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MID-TERM EVALUATION

Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity (TAWA)

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This publication was produced at the request of the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared independently by ME&A, Inc.

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ABSTRACT

The Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity (TAWA), funded by the United States Agency for International Development Central Asia (USAID/CA), is a four-and-a-half-year program (including the option period) designed to improve the nutritional outcomes of women of reproductive age and children under the age of two by increasing the yields and economic returns of household plots in Khatlon region. TAWA addresses four key project objectives through activities focused on agriculture extension services, vegetable production, orchard production, dairy production, and irrigation water management to increase, diversify, and add value to the agricultural production of smallholder farmers. This mid-term performance evaluation was commissioned to address key questions to help USAID better understand its investment in nutrition-sensitive agriculture in Tajikistan and strengthen the TAWA activity. The Evaluation Team (ET) conducted a desk review, interviews with key stakeholders in Dushanbe and Khatlon, focus group discussions with direct beneficiaries in Khatlon, and a telephone survey of 120 Women's Groups (WGs) members. The ET found that: adoption of new farming practices and technologies is high; some WGs may become sustainable after the project ends; WGs members appreciate the training they received but are looking for content that goes beyond basic skills; and training may have produced positive nutrition and income effects. The ET recommends formalizing roles and responsibilities within WGs, increasing coordination with state institutions, and providing more quality training.

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
CBO	Community-Based Organization
Chemonics	Chemonics International, Inc.
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
COP	Chief of Party
CTJ	Competitiveness, Trade, and Jobs Project
EHE	Extension Home Economist
EQ	Evaluation Question
ET	Evaluation Team
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FTF	Feed the Future
FTFMS	Feed the Future Monitoring System
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOT	Government of Tajikistan
IFPRI	Food Policy Research Institute
INGENAES	Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agriculture Extension Services
IP	Implementing Partner
IT	Information Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PMEP	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
SOW	Scope of Work
TAWA	Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity
THNA	Tajikistan Health and Nutrition Activity
TOT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/CA	United States Agency for International Development Central Asia
WG	Women's Group
WUA	Water User Association

Acronym	Description
ZOI	Zone of Influence

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purpose of the mid-term performance evaluation of the Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity (TAWA), a Feed the Future (FTF) activity, was to compare what had been accomplished against intended results, including any management, financial, and cost-efficiency findings. The evaluation is intended to help the United States Agency for International Development Central Asia (USAID/CA) to: 1) better understand its investment in nutrition-sensitive agriculture in Tajikistan; and 2) strengthen the TAWA activity. Because the TAWA project will complete its activities in late 2019, USAID/CA has indicated that the evaluation's recommendations are also expected to inform USAID FTF activities in the Khatlon region.

The evaluation addresses the following key evaluation questions (EQs):

> EQ1. To what degree are women beneficiaries adapting improved farming practices and technologies in the long term?
>
> EQ2. How sustainable and effective is TAWA's use of temporary informal women's groups to deliver agricultural extension services?
>
> EQ3. To what degree are TAWA's efforts in crop diversification impacting nutritional outcomes both through diet diversity and improved income?
>
> EQ4. How well is the activity coordinating with other USAID FTF agricultural and health activities, other donors, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders as applicable [e.g., universities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)] to leverage resources, increase impact, and prevent duplication of efforts?

PROJECT BACKGROUND

USAID launched the TAWA project in 2016. TAWA works in 12 out of 24 districts in the Khatlon region, with the aim of improving nutritional and health outcomes by increasing yields and economic returns from household plots. The activity focuses on women of reproductive age and with children under the age of two.

As per the project Scope of Work (SOW), key components within TAWA must:

1. Focus on men and women, recognizing that constraints exist for both male and female farmers (including the need to migrate due to lack of jobs with earning potential);
2. Reduce the confidence gap by developing activities that address women's low confidence at all levels of household, farm, community, and government;
3. Reduce the resources gap to ensure that both women and men farmers have access to extension services, credit, and agricultural inputs; and
4. Address time-saving measures for improved technologies.

EVALUATION DESIGN, METHODS, AND LIMITATIONS

To answer the EQs, the evaluation used a mixed-methods design consisting of both qualitative and quantitative data collection. These methods included:

A desk review based on materials related to TAWA and other materials provided by USAID/CA and the implementing partner (IP) to inform the data collection instruments and the analysis.

Qualitative data collected through 28 semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs), three group interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs) to collect information from a wide range of perspectives (public sector, program implementation, non-project subject matter experts, etc.).

Quantitative data collection, which comprised the following methods:

- *Telephone survey.* A small telephone phone survey of 120 randomly selected Women's Group (WG) members was conducted. The survey followed a script with mostly closed-ended questions.
- *Secondary data review.* The ET reviewed secondary project performance data as measured by the project's Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP) and Feed the Future Monitoring System (FTFMS) indicators.

The main limitations of the evaluation were limited time for analysis; difficulty assessing sustainability; inability to rely on measurements of nutrition or income changes; recall bias among respondents; reliability of responses; response bias; and challenges in attribution.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Overall: TAWA is a highly successful project in terms of its performance indicators. A comparison of actual indicators and the target values included in the latest Annual Report (October 2017-September 2018) clearly shows that TAWA has exceeded its targets already (in some cases by several degrees of magnitude) for 11 out of 12 indicators. Following the guidance given by the EQs, however, the evaluation team (ET) did not focus on the overall performance, but instead on a narrower set of issues concerning WGs, diet, income, and coordination between other projects and initiatives. The ET considered issues of management, finance, and cost-efficiency within this narrower context.

Below, the evaluation's main findings and conclusions are organized by EQ.

EQ1. To what degree are women beneficiaries adapting improved farming practices and technologies in the long term?

The evaluation could not directly answer the question of adaptation in the long term, because the project is ongoing and the "long term" is still years away. Instead, the ET considered key factors that could promote or impede adaptation (as well as adoption) of practices in the long term.

Findings

- The focus of TAWA agriculture extension service training is to introduce new practices and improve existing practices. It has largely succeeded, for now. The vast majority of women beneficiaries in WGs (87 percent of telephone survey respondents) reported using the new practices they learned from the TAWA extension home economists (EHEs), although they did not discuss adapting (i.e., modifying) them.
- Factors contributing to usage of new practices include: i) the relatively proactive profile of WG members, who are vetted by the project in part on how motivated they are; ii) the practical focus of the training—women can immediately use what they learned; 3) the design

and implementation of WGs; and 4) the fact that many women reported economic and other benefits resulting from applying the practices they learned.

- WG members receive training on three agricultural extension themes for two to three hours each, some of them of fairly basic nature, e.g. canning apricots, crop rotation. (WGs trained earlier in the program had received training on five themes). The training courses, while not difficult to adopt, were often not directly related to nutrition or even farming practices.

Conclusions

- In the strict sense of the word, adaptation of new practices taught to WG members was not found, yet neither was it intended. A clear indicator is that the TAWA Annual Report for 2018 uses the term "adopt" and its derivates 10 times but does not refer to adaptation not even once. However, if adaptation of existing practices by adopting what was learned from the training is considered, then some adaptation has taken place.
- It is clear that the training has gained traction with the target audience of rural women. There is a high appreciation among WG members for the opportunity to learn practical skills which directly affect their household's well-being. There appears to be a high demand for learning, improving practices, and WGs as platforms for knowledge exchange.
- In terms of impacts on livelihoods, including diets, the changes may be marginal rather than transformative, at least for now. The project spends considerable time establishing groups and less time on building their capacity. While women are indeed adopting the new practices they learn, and thus the impact is likely to be sustainable, the size of the impact will be small, and probably not a "game changer."

EQ2. How sustainable and effective is TAWA's use of temporary informal WGs to deliver agricultural extension services?

Findings

- WGs are a TAWA initiative, i.e. a project intervention, since no viable existing alternatives for delivering extension services to women were found. Under the project, training on various extension service themes is delivered to women via organized WGs. By the end of 2018, the project had trained seven cohorts of WGs in the 12 districts. In the first seven cohorts, a total of 29,331 women were trained.
- As the description "temporary informal" implies, WGs were not designed to be sustainable. Furthermore, sustainability can realistically only be assessed in the years after the project closes. In order to address the question, the ET considered factors which will influence the WGs' potential post-project sustainability, including:
  - Women being actively involved in the training process, and reporting that meeting within the framework of a group was very effective, as opposed to having to travel from their village to attend open field days, which would not have been possible for many;
  - Training that is relevant to the season, giving women the chance to practice their new skills immediately; and
  - Access to benefits beyond the practical aspects related to nutrition and agriculture, which women have obtained through WGs.
- TAWA had to reduce the number of trainings per group in order to meet its gender target of 70 percent of project beneficiaries being women. Instead of providing five training modules or themes over five months, only three were provided over three months. (The project did

not take the alternative option of increasing the number of EHEs in order to reach more women.) This meant that most WG cohorts received training in only three out of nine possible themes. Regardless of how positive the WGs were perceived by participants, the trainings they receive touched on only a very limited number of topics.

Conclusions

- WGs have proven to be a highly effective mode for delivering extension services to women: most of the TAWA women beneficiaries would not have been reached by the project otherwise. As the findings indicate, at the time of data collection, only 5,726 women were reached through open field days, while 30,000 were reached through the WGs.
- The various factors which make WGs appealing to their members suggest that, even though it was not the aim, many WGs may outlast the project. Through WGs, women have obtained access to benefits beyond the practical aspects related to nutrition and agriculture.
- WGs are effective, but underutilized. There appears to be a high demand for learning, improving practices, and WGs as platforms for knowledge exchange. The various factors which make WGs appealing to their members suggest that, even though it was not the aim, many WGs may continue to function beyond the project.
- Many, although not all, WGs will likely continue to function, to the extent that their members experience or expect various benefits. In the short- to medium-term, WGs represent a resource, a network that other projects can tap into in order to reach women with training.
- To meet its targets, the project had to make a trade-off between quantity and quality. On the financial side, budget limitations meant the project had to reduce the amount of assistance it could provide per woman in order to meet the target of at least 70 percent.

EQ3. To what degree are TAWA's efforts in crop diversification impacting nutritional outcomes both through diet diversity and improved income?

Findings

- Improved nutrition is a long-term outcome to which TAWA intends to contribute. However, most project activities focus on underlying causes, not nutrition itself, and activities focused specifically on nutrition are relatively modest. Out of the 24 trainings provided to the first six cohorts, only one WG cohort received training module on nutrition, and two out of six cohorts received training on "Backyard Vegetable Production and Crop Rotation."
- The diet of TAWA beneficiaries starts from a low baseline, which suggests that virtually any intervention in this area would have *some* effect on nutrition. However, responses from women beneficiaries suggest there is a high probability that WG training is having some positive effect on nutrition, but that the effect may be small.
- For reasons that are unclear, the majority of survey respondents (58 percent) reported eating *fewer* vegetables at home, and only 39 percent reported eating more. However, all those who said they were eating fewer vegetables said that their diet had improved. Various hypotheses may explain these responses: women are deciding to sell their vegetables rather than consuming them; households may be using additional income to purchase and eat more meat, fruits or grains; the concept of a "better diet" is not associated with vegetables but with something else, such as more calories, more meat, more fruit; and responses may be unreliable, with survey respondents failing to understand the question.

- With respect to income, nine out of 10 phone survey respondents reported that the training had improved their income "by a lot." However, they were likely conflating the positive economic effects of the improving Russian economy, manifested in Tajikistan via higher remittances.

Conclusions

- The feedback on the impact of training reveals that there are likely to be some positive nutrition and income effects because of the training interventions.
- Improving nutrition is not the project's focus, being only one of several expected results in the IP's contract agreement with USAID. While TAWA is by no means neglecting nutrition issues, nutrition is not the main focus and is incorporated into only one project indicator. This is understandable, as it is a long-term outcome, related to adoption of new practices, varieties, and technologies, and is outside the control of the project.
- The project takes a multi-sided approach to increasing and improving production of vegetables, fruits, and dairy products. Training on crop diversification is only one part of the "package." The training theme "Backyard Vegetable Production and Crop Rotation" was, in fact, only provided to two of the first six cohorts of WGs.

EQ4. How well is the activity coordinating with other USAID FTF agricultural and health activities, other donors, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders as applicable to leverage resources, increase impact, and prevent duplication of efforts?

Findings

- TAWA coordinates well with stakeholders at the regional level. Resources are leveraged between different USAID programs active in Khatlon. Coordination between TAWA and other FTF projects (there are seven active in the region) focuses on synergies and providing logistical cross-support. TAWA engages with other organizations in a way that meets mutual objectives, through sharing resources and information.
- Both the project and the regional government stakeholders, with whom TAWA cooperates closely, gain from cooperation. On the other hand, coordination between TAWA and national level state institutions is virtually non-existent.

Conclusions

- TAWA's ability to cultivate relationships with the governorate, the districts, and the jamoats, facilitated by having a government liaison on staff, can be partly attributed to the mutual benefits.
- The overall coordination between TAWA and other stakeholders in the region is productive and cooperative. However, the lack of well-functioning state institutions may weaken the long-term sustainability of project outcomes. Reasons include lack of relationships with agricultural sector stakeholders in Khatlon, bureaucratic procedures, and lack of resources at the Ministry and agency level which would make coordination mutually beneficial. The lack of coordination at the national level has nonetheless not affected project activities or results.

1.0 EVALUATION BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, AND QUESTIONS

1.1 EVALUATION BACKGROUND

This is a report on the mid-term performance evaluation of the Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity (TAWA), a $16.5 million project funded by the United States Agency for International Development Central Asia (USAID/CA).

Tajikistan is a post-conflict country with significant food security needs. Almost half of its population lives below the national poverty line,[1] and one-third is affected by food insecurity. In particular, the southern Khatlon oblast has some of the country's worst nutrition outcomes, in addition to its worst maternal and child health statistics. Based on International Food Policy Research Institute's (IFPRI) midline report, which covers 12 districts in Khatlon,[2] these statistics include the nation's highest under-five mortality (61 per 1,000 live births), child stunting (29.3 percent), and wasting (9.2 percent) rates.[3] Khatlon region is a Feed the Future (FTF) Initiative Zone of Influence (ZOI).

1.2 EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purpose of the mid-term performance evaluation of TAWA, an FTF activity, was to compare accomplishments against intended results, including any management, financial, and cost-efficiency findings.

The evaluation is intended to help USAID/CA to: 1) better understand its investment in nutrition-sensitive agriculture in Tajikistan; and 2) strengthen the TAWA activity. Because the TAWA project will complete its activities in late 2019, USAID/CA has indicated that the evaluation's recommendations are also expected to inform other USAID FTF activities in the Khatlon region.

The evaluation will also help determine the degree to which: 1) women beneficiaries are adapting improved farming practices and technologies in the long-term; 2) TAWA's efforts in crop diversification are impacting nutritional outcomes both through diet diversity and improved income; and 3) TAWA's use of informal women's groups (WGs) to deliver agricultural extension services is sustainable and effective.

1.3 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation addresses the following key evaluation questions (EQs):

- EQ1. To what degree are women beneficiaries adapting improved farming practices and technologies in the long term

[1] World Bank Europe and Central Asia Information Brief: Tajikistan Poverty Update 2007-2009 links the poverty line to the cost of buying a diet of 2,250 calories per capita per day, plus an allowance for non-food consumption.
[2] Bokhtar, Jilikul, Jomi, Khuroson, Nosir Khusrav, Qubodiyon, Qumsangir, Rumi, Sarband, Shahrituz, Vakhsh, and Yovon.
[3] IFPRI/USAID. Feed the Future Tajikistan. 2015. Zone of Influence Interim Assessment Report. February-March 2015.

- EQ2. How sustainable and effective is TAWA's use of temporary informal WGs to deliver agricultural extension services?
- EQ3. To what degree are TAWA's efforts in crop diversification impacting nutritional outcomes both through diet diversity and improved income?
- EQ4. How well is the activity coordinating with other USAID FTF agricultural and health activities, other donors, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders as applicable [e.g., universities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)] to leverage resources, increase impact, and prevent duplication of efforts?

It should be noted that the EQs do not cover all TAWA project components.

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 AGRICULTURE AND GENDER IN TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan is a landlocked country with a population of 9.1 million (2018). It is the poorest country in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region, with poverty levels of 31.3 percent in 2017[4] and per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of $812. The economy is largely driven by consumption, with little revenue for the state to redistribute, and limited opportunities for the population, especially for women, to engage in economic activities. The Tajik economy has been growing and poverty decreasing over the past decade. However, it remains poorly diversified and heavily dependent on remittances, which represent close to 31 percent (2017) of the Gross National Product (GNP).

More than a million Tajik citizens work abroad, 90 percent of them in Russia, to support their families back home. However, due to the protracted economic downturn in Russia, which began in 2015 with the imposition of sanctions, the average value of remittances sent by Tajik migrants working there has declined by 21 percent, although it has been rising again in recent years.[5] The emigration rate—especially among men from rural areas—is very high. Accordingly, by default, women have assumed many key decision-making roles in their households. However, they still face many problems and barriers from other family members, especially their in-laws. Despite these circumstances, Oxfam and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations reports indicated that women's participation in decisions related to family education, healthcare, and marriage has increased over the past several years. Reasons for this increase include changing norms introduced by migrants returning from Russia, new laws, and television programs on women's status.

Agriculture accounts for 25 percent of GDP but 45 percent of employment. The sector suffers from low productivity and uneven growth. Therefore, the country is dependent on imports for meeting its food consumption needs. Sixty (60) percent of food products are imported from other countries. The food deficit is related to a number of factors, including:

- Low productivity of main consumption crops;

[4] World Bank website: Http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/overview.
[5] World Bank. (2015). Listening to Tajikistan survey.

- Limited availability of land for agriculture. Less than seven percent of land is under cultivation and 93 percent of land is in mountainous areas;
- As a result of many years of cotton farming (a high water-consumption crop) large areas, especially in the Khatlon region, have developed high salinity levels, suffer from poor drainage, and have become unsuitable for producing vegetables. State authorities have not cleaned the drainage system, so groundwater has increased—resulting in soil salinization. This negatively affected yields.
- Extension services are weak, and infrastructure is deteriorated or missing, limiting effective and efficient production.

Beyond food insecurity, mentioned above, rural households face risks related to the high cost of energy, natural disasters, and climate change. The Government of Tajikistan (GOT) accepts that increasing food security and developing the agricultural sector are critical for strengthening the country's economy, reducing poverty, and developing sustainable livelihoods. As a result, it has funded a number of national programs aimed at reducing poverty and increasing access to resources such as education, healthcare, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

In terms of both land and labor, Khatlon is the largest agricultural region in the country. However, its practices and technologies are outdated. *Dekhkan* smallholder farmers and households dependent on kitchen gardens lack information and knowledge. Production and different market segments are functionally working in silos without benefitting each other. With cotton and grains as the main commodities, the vegetable and horticulture sub-sectors have been relatively neglected. However, they offer significant potential for growth.

Gender inequality is another feature of rural poverty. Female workers constitute a major labor source in the agricultural sector, yet have little or no control over production, assets, services, and decisions. In the context of high male migration (annually, approximately 10 percent of the population is migrating out) female-headed households are common. These households are vulnerable to disruptions and fluctuations of remittances, have limited resources, and receive limited support from government programs, producer groups, and self-help groups. Often, mothers-in-law are an authoritarian presence in the household, promoting the interests and prerogatives of their sons (the husbands) but not the daughters-in-law. Divorce rates are still high, fueled by increasing migration, hidden polygamy and, more recently, economic distress. Post-separation legal rights of women are seldom enforced. Younger women have less of a voice in the family decision-making processes. In recent years, however, incidents of domestic violence have declined, thanks mainly to a campaign by authorities and, sometimes, the advocacy of local religious leaders and the international community.

