



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

WEST AFRICA TRADE AND INVESTMENT HUB MID-TERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Final Report

May 2022

DISCLAIMER

This report is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It was prepared by the Analytical Support Services and Evaluations for Sustainable Systems (ASSESS) activity, a partnership of the United States Department of Agriculture/Foreign Agriculture Service (USDA/FAS), the University of Rhode Island (URI), and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). The content of this report does not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared for the USAID/Nigeria under the Analytical Support Services and Evaluations for Sustainable Systems (ASSESS) Project (Project No. 624-P-14-00004). It was prepared by Terence Lacey (PhD), Noel Kossonou, Ali Diallo, Yacouba Romba, and Abdoulaye Falla, and supported by the ASSESS Team. We would also like to thank Professor Kofi Asiedu for providing a secondary review of the report.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
ACRONYMS	v
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	vii
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND	1
1.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF WEST AFRICAN TRADE AND INVESTMENT	2
1.3 COUNTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION STRATEGY	4
1.4 EVALUATION PURPOSE	5
1.5 EVALUATION QUESTIONS	5
2.0 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH	7
2.1 EVALUATION APPROACH	7
2.2 METHODOLOGY	7
2.3 SAMPLING AND SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS	8
2.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS	8
2.5 DATA ANALYSIS	9
2.6 EVALUATION LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES	9
2.7 GENERAL DATA COLLECTION LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES	10
3.0 EVALUATION QUESTION ONE	12
4.0 EVALUATION QUESTION TWO	22
5.0 EVALUATION QUESTION THREE	31
6.0 EVALUATION QUESTION FOUR	35
7.0 EVALUATION QUESTION FIVE	45
8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	53
8.1 CONCLUSIONS	53
8.2 LESSONS LEARNED	54
8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	56
8.3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WATIH	56
8.3.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USAID	57
ANNEXES	59
ANNEX A: SAMPLING METHOD	59
ANNEX B: SCOPE OF WORK (SOW)	61
	ii

ANNEX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE	78
ANNEX D: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM	100
ANNEX E: LIST OF GRANTS APPROVED	102
ANNEX F: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED	111
ANNEX G: SUMMARY OF RESULTS TO DATE	116
ANNEX H – COUNTRY PROFILES	119
ANNEX I: PROFILE OF THE EVALUATION TEAM	126
ANNEX J: WATIH PROJECT DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	128

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: WATIH Project Components	1
Table 2: KIIS Sampling and Selection	8
Table 3: Evaluation Limitation and Mitigation Measures	10
Table 4: Selected Indicators on Cumulative Performance, September 2019 – March 2022	22

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: WATIH Theory of Change	4
Figure 2: WATIH Results Framework	5
Figure 3: Number of Monthly Grant Approvals, December 2020 – March 2022	12
Figure 4: Value of Grant Awards and Co-Investments made during December 2019-March 2022	15

ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directive System
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AFEX	Associated Foreign Exchange
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
ASSESS	Analytical Support Services and Evaluations for Sustainable Systems
ATI	African Trade and Investment Program
BDS	Business Development Service
BDSP	Business Development Service Provider
BIDC	Bank for Investment and Development
BOAD	Banque Ouest Africaine De Développement /West African Development Bank
CBC	Catalytic Business Concept
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DFI	Development Finance Institution
DFID	Department for International Development
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EOI	Expression of Interest
ET	Evaluation Team
ETLS	ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FY	Fiscal Year
GAP	Good Agricultural Practice
GUC	Grant Under Contract
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
KII	Key Informant Interview
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MFI	Micro-Finance Institution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPI	New Partnership Initiative
PNI	Partnership for Natural Ingredients

PPP	Public-Private Partnership
PSD	Private Sector Development
PSE	Private Sector Engagement
R&D	Research and Development
RDCS	Regional Development Cooperation Strategy
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SOW	Scope of Work
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TA	Technical Assistance
TOC	Theory of Change
UK	United Kingdom
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US	United States
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USG	United States Government
UEMOA	Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine/ West African Economic and Monetary Union
VIP	Very Important Person
WAFM	West Africa Food Markets
WAEMU	West African Economic Monetary Union
WATIH	West Africa Trade and Investment Hub
WTO	World Trade Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The West African Trade and Investment Hub (WATIH) is a portfolio of trade and investment activities promoting regional and global trade through access to finance and investment. It facilitates African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) related activities and works alongside the Prosper Africa Trade and Investment (ATI) program. WATIH leverages private sector funding and foreign direct investment (FDI) via grant support to firms to mobilize co-investment, catalyze sustainable growth and improve regional food security. WATIH manages three main program components:

- Design and administration of a competitive fund for private sector partnerships, with \$60 million in grants.
- An urgent response to the negative impacts of COVID-19, comprising US \$50 million, with US \$36 million in grants to 1) increase access to working capital with financial actors; 2) prevent and mitigate job losses; and 3) help respond to local and regional supply chain disruptions and shortages.
- Technical assistance (TA) which directly supports, coordinates, and engages with qualifying recipients (*i.e.*, grantees) to achieve USAID's trade and food security objectives.

This mid-term performance evaluation focuses on five main evaluation questions:

1. How effective and timely has the activity been in achieving planned results in the key focus areas?
2. Is the activity on track to achieve planned outcomes and impacts across all components and overall?
3. What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of planned results and objectives?
4. To what extent is the theory of change still valid? Does it respond to the needs of partner USAID missions?
5. To what extent is the activity's work sustainable and how has the activity worked with businesses to ensure that the results of their partnerships will have lasting benefits?

METHODOLOGY

The mid-term performance evaluation collected and analyzed primary and secondary data using quantitative and qualitative methods. Primary data included responses from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) from USAID Staff, WATIH Staff, WATIH Grantees, and AGOA beneficiaries. Secondary data were obtained from review of project related documents¹. The ET interviewed 102 key informants, including USAID activity managers (11), WATIH program staff (17), private sector grantees (56), AGOA trade promotion beneficiaries (7), participating financial institutions (6), specialized trade bodies (3), and government agencies (2). The ET conducted the fieldwork between March 28 and April 14, 2022, visiting Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal.

¹ See Annex J for the full list of project documents that the evaluation team reviewed.

LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Lists for prospective grantee KIIs were of varying quality, with up to 20 percent of contact data being out of date. Mitigation steps included locating e-mail addresses and phone numbers to facilitate KIIs. Responses from specialized trade organizations, government ministries, departments, and agencies were minimal reflecting weak working relationships with WATIH. No KIIs were conducted with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) due to the limited operational links between WATIH and the RECs. The interviews and review of program documents revealed minimal engagement, primarily restricted to contacts established during webinars.

FINDINGS

1. How effective and timely has the activity been in achieving planned results in the key focus areas?

WATIH processed 750 initial contacts to identify grantees. The first grant applications to USAID were planned to take place three to six months after start-up in September 2019 however, proposals were actually submitted by December 2020 some 16 months after start-up. Total submissions to USAID reached 11 grants by March 2021. Between April 2021 and March 2022, there were 65 additional grant submissions and 42 were approved between April and December 2021.

The ET noted that WATIH failed to meet its initial start-up targets. This reflected performance issues as well as some over-optimism on initial targets:

- a) The COVID pandemic resulted in lockdowns imposed on private firms while WATIH staff had to work from home and remotely with potential grantees.
- b) Grantees reported that the initial grant application and approval process was slow. Starting in July 2021, procedures were speeded up.
- c) The urgent timeframe prioritizing the COVID-19 response facility delayed non-COVID-19 proposals but prompted faster and simpler processes for COVID-19 grants.

2. Is the activity on track to achieve planned outcomes and impacts across all components?

Summarized key performance indicators are set out in Table 4 in Section 2.3 (*i.e., of the main report*) with a full list provided in Annex G. Table 4 shows that five out of six selected indicators achieved between 18 percent and 81 percent of targets during an operational period of only 18 months, which places planned results on track for a five-year program.

Annex G also shows that 14 out of 23 indicators show satisfactory progress towards achievement of targets by the end of March 2022. The ET, therefore, expects most grantees to reach 20 percent of targets in their first operational year. As private sector development programs usually involve time-lags between investments and results, the ET concluded it would be desirable to set up an ex-post facto measurement of results.

3. What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of planned results and objectives?

The principal internal factors affecting the attainment of planned results included the following:

- a) implementation of milestone monitoring, checking on production results and co-investment leverage achieved compared to targets.

- b) deployment of additional sectoral and specialist technical assistance; and
- c) continued efforts to strengthen working relationships with grantees through frequent contacts and site visits.

4. To what extent is the theory of change still valid? Does it respond to the needs of partner USAID missions?

The ET noted that 82 percent of USAID activity managers and WATIH staff² agreed that the TOC was adequate and did not require revision. Among USAID activity managers, 90 percent indicated the TOC met their Mission's needs, and 82 percent of WATIH staff said changes were not necessary.

5. To what extent is the activity's work sustainable, and how has it worked with businesses to ensure the results of their partnerships will have lasting benefits?

Respondents saw WATIH-supported enterprises as becoming sustainable (not the WATIH program itself). Some USAID and WATIH respondents supported making longer term use of the WATIH grantees fund-mobilization network, to be available for later programs. Sustainability of the activity's work is being ensured through (1) milestone monitoring, checking on leverage obtained, and management advice; (2) plus additional sectoral technical assistance; and (3) by strengthening relationships with grantees through site visits.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite earlier delays and management changes, the commitment of WATIH staff and USAID activity managers towards the WATIH private sector-driven investment and trade promotion model remains robust. USAID Activity Managers responsible for implementation in Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, West Africa Regional Office (*based in Ghana*), and the Sahel Regional Office (*based in Senegal*) are optimistic that the WATIH program is on track to achieve its planned results and outcomes.³

The WATIH program has clearly now moved from the co-creation and grant application stage to the implementation stage and has overcome initial difficulties during the first phase. The implementation stage is quite different in character. Successful implementation of co-investment mobilization is a key part of this. The program's co-investment target of US \$400 million is already within reach, as US \$240 million has been mobilized within just 18 months of practical operation⁴. A greater emphasis on technical and management support to meet contingencies and unexpected challenges, especially for STTA and targeted technical assistance will help ensure positive planned results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are provided for WATIH and USAID respectively and summarized below.

² This question was only targeted at USAID activity managers and WATIH staff.

³ However, it is important to note that the Evaluation Team (ET) did not interview the Activity Manager in USAID/Liberia during the evaluation process. The ET did, however, interview an Ecolodge representative from Liberia. It is acknowledged that it would have been beneficial to also speak with the Activity Manager in Liberia for a more comprehensive assessment.

⁴ This information is based on WATIH Indicators and can be further explored in Annex G, which is attached to this report. It indicates that the private sector has indeed invested \$240 million into their businesses as a result of the Trade Hub grants.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WATIH

The ET recommends that WATIH should:

- Create an operational policy unit from existing staff to work on trade, communications, and access to finance to monitor developments in trade policy and trade promotion instruments especially with respect to AGOA, AfCFTA, and ECOWAS, to help grantees to make use of trade promotion facilities.
- Organize Collaborating, Learning and Adaptation (CLA) events on best practices mobilizing blended finance, e.g., through the OECD/DAC DFI Working Group⁵ on Blended Concessional Finance for Private Sector Projects⁶.
- Organize CLA events for USAID, WATIH and grantees on new challenges in the global and regional business environment and the needs of the private sector for targeted support to cope with working capital shortages, and disruptions to supply chains and markets.
- Following on from COVID-19 restrictions to relaunch the WATIH public profile and modus operandi through renewed face-to-face contacts and dialogue with wider stakeholder networks at national and regional level (e.g., government agencies and trade associations).
- Consider when targeted technical assistance to help solve technical implementation challenges might best be achieved via amended grant agreements to increase grants rather than allocation of additional STTA to be financed and managed by WATIH. This would be in line with further delegation and privatization of technical assistance.
- Set up an ex-post facto results measurement mechanism with USAID, grantees, and stakeholders to help capture results and outputs three years after closure.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USAID

USAID should work with WATIH, and with USG departments and agencies on the following recommendations:

- USAID can provide networking support with USG-backed finance and trade, as demonstrated in the past where such support led to the successful award of key grants, including Red River, EAA, DTRT, Koster Keunen, and Cordaid. USAID can also actively engage with various stakeholders within the agency to garner substantial support for the activity. It is recommended USAID continue similar efforts, emphasizing the importance of further integration and coordination in order to achieve improved outcomes.
- USAID can help WATIH to organize CLA events on best practices on mobilizing blended finance, drawing on material from the OECD/DAC DFI Working Group on Blended

⁵ The OECD/DAC DFI Working Group, by virtue of its expertise in grant-funded private sector development has been cited here as an example of institutions that can be considered for collaboration.

⁶ See IFC (2017) The DFI Working Group on Blended Concessional Finance for Private Sector Projects for a review of the five key principles guiding blended finance.

Concessional Finance for Private Sector Projects⁷ since USG/USAID is represented on this OECD/DAC working group.

- The above links with OECD/DAC would help enable dialogue within USAID or with its partners on future designs for grant-funded private sector development mechanisms, either by means of support programs or, direct partnerships with financing institutions, to facilitate concessional support for private sector firms to expand outreach, production, and revenue.
- The above discussions could facilitate more detailed consideration by USAID of future options for providing technical assistance, or support for research and development to entrepreneurs, especially through the use of privatization deals financed by grant-support to private sector partners rather than traditional management of STTA via program structures.
- USAID can also play a key role in supporting WATIH and its grantees by facilitating links with AGOA and USG financing and trade specialist bodies including the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and the Export Import Bank of the US (EXIM).
- USAID can also promote links via DFC with the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC), Africa Finance Corporation (AFC) and MCC (Millennium Challenge Corporation) and the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA). WATIH financing mobilization events will benefit from links with all of the above USG-backed institutions.
- USAID can help organize during the WATIH close-out an event bringing together the fund mobilization contact network of the grantees (commercial banks, Islamic banks, MFIs, DFIs, venture capital firms, equity investors and others) along with the above USG-backed finance and trade promotion agencies. The financing knowledge identified by this event would help USAID and grantees to mobilize private sector finance going forward.
- USAID could explore the potential for direct engagement through contacts and dialogue to monitor and influence the evolution of Central Bank mechanisms affecting concessional finance for agricultural and non-agricultural private sector development. Specifically, USAID can leverage opportunities such as government-organized annual reviews of agricultural policy, where donors and NGOs are invited, to assess the progress made in implementing supportive measures by Central Banks. This particularly applies to countries like Nigeria and Ghana, where Central Bank review meetings are often accessible to donors and NGOs. In these forums, questions can be raised regarding the advancements in facilitating access to lower-cost funds, which have proven beneficial to farmers and agri-SMEs in Nigeria. Tracking such progress without excessive time or resource investment could be a valuable endeavor for USAID.

USAID should consider reviewing the results of WATIH by mid-2024 and make provision for ex-post facto results measurements to inform future private sector development programs⁸.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ In particular, the ex-post facto results measurement will be helpful in the elaboration of Theory of Change and assumptions for future programs.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

West Africa's trade is characterized by reliance on imported staple foods. A low degree of inter-regional trade and reliance on extractive and raw commodities rather than value-added exports dominate individual country economies. The high concentration of merchandise exports suggest that West African economies are more vulnerable to shocks in global commodity markets. High dependence on producing and exporting a few primary commodities by West African countries is financially unsustainable and affects their growth and development.

The West Africa Trade and Investment Hub (Trade Hub) is a 5-year, US \$140 million trade and investment facilitation activity designed to improve private sector productivity, profitability, and competitiveness in West Africa through market-based approaches. By working in partnership with the private sector and fostering co-investments, the Trade Hub generates new private-sector capital investment in key sectors to create jobs and increase trade between the United States and West Africa. Part of this work builds on a deep understanding of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and how it can be utilized to benefit African businesses.

The conceptual framework underpinning the Trade Hub is to raise domestic investment by providing access to finance for entrepreneurs. It also aims to enhance the efficiency of the operations of businesses in the staple food value chains to address inefficiencies in trade-related logistics infrastructure and services to spur trade and exports based on AGOA. For the period under evaluation, WATIH project components comprised three major thrusts:

Table 1: WATIH Project Components

WATIH PROJECT COMPONENTS	
ACTIVITY NAME	COMPONENTS
WATIH	—Design and administration of a competitive fund for private sector partnerships, with \$60 million in grants. —An urgent response to the economic impacts of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), comprising \$50 million, with \$36 million for grants to 1) increase access to working capital with financial actors; 2) prevent and mitigate job losses; and 3) help respond to local and regional supply chain disruptions and shortages, notably for staple crops⁹. —Technical assistance (TA) directly supports, coordinates, and engages with qualifying recipients (i.e., partners and grantees) to achieve USAID's trade and food security objectives.

For WATIH, grants and technical assistance that address key productivity and profitability constraints in priority value chains will improve private-sector competitiveness, which will, in turn, contribute to broad-based and inclusive economic growth and resilience. The additional remit in response to COVID-19 is aimed at helping firms to cope with lack of working capital during a pandemic-induced market downturn and to strengthen weakened supply chains.

WATIH covers the 15 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) member states, Mauritania, Cameroon, and Chad, and is jointly funded by USAID/Nigeria, USAID/West Africa,

⁹ It is important to note that while the text in Table 1 primarily focuses on staple crops, the intent of the Total Estimated Cost (TEC) increment was to support both critical medical supplies and services as well as agricultural inputs and food staples. The allocation for staple crops was particularly relevant to the enterprises supported by WATIH, but it does not exclude support for the former purposes mentioned.

USAID/Côte d'Ivoire, USAID/Senegal, and other USAID Missions. The activity is implemented by Creative Associates International Inc. and supported by Dalberg Consulting U.S., LLC.

1.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF WEST AFRICAN TRADE AND INVESTMENT

West Africa

A significant feature of West African trade is its deeply constrained nature, making businesses unable to meet the global market's enormous demands. West African countries primarily cannot meet market requirements of quality and volume of merchandised products to be competitive enough to succeed in the international marketplace. West Africa is a globally significant exporter of many commodities, including cocoa, cashew, cotton, shea, and some tropical fruits, and is hampered by low productivity levels. However, the substantial number of smallholders and cooperatives active in the supply chains for these commodities presents an opportunity to increase incomes for the poor. Still, their diffused nature makes aggregating sufficient quantities challenging, thus increasing the transaction costs for buyers compared to buying from commercial-scale farmers. For processors, securing supplies across countries in West Africa is highly problematic and often cost-prohibitive due to different currencies and languages, high transportation costs, roadblocks, formal and informal charges, and a lack of developed infrastructure in services such as cold-chain logistics.

Vertical integration into farming to guarantee at least minimal supplies to keep processing facilities running is a common adaptation to supply challenges. Still, it is complicated by the lack of secure land rights. Working capital requirements for processing industries (such as cashew) where the supply of raw material must be purchased upfront for year-round processing is challenging for locally based firms who compete with a lower cost of capital available to foreign operators. The cost and availability of energy are also relatively high in the region compared to competitor countries. Integrating smallholders and firms into international and regional supply chains requires investments in upgrading and certification that are difficult to finance in much of the West African region. Many financial institutions are reluctant to lend to the agriculture sector, and the applicants often do not have adequate financial documentation, business plans, or credit history to qualify for commercial loans.

Thus, through USAID intervention, the theory of change for West Africa is: IF successful partnerships with leading buyers and processors that expand production quantities and improve quality through upgrading producers are built, THEN West Africa will successfully increase trade and investment and contribute to broad-based economic growth and resilience through increased job creation and improved incomes.

Nigeria

Nigeria's agriculture is characterized by inferior quality inputs, minimal use of technology, low yields, and productivity due to inadequate knowledge of agriculture best practices, and minimal value-added processing. For a lower-middle income country, Nigeria experiences elevated levels of poverty (53.3 percent of the population), with significant income inequalities along the north-south divide. Linked to poverty, malnutrition remains high. According to the 2015 Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, national stunting rates are 32 percent for children under five (soaring to 54 percent in the North-west). Agriculture can become a formidable force in alleviating poverty and malnutrition. An agricultural powerhouse at its independence in 1960, Nigeria gradually succumbed to dependence on revenues from petroleum exports to fund government operations.

Despite the oil, agriculture remains the base of the Nigerian economy, primary livelihood of most Nigerians. The country has not exploited its comparative advantage in agriculture. The sector faces many challenges: notably, an outdated land tenure system that constrains access to land (1.8 ha/farming household), a shallow level of irrigation development (less than one percent of cropped land under irrigation), limited adoption of research findings and technologies, high cost of farm inputs, poor access to credit, inefficient fertilizer procurement and distribution, inadequate storage facilities, and poor access to markets have all combined to keep agricultural productivity low (average of 1.2 metric tons of cereals/ha) with high postharvest losses and waste. Also, the prohibitive cost and unreliable electricity supply rendered processing companies uncompetitive compared with peers overseas. Processors struggle to source a consistent supply of high-quality inputs on the domestic market due to the low quality of farm produce. They also face significant obstacles importing inputs from abroad due to high tariff rates and restrictions on financing for importing many commodity items. These challenges make it difficult for businesses to demonstrate their commercial viability and catalyze greater private sector investment.

Low crop yields lead to low income and poor nutrition for smallholder farmers. USAID mission involvement development hypothesis presumes that the inefficient use of technology, low private sector investments in smallholder farming, inadequate knowledge of agriculture best practices, and lack of value addition activities constrain agricultural productivity and profitability. Thus, IF the capacity of agricultural sector business service providers (including private firms, research institutions, and other stakeholders) is strengthened, IF the use of improved farming technologies is expanded, IF participation in agricultural markets is increased, and IF private sector investment to improve productivity and profitability of smallholder farming is increased, THEN Nigeria's agricultural competitiveness will be strengthened, contributing to broad-based and inclusive growth. These two development hypotheses in the West African region underpin WATIH's mission: WATIH will serve as a catalyst for broad-based and inclusive growth through private sector investment readiness and competitiveness (see Figure 1). Figure 1 depicts The Trade Hub TOCs specific to Nigeria and the rest of West Africa and the overall WATIH mission statement.

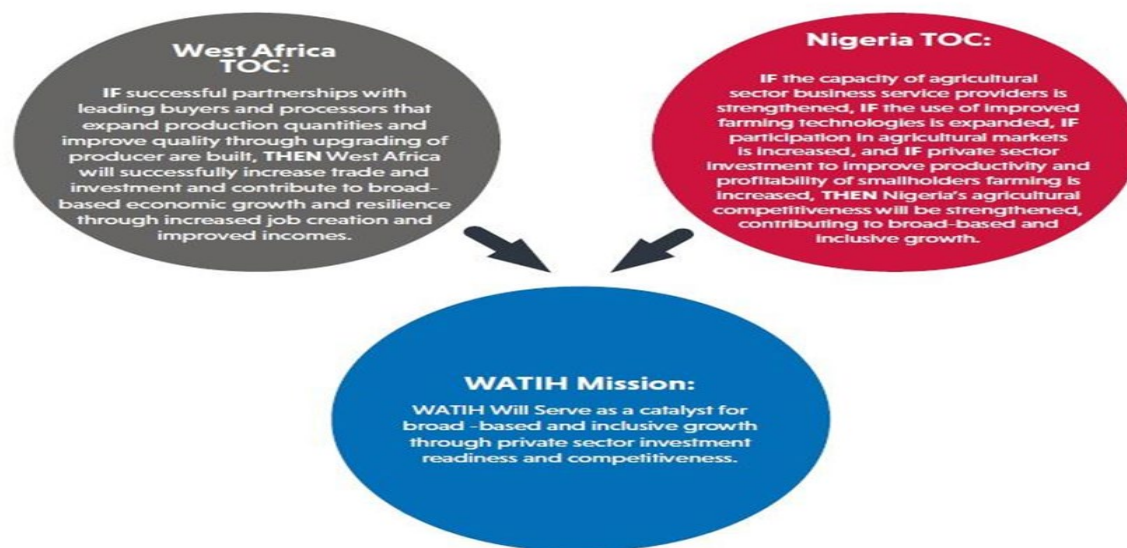


Figure 1: WATIH Theory of Change

1.3 USAID NIGERIA'S COUNTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION STRATEGY

USAID Nigeria's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) 2020-2025 aims to support a healthier, more educated, prosperous, stable, and resilient Nigeria. The mission's economic growth and environment office support this goal by promoting inclusive economic growth, reducing poverty, and enhancing private sector contributions to inclusive growth (See Figure 2 that explains the WATIH results framework for the region).

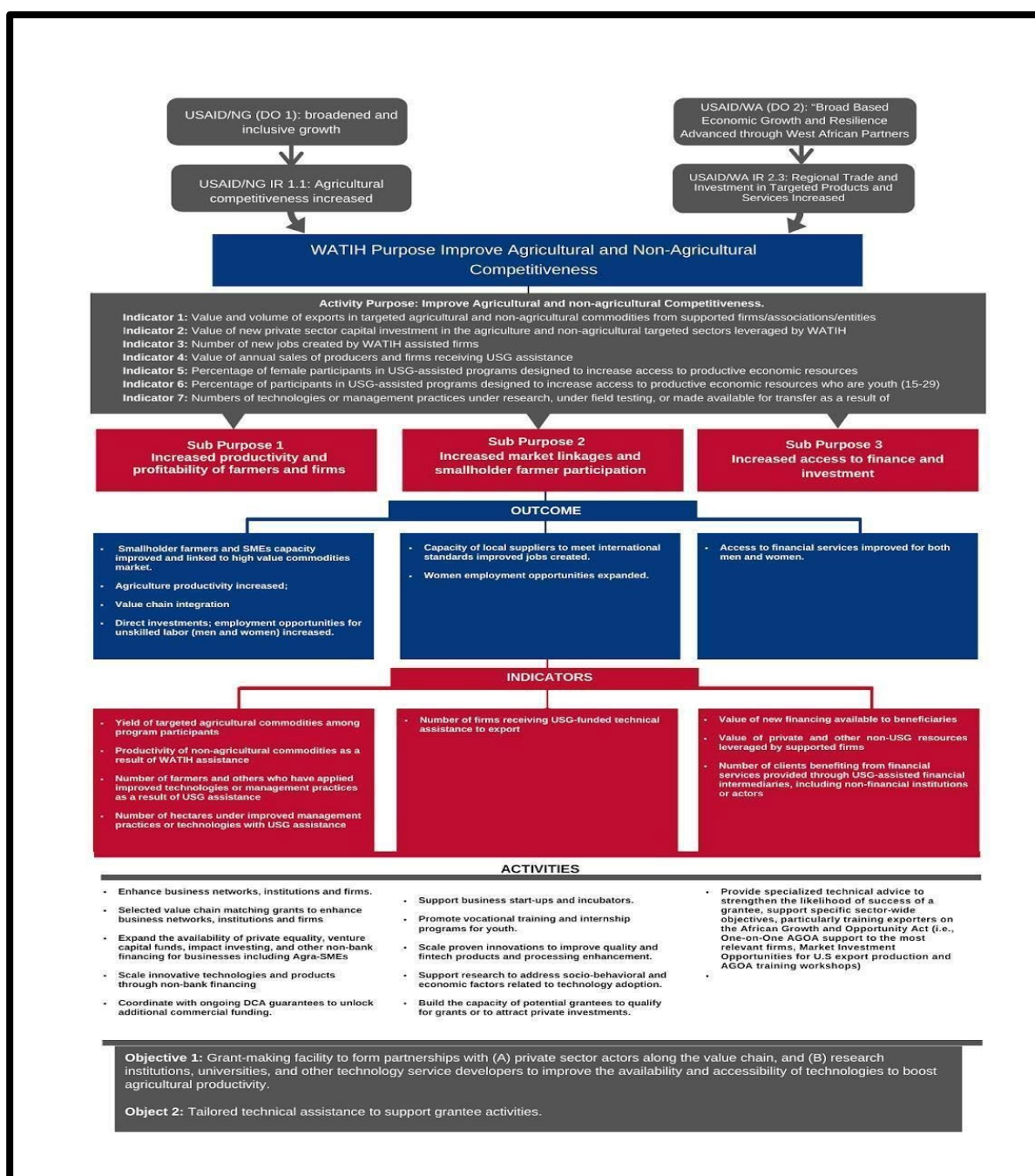


Figure 2: WATIH Results Framework

USAID/West Africa's Mission-wide goal is the West African-led advancement of social and economic well-being. This goal is supported by several development objectives, including "broad-based economic growth and resilience advanced through West African partners." This goal articulates USAID/WA's commitment to supporting African-led regional development and underscores the mission's commitment to capacity-building with the direct aim of supporting regional organizations to better deliver on their respective mandates.

1.4 EVALUATION PURPOSE

The main objective of this evaluation is to assess and document the extent to which WATIH is achieving its objectives, and intermediate results; document activity challenges and lessons learned and provide recommendations that will inform the direction of the activity for the remainder of the contract. Specifically, an assessment of the validity of the theory of change will be made. The evaluation will also assess the sustainability and exit strategy of WATIH.

1.5 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The key evaluation questions in the SOW, were as follows:

1. How effectively and timely has the activity achieved planned results in the key focus areas?
2. Is the activity on track to achieve planned outcomes and impacts across all components?
3. What are the significant factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of planned results and objectives?
4. To what extent is the theory of change still valid? Does it respond to the needs of partner USAID missions?
5. To what extent is the activity's work sustainable, and how has it worked with businesses to ensure that the results of their partnerships will have lasting benefits?

2.0 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

2.1 EVALUATION APPROACH

The ET¹⁰ evaluated this multi-faceted trade and investment activity across the West African region, focusing on Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal, where there were face-to-face KIIs. The KIIs in the Republic of Cabo Verde and Liberia were conducted remotely using platforms such as Google Meet, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and sometimes via email exchanges, where interviewees received and filled out questionnaires. Desk reviews of secondary information supplemented KIIs. Consistent with USAID's Automated Directive System (ADS) 201.3.6.7 guidance on evaluation methodologies, the ET used both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and analysis.

