Consulting Firm and Team Leader.

Specific Terms of Reference will clarify the roles and responsibilities of each team member, products expected and deadlines for submission. This will be developed and detailed by ViM's monitoring and evaluation unit, after approval of these ToR. However, the team's qualifications and conditions required are described below.

The mid-term evaluation team will be composed as follows:

- 1) A team leader with proven experience in evaluation and relevant knowledge of the qualitative research methodologies in nutrition, agriculture, resilience and Title II program programs. The team leader will be responsible for designing, organizing, implementing and writing up the results of the mid-term evaluation. They will conduct the evaluation team and will be assisted by two experts.
- 2) A Health/Nutrition Expert
- 3) An Agriculture/Livelihoods/Value Chains Expert
- 4) Two investigators

The full profile of the evaluation team is below:

The team leader of the evaluation is expected to hold:

- A third cycle diploma, with solid expertise in food security, agriculture, rural development, or a field linked to evaluation;
- Proven experience in carrying out at least three performance evaluations of multi-sectorial programs, preferably in the Title II of USAID, in underdeveloped countries.

- At least ten years of experience in evaluation, using qualitative tools to implement evaluations of agriculture, food security or health/nutrition programs;
- Experience required for evaluating Title II food security programs;
- Proven experience in collecting qualitative data, including designing qualitative research protocols; experience in designing tools and interpreting quantitative data, collecting and analyzing data and producing reports;
- Experience required in integrating gender into the evaluation;
- Excellent communication skills (verbal and written) in French and, if possible, English;
- Preferably, previous experience of work in rural areas in Burkina Faso;
- Solid capacity for critical analysis and competences in reporting. An example of a written document could be requested.
- If possible, work experience with USAID's reporting and evaluation tools.

The Health and Nutrition Expert should have:

- A postgraduate degree in public health, nutrition, medicine, care or another related subject;
- Proven experience in designing and implementing at least two qualitative performance evaluations of programs/strategies in the sector of mother and child health and nutrition, preferably from programs in developing countries;
- Knowledge and practical experience with care group models and community management of acute malnutrition;
- Proven experience in collecting qualitative data, including designing qualitative research protocols; experience in designing tools and interpreting quantitative data, collecting and analyzing data and producing reports;
- At least eight years of experience in managing and implementing the evaluation of health/nutrition programs;
- Knowledge and experience with multi-sectorial approaches and food support, aiming to improve the sanitary and nutritional situation of mothers and children;
- Required experience in integrating gender into the evaluation;
- Excellent communication skills in French and, if possible, English;
- Preferably, previous experience of working in rural areas in Burkina Faso;

The Expert in Agriculture (Ag), Livelihoods (LH) and Value Chains should have:

- A postgraduate diploma in rural development, agronomy, breeding, international development or another related subject;
- Preferably, expertise in one or several or the following areas: analysis of value chains, income-generating activities, village credit system, savings and credit groups, micro/small enterprises, and the methodology of training in field schools;
- Proven experience in designing and implementing at least two qualitative performance evaluations of programs/strategies in the sector of mother and child health and nutrition, preferably from programs in developing countries;

- Experience in implementing agriculture and livelihood programs in developing countries, if possible;
- Proven experience in collecting qualitative data, including designing qualitative research protocols; experience in designing tools, collecting and analyzing data and producing reports;
- Knowledge of and experience in multi-sectorial and food support approaches aiming to improve agriculture and livelihoods;
- Required experience in integrating gender into the evaluation;
- Excellent communication skills in French and, if possible, English;
- Preferably, previous experience of working in rural areas in Burkina Faso;

Two (2) investigators with experience in collecting qualitative data. The investigators will participate in interviews and focus groups during the collection phase of the mid-term evaluation of the ViM project. They will use the techniques and method of qualitative and participative collection to gather, notably among beneficiaries and communities, the opinions, appreciation on project activities and progress, results obtained, changes observed and their judgment on the project strengths and weaknesses. They will take note of the information professionally and produce detailed synthesis notes permitting them to answer the ToR questions. The investigators should have the following qualifications:

- At least a Bachelor's degree and a minimum of two years' experience in data collection;
- Experience in health/nutrition surveys (investigator 1);
- Experience in agriculture/breeding, rural development or livelihoods (investigator 2);
- Have already participated in program evaluation as an investigator;
- Be a Mooré speaker.