Gender roles in the economic sphere are driven by tradition and economic distress; women have to work to support their families. Even if women are involved in economic activities, the household budget and business is mainly managed by men. Women are engaged in all types of agriculture activities. Often, it is their responsibility to take agriculture produce to market while men are responsible for preparing farmland for the new cropping season. Due to deeply rooted traditions, women face discrimination in legal access to common property, especially land, which is mostly owned, controlled, and managed by men. Women generally are reluctant to perform

hard agriculture labor and prefer employment in traditional sectors like handicrafts, tailoring, and canteen services.[6]

Women, especially if they are younger, are generally less active and participate less in public meetings such as those held in community-based organizations (CBOs) or Mohalla (neighborhood) Committees. Women play a very minor role when it comes to communicating with officials. In most cases, men alone participate in discussions with the authorities and public officials. Women's representation in the leadership positions in local civil society is also low overall. In the absence of participation in social and public space, women are less able to discuss their problems, connect with women from the neighborhood, or have access to legal counseling and support.

One element of Tajikistan's planned agrarian reform program (2012-2020) is the promotion of government and private extension services in rural areas, with the goal of all farmers having access to services. However, reliable state extension services are virtually absent in the Khatlon region. While over the years the government, with donor support, developed a network of extension services to serve the community level, the scale-up of the program has been limited to those regions where donor projects have been active. The current model of adopting extension services, within the framework of agrarian reform, was designed around three channels aiming to improve uptake of new farming techniques, optimize costs, and build a base for technology-driven approaches targeting smallholder farmers. These channels are: 1) traditional knowledge hub-and-spoke model of extension services at the community level, through which on-farm demonstrations, training, and innovation are carried out, with links between hubs and institutions and academies; 2) private extension services linked to farmers to support deepening of input supply and extension services in the region; and 3) information technology (IT)-based extension services via subscription, on farming techniques, weather alerts, and input supply networks. Nonetheless, the effectiveness and efficiency of these channels remain weak.

2.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2016, to address the above concerns, USAID launched the TAWA activity. TAWA works in 12 out of 24 districts[7] in the Khatlon region, with the aim of improving nutritional and health outcomes by increasing yields and economic returns from household plots. The activity focuses on women of reproductive age with children under the age of two.

TAWA was launched in 2016 and is due to close in 2020 after 4.5 years, including a 1.5-year option period. TAWA's implementing partner (IP) is Chemonics International, Inc. (Chemonics).

As per the project Scope of Work (SOW), key components within TAWA must:

1. Focus on men and women, recognizing that constraints exist for both male and female farmers (including the need to migrate due to lack of jobs with earning potential);
2. Reduce the confidence gap by developing activities that address women's low confidence at all levels of household, farm, community, and government;

[6] Oxfam. (2018). Gender and Rapid Care Analyses in the Khatlon Region

[7] The districts are: Bokhtar, Jilikul, Jomi, Khuroson, Nosir Khusrav, Qubodiyon, Qumsangir, Rumi, Sarband, Shahrituz, Vakhsh, and Yovon.

3. Reduce the resources gap to ensure that both women and men farmers have access to extension services, credit, and agricultural inputs; and
4. Address time-saving measures for improved technologies.

The project's main activities cover the following:

- Agriculture Extension Services
- Vegetable Production
- Orchard Production
- Dairy Production
- Irrigation Water Management
- Cross-Component
- Communications
- Gender

Three development hypotheses express the project's Theory of Change (TOC). These hypotheses propose that:

- Increasing and improving the production of vegetables, fruits, and dairy products by smallholder farmers while simultaneously increasing their access to irrigation water and educating them on improved nutrition and sanitation behaviors will increase their incomes and improve the nutrition of women of reproductive age and children under two.
- Provision of public and private agricultural extension services will lead to increased agricultural production by smallholder farmers and will broaden the base of farmers receiving extension services.
- Targeting women with agricultural knowledge and technology will have equal or greater impact on household production and nutrition than targeting men with the same interventions.

The project engages approximately 70 staff in Khatlon, including 17 agronomists who provide training to men and women, and 12 extension home economists (EHEs), all of whom are women. Training is provided at the jamoat level. According to Chemonics, training sessions are organized at TAWA-supported demonstration plots, conducted during open field days, or administered via voucher programs. The TAWA project's agronomists inform the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) extension agents and Water User Association (WUA) management teams in advance of these upcoming events. The MOA's extension agents and WUAs' management teams, in turn, inform farmers and WUA members of the upcoming events, including the locations, times, and themes of the events.

3.0 EVALUATION METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

3.1 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Following the guidance given by the evaluation questions, the evaluation team (ET) did not focus on overall project performance, but instead on a narrower set of issues concerning WGs, diet,

income, and coordination. The ET considered issues of management, finance, and cost-efficiency within this narrower context.

Research design: To answer the EQs, the evaluation used a mixed-methods design consisting of both qualitative and quantitative data collection. To obtain information not available in reports, understand the program, and gather perspectives from knowledgeable people both within and outside of TAWA, the ET gathered qualitative data from key informants and through focus groups. To summarize the research design involved collecting data in the field through three methods: semi-structured interviews with key informants, focus group discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries who participated in WGs, and a telephone survey of beneficiaries in WGs. Qualitative data collection enabled the ET to cover many different issues from different perspectives, while probing responses with follow-up questions. Quantitative data collection provided a representative overview of beneficiary experiences and perceptions.

The data collection methods used are described below:

A **desk review** based on materials related to TAWA and other materials provided by USAID/CA and the IP to inform the data collection instruments and the analysis. (See Annex 4 for list of documents reviewed.)

Qualitative data collected through 28 semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs), three group interviews, and FGDs. These allowed the ET to collect information from a wide range of perspectives (public sector, program implementation, non-project subject matter experts, etc.). A list of the individuals and institutions the ET met with is in Annex 3. Key informants represented the following stakeholders: TAWA project, USAID, other USAID FTF projects, other donors, national and local state institutions, and private sector companies. The ET held two group interviews—one with the 12 EHEs who train WGs, and the other with an orchard extension advisor hired by the project, along with several orchard owners who benefited from the project.

The ET held 15 FGDs with members of WGs and relatives. Participants were women with kitchen gardens and smallholder farmers who received training from the project. Of the 15 FGDs, 10 were with WG members and five with men from households where women were WG members. The FGDs addressed EQ1, EQ2, and EQ3.

Quantitative data collected through the following methods:

- ***Secondary data review.*** The ET reviewed secondary project performance data as measured by the project's Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP) and Feed the Future Monitoring System (FTFMS) indicators.
- ***Telephone survey.*** The ET also conducted a small telephone phone survey of 120 randomly selected WG members. The survey followed a script with mostly closed-ended questions. The survey covered questions about: the activity training received; participation in and functioning of the WGs; whether and how WG members have diversified their crops; and their on-farm production results, and how this is changing their dietary habits, income levels, and control over their income. The survey used the project database of WG members, which was provided to the ET by the IP. The Evaluation Design Matrix in Annex 2 presents illustrative KII, FGD, and survey questions, data sources, data collection methods, and data analysis methods for each EQ.

Sampling Methodology

KIIs: The ET obtained a list of stakeholders belonging to groups listed above. From this list of contacts, the ET selected key informants. The selection was based on the relevance of their activities or the position to the EQs. Additional key informants from outside the list provided by the IP were included, based on recommendations of other key informants.

FGDs: The ET used purposeful sampling to select five out of the 12 districts where TAWA has activities to conduct the FGDs (see below). The basis for selection was geographic diversity, south and north, and proximity to the regional capital of Bokhtar. The selection of these regions was based on purposeful criterion sampling to allow comparisons between areas north and south and near and far to the regional center.[8] The ET conducted FGDs in five districts: Bokhtar, Yovon, Sarband, Qubodiyon, and Qumsangir.

Group Interviews: The ET interviewed some key informants in a group format because it was more convenient and effective. Thus, the team met with approximately 30 TAWA staff at the TAWA regional office in Bokhtar, during which project specialists presented the project activities they were responsible for, and the ET could ask questions. A second group meeting was held with all 12 EHEs. The ET held a third group meeting with a project extension agent and four beneficiaries.

For a full description of the evaluation methodology, please see Annex 5.

3.2 EVALUATION LIMITATIONS

The ET faced several limitations in conduction the evaluation. They included:

1. **Limited time for analysis:** Because of the tight timeline for delivering the draft report (approximately three weeks after data collection was completed), in-depth data analysis was not feasible.
    - Mitigation: The ET conducted descriptive data analysis and focused on the most pertinent findings.
2. **Difficulty assessing sustainability:** The evaluation was implemented while the interventions continued and occurred only two years after the WGs were formed. This made it difficult for the ET to gauge WG sustainability.
    - Mitigation: The ET used a probabilistic approach for analysis, focusing on known factors which are most likely to contribute to WG sustainability in the future.
3. **No measurement of nutrition or income changes:** Measuring changes in nutrition or income was not feasible given the lack of before and after data, and methods for accurately measuring these two indicators.
    - Mitigation: The ET relied on self-reporting by FGD and phone survey participants.

[8] Purposeful, criterion sampling was considered more likely to yield a representative sample of districts than random sampling, given the small number of districts.

4. **Recall bias:** Since a number of questions raised during the interviews dealt with issues that took place one or two years ago, some training participants could not always remember what they had learned.
    - Mitigation: The ET triangulated data from multiple informants and different informant types (survey data, FGD responses, project data on adaptation, and observations) to make a judgment.
5. **Response bias:** Reliability of responses was an issue. Based on several discrepancies in the telephone survey, there may have been a tendency among respondents to overreport socially desirable responses (and underreport socially undesirable answers). Respondents may have adjusted their responses to parallel what they perceived as the social norm or to reflect what they thought the interviewer wanted to hear. However, it is also possible that survey respondents revealed their true opinions to the data collectors.
    - Mitigation: The ET triangulated telephone survey and focus group data data with other data sources, such as key informant interviews and secondary data.
6. **Attribution:** Because of the nature of the evaluation design, timeframe, and data availability, the ET had to be careful in attributing changes to the project. The evaluation time and budget did not permit the use of a control group to allow for comparison purposes.
    - Mitigation: The ET was careful to consider other explanations for changes.

4.0 FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 EQ1: TO WHAT DEGREE ARE WOMEN BENEFICIARIES ADAPTING IMPROVED FARMING PRACTICES AND TECHNOLOGIES IN THE LONG TERM?

The ET interpreted this question both in terms of adapting and adopting practices and technologies. This is because through its EHEs, as well as open field days, TAWA trained women both in areas completely new to most of them (e.g. livestock hygiene, composting, growing broccoli) and in improving practices with which they were familiar (e.g. canning, new varieties of familiar crops such as tomatoes and cucumbers). According to the Merriam Webster dictionary "adapt" is defined as "to make fit (as for a new use) often by modification," and adopt as "to take up and practice or use."[9] Although some women might end up adapting an existing practice, they would do so by adopting a technique learned from TAWA's extension officers. For these reasons, the ET did not restrict the evaluation to the question of "adapting" and considered "adopting" as well. The text distinguishes carefully in use of the two terms.

[9] Merriam-Webster online Dictionary.

It is notable that TAWA project documents refer to the concept of adoption when referring to training women, rather than adaptation. The TAWA Contract Award does not use the term "adapt" when referring to extension services; it refers to "early adopters." [10] TAWA's annual reports also only use the term "adopt" and its derivatives, and not adapt.[11] An internal TAWA study assessed adoption rates.

As noted under Limitations, the ET cannot directly answer the question of adaptation in the long term, because the project is ongoing and the long term is still years away. Instead, the ET considered key factors that could promote or impede the adoption and/or adaptation in the long term.

The section first introduces TAWA's approach to introducing improved farming practices and technologies. It then reviews the FGD and survey findings on self-reported application of what they learned (i.e. adoption or adaptation) by respondents, and finally the possible factors contributing to these results.

4.1.1 Findings

Project approach

The focus of TAWA agriculture extension service training is to introduce new practices and improve existing practices. TAWA WG training covers new and familiar areas. The practices in which extension agents trained women covered things such as canning, drying apricots, planting seeds/seedlings, livestock hygiene, and using biowaste for composting. In the case of introducing improved practices, this included training on better fruit canning techniques, using jar sterilization, better sealing the jars, and reducing the ratio of water to fruit. For apricot drying, something many women already practiced, the project taught them how to do so using sulphuring techniques, resulting in yellow instead of darkened dried fruit, which could be sold for a higher price on the market. Many of the new varieties used by beneficiaries are new varieties of vegetables they have already been using, e.g., tomatoes, cucumbers, potatoes, rather than completely new vegetables.

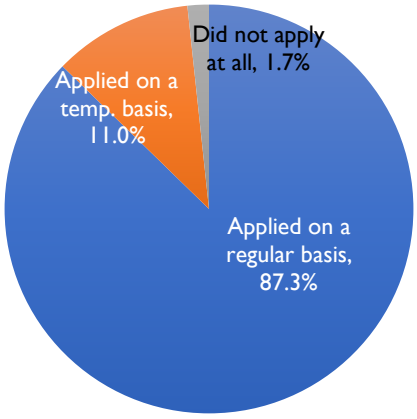
Beneficiary responses

Most women beneficiaries reported that they have adopted the new practices they learned through the project. The vast majority of survey respondents (87 percent) reported they had put into practice what they learned on a regular basis and most of the rest reported using new practices on a temporary basis (11 percent) (see Figure 1). The FGD findings largely corroborate this, with most participants reporting using the new techniques they learned. They generally did not report "adapting" what they learned, i.e., adjusting the new practice in response to their conditions, although this may well happen in the future. This finding is also in line with (although even more positive than) the findings from TAWA's own internal survey and analysis

[10] The TAWA Contract Award does not use the term "adapt" when referring to extension services; but it refers to "early adopters" (p. 12)
[11] TAWA Quarterly Report January 2018 – March 2018.

of selected practices, conducted from November 2017 to January 2018, which found adoption rates above 70 percent for "Backyard Vegetable Production," "Backyard Compost Production," and "Care of Dairy Cattle and Home-Based Processing of Dairy Products." Virtually all (99 percent) of respondents had adopted at least one practice.[12]

Figure 1: WG Members Who Applied What They Learned in Practice



Source: Telephone Survey, 2018, N = 120

Several factors contribute to the adoption of new practices in the short term. One factor is that WG members tend to be women who are more active than the average or at least more interested. Project design and implementation promote diffusion of techniques by targeting active women. While the WG leader recommends candidates, the project (through the EHEs) interviews them. If candidates lack motivation or interest, they are not accepted. Second, the training provided to WGs has a practical focus and is seasonally appropriate—it provides women with a skill they can immediately use at home. Third, the WG format—both design and implementation—works well. WGs are popular (see Section 4.2) and accessible because they are held in the village, and women feel comfortable participating because they are among their peers. Fourth, many women experience benefits, perhaps the most important motivator to adopt a new practice.

The practical element of the training is a key factor which promotes adoption of new practices and technologies. As noted, the training is tailored to women's needs and the resources available to them in their homes and land plots. Several women FGD participants described how the training has helped them:

> *"At the trainings, we were taught how to fight harmful insects and parasites in agriculture. We use all the knowledge we received [from the training] in everyday life: canning vegetables, growing vegetables."* – Female FGD participant, Bokhtar District, Navruz Village

> *"Now I prepare the solution [to fight pests] and use it in my personal plot."* – Female FGD participant, Yovon District, Lower Tagobojdi 2 Village

WG members perceive the new practices to be beneficial. The great majority (85 percent) of telephone survey respondents reported that practicing the new skills has helped them

[12] TAWA Quarterly Report January 2018 – March 2018.

improve productivity and diversify their food supply (e.g., canning and drying products). The same respondents reported having greater food security during winter than before because they can store canned and dried apricots.

To promote adoption, the project follows a clear logic in promoting new crops, practices, and technologies. The evaluation found that the TAWA IP builds on the idea that seeing something with their own eyes convinces people to try something new. The philosophy underlying the project's approach is that in the first year, inputs (seeds, seedlings, greenhouse) are provided (to some) beneficiaries free of charge. This serves to demonstrate the benefits of the new variety or practice. During the second year, interested people can receive inputs with the so-called voucher program (a 50 percent subsidy), which reduces the risk of trying out an unfamiliar variety. Then in year three, if all goes well, they recognize that the income benefits are significant enough that they invest in the inputs on their own, for the time being. Related to this, a TAWA project officer noted that if smallholder farmers are going to climb up the income ladder, it is important that they change their mindset from just keeping costs down to investing in better quality inputs to get higher returns.

In some areas, results were mixed, as not all women adopted the new practices they had learned. FGD findings show that sometimes women faced challenges and limitations with growing or selling new crop varieties. D factors played a role, from the lack of a market for selling to the small size of kitchen plots or problems with plant diseases and pests, which are not unusual occurrences

> *"In the village it is not profitable to raise cauliflower. Only tomatoes and cucumbers."* – Male FGD participant, Kabidian District, Aini Village

The link to economic benefits is a key factor in adoption of new practices. There is reportedly a ready market for new types of produce—especially cabbage varieties. Some farmers in the program are selling the improved varieties to distributors and grocery stores. A market exists for newly introduced varieties, which suggests that project effects will last. The TAWA project coordinated with the private sector and government departments at the oblast level to develop and deliver a range of services encouraging women farmers to participate in markets. This included developing a mobile application (AIMS) by Neksigol, which offers production advice and market information on a variety of crops establishing linkages between smallholder farmers and input suppliers, and encouraging private sector buyers to engage in the provision of extension services.

Almost all women said that they require permission from their husbands to do anything outside the house, including going to the market, visiting family, and even going to the hospital. Young women, in particular, face significant barriers to participating in new economic opportunities. They lack personal agency and decision-making power, and carry heavy responsibilities for unpaid work in the home. While the WG members have permission to leave the house, many other women do not. WG members are not necessarily representative of rural Khatlon women.

There is strong evidence of positive impact on the share of harvest sold, with 49.2 percent of TAWA-supported WG households selling some of their harvest in the last year. However, because of their modest production and poor access to markets, many women are not integrated into the value chain.

4.1.2 Conclusions

In the strictest sense of the word, adaptation of new practices taught to WG members was not found, and neither was it intended. However, if adaptation of existing practices by adopting what was learned from the training is considered, then adaptation of certain practices has taken place. As the findings indicate, adaptation was not a project goal. Women respondents reported that they were applying the new practices and technologies they had learned (i.e. adopting) but did not indicate that they were adjusting, i.e. adapting them. This does not mean that adaptation will not occur over time. Several factors that motivate women to learn and adopt suggest the new practices will continue to be used—at least in the medium term.

It is clear that the training has gained traction with the target audience of rural women. There is a high appreciation among WG members for the opportunity to learn practical skills which directly affect their household's well-being. The self-reported enthusiastic uptake of training, combined with post-training follow-up actions (seeking advice from trainers, discussing among themselves what they learned, and, as shown in Figure 2, sharing new knowledge with others), strongly indicates that the training was perceived as useful and beneficial. This, in turn, suggests that the effects of the training will last. Women reported an eagerness to learn about and use the new techniques like drying fruits, composting, canning, and livestock hygiene. By putting these skills into practice, their confidence will increase and they will continue to use the new knowledge after the project ends

There appears to be a high demand for learning, improving practices, and WGs as platforms for knowledge exchange. WGs often present the only real opportunity for women in rural areas to learn and discuss new things. They serve as a channel for reaching out to experts. Women recognize the benefits, including additional income opportunities, quality of produce, and increased production.

In terms of impacts on livelihoods, including diets, the changes may be marginal rather than transformative, **at least for now.** This is because the training themes, while highly useful, are fairly basic. The project spends considerable time establishing groups and less time on building their capacity. While women are indeed adopting the new practices they learn, and thus the impact is likely to be sustainable, the size of the impact will be small, and probably not a "game changer."

4.1.3 Recommendations

- **Focus on connecting women farmers to the value chain.** The project should identify systematic ways for connecting WGs with stakeholders in the value chain in order to further buttress their sustainability. For those WGs which are ready and interested, the project should take the next step and implement more WG capacity building activities, such as group activities, group purchasing of inputs, and group selling of products as well as negotiation skills and marketing. If the project aims to have a significant impact on women becoming more entrepreneurial, more professional training and mentoring support are needed.
- **Increase training and professional support for WG members.** If the project seeks to have a significant impact on women becoming more entrepreneurial, then more professional training and mentoring support will need to be provided.