A quantitative and qualitative approach (mixed method) were used in this performance evaluation. The indicative performance indicators provided in Annex G and derived from the intermediate results indicators in the two available Annual Reports were reviewed by the ET. However as of March 2022 when the Evaluation was conducted, this data only covered 18 months maximum of operational activity by WATIH-funded grantees, and only 11 grantees had conducted their grant-funded activities for more than 12 months. The rest, out of 76, for less than 12 months.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

The mid-term performance evaluation involved qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyze both primary and secondary data. Primary data sources included responses from key informant interviews with USAID staff, WATIH staff, Grantees, AGOA beneficiaries, Financial Institutions, Specialized Trade bodies, and Government Institutions. The secondary data included documents, report reviews, and performance data from the WATIH MEL results framework. Data collection methods and tools were selected to ensure sufficient variation to reach the geographically dispersed populations of WATIH stakeholders and beneficiaries. The evaluation team relied on the following data collection methods:

Qualitative:

- **Key informant interviews (KIIs) for stakeholders/partners** with a mix of open and closed-ended questions.
- **Focus group discussion protocol for beneficiaries** with open-ended questions.
- **Desk review of documents** provided by WATIH and beneficiary institutions (See Annex J for the full list of project documents that the team reviewed).

Quantitative:

- **Telephone interviews for selected beneficiaries** with appropriate questionnaires for KIIs.
- **Analysis of Performance data from WATIH results framework**

The desk review of documents method highlighted starting points on performance, including the 23¹¹ standard performance indicators adopted by the WATIH monitoring, evaluation, and learning

¹⁰ See Annex 1 for a brief profile of the evaluation team members.

¹¹ See the list of 23 Indicators in the first Annual Report (September 2019-September 2020) page 8, to confirm the number of indicators.

(MEL) team for data collection from grantees. Telephone interviews were used to supplement data collection methods, for example with the Republic of Cabo Verde.

2.3 SAMPLING AND SELECTION OF RESPONDENTS

USAID provided the ET with a list of distinct categories of stakeholders, including USAID, WATIH staff, and grantees. The evaluation team selected the following sample out of the population provided by USAID staff (15), WATIH staff (32), Grantees (38), AGOA beneficiaries (23), Financial Institutions (15), Specialized Trade bodies (8), and Government Institutions (10). Table 2 provides details of sampling and selection. Out of a total population of 245, the ET selected 141 through a mixed sampling technique.

Table 2: KIIS Sampling and Selection

KIIS SAMPLING AND SELECTION					
NO.	STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY	TOTAL SAMPLE	SELECTED FOR KIIS	ACTUAL CONDUCTED	KIIs
1	USAID Staff	15	15	11	
2	WATIH Staff	70	32	17	
3	Grantees	75	38	56	
4	AGOA beneficiaries	50	23	7	
5	Financial Institutions	15	15	6	
6	Specialized Trade Bodies	10	8	3	
7	Government Institutions	10	10	2	
TOTAL		245	141	102	

For example, the selection of grantees was purposeful rather than random to capture a range of smaller and larger countries and to include as wide a range of value chains and activities as possible. This was done to reflect the volume of grants and economic sectors. The ET identified ten firms that had received more than US \$1million in grants. Another ten firms which were considered received similar amounts during the last active year of grant-making. The ET selected 15 grantees that were banks, funding organizations, or providing financial services. The team also included several firms with high leverage on co-investment mobilization or impacts on large numbers of smallholders. The ET also selected some unsuccessful applicants to seek their views on the program. The ET interviewed 102 stakeholders (or 73 percent of the potential KII sample) during 14 days of fieldwork. The team ensured that key USAID Mission staff and WATIH staff were also interviewed. An explanation of the sampling method, using stratification techniques to ensure representativity, is presented in Annex A.

2.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The primary data collection methods included document reviews and interviews across the geographical coverage area. To be able to provide USAID and project implementers with pertinent data, the KII data collection was biased toward countries with the most extensive project base and

with resident USAID Missions or covered by the West Africa Regional Mission (based in Ghana) and the Sahel Regional Office (based in Senegal). The size of the Nigeria sample reflected the relative size of the Nigeria WATIH program in terms of funding and the number of grantee projects

The ET reviewed project-related documents to better understand the context of project implementation. The document review and evaluation matrix design helped identify subsidiary questions arising from the main questions, where the latter could not be addressed without recourse to the former. Subsequent KIIs allowed the ET to answer the main and sub-questions. Whenever possible, findings were triangulated by addressing the same key questions to distinct categories of respondents, comparing responses from USAID activity managers and WATIH staff to give further validity to conclusions.

2.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Consistent with the data analysis methods, the ET analyzed WATIH program documents, M&E data, and responses from the telephone questionnaire using frequency distributions (*i.e., how many answered a or b*), cross-tabulation (*i.e., type of answers by respondent category*), and tables/graphs generated through Excel and SPSS. For example, data was disaggregated by country, program component, and type of stakeholder. The evaluation team analyzed the data from the standard WATIH MEL indicators framework and the characteristics of the project components by country and use of funding instruments. For qualitative data, the analysis involved thorough content examination from the desk review, responses from key informant interviews, and beneficiary focus group discussions. The data was interpreted through a statistical coding process, to derive percentages of respondents responding positively or negatively to key questions.

2.6 EVALUATION LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Table 3 below summarizes some of the observed data limitations on the mid-term evaluation exercise and the mitigating measures the ET took to ensure the data collected and the analyses and conclusions drawn from them were based on valid and reliable sources.

Table 3: Evaluation Limitation and Mitigation Measures

EVALUATION LIMITATION AND MITIGATION MEASURES		
NO.	LIMITATIONS	MITIGATION MEASURES
1.	Lists for prospective KIIs were of varying quality, with 10-20 percent addresses that were out of date.	Steps were taken to obtain more up-to-date e-mail addresses and phone numbers for grantees by trawling websites, consulting phonebooks, or asking WATIH staff to help reach the proposed KII respondents.
2.	Responses by category reflected the degree of engagement with WATIH, with inadequate responses from specialist trade organizations, government ministries, departments, and agencies.	The team persisted in accessing a minimum of respondents in these categories to get some feedback. Still, it could not make up for previously low levels of proactive engagement with representatives of the under-represented parties in terms of their involvement with the program (either direct participation or solicitation of the input in the design and implementation of the initiative).
3.	The contact list provided for AGOA beneficiaries lacked key details like email and telephone numbers. It did not identify active technical assistance within the list, leading to many of those contacted having minimal contact with AGOA and little interest in being interviewed.	The team managed to locate and interview the previous regional AGOA technical assistance (TA) specialist and consult two WATIH annual reports. These steps eventually produced contacts who agreed to be interviewed.
4.	Although the evaluation team planned for significant face-to-face interviews in target countries for firms outside the capital cities, time limitations, and insecurity made it difficult for the team to do this.	As a mitigating measure, the team combined on-site meetings and online call conferences to shore up the numbers.

2.7 GENERAL DATA COLLECTION LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

USAID activity officers played a key role in implementing WATIH. Creative Associates and its partners deployed over 70 staff on WATIH. The ET sought to interview key staff in each country (*PPP, Grants, and MEL*). A second person from the same unit was not available on all the scheduled interview days, hence reducing the number of KIIs from WATIH staff. Some USAID and WATIH staff did not want to be formally interviewed. The larger number of KIIs with grantees reflected that KIIs with individuals were often joined by colleagues from the same firm. There were fewer KIIs than planned with trade bodies and government agencies. Below are some of the reasons for this:

- (i) During COVID restrictions contacts were reduced to online webinars.

Trade bodies, promotion agencies and chambers of commerce indicated they were “not directly engaged” because WATIH only grant-aided private firms and therefore made no provision for contracts with them¹².

- (ii) Finally, the lack of KIIs with Regional Economic Communities (such as ECOWAS and UEMOA), reflected there was no or minimal WATIH staff contact with these bodies.

¹² These institutions were added to the evaluation SOW because as part of the Trade Hub's SOW, the IP (in this case Creative Associates) was supposed to work with them, as local institutions with knowledge of business opportunities, to identify firms for the Trade Hub's co-investments. These institutions were not intended to be grant beneficiaries at any point.

The ET noted that WATIH made mostly virtual presentations to Governors and/or their teams in six targeted states of the Nigerian Federation (*Benue, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Kaduna, and Niger*)¹³. Additionally, courtesy visits to key Ministries (*Trade and Investment, Agriculture and Rural Development, Women's Affairs, and Youth Development*), specifically took place in Nigeria during Year 1 of the activity¹⁴. These meetings highlighted WATIH's objectives, promoting collaboration with the Nigerian Government. However, subsequent contacts were limited to webinars. There were no KIIs with state officials.

The ET selected 23 AGOA contacts for KIIs and interviewed seven (*see Table 2 above*). It was difficult to find contacts who had substantial involvement with AGOA or had benefited from an AGOA activity. The ET mitigated this by contacting the staff person who was previously responsible for AGOA-related work but had resigned, and the position remained vacant at the time of the survey. Furthermore, the designated AGOA contact in the US was also contacted.

WATIH Annual Reports listed firms that established significant contacts with AGOA leading to tangible benefits from the program (*see Box 1 below*).

Despite these difficulties and limitations faced during data collection the ET concluded that the KIIs conducted were sufficient to be representative of the main activities of WATIH. Some further details on representativity are set out in Annex A.

Box 1: Issues related to AGOA

Data from WATIH shows that in Year One, 43 firms established contacts with AGOA in order to access services. Out of these 15 firms received assistance in various forms, such as certification support (e.g., Rules of Origin or with Food & Drug Authority Food facility registration). Others received training on accreditation, and registration, or were helped with business links facilitating exports to the US. In Year Two, the comparable figures were 45 for total contacts, with 16 benefiting from concrete services. So, according to this analysis, one-third of all AGOA contacts benefitted concretely from the program, while most of the others received advice on export procedures. This is not counting all of the interested parties who attended webinars remotely. Despite some of the challenges mentioned above, the ET was able to collect enough data to assess the contribution of AGOA in the region (the complete KII list is in Annex F).

The next five chapters reflect findings mapped against the evaluation questions and serve as the main structure for outlining the evaluation findings. Each evaluation question chapter provides a synthesis of quantitative and qualitative findings, field observations notes, considerations, and remaining areas for improvement or engagement, as relevant to that question.

¹³ Unfortunately, specific dates were not provided. These visits were carried out before the launch of the project in January 2020. See WATIH Annual Performance Report for Year One, Section 4, page 46.

¹⁴ These contacts were focused on certain federal states in line with WATIH's objectives. However, there were no similar contacts reported in other countries. It is important to note that due to the COVID restrictions, WATIH offices were closed, and the staff worked from home, refraining from visiting Ministries, Departments, or Agencies during that period.

3.0 EVALUATION QUESTION ONE

HOW EFFECTIVE AND TIMELY HAS THE WATIH ACTIVITY BEEN IN ACHIEVING PLANNED RESULTS ACROSS THE VARIOUS KEY FOCUS AREAS?

The volume of monthly approval of grants under the WATIH program is highlighted in Figure 3. The field data presented in Figure 3 shows no grant approvals were made from the start of the program in September 2019 until December 2020 when three approvals were made. However, grant approvals averaged 4.0 per month between January and May 2021 and then rose to an average of more than 6.0 per month between June 2021 and March 2022. Procedural and management changes were made in the second half of calendar year 2021 and consolidated in the first quarter of 2022.

The initial slow pace of granting awards under the WATIH program could be attributed to “teething management problems” common to multi-stakeholder, cross-border private sector development programs as well as to the negative impacts of COVID-19 on WATIH and on grantee enterprises. Analysis of the volume of monthly grant approvals confirms that WATIH and USAID officials identified problems in co-creation and grant procedures and took steps to simplify and speed up processes (see Figure 3). These measures played a key part in improving the rate of approval of grants.

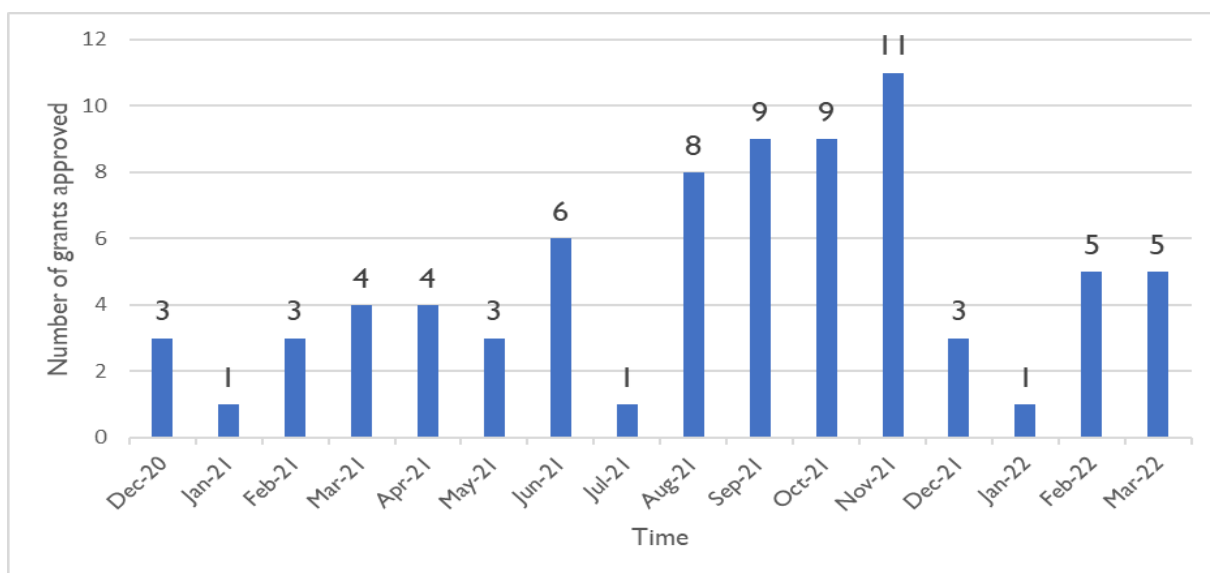


Figure 3: Number of Monthly Grant Approvals, December 2020 – March 2022

Figure 3 shows that 24 grant approvals were made between December 2020 and June 2021. Of the first 24 grant approvals, all but five were in favor of COVID-19 response projects. Grants were approved for 41 projects between July and December 2021. During the first quarter of the fiscal year 2022, 11 more grants received approval.

Initially, the grant approval process began with the submission of a Project Concept Note by a prospective grantee to WATIH and then to USAID for consideration. Once USAID approved the Concept Note, it was returned to WATIH. WATIH staff then prepared a final grant package with the grantee and presented this to USAID for final approval. If approved, a grant contract was

signed, provided that a co-investment target undertaking was attached with the signature of a contributing third party. This was not so easy to get during an economic crisis.

The biggest challenge was therefore how to improve the quality and speed of grant proposals. The two-stage Concept Note process was dropped in July 2021 and a one stage-process adopted based on an Expression of Interest (EOI). This had three main advantages:

- (i) WATIH now only made one presentation to USAID instead of two.
- (ii) WATIH could now provide technical assistance to improve the quality of proposals.
- (iii) The number of grants approved increased from four per month between January 2021 to June 2021 to eight per month between August and November 2021.

Despite earlier complaints about delays and cumbersome procedures, 61 percent of grantees reported the co-creation process was fairly fast and the WATIH team was extremely helpful, especially once the EOI was adopted. The quality and speed of grant proposals improved and the WATIH team was then alerted to the need to improve communications with grantees. Grantees reported to the ET that initially many WATIH staff, especially grant officers, were not familiar with business cycles and needs. The dialogue between WATIH and grantees was managed by PPP teams, then grant officers, then by MEL teams. Grantees requested more continuity and if possible single points of contact for implementation purposes. This was improved and WATIH staff also became more familiar with grantee business needs. So, with the shift from grant co-creation to implementation, communications became more effective. These changes in operational procedures were initiated by the Acting COP, who helped to clear a backlog of grants proposals, with speeded up approvals between August and November 2021. These improvements were consolidated by the new Chief of Party (COP), who on-boarded in January 2022.

This simplification of the Catalytic Business Concept (CBC) grant application process came alongside an already streamlined COVID-19 grant process. The COVID-19 Response Program budget of US \$50 million, with a grant component of US \$36 million, had been initiated in August 2020. COVID-19 grants were intended to be awarded within twelve months, by September 2021. Of the 24 grant requests approved by June 2021, 17 were for Covid-19, five were for CBC, and two were in support of research and development (R&D) projects in Nigeria. However, a total of 36 COVID-19 grants were co-created and disbursed up to February 2022. So, the COVID-19 portfolio was disbursed five months later than planned. The ET does not consider this delay excessive in the circumstances. The COVID-19 grant-supported activities appear to be effective in terms of potential development outcomes. The quality and effectiveness of both CBC and COVID-19 grant-funded activities look satisfactory, and their effectiveness, quality level, and potential catalytic impacts look remarkably similar (See Section 3.1.1). Generally, the COVID-19 portfolio helped to speed up the main CBC portfolio, although initially it delayed it. Based on these findings, the ET concluded that overall performance was effective.

3.1 Are the grants being given out by WATIH set to provide the catalytic effects needed to improve private sector competitiveness in the region?

WATIH staff indicated that most CBC grant-funded activities, and many of those funded by COVID-19, were well designed, with catalytic and transformational components. The ET set out to evaluate this catalytic potential, that is, the capacity of WATIH-sponsored activity to cause or stimulate other activities by acting as a catalyst. Then whether or not they were the kinds of activities needed to improve private sector competitiveness in the region. Catalytic impacts include

promoting replication or scaling up of activities, or extension of activities to new geographical locations or countries, or the production of new products for new markets, or further mobilization of funds for any of these activities. Some examples are given below:

As previously mentioned, 17 of the first 24 activity grant awards made by WATIH were under the COVID-19 Response Facility. They included awards to strong partners whose grant-funded activities exhibited catalytic characteristics, including Stichting Cordaid, Koster Keunen West Africa, Cross Boundary Nigeria, Red River Foods, and NAFASO. Those entities were making significant contributions to socio-economic development by impacting multiple clients in several countries and contributing to improving overall competitiveness in the West African sub-region.

This does not mean all firms with catalytic impacts have regional outputs. However, all the sectoral activities supported contributed to making SME producers more competitive, promoting increased production and sales, promoting exports, and helping SMEs to penetrate new markets.

There are also stand-alone national firms with extremely high outreach and significant catalytic and transformational impacts, including:

- AFEX is an agricultural commodities exchange that runs more than 140 warehouses serving thousands of farmers, generating large working capital amounts via new financial instruments supported by blockchain technology using warehouse receipts as collateral. Currently mobilizing US\$240 million in working capital. In 2021, it was the fastest growing firm in Nigeria.¹⁵¹⁶
- Babban Gona provides scaling up of harvest and post-harvest services to many smallholder farmers with substantial co-investment leverage in the WATIH portfolio.

Overall, the ET agrees that WATIH grants will exert a significant catalytic effect on improving private sector competitiveness in the region, considering the volume of co-investments being mobilized by the grantees (see Figure 4). These catalytic impacts reflect the design, outreach, and proposed impacts of these grant-funded projects rather than just the amount of co-investment to be mobilized. But the volume of investment is important in determining the dimensions of outreach and geographical and sectoral impacts. Actual results on fund mobilization for both agricultural and non-agricultural commodities have been provided in the Results to Date Matrix (see Annex G). A summary of two indicators is presented as follows:

The targeted value of new USG and private sector grantee **funding for agricultural project outputs** in Fiscal Year 2022 (FY2022) was set at US\$126.5 million. However, the actual performance during the first two quarters of FY2022 was US\$114.3, which represents 90 percent of the one-year target achieved in half a year. The Life of Project (LOP) target was US\$421.6 million and the accomplishment by the second quarter of FY2022 was already US \$179.2 million, equivalent to 42.5 percent achieved over an 18-month period.

The targeted value of new USG and private sector grantee **funding for non-agricultural project outputs** for FY2022 was US\$22.3 million and the actual performance in the first two quarters of FY2022 was US\$50.9 million or 228 percent of the one-year target achieved in half a year. The

¹⁵ It can be argued that the WATIH investment in the AFEX Quality Enhancement Centre (QEC) would have a positive catalytic effect across the board on their whole operation. It would require some further work now and retrospectively to make a more accurate determination of the extent of attribution of AFEX success that could be claimed by WATIH in respect of this investment.

¹⁶ See the UK Financial Times (22/05/22).

LOP target was US\$74.4 million and the actual achievement by the second quarter of FY2022 was already US\$60.8 million or 81.7 percent achieved over an 18-month period.

Given these performance figures from a slow start, representing only 18 months of investment, the ET is convinced that WATIH is likely to reach its investment targets, and this will have a positive impact in terms of catalytic effects given the outreach and impacts anticipated from the 76 grant-assisted private sector projects covered by this evaluation. The ET notes that the overall WATIH fund mobilization target for investment finance mobilized by grantees, excluding USG contributions (officially of US\$400 million) already exceeded US\$240 million after only 18 months of operation. The ET concludes it will already be a lot more when the figures are available for September 2022 and will result in an overall grantee financing mobilization result well in excess of the target by mid-2024.

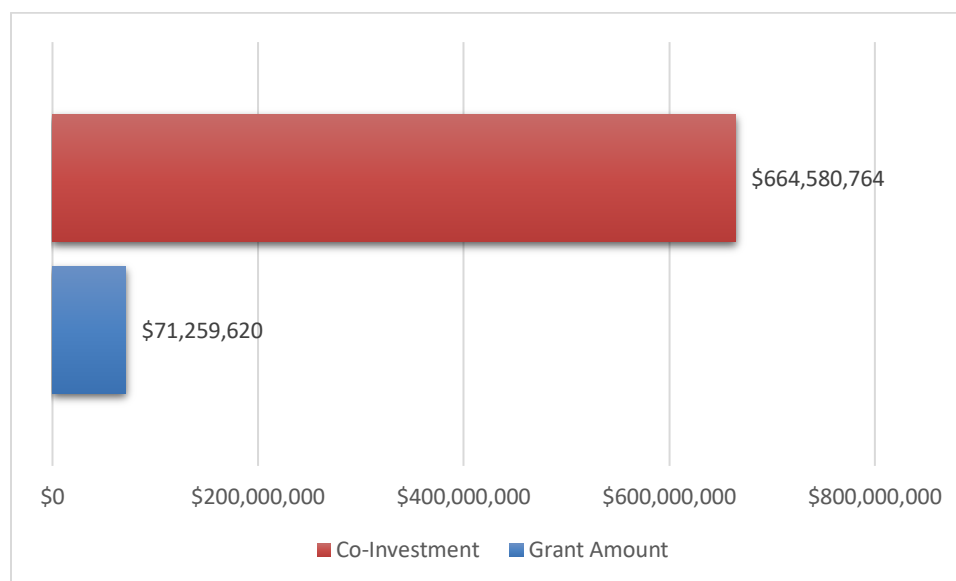


Figure 4: Value of Grant Awards and Co-Investments made during December 2019-March 2022

3.2 Are the R&D grants issued by WATIH supporting the innovation needed to propel businesses in Nigeria?

Grant-funded R&D activities were focused only on Nigeria, with only two projects in the initial list of 24 by June 2021 - one with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture business incubation platform (IITA-BIP) and the other with Premier Seeds Nigeria Limited. The Premier Seeds activities comprised the production and dissemination of improved maize, rice, soybean, and cowpea seeds in Nigeria. The IITA-BIP grant-funded activity encompasses the multiplication, registration, and marketing of Nigeria's new high-yielding soybean seed varieties. The initial focus on seven federal states (Benue, Cross River, Delta, Ebonyi, Kaduna, Kebbi, and Niger) and five value chains (maize, soybean, cowpea, rice, and aquaculture) limited the ability of WATIH to identify projects and project partners.

At the end of 2021, the geographic and sectoral limitations on the selection process were relaxed widening the geographical scope and value chain selections to include new possibilities. Following this, WATIH identified partners and activities for the remaining funds. WATIH staff reported that this relaxation of the selection process facilitated commitment by the WATIH Team towards the \$8.14 million funds allocated to R&D.

The ET found that grants were awarded to IITA-BIP and Premier Seeds under the R&D component. IITA-BIP faced challenges due to poor germination rates caused by heavy rains and mechanical issues with irrigation systems, leading to delays in meeting initial milestones. As a result, full out-grower production was delayed for a year and they plan to commence in mid-2022, resulting in a one-year delay in obtaining results.

Premier Seeds, on the other hand, has made notable progress. They leveraged \$420,000 in private investment, (67.9% of their total target), sourced 58.9 MT of early generation seeds from research institutes and conducted viability tests to ensure the purity and viability of the seeds. Additionally, Premier Seeds registered 786 out-growers across Nigeria (30% female and 65% youth). They developed training materials on seed production best practices for various crops and have already created 790 jobs (20% for women and 78% for youth). Furthermore, the field team of Premier Seeds has provided training to the 786 out-growers on integrated pest management, farm machinery maintenance, and the appropriate use of agrochemicals and fertilizers across the Feed the Future (FtF) states.

While it is still early to make a definitive assessment, the progress made by Premier Seeds demonstrates positive outcomes in terms of seed production, job creation, and training. These developments indicate the potential for the R&D component to facilitate the acquisition and adoption of innovative technologies and production processes in the program.

3.3 How well is WATIH supporting business recovery from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region? Has the COVID-19 support been timely? Have the grantees selected or receiving these grants demonstrated enough justification to warrant COVID-19 grants based on the criteria set?

In August 2020, the total estimated cost of the WATIH program was increased by US \$50 million to support businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Of this increase, US \$36 million was set aside for disbursement as grants. The introduction of the COVID-19 Response Facility program was very timely. Concerning how well the COVID-19 response mechanism supported the recovery of business activities during the COVID-19 pandemic, overall, the responses from the KIIs were positive, with 87 percent of grantees confirming that the COVID-19 Response Grants helped their businesses recover from the pandemic or to do even better than before.

However, 13 percent of grantees said they were yet to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁷. The ET concludes that the grant-supported activities selected for the COVID-19 rapid response program benefited from faster disbursement than most CBC projects. As of July 2021, out of the 24 projects that received grants under the WATIH program, 17 were funded through the COVID-19 facility, five were CBC, and two were R&D-related projects. The value of all grant awards ranged from US \$299,000 to US \$3,011,686, with 12 grant awards exceeding US \$1,000,000. The COVID-19 program was awarded between US \$250,000 and US \$3 million, with 9 of such awards at or below US \$500,000.

The elevated level of achievement under the COVID-19 Response program (evidenced by 35 grant disbursements within 18 months rather than 12 months) is highly commendable.

Both CBC and COVID-19 projects faced similar problems that could be addressed effectively through the funding criteria of the COVID-19 program. By mid-2019, most West African firms

¹⁷ See the discussion on this under Evaluation Question 3

were confronted with working capital shortages and disrupted supply chains. Consequently, the WATIH team had the opportunity to assess the existing queue of CBC projects and identify those impacted by these issues, which could then be slotted into the COVID-19 program. This approach yielded three positive benefits:

- (i) It facilitated the identification of eligible projects, thereby accelerating the implementation of the WATIH COVID-19 rapid response program.
- (ii) The selected grantees were able to provide justifications to warrant COVID-19 grants funding based on the criteria set; and
- (iii) Many of the eligible proposals manifested significant catalytic impacts and impressive co-investment leverage targets. Notable examples include Stichting Cordaid, Koster Keunen, Cross Boundary Nigeria, Red River Foods, NAFASO, AFEX, and Babban Gona.

These selected projects with a positive profile and high impact fitted the criteria for the COVID-19 program, absorbing larger than average grants and exhibited a promising potential for a higher-than-average co-investment leverage. At the same time, there was a group of COVID-19 projects which were satisfactory in terms of design but had a lower average leverage ratio. Of the first 24 projects (both COVID-19 and CBC) approved by USAID and assessed by the evaluation team, 15 projects were projected to exceed this average. The lower average leverage ratio of less than 1:5 for the 15 projects was nonetheless still consistent with the priorities for the COVID-19 program, which had lower leverage targets compared to the CBC projects. It is worth noting, that the average proposed co-investment leverage for the whole WATIH program (CBC and COVID-19 combined) was about 1:9, with many grant-supported activities proposed leverage ratios above 1:10 (see Annex E). The overall performance of the COVID-19 projects in respect of proposed co-investment leverage was deemed satisfactory since the co-investment leverage target was lower compared to CBC grants.

The total number of WATIH project grants reviewed during the evaluation exercise was 76. Of this number, 36 projects received support through the COVID-19 response mechanism. The list of beneficiary projects, categorized by funding source, can be found in Annex E. The activities and the grants allocated under the COVID-19 Response program fall into three main groups. First, ten of the COVID-19 projects were considered high-impact “wholesale projects” where private sector grantees (several receiving US\$1,000,000 or more) benefited from multiple access to finance from banks, investors, or guarantors, and support for financial transactions, sometimes impacting on multiple West African countries simultaneously. These included Stichting Cordaid, Cross Boundary, African Guarantee Fund, Injaro Investments Limited (the Republic of Cabo Verde), Banque Agricole (Senegal), and Locafrique (Senegal), among others. There were also two stand-alone Nigerian projects with high potential development impacts, namely AFEX, which is forecast to generate revenues of over US \$250 million from agricultural commodities exchange transactions, and Babban Gona, expected to impact large number of farmers and generate high co-investment leverage.

Second, there was a clear group of mostly medium-sized stand-alone projects (with grants of more than US \$500,000), ten in Nigeria and six in Senegal, expected to have satisfactory results and high co-investment leverage.