5.2. Responsibilities of ViM

The ViM project will carry out the following functions in line with these ToR:

- Provide liaison and organize meetings between USAID/FFP and the consulting firm;
- Provide logistic and administrative support to the consulting firm, notably the necessary information and transport, to facilitate the evaluation work. More specifically, ViM will provide two vehicles with a chauffeur for the travel of the evaluation team in the field;
- Plan meetings in the form of interviews and focus groups, based on the collection calendar agreed by the consulting firm;
- Provide punctually all the necessary documentation (including project documents, reports, IPTT/data of the monitoring system, lists of villages/communities, and all other available documents requested by the evaluation team);
- Coordinate the selection of villages with the Team Leader;
- Reproduce and provide punctually and in sufficient quantity the copies of the questionnaires (guides for focus groups, interviews, etc.);
- Facilitate the organization of a restitution session for the observations made in the field with all the actors, including staff from ViM, SCI, LIPs, FFP, the local authority and representatives of concerned ministries;

- Share the first draft of the evaluation with the staff of ViM, LIPs and SCI to generate comments;
- Compile all the comments received on the first draft to send them to the consulting firm to produce the final report.

Logistics

- Each evaluator is expected to provide their personal laptop, with the appropriate software on Microsoft Windows.
- ACDI/VOCA will arrange transportation for the member of the evaluation team and facilitate transportation in the field, where possible. However, there will be situations in which the evaluators will have to travel themselves or arrange their travel to/from the meetings, for focus groups and other interviews. The evaluators will have to provide a detailed list of the interview locations.

5.3. Outputs expected from the consulting firm

The Team Leader of the evaluation will be responsible for:

- Finalizing the evaluation questions, methodology, guides for interviews and focus groups, and the participant consent form with ViM's Monitoring and valuation unit.
- Designing and produce collection tools (questionnaires, guides for focus groups, interview protocol, etc.)
- Collecting data and supervise the management of tools in the field;
- Organizing the debriefing session in cooperation with the ViM project, to share the first observations;
- Analyze the data collected and submit an articulated and full standard report punctually to ViM.
- Submitting all the documents relating to the study (including completed questionnaires, electronic version of the data collected, training manual, notebooks with the information collected in the field (field work logs));
- Producing the provisory report (in French), taking in account the discussions during the restitution;
- Revising the report, taking in consideration the comments, and provide a final report (in French and English).

5.4. Deliverables

The Consulting firm will submit the following documents to ViM:

- Five days before the field work: an inception report that summarizes the observation of the documentary review and includes the final methodology and all the collection tools;
- Seven days before the field visits: a provisory report;
- Final report: one original, five copies and one electronic copy;
- And the interview forms and notebooks.

5.5. Strengths and limits of the methodology

Strengths: This evaluation is a participatory process that involves the project beneficiaries, staff and communities. This ensures a more holistic perspective of the project performance, lessons learnt and best practices and a solid understanding, appropriation and improved use of the observations and recommendations of the mid-term evaluation.

The methodology of this evaluation is qualitative, the sampling is purposive, which does not allow a generalization of quantitative results.

The project has experienced delays in implementing activities. This mid-term evaluation will therefore provide less information that it could have. To remedy this, ViM will consider proactively any possible challenge and opportunity that could emerge during the implementation of the project.

VI. FORMAT OF THE REPORT

The team leader of the mid-term evaluation will be responsible for submitting the provisory report and the final approved report to the office of ACDI/VOCA in Ouagadougou for final review and approval. The provisory version will receive comments and requests for clarification and written detail. This will require that these comments be taken into consideration and for the clarifications to be inserted for the production and submission of a final report to ACDI/VOCA.