- **The project should consider an integrated model which involves government entities, the private sector, and farmers to generate greater benefits from cooperation.** A key issue is how to support scaling up the existing extension government system, which is weak at the moment and does not have a strong track record in providing advice, let alone introducing innovations; or the private sector, which is (or should be) interested in expanding business. At present, the government extension services are a new structure in the MOA, implemented based on the current agrarian reform program. In order to strengthen these services, the USAID project should work in close cooperation with government extension departments and other international NGOs who promote such structures. Currently, government extension services are weak at the jamoat level, and reliable extension services for value-chain promotion are almost absent in Khatlon. In the future, projects should build extension services around different channels to improve uptake of new farming techniques, optimize cost, and build a base for technology-driven approaches.
    - *Traditional hub-and-spoke model of extension:* A training center could be in the form of a hub where on-farm demonstrations, training, and innovation are carried out. Links would be established with relevant agriculture departments at educational institutes, which would participate in demonstrations. The training center would use greenhouses and other methods to conduct training sessions exposing farmers to new techniques and seed varieties for sale and demonstration. A network of para-agronomists—as the "spokes" to the training and demonstration center—could be established to decentralize extension services in remote areas and link to the center for input supplies, training, and new technology trials.
    - *IT-based extension services where farmers can subscribe to advisory services on farming techniques, weather alerts, and input supply networks:* Given the uptick in smart-phone usage in rural areas, this could be a relatively low-cost option.

4.2 EQ2: HOW SUSTAINABLE AND EFFECTIVE IS TAWA'S USE OF TEMPORARY INFORMAL WGS TO DELIVER AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICES?

EQ2 is a multi-part and complex question, and for this reason it is worth clarifying what it does and does not cover, and how it was interpreted. The ET understands EQ2 as referring to the project's ability to effectively and sustainably use WGs for delivering extension services. The ET also notes that the question does not refer to how sustainable the effects of extension services are, i.e. whether WG members will continue to benefit from (be affected by) what they learned long-term. Although WGs were not designed to be sustainable (which is acknowledged in how the question is framed: "temporary and informal"), the ET assessed their potential *sustainability* as a mechanism for providing extension services. Furthermore, actual sustainability can realistically only be assessed later, in the years after the project closes.

To address the question, the section begins with findings providing context on how WGs are formed, how their members are selected, and how they function. The section then considers factors which may influence the WGs' post-project sustainability.

4.2.1 Findings

Formation of Women's Groups

WGs are a TAWA initiative, i.e. a project intervention, since no viable existing alternatives for delivering extension services to women were found. Under the project, training on various extension service themes is delivered to women via organized WGs. In order for women to feel comfortable, the selected EHEs, mentioned above, are all women. USAID's experience has shown that women were often reluctant to actively participate in project-supported activities when men were present.

By using female EHEs, the project has been able to meet its gender target. EHEs provide the training to WGs over a period of three months, one theme per month. EHEs are generalists and come from different backgrounds. They have experience in international development, although not necessarily a degree in an agriculture-related field education. They are trained, through training of trainers sessions, by national and international specialists (agronomists, professors from the agricultural academy, etc.) and then pass what they learn in training on to women beneficiaries. If the EHEs have trouble answering a question, they can call a specialist to get an answer.

WGs' participants are selected based on criteria designed to reach the women who can benefit the most from the training. WG membership criteria include: women of reproductive age with children under the age of 24 months, who own livestock, have access to a backyard land plot that can be used to produce agricultural crops, and have not been direct beneficiaries of other donor-funded programs. However, these criteria are guidelines, rather than strict rules. Once a woman leader has been identified by the EHE for a WG in a particular village, in consultation with jamoat and community leaders, it is up to her to select 20 to 25 women. She has discretion on how to apply the criteria, but then the pre-selected women are again screened by the EHEs.

According to the latest available data, the project has trained seven cohorts of WGs in the 12 districts. Each cohort is comprised of approximately 182 WGs, with about 20-25 members each. In the first seven cohorts, a total of 29,331 women were trained. Training of three more cohorts over the remaining life of the project is planned.

Table 1: Training of Women's Groups, by Cohort (from 2016 – 2018)

Cohort	Women Trained
Cohort 1	4,937
Cohort 2	4,543
Cohort 3	4,419
Cohort 4	3,705
Cohort 5	4,559
Cohort 6	3,640
Cohort 7	3,751
TOTAL	**29,331**

Source: TAWA monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data

TAWA selected and targeted WGs by taking into account resource constraints and logistics. During planning, TAWA chose villages based on their distance from one another. For effective cost management, villages near each other were selected so that several EHEs could conduct trainings at the same time, and a single vehicle could drop them off and bring them back. The number of EHEs deployed by TAWA (12) reflected the project's estimate of how many WGs could realistically be trained by one EHE, taking into account the target indicator (reaching 33,000 "women trained") over the project lifetime. TAWA organized and trained the first two cohorts of WGs over the course of six months. Each of the next four cohorts (Cohorts 3-6) were organized and trained over the course of four months. After graduating cohorts of WGs, TAWA remains in contact with their leaders and invites leaders and WG members to TAWA-supported trainings, demonstrations, and open field days. TAWA also informs them of opportunities to participate in, and benefit from, TAWA-supported voucher programs. Graduated WG members regularly contact TAWA's EHEs to seek follow-up extension services on the themes conducted during previous trainings. EHEs are well-educated and have significant experience both with donor projects and in the field. They are active, understand the grassroots-level work, and have built trust with WG members.

To meet its target of women as a share of all beneficiaries, the project decided to reduce the number of training sessions per WG from five to three. TAWA has beneficiary performance targets that are absolute and performance targets that are relative, because they are expressed as a percentage. This led to a mathematical conundrum, the solution of which was to reduce the number of trainings provided to women. On the one hand, 33,000 beneficiary farmers had to be reached (an absolute performance target). On the other hand, 70 percent of them had to be women (a relative performance target). This means, conversely, that not more than 30 percent could be men. While the open field day training that TAWA provided is, by definition, open to all, participants tend to be largely men (by a ratio of three to one)[13]. This is not unexpected, as women do not have as much freedom to leave the village to attend trainings. However, it had implications for the project's gender targets. If more than 30 percent of beneficiaries attending trainings are men, they cannot simply be refused training because the quota (or 70 percent women) has been reached. The only way to hit the target of 70 percent was to train more women. And this is what the project ended up doing; it increased the number of women beneficiaries by recruiting more WGs. However, it did not increase the number of EHEs (or drivers). Instead, the decision was made to reduce how much training each WG received. The trade-off meant reaching more women with extension services (a positive outcome) but cutting down on the length of time EHEs could work with each WG (a somewhat negative outcome). This was necessary in order to close the project on time. The end result was that TAWA shortened the training per WG from five to three months. The project will thus meet its 70 percent target of women beneficiaries at the expense of more extensive training. Over the life of the project, more WGs will be trained and more women will be reached. However, as a result, each woman beneficiary will receive training on fewer themes.

Project implementation requires significant efforts to establish new WGs, yet the training provided is quite limited. One month goes into selecting each cohort of women.

[13] Currently, 22,324 people have been trained at open field days, of this number only 5,726 were women (a figure based on the most current monitoring data)

This is a significant investment in time and logistics which could be more efficient, especially given that there are 34 training themes in TAWA's training portfolio. However, a great majority of WGs are not exposed to many of the themes because they only receive three sessions each. The women FGD participants themselves noted that the duration of the training and project support are limited—they would like to receive more. One male family member of a woman in a WG in Kabadian District, Sardini Aini Village argued that *"If more trainings are conducted, then I think people will have more knowledge and skills. We will be able to be able to contribute more to developing the agriculture sector. And when agriculture develops, the products will become cheaper and more accessible to the people."*

As a result of participating in WGs, women have been able to connect with agro-dealers and have access to EHEs. Women farmers from different FGDs reported that they have gained a better understanding of where to access inputs like seeds and fertilizers. They said they have benefitted from new agro-dealer shops and will continue visiting them in the future, noting that enhanced access to quality inputs was one of the main benefits of being involved in the program. This does not apply to everyone, however. Eight FGD participants mentioned that there are no agriculture specialists or farm service centers in areas where they live, where they could buy inputs or obtain advice.

WGs were not designed to be a sustainable mechanism for improving the economic and social status of women. WGs, as noted above, were not intended to be sustainable. They were established as a temporary mechanism to deliver knowledge and skills that would lead to improved nutrition, agricultural practices, and access to the market, as the project realized that few women would, of their own accord, come to the project's open field day training sessions. Their establishment created a method for reaching many women with basic training, as well as meeting project requirements.

TAWA showed flexibility by including women from different age groups. One of the concerns in Tajikistan is not just the degree to which women and girls have access to trainings, but the prevailing beliefs of family members that young women should stay at home and do all the housework instead of improving their knowledge. When they were younger, older women faced the same conditions and barriers, and there is a widespread attitude that now that they are in senior positions in the household, they are justified in treating young women (especially daughters-in-law) this way. During FGDs, women mentioned that mothers-in-law worried that if a wife becomes more educated than her husband, she will no longer respect her family members or husband. The result is that it deprives women and girls of opportunities and confidence. Cognizant of this, the project included older women in its outreach activities as well, with the aim of gaining their support and encouraging them to allow younger women to participate. For example, the average age of project participants from the 2016/2017 cohort was 34.3, with a range from as young as 16 to as old as 73 in Balhki District.

<u>Factors contributing to sustainability</u>

Women participating in WGs are actively involved in the training process and reported that meeting within the framework of a group was very effective. This is in contrast to having to travel from their village to attend open field days, which would not have been possible for many. Eighty (80) percent of survey respondents reported that their group met, usually weekly, sometimes monthly, without the presence of the EHE. Virtually all (99 percent) of surveyed WG members reported that they enjoyed being a part of the group. They noted that

it gives them opportunities to share news and know-how. It is a place where they can seek out support from other women to solve problems, starting from production and including even family problems. Most surveyed women (90 percent) reported that they found the trainings effective and they have become more confident in adopting new practices in improved production and processing. Women (86 percent) share new information among other community members and support them, when needed.

> *"Participation in seminars gives a lot of useful recommendations and knowledge. We fully support the idea of women's groups."* – Male FGD participants, Bokhtar District, Kizilbayrak Village.

The training provided was relevant to the season, giving women the chance to practice their new skills immediately. Training courses were elaborated based on WG and seasonal needs. Therefore, the subject of trainings varied depending on the time of establishing WGs. Trainings are short-term (2-3 hours each training) and provide WG members with basic knowledge. During winter time, women received trainings on composting and seedling production, while in the summer and spring topics included drying apricots, canning products, and producing new crops like cauliflowers, broccoli, etc. These skills help women to improve income and secure additional provisions during the off-season. Although the training is fairly basic and short-term, it is relevant to the project goals and indirectly contributes to improvements.

Training on canning and drying apricots has provided clear benefits and has been highly popular. Feedback from FGDs and the survey responses indicate that trainings on drying apricots and canning were considered the most important, with 45.8 percent citing canning and 34.3 percent citing apricot drying as the most important things they had learned. WG members learned how to sterilize the jars and lids as well as seal the jars so they would not spoil. Prior to the training, many women did not know how to properly dry apricots. They either let them spoil on the ground or, if they dried them, they had a black color *"and lost their marketability"* as per the husband of a WG member (FGD participant from Yovon District, Navkorom Village). The project trained women how to dry apricots correctly so they kept their orange color. This had a direct and positive effect on income and provisions, while reducing waste.

> *"When they used to dry apricots, they got very black. They would sell for just 1 somoni [on the market]. But after the training, they nice yellow color, and now they can get 10-12 somoni."* – EHE in group meeting

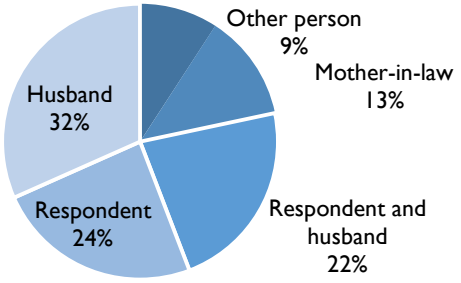
> *"We used to have apricots with worms in them, and they were left to turn brown in the sun. Then we learned [from TAWA training] about the technique for storing apricots, it was necessary to store them in five-liter jugts, and now there are no wormholes!"* – Female FGD participant, Sarband District, Okgaza Village

Through WGs, women have obtained access to benefits beyond the practical aspects related to nutrition and agriculture. Surveyed women were asked about whether they feel able to make or influence economic decisions in the household, with 96 percent of survey participants stating that it has improved their confidence as a woman in making decisions. The decisions involve practices such as crop production and how to spend the income from farming, as well as about other decision areas such as who does household work and their own mobility. In FGDs, women noted that it gave them the opportunity to share knowledge, share news and events, and seek advice about solving family problems from older women in the group. For example, people mentioned being able to spend more money on their children—on clothing,

school fees, or even being able to pay for them to attend university—as well as material benefits such as improved food availability and diversity. One WG member said, *"we have a lot of tomatoes, so we share with neighbors and they in turn give us something we need, like potatoes."* It is thus possible to talk about positive secondary or spillover effects, beyond the agriculture extension activities the project focuses on.

Most women survey participants agreed that they have more influence over economic decisions when they contribute income to the household. Another potential factor contributing to the popularity of WGs and thus their effectiveness as delivery mechanisms, concerns women's sense of empowerment. (Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment are among USAID's agency-wide priorities that TAWA was required to incorporate.) The WG survey presents a mixed picture regarding decision-making. In 46 percent of cases, women report that either they (24 percent of the time) or they and their husband jointly (22 percent of the time) make the decisions on how money is spent. The rest of the time it is either the husband, mother-in-law, or another person.

Figure 2: Who Makes Decisions in Your Household Regarding How Money Is Spent?

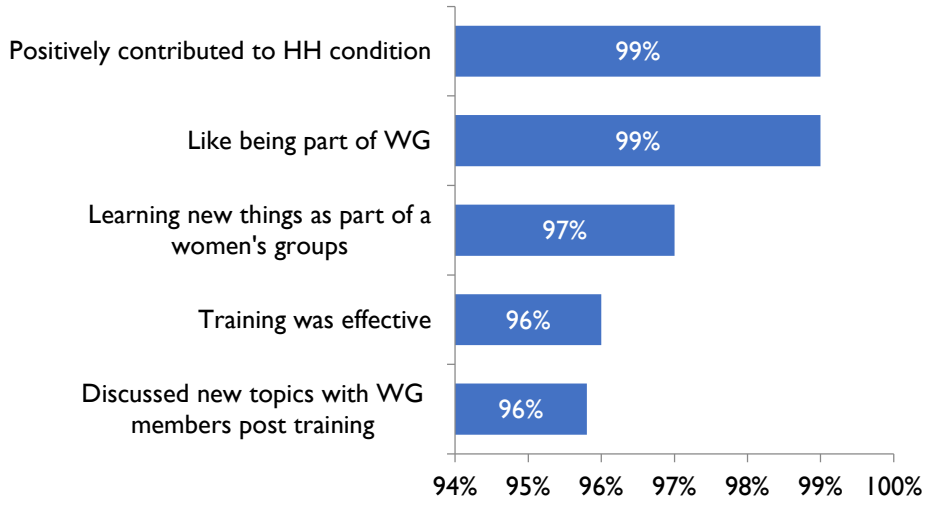


Source: Telephone Survey, 2018, N = 120

According to some WG members, they are able to spend the money they now earn, and this was cited as a main benefit of participating in the FTF program. One female FGD participant in Bokhtar District, Kizilbairak village, explained what the situation was like before*: "Five years ago almost all women had no money [in] their hands. We strongly depended on men, we could ask only men for money. But now they do not have to turn to their husbands for every purchase.*" Another woman from Yovon district, Navkaram village said*, "two years ago I had to ask for everything. I have five children at school and spend money for them and now I do not need to ask about it. Everything I need I buy from my earnings.*"

WG members' attitudes are positive about the trainings and how they have affected their households and lives. The survey responses indicate that the WG trainings are perceived as highly positive on many levels. Virtually all surveyed women reported that they enjoy being a part of the group, that the trainings contributed positively to household conditions, and that they learned new things (see Figure 3). Over 96 percent described the trainings as effective and reported that they discussed the training topics with fellow WG members afterwards.

Figure 3: Women's Perceptions Regarding WGs



Source: Telephone Survey, 2018, N = 120

Most women reported sharing what they learn outside the WG. The effectiveness of WGs was also considered beyond the impact on WG members, i.e. the direct beneficiaries. Almost all women survey respondents reported that they have shared new skills with other community members, according to 95.8 percent of women surveyed (Figure 4). This is multiplier effect indicator. *"Everything that they learned at the seminars, they share it with their neighbors and relatives*" according to a male FGD participant, Bokhtar District, Mekhnatobod Village.

Likewise, FGD participants mentioned that women who were not part of WGs could join the trainings. During interviews, EHEs mentioned that they allowed non-WG members to participate and reported that these women also adopted new tools and skills. Sometimes, if a woman herself could not join the meeting, her husband came instead, and passed on what he learned to her, so she did not miss out.

Figure 4: What WG Members Did After They Received Training

Source: Telephone Survey, 2018, N = 120

4.2.2 Conclusions

WGs have proven to be a highly effective mode for delivering extension services to women: most of the TAWA women beneficiaries would not have been reached by the project otherwise. As the findings indicate, at the time of data collection, only 5,726 women were reached through open field days, while through the WGs almost 30,000 women were reached. Much of this can be attributed to the project's ability to organize WGs and deliver extension services to them in way that made them attractive for women to participate. It also highlights the importance of WGs for achieving the project's gender goals.

WGs are playing a central role in helping women farmers across a range of areas. TAWA has enabled women farmers to improve their agriculture productivity, knowledge, and income by building a network of extension services, conducting trainings and, in some cases, linking women to local markets. Since women are much less likely than men to attend open field days, especially outside their village, WGs appear to be an effective vehicle for delivering extension services to women who otherwise would not have access to them. The effectiveness of the WG approach speaks highly of the project's targeting approach, practical focus, design, and implementation. The lack of a well-functioning agricultural extension service means that for rural women who grow their own crops in kitchen gardens or on Presidential land, there are almost no realistic alternatives to getting information.

The various factors which make WGs appealing to their members suggest that, even though it was not the aim, many WGs may outlast the project. Despite not intending to create permanent groups and the fairly limited training session each WG receives, the numerous benefits women associated with the groups may be enough to overcome the lack of ongoing support when the project closes. However, even WGs that continue meeting after the project ends will only be able to serve as mechanisms for extension services if the latter are provided to them. At present, state institutions are extremely constrained in terms of extension service delivery. The private sector can contribute but it cannot fill the gap. The result is that a potential mechanism for extension service will exist (the WGs) but will not be put to use without a TAWA or similar project.

Although WGs are an effective vehicle for delivering extension services to women, this does not mean they have been used as effectively as possible. TAWA's emphasis on the number of women trained mitigates transformative changes through more in-depth support. The project spent a lot of time and effort to bring women together but provided relatively limited capacity building support and training. The effects of the training appear to apply to a narrow set of areas.

Nonetheless, even with these constraints, the WGs are in place and women enjoy being part of the groups. TAWA did not intend to sustain the WGs but rather to use the groups as a platform to disseminate best practices among women as much as possible. However, most of WGs will likely persist if members experience or expect benefits like social outlets, learning opportunities, the feeling of receiving attention that family and society may not give them, additional income/savings opportunities, and discussion fora.

To meet its targets, the project had to make a trade-off between quantity and quality. On the financial side, budget limitations meant the project had to reduce the amount of assistance it could provide per woman in order to meet the target of at least 70 percent of

beneficiaries trained. Reducing the duration of the training period (from five to three months) may adversely affect the sustainability of the WGs (bearing in mind that WGs' sustainability was not a planned project objective).