Third, there were two clusters of smaller projects in smaller countries or countries with weaker economies, five in the Republic of Cabo Verde and four in Niger. Finally, there was a small group of grants financed by the USAID West Africa and Prosper Africa.

Given this grouping of projects (including CBC and other types of grant-funded activities), it was clear that we could expect all the wholesale and high-impact grant-funded activities selected to do well. Interviews with respondents confirmed that the project clusters in Senegal, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire were also likely to do well, including COVID-19 and CBC grant-funded activities. Further, the Evaluation Team expected the grants awarded in Burkina Faso to produce satisfactory results, whilst only those in Niger reflected country-specific private sector weaknesses¹⁸. For more information, please refer to Annex H: Country profiles, specifically the section on Niger.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 Response program portfolio has been quite successful, with WATIH expected to realize satisfactory results overall. Moreover, the COVID-19 project results are anticipated to be comparable to those of CBC projects. This explains how initially some CBC proposed grant activities were rapidly adapted and re-designated as COVID-19 grants because in practice the two program components (COVID-19 and CBC) over-lapped and were complementary and responded to similar criteria in respect of their selection for grant support. The WATIH team proved to be adaptable in adopting a hybrid approach towards clusters of project proposals which began as CBC proposal concept notes but were adapted to join the COVID-19 Rapid Response decision-track.

3.4 Can WATIH provide more support to USAID in respect of especially important persons (VIP) and official visits to grantees by providing data, logistics, and information for briefings?

During USAID interviews, the Evaluation Team was informed of major challenges related to site visits, particularly in Nigeria. It was reported that the WATIH team had not adequately prepared and ensured sufficient progress on-site to justify a visit. No similar problems were reported in other locations during the interviews, although there were subsequently some reports of similar concerns in Ghana.

It is worth noting that there were no widespread complaints regarding site visit difficulties across West Africa. Most USAID activity officers and WATIH staff indicated that changes in WATIH management had greatly improved internal communications and coordination of visits, addressing previous challenges. Both USAID Managers and WATIH staff indicated that they do not expect any more problems with site visits in the future. Therefore, the WATIH Team is capable of providing adequate resource support for VIP visits to project sites, including data, logistics, and briefing services. A successful mission undertaken by USAID in Niger visiting Entreprise Salma, a grant recipient of US \$450,000, provided a positive example showcasing the availability of support for site visits.

¹⁸ It is important to note that while all West African countries face private sector weaknesses, each country is at a different stage of improvement. Therefore, it would be unfair to generalize and assume that all grants in Niger will underperform. It is widely acknowledged that the private sector in Niger is relatively weaker compared to other countries in the Sahel region. However, this observation does not imply criticism towards Creative or USAID. It is important to recognize the diligent efforts of the WATIH team in identifying and supporting these projects. The Evaluation Team has not suggested that these projects will underperform. Instead, it highlights that the modest targets set in Niger are in line with the contextual conditions and the relative strength of the private sector in the country. Despite these challenges, the Niger grants are still expected to achieve their objectives, demonstrating the progress made within the country's private sector.

3.5 Has WATIH been strategic in establishing additionality in the selection of concepts to fund? How will it work out attribution of impact, especially with concepts funded by multiple donor partners?

The WATIH team was strategic in selecting CBC and COVID-19 projects with significant outreach leading to potential large-scale impacts, for example on the number of farmers or consumers and with significant co-investment leverage – an average of 1:9 – that is nine US dollars mobilized for every one dollar invested. These well-selected projects are expected to manifest catalytic impacts, potentially leading to additional activities in new geographical locations, or in the production of new products.

USAID officials have rightly emphasized the principle of additionality in the funding of development programs. Therefore, even if a project had the potential to succeed without WATIH support, WATIH's investment should still provide meaningful additionality, that is, additional identifiable benefits to the project. The USAID funding for a project would for example (i) be crucial in making the project feasible, (ii) bring the project to fruition and viability earlier than expected, and (iii) enable scaling up or replication. See Box 2 for WATIH Grant examples demonstrating additionality.

Box 2: WATIH Grant Examples Demonstrating Additionality

During the evaluation, the team discovered that the WATIH grant of US \$1,499,953 to Agroserve enabled the company to maintain a positive cash flow and consolidate its five years of growth. Additionally, a WATIH contribution of US \$1,000,000 to NAFASO helped the company to expand its business links and support for multiple rice producers, processors, and distributors across West Africa¹⁹. Also, on the back of a WATIH grant of US \$1,655,224, AFEX, a grantee, was placed on an extremely high growth trajectory driven by a US \$240 million expansion package collateralized by warehouse receipts from 140 warehouses, which benefited a large number of farmers.

In these cases, multi-donor grants with different purposes and spread over time made it easier to deal with attribution and additionality. All three aforementioned projects had previously received substantial private sector development grants from UK DFID (now Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, FCDO) several years ago through the West Africa Food Markets program (WAFM), as well as investment support from investors, including funds from the Principality of Monaco in the case of Agroserve, and loans facilitated by Coris Bank.

All of these enterprises attracted equity investors and loan finance, and had some backing from bank credit lines, such as those supplied by Coris Bank, which in turn had support from institutional donors to help them extend their lending to the agricultural sector.²⁰ The multi-year time lag between the earlier DFID contributions to project development and later support from USAID via WATIH for the three examples given above made it easier to separate out and assess the subsequent attribution of success to USAID.

Examples of WATIH-supported private sector projects which attracted investment from multiple investors and direct and indirect institutional support from multiple donor agencies have been provided in Annex H of this report. One notable example is the Coliba waste processing company in Côte d'Ivoire, which received support from six investors, including entities from Germany and Switzerland. Additionally, one of these investors was in turn backed by a consortium of three institutional donors (BritishAid – DFID, Australian Aid and BMZ of Germany).

¹⁹ It is worth noting that NAFASO was already selling seeds across ECOWAS and exploring joint ventures outside of Burkina Faso. The WATIH grant specifically facilitated the establishment and strengthening of connections with rice producers in other countries, as planned.

²⁰ It should be noted that the ability of these companies to attract funding (as observed during the evaluation) does not necessarily imply that the WATIH grant was not needed. Many West African private sector firms directly or indirectly attract subsidies and state-backed support. So do many firms in the USA and EU. None of this proves that firms do not need extra support. What is clear is that classic aid programs may no longer be necessary as direct and indirect financing mechanisms through banks and investors become more effective. There is a strong case for phasing out grants via programs and instead strengthening lending through banks, perhaps with smart transitional interest subsidies.

If a research investigation were conducted into the financial support base of WATIH grantees, especially in high inward investment destination countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Senegal, more cases similar to those mentioned would likely be found. To accomplish this, an examination of how bank loans accessed by WATIH-supported companies in the private sector are routinely approved, subsidized, or collateralized by domestic, regional, and international state-backed sources would be necessary, especially for agriculture and agricultural processing. Most of this information, on the funding base of WATIH-supported grantees, and of their funders, is already available online. These sources were used to research some examples of grantee financing in the country reports provided in Annex H.

As co-investment activities become common, project stakeholders ought to reconcile this with the attribution of results to which donors would have contributed. For example, private sector supported grants have the effect of underpinning growth in production and revenue over time. Hence, at least partial attribution for the success to the grant donor seems reasonable. Against this backdrop, USAID and WATIH can take credit for the success of the aforementioned grantee projects.

As multi-donor funding becomes common, USAID and other donors will want to take a more careful look at how attribution levels are assessed or calculated. Undoubtedly some work on this already exists within USAID. In the longer term this may involve adaptation of approaches already adopted, for example, by OECD, UN agencies, and regional banks. In the shorter term, WATIH may want to consult within the USAID network to see if there are already available tools to help improve on some kind of basic attribution guidelines or matrix, without having to undertake work beyond the scope of an individual USAID-supported program such as WATIH.

Based on the responses to survey questions, more work has been done on additionality and direct attribution of impacts, and less on the complexity of the funding base of WATIH-supported grantees. The latter would lead in turn to more issues on allocation of attribution in a multi-donor context.

The ET recommends that more work²¹ be done on the funding base of WATIH grantees throughout the grant support period. This could lead to more comprehensive conclusions on the financial sustainability of the WATIH grantees and their supporting financial networks at the end of the WATIH program. It would also provide some of the evidence USAID needs to identify potential overlaps in terms of time, or sectoral and thematic support, or a combination of the two in respect of USAID grant support to private sector firms through WATIH. This information will aid in devising an appropriate approach to identify the implications for attribution and combining it with data or guidelines gleaned from OECD and other sources.

3.6 Is WATIH well set up in terms of strategy, expertise, tools, to manage implementation?

The ET notes the shift of emphasis from phase 1 – project co-creation and approvals – to phase 2, focusing on implementation and assessed WATIH's strategies, expertise and tools from this perspective. The new WATIH team with the management changes reflects the needed expertise for ensuring the achievement of planned project results.

²¹ It is important to note that the concept note preparation template has a section for indicating past work or experience collaborating with partners. It should also require potential grantees to list all the possible partners and actually record those who came on board throughout the grant support period.

While the expertise is available, the ET notes that the WATIH team should focus on implementation mechanisms to optimize the changes of WATIH grantees to meet their targets as far as possible by the end of the program in mid-2024.

Tools for managing implementation of Phase 2 include a standard matrix of performance indicators set up by the WATIH MEL team, which is annexed to the Report (see Annex G), and a risk analysis matrix which has been designed to help determine the prioritization of technical assistance.

WATIH's strategy for ensuring effective implementation of Phase 2 is structured along the three actions below:

- (i) the continued focus by WATIH staff, on the milestone monitoring mechanism that triggers incremental tranches of grant payments.
- (ii) deployment of additional STTA activities to address technical problems and contingencies.
- (iii) Continued improvement of working relationships between WATIH staff and grantees through broader stakeholder discussions including CLA and promotional events as suggested above. In particular these broader discussions have the aim to strengthen WATIH staff capacities and confidence in dealing with the increasingly challenging business enabling environment.

For effective implementation of Phase 2, the ET suggest that the existing expertise, tools and strategy can be complemented by promotional activities such as a relaunch of WATIH activities. This can be done partly via CLA and promotional events, to encourage a higher profile for WATIH, its objectives and modus operandi. These activities will promote greater awareness of the objectives and scope of the WATIH program in the light of a more challenging business environment.

4.0 EVALUATION QUESTION TWO

IS THE ACTIVITY ON TRACK TO ACHIEVE PLANNED OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS ACROSS COMPONENTS AND OVERALL?

Concerning the prospect of achieving planned program outcomes, 87 percent of respondents (USAID, WATIH team, and grantees) thought that WATIH is on track to achieve the target project outcomes across all, or almost all, segments of the program. However, 55 percent of respondents expressed concern about the constraining effects of start-up delays on the WATIH program. Hence 78 percent of respondents favored an ex-post facto measurement of results two or three years after the program had ended, to ensure capture of results in achieving planned outcomes and impacts across WATIH components and overall.

The results matrix provided in Annex G highlights that more time is needed to obtain a greater volume of results. However, the available results already make it clear that targets in concrete areas like co-investment fund mobilization for agricultural and non-agricultural production are already well on the way to being achieved. This is substantiated in detail under section 3.1 above and summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Selected Indicators on Cumulative Performance, September 2019 – March 2022

SELECTED INDICATORS ON CUMULATIVE PERFORMANCE			
SELECTED INDICATORS ON CUMULATIVE PERFORMANCE	PROJECT TARGET	RESULTS ACHIEVED	PERCENT ACHIEVED
Value of exports in targeted agricultural and non-agricultural commodities	\$ 300,000,000	\$18,557,672	6.2%
Value of new private sector capital investment in the agriculture sector or food chain leveraged by feed the future implementation	\$421,600,000	\$179,124,570	42.5%
Value of new private sector investment in non-agricultural targeted sectors leveraged by USAID implementation	\$74,400,000	\$60,800,527	81.7%
Creation of new jobs in project-assisted firms	60,000	11,318	18.9%
Value of smallholder incremental sales generated with USG assistance	\$ 375,000,000	\$ 77,136,311	20.6%
Improving the percentage of hectares of land under improved technologies or management practices	403,750 Ha	74,377 Ha	18.4%

Regarding projects that have been faced with particular problems, the WATIH program has already carried out remedial action and varied grant conditionality in cases where the grantee was affected by circumstances beyond its control, such as delays in acquiring land, in order to ensure a good chance of eventually achieving planned outcomes, rather than running out of cash. Provided that WATIH continue to show this kind of flexibility through close mentoring and supervision, especially via the milestone monitoring system²², then the ET is confident that non-performance

²² The milestone monitoring system is a mechanism used to track and evaluate the progress of a grant or project by setting specific milestones or key checkpoints at various stages of implementation. These milestones represent significant achievements or targets that need to be reached within a specified timeframe in order to access the grant.

risks can be mitigated, and risks identified and managed in order to ensure positive results going forward. In the light of evidence gathered from all categories of respondents, the ET's considered opinion is that WATIH activities are on track to achieve planned project results in terms of outcomes and impacts, but with some delays.

This observation draws from the design and content of activities supported by grants awarded, as evidenced by the list of 76 grant-supported projects provided in Annex E. Some of these grant-supported activities, mentioned in this report, (specifically *in section 3.1 on the catalytic impacts of multi-client, multi-country grant-funded activities of African Guarantee Fund, Cross-Boundary, and Stichting Cordaid*) offer exceptional potential in terms of design, outreach and prospects for production, revenue generation, and mobilization of co-investment.

Available data on design objectives and results of these projects, which are summarized in Table 4 and set out in more detail in Annex G, suggest that there is reasonable cause to expect that these activities are likely to contribute significantly to the attainment of planned results.

4.1 Is there an adequate mix of technical assistance for the WATIH grantees?

The WATIH contract mentions the provision of technical assistance in support of WATIH objectives. While acknowledging the existence of a budget for technical assistance, Some WATIH staff were of the view that technical assistance might be under-resourced. This concern may have also reflected some differences of view on the extent that technical assistance provided by WATIH should play a key role in WATIH program management, since the philosophy was that technical assistance needs of grantees should be anticipated by and incorporated in their budgets submitted to USAID as part of their grant proposals. Some of the USAID and WATIH respondents who expressed this view felt that the current WATIH under evaluation should not be conceived as being primarily a technical assistance program, which highlighted the difference between the current WATIH and the previous West Africa Trade Hub program. There was also a section of the Respondents and of the stakeholder community surrounding WATIH that believed the opposite, that the current WATIH should routinely supply technical assistance services organized by WATIH management to benefit grantees and third-party stakeholders.

The ET provides some pointers for addressing technical assistance needs in the current WATIH program. Firstly, there could be support for technical assistance commissioned and managed by grantees, which should be planned as part of the grant budget agreed with the grantee. In this case, the responsibility for implementing the technical assistance would rest with the grantee to hire Business Development Service Providers (BDSPs) to provide the training and advisory services in their grant proposal agreed and cleared by WATIH officials. The ET found several examples²³ of this working relationship, particularly including provision of essential and routine services to agricultural enterprises. Some BDSPs evolved out of the previous Trade Hub program, and some BDSP were based outside West Africa, for example in the US or Europe, whilst most were based nationally or regionally within West Africa.

Secondly, technical assistance could be offered to ongoing grant projects under implementation in order to promote project objectives and effectiveness.

²³ The ET provides in the Report one detailed example of where a spin-off BDSP from the previous Trade Hub was set up with its head office in the USA to supply technical assistance, and not only temporary TA, in support of agricultural Value Chains, to grantees. Grantees without permanent representation in West Africa explained that they could not have operated so successfully without such TA.

A key feature in the mix of technical assistance is the mobilization of Short-Term Technical Assistance (STTA) to provide client-specific and problem-specific advisory services, for example to provide management advice or training, or technical support related to production processes. This category of technical assistance is not new to the program and should be encouraged. In particular, the allocation of STTA²⁴ to selected grantees should continue to be provided in the light of risk analysis and grantee requests.

WATIH staff and grantees indicated that when circumstances beyond the control of the grantee had made it impossible to achieve performance targets or project development milestones, WATIH has provided direct technical assistance or STTA. This has sometimes included renegotiation of conditions related to milestones to avoid disruption to the cash-flow planning of the grantee and to facilitate continued pursuit of agreed project objectives and targets. When the takeoff of a project has depended, for example, on the procurement of land for an industrial site, WATIH management has made specific interventions, as in Liberia with Nimba Ecolodge. That was STTA input without which the WATIH-sponsored project would have suffered undue delay or a permanent stall.

The staff of WATIH reported in interviews that about 60 percent of the ongoing technical support offered by the WATIH team to grantees has been and is now in the form of delivery of monitoring of milestones, mentoring, and associated management advice, while 40 percent has been in the form of STTA services mostly to help resolve technical issues. Another example of STTA is technical advice to a poultry farming grantee in Niger dealing with an outbreak of avian flu.

The ET found at least one case where medium-term technical support services were being delivered to several grantees by a US-based specialist BDSP. The Partnership for Natural Ingredients (PNI) provides technical support services related to supply chain issues regarding natural products to seven WATIH grantees in different West African countries. PNI was created in 2019 and managed by Joseph Funt, former managing director of the Global Shea Alliance, which was previously supported by the preceding Trade Hub program. The Evaluation Team regarded this as a significant and positive development in the successful privatization of non-traditional technical assistance provision.

In this case, one of the grantees, Burt's Bees, made it clear that they could not have managed their WATIH-supported project in absentia (without a management structure in Ghana, the recipient country) without a supporting contract with this new US-based TA provider. This was not short-term provision, but medium term. The service provided supported the consolidation of the supply chain, and improvements in productivity and profitability, and also in this case to a commitment to job creation for women, women's empowerment, and gender equality, with 78 percent of jobs created going to women. This particular STTA program for this grantee had positive prospects for replication and scaling up across West Africa. Burt's Bees confirmed that it could not implement such projects as a US-based firm without PNI acting for them as a local representative.

In this case, private sector-originated technical help has been critical for grantees but provided by a service provider and not by WATIH. The payment for the technical support services came from the grantee's own revenues, often supported by the grant provided by WATIH. The ET regards the successful privatization of technical assistance as an achievement for a private sector development program. This sort of initiative should be encouraged. WATIH grant support for Babban Gona reflects a similar development since this grantee agricultural support services

²⁴ STTA is paid for and managed by the WATIH team.

delivery system is locally based in Northern Nigeria and was originally constructed as a privatized spin-off from the Palladium management structure of a UK-DFID-funded program in Nigeria.

4.2 Has WATIH identified the core mix of TA needed to address key productivity and profitability constraints that plagued the private sector?

The WATIH program has now completed the grant co-creation stage, therefore no further technical assistance is required in respect of preparation of EOIs and final grant proposals to USAID. The appropriate mix of types of technical support needed to address key productivity and profitability constraints is outlined in detail in section 3.2.1. above. With this range of technical assistance support services and modus operandi, WATIH has enough tools in its toolbox to address any technical assistance needs.

The management of WATIH, led since January 2022 by a new COP, has prioritized the allocation of upcoming technical assistance requirements during the implementation phase, having moved on from the grant co-creation stage. The provision of technical assistance support is categorized as per the risks identified through analysis which reflects the priorities aimed at meeting the challenges and risks. Additionally, the allocation of technical assistance support is based on fulfilling the needs to enhance grantee performance.

4.3 Has WATIH employed the appropriate set of skills needed to respond to the technical assistance needs of the grant recipients?

One of the most common complaints from WATIH grantees during the grant co-creation phase was that their contacts with WATIH were often with staff who seemed not to have enough familiarity with business needs and commercial practices (*see the percentage cited below in the next paragraph*). It was not that WATIH staff showed a lack of knowledge of fund management (*where Creative Associates had some experienced people*), but that many staff, especially grants officers, seemed initially to lack business awareness and familiarity with how private sector businesses operate. This related especially to the needs of grantee firms engaged in agricultural and business cycles, where lack of timeliness in grant management could negatively affect grantee performance and the achievement of results targets²⁵. It was however also noted that this problem was gradually addressed and resolved with increased knowledge of grantee operations.

A combination of implementation delays (*by Creatives Associates and USAID*), plus a lack of sector-specific knowledge, led to some losses of opportunities for grantees. Specifically, 73 percent of grantee respondents confirmed this lack of experience or sector-specific expertise on the part of the WATIH program managers. Some grantees dealing with rural business cycles reported that in some cases they missed a six-month cycle due to delays. Some financial service providers said they missed deals that they could have made due to the delays in the approval processes.

The set of skills deployed by WATIH, apart from the grantee identification and co-creation stage, was the regular monitoring of milestones to trigger incremental grant payments.

²⁵ Partners who were already involved in specific sectors highlighted their familiarity with the seasons and timelines of relevant agricultural value-chains. However, it is important to consider whether there were other factors at play, such as changes in seasonal patterns due to climate change, which may have impacted the timing and effectiveness of grant management.

The WATIH team confirmed they sought to improve grantee performance and productivity by:

- (i) strengthening team skills for effective deployment of STTA in support of grantees,
- (ii) intensifying longer term efforts to improve working relationships with grantees, and
- (iii) facilitating more comprehensive and constructive dialogues on the joint identification of problems and mapping out strategic measures to resolve them.

4.4 Has WATIH established the appropriate metrics to gauge its success in improving private sector competitiveness with the portfolio of grantees supported?

The managers of WATIH had established a checklist of 23 indicators, the results for which were regularly updated by the MEL team, drawing on information from the grantees. The bulk of the indicators are obtained quarterly, with some collected annually.

One of the complaints of some grantees was that the timing and cycle for the collection of performance indicators for individual enterprises were different from the timing and cycle for the collection of similar data for MEL aggregation purposes for the whole program. This arrangement sometimes necessitated preparing similar measurements and reports twice but with two different deadlines. This anomaly was, over time, addressed through improved coordination.

The ET found the established metrics for the measurement of program results to be appropriate. This opinion of the Evaluation Team was based on and consistent with the views of all the WATIH/USAID Activity Officers interviewed. The metrics selected were partly laid down by standard USAID requirements, for example for all agricultural projects, (as indicated in the SOW) but the rest of the performance indicators and targets were put together by WATIH MEL staff and the WATIH management team.

The resulting interim results matrix is set out in Annex G of this Report. Reporting requirements of specific grantees matched their sectoral priorities and did not usually cover all 23 indicators in the results matrix for every grantee. Therefore, most grantees did not have to supply metrics on all the indicators, but only to the ones relevant to their sector. These key indicators (see Table 4) are sufficient to substantiate the private sector competitiveness of the grantees since they cover production, sales, revenue, and mobilization of co-investment.

There was only a limited volume of data available on the performance indicators summarized in Table 4 and set out in Annex G. This reflected the short operational period (maximum 18 months) for the achievement of results. For instance, as of March 2022, only 11 grantees had been operational for a full year, with 65 grantees having been in operation for less than one full year. Despite this, the actual achievements on mobilization of co-investment were fairly positive having already reached US \$240 million within 18 months, in line with reaching the aggregate target of US \$400 million within the program timeframe. These co-investment mobilization achievements are summarized in Table 4.

The data relating to achievement of annual targets for Year Three, (due in October 2022), is expected to show more scope for comparisons and variance analysis. This data should give a better indication of performance prospects. By mid-2024, performance indicators for the five-year WATIH program would reflect comprehensive operational data for the three full operational years ending in March 2024. That would provide a better idea of medium-term trends in planned results, and potential outcomes and impacts. The ET found the performance metrics to be relevant given

its focus on indicators such as co-investment mobilized (for agricultural and non-agricultural projects), exports, as well as jobs created and participation levels for women, and youth.

Despite earlier delays, which adversely impacted on the achievement of targets to date, the ET believes that the program targets remain realistic, and in some instances seem too low. Some targets self-set by Creative Associates, the contractor (and not by USAID) is retrospectively on the low side. (For example, 60,000 jobs in five years). In addition, the co-investment targets appeared to be low compared to actual performance so far since the aggregate revised target of US \$400 million will be easily achieved by mid-2024 especially considering that the achieved co-investment figure had already reached US \$240 million at the time of the evaluation. This target had been increased from US \$300 million to US \$400 million when the COVID-19 rapid response facility was added to the WATIH portfolio.

Whether or not these targets for employment and co-investment should be reviewed and increased is a matter for WATIH and USAID. There is scope to do so, or to ensure a significant over-achievement of these targets based on the current MEL matrix. The ET would support either an upward revision of targets on employment and co-investment fund mobilization, or a clear focus on producing much better results than the original and amended.

The ET concludes that the matrix of indicators and interim results as presented in Annex G is appropriate to gauge the private sector competitiveness of the grantees supported by the WATIH program. The key indicators include outreach (*e.g., to farmers*), sales and revenue and the volume of co-investment funds actually mobilized. These are primary metrics indicating the success of the WATIH program and grantee performance, including their increased competitiveness. The ET also supports the recommendation by WATIH and USAID respondents to set up a mechanism for ex-post facto evaluation of grantee results and program outcomes and impacts, in 2027 (*i.e., approximately three years after the closure of the WATIH program in mid-2024*).

4.5 Are grantees actually aware of the availability of TA during implementation? Are grantees approaching WATIH on implementation issues at all?

The WATIH team was aware that as part of the grant design and co-creation process the grant proposals could incorporate budgetary provision so that grantees would be able to identify and implement their own technical assistance support arrangements within the scope of the agreed grant. This was intended to be the main way of mobilizing technical assistance funds for grantees, to be planned, designed, and managed by themselves rather than funded and managed by WATIH.

Once the grant and project implementation stage were reached all co-investment grantees were aware of the milestone monitoring system and the accompanying mentoring services, a form of management support from WATIH, since this was written into the grant agreements and contracts with WATIH. Whilst this was not regarded by some respondents as a classic form of technical assistance, it was nonetheless regarded as a primary means of monitoring and promoting project progress, especially since successive incremental tranches of grant payments to the grantees are dependent on the grantee achieving agreed incremental results targets.

There was also scope for Short Term Technical Assistance (STTA) to be identified by WATIH and grantee staff teams together to meet additional contingencies, especially technical and sectoral needs reflecting risks and problems not necessarily covered by the grant to the WATIH-supported firm. There were different views about this and how to prioritize this provision so WATIH developed, especially after management changes starting in mid-2021 and consolidated by a new

COP starting in January 2022, a risk matrix identifying types of risks and problems that could lead to allocation of STTA funding for prioritized grantees. It was not assumed that all grantees would need or qualify for this type of support. The ET looked at examples where grantees had unexpected problems, for example when a poultry project hit an outbreak of avian flu, or when a tourist lodge project hit a problem with land acquisition. In such cases grantees approached WATIH management and asked for help.

Meanwhile some grantees made their arrangements for technical assistance to be provided by third parties – Business Development Service Providers (BDSPs) such as was the case with Partnership for Natural Ingredients (PNI) noted in section 3.2.1 above. In the case of PNI the ET identified about half a dozen cases where grantees depended on medium-term or permanent support from this source to help them with the management of agricultural value chains and supply chains. This type of technical assistance was financed by the grantees’ own revenues, or by the grant from WATIH under the agreed terms in the grant agreement, or a combination of the two.

The ET concluded that grantees are aware of the availability of TA during implementation and are using it. They also approach WATIH on implementation issues as necessary.

4.6 What are the proposed projects by grantees, what is the grant amount received, what is the co-investment fund, have grantees started implementation, and what are the proposed outcomes and impacts for these activities?

Annex E summarizes the proposed projects by grantees, the grant amount received, the co-investment fund, implementation status, and proposed outcomes and impacts.

The Evaluation Team's assessment of the leverage performance of the WATIH program is based on grantee performance in terms of the size of the grant compared to the amount of co-investment attracted. The actual leverage performance achieved during the period under review is in Figure 4 in section 1.1 of this Report. Annex E shows that 10 of the 76 grantees accounted for 58 percent of all co-investments leveraged during the period under review. However, they (*i.e., the 10 grantees*) received only 25 percent of all the grants provided by WATIH from the inception of the program in September 2019 until April 2022. Besides, the Team noted that only two grantees, namely the African Guarantee Fund, West Africa, and the AFEX Commodities Exchange, Nigeria is likely to mobilize, within three years, up to US \$500 million between them in co-investments. The attribution of the agreed co-investment leverage volumes raises issues as to whether these will be directly attributable to the project component agreed for co-investment with WATIH, as part of the overall grantee performance.

Interim results on the performance indicators can be found in Annex G. The performance indicators include production, exports, jobs, women, youth, revenue and co-investment targets and achievements. Details on co-investment targets and achievements for agricultural and non-agricultural enterprises have already been discussed in earlier sections of this report. Aggregate interim results on co-investment mobilized was already US \$240 million²⁶ by March 2022, so projections based on this would mean that aggregate results for co-investment by mid-2024 would certainly exceed the target of US \$400 million.

The list of grants awarded to grantees by WATIH has been provided in Annex E. These details include grant volumes as well as co-investment targets. The *Financial Times* of London recently

²⁶ The summary results as presented in Annex G is approx. USD 240M = USD 239.9 M (\$179,124,571+\$60,800,527)

published an article stating that in 2020 AFEX Nigeria was the fastest growing company in Nigeria and the third fastest growing firm in Africa. The annual revenue of AFEX grew from US \$848,000 in 2017 to US \$31.7 million in 2020.²⁷

AFEX received a grant of US\$1.6 million from USAID via WATIH in May 2021 and undertook to mobilize US \$29.8 million in co-investment. Three years earlier it received a grant of more than £1 million from the (UK) Department for International Development (DFID) via the West Africa Food Markets program (WAFM). The DFID grant consolidated the early establishment of AFEX. The three-year separation between the two grants facilitated clear attribution of recent growth to WATIH. AFEX only started mobilizing large-scale finance from new financial instruments backed by warehouse receipts in 2018, so WATIH could claim attribution for recent upscaling.