The final report of the mid-term evaluation should be delivered to ACDI/VOCA in Ouagadougou in hard copy and on a CD (software: Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel). It should contain a cover page, a list of acronyms, a contents page and page numbers. The selected font is Times New Roman, size 12.

The Team Leader must submit a final report in electronic format, following the format below.

- | | |
|--|--|
| I. | Executive Summary |
| II. | Presentation of the project and ViM |
| | A. General presentation of the strategy |
| | B. Background and contextual setting |
| III. | Objectives of the mid-term evaluation |
| | A. Methodologies of the evaluation |
| IV. | Intermediary result 1.1 (under Strategic Objective 1) |
| | A. Brief description of the intervention |
| | B. Strategy and approaches: relevance, quality, successes and challenges |
| | C. Progress and results expected (targets and milestones) |
| | D. Lessons learnt and best practices |
| | E. Recommendations |
| V. | Intermediary result 1.2 (under Strategic Objective 2) |
| | A. Brief description of the intervention |
| | B. Strategy and approaches: relevance, quality, successes and challenges |
| | C. Progress and results expected (targets and milestones) |
| | D. Lessons learnt and best practices |
| | E. Recommendations |
| [the same schema should be followed for the intermediary results of SO2 and SO3] | |

VI. Quality of the program and cross-sectional topics

A. Quality of the partnership and consortium

- B. Targeting
- C. Integration
- D. Sustainability and exit strategy
- E. Gender
- F. Environment
- G. Change in behavior

VII. Implementation process

- A. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)
- B. Knowledge management
- C. Food management
- D. ViM management (financial)

Recommendations (in addition to those mentioned for the IR)

VIII

The consultant must provide and include as an annex the ToR, evaluation plan/timetable revised with the M&E team, all the collection tools used during this evaluation, list of the sites visited, and the key informers and communities interviewed.

Source: Guideline to Developing SOW for mid-term evaluation of title II Development Food Assistance Program, TOPS 2013

Miscellaneous

Ownership of information and material of the report: All reports, information and data produced during this consultation will be owned by ACDI/VOCA and will be broadcasted at its discretion. In the event that the report contains sensitive issues, ACDI/VOCA reserves the right to prohibit the dissemination of all or part of the report [non applicable towards USAID].

Confidentiality: The consulting firm shall treat all of ACDI/VOCA's contacts confidentially, including all the shared documents and information, and respect all its policies and procedures on information confidentially outside the organization.

Disputes: Any disputes between ACDI/VOCA and the consulting firm must be resolved through a mediator.

Lack of commitment: No employer/employee relationship exists between ACDI/VOCA and the consultants or the firm recruited to implement these terms of reference. These terms of reference are a commitment exclusively for the provision of professional services and their

deliverables. The consultants have the responsibility of carrying out the procedures related to tax payments themselves.

ACDI/VOCA will not be responsible for any commitment during the mid-term evaluation.

VII. CALENDAR OF MID-TERM EVALUATION

Provisional calendar of the mid-term evaluation

Activities	June				July				August				November					Comments
	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 4	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	
1. Internal Discussions. Finalization of the draft of and submission to FFP for approval																		The ToR will be submitted on June 7 for comments
2. Feedback from FFP and finalized ToR																		The final version of the ToR will available on July 25
3. Call for proposals. Preparation and publication.																		
4. Technical evaluation and of price of bids Selection of consulting firm or consultants																		
Preparing the procurement request form for the approval from the headquarters																		
5. Signing the Contract, with the firm and approval from the headquarters																		
6. Orientation and scoping meeting between ViM's M&E teams and the reduced consultant team (review of the documentation, methodology and finalization of an action plan)																		
7. Implementing the mid-term evaluation and collecting information in the field																		13 days (interview, focus groups)
8. Preparing and conducting the debriefing																		3 days
9. Collecting and compiling comments on the provisory report																		10 days

PLACES OF EXECUTION

The evaluation activities will take place in both the Project's zone of intervention, in Kaya, Pissila, Barsalogho and Namissiguima (Province of Sanmatenga), and in Ouagadougou