4.2.3 Recommendations

Treat women smallholder farmers as economic agents. To promote WGs as a sustainable mechanism for reaching women, the FTF projects should integrate a market-oriented/value chain approach based on participatory and capacity building methodologies. This would mean viewing trained WG members as community economic agents—critical for reducing poverty, absorbing labor, improving and diversifying nutrition, and scaling up the new tools and technologies. This could be done by strengthening WGs, especially those that are proactive and have higher capacities. They could be supported with a whole package of training themes (at least 10) on new crops and practices. At a later stage, the project could pilot a mechanism of market-based approaches by developing a fee-based service package. Women could play the role of market agent for processors and buyers, buyers would pay them a fee for consolidating products and necessary volume. Services providers could distribute their inputs through the WGs and pay services fee. There are several different mechanisms to integrate women into the market, and the project should pilot several models and scale-up the best ones.

Help build groups into sustainable organizations by formalizing roles. Recognizing that not all WGs will continue to function, it is nonetheless possible to strengthen those that have potential. To help them manage on their own, roles within groups, beyond the group leader, could be formulated. At present, there are no defined rules and responsibilities within the groups. For more effective management of groups, and links with associations, the project should encourage groups to take on a more institutional structure (while avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy or formalization). This would help make WGs more sustainable by being less dependent on one person (the leader). In the future, WGs could be run as informal business associations along the model of producer groups and could mirror their national-level structures. WGs can also be a useful organizational mechanism for mobilizing women farmers' collective self-help actions aimed at improving their own and communities' economic and social conditions.

Promote apex-level institutions for women. The project should consider promoting apex-level institutions like associations of WGs or cooperatives. This would be an avenue for strengthening the influence of women smallholders in the sector and promoting their empowerment in decision-making. WGs are not commercial or business-oriented producer groups. If USAID is interested in empowering women beyond learning practical skills, a broader, more sustainable structure should be introduced. WGs are informal, community-level groups. To give them greater stability and influence, WGs can form associations, through "clustering" at the regional level. WGs can represent their members at these levels and beyond—at the oblast or national level. This will present a path for rural women to influence decisions that affect their households and communities.

4.3 EQ3: TO WHAT DEGREE ARE TAWA'S EFFORTS IN CROP DIVERSIFICATION IMPACTING NUTRITIONAL OUTCOMES BOTH THROUGH DIET DIVERSITY AND IMPROVED INCOME?

To provide context to this question, the ET notes that TAWA does not focus directly on nutrition outcomes. Only one of the IP's 12 Expected Results incorporates the concept of

nutrition. The evaluation methodology did not include measuring changes in nutrition but relied on respondents' perception and self-reporting about diets and attitudes. Relatedly, within the constraints of the evaluation design and budget, it was not possible to directly assess how nutritional outcomes were affected by improved income. Instead respondents were asked about changes in their diets since the project began, and how the diets of different socio-economic groups in their communities differed.

4.3.1 Findings

Nutrition

To put findings on nutrition into context, it should be noted that project activities focused specifically on nutrition are relatively modest. According to the development hypotheses, educating smallholder farmers on "improved nutrition and sanitation behavior" is expected to lead to better nutrition and income outcomes. The project has disseminated brochures, flipbooks, and recipe books on the topic of nutrition to WGs and as part of its training modules at open field days. The lack of specific nutrition-focused activities (like a public information campaign on the benefits of better nutrition for women and infants, or a campaign on growing and cooking foods with high nutrient value) means most beneficiaries— indeed the general population in the ZOI—may not necessarily have understood the importance of eating a balanced diet. Only one out of the six trained WG cohorts received specific training on nutrition (Preparing Meals with Nutritious Crops) and only two received training on crop rotation (Backyard Vegetable Production and Crop Rotation).

Improved nutrition is a long-term outcome to which TAWA is intended to contribute, but most project activities focus on underlying causes, not nutrition itself. The IP contract refers to nutrition only indirectly. The sole TAWA nutrition-related indicator is "Total quantity of targeted nutrient-rich value chain commodities produced by direct beneficiaries that is set aside for home consumption" (EG.3.3-11). Out of 24 total training sessions on nine different themes provided to the first six cohorts, only one WG cohort received specific training on nutrition ("Preparing Meals with Nutritious Crops"). In addition, few WGs (two out of six cohorts) received training on "Backyard Vegetable Production and Crop Rotation."

Table 2. Training themes by number of WG cohorts that received it

#	Theme	Frequency
1	Backyard Apricot Drying	3
2	Backyard Compost Production	5
3	Backyard Vegetable Production and Crop Rotation	2
4	Canning of Fruits and Vegetables	3
5	Care of Dairy Cattle and Home-based Processing of Dairy Products	4
6	Household Budgeting and Financial Management	4
7	IPM of Backyard Vegetable Gardens	1
8	IPM of Fruits and Vegetables	1

#	Theme	Frequency
9	Preparing Meals with Nutritious Crops	1
Total		24

The project tackles the issue of nutrition from different angles, not just crop rotation, and includes training on a large range of topics relevant to rural livelihoods. TAWA takes a holistic and often indirect approach to improving nutrition outcomes. Its training and extension activities cover issues as disparate as livestock hygiene, connecting producers to traders and grocery stores, supporting the value chain, supporting new cold storage facilities through subsidies, subsidizing inputs, techniques for planting and harvesting, extension services, cooking (through recipes), canning, and drying. The project also distributes DVD instructional videos on different topics, which FGD participants reportedly found useful. A mobile app is also being developed by a TAWA project partner for activity-supported crops.

The diet of TAWA beneficiaries starts from a low baseline, which suggests that virtually any intervention in this area would have some effect on nutrition. According to the project's own assessments,[14] the standard diet in Khatlon rural areas, at least for the poor, is low in vegetables, fruits, dairy products, and meat. Typically, it is comprised of sweetened tea with bread and butter for breakfast, soups with bread and occasionally *plov* (a rice dish common to parts of Central Asia), for lunch and dinner.

Responses from women beneficiaries suggest there is a high probability that WG training is having a positive effect on nutrition, but that the effect may be small. Female participants in the FGDs and survey responded very positively when asked about using the training related to improving diets in their daily lives. When asked "with respect to your diet, to what extent have you changed the meals you prepare from before you took the training?" over 98 percent of survey respondents said they changed either "a lot" (77.5 percent) or "a little" (20.8 percent). While a limited amount of the training specifically targeted nutrition, most of it focused on the better use of existing resources, (e.g., drying apricots, using bio waste for compost, livestock hygiene) or cultivating new varieties and new recipes—all indirect interventions which can lead to better nutritional outcomes. According to the telephone survey, almost all respondents (98 percent) said they are consuming the new crops they learned to grow (new varieties) or prepare (e.g., dried apricots). Yet, while positive and widely adopted, these interventions represent marginal changes to diets. An assessment of nutrient intake would very likely detect only a small change.

> *"We also were taught how to raise poultry. So now there will now be meat for the household, and eggs. And also [we were taught] how to cultivate…maize…children can eat it, and the rest is for feed for the chickens. If every woman is able to apply all this knowledge in practice, it will help her family climb up the social ladder."* – Female FGD participant, Yovon District, Lower Tagoybodi 2 Village

[14] TAWA Quarterly Report, January 2018 – March 2018 (Q2 FY 2018).

Diet is cited by women as one of several indicators of well-being. In describing the difference between poor, middle class, and wealthy households, FGD participants often referred to what they eat (in addition to steady employment, sending their children to higher education, wearing nicer clothes, owning a car, and having a nice house). Participants consistently noted that, in contrast to poor households, rich households ate meat; on eight occasions during FGDs, different participants mentioned eating meat in the context of household well-being. Wealthy and middle-class households are categorized as those who raise their own livestock and have a diet rich in calories.

> *"Our diet is incomplete. If we are able, we will buy meat. Sometimes, over five to six months we buy 2 kg of meat."* – Female FGD participant, Chaikhun District, Bolshevik Village
>
> *"They [wealthy households] can afford to eat good food, high in calories and vitamins."* – Female FGD participant, Yovon District, Navkoram Village
>
> Describing what wealthy households eat: *"Nuts, pistachios, which cost 100 or more somoni."* – Female FGD participant, Sarband District, Eshonobod Village

Some feedback on nutrition appears to be contradictory. It is unclear why the majority of survey respondents (58 percent) reported eating *fewer* vegetables at home, and only 39 percent reported eating more. However, all those who said they were eating fewer vegetables said that their diet had improved. There are various ways of trying to understand this counterintuitive finding. Four hypotheses are presented below. Further research would be needed to test which of these holds true:

- Women are selling instead of eating the new varieties of vegetables they are growing. In addition, only some WGs received vegetable seedlings or training; most received training in areas not related to vegetables;
- Households may be using additional income to purchase and eat more meat, or more non-vegetable products, such as fruits or grains;
- It is possible that for many the concept of a "better diet" is not associated with vegetables, but with something else, such as more calories, more meat, more fruit (e.g., dried apricots); or
- Responses may be unreliable, with survey respondents failing to understand the question.

Feedback from FGDs shows that there is an openness among WG members to learn about new crop varieties and that many who tested them were satisfied with the results. Crop diversification under TAWA consists of introducing improved varieties of horticultural crops that households and farms are already growing, especially tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, and potatoes. Diversification also includes introducing new vegetables with high nutritional value like broccoli and new cabbage varieties, and new fruit varieties such as peaches. According to TAWA project staff, in addition to having higher nutritional values, the new varieties are heartier and longer-lasting, extend the growing season (through introduction

of early and late harvest varieties),[15] and are healthier looking. Many of these new varieties were procured from California in the form of seeds and seedlings and then tested in different demonstration plots in Khatlon. WG members were both highly interested in and satisfied with results from the new varieties provided to them as seeds or seedlings. An EHE noted that in one village, cabbage was never used before. *"But after the training, five different varieties are being used…I don't [know] of any family that doesn't use cabbage now. This is one way of feeding children with nutritious food."* There were few cases where the new variety did not work out.

> *"Such beautiful [tomatoes] were harvested. Earlier, when a white spot appeared on a tomato, we thought it would dry up. But this one can handle 50 degrees [centigrade]."* – Female FGD participant, Chayhun Jamoat Istiklol, Vakhsh Village

> *"Previously, we did not know about broccoli. Only recently we learned about it and it has become widely known."* – Male FGD participant, Kabadian District, Orzu Village

Among the most positive and significant impacts of the project (both through WGs and the open field day training sessions) is the increasing production of legumes, especially new cabbage, cucumber, and tomato varieties, which appear to be the most popular. A woman key informant (who participated in open field day trainings, not WGs) who farms a large garden plot with her husband said that the new varieties they planted, and the new planting methods—in rows as opposed to scattered sowing—had increased their revenue by 50 percent. In terms of early crops and seedlings, there is evidence of significant and positive impact on project participants.

TAWA nutrition activities were largely limited to training sessions at open field days and to WGs. TAWA also distributes flipbooks and recipe books at these events. Books include information about nutrition. Education on nutrition, however, was to be covered through other projects like the Tajikistan Health and Nutrition Activity (THNA). However, THNA did not necessarily focus on the same beneficiaries.

<u>Income</u>

A key factor in nutritional outcomes is income. A primary reason for poor diets of Khatlon households is that they cannot afford to eat more nutritious meals. When, during FGDs participants were asked to distinguish between poor, middle class and wealthy households in their communities, many reported that wealthy households regularly ate meat, as well as vegetables produced on their own plots, while for poor households, meat was a luxury item.

Access to large markets remains a challenge, which limits the ability of farmers to increase their income. Being able to access markets outside of the village was mentioned as a key reason for increasing revenues from the early crops and seedlings. On the other hand, transporting produce to markets was mentioned as a barrier. Farmers try to sell their produce in big cities where prices are much higher than in local markets. In the village, there are usually no collection points and local markets are small. Another issue is transportation—the

[15] Early and late harvest crop varieties present a competitive advantage. They allow producers to take advantage of times when others do not yet have a harvest to sell on the market, so that either the vegetables are not available or are more expensive due to being imported. It is a case of the early (and late) bird, catching the worm.

infrastructure is not always in place to deliver produce. This adds additional expenses to production and can reduce the quality if transport times are long.

For some, selling on to market is not feasible or profitable. Inability to sell produce is linked to distance from markets, the high supply and low prices of produce in the village, produce spoiling along the way, and reliance on transport. In community discussions, women mentioned many challenges that they face in marketing their products outside their village, including lack of time, transport, and places to sell. They also mentioned lack of confidence and discriminatory attitudes and norms.

> *"We have problems with transportation to Kurgan Tube [regional capital, recently renamed Bokhtar] and Dushanbe. To transport one bag costs three somonis to Dushnabe. In the village there is no possibility of selling, since everyone is growing their own produce for their household. If we had a vehicle in the village, which could deliver the goods to Dushanbe, that would solve the problem."* – Male FGD participant, Chaikhun District, Aini Village

Asked what would improve their lives, FGD participants nearly always spoke of their desire for a factory[16] to open in their area, citing light industry, such as a sewing factory or agro-processor as being an attractive source of steady wage jobs, which would be good fit for women.

Survey respondents reported that the training they received was followed by significant increase in household income. Nine out of 10 respondents reported that the training had improved their income "by a lot," and six percent reported it changes their income by "a little." Less than two percent said, "not at all." The claim made by the vast majority that their income had improved by a lot applied even to those who did not sell their crops at the market. The survey did not ask them to quantify "a lot," thus the actual amount, either in terms of somonis or relative to their existing income, was not obtained. In follow-up telephone interviews to better understand how relatively limited training could affect income, women said that the increase in remittances was the main contributor to family income, which means that family income most likely did not improve solely due to the trainings but improved because family members migrated and send money to them.

> "*The seminars provide a lot of useful advice and knowledge. We completely support this idea.*" – Male FGD participant, Bokhtar District, Kyzylbairak Village

> *"[as a result of the training] your health improves, and your knowledge, and the family budget changes."* – Female FGD participant, Kabadian District, Orzu Village

For most project beneficiaries, changes in the economy of Russia, where the majority of Tajik migrants go for work, dwarf any project impacts. The majority of survey respondents reported that living conditions have improved, both at the household (98 percent) and at the community level (also 98 percent) in the past three years. Based on follow-up phone calls with survey participants, it became clear that changes in living conditions are linked to improvements in the Russian economy after the steep decline in 2015, when sanctions were imposed. That decline more than halved the value of the Russian ruble and decimated the GDP of Tajikistan. Some improvements at the household level were also attributed to children growing

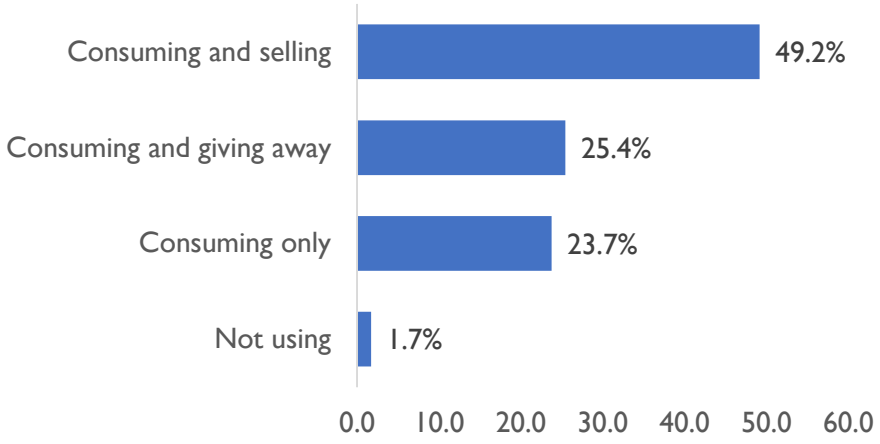
[16] Russian terms used, which all refer to a factory of varying size, included: *fabrika, zavod, promyschlenost, tsekh.*

older and either moving out or being able to earn income by picking cotton or through other means. This is to say that there are life-cycle effects at play.

> *"If there is at least one employed person in the family—either a civil servant or a migrant—then life will be okay, there is going to be steady improvement. But if there is no one in the family who is employed, as in our case, and there are small children, then life is hard."* – Female FGD participant, Bokhtar District, Navruz Village

Growing new vegetable varieties leads to different outcomes, depending on the household. Virtually all respondents reported that they consume the new or improved produce they have received or learned about. Both survey respondents and FGD participants reported different uses for the new vegetables they were growing and for the dried apricots. The cultivation of new vegetable varieties can lead to new sources of income, increased income, reduced expenditures, a change in food consumption patterns, or some combination of the above. For example, some women reported that as a result of participating in TAWA, they could cut down on their expenditures by buying less on the market and producing more.

Figure 5: Use of New Crops by WG Members Following TAWA Training



Source: Telephone Survey, 2018, N=120

Increasing own production is considered a way to improve household economic status. Routinely, wealthier households were said to be those who can produce more of their own food (both crops and livestock) rather than needing to purchase it. Some women (49 percent of surveyed women) reported that they now sell to the market and had not done so before. Other women are expanding their business, increasing sales, selling higher quality produce and inputs (seedlings, fertilizer, etc.). Referring to the impact of training and living conditions improving, one FGD participant noted that there was a change in attitudes about selling:

> *"In the past, it didn't even occur to people that you could earn money that way [by selling one's own produce.]. Before, people were reluctant to sell, that is, to engage in small-scale trade, but now that reluctance is gone. And they now sell at the market price."* – Female FGD participant, Yovon District, Navkoram Village

"They brought us broccoli seeds. At the beginning, we didn't know what sort of vegetable this was, how to use it. But then we learned that it has many benefits, a lot of vitamins. We sold it on the market and used it ourselves." – Male FGD participant, Chaikhun District, Aini Village

4.3.2 Conclusions

The feedback on the impact of training reveals there are likely to be some positive nutrition and income effects as the training interventions gradually feed through to outcomes and impacts. This should be no surprise given that WG members were selected, at least in part, on how active they were in their communities. Motivation appears to relate to multiple factors—the income and savings benefits that they have experienced, as well as the satisfaction of consuming foods of better quality (which should indirectly improve their diets). Another likely factor in their motivation is that someone is taking an interest in them; it is rare that women in rural Tajikistan are the focus of attention, not least by outsiders with the goal of improving their well-being and livelihoods.

The project takes a multi-sided approach to increasing and improving production of vegetables, fruits, and dairy products. Training on crop diversification is only one part of the "package." The training theme "Backyard Vegetable Production and Crop Rotation" was, in fact, only provided to two of the first six cohorts of WGs. This should be kept in mind, since it is unrealistic for one theme, such as crop rotation, to have a major impact when it is taught to only two groups of cohorts for two to three hours.

The project is on the right track in terms of reaching its target audience. High interest in new crops, coupled with positive effects observed by beneficiaries, suggests that the project is taking the right approach, even if nutrition effects will take time to manifest themselves. WG participants report multiple benefits—consuming, selling, and saving on expenses.

A key influencing factor on change in livelihoods is the remittances received from family members working abroad, generally in Russia. Beyond the extension service training beneficiaries receive through TAWA, many can rely on remittances from Russia that have grown in recent years from a low point in 2015, which they can use to invest in inputs. In this sense, the knowledge capital received from the project is complemented by financial capital from remittances. It also means that it is difficult, both for the researchers and the beneficiaries themselves, to separate out how these factors have led to improved livelihoods.

4.3.3 Recommendations

To strengthen the link between training activities and nutrition and income, TAWA and future projects should provide training on nutrition to all beneficiaries, not just selected WGs. While welcomed and useful, most of the training topics currently only indirectly relate to nutrition and income. Providing more training on the importance of nutrition and offering practical advice would take away the guesswork women beneficiaries currently engage in. There is a clear interest in learning and obtain practical advice.