WACOT Rice, also a WATIH grantee, was the 24th fastest growing company in Africa, growing in revenue from US \$29.8 million in 2017 to US \$73.1 million in 2020, with an absolute annual growth rate of 187.8 percent.²⁸

4.7 What are the unintended consequences (unexpected outcomes) of the grants?

One of the unintended consequences of the operational model of WATIH is an encouragement of the idea of further grants being distributed on the same model, using grant funding to trigger the promotion of additional private sector-led projects. For example, the capital expenditure of upscaling and replicating new bee-keeping projects comprises the cost of constructing the hives and providing protective clothing and tools. This type of expansion and replication across West African countries with shea butter-producing communities could be grant funded. The unit cost for each start-up would be less than US \$200, including an allocation for technical assistance.

Nevertheless, some USAID activity managers argued that this program design should not be repeated, thinking that this investment by USAID should be a one-off, and that WATIH should be followed up by new kinds of private sector development initiatives backed by novel approaches and financial instruments. However, some managers of the WATIH and some private sector grantees want a project extension, or the evolution of a new hybrid model based on grants to private sector enterprises, but with more technical assistance provided by WATIH and some similarities with the previous Trade Hub.

For example, earlier private sector development and trade promotion programs run by the EU in Asia in ASEAN countries in the mid-1990s, such as the COGEN (Cogeneration) program, following evaluation from Phase I to Phase II, dropped grant premiums and expanded technical assistance and access to technology. The motivation of some USAID activity managers was also in the direction of promoting further program design changes and to seek to avoid institutionalization of grant dependency.

There is a tendency, especially in West Africa, where project and grant subsidies are still common, for a grant-in-aid outlook to persist, despite arguments for a break from aid and grant dependency. For example, the intervention of the Ghanaian President with policy agenda hinged on “Moving Towards a Ghana Beyond Aid,” a policy which he had shared with Heads of some bilateral donor governments, such as the Prime Minister of the UK, HE Boris Johnson and the President of France, HE Emmanuel Macron. Just a couple of years after the public pronouncements by the President of

²⁷ Financial Times May 2, 2022, citing Special Report on Africa’s Fastest Growing Companies.

²⁸ Op Cit.

Ghana, the Ghanaian economy plunged into an economic crisis precipitated by home-grown economic difficulties and external shocks, including the negative impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war and its associated global energy crisis, high inflation, and supply chain and logistics difficulties, leading to little or no reference to the Ghana Beyond Aid agenda by Ghanaian officials in recent times.

The experience of the Ghanaian economy suggests that the transition from donor-dependency to economic self-reliance takes time and is likely to proceed in incremental steps. In the light of these comments the ET recommends that going forward after the WATIH program there could be more consideration of working through banks and financial institutions as well as via grantees, rather than traditional aid-based programs, and to move gradually from direct grant-support to facilitating private firms to access concessional finance and new forms of blended finance.

5.0 EVALUATION QUESTION THREE

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF PLANNED RESULTS AND OBJECTIVES?

The WATIH team identified several categories of risks which were threats to planned results. These included poor market conditions (disruptions to supply chains, inflation, high-interest rates); barriers to access to finance and political factors including border closures. The team also identified problems related to environmental factors including climate change, seasonal problems, weather, and natural disasters. Clearly the program and grantees were affected by disease outbreaks such as COVID-19, fall armyworm, avian flu. Regulatory challenges facing grantees included problems related to rules, permits and licenses. Respondents underlined that security concerns presented real difficulties including political instability, terrorism, criminal violence, and civil unrest. Grantees were also negatively affected by poor hard and soft infrastructure. Finally, the program had been affected by management and operational challenges.

The Evaluation Team, following consultations with key informants, concluded that the main risks affecting grantees were macroeconomic factors, such as high inflation, high interest rates, prohibitive costs of funds and insufficient working capital and of foreign exchange shortages. There were gaps in soft and hard infrastructure and economic fall-out from the Russia-Ukraine war with downturns in global demand, disruption of supply chains, shortages of wheat and fertilizer and high energy costs.

Concerning internal factors affecting success in reaching planned results and objectives, 63 percent of respondents felt that initial challenges relating to management and communications had been dealt with and that the program was now on track to achieve positive planned results. Respondents pointed to the way in which problems in the co-creation phase, and associated grant management processes had been addressed and management changes made as evidence of substantive progress during the grant-making phase.

The evaluation also identified some of the key factors contributing to the success of the WATIH co-investment projects. These include:

- (i) milestone monitoring and mentoring, checking on production results and co-investment leverage obtained (*as opposed to promised and planned*), thereby leading to additional incremental grant payments.
- (ii) deployment of optional additional technical problem-oriented sectoral and specialist STTA aimed at helping to overcome problems and resolve barriers
- (iii) other successful efforts at strengthening working relationships between WATIH and grantees, for example via frequent remote contacts and site visits, whenever possible.

Since January 2022, WATIH has been able to prioritize technical assistance choices for STTA support by updating its Implementation Strategy (IS) incorporating a Risk Management Framework (RMF) and by identifying in advance risks that could affect grantees. This along with dialogue with grantees and grantee requests has facilitated a practical approach to allocation of STTA resources. WATIH sought to establish a balance between costs, operational effectiveness, and improving the prospects for successfully achieving planned targets and objectives. The ET noted that these changes are already impacting positively on program management and on the performance of WATIH-supported grantees.

As regards external factors, 65 percent of grantees reported that increased insecurity is likely to negatively affect supply chains, marketing, and road transport (*citing recent attacks on the train from Abuja to Kaduna in Nigeria and insecurity affecting road transport in border areas of Burkina Faso and Niger and in Northern Togo and Benin*). The deterioration in security is adversely impacting visits to WATIH project sites, especially in Nigeria. For regional business stakeholders and WATIH staff, there are more security concerns about visiting Nigeria than the Sahel region.

Further, the global economic downturn, partly triggered by COVID-19 and now propelled by the war in Ukraine, can adversely affect agriculture due to shortages of grain and fertilizer. Negative impacts include weaker global and national value chains, higher energy costs and inflation, and some political instability, impacting on economics and trade.

Concerning the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on WATIH and its grantees, the response was mixed. Whilst 13 percent of grantee firms reported that they were still negatively impacted by the pandemic, others such as those specializing in home delivery, food distribution systems, logistics and e-commerce said they were actually doing better. Surprisingly, 87 percent of grantee respondents reported that their firms were either recovering from COVID-19 or doing better than before. The firms doing better because of the impacts of COVID-19 were able to take advantage of travel restrictions and lock downs and to develop, for example, retail distribution systems and home deliveries of groceries. They include firms that could provide services making it easier for people to work from home, including software services facilitating remote meetings and teamwork.

In addition, COVID-19 responses by donor-supported programs like WATIH have resulted in more short-term support being available to private sector enterprises than previously, helping them to cope with structural challenges such as shortage of working capital and unreliable supply chains. These structural problems preceded the COVID-19 pandemic but became more pronounced and threatened business survival as the pandemic disrupted supply chains, reduced incomes and decreased demand for goods and services. The compensatory services and interventions provided by various donors helped to regenerate economic activity and make value chains more resilient.

Based on the Annual Reports and KIIs conducted, the ET noted that about a third of AGOA-WATIH contracts resulted in practical technical support on trade-related procedures such as certification to the benefit of grantees. These positive trade support measures therefore helped to make the WATIH program more successful and helped grantees to sustain or increase targeted exports.

Overall, the ET noted that the WATIH program is moving on from its first two years of slow grant co-creation. Management has been strengthened for the implementation phase. The program and grantees are recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and coping with the impacts of the war in Ukraine.

5.1 Are there metrics to measure the program's impact on broad-based and inclusive economic growth and resilience?

All respondents were aware of the set of interim performance indicators adopted by USAID and WATIH for MEL purposes. All respondents (99 percent) considered these metrics to be adequate for program performance measurement. The only adaptations suggested were that the measures on gender progress should include the advancement of women within grantee firms toward positions

of greater responsibility. The ET thought this could be achieved without actually changing the core matrix, by adding some additional reporting and data to grantee reports. The measurement of progress regarding opportunities for the youth also would depend on detailed agricultural surveys usually done annually to track the average age of farmers and, thus, the prospect of the entry of younger people into the sector. The ET concluded that such detailed surveys were beyond the scope of the WATIH MEL system and its budget limitations and would, therefore, have to be pursued in cooperation with government agencies, specialist agricultural research agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international agencies.

For the purposes of MEL, WATIH could consider surveying the larger firms participating in the program, especially those working with large groups of farmers. The ET was worried that this could potentially overburden enterprises with too much social research. Hence the preferred solution was as suggested above, to work out synergistic relationships with research agencies, NGOs, or government ministries, departments, and agencies to gather such information.

On balance the WATIH team believes that the MEL matrix of 23 performance indicators provides an adequate basis to assess the program's progress in terms of its declared objectives and WATIH's impacts on broad-based and inclusive economic growth and resilience.

5.2 Has WATIH and the supporting Missions established meaningful and measurable metrics to use in tracking progress toward planned/desired outcomes across priority program objectives?

Concerning the adequacy of the established performance measurement metrics, as recorded above, 99 percent of the respondents thought the routine MEL operations of WATIH and the collection of data on the 23 indicators were adequate to track progress towards planned and desired outcomes and impact of the program.

Respondents noted that, in some cases, the same information was required for milestone monitoring as well as MEL reporting so that similar data required from grantees was requested at various times. This caused extra work and administrative challenges. Efforts were therefore made, and are being continued, to better coordinate and harmonize these requirements so as to minimize data collection and recording workloads (*see section 3.3.3*).

The Report discusses elsewhere the points made by respondents concerning the need to build up a sufficient volume of data in response to the matrix of performance indicators given the short duration of operational grantee projects during the Mid Term Review. Hence it was expected that more reliable results and forward projections would be available by the end of the WATIH program in mid-2024, and from the proposed ex-post facto measurement mechanism to be applied in 2027, three years after the end of the WATIH program.

5.3 Are there sound and appropriate established metrics to determine program impact?

The Respondents from USAID and WATIH made it clear in their responses on the question of the adequacy of the MEL approach and MEL matrix developed for the program, that this was adequate to meet the needs of the program. The immediate issue was to build up a sufficient volume of results and data given the short duration of the grant-supported projects at the time of the Mid Term Evaluation. By September 2023, program managers should be able to make more informed analysis concerning prospects for achieving planned results and outcomes for the WATIH program based on at least two complete years of data on production and revenue.

Respondents shared concerns about the sufficiency of the volume of data in determining program impact in the future, noting that given start-up delays on many projects since July 2021, affecting agricultural and other types of production cycles would mean more annual metrics would be available only later in 2022 and 2023. That explains the interest in obtaining more data on the performance metrics after the end of WATIH in mid-2024. However, the existing range of metrics is considered adequate to facilitate program evaluation and planning.

The Evaluation Team did not consider it appropriate, after 18 months of successful operations, to begin to attempt analysis of high-level outcomes. This may be more possible as a greater volume of data is accumulated in year 4 and year 5.’ More reliable, broader conclusions on wider concepts such as outcomes and impacts do require more data and more analysis than can be obtained at this stage.

6.0 EVALUATION QUESTION FOUR

TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE THEORY OF CHANGE STILL VALID, AND DOES IT RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF PARTNER USAID MISSIONS?

6.1 Will WATIH investments validate and contribute to the TOC for this activity?

This question drew responses from 11 WATIH and USAID activity managers, representing about 10 percent of the KII sample. They agreed the TOC was consistent with their needs and that WATIH investments would result in achieving the targets and objectives of grant-funded activities as per the TOC assumptions. The ET supports this assertion on the validity of the TOC based on (a) acquired knowledge of the progress of grantee projects, (b) perception of overall program progress gleaned from Annual Reports and Work-plans and (c) drawing upon recent experiences with similar private sector programs in West Africa (e.g., with USAID and UK-Aid DFID). These views of the ET also reflect the ET's management experience with contractors with track-records in large programs in West Africa including DAI and Palladium as well as from the review of published information by the DAC Committee of the OECD.

Given the positive interim performance results set out in Annex G, the ET concludes, in line with KII respondents, that the focus of WATIH grant-funded activities is convergent with TOC assumptions. Therefore, the WATIH grant investments will validate and contribute to the strengthening of the logic of the TOC and contribute to the achievement of the results, impacts and outcomes envisaged.

6.2 To what extent are the assumptions under which the TOC was formulated valid?

Field data show 86 percent of respondents believe the TOC should not be changed, while 90 percent of USAID activity officers and 82 percent of WATIH staff feel it is adequate to meet their needs. One respondent favored minor adjustments to the TOC to reinforce the role of capacity-building and knowledge management as regards access to finance and co-investment mobilization. The ET concluded this could be considered without changing the TOC.

The assumptions underlying the TOC²⁹ are that WATIH will serve as a catalyst for broad-based inclusive growth through private sector investment readiness and competitiveness. The evaluation SOW makes clear the role of the WATIH program in respect of Nigeria and West Africa.

The Nigerian TOC states that *if* the capacity of agricultural service providers is strengthened. The use of improved farming technologies expands *if* participation in the agricultural markets is increased along with private sector investment to improve productivity. *If* the profitability of smallholder farming improves, Nigeria's agricultural competitiveness will be strengthened, thereby contributing to broad-based and inclusive growth.

There is an apparent ambiguity on the possibility of WATIH intervening in policy support work since the SOW quotes the USAID Country and Regional Development Strategy on the general role of USAID West Africa as follows: USAID/West Africa's Mission-wide goal is the West African led advancement of social and economic well-being. This goal is supported by several development objectives, including "broad-based economic growth and resilience advanced through West African partners." This goal articulates USAID/WA's commitment to support African-led, regional development and underscores the mission's commitment to capacity-

²⁹ See the TOC section in the Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the West Africa Trade and Investment Hub – Scope of Work, page 2.

building with the direct aim of supporting regional organizations to better deliver on their respective mandates. This refers to the broad commitment of USAID/WA and not to the specific role of the WATIH program which is clarified below.

The SOW then makes it clear that the WATIH program will **not** enter directly into intervening in policy support work. Firstly, it sets out the main mandate and modus operandi of WATIH. The West Africa TOC says, “that *if* successful partnerships with leading buyers and processors expand production volume and improve quality, West Africa will increase trade and investment and contribute to broad-based economic growth and resilience through increased job creation and improved incomes.” Then it goes on to say: “Complementary policy work addressing trade barriers and regional market integration is undertaken by USAID/West Africa under different activities.” (See page 3 of the evaluation SOW).

Creative Associates and WATIH management have interpreted their remit as being that they should maintain contacts with wider stakeholders, for example via promotional events. But these entities should no longer be funded directly by WATIH contracts as they were by the previous Trade Hub, since USAID/WA has the remit to address policy work by other means.

The ET finds that the TOC logic flows well and that WATIH has contributed to regional development via the selection of West African private sector partners with regional catalytic impacts such as Stichting Cordaid, Cross Boundary Ltd, and African Guarantee Fund (see grant-funded activities are set out below in Section 4.3).

The report on work plan implementation in the Annual Report for Year One said little about regional cooperation, mentioning only webinars involving the Federation of West African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FEWACCI) and the ECOWAS Commission.³⁰ There was no mention of contact with UEMOA. The 2022 Annual Work Plan³¹ refers to broad engagement with commercial operators, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and others.

The Nigerian TOC remains valid, however further deterioration in security makes it increasingly difficult to implement this strategy. The disruption of supply chains, logistic services and road transportation affecting main trade corridors makes it harder to obtain inputs (raw materials, spare parts, and accessories), sell, and deliver finished goods, or get people in the right place at the right time. Agriculture has been disrupted, especially in the Northeast, with negative impacts on productivity and competitiveness.

Despite rising insecurity, agricultural development is making progress, mostly in parts of South-Western Nigeria and Central Nigeria, such as Plateau State. Northern Nigeria used to be the breadbasket for the country, and there is now some recovery of agriculture in the North-east. Some internal cross-country trade routes by road or rail may no longer be practical or safe without military-style convoys and protection. For some time, processed food producers in Lagos and the South-West have found it difficult to transport products across the country to the North-east. Therefore, producing for the Lagos area or overseas markets is more manageable. The deteriorating security situation, if not addressed, could eventually lead to the Balkanization of the national economy, built around safer zones. The sub-optimal security situation in Nigeria does not

³⁰ See the WATIH Annual Performance Report Year One, September 2019 to September 30, 2020, Chapter 4 on Stakeholder Participation and Involvement, page 46.

³¹ See the 2022 Annual Work Plan revised on November 9th, 2021, in section 3.2 to Technical Assistance to Strengthen the Effectiveness of the Trade Hub Fund

invalidate the essence of the TOC but makes it harder to implement development strategies based on it. The evolving insecurity across the Sahel poses more long-term economic, social, and political risks to business across the sub-region, especially cross-border trade, and investment flows.

6.3 Which grantee activities are potential models of success in advancing the TOC?

During the two and a half years of the WATIH program, the progress on COVID-19 recovery responses and the implementation of the CBC projects have made achievements toward catalytic and transformational changes. The other sectoral specialist project activities under the WATIH umbrella, such as R&D in Nigeria, health, water, and sanitation in Senegal, and some projects targeting the advancement of women, have made progress in terms of project outcomes and impact based on measures of success that are different from those of co-investment projects.

The co-investment projects (CBC and COVID-19) are on course to success. Some of the most successful work on a wholesale rather than retail basis. These have a wide range of catalytic impacts on multiple project partners across West Africa. For example, Stichting Cordaid is a multi-partner, multi-country grantee supporting SMEs and Microfinance Institutions providing credit to SMEs, micro-enterprises and consumers in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Sierra Leone.

Cross Boundary Nigeria Ltd, is an example of a WATIH-supported grantee facilitating investment via advisory services to unlock access to private capital for sustainable growth. It targets SMEs and micro-enterprises under-served by conventional banking in Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Nigeria. Locafrique in Senegal, supports SMEs, microenterprise and smallholder farmers with small loans and equipment leasing. The Africa Guarantee Fund (AGF) offers credit guarantees to SME support agencies and SME clients in Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria, and other West African countries. AGF has undertaken to mobilize US \$160 million in co-investment to be deployed alongside a WATIH grant of US \$2.5 million. In all these multiple-client outlet cases the business models supported by WATIH look to be both catalytic and to have high volume impacts.

The WATIH Action Plan of October 2021³² highlighted some middle-level specialist service providers with multi-country outlets, such as Koster Keunen, which supports beekeepers in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo. Similarly, WATIH support for Burt's Bees pioneering synergies between shea nut-collecting communities in a Ghana pilot project, will help to replicate this approach across West Africa.

Finally, the Evaluation also identified some successful stand-alone grantee projects with high impacts, including AFEX Commodities Exchange Ltd and Babban Gona in Nigeria and NAFASO in Burkina Faso. WATIH gave grant support to the AFEX Quality Enhancement Centre which helped to underpin its growth strategy. AFEX has set up more than 140 warehouses in Nigeria in support of Commodity Exchange Aggregation services benefitting large numbers of smallholder farmers. It is currently mobilizing US \$240 million in working capital via support for innovative financial instruments collateralized by warehouse receipts. By 2020, AFEX was the fastest growing company in Nigeria and the third fastest in Africa. Babban Gona provides training, financial credit, agricultural inputs, and harvesting and marketing services to over 56,000 smallholder farmers in Nigeria. Meanwhile NAFASO is supporting rice production in its Burkina

³² The WATIH Action Plan for Remaining Co-Investment Funding, October 2021.

Faso factory for the Burkinabe and West African markets. It supports SME rice producers, processors, and distributors in several countries, while supplying seeds to most of ECOWAS, Mauritania, and the DRC.

In all of these cases WATIH is supporting grantees operating successful business models, in line with TOC objectives. As highlighted above these leading examples of WATIH-supported grantee projects promise high impacts often in support of activities in several West African countries. In this Report we provide above greater details on these projects and on the catalytic impacts and high co-investment leverage offered by these grantees, as we cannot repeat all of these potentially successful attributes here (see for example pages 33-34). The ET is convinced that these WATIH-supported grantee activities will be models for successful implementation of TOC objectives.

6.4 Is the TOC adequate to meet the changing socio-economic and political conditions in West Africa and the Sahel, especially given global supply challenges on energy, grain, and fertilizer? Will these pressures undermine the TOC?

On this topic, 86 percent of USAID and WATIH respondents felt that for the remainder of the WATIH program, the TOC responded to their needs and did not need changing. However, a small group of two or three USAID Activity Officers argued that it would be necessary to modify TOC assumptions for follow on trade and private sector development programs going forward, in light of rapidly evolving global and regional geopolitical and economic developments.

6.5 Does the MEL plan include sufficient means for regularly monitoring change for critical TOC outcomes?

The MEL plan and the set of 23 indicators collected regularly by WATIH for program monitoring cover all the objectives of the TOC. The monitoring indicators for each WATIH-supported grantee are complementary to the overall MEL plan but cover only the sectors needed for each set of grantee activities provided for in each individual grant agreement. The MEL plan indicators are collected quarterly or annually depending on their specification. In depth quality assurance is assured by the individual MEL and monitoring plans for each grantee. This data is analyzed to determine if and when successive incremental grant payments are triggered. All of this data is fed into Collaborative, Learning and Adaptation events and reports. The first major CLA survey was commissioned by WATIH in mid-2021 and the Report was issued in October 2021 and is referred to in this Report. Following the removal of the main COVID-19 restrictions in late 2021 a Staff Retreat was held in Abuja in April 2022 during which interim results so far were discussed by the WATIH team and recommendations made to reinforce program implementation. In particular the priorities for allocation of STTA to WATIH-supported grantees was based going forward on an amended and strengthened risk analysis of the challenges facing grantee enterprises. The ultimate objective of a combined West Africa and Nigeria TOC is to ensure that WATIH serves as a catalyst for broad-based and inclusive growth through private sector investment and competitiveness. In the view of WATIH Staff and USAID Activity Managers the MEL plan does provide sufficient means for regularly monitoring progress and changes in activities to facilitate key and critical TOC outcomes and the ET concurs with this view.

6.6 To what extent will investments to date and planned be quick program opportunities that will advance the TOC for Nigeria and West Africa over a sustainable period?

The TOC for West Africa states that *if* successful partnerships with leading buyers and processors expand production volume and improve quality, West Africa will increase trade and investment

and contribute to broad-based economic growth and resilience through increased job creation and improved incomes. For some agricultural commodities, success in raising exports to global and regional markets seems to come after a successful increase in domestic production of the product. This is because in some value chains producers must satisfy domestic consumers in terms of the quality and price of the product before they can successfully sell in overseas markets. However, this is not true for some agricultural commodities, such as cashew and shea butter, where overseas demand may precede local consumption or be larger in volume. The growth of the non-agricultural sectors, such as apparel and eco-tourism, may also be driven by export markets rather than domestic ones. WATIH-funded grantees including Africa Guarantee Fund, Cross Boundary, Koster Keunen West Africa, NAFASO, Red River Foods, ShEquity Women Investment Ecosystem, Stichting Cordaid, and Stichting Organic Development have rapidly expanded their West African activities and networks. These WATIH grantees have all supported multi-partner operations of producers, processors, and buyers in multiple countries. These WATIH grantees all offer significant and quick program opportunities advancing the TOC for West Africa.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian TOC states clearly that *if* the capacity of agricultural service providers is strengthened. The use of improved farming technologies expanded *if* participation in agricultural markets is increased along with private sector investment to improve productivity. If the profitability of smallholder farming is increased, *then* Nigeria's agricultural competitiveness will be strengthened, contributing to broad-based and inclusive growth.

WATIH-supported grantees like AFEX, Babban Gona and WACOT Rice have shown that the consolidation of the smallholder farmer model can successfully contribute to WATIH objectives, just as it does across West Africa. An interventionist approach to private sector development propelled by investment into agri-business has been easier to finance in Nigeria, given the progress of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in reducing the cost of agricultural lending. This is already working in the francophone banking system. [By contrast agri-financing is twice as expensive in Ghana compared to most ECOWAS countries]. Meanwhile in Nigeria increasing inflation, the falling value of the Naira, and dollarization all call for further innovative approaches to agribusiness financing to help maintain gains already made. Otherwise, the commercial performance of WATIH-supported grantees will be negatively affected despite progress already made. These issues are referred to later in the section on finance (Evaluation Question 5.3). The ET is convinced that with these technical support measures in place the WATIH program can ensure some quick program successes in a sustainable period (within the life span of the WATIH program), with further continuing successful results within two or three years.

6.7 Does the provision of TA include the possibility of more than MEL with a switch to a more interventionist approach to portfolio management and fund management geared toward obtaining quick wins?

WATIH and USAID respondents agreed that the obtaining of quick wins and positive results during the implementation phase will depend upon the implementation of milestone monitoring and associated mentoring, the deployment of STTA in support of specific grantees when justified by risk analysis and the general improvement of working relationships between WATIH management and grantees. On reflection WATIH respondents did not think that fund management was a key issue in itself since (a) WATIH does deploy limited skills in this area already and (b) one of the main purpose and outcomes of monitoring is to ensure that grantee co-investment targets are met. Agreed production and sales targets cannot be met if funds are not available to support these targets.

STTA is considered a vital part of this support toolbox, but it was never planned to provide STTA to every WATIH-supported grantee and “it is not technically or financially feasible to provide comprehensive STTA to the entire portfolio of over one hundred grantees.”³³ The ET did not gain the impression from respondents that there was any major controversy over STTA, and that it was considered both a necessary and normal part of program activities. There were some concerns that more of it might be needed than first thought and that if so, it should be funded. The WATIH Implementation Strategy produced in 2022 shows that priority allocation of STTA is to be justified by risk analysis. It was hoped this would address technical, managerial, administrative, or financial issues before they would affect implementation and outcomes by:

- (i) determining an at-risk analysis to identify cases where STTA might be needed.
- (ii) reviewing the grantee portfolio every month, including the Risk Management Framework and factors that might lead to underperformance; and
- (iii) these considerations, as well as unforeseen contingencies or urgent requests for TA from grantees can lead to site visits to help to identify and resolve problems

The WATIH respondents explained that their approach towards provision of technical assistance is interventionist and is intended to help optimize portfolio management and grantee performance. This is explained in detail in Section 3.2.1 above explaining the several types of technical assistance provided by WATIH. The obtaining of quick wins is part of the reasoning for provision of technical assistance and the ET supports respondents’ view that enough STTA should be deployed to ensure this.

6.8 Document the extent to which WATIH is advancing West African Regional Trade Objectives, and if not, what more they could be doing? What are the objectives of the West Africa Regional Mission on regional trade?

The objective of the West African mission is to support West African *Regional Trade Policy Integration and Private Sector-Led Regional and International Trade, Markets, and Investment Expansion*. Regional trade and investment integration seeks to reduce the cost and risk of doing business in West Africa and helps to level the playing field while improving the business environment and enabling expanded production of goods and services across the subregion.³⁴

To this end, the regional mission is implementing through WATIH strategic and innovative interventions in support of private sector projects at the regional level to improve the capacity of private sector businesses to access the regional and global markets using the Prosper Africa Initiative³⁵ as well as to make use of the AGOA legislative framework and instruments.³⁶

While the ET understands that WATIH cannot become involved in trade policy development as such, the ET concludes that WATIH should pursue limited trade support activities promoting:

- (i) awareness and use of trade support facilities working with AGOA³⁷

³³ See the WATIH Updated Implementation Strategy dated 31st May 2022.

³⁴ USAID regional trade objective Intermediate Result 2.4 <https://www.usaid.gov/west-africa-regional/rdcg>

³⁵ This USG initiative aims to increase two-way trade and investment between the U.S. and Africa.

³⁶ The USG initiative seeks to increase one-way trade to the U.S. based on country eligibility.

³⁷ It should be noted that AGOA was already included in the Scope of Work (SOW) of WATIH. This recommendation to emphasize trade support activities, specifically working with AGOA arose due to the absence of a dedicated AGOA specialist within the WATIH team in West Africa during

- (ii) awareness and use of specific trade support instruments under ECOWAS and AfCFTA such as the ETLS (the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme)
- (iii) awareness of cross-border trade regulations and requirements affecting WATIH-supported grantees engaged in imports and exports, including means of access to information from third parties (for example, regional organizations or trade associations) on tariffs and Non-Tariff Barriers.

The ET understands that WATIH can only deploy modest resources in support of such activities but that these will affect the commercial performance and results of grantees and will impact upon the export indicators in the WATIH MEL results matrix and agreed performance results incorporated in grant agreements. Going forward, the WATIH communications strategy can resume, as conveyed previously by Annual Reports and Work-Plans, contacts with appropriate third parties, to facilitate this cooperation, including ECOWAS, WAEMU and AfCFTA.

Since 1979 the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) has provided documentation to facilitate duty-free or reduced-tariff transit for cross-border trade. ECOWAS also promotes a non-tariff barrier reporting mechanism to reduce red tape, illicit charges, and unauthorized roadblocks. Given the WATIH interim MEL indicators on export trade targets showed extremely low results by March 2022 WATIH grantees may need more help to make effective use of this under-utilized facility. AfCFTA is also introducing new protocols and guidelines on Rules of Origin and Standards and E-commerce to facilitate pan-African trade.

The mandates provided by the SOW and TOC for this Mid-Term Performance Evaluation and the supporting literature provided by WATIH³⁸ make it clear that WATIH would contribute to regional trade and development, through investment in grantees, including with regional catalytic impacts, alongside engagement with regional trade dialogue stakeholders. WATIH has performed positively in the former, but not so much in the latter. Some increased awareness activities, under the auspices of the suggested Operational Policy Unit, could help to remedy this without necessarily involving large-scale budget commitments.