Leverage resources from other projects and programs to complement TAWA's nutrition promotion efforts. If TAWA's budget and human resources are constrained, as they appear to be, USAID should consider leveraging other projects with relevant focus (e.g., health) or resources to fill the gap. Dissemination of nutrition information can go beyond project beneficiaries through channels like broadcast media, school events, CBOs, and group leaders.

4.4 EQ4: HOW WELL IS THE ACTIVITY COORDINATING WITH OTHER USAID FTF AGRICULTURAL AND HEALTH ACTIVITIES, OTHER DONORS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR, ETC. TO LEVERAGE RESOURCES, INCREASE IMPACT, AND PREVENT DUPLICATION OF EFFORTS?[17]

The ET reviewed donor coordination primarily in terms of other USAID projects, as other donor activity in the agriculture sector in Khatlon is limited at present. In addition, the evaluation assessed coordination with national level and with regional level state institutions, as well as the rationale behind the choices the project made.

4.4.1 Findings

TAWA coordinates well with stakeholders at the regional level. Based on KIIs, the ET found coordination levels between the TAWA project and other stakeholders in Khatlon to be more than satisfactory. This is based on three key factors:

1. The absence of problems that typically affect donor activities in the same sector, including personality conflicts, turf wars, information withholding, and wasteful duplication. Virtually no issues with duplication were identified aside from, early in the project, a minor coordination issue involving the THNA project targeting a training. Staff from THNA would sometimes offer nutrition training in TAWA villages where TAWA had already provided similar training. However, this problem was resolved.
2. Good synergies between projects. Other projects leverage TAWA resources and TAWA leverages those of other projects, which reduces costs and enhances efficiency.
3. TAWA is well integrated into the network of local actors in the agricultural sector and the national network when it concerns the private sector. The project connects farmers work with agro-dealers and distributors to help them access the market.

Coordination efforts with different stakeholder groups are rational and logical. TAWA engages with other organizations in a way that meets mutual objectives, through sharing resources and information. The project has a different relationship with each of the key stakeholder groups. This appears to be guided by the stakeholders' functions, their relationship to TAWA, and TAWA's objectives. Below is a review of the nature of coordination with each stakeholder group.

Coordination between TAWA and other FTF projects focuses on synergies and providing logistical cross-support. The entities with which TAWA coordinates most closely are the other USAID FTF projects and activities in the Khatlon province ZOI. The current USAID FTF projects are:

1. Farmer-to-Farmer Program
2. Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension (INGENAES)
3. Potato Production Support and Research to Improve Food Security in Khatlon, Tajikistan, Phase II Project

[17] The full evaluation question is: "How well is the activity coordinating with other USAID FTF agricultural and health activities, other donors, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders as applicable (e.g., universities and NGOs) to leverage resources, increase impact, anzd prevent duplication of efforts?"

4. Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity (TAWA)
5. Tajikistan Health and Nutrition Activity (THNA)
6. Tajikistan Nutrition-Sensitive Vegetable Technologies Project
7. Women's Entrepreneurship for Empowerment Project

The projects' names indicate that each occupies a niche within the area of food security and nutrition. Among them, TAWA is the largest USAID project in the region.

USAID coordinates FTF projects. USAID keeps the various FTF projects informed about each other's activities, and will request that they support each other in multiple ways—via logistics, training of beneficiaries, provision of seedlings and seeds, etc. TAWA and the other project will then sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). For example, TAWA provided logistical support and helped make connections in Khatlon for the Potato Production Support and Research to Improve Food Security, and TAWA and the Women's Entrepreneurship for Empowerment Project contributed to and complement each other's projects, through involving WG members in adopting innovations and linking women with other stakeholders in the value chain. Another FTF project IP said they were *"happy to work with the TAWA project,"* noting that avoiding overlap of responsibilities was critical and that there was no issue in this regard with TAWA. The same person noted that TAWA's management is *"very knowledgeable, very organized, and completely understand the point."*

Coordination between TAWA and national-level state institutions is virtually non-existent. For various reasons, the TAWA project has not established areas of coordination with the GOT ministries.[18] The reasons include lack of relationships with agricultural sector stakeholders in Khatlon, bureaucratic procedures, and lack of resources at the Ministry and agency level, which would make coordination mutually beneficial. The lack of coordination has not affected project activities or achieving results.

Although it does not coordinate with them, the TAWA project engages personnel from state institutions as experts to provide instruction and produce analytical reports. TAWA hires experts from several state institutions with relevant expertise. These trainers provide training on specialized subjects to TAWA beneficiaries (specialists and farmers) and offer Training of Trainers (TOT) to staff. They also produce reports on specific topics. TAWA hires trainers from a number of institutions trainers, including the:

1. Livestock Institute, Tajik Academy of Agricultural Sciences;
2. Horticultural Institute, Tajik Academy of Agricultural Sciences;
3. Soil Science Institute, Tajik Academy of Agricultural Sciences; and
4. Tajik Agrarian University

There are mutual benefits to this type of engagement—TAWA beneficiaries (producers) and staff learn from experts in the field, and the experts can put their knowledge to practical use while being remunerated. Key informants from the above institutions had a favorable impression of TAWA:

> *"We assess TAWA very positively."* – Key informant, national-level government institution

[18] The ET did not meet with representatives of national-level Ministries or Agencies.

"They [TAWA staff] do good work." – Key informant, national-level government institution

"Based on the questions that they [TAWA project personnel] ask, they seem to be very knowledgeable." – Key informant, national-level government institution

However, as the TAWA IP noted, bringing in experts from these institutes to provide training and draft reports cannot be considered coordination with state institutions. Coordination would involve an MOU or similar agreement, under which TAWA and the state institution counterpart would, for example, support one another to achieve programmatic goals, share resources, etc. This does not mean there is no *desire* on the part of state institutions to cooperate. Two of the four key informants interviewed from state institutions said they would welcome coordination with the TAWA project and the possibility of having people other than their experts lead training sessions and produce analytical reports.

At the provincial and sub-provincial government level, TAWA works closely and successfully with relevant institutions. The project coordinates with the governorate, the district, and the jamoat (sub-district) administrations to ease contact with communities. The project has good relations with the Khatlon government—the Governor and Deputy Governor are aware of and supportive of TAWA activities. These relationships are not based on formal agreements such as MOUs. TAWA employs a government liaison with decades of experience with Khatlon government structures, who maintains contact with the Khatlon Government and lower levels of government where TAWA is active, and informs them of project-related events. The Governor himself occasionally attends events, such as the opening of a new cold storage facility co-financed by the project.

Both the project and the regional government stakeholders gain from cooperation. The relationship between the project and regional government can be described as "win-win," with the Khatlon government happy to claim credit for new investments and initiatives, and TAWA able to call on support when necessary. For example, when TAWA launches activities in a new jamoat, it is able to count on the Governor's word to facilitate cooperation, which would not necessarily be forthcoming otherwise. When TAWA conducted a training on the sensitive topic of gender-based violence (GBV), it was able to count on the support of the Governor's office to direct lower-level provincial officials to allow the training to take place. The Khatlon government has also contributed ideas for project activities, such as the artificial insemination activity. The project purchased 12 Brown Swiss bulls and distributed them to insemination points in each district, where natural and artificial insemination services are being provided. Key informants noted that insemination services are both highly profitable veterinary services and improve the quality and quantity of the local cattle stock.

Coordination with district- and jamoat-level administrations is focused on extension services and WUAs. TAWA reports that more than 100 jamoat-level MOA extension agents are included in TAWA's extension trainings, and that relevant district-level government officials are included in TAWA's work with WUAs. The relationships are not institutionalized—there is no MOU or other official document—but are considered necessary and important for carrying out project activities. TAWA obtains support from district and jamoat administrations to conduct activities and engages their agricultural extension agents in project activities. Reportedly, the public extension service in Tajikistan is very weak. Local governments provide the project with necessary information and they join open-field day trainings, demonstrations, and other events.

TAWA works with private sector operators to connect project beneficiaries with buyers and distributors. The project has connections with various private sector actors in the agriculture and agro-business sector, including distributors, grocery chains, and producers of new crop varieties, seedlings, and milk for sale on the market. This type of engagement may involve encouraging market linkages or simply connecting farmers with information on agricultural inputs or credit. Private sector players engaged with the project include Neksigol (an agriculture input supplier based in Sughd province), Bejo Zaden (Dutch Seed Company), and Syngenta (Swiss Agrichemical and Seed Company). TAWA has also invited Eskhata Bank, Imon International Bank, and Sarvati Vaksh (a financial institution that provides small loans and microcredit to farmers) to field days to share information about their services.

The linkages with the private sector, although benefiting mostly the larger farmers, are a key element in the overall TAWA's holistic approach. Although it does not have institutional relationships with them, TAWA has also engaged experts from various organizations, such as MASHAV (an Israeli NGO) to provide training. MASHAV specialists conducted training on integrated pest management techniques for extension agents and beneficiaries at several FTF projects in July 2018. Using the expert services to reach multiple projects is another type of intra-FTF coordination.

There are few other donor projects in the ZOI Khatlon districts where TAWA is active. Aside from USAID FTF activities, there are relatively few donor projects in the 12 Khatlon districts where TAWA is active. Some, such as the USAID-funded Aga Khan Foundation project, have activities in only one or two districts. Others, such as Mercy Corps, which was a THNA subcontractor, have left. The World Bank has as an Institutional Strengthening for Integrated Water Resources Management Project, which has worked with Sarvati Vakhsh, Eskhata Bank, and Imon International to help beneficiaries obtain loans. In a number of cases, the engagement between TAWA and other projects has involved TAWA staff introducing the other projects' staff to the region and its stakeholders or providing advice. Such is the case with the Competitiveness, Trade, and Jobs (CTJ) project, which is considering financing cold storage facilities, which will enable farmers to store their produce and sell on the market when the prices higher, instead of being forced to sell immediately after harvesting.

Beyond TAWA, monthly FTF coordination meetings could be more effective. Until the summer of 2018, USAID convened monthly FTF Tajikistan IP meetings; these meetings were described as less than effective and were not TAWA's responsibility. At the meetings, each FTF program provided operational updates on its activities. Three out of the four FTF Chiefs of Party (COPs) based in Tajikistan noted that these meetings were not a productive use of time because they involved minimal learning or exchange of ideas. The key informants described the meetings as "*more about reporting than about strategy*," "*mostly operational updates*," and "*a waste of time*." By the time of the evaluation, USAID recognized that the monthly meetings were not a productive use of time and cancelled the meetings. The fourth COP noted, however, that overall coordination by USAID was far better than in the past. This person described coordination as "*excellent compared to 12 years ago when I was on a USAID project. [Then] there was no coordination at all. I did not even know where USAID's main office was*!"

4.4.2 Conclusions

The overall coordination between TAWA and other stakeholders in the region is productive and cooperative. The key factors underlying this positive assessment are:

- The relatively limited number of current donor programs in the 12 districts where TAWA is engaged;
- Good project leadership and management, which has generated goodwill, resource and information sharing, and cross support between FTF activities;
- Cooperation (willingness to work together) among FTF project IPs;
- USAID-level coordination of FTF activities, and its guidance to IPs to engage where it sees synergies or need for mutual support; and
- The mutual benefits of cooperation.

It is not possible to estimate how much TAWA has been able to leverage resources or increase impacts. However, it is possible to speak about the type of impacts. In the short term, TAWA's coordination efforts with the private sector have helped a select number of producers with commercial orientations (or entrepreneurial skills) expand their production and increase sales. The effect is unlikely to be widespread as the vast majority of WG beneficiaries did not receive support from non-TAWA stakeholders. Overall, the use of resources by TAWA appears to be sound.

Without the endorsement of local authorities, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to operate in the region. A staff government liaison facilitates TAWA's ability to cultivate relationships with the governorate, the districts, and the jamoats. The success of these relationships can be attributed to the benefits both sides receive. TAWA is able to meet its objectives, and local authorities can show that something is being done for farmers and other agriculture sector stakeholders and claim partial credit for it. Cooperation with state institutions exists where both sides benefit. This explains why cooperation is so good at the regional and sub-regional level, and practically non-existent at the national level.

Lack of well-functioning state institutions may weaken the sustainability of project outcomes. Weak government extension services that lack personnel, up-to-date knowledge, and training equipment mean that new practices and technologies introduced by the project are unlikely to be institutionalized, or even taught, after the project ends. To return to Section 4.1, adoption of new practices and technologies will depend on non-institutional factors

4.4.3 Recommendations

Future FTF projects can leverage WGs. Considerable effort has gone into bringing together women in over 1,000 villages, and yet they received fairly limited training (just three to five 2-3 hour sessions). While not all of these WGs will last, they represent a ready organizational structure and a resource that can readily be tapped into by other initiatives.

Prepare a strategy for engaging with national institutions agencies to institutionalize extension practices. The ET recognizes that working with the national government may be challenging, insofar as its resources are limited, and turnover is high. However, it would still, be worth exploring ways to engage relevant Ministries in a strategically or constructively. At a minimum, the project must build up relationships that might yield results over time, with the goal of eventually incorporating FTF project outcomes. If the project intends to have a lasting impact, it should work with the MOA and the Committee on Rural Development.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: EVALUATION STATEMENT OF WOR

The USAID/Central Asia "Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity" (TAWA) Evaluation

C.9 PURPOSE

The purpose of this evaluation is to test primary objectives set in the Tajikistan Agriculture and Water (TAWA) contract. The evaluation should provide pertinent information, statistics, and judgments that assist the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Chemonics International, Inc. (Chemonics) to learn what has been accomplished against the intended results of the contract, including any management, financial, and cost-efficiency findings. The evaluation will help USAID better understand its investment in nutrition sensitive agriculture in Tajikistan and help focus and strengthen the TAWA activity.

C.10 BACKGROUND

Under the U.S. Government's Feed the Future (FTF) initiative, Tajikistan is part of an international effort to transform lives toward a world where people no longer face extreme poverty, under nutrition, or hunger. Tajikistan's multi-year FTF strategy was approved in March 2012 and officially launched in May 2012. This strategy is built on three pillars of which TAWA addresses the first two:

- Pillar One: Assistance to household and small commercial farms to increase income and the production of food for home consumption, and support to improve nutritional and health outcomes.
- Pillar Two: Building the capacity of local institutions and community-based organizations. FTF Tajikistan will support public and private agricultural extension to advise farm families on production technique, natural resource conservation, food utilization, and formation of producer groups to facilitate access to markets and inputs. It will also support village organizations to help rural residents tackle local development problems themselves. Finally, it will assist local governments in becoming more active and effective, as well as support and expand community-based health efforts.
- Pillar Three: Completing effective agrarian reform in selected districts of Khatlon Province. Agrarian reform includes changes in land and water relations and rights, institutions, policies, and incentives.

TAWA is focused on 12 districts within Khatlon Province, which is referred to as the Zone of Influence (ZOI). These districts are: Bokhtar, Jomi, Dusti (formerly Jilikul), Khuroson, Nosiri Khisrav, Qabodiyon, Jaihun (formerly Qumsangir), Balkhi (formerly Rumi), Sarband, Shahritus, Vakhsh, and Yovon.

C.11 PROJECT INTENT

TAWA is a key component in USAID/Central Asia's FTF portfolio to improve nutrition of women of reproductive age and children under the age of two in what is referred to as nutrition-sensitive agriculture. TAWA's primary focus is to positively impact nutritional outcomes by increasing yields and returns from household plots. The program directly supports FTF objectives by assisting smallholder farmers to increase, diversify, and add value to their agricultural production to address dietary deficiencies and market production by focusing on five nutrition sensitive

agriculture sectors. These sectors were identified as having the greatest possibility of scaling in the ZOI and are agriculture extension, vegetables, fruits, dairy, and irrigation water. TAWA interventions are coupled with a robust portfolio of other USAID activities, which address both agricultural and non-agricultural activities including sanitation, hygiene, health behavior change, iodized salt, drinking water, and flour fortification.

TAWA is working to improve nutritional outcomes by focusing on family-owned private farms or small commercial farms that average less than five hectares. Regardless of farm size, this activity focuses on horticulture, orchard, and dairy livestock feed production and not work with cotton or wheat, the primary agricultural commodity crops currently produced in the ZOI. In addition to private sector engagement, institutional interventions with public entities such as agricultural universities are encouraged. In addition to extension and agricultural technology interventions, this program works to increase the sustainability of the 60 Water User Associations (WUA) USAID organized through its Family Farming Program from 2010-2014 in the FTF ZOI.

The program also places special emphasis on engaging women in all activities. Seventy to eighty (70-80) percent of households have a family member working in Russia, Kazakhstan, and in other countries either semi-permanently or seasonally during the period of April to November. This in turn causes an increasing labor shortage in agriculture. Thus, much of the farming and hired farm labor is provided by women. At the same time, the fertility rate within the ZOI is 4.2 children per woman, which is the highest in the former Soviet Union and very high by international standards. Most of the rural population and possibly more than 90 percent live in extended family situations where the sons and their families live with the parents. Because of the large number of women working in agriculture and a general lack of access for women to agricultural technologies and services, TAWA programming is directed at the women. In addition, the activity gives consideration to the volatility of international labor markets and uncertainties, with men potentially returning to Tajikistan in the future with domestic employment needs.

Key components within TAWA include the following:

1. Focus on both men and women, recognizing that constraints exist for both male and female farmers (including the needs to migrate due to lack of jobs with earning potential);
2. Reduce the confidence gap by developing activities that address women's low confidence at all levels of household, farm, community, and government;
3. Reduce the resources gap to ensure that both women and men farmers have access to extension services, credit, and agricultural inputs; and
4. Address time-saving measures for improved technologies.

At least half of the level of effort for the Ag and Water program focuses on the following two areas:

- **Agricultural Extension Service Development**: Agricultural Extension can best be defined as the transfer of current agricultural knowledge to farmers through individual consultations, train the trainer, group training, or mass media as appropriate and economically feasible. Therefore, the person transferring the knowledge should be considered as an educator or facilitator and is sometimes referred to as an extension agent.

The Ag and Water activity continues to develop an agriculture advisory service and information system in the ZOI. The program maximizes educational activities with existing groups such as participatory farmer groups, health groups, saving groups, WUAs, women's savings groups, and others to deliver extension services in a cost-efficient and sustainable way. These groups can be either formal or informal groups. The program educates both experienced farmers and the jamoat agricultural specialists who will further disseminate the new knowledge and farming methods.

- **Extended Season Vegetable Production**: All interventions support the FTF objectives to increase income for smallholder farmers and to improve nutrition of children under the age of two and women of reproductive age. Agricultural production should address how to increase the amount of Vitamin A, iron, zinc, and animal protein in the diet.

These areas are also being addressed within the Ag and Water program in descending order of importance:

- **Orchards Production**: All interventions are integrated into the extension component and aim to increase consumption in the ZOI of wholesome, safe, and nutritious fruit products. Specifically, fruit production addresses how to increase the amount of Vitamin A, iron, and zinc in the diet.
- **Dairy Production**: Dairy production activities aim to increase production and consumption in the ZOI of wholesome, safe, and nutritious dairy products. Dairy is the cheapest form of animal protein in the ZOI can be used to improve the amount of Vitamin A, iron and calcium in the diet.
- **Water**: Water activities focus on supporting the existing WUAs and Federations of WUAs both in respect to technical support for association management and policy support with the government. Work will be done directly with the existing community-based WUAs, Federations, or similar entities, within the nascent river basin management, and Agency for Irrigation government entities. Improving water availability to smallholders underpins USAID's other work with the extended season vegetables, orchards, and dairy sectors.

C.12 EVALUATION PURPOSE

This is a mid-term performance evaluation that will help determine what components and project aspects worked well, which did not and why, and to make informative decisions on the direction of the program for the remaining years of the contract. The purpose of this evaluation is to test primary objectives set in the TAWA contract. The evaluation should provide pertinent information, statistics, and judgments that assist Chemonics and USAID to learn what has been accomplished against the intended results of the contract, including any management, financial, and cost-efficiency findings. In summary, the evaluation will help USAID better understand its investment in nutrition-sensitive agriculture in Tajikistan and help focus and strengthen the TAWA activity.