WATIH's involvement in trade support has in practice been largely limited to prioritizing the AGOA initiative to support exports to the USA. This trade support has taken the form of assisting exporters to comply with regulatory frameworks and certification, along with some help in penetrating overseas markets. For distinct reasons it has often been easier for grantees to export to the US, Asia, or Europe, which is to global markets, rather than with ECOWAS countries or the rest of Africa. This has also been true of assessing imports. These realities are the result of trade barriers, and cost structures, encouraged by longstanding patterns of trade reflecting these and other factors. For example, the trade links between Anglophone countries and the UK and the US, or francophone countries and France represented traditional markets. However, these patterns are now changing and South-South trade in general is increasing.

The ET understands that regional trade barriers include *“roadblocks and checks on the corridors in the community territory; unofficial, illicit payments on highways; the slow pace of formalities upon import and export of goods; and the high number and complex nature of procedures and*

the evaluation period, which was identified as a challenge by grantees and respondents. However, Creative Associates assured the ET that this issue would be promptly addressed to ensure appropriate support in this area.

³⁸ See the provisions in the SOW TOC section in Annex B to this Report and the FY2022 Work Plan

documents those economic operators must contend with.” (West African Economic and Monetary Union [UEMOA], World Trade Organization [WTO], 2017). However limited implementation of the ETLS for more than 40 years has not made a significant difference to this.³⁹ While the AfCFTA now provides the overarching framework for trade between African states, regional organizations, such as ECOWAS, will still have to provide a ground-floor of functional regulations and structures to facilitate the intra-African trade in goods and services, as envisaged under AfCFTA.⁴⁰

The ET noted that KII respondents raised these issues and that the contradiction between well-supported global trade and poorly implemented regional trade was well understood. As regards what more WATIH can do in support of West African regional trade, WATIH may be able to support targeted activities (such as promotion of ETLS) to help boost regional trade or any specific equivalent instruments under AfCFTA. WATIH might also be able to carry out some limited monitoring of West African trade policies, via monitoring of web sites and trade promotion events, in order to keep WATIH-supported grantees informed of any practical export-support opportunities that might help them. Overall WATIH is clearly better placed to promote trade measures and facilitation within the scope of AGOA, since this activity is a formal component of the WATIH program. Given some lack of continuity in AGOA activities the first priority will be to ensure that these activities are properly supported (see below).

6.9 To what extent is the AGOA component working to promote the Prosper Africa Initiative by supporting the trade indicator to increase exports?

The USAID and Creative Associates contract said on AGOA that ⁴¹ *“specific areas of technical assistance must include training for exporters across the region on requirements to export to the United States, including taking advantage of duty-free opportunities provided under the African Growth and Opportunity Act. This training can and must be delivered in partnerships with U.S. embassies and business associations across the region and upon the request of USAID or the relevant embassy. The use of innovative approaches for remote delivery of this training must be actively pursued and developed, given that many of the key resources on U.S. import requirements are based in the U.S. Due to many countries in the region, the contractor must identify a bilingual West African expert on AGOA to lead provision and coordination of this training.”*⁴² The WATIH intervention to do this has three main pillars, according to the former AGOA specialist. These are:

- (i) Technical support for supporting access to the AGOA textile visa.
- (ii) Creation of awareness about AGOA concerning its processes, with support of U.S. Missions in the region, and partnerships with key export promotion agencies, including the Nigeria Export and Promotion Council (NEPC), and the Ghana Export and Promotion Authority (GEPA); and
- (iii) Delivery of technical assistance to eligible grantee firms regarding eligible products under the AGOA, and export documentation requirements, including the registration of West African exporters with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of the USA, among others.

³⁹ <https://etls.ecowas.int/about-etls/>

⁴⁰ <https://ecdpm.org/great-insights/african-continental-free-trade-area-agreement-impact/ecowas-recs-afcfta-implementation/>

⁴¹ See the WATIH Contract Award document p.32.

⁴² A paragraph in the creative award contract Award-20220120T132629Z-001 document Feed the Future West Africa Trade and Investment Hub Activity (Trade Hub) specifying the intervention guideline for the implementation of AGOA across the region.

According to the first year or Year 1 *Annual Report* covering the activities of the WATIH between September 2019 and September 2020, 43 organizations had contact with WATIH on services related to AGOA. Of these, 15 benefited substantially⁴³ from accessing support for certification, for example, on Rules of Origin or with Food and Drug Authority Food facility registration, or accessing training on registration and certification, or via business links facilitating exports to the US.⁴⁴

In the Year 2 *Annual Report* (October 2020 to September 2021), the WATIH reported 45 instances where private firms accessed services on AGOA-related trade interventions, of which 16 resulted in the delivery of services to the private sector entities, including help with certification, FDA registration, business marketing links and logistic advice on pilot export containers. During the first two years of WATIH's AGOA-related trade support activities, one-third of all AGOA contacts followed up by WATIH resulted in firms receiving substantive and specific assistance in addition to technical advice on export procedures.⁴⁵

Following the COVID-19 restriction, WATIH AGOA activities mostly comprised webinars, with 2,150 participants seeking information on overseas markets, regulations, the availability of trade financing, and access to international trade payment mechanisms. Webinars were organized in cooperation with regional and state agencies including the ECOWAS Commission, the Nigerian Export Promotion Council, the Ghana Export Promotion Agency (GEPA), and the US Embassy in the Republic of Cabo Verde. WATIH staff also worked on textile issues with the governments of Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. Private sector trade associations and promotional partners for webinar activities included the Liberia Chamber of Commerce, the Nigerian American Chamber of Commerce, the Senegalese Export Promotion Council Agency (SAPEX) and the Burkina Faso Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

In Year One, the AGOA trade specialist organized a training session for 15 WATIH staff on the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and FDA registration requirements. The AGOA Specialist and the WATIH Senior Private Sector Development Advisor from the Creative Associates International Subcontractor Pragma also visited 17 grantee firms and two industry associations (AGAM and AGI) in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal, and Togo. In Year Two, the AGOA specialist helped provide technical assistance to 45 firms, promoted business links with potential buyers for 34 firms, and worked with nine companies regarding export development.

Despite this track record the ET found only seven respondents willing to do KII interviews out of 25 AGOA contacts. This reflected the fact that the AGOA contact list did not differentiate firms benefiting from substantive services from those having had more superficial contacts. Also, that there had been no full time AGOA support staff at post during most of 2022. The level of AGOA support activity had been reduced since October 2021 to a contact person online in the US. Despite reduced support WATIH helped to set up several export deals to the US including with Tahara on palm oil, Atelier Tess on textiles, and Foods Co. on cashews⁴⁶. However, during the Mid Term

⁴³ "Substantial" here refers to activities that go beyond the routine advisory functions such as in cases where export certification was finalized, specific agreements reached with export partners, export consignments successfully exported, etc.

⁴⁴ WATIH Annual Report Year One see Table in Annex C pp 61-64 and pages 31-34

⁴⁵ WATIH Annual Report Year Two see Table in Annex B and pages 61-68

⁴⁶ Since there was no WATIH staff in situ in West Africa dealing with AGOA support issues prior to and during the Evaluation the ET team was unable to obtain adequate information to comprehensively respond to this evaluation question, especially in establishing the extent to which the AGOA component is working to promote the Prosper Africa initiative by supporting the trade indicator to increase exports.

Review several respondents complained about the lack of follow-up on AGOA support and recommended that a full-time AGOA staff person be appointed as soon as possible. Consequently, the ET agreed that this vacant post should be filled. This could be done under the umbrella of the suggested Operational Policy Unit. Efforts could also be made through CLA activities and webinars to publicize the available trade support and promotion services of WATIH.

7.0 EVALUATION QUESTION FIVE

TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE ACTIVITY'S WORK SUSTAINABLE, AND HOW HAS THE ACTIVITY WORKED WITH BUSINESSES TO ENSURE THE RESULTS OF PARTNERSHIPS WILL HAVE LASTING BENEFITS?

7.1 How is WATIH positioning its grantees for success once the program interventions end? Is there a plan of action to transition/graduate grantees using a schedule that will allow the program time to monitor sustainability and success before the program ends?

There is no detailed transition plan yet for the WATIH program close-out and final consultations at national and regional level with USAID, WATIH staff, grantees, and stakeholders. However, some points are already clear. First, normal program operations will end in March 2024 to give time to wrap up activities and collect final results. Second, WATIH will officially end in mid-year, in June. Third, it is suggested by some survey respondents that close-out include CLA events and bringing together the extensive grantee financing and donor/investor base mobilized by WATIH and its grantees to discuss finance mobilization going forward).

WATIH MEL framework interim results will feed into CLA activities during the last two years of the program and in particular to inform close-out events during the last three months. During phase II of the WATIH program the CLA framework will promote evidence-based, knowledge-driven, and adaptive and best practices in program implementation and ongoing evaluation of grant activities. The purpose of these CLA activities is to optimize positive impacts of lessons learned during the program and to promote WATIH-supported grantee performance and sustainability.

The proposal from respondents to set up a close-out event on co-investment financing is intended to draw upon aggregated knowledge on potential co-investment sources based on the contacts of WATIH-supported grantees. Data in the country papers in Annex shows that the co-financing contact base of selected WATIH-supported grantees could include three or four international institutional donors alongside another three or four more local or regional sources, including commercial banks, microfinance institutions, NGOs, and investors (*see the example of Coliba in Côte d'Ivoire*). The aggregated databank on the financial contacts of WATIH-supported grantees represents a major co-investment financing network and a significant asset, brought together by USAID funding. MTR survey respondents suggest that WATIH close out events should recognize the value of this network with a view to future co-investment mobilization potentials for future USAID-backed private sector development programs and public-private partnerships.

Respondents also suggested that there could be final CLA events in each of the main participating countries to discuss lessons learned for each national cluster of WATIH grant-funded activities as well as an overall regional event bringing the lessons from these experiences together. This could be an opportunity for grantees to learn from each other, share experiences, discuss challenges faced and look to future collaboration. Future plans would include the sustainability plan for each participating enterprise and the proposal supported by respondents to plan and put into place an ex-post facto results measurement mechanism to capture optimum incremental performance results from WATIH-supported grantees. Most respondents felt that without such a mechanism, and the time needed to produce results from private sector firm investments, the full benefits of performance results of WATIH grants to participating firms might not be captured.

7.2 Is the inclusion of women and youth sufficient to gauge meaningful and measurable access to program resources?

The WATIH program is on track to achieve its targets for women's participation and access to training. This optimism is based on 23 percent attainment for women's participation and 70.8 percent achievement of access to training, based on only 18 months of operational project activity by March 2022, as recorded in the WATIH Interim MEL Results Framework (see Annex G). WATIH has an Integration Plan for Gender and other Vulnerable Groups, providing a roadmap promoting empowerment, inclusion, and active participation of women and youth. The WATIH Gender Action Plan supports gender mainstreaming by integrating gender analysis across all elements of the Activity. This addresses key constraints and opportunities to promote gender integration and equity. As regards youth participation, the results target is likely to be achieved by 2024 since WATIH already reached 27 percent of its five-year target in 18 months (see Annex G).

The ET concludes that some additional data collection is necessary, including the following:

- What percentage of WATIH-supported firms are solely owned by women, have women proprietors, or are owned by partnerships where women are joint proprietors?
- What percentage of firms receiving technical assistance from the AGOA program are owned or partly owned by women?
- If resources permit, there could be a study of the personnel structure of selected enterprises funded by WATIH to see how many women have progressed into management positions by March 2024, compared to the number in March 2022.

The reason for the above suggestions is that such data is not being systematically recorded and published. To do this will require access to raw data at grantee level. This will need data collection and analysis. The ET is recommending this data should be collected and included in reports in future, provided there are resources available to do this.

7.3 Can WATIH's resource mobilization serve as the basis for more significant regional resource mobilization from other regional sources for regional trade for the agricultural sector?

Key respondents from USAID, WATIH staff and grantees said that WATIH would help lead to a broader, longer-term resource mobilization framework based on grantee experiences. The WATIH private sector development support model, based on co-investment mobilization with financial organizations in the region - implies a three-way interaction with the financial ecosystem:

- Catalyzing resource mobilization with financial institutions (*for example, Coris Bank or the Monaco Sovereign Development Fund, as in the case of AgroServe in Burkina Faso*).
- Providing grants to financial institutions to support multiple private businesses, as with Banque Agricole and Locafrique in Senegal. Several financial institutions such as Stichting Cordaid and Africa Guarantee Fund (AGF) have supported multiple SME outlets in multiple West African countries. Locafrique is an example of making effective use of the Development Credit Authority (DCA) guarantee mechanism.
- Awarding grants to firms providing transactional support services to facilitate access to finance for businesses (*such as Cross Boundary in Nigeria*). That is an example where brokering skills and transaction advice, on a portfolio basis, facilitate the

mobilization of funds without directly providing finance to the SMEs receiving services from the grantee.

Through this three-axis strategy, WATIH's resource mobilization efforts leverage additional resources from other sources to boost regional resources for investment in agricultural production and raise the level of regional food trade. From the WATIH interim results MEL framework (see Annex G) it is clear that WATIH has done well so far on co-investment mobilization and poorly on promoting additional trade. WATIH achieved only 6% of agreed export targets during 18 operational months. Grantees in Ghana did better on increased trade⁴⁷, achieving by March 2022, about 33 percent of export targets for the program period. Respondents expect that export performance will be better by March 2024, after two or three full years of grantee operations.

Regarding the financing of agriculture and exports, non-grantee financial institutions like Coris Bank did suggest that there could be closer cooperation between it and WATIH in support of grantee businesses. Regional financial institutions, such as the West African Development Bank (BOAD) and the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (BIDC), could be considered potential resource mobilization partners and invited to the CLA event on co-investment partnerships proposed by respondents as part of the WATIH closeout in 2024.

The proposed CLA event could identify three categories of potential participants:

- The aggregate financial and co-investment contact base focusing initially on the track record of implemented co-investment partnerships of 100 or so WATIH grantees
- Potentially additional co-investment linkages already identified but not yet operationalized by WATIH grantees
- The WATIH team and grantees could also try and identify additional potential co-investment sources, and collateral and guarantee mechanisms for future co-operation.

7.4 Is engagement with women and youth sufficient and adequate to ensure that the activity's anticipated results are achieved?

All Grantees felt that engagement with women was working better and with more focus, while program engagement with youth required more efforts to obtain better program outcomes and impact.

First, the indicators in the WATIH standard MEL matrix show that the percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources reached 23 percent of the cumulative WATIH target for the whole program period by March 2022. The expectation is that the targets of the WATIH program seem set to be realized by the end of the program in 2024, given the late start and the modest mid-term performance results despite its slow start.

Examples of achievements in the first batch of WATIH grant-funded activities relating to women or jobs for women are many. One notable achievement is the activities of Stichting Cordaid and Microfinance institutions which supported SMEs and women and female enterprises in four west African countries, including Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Mali. Others include the

⁴⁷ This seemed to reflect the positive influence of a more focused and experienced USAID team working closely with grantees and WATIH.

activities of grantees, such as Koster Keunen West Africa, which assisted beekeepers, primarily women, in seven countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo); Ethical Apparel in Ghana, which employs primarily women; Global Mamas, which supports women and female enterprises in Ghana; and Club Tiossane in Senegal, which supports the expansion of home delivery services by small-scale food producers, primarily women.

Second, the number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations was 70.8 percent of the target by March 2022, which strongly indicates that this target is attainable by the end of the program.

7.5 Have the women and youth strategies incorporated at the design stage been effectively implemented? What challenges were encountered in reaching targets for women?

WATIH developed and submitted the Gender Integration Action Plan (GIAP) to USAID in March 2020 and got approved in September 2020. The plan derives from the WATIH baseline survey using data from selected Nigeria-specific value chains. The plan outlined targeted interventions to address gender-based constraints with WATIH's manageable influence and grantee's abilities to realize targets, for example, 50 percent targets for women and youth participation in funded activities to quicken the rate of inclusive economic growth in West Africa. The grant selection and Co-creation process were also influenced by (i) a gender and youth checklist as part of the due diligence process and (ii) a Gender Equality Policy for project partners entering into grant agreements with WATIH.

There was also a workshop in March 2020 to strengthen GIAP activities. WATIH then established, following additional training, a Gender Peer Review Panel (GPRP) to provide oversight on gender issues and support the Gender and Social Inclusion Manager (GESI) in institutionalizing gender concerns. WATIH also developed a Gender Commitment Acknowledgement Policy (GCAP) to help propel the institutionalization process. WATIH also published a Quick Guide on Gender Integration for (Grant) Applicants. The gender policy is implemented in partnership with financial agencies pursuing the objectives of the Criteria-2X Challenge. The 2X Challenge Fund represents a commitment by 12 DFIs, including the U. S. International Development Finance Corporation. The 2X approach covers leadership opportunities, quality employment, finance, enterprise support, and products and services that enhance economic participation and access for women. WATIH was also a key participant in various gender-related events, including the USAID-Nigeria Gender Summit Advancing Nigeria's Journey to Self-Reliance Through Increased Gender Equality.⁴⁸

The Year Two *Annual Report* of WATIH also reports significant strides concerning the Gender and Youth strategy despite the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. In this regard, during the review period, the WATIH team worked with over 100 applicants on their women and genders. WATIH used the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) to self-assess progress on women and youth issues. The OCAT looks at functional areas, including a Gender and Special Needs Management System. Upon application of the OCAT to 15 grantees, WATIH concluded that there was a lack of corporate gender policy or action plans, the lack of diversity (especially women and youth) in representation on boards and senior management positions, and limited statistics on women and youth available for decision-making purposes. The WATIH identified a

⁴⁸ See the WATIH Year One Annual Report, Section 3.3, pp 42-44

set of measures for improving Gender Strategies by Firms, as detailed in the Annual Report. WATIH also ensured the provision of Technical Assistance to Women/Youth SMEs to meet AGOA requirements and, in November 2020, WATIH made a presentation to the White House alongside the Department of State, USAID, and other agencies on gender strategy and the achievements of two WATIH grantees (Ethical Apparel and Alaffia).⁴⁹

The year three Annual Report of WATIH, expected to be issued in October 2022, will continue to report on progress in respect of targets for Gender and Youth. Based on suggestions from WATIH staff, the ET suggests further follow-up on the advancement of women within enterprises and taking into consideration the following going forward:

- 1) There are cultural barriers to the advancement of women, especially in rural areas, notably in parts of Northern Nigeria and the Sahel. The suggestion is that reports on improvements or deterioration in the status of women, especially those impacting the activities of WATIH grantees, should be captured in field reports to create awareness about those challenges in the operating environment and to inform strategic planning for future PSD activities.
- 2) According to KIIs, WATIH is not tracking advances in the position of women within enterprises, for example, in terms of attainment of management positions. However, data in the WATIH Annual Reports suggests that such strides are being tracked or monitored. The ET believes there is a need for greater awareness about ongoing efforts and indications of progress, or otherwise, and prospects in this regard.
- 3) The recent DFID report on a regional program⁵⁰ showed that five of every 12 SME enterprises operating in the West African Food industry were female managed. It is good to know that WATIH is collecting gender data and that comparisons will be possible later with other programs in West Africa on the results of this data collection, which will hopefully indicate an increase in the number of women proprietors and owners of WATIH grantees.

7.6 How have any shortfalls in targeting women been remedied on the ground?

The economic empowerment of West African women is a key mandate of the Trade Hub. Thus, WATIH is committed to providing support for co-investment partners to implement gender strategies and celebrating their successes in creating economic opportunities for women. Events like “Empowering Women in Ghana’s Apparel Sector” allow this support to extend to other organizations and individuals within targeted sectors, amplifying the impact of co-investment partnerships within the region and beyond.

For example, some grantees have designed innovative ways to address some of the existing shortfalls in targeting or empowering women. Adefunke Desh Nigeria and Tomatoes Jos enrolled couples into their small farmers to have women on their register. Another strategy adopted was the involvement of Associations of Women in doing community work as adopted by West Africa water in Senegal. NAFASO in Burkina Faso adopted working with a community leader or chiefs to encourage women to enroll in its production program. The USAID/WATIH’s proactive engagement with the various associations of women via its PSE programs would help unearth some shortfalls in targeting and empowering women in the community.

⁴⁹ See the WATIH Year Two Annual Report, Section 4.3 pp 80-82

⁵⁰ DFID West Africa Food Markets (2015-19)

7.7 Is engagement with women sufficient? What is WATIH's target for this? Is the level of engagement with women going up or down?

According to published data on relevant indicators for Evaluation Question 5.4, (see below in this paragraph) the level of engagement with women is improving, given the pick-up in women's participation in the WATIH and access to training. (The published targets for these two indicators are set out in the results matrix in Annex G).

The target on the level of engagement with women is to raise the share of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources to at least 50 percent LOA overall. The annual target for the latest complete year is a female share of 40 percent, with the level of achievement halfway through this year already being 57.5 percent. The cumulative level of achievement (LOA) so far is 62 percent, already in excess of the target for the whole program period. (See GNDR-2).

The published target in the matrix for the number of women trained with USG assistance consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations is targeted at 500 for the whole program period, with cumulative LOA achievement so far at 71 percent, only halfway through the WATIH program.

The data for both of these indicators is set out in the Results Matrix attached to this Report (see Annex G, Summary of Results to Date, see GNDR-2 and GNDR-8).

7.8 What challenges were encountered in reaching targets for youth? Have any shortfalls in targeting youth been remedied on the ground?

First, the ET noted that the reporting on the progress made with youth issues was less comprehensive relative to gender issues, which suggests the need for further focus on this, despite the WATIH's Youth targets being easier to follow.

In terms of training, there are records of persons trained and their ages, but the WATIH's approach toward economic empowerment of the youth seems more limited compared to gender. In this regard, the targeted share of participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase youth (aged 15-29) access to productive economic resources during FY2022 is 35 percent, and this year's figure after only two quarters of data already stands at 27 percent, which means that the annual target will be met.

The cumulative LOA target for the lifespan of the WATIH program is 50 percent and the percentage already achieved after only 18 months of data is 86%, which means the that the actual achievement is already significantly above target, (see Annex G, YOUTH-3: Summary of Results to Date with regard to targets approved in the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan).

It would require more detailed research to get more detailed data on key points such as the average age of farmers in the supply chains linked to WATIH-grantees engaged in processing agricultural inputs. These issues are referred to in the paragraphs below.

7.9 What is the average age or age distribution of farmers working with grantees in their supply chains? And what percentage are women?

Discussions with grantees engaged in agriculture confirm that some enterprises and research organizations collect such figures annually and, often, in partnership with an NGO or government agency. The ET would require access to an annual agricultural survey to extract these figures for

a farm or an area, as an attempt at generating the needed data yielded no results. The ET encourages the WATIH MEL team to find a way to collate such data from grantee progress reporting.

7.10 Is the level of engagement with youth (under 30 years) going up or down? Since WATIH is in its third year of grantee selection, is the average age of farmers engaged with grantees going up or down? Is the proportion of farmers (a) under 30 and (b) women increasing or decreasing?

The MEL indicators show that the level of engagement with the youth is trending upward, as mentioned above. The rest of the data required to answer these questions is more detailed annual agricultural surveys. The ET recommends some research collaborations with university departments, agricultural colleges, or other specialist agencies and Ministries of Agriculture to generate such data, as the issue of the average age of the farming population is a vital statistic needed for planning. The improvement in youth engagement is based on the performance indicators already collected by WATIH and available in Annex as Table G (Summary of Results to Date). [See the Indicator for Youth 3 – Percentage of participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources who are youth (15-29) in Annex G.

7.11 Are women farmers the key to lowering the average age of farmers and involving more youth? Does increased agricultural productivity depend on Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) or more use of appropriate technology? Or both?

Data⁵¹ show that West African female farmers are young and disadvantaged regarding inheritance for daughters, access to, control, and ownership of land, and non-land assets. These disadvantages imply that most West African women farmers and entrepreneurs have no land or non-land access to secure credit and logistics to be fully involved in good agricultural practices. Women farmers are, thus, less able to venture into more technology-driven or scientific-based forms of producing goods, such as agricultural produce. With little value-added processing happening in West Africa, the lion's share of the profits is accruing elsewhere. Thus, GAPs are critical to the success of agricultural development in West Africa for women and the youth. For a complete discussion of this question, ET will need access to more agricultural surveys and data, but this cannot be done within the time frame for this report.

7.12 Has agriculture been disrupted, with greater urbanization forced by insecurity, in areas where WATIH grantees work?

The evidence from grantees interviewed is that this has been the case recently in several Nigerian states where WATIH is active, as well as in parts of Burkina Faso and Niger, especially near the borders with Mali, and more recently in Northern Togo and Northern Benin. The deterioration in security in Nigeria has been the most marked, with frequent attacks on the road and railway line between Abuja and Kaduna, along with a large-scale attack on a prison in Abuja to release hardened criminals in state custody.

The Annual Reports of WATIH refer to the adverse effect of insecurity on program implementation. The pursuit of conflict mitigation components of the WATIH, for instance, has been seriously constrained due to security threats to the lives of mediators and travels to conflict areas to roll out schemes to mitigate potential conflict. Also affected are activities of WATIH grantees operating in or near conflict-prone communities. The WATIH Annual Report for Year 1 referred to standard security risk assessments in hotels in the case of the Nigerian states selected

⁵¹ See West Africa Regional Economic growth Office Bridge Analysis, February 2022

and prioritized for WATIH activities. The second Annual Report for WATIH noted that some WATIH grantees were to prepare a conflict risk checklist to see if a proposed co-investment activity is susceptible to disruption arising from violent extremism or long-standing conflicts over land rights. Banditry is widespread in West Africa and impacts many communities in which WATIH operates.⁵²

⁵² See the WATIH Annual Report Year 1 Section 5.3 on security p. 49. And the WATIH Year 2 Annual Report section 4.5, page 83

8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 CONCLUSIONS

Despite delays caused by some teething problems, such as grappling with gaps in operating policies and procedures, management miscommunications and discontinuity, and genuine initial disagreements between USAID and Creative Associates over some aspects of the set operational approach, the commitment of WATIH staff and USAID activity officers to the WATIH private sector-driven investment and trade model remained strong. Early management challenges with large-scale, multi-sector, multi-country programs are common. Problems with slow, cumbersome grant application and approval procedures were identified and dealt with.

The adoption of a hybrid approach whereby CBC proposals were adapted to the COVID-19 portfolio to fast-track grants worked, with prospects for satisfactory results going forward. This reflected that the two portfolios (CBC and COVID-19) included projects facing similar problems such as lack of working capital and disruption of supply chains. This switch in funding sources and earlier delays in approving grants led to questions about WATIH management capacity. WATIH recovered credibility by appointing an Acting COP in August 2021 who initiated management changes. Then a new COP starting in January 2022 consolidated management changes for the implementation stage. By March 2022 when the evaluation started, WATIH was back on track.

WATIH was expected to initiate CBC grants within three to six months but took about 15 months to do so. Similarly, the activity was expected to disburse the COVID-19 grants in twelve months, but this took five months longer. Given COVID-19's impact on WATIH staff working patterns and on grantee production and finances, some delays were not surprising.

The WATIH program appeared to be ambitious according to some USAID and WATIH respondents. This reflected its geographical and thematic scope, covering all of West Africa, Cameroun, the Republic of Cabo Verde, and Mauritania. It also encompassed more than ten value chains, with several types of project funding, implemented by a broad coalition of half-a-dozen USAID Missions. These views were those of respondents from USAID and Creative Associates as recorded in the database. Respondents said these problems were later ironed out.

The management of WATIH reflected multiple interests, including USAID, the main contractor and its associates, the grantees, and others including Prosper Africa. In the first year and a half, there were more back-and-forth communications between WATIH and USAID, especially before the EOI procedure was adopted. This reflected the initial inferior quality of proposals and the need to clarify details. Between July 2021 and June 2022, grant approval processes were streamlined with improved management and coordination. Grantees also pointed out that during the first half of the WATIH program they noticed an initial lack of WATIH staff business awareness. This reflected in particular on grant officers who were deemed by grantees to have no business background. This led to initial problems in comprehension and continuity between grantees and WATIH staff. These problems were resolved with time, as WATIH staff became familiar with their clients.

Respondents recommended that more CLA activities and a relaunch of promotion and dialogue with wider stakeholders (including trade associations and selected government agencies) could be directed at addressing Business Enabling Environment (BEE) issues. This should help make WATIH management interventions with grantees more effective.

The WATIH program has clearly now moved from the co-creation and grant application stage to the implementation stage and has overcome initial difficulties with the first phase. The implementation stage is quite different in character. Successful implementation of co-investment mobilization is a key part of this. The US \$400 million co-investment target for the program is already within reach with \$240 million mobilized after only 18 months of practical operation. The implementation stage requires a greater emphasis on technical assistance to facilitate the achievement of planned results. There were some different perceptions by respondents on this.

The ET noted that WATIH management now allocates STTA based on risk-analysis for projects, triggered by dialogue with grantees and requests. WATIH management maintained the policy of not awarding technical assistance contracts to third parties such as trade associations or government agencies although the previous Trade Hub had done so. While there were still some requests and suggestions by grantees to do this, WATIH did not reverse this.

WATIH staff attached importance to milestone monitoring as a way of improving their relationship with grantees. This also opened the door to a dialogue on the funding base and funding contacts of the grantees since the level of co-investment fund mobilization was monitored this way. This led to recommendations on how to focus more on fund mobilization issues going forward.

USAID Activity Managers responsible for implementation in Nigeria, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, West Africa Regional Office (based in Ghana), and the Sahel Regional Office (based in Senegal) are optimistic that the WATIH program is on track to achieve its planned results and outcomes. WATIH staff and grantee respondents shared this optimism, qualified by some anticipated delays in some activities reaching optimum targets whilst noting that the current deterioration in the global business environment could also affect some results.