C.13 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation will address the following key questions:

1. To what degree are women beneficiaries adapting improved farming practices and technologies in the long term?
2. How sustainable and effective is TAWA's use of temporary informal women's groups to deliver agricultural extension services?
3. To what degree are TAWA's efforts in crop diversification impacting nutritional outcomes both through diet diversity and improve income?
4. How well is the activity coordinating with other USAID FTF agricultural and health activities, other donors, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders as applicable (e.g., universities and NGOs) to leverage resources, increase impact, and prevent duplication of efforts?

C.14 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

This evaluation will be qualitative in nature with some secondary, quantitative data analysis. Prior to the start of data collection, as part of the evaluation work plan, the evaluation team will develop and present, for USAID review and approval, a data analysis plan; what procedures will be used to analyze qualitative data from key informant and other stakeholder interviews; and how the evaluation will weigh and integrate qualitative data from these sources with quantitative data from project performance monitoring records to reach conclusions about the effectiveness and efficiency of the Ag and Water activity in Tajikistan.

The contractor shall have flexibility in proposing the most appropriation methodology to accomplish the tasks outlined in the most efficient way. However, the contractor will address the following:

Task 1: Desk review

The contractor will conduct a desk review to provide a general overview of the current situation in Tajikistan and will help identify areas that merit closer attention once the team begins its fieldwork. Reading materials will be available to the team prior to their arrival in Tajikistan. The contractor shall also review other relevant non-project related documents such as peer-review articles and other publications and incorporate the review findings into the data collection design and data analysis and interpretation.

The evaluation team shall consult a broad range of background documents apart from project documents provided by USAID/Central Asia. USAID and Chemonics will provide the evaluation team with a package of briefing materials, including:

- USAID Central Asia Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (2015-2019)
- Tajikistan Feed the Future Multi-Year Strategy (2011-2015)
- Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Contract (2015)
- Ag and Water Year 1 and 2 Work Plans
- Ag and Water Annual Reports, 2016 and 2017
- Ag and Water Quarterly Reports, 2015 - Present
- Ag and Water Initial Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, 2015
- Ag and Water Annual PMEP Report, 2016

- Feed the Future Tajikistan Baseline and Midline Survey Reports
- Feed the Future Tajikistan Cost of Diet Study
- Government of Tajikistan National Development Strateg
- New USG Global Food Security Strategy (for context moving forward)
- Papers and reports from an on-going International Water Management Institute (IWMI) assessment of WUAs in Tajikistan
- USAID Tajikistan job diagnostic analysis
- USAID Tajikistan Feed the Future Gender Analyses
- ADB Tajikistan Country Gender Assessment

The final evaluation report shall incorporate information obtained from the pre-field work desk review as well as information obtained from key informants and observations in the field.

Task 2: Draft description of overall methodology and work plan

In conjunction with USAID/Central Asia, the contractor will develop a plan for conducting their fieldwork using information from the desk review and this SOW. The work plan will clearly outline the methodological approach the team will use. The work plan shall be submitted for review to the USAID/Central Asia COR for approval prior to arrival in country. The work plan shall include a field work schedule, including a preliminary list of all proposed districts for travel and key organizations the evaluation team plans to meet.

Task 3: Conduct a field data collection

The in-country data collection will expand upon the analysis in the desk review. The tasks will include facilitated discussions through interviews, focus groups of sub-grantees/end-users, the GOT, business associations, other private sector and certification entities and conduct field visits using other evaluation methods. The evaluation team will spend at least three weeks in-country to conduct the evaluation. The identification of key stakeholders and informants and the scheduling of in-person interviews/focus groups must be arranged in advance as much as possible to maximize efficient use of time while in the field. USAID/Central Asia will provide introductions and contact information to facilitate the data collection.

The team will travel outside the capital to the agreed upon ZOI districts as stated in the approved work plan to collect data and/or obtain information from As and Water beneficiaries (e.g., male and female smallholder farmers, extension providers, district and community officials, etc.). The 12 districts, which are typically named after the district center town, are: Bokhtar, Jomi, Dusti (formerly Jilikul), Khuroson, Nosiri Khisrav, Qabodiyon, Jaihun (formerly Qumsangir), Balkhi (formerly Rumi), Sarband, Shahritus, Vakhsh, and Yovon.

ANNEX 2: EVALUATION DESIGN MATRIX

TAWA Evaluation Matrix			
Evaluation Questions w/ Illustrative KII, FGD & Survey Questions	**Data Sources**	**Methodologies**	**Data Analysis**
EQ 1: What conditions have been conducive or detrimental to the implementation of reform efforts, in order for TAWA to be able to pursue or avoid such conditions moving forward?			
Illustrative KII and FGD Questions • How have farmers changed cropping practices related to such things as production practices, technologies, and types of crops? Why? • What are the benefits from these changes in cropping practices? • What are barriers to changing cropping practices? What has the activity done to address these barriers? • What was most useful about the activity training? How can it be improved? **Illustrative Survey Questions** • Which of the following technologies or practices have you adopted? • If you have not adopted them, why not? • To what extent have you benefitted from these new technologies or practices in the following areas: . . .? • Will to continue with these new technologies in the future? If no, why not? • How satisfied are you with the activity training you received?	• Activity documentation [narrative report, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan, results framework, etc.] • USAID • IP • Local & national authorities • Other stakeholders • Other projects & donors • Secondary data • Female & male WG members	• Desk review • KIIs • FGDs • Review of secondary performance data • Review of secondary contextual data • Mobile phone survey	• Content analysis of beneficiary perceptions for key three dimensions of capacity building, adoption factors, and impacts • Analysis of activity performance and contextual data • Statistical analysis of survey results

TAWA Evaluation Matrix			
Evaluation Questions w/ Illustrative KII, FGD & Survey Questions	**Data Sources**	**Methodologies**	**Data Analysis**
EQ 2: How sustainable and effective is TAWA's use of temporary informal women's groups to deliver agricultural extension services?			
Illustrative KII & FGD Questions • How effective is the WG for providing extension services? • How does it compare to other types of extension services? • Which activity features were more/less effective in promoting WG functioning? • How can WGs be strengthened to provide extension services? • How sustainable is the WG model for providing extension services? • What has been put place to ensure the continuity of WG extension services after the activity ends? **Illustrative Survey Questions** • What benefits do you get from participating in the WG? • How effective is the WG for providing extension services? • How do you rate your WG on the following: . . .? • How likely is it that your WG will continue to function once external support ends? • How important is each of the following to support your WG to continue functioning over the long-term: . . .?	• Activity documentation • IP • Local & national authorities • Other stakeholders • Female WG members	• Desk review • KIIs • FGDs • Review of secondary performance data • Mobile phone survey	• Analysis of WG formation, structure, scale, and coverage • Content analysis of perceptions on the type, quality, and quantity of training • Content analysis of importance and value of WGs for ensuring uptake and benefits from new practices and technologies • Analysis of activity performance data • Statistical analysis of survey results

TAWA Evaluation Matrix			
Evaluation Questions w/ Illustrative KII, FGD & Survey Questions	**Data Sources**	**Methodologies**	**Data Analysis**
EQ 3: To what degree are TAWA's efforts in crop diversification impacting nutritional outcomes both through diet diversity and improved income?			
Illustrative KII & FGD Questions • How have farmers diversified their crops as a result of the activity? (WEAI: Production dimension) • How has the activity affected the dietary habits and income of farmers? (WEAI: Income dimensions) • How has the activity affected the daily activities and commitments of female members? (WEAI: Time dimension) • How as the activity affected the intra-household decision-making within female farmers' households? (WEAI: Resources dimension) • How has the activity affected WG members' participation in community leadership positions? (WEAI: Leadership dimension) • What can be done to increase the impact of activities like TAWA on nutritional outcomes both diet diversity and improved income? **Illustrative Survey Questions** • To what extent have you benefited from the activity in terms of: . . .? [The survey will ask a series of questions gauging the respondents' perceived benefits in terms of: a) on-farm production, b) diet, c) income, d) confidence, e) control over household assets, f) participation in household decision-making, g) participation in community leadership, and h) time.] • What other benefits have you received from the activity?	• Activity documentation • IP • Local & national authorities • Other stakeholders • Secondary data • Female & male WG members	• Desk review • KIIs • FGDs • Review of secondary performance data • Review of secondary contextual data • Mobile phone survey	• Analysis of nodes in theory of change • Assessment of changes in crop diversity • Content analysis of how and whether reported crop diversification is changing diet and incomes • Content analysis of pass-through effects of TAWA intervention as well as alternative explanations for changes • Analysis of activity performance and contextual data • Statistical analysis of survey results

TAWA Evaluation Matrix			
Evaluation Questions w/ Illustrative KII, FGD & Survey Questions	**Data Sources**	**Methodologies**	**Data Analysis**
EQ 4: How well is the activity coordinating with other USAID FTF agricultural and health activities, other donors, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders as applicable (e.g., universities and NGOs) to leverage resources, increase impact, and prevent duplication of efforts?			
Illustrative KII & FGD Questions • What is the level or resources/funding that can be attributed to activity facilitation efforts? • To what extent are stakeholders coordinating in activity-related areas? Why? • What joint efforts exist across possible levels of coordination (community, district, and national levels)? How effective have they been? • What community, district or national-level mechanisms/platforms exist that can support coordination? How have they functioned? How can they be made to function better? • What incentives/barriers are there for stakeholders to coordinate in activity-related areas?	• Activity documentation • USAID • IP • Local & national authorities • Other stakeholders • Other projects & donors	• Desk review • KIIs • Review of secondary performance data	• Leveraging: Quantification of co-financing and other investments that can be linked to the activity • Coordination: Content analysis of coordination levels, forms, mechanisms, and related incentives/barrier • Analysis of activity performance contextual data

ANNEX 3: INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS CONTACTED

N	Contact Person	Position	Organization	Location
TAWA Staff				
1.	Kirk Ramer	Chief of Party	TAWA head office	Dushanbe
2.	Sabohatillo Muzaffarov	Deputy Chief of Party	TAWA regional office	Bokhtar
3.	30 project staff	Project staff	TAWA regional office	Bokhtar
4.	Nigina Tajieva	Home Economist	TAWA regional office	Bokhtar
5.	Jamila Samadova	Home Economist	TAWA regional office	Nosiri Khisrav
6.	Mastura Mamasaidova	Home Economist	TAWA regional office	Shahrituz
7.	Mehriniso Nasrulloeva	Home Economist	TAWA regional office	Qabodiyon
8.	Gulbahor Azimova	Home Economist	TAWA regional office	Dusti
9.	Umrinisso Karimova	Home Economist	TAWA regional office	Jayhun
10.	Parvina Rakhimova	Home Economist	TAWA regional office	Balkhi
11.	Nargis Ibragimova	Home Economist	TAWA regional office	Vakhsh
12.	Matluba Umarova	Home Economist	TAWA regional office	Bokhtar
13.	Jamila Khasanova	Home Economist	TAWA regional office	Sarband
14.	Zulkhumor Suvanqulova	Home Economist	TAWA regional office	Jomi
15.	Madina Khakimova	Home Economist	TAWA regional office	Khuroson
16.	Malika Inoyatova	M&E Specialist	TAWA regional office	Bokhtar
17.	Jovid Tilloev	M&E Officer	TAWA regional office	Bokhtar
18.	Malika Huseinova	Database Entry	TAWA regional office	Bokhtar
USAID and USAID Projects				
19.	Robert Reno	Program Officer	USAID – Tajikistan Country Office	Dushanbe
20.	Aygul Berdygulova	Program Specialist	USAID – Regional Mission to Central Asia	Dushanbe
21.	Malika Jurakulova	Gender Specialist	USAID – Tajikistan Country Office	Dushanbe
22.	Annie Steed	Agriculture Development Officer	USAID – Tajikistan Country Office	Dushanbe
23.	Surendra Bhatta	Economic Growth Team Lead	USAID – Tajikistan Country Office	Dushanbe
24.	Nurali Saidov	Project Manager	USAID/Tajikistan Nutrition-Sensitive Vegetable Technologies Project	Dushanbe
25.	Farrukh Shoimardonov	Project Manager	USAID/Women's Entrepreneurship for Empowerment Project	Dushanbe

N	Contact Person	Position	Organization	Location
26.	Nodir Ibrohimzoda	Country Director	USAID/Farmer-to-Farmer Program	Dushanbe
27.	Roman Yorick	Chief of Party	USAID/Health and Nutrition Activity	Dushanbe
28.	Nargiza Ludgate	Expert	USAID/Integrating Gender and Nutrition in Agriculture Extension Services Project	USA
29.	Rusudan Mdivani	Regional Leader	USAID/Potato Production Support and Research to Improve Food Security in Khatlon, Tajikistan – Phase II Project	Georgia
Government Stakeholders				
30.	Faizullo Amirshoev	Director	Livestock Institute under the Academy of Agricultural Sciences	Dushanbe
31.	Sharofjon Rahimov	Head	The Republican Livestock Biotechnology Center under the Academy of Agricultural Sciences	Dushanbe
32.	Sharif Khojaev	Director	Soil Science Institute of the Tajik Academy of Agricultural Sciences	Dushanbe
33.	Salimzoda Amonullo Faizullo	Rector	Tajikistan Agrarian University	Dushanbe
34.	Normahmad Kamolov	Chief Specialist	Horticultural Institute of the Tajik Academy of Agricultural Sciences	Dushanbe
35.	Tanzila Ergasheva	Senior Researcher	Institute of Agricultural Economics of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences	Dushanbe
36.	Ziyozoda Sulaymon Rizoi	1st deputy Governor	Government of Khatlon province	Khatlon
37.	Safarov Mahmadsafar	1st deputy chairman of the Jomi district	Government of Jomi district	Khatlon
38.	Sharipov Mahmadsharif	1st deputy chairman of jamoat in Vakhsh district	Community government	Khatlon
39.	Safarov Gulbuddin	Head of Statistics Department in Vakhsh district	Community government	Khatlon

N	Contact Person	Position	Organization	Location
Non-Government Stakeholders				
40.	Bobojon Yatimov	Senior Rural Development Specialist	World Bank - Global Agriculture and Food Security Program	Dushanbe
41.	Inoyatov Akbarjon	Head of Department on Corporate Lending	Micro-deposit Organization "IMON International"	Dushanbe
42.	Abdusattor Khaidarov	Director	Neksigol LLC (Agriculture Input Supplier)	Dushanbe
43.	Ilhomuddin Ismoilov	Director	Micro-credit Fund "Sarvati Vakhsh	Bokhtar
44.	Ulugbek Turdaliev	Farmer	Owner of a greenhouse	Khatlon
45.	Mavluda Turdalieva	Farmer	Owners of a greenhouse	Khatlon
46.	Aliev Azimjon	Director	Owner of a cooling and storage facility ALI-1 LLC	Khatlon
47.	Shamsiya Sharipova	Housewife	Backyard grower of TAWA crops	Khatlon
48.	Farida Sharipova	Housewife	Backyard grower of TAWA crops	Khatlon
49.	Miminov Qiyomiddin	Farmer	Owner of a nursery and extensionist	Khatlon
50.	Rustamov Ikrom	Farmer	Owner of orchards	Khatlon
51.	Mavlonov Qurbonnazar	Farmer	Owner of orchards	Khatlon
52.	Tilloev Sayvali	Farmer	Owner of orchards	Khatlon
53.	Usmonov Qudrat	Farmer	Owner of orchards	Khatlon
54.	Parviz Yusupov	Director	Z-Analytics Group	Dushanbe
55.	Aziz Kasymov	Senior Research Analyst	Z-Analytics Group	Dushanbe
56.	Gulchehra Tabarova	Head of Fieldwork Unit	Research company "Zerkalo"	Dushanbe
57.	Abduhalim Mirzoev	Manager of the Data Collection Unit	Research company "Zerkalo"	Dushanbe

ANNEX 4: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

ADB. Tajikistan Country Gender Assessment, 2016 Available at: https://www.adb.org/documents/tajikistan-country-gender-assessment-2016

Feed the Future Tajikistan Baseline and Midline Survey Reports

Feed the Future Tajikistan Cost of Diet Study

Government of Tajikistan National Development Strategy

IFPRI/USAID. Feed the Future Tajikistan. 2015. Zone of Influence Interim Assessment Report. February-March 2015.

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. Available at: https://www.merriam-webster.com/

New USG Global Food Security Strategy (for context moving forward)

Oxfam. 2018. Gender and Rapid care analyses in Khatlon region

Papers and reports from an on-going International Water Management Institute (IWMI) assessment of WUAs in Tajikistan

Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Contract (2015)

Tajikistan Feed the Future Multi-Year Strategy (2011-2015)

TAWA Annual PMEP Report, 2016

TAWA Annual Reports, 2016, 2017 and 2018

TAWA Initial Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, 2015

TAWA Quarterly Reports, 2015 - Present

TAWA Year 1 and 2 Work Plans

USAID Central Asia Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (2015-2019)

USAID Tajikistan Feed the Future Gender Analyses

USAID Tajikistan job diagnostic analysis

World Bank Europe and Central Asia Information Brief: Tajikistan Poverty Update 2007-2009

World Bank website. Available at: Http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/overview

World Bank. Listening to Tajikistan survey, 2015

ANNEX 5: METHODOLOGY

To answer the evaluation questions, the evaluation used a mixed-methods design consisting of both qualitative and quantitative data collection.

A **desk review** to inform the data collection instruments and the analysis was conducted, based on materials related to TAWA and other material provided by USAID/CA, the IP. Documents reviewed include the following: the USAID/CA Regional Development Country Strategy (RDCS) (2015-2019); Tajikistan FTF Multi-Year Strategy; TAWA work plans, annual and quarterly reports, and PMEP plans; Government of Tajikistan National Development Strategy; USAID/Tajikistan FTF Gender Analyses; other project deliverables (e.g., expert reports, publications, studies, research reports, etc.); and any other USAID, U.S. Government independently produced documents relevant to TAWA. (See Annex 5. for list of documents reviewed).

Qualitative data collection was based on semi-structured KIIs and FGDs.

KIIs are a method that will enable the ET to collect information from a wide range of perspectives (public sector, program implementation, non-project subject matter experts, etc.), probe questions in-depth, and verify responses through comparisons of key informants and, if necessary, by going back to the same key informant. A semi-structured interview approach was used, using a set of interview guidelines tailored for different stakeholder types. Not all questions were relevant, since some stakeholders had limited knowledge of the TAWA project. A list of individuals and institutions which the evaluation team met can be found in Annex 4.

Two group interviews were held. One was held with the 12 extension home economists who train WGs. The other was held with an orchard extension advisor hired by the project, and several orchard owners who had benefited from the project.

Key informants represented the following stakeholders: TAWA project, USAID, other USAID FTF projects, other donors, national and local state institutions, private sector companies.

FGDs were held with members of WGs. These are women with kitchen gardens and smallholder farmers who received training. The FGD methodology allowed the ET to look beyond the numbers and gain a richer and more nuanced understanding of project participants' perceptions, allow for probing and follow-up questions, uncover new issues, and generate insights. A total of 15 FGDs were held—10 with WG members and five with men from households where women were WG members. The FGDs addressed EQ1, EQ2, and EQ3.

Quantitative data collection consisted of the following methods:

- ***Secondary data review***. The ET reviewed secondary project performance data as measured by the project's Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP) and FTF Monitoring System (FTFMS) indicators.
- ***Mini-survey***. A telephone phone survey of 120 randomly selected WG members was conducted. The survey followed a script with mostly closed-ended questions. It was conducted in Tajik and Uzbek, as necessary, as there is a sizeable Uzbek population in Khatlon and many of them do not speak Tajik or Russian. The survey covered questions about the activity training received, participation in, and functioning of the WGs; whether and how they have diversified their crops, on-farm production results; and how this is changing their dietary habits, income levels, and control over their income. The survey used the project database of WG members, which has been provided to the ET. The

database contains variables for district, jamoat, village, name of individual, age, telephone number (in a minority of cases), number of family members, three variables for land, cows giving milk, number of farms, and "from poor family."