8.2 LESSONS LEARNED

The outstanding driver of success for the initiative has been the resilience of USAID activity managers and the WATIH team in supporting the WATIH private sector model and continuing to believe that the program would succeed and meet its objectives. The Report of a Staff Retreat on the WATIH program held during 16-20 May 2022 made some observations, including:

- (i) It is clear that COVID-19 harmed social communications and, to a certain extent, confidence in the WATIH program and that WATIH staff are re-learning both. In this regard, the WATIH managers were unanimous in the call for more effort to restore motivation and teamwork, and the confidence of existing and potential grantees in the program.
- (ii) COVID-19 and poor macroeconomic conditions in the operating environment adversely affected the operational performance of grantee firms, even though respondents believe they are turning a corner. There has been high staff turnover among grantees, communication challenges, operational issues, and limiting factors affecting mobilization of co-investment. WATIH staff believe it will take some time to overcome these challenges.
- (iii) There is, therefore, a need for continuous evaluation of the program and a search for more reliable sector-specific secondary data to fine-tune goals and operational processes. This may include surveys to help inform the implementation of WATIH going forward.

The needs suggested in (iii) can only refer to looking carefully at the orientation of individual grant- supported project activities, since all grant funds were allocated by the time of the WATIH Retreat. The reviewing of individual grant agreements with firms via milestone monitoring and

MEL activities in the light of changes in sectoral prospects is something the WATIH team should be looking at anyway. Flexible implementation of grant agreements in rapidly changing conditions would remain valuable to the project. The idea of a small operational policy unit pulling together existing staff from PPP, MEL and AGOA support could also be explored further as it could contribute to a better understanding of changes in the Business Enabling Environment.

At the regional and national levels, CLA events will help WATIH underline its innovative combination of Private Sector Engagement (PSE), New Partnership Initiatives (NPI), blended finance, co-investment support grants, and co-creation (including support for investment with first loss provisions). And that WATIH is operationally based on Grants Under Contract (GUCs), with private sector client relationship management as its foundation, rather than being Technical Assistance-based.

The COVID-19 pandemic had negative effects on West African economies and global markets. It also hit the commercial performance of grantees. The extra COVID-19 component to the WATIH program activities introduced new high priority pressures on WATIH management temporarily slowing down the CBC projects. However, the net effect of COVID-19 on the WATIH program was to accelerate restructuring with strong synergies between COVID-19 projects and CBC projects. The similar challenges to the two portfolios resulted in a successful hybrid approach to both, increasing overall the scale and impacts of the WATIH program. These impacts both negative and positive were unforeseen by WATIH program planners since COVID-19 hit in about March 2020.

The war between Russia and Ukraine produced a second set of unforeseen circumstances and impacts exacerbating and prolonging negative impacts of the pandemic. Supply chains for wheat and fertilizers have been hit by the war. It has also provoked an energy supply crisis leading to higher inflation and associated monetary and fiscal restrictions. For Governments and enterprises this second wave of economic and financial challenges is proving more profound and longer lasting than those of the pandemic. The war has led to sanctions and reduced trading and commercial flows between Europe and Russia, alongside global rebalancing of trade flows and economic alliances. This rebalancing had already started, as the post-World War II economic world order gave way to increased economic roles for China, India, and Brazil as well as Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey. The efforts of Russia to rebuild new economic and trading links with Southern economies following reduced links with Europe are reinforcing these changes. All of which leads to new political and economic alignments and commercial rivalries in West Africa.

Although the design of WATIH considered some regional insecurity, growing instability and insecurity have become more pronounced. Previously, this was linked to Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad and some parts of Nigeria (in the North-East and the Delta. Now there are military regimes in Guinea Conakry, Mali and Burkina Faso alongside new insecurity in Northern Togo and Benin. Greater insecurity in the Lake Chad basin now includes Cameroun, Chad, southern Niger, and Northern Nigeria. Increased political and criminal insecurity in Nigeria now covers all parts of the country. There are terrorist attacks near and in Abuja and travel by road to Kaduna is not safe. The capacity of Abuja-based WATIH staff to visit grant-supported firms in Nigeria has been seriously reduced. The use of Abuja to host regional West African meetings is more problematic and this may continue after the upcoming Nigerian Federal Presidential elections. It may be wiser for future regional USAID programs to coordinate them from regional USAID hubs for West Africa and the Sahel, based in Accra and Dakar, respectively.

Nonetheless the Evaluation Team concludes it remains both practical and desirable to organize regional West African private sector development programs. Despite start up difficulties, the pandemic and new global and regional challenges, WATIH is set to achieve its targets, although optimum results of WATIH-supported grantees may be reached after the end of the program. There may also be a slight increase in the anticipated failure rate for grant-supported projects but there are also plenty of signs of positive results with grant-assisted projects doing better than expected both in term of outputs and the mobilization of co-investment. There will be scope for adaptation of program design going forward after WATIH including more innovation in terms of private sector partnerships, with more engagement with financial institutions. The extensive co-investment mobilization platform generated by WATIH will help to show ways forward on this.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WATIH

The ET recommendations for WATIH include various measures to improve performance and results effectiveness:

- WATIH managers should create an operational policy unit from existing staff to work on trade, communications, and access to finance to monitor developments in trade policy and trade promotion instruments especially via AGOA, AfCFTA, and ECOWAS, to help grantees to make use of trade promotion facilities. The unit should also Accumulate data on the fund mobilization contacts of grantees and organize a workshop during close-out to identify an A2F network comprising banks, DFIs and stakeholders.
- New management and the mid-term transition from grant disbursement to implementation offer the opportunity for a revitalized communications strategy emphasizing the distinctive style and modus operandi of the WATIH to, on the back of grants and technical assistance, renew and strengthen relationships between grantees (and the national business communities) and supporting USAID Missions. This new strategy can also help to improve awareness and capacity to support and underpin business cycles in agriculture, manufacturing, and exports, promoting flexible implementation and adaptation of grantee agreements in the light of international economic and trade downturns, disruptions in supply chains, high inflation, and fiscal and budget restrictions. Selected and targeted CLA activities could help consolidate the learning curve as grant administrators become more familiar with the business patterns of their clients.
- The shift from disbursement to implementation via private sector grants makes it necessary to promote WATIH's blended finance model for development financing. In this regard, WATIH should organize CLA events on best practices mobilizing blended finance, e.g., via the OECD/DAC DFI Working Group on Blended Concessional Finance for Private Sector Projects⁵³.
- The ET further recommends that there should be some CLA events for USAID, WATIH and grantees on new challenges in the global and regional business environment and the

⁵³ See IFC (2017) The DFI Working Group on Blended Concessional Finance for Private Sector Projects for a review of the five key principles guiding blended finance.

needs of the private sector for targeted support to cope with working capital shortages, and disruptions to supply chains and markets.

- Consider when targeted technical assistance to help solve technical implementation challenges might best be achieved via amended grant agreements to increase grants rather than allocation of additional STTA to be financed and managed by WATIH. This would be in line with further delegation and privatization of technical assistance.
- WATIH should set up an ex-post facto results measurement mechanism with USAID, grantees, and stakeholders to help capture results and outputs three years after closure.

8.3.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USAID

USAID should work with WATIH on the following recommendations:

- USAID should help WATIH to organize CLA events on best practices on mobilizing blended finance, via the OECD/DAC DFI Working Group⁵⁴ on Blended Concessional Finance for Private Sector Projects⁵⁵ since USG/USAID is represented on the DAC working group. The link with OECD/DAC would facilitate dialogue within USAID or with its partners on future designs for grant-funded private sector development mechanisms, either via support programs or direct partnerships with financing institutions to facilitate concessional support for private sector firms to expand outreach, production, and revenue.
- USAID can play a key role in supporting WATIH and its grantees by facilitating links with AGOA and USG financing and trade specialist bodies including the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and the Export Import Bank of the US (EXIM).
- USAID can also promote links via DFC with the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC), Africa Finance Corporation (AFC) and MCC (Millennium Challenge Corporation) and the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA). WATIH financing mobilization events will benefit from links with all of the above USG-backed institutions.
- USAID can help organize during the WATIH close-out an event bringing together the fund mobilization contact network of the grantees (commercial banks, Islamic banks, MFIs, DFIs, venture capital firms, equity investors and others) along with the above USG-backed finance and trade promotion agencies. The financing knowledge identified by this event would help USAID and grantees to mobilize private sector finance going forward.
- USAID could also consider how, either directly, or via targeted technical support, USAID could monitor or influence the evolution of Central Bank mechanisms affecting concessional finance for agricultural and non-agricultural private sector development.
- Private sector development and blended finance support programs could be linked to short-term operational Research and Development activities with potentially good impacts on products, production, productivity, and market penetration. The R&D activities, which

⁵⁴ The OECD/DAC DFI Working Group, by virtue of its expertise in grant-funded private sector development has been cited here as an example of institutions that can be considered for collaboration.

⁵⁵ See IFC (2017) The DFI Working Group on Blended Concessional Finance for Private Sector Projects for a review of the five key principles guiding blended finance.

may target short-term operational R&D goals, could be pursued by including R&D costs in grant awards to the private sector or via sponsored joint ventures between grantees and other partners.

- USAID should look at the results of WATIH by mid-2024, and again at ex-post facto results collected in 2027, with a view to seeing what future assumptions should form the basis for elaboration of TOCs for private sector development programs in West Africa going forward.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A: SAMPLING METHOD

The research employed stratified sampling methodology, dividing the final list (all stakeholders as population) into homogeneous groups called strata (AGOA, CREATIVE, GRANTEES) which are mutually exclusive. The evaluation team then selected independent samples from each stratum based on purposive sampling methodology, to allow the team to choose the sample that would provide the most information for the evaluation (transaction volume, large beneficiaries, key USAID administrators), and make the sampling strategy more effective.

The principle behind the efficiency gain from stratification is that when strata units have similar characteristics, a small sample from each stratum (stakeholder group) gives an accurate estimate of the total for the stratum in question.

Another advantage is that stratified sampling ensures that sufficient sample size is obtained for subgroups of interest in the population. As each stratum becomes an independent population, a sample size is determined for each stratum.

Table 5: Sample Selection

CATEGORIES	TOTAL	SELECTED	REALIZED
USAID Staff	15	15	11
WATIH Project Staff	70	32	17
Co-investing Grantees	75	38	56
AGOA	50	23	7
Financial Institutions	15	15	6
Specialist Trade Bodies	10	8	3
Government Agencies Ministries Depts.	10	10	2
	245	141	102

Based on the survey population (list received by ASSESS), the total statistical population is 245. Applying the formula below, gives a population of 133 to survey, adding eight people in the framework of the prediction of non-responses to give a 95 percent confidence interval for the representative sample, which is [102; 150] people to survey. The implementation allowed the evaluation team to survey 102 people with a maximization of the respondents in the most heterogeneous strata (Grantees), thus minimizing errors.

The formula used is as follows:

$$n = \frac{t_p^2 \times P(1 - P) \times N}{t_p^2 \times P(1 - P) + (N-1) \times y^2}$$

n= sample size

N: Population.

P: Proportion of the character (0.87 lower limit and upper limit 0.5 and minimum)

Tp: confidence interval (here for 95 percent confidence it is 1.96).

Y: the margin of error

ANNEX B: SCOPE OF WORK (SOW)



Mid-Term Performance Evaluation of the West Africa Trade and Investment Hub - Scope of Work

I. Introduction

USAID Nigeria and USAID West Africa wish to carry out a Mid Term Performance evaluation of the

West Africa Trade and Investment Hub (the Hub) activity. The activity is implemented by Creative Associates International Inc. and supported by Dalberg Consulting U.S., LLC. The 5- year activity commenced in September 2019 and is expected to end in August 2024. The total funding level is \$140 million. The Trade Hub Activity is jointly funded by USAID/Nigeria, USAID/West Africa, USAID/Côte d'Ivoire, USAID/Senegal, and other USAID Missions. The geographic focus for the activity is the 15 ECOWAS countries plus Mauritania, Cameroon, and Chad.

II. Project Background

For a lower-middle income country, Nigeria experiences high levels of poverty (53.3% of the population), with significant income inequalities along the north-south divide. Linked to poverty, malnutrition remains high. According to the 2015 Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics, national stunting rates are 32% for children under five (soaring to 54% in the Northwest). Agriculture can become a strong force in alleviating poverty and malnutrition. An agricultural powerhouse at its independence in 1960, Nigeria gradually succumbed to dependence on revenues from petroleum exports to fund GON operations. In spite of the oil, agriculture remains the base of the Nigerian economy, providing the main source of livelihood for most Nigerians. The country has not exploited its comparative advantage in agriculture. The sector faces many challenges, notably an outdated land tenure system that constrains access to land (1.8 ha/farming household), a very low level of irrigation development (less than 1 percent of cropped land under irrigation), limited adoption of research findings and technologies, high cost of farm inputs, poor access to credit, inefficient fertilizer procurement and distribution, inadequate storage facilities and poor access to markets have all combined to keep agricultural productivity low (average of 1.2 metric tons of cereals/ha) with high postharvest losses and waste. Also, the high cost and unreliable supply of electricity rendered processing companies uncompetitive when compared with peers overseas. Processors struggle to source a consistent supply of high-quality inputs on the domestic market due to the low quality of on-farm produce. They also face significant obstacles importing inputs from abroad due to high tariff rates as well as restrictions on financing for the importation of many commodity items. These challenges make it difficult for businesses to demonstrate their commercial viability and catalyze greater private sector investment.

West Africa trade is deeply constrained by businesses' inability to meet the huge demands of the global market as they are mostly unable to meet market requirements of quality and volume and succeed in the international marketplace and are therefore not competitive. West Africa is a globally important exporter in many commodities including cocoa, cashew, cotton, shea, and some

tropical fruits, it is hampered by low levels of productivity on the production side and relatively limited investment and export of value-added processed commodities. The large number of smallholders and cooperatives active in the supply chains for these commodities presents an opportunity to increase incomes for the poor. Their diffuse nature makes aggregating sufficient quantities challenging and significantly increases the transaction costs for the buyers in comparison to buying from commercial scale farmers. For processors, securing supplies across countries in West Africa is extremely challenging and often cost-prohibitive due to different currencies, languages, excessive transportation costs, roadblocks, formal and informal charges, and a lack of developed infrastructure in services such as cold-chain logistics.

Vertical integration into farming to guarantee at least minimal supplies to keep processing facilities running is a common adaptation to supply challenges but is complicated by lack of secure land rights. Working capital requirements for processing industries (such as cashew) where the supply of raw material must be purchased up front for year-round processing is particularly difficult for locally based firms who compete with lower cost of capital available to foreign operators. The cost and availability of energy is also relatively high in the region in comparison to competitor countries. The integration of small holders and firms into international and regional supply chains requires investments in upgrading and certification that are difficult to finance in much of the West African region. Many financial institutions are reluctant to lend to the agriculture sector and the applicants often do not have adequate financial documentation, business plans, or credit history to qualify for commercial loans.

To help address these challenges, the USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub seeks to improve private sector competitiveness in West Africa with a focus on increasing the agricultural productivity and profitability of smallholder farmers in Nigeria and promoting West Africa's regional and international trade. Toward this end, the Trade Hub Activity is jointly established and funded by USAID/Nigeria, USAID/West Africa, USAID/Côte d'Ivoire, USAID/Senegal, and other USAID Missions. The Activity comprises two main components: (i) design and administration of a Competitiveness Fund for private sector partnerships and (ii) technical assistance (TA) that directly supports, coordinates, and engages with qualifying recipients (i.e., partners and grantees) to achieve USAID's trade and food security objectives. The purpose of the Activity is to improve the competitiveness of West African farmers and firms by increasing productivity, investment and adoption of improved technologies. The activity is expected to achieve these objectives as measured by the following mandatory USAID standard and custom indicators:

- Value of exports in targeted agricultural and non-agricultural commodities
- Value of new private sector capital investment in the agriculture sector or food chain leveraged by Feed the Future implementation (EG.3.2-22)
- Value of new private sector investment in non-agricultural targeted sectors leveraged by USAID implementation
- Creation of new jobs in project assisted firms
- Value of new financing to clients in targeted sectors
- Value of smallholder incremental sales generated with USG assistance (EG.3.2-19)

- Percentage of hectares of land under improved technologies or management practices with USG assistance in Zone of Influence or ZOI

Development Hypothesis Nigeria

Nigeria's agriculture is characterized by poor quality inputs, minimal use of technology, low yields and productivity due to inadequate knowledge of agriculture best practices, and minimal value-added processing. Low crop yields lead to low income and poor nutrition for smallholder farmers. The Activity's development hypothesis presumes that the inadequate use of technology, low private sector investments in smallholder farming, inadequate knowledge of agriculture best practices, and lack of value addition activities constrain agricultural productivity and profitability. IF the Activity can strengthen the capacity of agricultural sector business service providers (including private firms, research institutions, and other stakeholders), expand the use of improved farming technologies, and increase private sector investment to improve productivity and profitability of smallholder farming, THEN Nigeria's agricultural competitiveness will be strengthened, contributing to broad based and inclusive growth.

West Africa

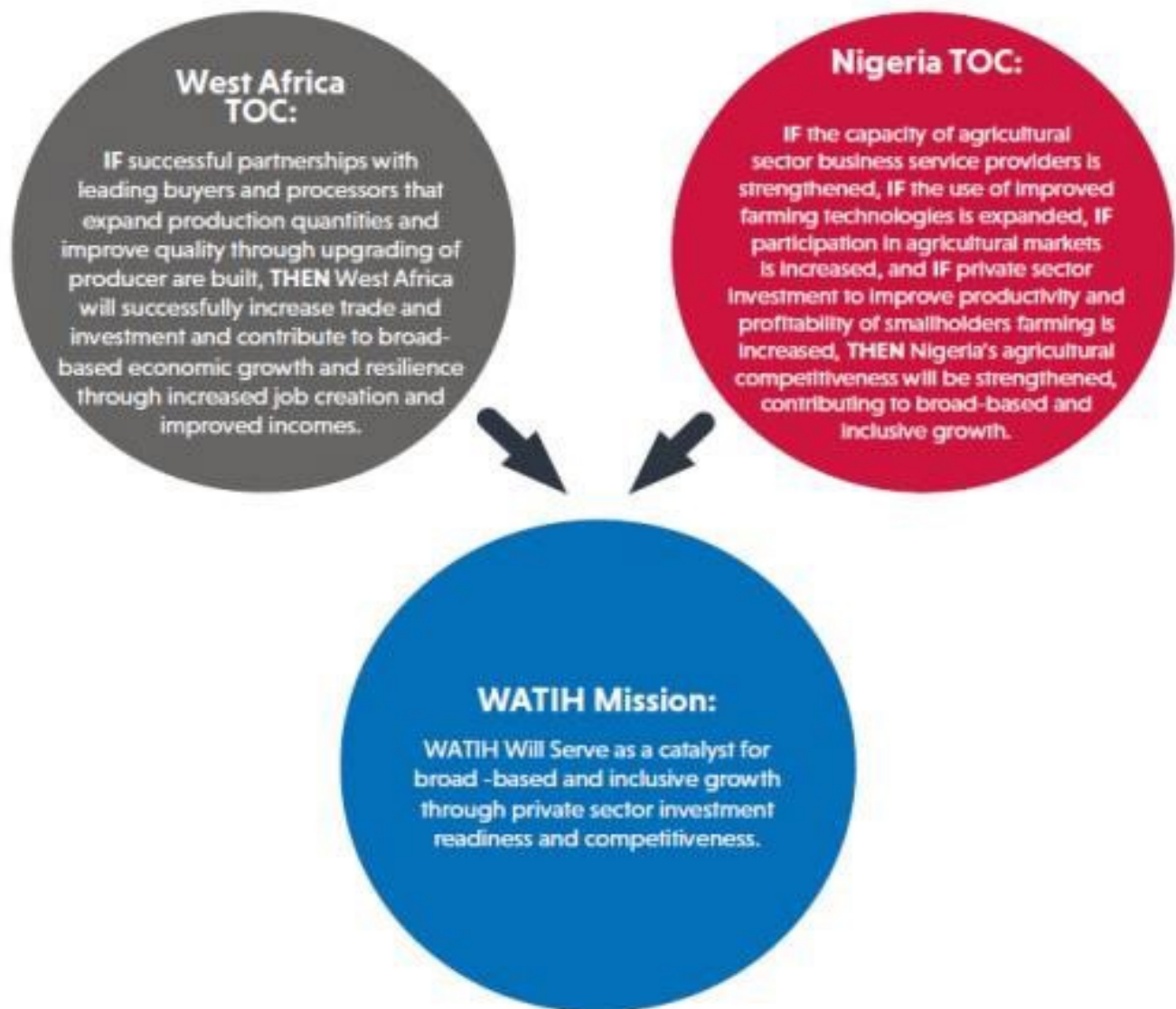
West Africa's trade is characterized by a reliance on imported staple foods, a low degree of intraregional trade, and reliance on extractive and raw commodities rather than value-added exports. IF the Activity can build successful partnerships with leading buyers and processors that expand production quantities and improve quality through upgrading of producers, THEN West Africa will successfully increase trade and investment and contribute to broad-based economic growth and resilience through increased job creation and improved incomes. Complementary policy work addressing trade barriers and regional market integration is undertaken by USAID/West Africa under different activities.

The theoretical framework underpinning the Trade Hub is clear and direct. Grants and technical assistance that address key productivity and profitability constraints in priority value chains will improve private-sector competitiveness, which will, in turn, contribute to broad-based and inclusive economic growth and resilience. In Nigeria and Senegal, the Trade Hub activities will focus on agricultural VCs while activities in the rest of West Africa will focus on trade. The Trade Hub theories of change (TOCs) specific to Nigeria as well as to the rest of West Africa, are presented below and depicted in Figure 3 on the following page.

Nigeria TOC: *IF the capacity of agricultural sector business service providers (including private firms, research institutions, and other stakeholders) is strengthened, IF the use of improved farming technologies is expanded, IF participation in agricultural markets is increased, and IF private sector investment to improve productivity and profitability of smallholder farming is increased, THEN Nigeria's agricultural competitiveness will be strengthened, contributing to broad-based and inclusive growth.*

West Africa TOC: *IF successful partnerships with leading buyers and processors that expand production quantities and improve quality through upgrading of producers are built, THEN West Africa will successfully increase trade and investment and contribute to broad-based economic growth and resilience through increased job creation and improved incomes.*

Figure 1: THE TRADE HUB Theory of Change



The Development Hypothesis underpinning this activity states that:

IF activities conducted by the Trade Hub generate changes in levels of each sub-intermediate results and intermediate results, THEN this will create significant and sustainable increases in trade, investment and jobs.

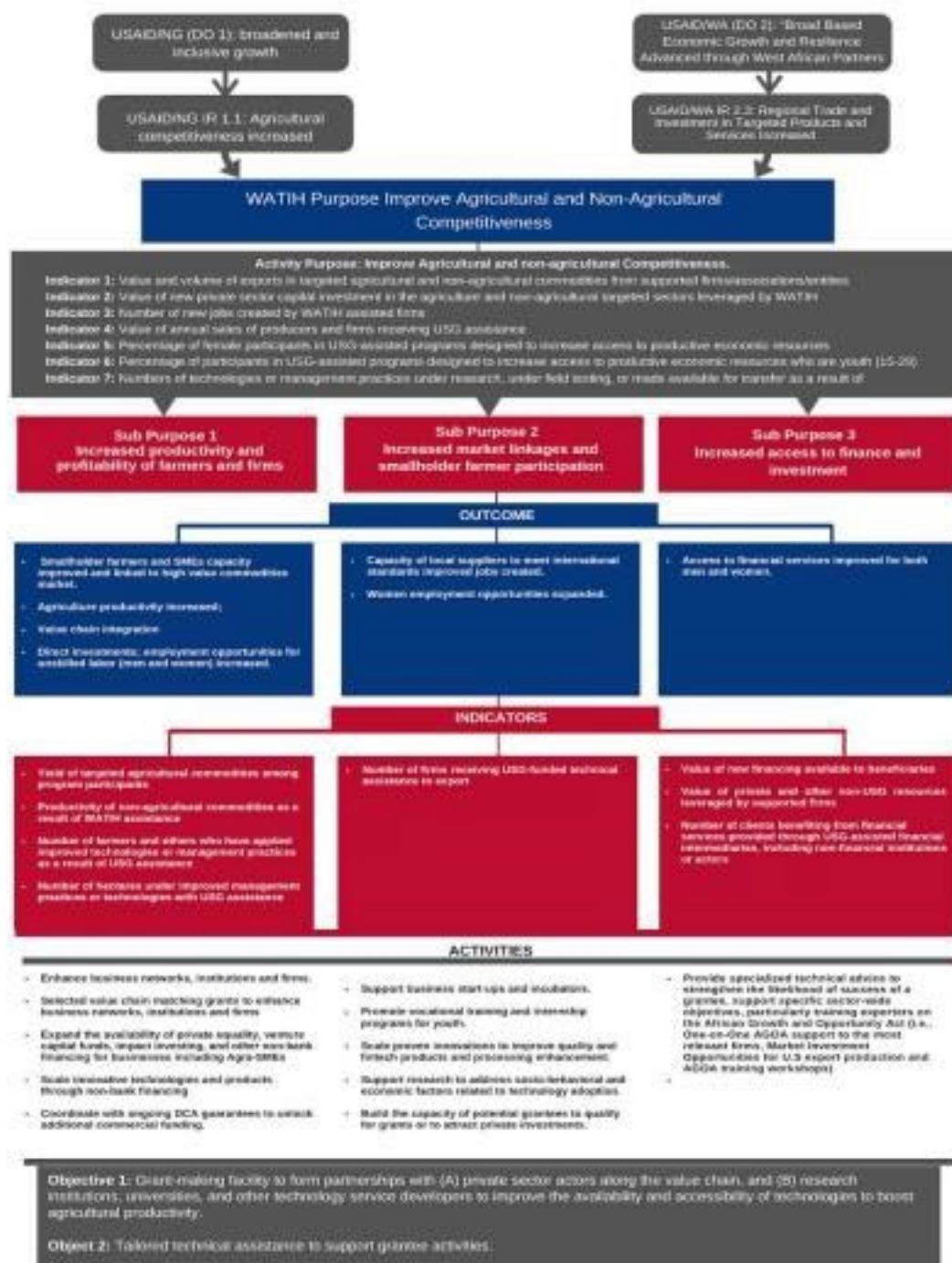
Country and Regional Development Cooperation Strategy

USAID Nigeria's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) 2020-2025 promotes the goal to support a healthier, more educated, prosperous, stable, and resilient Nigeria. The mission's economic growth and environment office supports this goal by promoting inclusive economic growth, reducing poverty and enhancing private sector contributions to inclusive growth.

USAID/West Africa's Mission-wide goal is the West African led advancement of social and economic well-being. This goal is supported by several development objectives, including

“broad-based economic growth and resilience advanced through West African partners.” This goal articulates USAID/WA's commitment to support African-led, regional development and underscores the mission's commitment to capacity-building with the direct aim of supporting regional organizations to better deliver on their respective mandates.

Figure 2 - Trade Hub Results Framework



Purpose of the Performance Evaluation

The main objective of this evaluation is to assess and document the extent to which the USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub is achieving its objectives, and intermediate results; document activity challenges and lessons learned and provide recommendations that will inform the direction of the activity for the remainder of the contract. Specifically, an assessment of the validity of the theory of change will be made. The evaluation will also assess the sustainability and exit strategy of the Trade Hub.

Target Areas and Groups

The Evaluator must implement the evaluation at different levels across government partners, Trade Hub applicant firms and partner businesses, private sector apex bodies, processors, farmers and traders across the region and universities or research centers especially for the Nigeria component.

III: Evaluation Questions

The Evaluator must, at a minimum, address the following questions and develop recommendations for both USAID and the activity to address any shortcomings in activity implementation or design.

1. How effective and timely has the activity been in achieving planned results across the various key focus areas:
 - Are the grants being given out by the Hub set to provide the catalytic effects needed to improve private sector competitiveness in the region?
 - Are the Research and Development grants being issued by the hub supporting cutting edge innovation needed to propel businesses in Nigeria?
 - How well is the hub supporting business recover from the effects of the COVID pandemic in the region?
2. Is the activity on-track to achieve planned outcomes and impact across all components and overall?
 - Is there an adequate mix of technical assistance for the Trade Hub grantees?
3. What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of planned results and objectives?
4. To what extent is the theory of change still valid and does it respond to the needs of partner USAID Missions?
 - To what extent will the investments to-date and planned be quick program opportunities that will advance the theories of change for Nigeria and West Africa over a sustainable time period.

- Please document the extent to which this activity is advancing West Africa Regional Trade Objectives, and if not, what more they could be doing.
5. To what extent is the activity's work sustainable and how has the activity worked with businesses to ensure that the results of their partnerships will have lasting benefits?
- Can the Trade Hub's resource mobilization serve as the basis for greater regional resource mobilization from other regional sources for regional trade for the agriculture sector? This could include funding through organizations such as the ECOWAS Capital Fund or African Development Bank.
 - Is engagement with women and youth sufficient and adequate to ensure that the activity's anticipated results are achieved?

IV. Tasks

The Evaluator must perform the following tasks as part of this scope of work:

1. Draft inception report with a detailed work plan
2. Develop the evaluation methodology (part of inception report)
3. Test and verify the evaluation methodology
4. Deploy a field team
5. Collect the relevant data to inform the evaluation
6. Conduct oral debrief meetings with USAID on the preliminary findings of the evaluation
7. Host a learning event to present the draft evaluation findings for their validation and inputs
8. Draft Final Report
9. Submission of COR approved final report to the DEC

V. Results: Deliverables and Outputs

The Evaluator must furnish the following deliverables and reports:

1. Inception Report

The inception report must describe the conceptual framework the evaluator will use to undertake the evaluation and the justification for selecting this approach. It must detail the evaluation methodology (i.e. how each question will be answered by way of data collection methods, data sources and sampling). The report must also contain a work plan, which indicates the phases in the evaluation with key deliverables and milestones and timelines. USAID will review this report and the Evaluator must receive approval from the COR of the report before it begins implementing the evaluation plan. The inception report must clearly document and discuss how gender analysis will be integrated into the design of the evaluation.

The Inception Report must at least contain the following:

- a. A work plan, which indicates the phases in the evaluation with key deliverables and milestones, timelines and key personnel responsibility.
- b. Complete set of evaluation questions and elaborate on them as necessary. Any questions added during the contract negotiations must be clearly indicated and any deleted questions must be mentioned with a reason as to their exclusion.
- c. Discussion of the overall approach of the evaluation, highlighting the conceptual model(s) adopted. This must incorporate an analysis of the intervention logic of the program.
- d. Discussion of risks and limitations that may undermine the reliability and validity of the evaluation results.
- e. Specification of indicator, index, or indicators that must be used as a guide in answering each question.
- f. Discussion of the data collection and data analysis methods that will be used for each question. State the limitations for each method. Include the level of precision required for quantitative and qualitative methods and value scales or coding used for qualitative methods. Standard data collection methods for USAID evaluations are: surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, document review and observations
- g. Detail key data sources that will be selected to answer each evaluation question.
- h. Explanation of how existing data will be incorporated and used to answer the evaluation questions.
- i. Discussion of the sampling methods and details. Include area and population to be represented, rationale for selection, mechanics of selection, sample size (for each unit of analysis), sample precision and confidence and limitations.
- j. Summarized evaluation methodology in an evaluation planning matrix that must contain the following headings: evaluation question, measure (s) or indicator(s), data collection method(s), data source, design strategy / framework for each question, sampling methodology, data collection instrument(s) for each question and data analysis methodology on each evaluation question.

- k. Timeline showing the evaluation phases (data collection, data analysis and reporting) with their key deliverables and milestones.
- l. Specific responsibilities of each team member for each evaluation phase. Include any changes in the evaluation team.
- m. Discussion of logistics of carrying out the evaluation and learning event. Include specific assistance that will be required from USAID, such as providing arrangements for key contacts within the Mission or Government.
- n. Appended draft instruments for data collection specific to questions and indicators in the evaluation.
- o. Standard USAID work plan outlying timeframes, etc. for implementation.

2. Evaluation Methodology (submitted within the Inception report)

The performance evaluation must utilize the mixed methods research design employing both quantitative and qualitative methods to strengthen the validity of the findings and provide room for data triangulation. The Evaluator must describe and document the methodological approach that will be used, and this should follow USAID Evaluation best practices. The model must include an evaluation framework and assessment tools for each evaluation question and highlight the conceptual model(s); specify the measurement criteria to be used to respond to each question. It must discuss any risks and limitations that may undermine the reliability and validity of the evaluation results. In order to ensure the maximum value for learning and use, a description of the proposed evaluation methodology must include the following, at a minimum:

- i. Methods of data collection: The Evaluator must clearly highlight the different methods and tools that will be utilized to collect both quantitative and qualitative data such as structured questionnaires for beneficiary interviews; analysis of secondary data/outputs from performance monitoring system, focus group interviews with beneficiary farmers, key informant interviews with USG staff, implementing partners or government staff, community leaders, private sector and other stakeholders.
- ii. Sampling: The Evaluator must propose how sampling will be done and propose the appropriate sample sizes required to ensure scientific rigor.
- iii. Data analysis: The Evaluator must provide the plan for analysis of all qualitative and quantitative data collected. This should include how different secondary sources of data collected by JSSP (e.g. annual beneficiary surveys/outputs from performance monitoring system, etc.) will be utilized to answer the evaluation questions.

Data Collection and Analysis

The Evaluator must complete the following table as part of its detailed design and evaluation plan.

Evaluation question	Data source	Data collection method (including sampling methodology, where applicable)	Data analysis method	Type of data or information needed to address the question"

3. Progress Debriefing Meeting

The Evaluator must debrief USAID on the preliminary findings of the evaluation. This meeting must provide a summary of any analytical results; discuss challenges, successes, and way forward. The Evaluator must deliver an oral presentation of the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations for each question to USAID, prior to finalizing the draft evaluation report. The team leader of the evaluation team will be required to routinely update the evaluation point of contact on the progress of the evaluation.

4. Learning Workshop and Report

In coordination with USAID, and in support of Agency collaboration learning and adaptation methodologies, the Evaluator must organize a learning workshop. The focus of the workshop is to generate varied and diverse learning points including useful and actionable suggestions or proposals for addressing recurrent development challenges (based on the specific activity evaluation) in the West African context with the end goal being to enhance achievement of USAID objectives. The workshop must bring together key stakeholders jointly identified by the Evaluator, USAID and activity beneficiaries to stimulate discussion around the evaluation topics. Inclusion of a wide array of stakeholders is expected to bring to bear different contextual experiences to broaden the learning base, share best practices, exchange knowledge on critical activity lessons, evaluation results, discuss barriers, and recommend approaches to further enrich learning and the success of USAID activities. This will inform operational, tactical and strategic decisions into other on-going programs and the planning of future programs, as well as capture a broad array of stakeholder thought processes.

The specific objectives of the learning event are:

- To disseminate findings and recommendations from the assessment.
- To review in-depth key lessons and their implication for future programs; and
- Most importantly, to engage stakeholders on the evaluation topic, to share lessons learned, barriers, successes, discuss recommendations and to generate a dialogue that captures stakeholder input, thoughts, and ideas on the technical approach used to achieve activity results as presented in the evaluation.

The Evaluator will be responsible for documenting the learning points that will emanate from the discussions and knowledge sharing. These will be appropriately captured in a learning report that will be shared with USAID, workshop participants and other targeted audiences no later than two-weeks after completion of the workshop. The Evaluator will be responsible for all costs and logistics including but not limited to: invitations, agenda, facilitation, coffee breaks, lunch, appropriate branding materials and all other aspects for this all day workshop. The Evaluator, in coordination with and approval of the COR will produce an event agenda, generate a list of invitees, produce all workshop materials, acquire a venue, and manage all aspects to ensure a successful workshop. The Evaluator must produce a workshop report that captures the learning dialogue, discussion surrounding key findings, conclusions and recommendations. The final COR approved report will, at a minimum, include an executive summary for the workshop, activity background, a workshop scope describing the reason for the workshop and transcribed discussions that provide details on the workshop proceedings focused on outcomes and takeaways surrounding the dialogue that ensues at the workshop.

4. Final Evaluation Report

The Evaluator must submit a final evaluation report that is based on analyzed facts and evidence and fully addresses all the evaluation questions. The report must be no less than 25 and no more than 30 single-spaced pages in length in 12 point Times New Roman font, excluding annexes and a five-page Executive Summary, and comply with the Checklist for Assessing USAID Evaluation Reports (See Annexes). After considering all the new information and feedback provided on the

final oral briefings and draft evaluation report, the Evaluator must submit 15 hard-bound copies and an electronic version of the report to the Mission. The Evaluator must also submit an electronic version of the report in an appropriate media including all tools and products of the evaluation, including instruments and data in data formats suitable for reanalysis. The Evaluator must ensure that Appendix I of the USAID

Evaluation Policy – Criteria to Ensure the Quality of the Evaluation Report is followed. This includes:

- The evaluation report must represent a thoughtful, well-researched and well-organized effort to objectively evaluate what worked in the project, what did not and why;
- Evaluation reports must address all evaluation questions included in the scope of work;
- The evaluation report should include the scope of work as an annex. All modifications to the scope of work, whether in technical requirements, evaluation questions, evaluation team composition, methodology or timeline need to be agreed upon in writing by the technical officer;
- Evaluation methodology must be explained in detail and all tools used in conducting the evaluation such as questionnaires, checklists and discussion guides will be included in an Annex in the final report;
- Evaluation findings will assess outcomes and impact on males and females;
- Limitations to the evaluation must be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.);
- Evaluation findings must be presented as analyzed facts, evidence and data and not based on anecdotes, hearsay or the compilation of people's opinions. Findings must be specific, concise and supported by strong quantitative or qualitative evidence;
- Sources of information must be properly identified and listed in an annex;
- Recommendations must be supported by a specific set of findings; and should be action-oriented, practical and specific, with defined responsibility for the action.

The final evaluation report must contain the following sections:

- **Executive Summary:** This section must be five pages in length and must summarize the purpose, project background, evaluation design and methodologies including main evaluation questions, key findings, conclusions, and recommendations and lessons learned from the evaluation.
- **Background:** This section must provide a brief description of the project that highlights the scope of the project, project development hypothesis, activities undertaken in the project, key impact indicators of the project and impact areas of the project. Other activities that complemented the project activities directly or indirectly in the intervention districts must also be highlighted.
- **Methodology:** This section must detail the methodology and related research protocols undertaken in conducting the evaluation, data collection, analysis, selection criteria/sampling, and related constraints or limitations encountered during the project implementation and evaluation.
- **Findings:** Empirical facts collected during the evaluation: This section must present findings from the evaluation. The evaluation findings must be presented as analyzed facts, evidence and data and not based on anecdotes, hearsay or the compilation of people's opinions. The evaluation

findings must assess key outcomes and impacts as structured around the organizational framework of the evaluation questions. The findings must be specific, concise and supported by strong quantitative and qualitative evidence analyzed through scientifically plausible methodologies. Sources of information used in arriving at the findings must be properly acknowledged and listed in an annex.

- **Conclusions (Interpretations and judgments based on the findings):** Evaluation conclusions must be presented for each key finding. The Conclusions must logically follow from the gathered data and findings. These must be explicitly justified. If and when necessary, the evaluator must state his/her assumptions, judgments and value premises so that readers can better understand and assess them.

- **Recommendations (Proposed actions for management):** This section must precisely and clearly present recommendations that must be drawn from specific findings. The recommendations must be stated in an action-oriented fashion, must be practical, specific, and with defined responsibility for the requisite action. The recommendations presented in this section must follow the evaluation questions as the organizational framework.

- **References:** This section should include all documents reviewed, including background documentation and records of technical data application and decision-making.

- **Annexes:** These may include, but not limited to, statements of work, tools used in conducting the evaluation such as questionnaires, checklists, discussion guides, sources of information, etc.

VI. Team Composition

Offerors may propose personnel (on a full or part-time basis) to fill technical, data analysis, logistical, administrative, or editorial roles. The proposal will include a Senior Evaluator who will work full time on the evaluation and be considered “key personnel”. This evaluation will be overseen jointly by USAID Nigeria’s Economic Growth, Environment Office, USAID West Africa’s Economic Growth Office, and the Trade Hub’s activity managers based in all the buy-in countries. USAID encourages the use of local West African personnel on the evaluation team.

Roles and Responsibilities

The writing of the report will be the sole responsibility of the independent evaluators. The evaluation team may request USAID team members to participate in interviews and meetings—but the independent evaluators may wish to have certain interviews without USAID staff present.

Key Positions:

It is expected that evaluation team members will have relevant prior experience in West Africa, be proficient in the French language, have familiarity with USAID’s objectives, approaches, and operations, and prior evaluation/assessment experience. In addition, individual team members should have the technical qualifications identified for their respective positions. The evaluation team should consist of a range of experts and supporting staff, based on the specific tasks and sub-tasks required to carry out the activities described in this Statement of Work. In its Evaluation Design Proposal and Survey Assessment Design Proposal, the evaluation team should propose specific positions and individuals to carry out the required activities for each of those respective activities, including CVs of core team members.

At this stage, it is expected that the performance evaluation team may include the following positions, although the Evaluator may propose a different configuration:

Team Leader (Evaluation Specialist): The Team Leader will have a minimum of a master's degree in a relevant discipline (Business, Finance, International Trade Law, Economics, etc.) and At least 15 years' experience in program evaluation of donor funded development programs. Priority will be given to those who have evaluated programs of similar nature. The Team Leader will have excellent analytical and report writing skills as well as demonstrated skills in applied economic analysis, project management, and survey administration. Proficiency in both English and French will be required.

Trade Expert: The Trade and Integration Expert will have a minimum of a master's degree in a relevant discipline (Business, Finance, International Trade Law, Economics, etc.) and eight years of experience in international trade. S/he should have experience with USAID evaluation projects in Africa and have demonstrated abilities in applied economic analysis. Proficiency in both English and French will be required.

Researchers: 2 Researchers supporting the evaluation team will have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and at least two years' experience in international trade with an emphasis on agricultural projects. They will have excellent analytical and report writing skills and proven experience with carrying out semi-structured interviews. They will possess a sound knowledge of agricultural policies and be familiar with the ECOWAS region. They will also provide logistical support to the evaluation team including the scheduling of interviews and travel preparations. Proficiency in both English and French will be required.

Investment Expert

A minimum of a master's degree in commerce/finance from a recognized university. At least 10 years' experience in investment analysis, promotion, and transaction advisory. Demonstrated experience in investment and finance within the West Africa region. Demonstrated skills in critical thinking and analysis, as well as written and verbal communication. Experience in the evaluation of donor funded activities in Africa. Sound knowledge of donor funded programs and an understanding of the evaluation approaches. Excellent analytical, report writing and presentation skills. Proficiency in both English and French will be required.

Place of Performance

The place of performance is West Africa with special emphasis on Nigeria, Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire, Senegal, Sahel, Liberia and Cape Verde. The extent of travel will be determined by the evaluation design and data needs as agreed upon between the Evaluator and USAID. A designated contact person from USAID Nigeria will serve as the primary Point of Contact and Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) for the Performance Evaluation. The performance evaluation is expected to be conducted between January and March 2022

VII. Logistics

The Evaluator/MEL Mechanism will be responsible for all logistics including coordinating all travel throughout the regions The Evaluator is responsible for all lodging, printing, office space, equipment and car rentals, financing from the contract award and managing dissemination of results. USAID will provide support to set up initial meetings with key government officials and other stakeholders.

VIII. USAID Participation

An interactive and collaborative process is envisioned between the evaluation team, USAID/Nigeria, all the various missions with buy ins under this activity (West Africa, Liberia, Côte D'Ivoire, Senegal, Cape Verde, Sahel Regional Office and Ghana) and USAID/AFR to carry out this activity. USAID and the evaluation team will be engaged during the design process to consider options for answering the evaluation questions and designing the assessment survey, to ensure agreement on the focus and approaches for the design and delivery of the performance evaluation and assessment survey.

IX. Existing Sources of Information

The Mission will share the following documents with the successful evaluation team to facilitate the desk review. The applicable documents are listed below:

1. West Africa Trade and Investment Hub Contract, including all modifications
2. West Africa Trade and Investment Hub monitoring and evaluation plan and indicator table including any data quality assessments completed
3. West Africa Trade and Investment Hub annual work plans
4. USAID Nigeria FtF strategy
5. USAID West Africa FtF strategy
6. USAID Ghana FtF strategy
7. USAID Nigeria Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS)
8. USAID West Africa Regional Development Cooperation Strategy (RDCS)
9. USAID Ghana Country Development Strategy (CDCS)
10. West Africa Trade and Investment Hub Annual Report (October 19 – September 20)
11. West Africa Trade and Investment Hub Annual Report (October 20 – September 21)
12. The Trade Hub Baseline Survey Report
13. West Africa Trade and Investment Hub turn around plans

I. Reporting Requirements

The format of the evaluation report should follow USAID guidelines set forth in the USAID Evaluation Report Template (<http://usaidlearninglab.org/library/evaluationreport-template>) and the How-To Note on Preparing Evaluation Reports

(<http://usaidlearninglab.org/library/how-note-preparing-evaluation-reports>). The format

will include an executive summary, table of contents, list of acronyms, evaluation design and methodology, findings, conclusions, and recommendations and lessons learned. The report will be submitted in English and should not be more than 40 pages, excluding annexes.

A copy of the final evaluation report will be delivered to the USAID Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) within 30 days of USAID's acceptance of the final evaluation report and approval to post it on the DEC.

A brief summary of the evaluation report, not to exceed 15 pages and excluding any potentially procurement-sensitive information, should also be submitted electronically in English for dissemination among implementing partners and stakeholders.

All members of the evaluation team should be provided with USAID's mandatory statement of the evaluation standards they are expected to meet, shown in the text box below, along with USAID's conflict of interest statement that they sign where necessary before field work starts.

USAID EVALUATION POLICY, APPENDIX 1

CRITERIA TO ENSURE THE QUALITY OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

The evaluation report should represent a thoughtful, well-researched and well-organized effort to objectively evaluate what worked in the project, what did not and why.

Evaluation reports shall address all evaluation questions included in the scope of work.

The evaluation report should include the scope of work as an annex. All modifications to the scope of work, whether in technical requirements, evaluation questions, evaluation team composition,

Data Management

The storage and transfer of data collected for this evaluation will adhere to the requirements laid out in USAID's Automated Directives Systems (ADS) 579.1 The evaluation team should also follow applicable Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidance on data security and confidentiality. Final datasets are expected to be submitted to USAID in a format consistent with the ADS 579 report.

Evaluation findings will assess outcomes and impact on males and females.

II. Estimated Budget

Limitations to the evaluation shall be disclosed in the report, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences).

The evaluation team will propose for USAID's approval estimated budgets as part of its Evaluation Design Proposal and Assessment Survey Design Proposal, considering costs required completing all tasks under these respective activities, including those costs already presented as analyzed facts, evidence and data and not based on incurred to date during the design stages.

Findings should be specific, concise and supported by strong quantitative or qualitative evidence.

Sources of information need to be properly identified and listed in an annex.

Recommendations need to be supported by a specific set of findings.

Recommendations should be action-oriented, practical, and specific, with defined responsibility for the action.

ANNEX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

ANNEX C1: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WATIH STAFF

USAID/Nigeria and USAID/West Africa commissioned this Mid-term Performance evaluation to assess and document the extent to which the USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub is achieving its objectives, and intermediate results; document activity challenges and lessons learned and provide recommendations that will inform the direction of the activity for the remainder of the contract. Specifically, the evaluation will assess the validity of the theory of change, and the sustainability and exit strategy of WATIH.

This interview guide is meant for WATIH program staff to assess the initial objectives, achievements, and expectations at this current stage of WATIH program implementation, as per the Scope of Work.

DATE OF INTERVIEW (DD-MM-YYYY) |

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE|

RESPONDENT'S POSITION|

INTERVIEWER'S NAME|

COUNTRY|

LOCATION|

1. How effective and timely has the activity been in achieving planned results across the various key focus areas:
 - a. How well has WATIH made progress in its activity implementation in relation to:
 - Increasing value of exports in targeted agricultural and non-agricultural commodities?
 - Increasing value of new private sector capital investment in the agriculture sector or food chain leveraged by feed the future implementation?
 - Increasing the value of new private sector investment in non-agricultural targeted sectors leveraged by USAID implementation?
 - Creation of new jobs in project assisted firms.
 - Increasing the value of new financing to clients in targeted sectors?
 - Increasing the value of smallholder incremental sales generated with USG assistance?
 - Improving the percentage of hectares of land under improved technologies or management practices?
 - b. In your opinion, what aspect(s)/element(s) of WATIH contributed to the achievement of the results above? (Probe for key elements of the WATIH. i.e., Catalytic business concepts Grants, R&D Grants, COVID-19 Response Grants, AGOA-Technical Assistance)
 - c. Which of these elements of WATIH assistance was most effective in achieving those results? Why? (Catalytic business concepts Grants, R&D Grants, COVID-19 Response Grants, AGOA-Technical Assistance, Prosper Africa)

- d. Are the grants being given out by the Hub set to provide the catalytic effects needed to improve private sector competitiveness in the region?
 - e. Are the grants being given in a timely manner? Yes/ No. Briefly explain your response.
 - f. How are the R&D grants being utilized? (Probe further to ascertain whether utilization is focusing on any of these areas: (i) producing more food with less land and water, (ii) improving nutrition, and (iii) helping farmers adapt to climate change). For R&D Grantees in Nigeria only
 - g. Are the Research and Development grants being issued by the hub supporting innovative innovations needed to propel businesses in Nigeria?
 - h. How well is WATIH supporting businesses to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region? How far has the COVID response support helped the firms to mitigate or recover from COVID impacts?
 - i. Has the COVID support been timely and effective?
 - j. Are any firms now doing as well or better than they were doing before COVID-19?
 - e. Have the grantees selected or receiving these grants demonstrated enough justification to warrant COVID-19 grants based on the criteria set for this specific grant?
 - f. As you are aware the grant allocation stage is ending soon and WATIH has to move from this stage to the full implementation management stage. From your assessment, does WATIH have what it takes to manage the implementation stage successfully?
 - g. Are there any unintended consequences (unplanned outcomes) of the grants of which you are aware?
2. Is the activity on-track to achieve planned outcomes and impact across all components and overall? Is there an adequate mix of technical assistance for the WATIH grantees?
- a. How will you rate the program's performance to date? Would you say the program is on track to achieving its goals and objectives? Briefly explain your response.
 - b. In your opinion, are any program components lagging? If yes, could you explain which ones and why?
 - c. Are there any program components (or expected results) you envisage may not be realized within the remaining years of the program? If yes, which one(s) and why?
 - d. What is the process in place for grantees and potential grantees to know about and to access technical assistance from the program?
 - e. Are grantees approaching you to request Technical Assistance in support of their grants management or implementation?
 - i. Are there any implementation issues or challenges grantees have reported or informed you about?
 - f. Has WATIH identified the core mix of technical assistance needed to address key productivity and profitability constraints that plague the private sector?
 - ii. What is the nature of technical assistance provided to grantees? (Probe for the range of technical assistance services available to grant recipients)

- iii. Besides the range of services provided to grantees, have these businesses expressed the need for additional or other technical assistance support that WATIH found to be valid but could not provide?
- iv. Comparing the range of services provided to grantees and their actual or expressed technical assistance needs, would you say WATIH is providing the appropriate set of technical assistance that meets the needs of grantees? Briefly explain your response.
- g. Considering the projected needs of grantees in the remaining years of the program, is the current mix of Technical Assistance adequate? Is WATIH providing enough support to grantees to help them better meet the objectives of their grants?
- i. Are there any additional components that should be included in the Technical Assistance support to make it more impactful?
- h. Has WATIH employed the appropriate set of skills needed to respond to the technical assistance needs of the grant recipients? Briefly explain your response.
- i. What are the qualifications of individuals providing the technical assistance? What type of problems do these individuals have to help solve? Give examples of cases where they have been successful. Give examples of cases where they have not been successful. What did the WATIH do in such cases?
- i. Given the portfolio of grantees supported, how is WATIH monitoring the program's success in relation to improving private sector competitiveness?
- i. Has WATIH established any metrics/indicators to gauge the program's success in this regard? Briefly explain your response.
- j. Has WATIH put in place a system for monitoring the impact of grants for a few years after the project has ended to help USAID determine lasting benefits?
- k. Is the WATIH well set up (in terms of strategy, expertise, tools) to manage (execution, performance/monitoring, and project close) implementation? Are there any key or essential components missing that need to be incorporated to maximize expected outcomes?
- 3. What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of planned results and objectives?
 - a. What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of planned results and objectives?
 - b. Has WATIH and the supporting Missions established meaningful and measurable metrics to use in tracking progress towards planned/desired outcomes across priority program objectives?
 - ii. Based on your program performance monitoring, what are your general impressions of these metrics?
 - iii. To what extent are they measurable? Are there any particular indicators that you find to be difficult to measure? Briefly explain.
 - iv. From your monitoring experience, are all the metrics or indicators still useful or relevant for tracking the program's progress towards achieving planned results?
 - v. Are there any of the indicators you recommend should be dropped, and why?

c. Are their metrics in place to measure the program's impact on broad-based and inclusive economic growth and resilience?

d. To what extent does the current management structure of the project support effective implementation? (Note for evaluation team: Effective means implementing activities in a cost-effective manner)

e. Is Creative Associates staffing sufficient to provide key support to USAID Activity Managers responsible for:

(a) Responding to multifarious (many), diverse data calls

(b) Supporting USAID, USG, and VIP visits to partnerships including logistics and key document preparation

(c) Processing gathered data and refining it such that it is usable for briefers, press releases, speeches.

Is the program facing any staffing challenges? Please explain.

f. What challenges has the program encountered and how has the team mitigated these challenges? Are there any prevailing challenges that need to be resolved? If yes, please explain. (For unresolved challenges, probe further into why they have still not been addressed).

g. To what extent did these challenges impact program implementation and the expected results?

h. Did WATIH have to change strategy at any point during the past 2.5 years? What changes have been made and why?

i. At this point, is there something that WATIH would have done differently to ensure successful implementation?

4. To what extent is the theory of change still valid and does it respond to the needs of partner USAID Missions?

a. In your opinion, are the assumptions on which the TOC is based still valid in the face of the current state of affairs of the region and globally?

b. In your opinion, are the WATIH investments validating and contributing to the TOC for this activity?

c. Which grantee activities are potential models of success in advancing the TOC?

d. To what extent are the investments to-date and planned investments be quick program opportunities advancing the theories of change for Nigeria and West Africa?

e. How familiar are you with the objectives of the USAID West Africa Regional Mission? In your opinion, is WATIH advancing the West Africa Regional Mission's Objectives?

If yes, to what extent? If not, what could be done?

5. To what extent is the activity's work sustainable and how has the activity worked with businesses to ensure that the results of their partnerships will have lasting benefits?

a. How has the activity worked with firms to ensure sustainability? How is the activity positioning the grantees for success once the program interventions end?

- b. Is there a plan of action to transition/graduate grantees using a schedule that will allow the program time to monitor sustainability and success before WATIH ends?
 - c. Is engagement with women and youth sufficient and adequate to ensure that the activity's anticipated results are achieved? Please explain
 - d. Is the inclusion of women and youth sufficient to gauge meaningful and measurable access to program resources? Please explain.
 - e. Can WATIH's resource mobilization serve as the basis for greater regional resource mobilization from other regional sources for regional trade for the agriculture sector? (This could include funding through organizations such as the ECOWAS Capital Fund or African Development Bank?)
 - f. To what extent is the AGOA component working to promote the Prosper Africa initiative by supporting the Trade indicator to increase exports?
 - g. What lessons can be learned to inform future programming? Do you have any recommendations for future USAID programming?
 - h. What activities do you think should be scaled up or down for WATIH to maximize program results until its completion?
 - 5b. Is engagement with women and youth sufficient and adequate to ensure that the activity's anticipated results are achieved?
 - i. Have the women and youth strategies integrated at the design stage been effectively implemented? Please explain how and to what extent these have been implemented.
 - j. What challenges were encountered in implementation? How have these challenges been remedied on the ground?
 - k. In your opinion, is the level of youth engagement in the program sufficient? Is the level of engagement with youth (under 30 years) increasing or decreasing? Any reason for this observed trend?
 - l. In your opinion, is the level of women engagement in the program sufficient? Is the level of engagement with women increasing or decreasing? Any reason for this observed trend?
- Do you have other comment (s) for the evaluation team?

ANNEX C2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR USAID STAFF

USAID/Nigeria and USAID/West Africa commissioned this Mid-term Performance evaluation to assess and document the extent to which the USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub is achieving its objectives, and intermediate results; document activity challenges and lessons learned and provide recommendations that will inform the direction of the activity for the remainder of the contract. Specifically, the evaluation will assess the validity of the theory of change, and the sustainability and exit strategy of WATIH.

This interview guide is meant for USAID staff to assess the initial objectives, achievements, and expectations at this stage of WATIH program implementation, as per the Scope of Work.

DATE OF INTERVIEW (DD-MM-YYYY) |

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE|

RESPONDENT'S POSITION|

INTERVIEWER'S NAME|

COUNTRY|

LOCATION|

1. How effective and timely has the activity been in achieving planned results across the various key focus areas:

a. How well has WATIH made progress in its activity implementation in relation to:

- Increasing value of exports in targeted agricultural and non-agricultural commodities?
- Increasing value of new private sector capital investment in the agriculture sector or food chain leveraged by feed the future implementation?
- Increasing the value of new private sector investment in non-agricultural targeted sectors leveraged by USAID implementation?
- Creation of new jobs in project assisted firms.
- Increasing the value of new financing to clients in targeted sectors?
- Increasing the value of smallholder incremental sales generated with USG assistance?
- Improving the percentage of hectares of land under improved technologies or management practices?

b. In your performance monitoring of this activity, have you identified any areas where WATIH is consistently exceeding planned targets? If yes, please specify.

a. If yes, has WATIH provided any explanations for this observation?

c. In your performance monitoring of this activity, have you identified any areas where WATIH is consistently underperforming? If yes, please specify

b. If yes, has WATIH provided any explanations for this observation?

c. In your opinion, are the grants being given out by the Hub set to provide the catalytic effects needed to improve private sector competitiveness in the region? Please explain.

e. In your estimation, are the grants being given in a timely manner? Yes/ No. Briefly explain your response. Is the grants disbursement process in alignment with previously agreed plans?

f. Are the Research and Development grants being issued by the hub supporting innovative innovation needed to propel businesses in Nigeria? Briefly explain. (For USAID/Nigeria only)

g. Are there any improvements needed? Do you have any recommendations on how the R&D grants can be better utilized to achieve more impactful outcomes?