(The Evaluation Matrix in Annex 2 presents illustrative KII, FGD, and survey questions; data sources; data collection methods; and data analysis methods for each EQ).

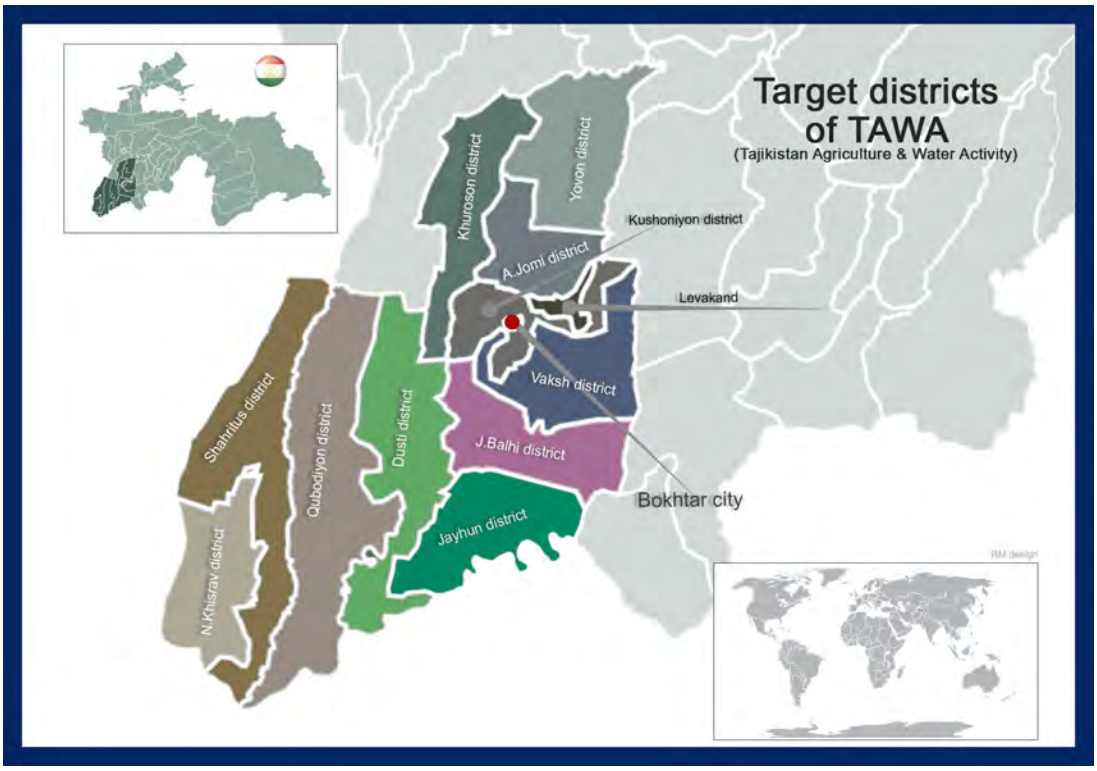
Sampling Methodology

KIIs: The ET obtained a list of stakeholders belonging to groups listed above. From this list of contacts, the ET selected key informants. Additional key informants from outside the list provided by the IP were included, based on recommendations.

FGDs: The ET used purposeful sampling to select five out of the 12 districts where TAWA has activities to conduct the FGDs (see below). The basis for selection was diversity, using south and north, and proximity to the regional capital of Bakhtar. The selection of these regions was based on purposeful criterion sampling, to allow comparisons between north and south, and near and far to the regional center:[19]

Districts where FGDs were conducted were: Bokhtar, Yovon, Sarband, Qubodiyon, Qumsangir

Figure 6: Map of ZOI – Locations of Sample Households



Source: TAWA, FTF Midline Report 2015

[19] Purposeful, criterion sampling was considered more likely to yield a representative sample of districts than random sampling, given the small number of districts.

Once villages in each District were selected, the ET randomly selected female and male members drawn from project data. As much as possible, this will be random. In each district, the three FGDs were conducted, with 8 participants each, for a total of 15 FGDs and 120 participants.

Survey: The IP provided the ET with data on WG members, by cohort, which served as a sampling frame. The sample was taken from a 2016 cohort and a 2017 cohort, as individuals from these groups will have had more time to implement what they learned. From the list of individuals in the database, 20 women from each of the 12 districts were randomly selected. The target was survey 10 per district, with an additional 10 serving as replacements, in case of non-response. In cases where phone numbers were missing the EHEs were asked to contact the WG leaders to obtain phone numbers for the women in their group. This is what occurred and the survey was successful. The survey instruments were developed in English before being translated into Russian and Tajik. The questions took into consideration local and cultural sensitivities, and respondents were assured that their responses will be anonymous, to encourage frank and open answers.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis: Transcripts of each FGD were produced. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis. The analysis allowed the ET to triangulate from multiple data sources and draw inferences from the qualitative data by objectively and systematically identifying specific themes and sub-themes within the data, and assessing their relative importance in answering the EQs, supported by key quotations and examples from the individual KIIs or FGDs.

Quantitative analysis: Quantitative data will be analyzed using established evaluation techniques and industry standard data analysis tools.

To address the question on coordinating with other project/donors (EQ4), the ET will review data on co-financing levels, and non-TAWA projects and investments that are linked to the activity. Because attribution of outcomes is important to understanding the activity's effectiveness and relevance, analysis of the extent that TAWA was decisive in attracting the additional resources, compared to other reasons, will also be conducted.

ANNEX 6: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Key Informant Interviews with Program Implementers

General

1. What are your responsibilities as part of the TAWA project?
2. Is project implementation proceeding according to plan?
3. Please tell us about the training/capacity building—the design, approach, appropriateness.
4. What kind of changes you can bring to project or project should do in order to archive impact goals?

EQ1: To what degree are women beneficiaries adapting improved farming practices and technologies in the long term?

5. How do women accept trainings and what was their main learning?
6. Have you observed women adapting the new farming practices and technologies?
7. What project interventions have been particularly effective and why?
8. What, if any, project interventions have *not* been particularly effective and why?
9. What barriers to adaptation are you aware of, if any?
10. What, if any, steps has the program taken to address those barriers?
11. Have you observed any differences across district, age, gender, etc.?

EQ 2: To what degree are TAWA's efforts in crop diversification impacting nutritional outcomes both through diet diversity and improved income?

12. Have you observed women growing new and different crops?
13. Are you aware of any obstacles to them diversifying what crops they grow?
14. Has crop diversification led to increased income? To dietary diversity? Why or why not?
15. What barriers to adaptation are you aware of, if any?
16. What, if any, steps has the program taken to address those barriers?
17. Have you observed any differences across district, age, gender, etc.?

EQ 3: How sustainable and effective is TAWA's use of temporary informal women's groups to deliver agricultural extension services?

18. The program provides training both via WGs and directly. What has been the experience of using WGs? Can you comment on the pros and cons of using WGs?
19. How you understand women's empowerment? In your view, how has the use of WGs changed women's attitudes or increased women's empowerment?
20. What are your perceptions on how women's involvement in this program may have influenced the amount of time they spend on:
    a. Activities within the home versus activities outside the home?

b. Care-giving activities (exclusive breast-feeding, food preparation, child-feeding, quality time spent with children)?
c. How are care giving activities distributed within the family? Did the project change or improve the situation?

21. What are your perceptions on how this program may be influencing other household members' attitudes towards women's contribution to:
    a. Activities within the home versus activities outside the home?
    b. Care-giving activities?
    c. Decision-making?
22. Are there any efforts being put in place to ensure some continuity of activities at the end of the program period?
23. What do you think about sustainability of project interventions? Did women will continue new practices in the future?

EQ4: How well is the activity coordinating with other USAID FTF agricultural and health activities, other donors, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders as applicable (e.g., universities and NGOs) to leverage resources, increase impact, and prevent duplication of efforts?

24. With what other projects/initiatives has TAWA coordinated its activities? (USAID FTF agricultural and health activities, other donors, the private sector, etc.)
25. In what ways have you coordinated? (sharing knowledge, resources, avoiding duplication, etc.)
26. In what ways has the coordination benefited TAWA as well as the other programs?
27. How much overlap is there between the program activities and government-sponsored programs?

Wrap-up

28. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us

Key Informant Interviews with Government Stakeholders

General

1. How familiar are you with the project activities?
2. What is your level of engagement with the TAWA project?
3. Overall, what do you think of the project, compared to similar projects you are aware of? (design, implementation, impact, etc.)
4. What kind of changes are you expecting as a result of cooperation with project?

EQ1: To what degree are women beneficiaries adapting improved farming practices and technologies in the long term?

5. What do you believe is necessary to improving farming practices and technology in Tajikistan in the long term?
6. How well do you think the project is doing at helping women, specifically, change their farming practices and technologies?
7. Do you think any changes resulting from the project activities will last beyond the project? If yes, please explain in which aspect, how it will be scaled up and adopted?

EQ 2: To what degree are TAWA's efforts in crop diversification impacting nutritional outcomes both through diet diversity and improved income?

8. How well do you think the project is doing at helping women, specifically, diversify their crops?
9. Are you aware of any effects at this point in time in terms of improved nutrition or income?
10. What is the government vision on crop diversification and improving income?

EQ 3: How sustainable and effective is TAWA's use of temporary informal women's groups to deliver agricultural extension services?

11. The program provides training both via WGs and directly. What do you think of the project's use of WGs for delivering extension services? Is it an effective approach? What could be improved?
12. As far as you are aware, has the use of WGs changed women's attitudes or increased women's empowerment?
13. Are there any efforts being put in place to ensure some continuity of activities at the end of the program period?
14. Does the government have any vision/plans to scale up this approach? If yes how would it look?

EQ4: How well is the activity coordinating with other USAID FTF agricultural and health activities, other donors, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders as applicable (e.g., universities and NGOs) to leverage resources, increase impact, and prevent duplication of efforts?

15. Are you aware of any coordination efforts between the project and other projects/activities? (USAID FTF agricultural and health activities, other donors, the private sector, etc.)
16. How effective do you believe the coordination is?
17. How we can enhance coordination?
18. How much overlap is there between the program activities and government-sponsored programs?

Key Informant Interviews with Stakeholders from Other Projects/Donors

General

1. Please describe your program/activities as they relate to food security, agricultural practices, women's empowerment, etc.
2. What is your level of engagement with (or awareness of) the TAWA project?
3. Overall, what do you think of the TAWA project, compared to similar projects you are aware of (in terms of design, implementation, impact, etc.)?
4. What do you expect the project to achieve?

EQ1: To what degree are women beneficiaries adapting improved farming practices and technologies in the long term?

5. What is you experience of farmers (especially women) adopting new technologies and practices after project end?
6. How well do you think the project is doing at helping women, specifically, change their farming practices and technologies?
7. Do you think any changes the project activities have made will last once the project ends?
8. Any suggestion for what a project like TAWA can do to sustain its activities?

EQ 2: To what degree are TAWA's efforts in crop diversification impacting nutritional outcomes both through diet diversity and improved income?

9. What is your vision of crop diversification and improving income in rural areas of Tajikistan?
10. How well do you think the project is doing at helping women, specifically, diversify their crops?
11. Are you aware of any effects at this point in time in terms of improved nutrition or income?

EQ3: How sustainable and effective is TAWA's use of temporary informal women's groups to deliver agricultural extension services?

12. The program provides training both via WGs and directly. What do you think of the project's use of WGs for delivering extension services? Is it an effective approach?
13. As far as you are aware, has the use of WGs changed women's attitudes or increased women's empowerment?
14. Are there any efforts being put in place to ensure some continuity of activities at the end of the program period?
15. What is your view on future sustainability of WGs? What should be done in order to sustain the activity after project end?

EQ4: How well is the activity coordinating with other USAID FTF agricultural and health activities, other donors, the private sector, and other relevant stakeholders as applicable (e.g., universities and NGOs) to leverage resources, increase impact, and prevent duplication of efforts?

16. What kind, if any coordination have you had between your project/activities and TAWA?
17. What kind of coordination platform existing at the moment in region?
18. Was this coordination managed or initiated by the GoT or by the projects/donors themselves?
19. How would you rate the level of coordination taking place at the moment?
20. What is your recommendation concerning improving coordination?
21. Could there be more or better coordination taking place?
22. How much overlap is there between the program activities and government-sponsored programs?

Wrap-up

23. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us?

Telephone Survey

If possible, obtain data on when respondent joined WG and how many trainings attended from the data

Hello, my name is _____ and I am a researcher. Am I speaking with _____**? [If not the same person as on the list, ask if the target respondent can come to the phone]**

I am calling you to ask you some questions about the Tajikistan Agriculture and Water Activity program, implemented by USAID and Chemonics, because we understand that you participated in the training [description using the terminology the respondents are familiar with]. Do you have a few minutes to talk?

Did you, in fact, take the training? **[if they answer "No", thank them and conclude the interview]**

I should tell you that your answers to my questions will be kept anonymous – which means we will not include your name anywhere in our report. The whole interview should not take more than **[15]** minutes. Are you willing to be interviewed? Thank you. Please answer the questions as accurately as you can.

Time the start and end of the interview and note it here.

General questions

First, I have some general questions:

1) Do you think the [TAWA training] is a good idea for people like yourself?

   Yes/no/DK

2) How important is it to help women in Khatlon province on the farm and in the kitchen?

   a. Very important
   b. Somewhat important
   c. Not important
   d. DK

3) Please tell me, what was the best thing about the training?

4) What could be improved with the training?

5) What were the most important new things you learned – please name up to three.

EQ1: To what degree are women beneficiaries adapting improved farming practices and technologies in the long term?

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about farming your plot.

6) With regard to improving your farming, have you applied what you learned…

   Yes (if yes go to Q6.1
   No

7) How often you applied what you learning or learned:
   On a regular basis?
   On a temporary basis, and no longer?
   Not at all? **[skip to Q9]**

8) If on a temporary basis, what were the reasons?

   Know how to applied
   Think that its very effective way
   Want to apply something new
   Want to compare theory with practice
   Please add more

9) If not at all, what were the reasons?

   Didn't understand what to do
   Not interested
   Its not relevant with what I do

10) With the new crops, are you (check all that apply):

    a. consuming them at home
    b. selling them
    c. giving them away,
    d. not using them
    e. consuming and selling
    f. consuming and given to neighbors
    g. others

11) Overall, on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 = ineffective and 5 = highly effective, how effective do you think the trainings were in helping you with your farming practice?

    ____

EQ3: To what degree are TAWA's efforts in crop diversification impacting nutritional outcomes both through diet diversity and improve income?

12) Compared to before the training, talking about eating vegetables at home, are you eating

a. The same amount
b. More
c. Less
d. DK

13) With respect to your diet, to what extent have you changed the meals you prepare from before you took the training?

a. A little bit
b. A lot
c. Not at all

14) Do you believe as it improved your diet?

Yes/no/DK

15) Do you believe that the training has improved your living standards?

a. By a lot
b. By a little
c. Not at all

16) Do you believe that the training has improved your income?

a. By a lot
b. By a little
c. Not at all

17) Do you believe it has improved your confidence as a woman in making decisions?

Yes/no/DK

18) Compared to before the training, do you time to do your other work?

a. Less
b. More
c. Same

19) Compared with 3 years ago, would you say that living conditions in your village/community have:

    a. Gotten better
    b. Gotten worse
    c. Stayed the same
    d. Don't know

20) Compared with 3 years ago, would you say that your own household living conditions have:

    a. Gotten better
    b. Gotten worse
    c. Stayed the same
    d. Don't know

21) Do you think the project training you took contributed positively to your household living conditions?

    Yes/no/dk

EQ2: How sustainable and effective is TAWA's use of temporary informal women's groups to deliver agricultural extension services?

Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about the women's group you were a part of

22) Do you like be a part of Women group?

    Yes/no/DK

23) In your opinion, was learning new things by being part of a women's group useful:

    Yes/no/DK

24) If yes, what was the most useful thing about learning via a group? **[ask them to rate all answers from 1 to 5]**

    a. Decision making
    b. New tool on production
    c. Join production
    d. Join selling
    e. Access to the services
    f. Access to information

25) If no, what was the reason?

a. Not interested
b. Misunderstanding in the group
c. New things are not relevant to what I do

26) Do you meet together as a group, even when there is no trainer present?

a. Once per week
b. Once per month
c. Only when we have training
d. Never
e. When Women Group leader invites to come

27) Since the training ended, have discussed with other women from your group the topics you were trained in?

Yes/no/dk

28) Since the training ended, have sought additional advice from the trainer on topics you were trained in?

Yes/no/dk

29) Since the training ended, have you shared what you learned with people who were not part of your group?

Yes
No

Other questions

30) Marital status?

a. Married and husband lives at home
b. Married but husband lives abroad
c. Single
d. Divorced / separated
e. Widowed

31) Who makes decisions in your household regarding how money is spent?

a. I do
b. Husband
c. Mother in law
d. Other person
e. I and my husband together

32) Who makes decisions in your household regarding the types and amounts of foods eaten in the household?
    a. I do
    b. Husband
    c. Mother in law
    d. Other person
    e. I and my husband together

Interviewer comments

TAWA Mid Term Evaluation Tajikistan 2018

Community Level Qualitative Component: Facilitation Guide

Introduction

The Community Level Qualitative Component of the TAWA mid - term evaluation in Tajikistan will consist of focus group discussions (FGDs) with a cross-section of project participants and their partners to explore the following questions:

General

- Target agricultural production and consumption practices among farmers to improve economic and nutritional statuses of households in the Khatlon region
- Improve vegetable, orchard, and dairy production by introducing new technologies, conducting training, and promoting the use of greenhouses and supply chains
- Implement more effective irrigation methods to improve farmers' access to water
- Promote public outreach and education in how to manage water resources and reduce waste

Project-specific

- A focus on both men and women, recognizing that constraints exist for both male and female farmers (including the needs to migrate due to lack of jobs with earning potential);
- Reduce the confidence gap by developing activities that address women's low confidence at all levels of household, farm, community, and government;
- Reduce the resources gap to ensure that both women and men farmers have access to extension services, credit, and agricultural inputs; and
- Address time-saving measures for improved technologies

Site selection

Purposive sampling

A set of sampling criteria was informed by discussions with TAWA staff and partners, balancing feasibility with a desire to include communities with elements of the following characteristics:

1. Range of districts: Including 5 of the 12 districts that TAWA has been implemented (most WGs are in Bokhtar, Yovon, Sarband, Qubodiyon, Qumsangir);
2. Range of ethnic and language backgrounds: at least 1 community with large Uzbek population as the rest tend to be majority Tajik;
3. Range of geographical conditions (related to ease of market access): at least 1 mountainous/remote community and 1 peri-urban/easy access community;
4. Range women group strengths, as determined by TAWA staff and partners: at least 1 community with a strong women group and 1 with a weaker women group.

In addition, where possible, we wanted to avoid villages where the quantitative survey was being administered (to avoid research fatigue). Taking these criteria into consideration, the table below shows the four villages that were selected for the community level qualitative component:

Table 1: Criteria and selected villages for community level qualitative component

Criteria	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5
Suggested FGD by sex and year of established	1. 2016, Women – FGD 2.2017, Women-FGD 3. 2016, Men-FGD	1. 2017, Women – FGD 2. 2017, Men-FGD 3. 2016, Women-FGD	1. 2016, Men-FGD 2. 2017, Women-FGD 3. 2017, Women-FGD	1. 2017, Women-FGD 2. 2016, Women-FGD 3. 2016, Men-FGD	1. 2017, Women FGD 2. 2016, Men-FGD 3. 2016, Women-FGD
Suggested Village	**1. Navruz village, jamoat Navbahor (2016)**	**1. Navkaram village, jamoat G. Yusupova (2017)**	**1. Bohturobod village, Sarband (2016)**	**1. Ittofoq village, jamoat Tahti Sangin (2017)**	**1. Vaksh village, Jamoat Istiklol (2017)**
	2. Navjavon village, jamoat Mehnatobod (2017)	2. Gulafshon village, jamoat Chorgul (2017)	2. Eshonobod village, Guliston jamoat (2017)	2. Orzu village, jamoat Tahti Sangin (2016)	2. Aini village, Jaihun (2016)
	3. Kizilbairak villiage, jamoat Mehnatobod (2016)	**3. Tagoibodi poyon 2 village, jamoat Obshoron (2016)**	**Oqgaza village, jamoat Guliston (2017)**	**3. Sadridin Aini village, Jamoat Tahti Sangin (2016)**	**3. Bolshevik village, Jaihun (2016)**
District	Bokhtar	Yovon	Sarband	Qubodiyon	Qumsangir (Jaihun)
Ethnic	Tajik	Tajik	Tajik	Tajik	Tajik
Complementary USAID interventions	F2F project are zone	F2F project are zone	F2F project are zone	F2F project are zone	F2F project are zone
Strength of WG	-	-	-	-	-
Potential replacement	Jomi village, jamoat Zargar. (2016)	Furkat-1 village, jamoat Sitorai Surh (2016)	Mehrobod village, jamoat Guliston (2017)	Ittifok village, jamoat Takhti Sangin (2017)	Rudaki vllage, Jaihun (2016)

Participant selection criteria

At each site, FGDs will be conducted with WG members; male non-WG members who pass training; and husbands of WG members. FGDs will need to consist of between 8 and 10 participants. Should the available group be too small or large, arrangements should be made to meet the required size. A list of randomly selected WG members will be provided to the consultants but the participants of the FGDs will have to be organised on the first day in the village with the village and producer group leaders.

Overview of methods

FGD Tool	Objectives	Link to impact/outcome and areas of interest	Who
Ladder of Life	• Changes in opportunities for smallholder farmers • Availability of agricultural and market services. Who uses these? Who is excluded? What are the barriers to use for women? • Benefits and disadvantages/risks of WG, and barriers to entry	• Quality of income: stability, predictability, regularity of income • Quality of market services • Resilience strategies • Perceptions of WGs and collective action	• Female WG members • Female non-WG members
Power spectrum	Meaningful decision-making at the group/community level, specifically: • Women's influence in mixed-sex spaces at community level • Women's power beyond their group and community • Do women influence community decisions that will improve their well-being? How? Who?	• Ability of women to engage in decision-making at community • Knowledge of rights and relationship between legal interventions and well-being	• Female WG members • Husbands of WG members

Schedule date, time and group

Sample

Location	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Bohtar	**12/11/18 1. 9:00 2. 14:00**	**13/11/18 3. 15:00**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Yovon	**-**	**-**	**14/11/18 1. 9:00 2. 14:00**	**15/11/18 3. 8:00**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Sarband	**-**	**-**	**-**	**15/11/18 1. 15:00**	**16/11/18 2. 9:00 3. 14:00**	**-**	**-**
Qubodiyon	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**17/11/18 1. 9:00 2. 14:00**	**18/11/18 3. 9:00**
Qumsangir (Jaihun)	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**18/11/18 1. 14:00**
	19/11/18 2. 9:00 3. 14:00	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**

Pre-field Preparation

Example schedule

DAY	ACTIVITIES		PARTICIPANTS
DAY 1	Morning	**FGD 1 Ladder of Life**	8-10 males + non members 8-10 female WG members
		FGD 3 –Power spectrum	8-10 female WG members
		Final debrief + writing observations *Data collection* *Quality monitoring*	

Field preparations and materials

The FGDs are best held in a closed space, for instance in a village hall or the school. The participants need to feel safe and confident, and we need to have the right participants for each exercise. Therefore, it is important to avoid interference of other people who are not invited to the exercise, and kindly send them away.

Most of the exercises are done on flipchart sheets on a table or on the floor. You can best remove all chairs so that people can walk freely around the flipcharts. They will make the exercise easier. A standard set of materials needed **per village** is:

- 1 flipchart pack
- Flipchart pens
- 1 roll of tape
- Pack of post-its
- Half a pack coloured A4 paper in 2 colours
- Print-outs of the note-taking formats
- Print-out of the manual
- Personal notebooks and 2 pens
- Camera or smart-phone

Facilitation rules and research ethics

FGDs should be completed in 90 minutes – maximum 2 hours at most. You also will need to be mindful of people's ability and encourage all attendees to participate and create a good process. To enable this, the **facilitation principles and rules** below should be followed:

1. Develop your facilitation materials, including preparation of all flipcharts, beforehand. This will help you manage the time and avoid you wasting participants' time with finding out what you need to ask.

2. Build trust and make sure participants feel safe and comfortable before starting the exercise. If there is any risk or threat, interrupt the exercise immediately.
3. **Avoid using the word evaluation, as it is not well-understood and can be misunderstood.**
4. Make sure you have the right participants in your group! Ask outsiders (or those not invited) kindly to leave the group. Make sure the village leaders know and agree with this rule in advance by doing a village entry with them.
5. Listen to the silent voices, and regularly check if they agree or disagree with what is said. Avoid the loud voices overpowering the more silent ones. So be aware of the dynamics in the group!
6. Turn the flipcharts towards the participants and make sure they can read everything. If possible let them help you write things down on the post-its and flipcharts.
7. If participants cannot read or write use symbols and pictures instead of words where you can. If you must use words make sure to explain what it says.
8. Always ask permission to take photos and make sure these photos cannot be connected to anybody in particular.

Tool guidelines

Before each FGD with community members

1. Complete FGD roster (Annex 2). Often easiest when participants arrive.
2. Read consent statement:

Read: Thank you for joining us today. We are going to be discussing men's and women's different roles and livelihoods in the village and how they have changed over the years. We will also be looking at processes by which men and women here have found ways to move out of poverty or have fallen back into poverty. This focus group is part of a study being conducted with separate groups of women and men here in the community and elsewhere in Khatlon region, Tajikistan

Your participation today is voluntary and confidential. We will not be using your names in any publication with the information that we collect today. We request that you respect the confidentially of the others participating today by not repeating outside this room some of the sensitive issues that will be said during the discussion. We hope that each of you will feel free to express your opinions fully and share your own experiences with the topics that we will be discussing. You are of course each free not to answer any question and to leave the discussion whenever you like. However, we very much hope you remain for the entire discussion and enjoy reflecting on many of our questions. Your views and experiences are very important to us, there are no right or wrong answers. We cannot promise that you and your community will benefit directly from this study, but the information that we are collecting will help to improve learning in your country and in other countries.

We would like your permission to take photographs and these may be shared in reports. If you prefer we do not take photos please let us know.

Are there any questions before we begin?

Ladder of Life (1.5 hours)

- Female group, mix of WG members and non-WG members

Area	Focus Questions
	REMINDER: Fill out FGD Roster. Consent statement.
INTRO	**READ:** With these questions, we will be discussing the different types of people who live in your community, and introducing an activity called the Ladder of Life. This activity is designed to provide a general picture of the different wellbeing groups that live in the village. We will also explore how and why some individuals and households here are able to move up the ladder -- and also how and why people sometimes struggle and fall back.
1	First I would like you to tell me about local people at the top step. How would you describe the men and women who have the highest quality of life in this community? How do they live? How can you tell that a person or household is the best off? ***Note for facilitator:*** *If characteristics of the step are not flowing freely from the group, perhaps inquire how people on this step would be living, the types of homes and other property they have, their level of* ***self-confidence****, ways they earn a living, their education, the* ***types of relationships they have with family members and others****, the different places they go, and so forth. Additional characteristics will emerge from later discussions, and these should be added to the steps throughout the exercise.*
2	Next, we will move all the way down to the very bottom step, which we'll call step 1. How would you describe the people here who live at the bottom—or the worst-off in the community? What is a person's life like who is on the bottom step or step 1? Including situation on nutrition, level of income, care work distribution and decision making level in the family?
3	Let's move on. What about people who are on the step **just above** the people who are at the bottom? How would you describe individuals and households here at step 2? Including situation on nutrition, level of income, care work distribution and decision making level in the family?
4	Now, let's move up from step 2. Does this community have a step between step 2 and the highest step? [If so,] How would people living on step 3 be described? Including situation on nutrition, level of income, care work distribution and decision making level in the family? ***Note for facilitator:*** *Keep inquiring about additional steps until the best off on the top step is reached. Once the ladder visual is complete, number each of the steps so that*

Area	Focus Questions
	step 1 is the bottom step or worst off. Numbering the steps will make the following discussion easier.
5	Okay, now I would like you to recall the community 5 years ago. Would we need to add a new step to the top or bottom? Or would we need to remove a step? ***Note for facilitator:*** *If a new step is required, please add the step and document the characteristics. Do not change any of the existing steps, merely note the differences on the chart. If another step at the bottom is added for 10 years ago, please label this step 1, and re-label the other steps above it step 2, 3, 4 and so forth. The bottom step should always be step 1 so as not to confuse the group or the comparative analysis later. Also please do not create a separate ladder for ten years ago.*
6	What is the step or category of the ladder where people in this village are no longer considered poor? Including situation on nutrition, level of income, care work distribution and decision making level in the family? ***Note for facilitator****: Please note this on the ladder by drawing a line and labeling it as the "community poverty line"*
7	Next, let's get a rough sense of where people in this village fall on the ladder. To make this easier, let's say that these 20 seeds represent all of the households in the community. Let's begin with the step where the most households would be -- which step is that and what share of the 20 seeds should we place there to represent the households on that step in the community?
8	How many seeds do you want to allocate to the other steps in the ladder? ***Note for facilitator:*** *The number of steps and the distributions of households are determined by consensus among the focus group members. If one of the FGD members sorts the seeds, the facilitator needs to guide a careful discussion on whether there is agreement on the distribution. Please do not show any illustrations of ladders that are not created by the group. Also be sure to recreate the ladder visual, including what the facilitator noted as the traits, in addition to the notes taken by the note taker.*
9	What share of the 20 seeds would you place on each step to represent the households of this community 5 years ago? ***Note for facilitator:*** *Add a column beside the table for them to put the seeds for 5 years ago. The flipchart should look like the image below.*
10	Now we're going to focus on how individuals and their households improve nutrition, improve income and decision making level in order to move out from poverty? How have households from this community moved their household **up** the ladder?
11	In what ways do local groups and projects support women and men to improve their cropping practices and move up the ladder?

Area	Focus Questions
12	Do women groups support women to improve their livelihoods, cropping practice and improve nutrition? In what ways?
13	Do all women in the community benefit from trainings and project interventions or only members? How effective is the WG for providing extension services? How does it compare to other types of extension services, which is available in the community?
14	How can WGs be strengthened to provide extension services? How sustainable is the WG model for providing extension services? What has been put place to ensure the continuity of WG extension services after the project ends?
15	Are there any barriers to women in joining the women group or their activities? Which activity features were more/less effective in promoting WG functioning?
16	What other support is available to women and men to help them to improve crop diversification, nutrition and income and move their households up the ladder?
17	Are extension services available to both men and women in a household? Who accesses these services more and why? Are there any barriers to accessing these services?
18	How have farmers changed cropping practices related to such things as production practices, technologies, & types of crops? Why?
19	What are the benefits from these changes in cropping practices?
20	What are barriers to changing cropping practices? What has the activity done to address these barriers?
21	What was most useful about project? How can it be improved?
22	Who are not a part of WG and not pass training what they think about project?
23	What is the difference between WG members and families who are not project participants? What kind of services they received, how affective this services? How care work and empowerment of women are going on in this families.
24	In this community, what can people do or where can they turn in times of hardship, like if there is bad weather or a bad crop? What prevents them from failing down the ladder?

Area	Focus Questions
25	I would like to conclude the focus group by asking you to think about the future. What changes would you like to see in your community that would make the biggest difference in the lives of the poorest community members?

Thank you for being so generous with your time today and for sharing your views and experiences. **Do you have any questions for us?**

Note for facilitator: *Make sure everything is legible on the flipcharts and then take a good picture.*

Power spectrum and women's rights (30-45 minutes)

- FGD 3 – Female WG Members
- FGD 4 –Husbands of WG members and/or males

This tools will help in interactive way received answer about all activities which is going on in the communities. With comparing 5 years back we can see did project bring any changes to the life of project beneficiaries and village too. Did poor families have access to project interventions, how project affected to their life. To find out what other projects and services available in community and how cooperation and synergy between project going on

#	**Focus Questions**
0	**Note to facilitator:** Pre-prepare a flipchart like the image below in local language.

Farmers have <u>little capacity</u> to speak out and influence community decisions	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	Women have <u>great capacity</u> to speak out and influence community decisions

1 Now I'm interested in your views about women's capacity to speak out and help to make or influence decisions that affect them and their community. On the left side are **individual women with little capacity to speak out** and to influence decisions at the community level. At the other end are **individual women who have the greatest capacity to influence community decisions that affect their well-being.**

How have farmers diversified their crops as a result of the activity?
How as the activity affected the intra-household decision-making within female farmers' households?
How has the activity affected WG members' participation in community leadership positions?

2 I'd like to ask you to vote privately to this question. Where would you position the majority of the women in your community today? Write a number between 1 to 10 on a post-it note and submit it secretly.

Note to facilitator: *Take the votes and place them on the scale.*

3 In which category are most of the answers? Why do you think that is?

#	Focus Questions
4	***Note to facilitator:*** *Add another row to the scale as shown in the diagram below*

Famers have <u>little capacity</u> to speak out and influence community decisions	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	Women have <u>great capacity</u> to speak out and influence community decisions
Responses Men Women											
Five years ago											

5 I'd like to ask you to vote privately again. But now I want you to imagine your community ten years ago. Where would you position the majority of the women in your community 5 years ago? Write a number between 1 to 10 on a post-it note and submit it secretly.
Note to facilitator: *Take the votes and place them on the scale.*

6 Is there a difference between the two scales? Why, why not?

7 What has changed for women in this community in the last 5 years years? What new things have women been able to do that were not possible before?

8 What strategies do women use in your community to influence big decisions or important institutions? Give me some examples.
Did W G work help women of empowerment and decision making in the family and community?
How men react to women empowerment and distribution of care work

When women speak out in public, how do others in the community react?
How do their own families react?

9 How have women worked together to bring about improvements in your community? Give some examples.

10 Finally, I would like to conclude the focus group by asking you to think about the future. What changes would you like to see in your community that would make the biggest difference in the lives of women and girls?

#	Focus Questions
12	Thank you for being so generous with your time today and for sharing your views and experiences. **Do you have any questions for us?**

Note for facilitator: *Make sure everything is legible on the flipcharts and then take a good picture.*

Focus Group Roster

District		**Date**	
Village		**Time**	
Facilitator		**Note-taker**	
FGD tool(s)		**-**	-

FGD members (family name not needed)	**Age**	**Marital Status**	**Level of education completed**	**# of children**	**# of household members**	**Primary Occupation**
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						
13.						
14.						

ANNEX 7: TELEPHONE SURVEY FINDINGS – WOMEN'S GROUP MEMBERS

1. Do you think the [TAWA training] is a good idea for people like yourself?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Yes	120	100.0	100.0
No	0	0.0	100.0
Total	120	100.0	-

2. How important is it to help women in Khatlon province on the farm and in the kitchen?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Very important	114	96.6	96.6
Not important	4	3.4	100.0
Total	118	100.0	-

3. Please tell me, what was the best thing about the training?

Qualitative responses

4. What could be improved with the training?

Results invalid. Respondents misunderstood the question.

5. What were the most important new things you learned – please name up to three?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Canning	55	-	-
Drying apricots	34	-	-

6. With regard to improving your farming, have you applied what you learned?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Yes	118	98.3	98.3
No	2	1.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	-

7. How often have you applied what you learned?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Applied on a regular basis	103	87.3	87.3
Applied on a temporary basis	13	11.0	98.3
Did not apply at all	2	1.7	100.0
Total	118	100.0	-

8. If on a temporary basis, what were the reasons?			
Answer Choices	**N**	**Percent**	**Cum.**
Know already	3	30.0	30.0
Think it is effective	1	10.0	40.0
Want to apply something new	4	40.0	80.0
Want to compare theory with practice	2	20.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	-

9. If not at all, what were the reasons?			
Answer Choices	**N**	**Percent**	**Cum.**
Didn't understand	1	50.0	50.0
Not interested	1	50.0	100.0
Total	2	100.0	-

10. With the new crops, are you (check all that apply):			
Answer Choices	**N**	**Percent**	**Cum.**
Not using	2	1.7	25.4
Consuming only	28	23.7	23.7
Consuming and giving away	30	25.4	100.0
Consuming and selling	58	49.2	74.6
Total	118	100	-

11. Overall, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 = ineffective and 5 = highly effective, how effective do you think the trainings were in helping you with your farming practice?			
Answer Choices	**N**	**Percent**	**Cum.**
Quite effective	11	9.2	9.2
Highly effective	109	90.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	-

12. Compared to before the training, talking about eating vegetables at home, are you eating:			
Answer Choices	**N**	**Percent**	**Cum.**
Same	4	3.5	3.5
More	45	38.8	42.2
Less	67	57.8	100.0
Total	116	100.0	-

13. With respect to your diet, to what extent have you changed the meals you prepare from before you took the training?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
A little	25	20.8	20.8
A lot	93	77.5	98.3
Not at all	2	1.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

14. Do you believe as it improved your diet?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Yes	117	97.5	97.5
No	2	1.7	99.1
Don't know	1	0.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

15. Do you believe that the training has improved your living standards?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
A lot	115	95.8	95.8
A little	4	3.3	99.2
Not at all	1	0.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

16. Do you believe that the training has improved your income?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
A lot	111	93	93
A little	7	6	98
Not at all	2	2	100
Total	120	100	

17. Do you believe it has improved your confidence as a woman in making decisions?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Yes	116	96.7	96.7
Don't know	4	3.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

18. Compared to before the training, do you time to do your other work?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Less	35	29.2	29.2
More	72	60.0	89.2
Same	13	10.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

19. Compared with three years ago, would you say that living conditions in your village/community have:

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Improved	117	98.3	98.3
Same	1	0.8	99.2
Don't know	1	0.8	100.0
Total	119	100.0	

20. Compared with three years ago, would you say that your own household living conditions have:

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Improved	118	98.3	98.3
Same	2	1.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

21. Do you think the project training you took contributed positively to your household living conditions?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Yes	117	97.5	97.5
No	2	1.7	99.2
Don't know	1	0.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

22. Do you like be a part of the Women's Group?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Yes	118	98.3	98.3
No	2	1.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

23. In your opinion, was learning new things by being part of a Women's Group useful?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Yes	119	99.2	99.2
Don't know	1	0.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

24. If yes, what was the most useful thing about learning via a group? (more than one response possible)

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Decision-making	22	18.3	18.0
New production tools	102	85.0	103.3
Total	122	123.3	

25. If no, what was the reason?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.

No responses

26. Do you meet together as a group, even when there is no trainer present?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Weekly	59	49.2	49.2
Monthly	37	30.8	80.0
Only for training	7	5.8	85.8
Only when leader invites	12	10.0	95.8
Never	5	4.2	100.0
Total	120	100	

27. Since the training ended, have discussed with other women from your group the topics you were trained in?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Yes	102	85.0	85.0
No	18	15.0	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

28. Since the training ended, have sought additional advice from the trainer on topics you were trained in?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Yes	103	85.8	85.8
No	17	14.2	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

29. Since the training ended, have you shared what you learned with people who were not part of your group?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Yes	115	95.8	95.8
No	5	4.2	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

30. Marital status?

Answer Choices	N	Percent	Cum.
Husband at home	93	77.5	77.5
Husband abroad	9	7.5	85.0
Single	5	4.2	89.2
Divorced/separated	7	5.8	95.0
Widowed	6	5.0	100.0
Total	120	100.0	

31. Who makes decisions in your household regarding how money is spent?			
Answer Choices	**N**	**Percent**	**Cum.**
Respondent	29	24.2	24.2
Husband	38	31.7	55.8
Mother-in-law	15	12.5	68.3
Other person	11	9.2	77.5
Husband + respondent	27	22.5	100.0
Total	120	100.0	