2. What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of planned results and objectives?

- a. What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of planned results and objectives?
- b. What are your general impressions of the metrics that WATIH and supporting Missions are using to track progress towards planned/desired outcomes across priority program objectives?
 - i. Do you find these metrics to be adequate? Have you identified any related problems from the regular reports submitted by WATIH that suggest these metrics may not be appropriate? vii.
 - ii. Do you have any recommendations on how best to strengthen the metrics to facilitate results measurement and tracking? viii.
 - iii. Are there any particular metrics or indicators you have identified to be difficult for WATIH to report on? In your opinion, are there particular indicators that need to be dropped? If yes, which ones and why?
- c. Are their metrics in place to measure the program's impact on broad-based and inclusive economic growth and resilience?
- d. To what extent does the current management structure of the project support effective implementation? (Note for evaluation team: Effective means implementing activities in a cost-effective manner)
- e. How well has the Creative Associates staff performed in relation to providing key support to USAID Activity Managers in relation to:
 - i. Responding to multifarious (many), diverse data calls
 - ii. Supporting USAID, USG, and VIP visits to partnerships including logistics and key document preparation
 - iii. Processing gathered data and refining it such that it is usable for briefers, press releases, speeches.
 - iv. What challenges have you observed with respect to Creative Associates staff providing the above functions.
 - v. What do you suggest could be done to improve this situation?
- e. What challenges have WATIH encountered and how have they been mitigated?
- f. Did you find the mitigation strategies appropriate and effective? Is there a way the challenges could have better been resolved? Please explain.
- g. In your opinion, to what extent did these challenges impact on the achievement of results? In your estimation, which particular result area(s) were most likely to be affected?
3. To what extent is the theory of change still valid and does it respond to the needs of partner USAID Missions?
 - a. In your opinion, are the assumptions on which the TOC is based still valid in the face of the current situation of the region and globally?
 - b. In your opinion, are the WATIH investments validating and contributing to the TOC for this activity?
 - c. Which grantee activities are potential models of success in advancing the TOC?
 - d. To what extent can the planned and current investments become program opportunities to advance the theories of change for Nigeria and West Africa?
 - e. To what extent is the program advancing West Africa Regional Trade Objectives? What more can or should the program do to further advance the regional trade objectives?
4. To what extent is the activity's work sustainable and how has the activity worked with businesses to ensure that the results of their partnerships will have lasting benefits?
 - a. Is there an exit plan in place for this activity? How is WATIH positioning the grantees for success once the program interventions end?

- b. Is there a plan of action to transition/graduate grantees using a schedule that will allow the program time to monitor sustainability and success before WATIH ends?
 - c. Are engagements with women and youth adequate to ensure that the activity's anticipated results are achieved?
 - d. Are the strategies to include women and youth adequate to gauge their meaningful and measurable access to program resources?
 - e. Can WATIH's resource mobilization serve as the basis for greater regional resource mobilization from other regional sources of financing for the agriculture sector? (This could include funding through organizations such as the ECOWAS Capital Fund or African Development Bank?)
 - f. To what extent is the AGOA component working to promote the Prosper Africa initiative by supporting the Trade indicator to increase exports?
 - g. What lessons can be learned to inform future programming?
 - h. What activities do you think should be scaled up or down for WATIH to maximize project results until project completion? Briefly explain.
5. What is the perception of WATIH's activities amongst mission staff and USAID colleagues?
- a. In your opinion, have WATIH's activities contributed to regional trade competitiveness?
- Do you have other comment (s) for the evaluation team?

ANNEX C3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR GRANTEES

USAID/Nigeria and USAID/West Africa commissioned this Mid-term Performance evaluation to assess and document the extent to which the USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub is achieving its objectives, and intermediate results; document activity challenges and lessons learned and provide recommendations that will inform the direction of the activity for the remainder of the contract. Specifically, an assessment of the validity of the theory of change will be made. The evaluation will also assess the sustainability and exit strategy of WATIH.

This interview guide is meant for Grantees to assess the initial objectives, achievements, and expectations at this stage of WATIH program implementation, as per the Scope of Work.

DATE OF INTERVIEW (DD-MM-YYYY) |

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE|

RESPONDENT'S POSITION|

INTERVIEWER'S NAME|

LENGTH OF TIME WITH ORGANIZATION|

ROLE AS IT RELATES TO WATIH'S ACTIVITIES|

ORGANIZATION|

COUNTRY|

LOCATION|

1. Grant application and co-creation process:

- a. What are your general impressions about the grant application and co-creation process?
- b. Has WATIH been transparent, responsive/helpful, clearly explained things and given clear guidance during the application and co-creation process?
- c. Have you received any grants from WATIH yet?
- d. In your opinion, were the grants disbursed in a timely manner? Yes/ No. Briefly explain your response.

2. How effective and timely has the activity been in achieving planned results across the various key focus areas:

- a. How long has your organization been working with WATIH?
- b. What key activities have you participated in or led under the WATIH collaboration within the period of your engagement with the program?
- c. How have these activities contributed to achieving your organization's objectives and development?
- d. Would this project have gone on without the WATIH partnership? Briefly explain.
- e. Has the engagement with WATIH resulted in any key achievements or successes for your firm/organization? Please explain.

- i. If not, what in your opinion hindered the process? Is there anything WATIH could have done differently or better to facilitate the achievement of results?
 - f. For businesses/firms: What were your sales (in value or volume) prior to working with WATIH? What are they now? How has/will the WATIH collaboration influenced /influence this change?
3. In your opinion, what aspect(s)/ element(s) of WATIH collaboration are contributing to these achievements you just mentioned? (Probe for key elements of the WATIH. i.e., Catalytic business concepts Grants, R&D Grants, COVID-19 Response Grants, AGOA-Technical Assistance)
 - a. Which elements of WATIH assistance are most effective in achieving those results? Why? (Catalytic business concepts Grants, R&D Grants, COVID-19 Response Grants, AGOA-Technical Assistance)
 - b. Are the grants being given out by WATIH set to provide the catalytic effects needed to improve private sector competitiveness in your country/the region? Please explain
4. Are the Research and Development grants being issued by the hub supporting innovative innovation needed to propel businesses in Nigeria? (For USAID/Nigeria only)
 - a. Have you received any grant specifically for Research and Development?
 - b. How are you using these funds? Or What have you invested these funds in?
 - c. What was the rationale for investing the R&D funds in this particular area you just mentioned? In your estimation, what outcomes is the firm expecting from these investments?
 - d. In your assessment, how well is the hub supporting or has the Hub supported your business to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - e. Have you benefited from a COVID-19 Response Grant? If yes, how was the grant used? What are the expected benefits?
5. Is the activity on-track to achieve planned outcomes and impact across all components and overall? Is there an adequate mix of technical assistance for the WATIH grantees?
 - a. Did your business' targets/planned results differ significantly before and after the WATIH grant? Briefly explain the expected results from the grants you received.
 - b. In your estimation, is your firm on track to achieving these results? If not, is there any reason for which the results cannot be achieved as planned?
 - c. What do you think can be done or should be done to enable your firm to achieve these planned results? Is there any assistance in particular you require from WATIH to be able to achieve the expected results?
 - d. Is there a reporting process in place for you to provide updates to WATIH on the grants and other support received? If yes, kindly describe the reporting process.
 - e. How is your business or firm tracking its progress towards achieving the set objectives for which the grant was given?
 - f. Do you have metrics/indicators to gauge the program's success? Please explain.

- g. Do you require additional support from WATIH to better track these results? If yes, what kind of assistance would you like WATIH to offer to enable your firm to better track your progress towards achieving the expected results from the grants received?
- i. Besides the grants, have you received any technical assistance from WATIH? If yes, what was the nature of the technical assistance received?
 - ii. Did you find the technical assistance to be adequate for your business? Briefly explain.
 - iii. Did the technical assistance include elements to enable you to address the key? productivity and profitability constraints that the private sector is often confronted with.
 - iv. Are there any key concepts or elements you found missing from the technical assistance you received? If yes, which ones? How critical or important are these concepts to your firm?
6. Do you have any suggestions on how the technical assistance being provided by WATIH can be improved?
- a. Comparing the technical assistance you received from WATIH to the actual technical assistance needs of your firm, would say that WATIH is sufficiently addressing these needs?
 - b. Have you requested technical assistance from WATIH that was not provided to you? If yes, please specify and indicate WATIH's explanation for not responding to this request.
 - c. In your collaboration with WATIH, does your firm have a say in the content of the Technical Assistance that is provided to you?
 - d. In your opinion, has WATIH employed the appropriate set of skills needed to respond to your firm's technical assistance needs? Briefly explain.
7. What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of planned results and objectives?
- a. What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of planned results and objectives?
 - b. What challenges has your firm encountered in your work with WATIH and how have you mitigated these challenges?
8. To what extent is the activity's work sustainable and how has the activity worked with businesses to ensure that the results of their partnerships will have lasting benefits.
- a. How is WATIH positioning your business for success once the program interventions end?
 - b. Has WATIH provided guidance to you on how to monitor your success and sustainability before the program ends? If yes, please explain.
 - c. Do you have a sustainability plan on how the gains from your engagement with WATIH will be sustained after the intervention ends?
 - d. What percentage of women and youth from your firm are involved in this program? Is your firm's engagement with women and youth sufficient and adequate to ensure that the activity's anticipated results are achieved?
 - e. What are lessons learned regarding your experience with the WATIH program? I

f. What activities do you think should be scaled up or down for WATIH to maximize project results until project completion?

g. What would you recommend for WATIH to adjust in its programming to better meet the needs of businesses in West Africa?

9. Experience working with other donors

a. Has your organization worked with any other partner or donor or NGO within the last five years? (Provide names of specific partners/donors and what support was received)

b. If yes, how would you compare your organization's experience with WATIH and other donors/NGOs with whom you have worked with in the last two years (grant administration, technical assistance, private sector competitiveness)?

c. Is there anything WATIH can learn from these other donors and/or projects?

d. Is there anything that other donors and/or projects can learn from the WATIH collaboration?

Do you have other comment(s) for the evaluation team?

ANNEX C4A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

USAID/Nigeria and USAID/West Africa commissioned this Mid-term Performance evaluation to assess and document the extent to which the USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub is achieving its objectives, and intermediate results; document activity challenges and lessons learned and provide recommendations that will inform the direction of the activity for the remainder of the contract. Specifically, the evaluation will assess the validity of the theory of change, and the sustainability and exit strategy of WATIH.

This interview guide is meant for Financial Institutions to assess the initial objectives, achievements, and expectations at this stage of WATIH program implementation, per the Scope of Work.

DATE OF INTERVIEW (DD-MM-YYYY) |

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE|

RESPONDENT'S POSITION|

INTERVIEWER'S NAME|

LENGTH OF TIME WITH ORGANIZATION|

ROLE AS IT RELATES TO WATIH'S ACTIVITIES|

ORGANIZATION|

COUNTRY|

LOCATION|

1. Grant application and co-creation process:

- a. What are your general impressions about the grant application and co-creation process?
- b. Has WATIH been transparent, responsive/helpful, clearly explained things and given clear guidance during the application and co-creation process?
- c. Have you received any grants from WATIH yet?
- d. In your opinion, have the grants been disbursed in a timely manner? Yes/ No. Briefly explain your response.

2. How effective and timely has the activity been in achieving planned results across the various key focus areas:

- a. How long has your organization been working with WATIH?
- b. What key activities have you participated in or led under the WATIH collaboration within the period of your engagement with the program?
- c. Does this collaboration reflect your regular business, or have you had to make some significant adjustments?
- d. Does the WATIH collaboration enable you to expand or diversify your activities? (Different sectors, borrower groups, regions, financial products, increased borrower amounts)
- e. How have these activities contributed to achieving your organization's objectives and development?

- f. Could your firm achieve these expected results without the WATIH partnership? Briefly explain.
 - g. Has the engagement with WATIH so far resulted in any key achievements or successes for your firm? Please explain.
 - i. If not, what in your opinion hindered the process? Is there anything WATIH could have done differently or better to facilitate the achievement of results?
 - ii. How many financial links have you been able to facilitate so far? What is the value (\$) of these linkages?
3. In your opinion, what aspect(s)/ element(s) of WATIH collaboration are contributing most to these achievements you just mentioned? (COVID-19 Response funds to borrowers, de-risking mechanisms - DFC guarantee, 1st loss capital, specialized Access to Finance related TA) (Does Not Apply to Financial Advisory Firms)
- a. Are the grants being given out by WATIH set to provide the catalytic effects needed to improve access to finance and private sector competitiveness in your country/the region? Please explain
 - b. Is your collaboration with WATIH under the COVID-19 Response Grant? If yes, how is the grant being used? What are the expected benefits
 - c. In your assessment, how well is WATIH supporting or has WATIH supported your business to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic?
4. Is the activity on-track to achieve planned outcomes and impact across all components (increase private sector financing, maintain existing jobs (under COVID grants), and create new jobs, increase exports, increase impact on women and youth, and overall? Is there an adequate mix of technical assistance for the WATIH grantees?
- a. Did your business' targets/planned results differ significantly before and after the WATIH grant? Briefly explain the expected results from the grants you received.
 - b. In your estimation, is your firm on track to achieving these results? If not, is there any reason for which the results cannot be achieved as planned?
 - c. What do you think can be done or should be done to enable your firm to achieve these planned results? Is there any assistance in particular you require from WATIH to be able to achieve the expected results?
 - d. Is there a reporting process in place for you to provide updates to WATIH on the grants and other support received? If yes, kindly describe the reporting process.
 - e. How is your business or firm tracking its progress towards achieving the set objectives for which the grant was given?
 - f. Do you have metrics/indicators to gauge the program's success? Please explain.
 - g. Do you require additional support from WATIH to better track these results? If yes, what kind of assistance would you like WATIH to offer to enable your firm to better track your progress towards achieving the expected results from the grants received?
 - i. Besides the grants, have you received any technical assistance from WATIH? If yes, what was the nature of the technical assistance received?

- ii. Did you find the technical assistance to be adequate for your business? Briefly explain.
 - iii. Did the technical assistance include elements to enable you address key constraints that the Financial Institution is often confronted with. Name some of the constraints and how the TA has been able to help address them.
 - iv. Are there any key concepts or elements you found missing from the technical assistance you received? If yes, which ones? How critical or important are these concepts to your firm?
5. Do you have any suggestions on how the technical assistance being provided by WATIH can be improved?
- a. Comparing the technical assistance you received from WATIH to the actual technical assistance needs of your firm, would say that WATIH is sufficiently addressing these needs?
 - b. Have you requested technical assistance from WATIH that was not provided to you? If yes, please specify and indicate WATIH's explanation for not responding to this request.
 - c. In your collaboration with WATIH, does your firm have a say in the content of the Technical Assistance that is provided to you?
 - d. In your opinion, has WATIH employed the appropriate set of skills and resources needed to respond to your firm's technical assistance needs? Briefly explain. (Team can probe further by asking about the knowledge and skills of WATIH TA staff, responsiveness, understanding of the issues that need TA, adequacy of other TA resources to help tackle issues)
6. What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of planned results and objectives?
- a. What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of planned results and objectives?
 - b. What challenges has your firm encountered in your work with WATIH and how have you mitigated these challenges?
7. To what extent is the activity's work sustainable and how has the activity worked with businesses to ensure that the results of their partnerships will have lasting benefits?
- a. How is WATIH collaboration helping to position your business for success once the program's interventions end?
 - b. Has WATIH provided guidance to you on how to monitor your success and sustainability before the program ends? If yes, please explain.
 - c. Do you have a sustainability plan on how the gains from your engagement with WATIH will be sustained after the intervention ends?
8. What are lessons learned regarding your experience with the WATIH program?
- a. What activities do you think should be scaled up or down for WATIH to maximize project results until project completion?
9. What would you recommend for WATIH to adjust in its programming to better meet the needs of businesses in West Africa?

10. Experience working with other donors

- a. Has your organization worked with any other partner or donor or NGO within the last five years? (Provide names of specific partners/donors and what support was received)
- b. If yes, how would you compare your organization's experience with WATIH and other donors/NGOs with whom you have worked with in the last two years (grant administration, technical assistance, private sector competitiveness)?
- c. Is there anything WATIH can learn from these other donors and/or projects?
- d. Is there anything that other donors and/or projects can learn from the WATIH collaboration?

11. Do you have other comment(s) for the evaluation team?

ANNEX C4B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NON-GRANTEE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS CONTRIBUTING LEVERAGE

USAID/Nigeria and USAID/West Africa commissioned this Mid-term Performance evaluation to assess and document the extent to which the USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub is achieving its objectives, and intermediate results; document activity challenges and lessons learned and provide recommendations that will inform the direction of the activity for the remainder of the contract. Specifically, the evaluation will assess the validity of the theory of change, and the sustainability and exit strategy of WATIH.

This interview guide is meant for Financial Institutions which are not WATIH Grantees, but which contribute complementary fund mobilization leverage to WATIH grantees, to assess the initial objectives, achievements, and expectations at this stage of WATIH program implementation, as per the Scope of Work.

DATE OF INTERVIEW (DD-MM-YYYY) |

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE|

RESPONDENT'S POSITION|

INTERVIEWER'S NAME|

LENGTH OF TIME WITH ORGANIZATION|

ROLE AS IT RELATES TO WATIH'S ACTIVITIES|

ORGANIZATION|

COUNTRY|

LOCATION|

Activities Implemented with WATIH grantees

1. Have you heard of WATIH? What do you know about their activities?
2. Are you aware that your firm has been helping mobilize leverage co-investment funds for one or more WATIH grantees? If yes, please name them.
3. For how many years has your organization been financing these businesses: I. Prior to the WATIH activities?
 - i. During the WATIH activity when did the businesses become WATIH grantees?
4. If your organization has not been mobilizing co-investment for WATIH grantees skip question 10.
5. What is the value of co-investment your firm has mobilized so far for WATIH grantees?
6. What is the value of co-investment your organization has committed going forward for WATIH grantees?
7. Would you have approved financing these WATIH grantees if they had not received the grant? Please explain. What role does the WATIH grant play in your determination of whether to finance a client or not?

8. Does working alongside WATIH with grantees give you confidence they will achieve agreed targets?
9. Do you believe you can fully finance WATIH grantees to help them fulfil their obligations of co-investment under the WATIH collaboration?
10. Are there any factors that may make it harder for you to reach these co-investment targets?
11. Are there any positive measures you can suggest making it easier to ensure agreed targets are met?
12. Would you like to suggest some of your current and prospective SMEs to receive grants under the WATIH activity?
13. Do you have any suggestions on how to initiate or improve a working relationship with WATIH?
14. What service do you think your firm and your grantees may need most from an organization like WATIH? Why?
15. Which seems more important as a service from WATIH? Grants or technical assistance? Or both? Why?
16. What factors do you think are affecting grantees more significantly lately - COVID-19, or insecurity, or the impacts of the war in Ukraine? Any other factors?
17. What more could be done to help grantees cope better with negative impacts or to help overcome them?
18. Would you say the WATIH grants to your borrowers have influenced your “regular” way of doing business? If yes, after WATIH ends, would you continue working in the new way of operating because of the WATIH collaboration? If yes, why? If not, why not?

ANNEX C5: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS

USAID/Nigeria and USAID/West Africa commissioned this Mid-term Performance evaluation to assess and document the extent to which the USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub is achieving its objectives, and intermediate results; document activity challenges and lessons learned and provide recommendations that will inform the direction of the activity for the remainder of the contract. Specifically, an assessment of the validity of the theory of change will be made. The evaluation will also assess the sustainability and exit strategy of WATIH.

This interview guide is meant for government institutions to assess the initial objectives, achievements, and expectations at this stage of WATIH program implementation, as per the Scope of Work.

DATE OF INTERVIEW (DD-MM-YYYY) |

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE|

RESPONDENT'S POSITION|

INTERVIEWER'S NAME|

LENGTH OF TIME WITH ORGANIZATION|

ROLE AS IT RELATES TO WATIH'S ACTIVITIES|

MINISTRY/DEPARTMENT/AGENCY|

COUNTRY|

LOCATION|

1. Activities implemented with WATIH

- a. How long has your organization or institution been working with WATIH?
- b. What is the nature of your collaboration with WATIH? What key activities have you participated in or led with the support of WATIH within the last two years?
- c. Which of your government's development objectives has collaboration with WATIH helped to achieve? How has this collaboration contributed or helped to the achievement of your government's objectives and development?
- d. How does your agency coordinate the national implementation of WATIH activities?
- e. How does your agency coordinate the various activities being implemented by multiple donors you work with?
- f. Are there any partners (trade associations, alliances you are working with that USAID should also be considering working with? If so, which ones and why?
- g. Are there other areas of collaboration WATIH should consider working with you on?
- h. Can you make some suggestions on the nature of partnership USAID can consider working with these partners you just suggested (in f above)?

2. Institutional Work

- a. What are the biggest challenges faced in your country for those wishing to export?

- b. In what ways has your organization worked with WATIH in addressing some of these key challenges? Has WATIH provided any institutional capacity development or technical assistance to deal with these challenges?
- c. What is the value-add of WATIH? What activities would not exist without the WATIH collaboration?
- d. How, if at all, would you recommend WATIH adjust its programming in its next three years?

3. Experience working with other donors

- a. Has your organization worked with any other partner or donor or NGO within the last five years?

(Provide names of specific partners/donors and the type of collaboration)

- b. If yes, how would you compare your organization's experience with WATIH and other donors/NGOs with whom you have worked with in the last five years (grant administration, technical assistance, private sector competitiveness, AGOA related support)?
- c. Is there anything WATIH can learn from these other donors and/or projects?
- d. Is there anything that WATIH can also teach other donors and/or projects?

Do you have other comment(s) for the evaluation team?

ANNEX C6: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SPECIALIZED TRADE BODIES

USAID/Nigeria and USAID/West Africa commissioned this Mid-term Performance evaluation to assess and document the extent to which the USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub is achieving its objectives, and intermediate results; document activity challenges and lessons learned and provide recommendations that will inform the direction of the activity for the remainder of the contract. Specifically, the evaluation will assess the validity of the theory of change, and the sustainability and exit strategy of WATIH.

This interview guide is meant for interviewing specialized organizations dealing with trade, to assess the initial objectives, achievements, and expectations at this stage of WATIH program implementation, as per the Scope of Work.

DATE OF INTERVIEW (DD-MM-YYYY) |
NAME OF INTERVIEWEE|
RESPONDENT'S POSITION|
INTERVIEWER'S NAME|
LENGTH OF TIME WITH ORGANIZATION|
ROLE AS IT RELATES TO WATIH'S ACTIVITIES|
ORGANIZATION|
COUNTRY|
LOCATION|

1. How effective and timely has the activity been in achieving planned results across the various key focus areas:
2. What are your annual trade volumes?
 - a. US?
 - b. Other Global markets?
 - c. West Africa and (d) AfCFTA?
3. Do you know if new jobs have been created as a result of increased cross-border trade by WATIH Grantees?
 - a. Do you know or work with firms/organizations that receive AGOA related support from WATIH? Do you think the AGOA related support to firms/organizations will lead to replicable catalytic impacts?
 - b. What specific support are you aware of?
 - c. What are some of the challenges faced by exporters you are working with in taking advantage of the AGOA scheme?
4. Do you know of cases of cutting- edge innovation propelling firms to take advantage of export markets?
 - a. in general

- b. with WATIH collaboration?
- 5. How are businesses recovering from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - a. Are you aware of WATIH's COVID grants? DO you think they will help businesses recover?
 - b. To what extent is WATIH activities advancing West Africa Regional Trade Objectives? What more could be done?
 - c. To what extent is WATIH making trade easier between US and West Africa?
- 6. Can you suggest new forms of cooperation between institutions like yours, USAID and WATIH aimed at trade promotion?
 - a. Do you see a role for new collaborations?
 - b. What types of partnership would you like to be involved in to make such new forms of cooperation work effectively?
- 7. What are some lessons learned regarding your experience with the WATIH project?
 - a. What activities do you think should be scaled up or down for WATIH to maximize project results until project completion?
 - b. What would you recommend WATIH adjust its programming to better meet the needs of businesses in West Africa?
- 8. Experience working with other donors
 - a. Has your organization worked with any other partner or donor or NGO within the last five years? (Provide names of specific partners/donors and what support was received)
 - b. If yes, how would you compare your organization's experience with WATIH and other donors/NGOs with whom you have worked with in the last five years (grant administration, technical assistance, private sector competitiveness)?
 - c. Is there anything WATIH can learn from these other donors and/or projects?
 - d. Is there anything other donors and/or projects could learn from?
- 9. Do you have other comment(s) for the evaluation team?

ANNEX D: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

West Africa Trade and Investment Hub Mid-Term Performance Evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. My name is xxxxxx and I am a consultant working with the Analytical Support Services and Evaluation for Sustainable Systems Project (ASSESS).

Your participation is voluntary.

WHAT IS THE SURVEY ABOUT AND WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS?

USAID/Nigeria and USAID/West Africa commissioned this Mid-term Performance evaluation to assess and document the extent to which the USAID West Africa Trade and Investment Hub is achieving its objectives, and intermediate results; document activity challenges and lessons learned and provide recommendations that will inform the direction of the activity for the remainder of the contract.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

The performance evaluation seeks to address five main questions and provide recommendations for both USAID and the activity to address any shortcomings in activity implementation or design. We are soliciting your input to assist in responding to these questions:

1. How effective and timely has the activity been in achieving planned results in the key focus areas?
2. Is the activity on-track to achieve planned outcomes and impact across all components and overall?
3. What are the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of planned results and objectives?
4. To what extent is the theory of change still valid? Does it respond to the needs of partner USAID Missions?
5. To what extent is the activity's work sustainable and how has the activity worked with businesses to ensure that the results of their partnerships will have lasting benefits?

Please know that there are no right or wrong answers to the questions. Your opinions and experience are appreciated and valued. At the end of the interview, you will have an opportunity to share anything you think is relevant to the topic that was not covered in the interview and to ask questions. You are free to end the interview at any point should you feel uncomfortable. The interview should take between **90 minutes and two hours**. Your responses are confidential. The Mid-term Evaluation report will be written in a manner such that comments cannot be attributed to a particular person. We might however use short quotations in some sections of the report. Your consent will however be sought before this is done.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO INFORMATION ABOUT ME?

Any information collected will remain completely confidential. To protect your privacy, we will remove any identifying information (called de-identification). Your de-identified data will be analyzed by ASSESS and the findings will be used to inform the development of the Mid-term Performance Evaluation Report. Further, to inform evidence-based decision making, the report might be circulated among key USAID and USG Missions and agencies. Nobody will be able to identify you from the de-identified data we analyze or from any related publications.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION?

If you would like more information about the Mid-term Performance Evaluation, please contact Barbara Arthur (barthur@assess-wa.org).

CONSENT - Please read carefully

1. I consent to participate in this interview session, the details of which have been explained to me.
2. I understand that the purpose of this survey is to produce a Mid-term Performance Report on the activities of the West Africa Trade and Investment Hub.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the interview anytime without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data that I have provided.
4. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded by ASSESS.
5. I understand that the findings of this survey may be circulated amongst key USAID and USG Missions and agencies.

Do You Agree to Participate in the interview session?

Yes []  Kindly append your signature at the bottom of this page

No []  Please inform the evaluation team.

Name:

Organization:

Date:

Location:

ANNEX E: LIST OF GRANTS APPROVED

NO.	GRANTEE	PROJECT TITLE	FUNDING SOURCE	PERCENT OF FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT FROM FUNDING SOURCE	GRANT AMOUNT	CO-INVESTMENT	DATE APPROVED USAID BY	COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION OF
1	WACOT Rice Limited	Argungu Rice Outgrower Expansion	COVID - Nigeria	100%	\$1,474,717	\$1,474,717	\$8,661,420	7-Dec-2020	Nigeria
2	Stichting Cordaid	Creating Jobs in West Africa through Investment in Small to Medium Size Enterprises and Microfinance Institutions	COVID - West Africa	100%	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$26,645,200	8-Dec-2020	Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, and Sierra Leone
3	Koster Keunen West Africa	Establishment of Regional Smallholder Beekeeping to Catalyze Multiple Export Supply Chains	CBC - Prosper Africa	100%	\$1,785,470	\$1,785,470	\$6,385,450	11-Dec-2020	Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Togo, Benin, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire
4	Ethical Apparel Africa	Developing a Model Apparel Manufacturing Factory in Ghana	W-GDP - Ghana	81%	\$1,092,538	\$1,348,812	\$6,738,900	13-Jan-2021	Ghana
5	CrossBoundary Nigeria Limited	CrossBoundary Investment Facilitation Portfolio Approach	COVID - West Africa	50%	\$750,000	\$1,500,000	\$14,000,000	17-Feb-2021	Nigeria, Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso
6	Global Mamas	Livelihood Resiliency in a COVID-19 Marketplace: Women Rising	COVID - Prosper Africa	100%	\$497,112	\$497,112	\$2,023,646	17-Feb-2021	Ghana
7	Agbanga Karite Alaffia SARL (Alaffia Togo)	Alaffia Kernel Project	COVID - Prosper Africa	100%	\$299,000	\$299,000	\$599,489	17-Feb-2021	Togo
8	IITA Business Incubation Platform Limited	Multiplication, Registration, and Marketing of a New High Yielding Soybean Seed Variety in Nigeria	R&D - Nigeria	100%	\$314,847	\$314,847	\$1,078,297	3-Mar-2021	Nigeria
9	REMIF REMS Nigeria Limited	Production and Supply of Clean Paddy Rice in the Wet and Dry Seasons During Covid-19	COVID - Nigeria	100%	\$499,083	\$499,083	\$702,537	3-Mar-2021	Nigeria

NO.	GRANTEE	PROJECT TITLE	FUNDING SOURCE	PERCENT OF FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT FROM FUNDING SOURCE	GRANT AMOUNT	CO-INVESTMENT	DATE APPROVED BY USAID	COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION OF
10	Club Tiossane	Strengthening Producer-to-Consumer Home Delivery Model to Improve Livelihoods of Small Food Producers	COVID - Senegal	100%	\$495,194	\$495,194	\$1,515,564	24-Mar-2021	Senegal
11	Biosene SARL	Boosting wealth creation and resilience for BIOSENE and farmers and processors partners' ecosystem in Senegal's traditional agriculture and natural resources value chains in recovery from COVID-19	COVID - Senegal	100%	\$479,957	\$479,957	\$1,699,306	24-Mar-2021	Senegal
12	8 Degrees North	Enabling Smallholders in West Africa to Access the Growing Organic Palm Oil Market in the United States (Second Submission)	CBC - Prosper Africa	100%	\$1,113,413	\$1,113,413	\$4,542,244	7-Apr-2021	Ghana and Liberia
13	Adefunke Desh Nigeria Limited	Optimizing Grain Cleaning and Storage Capacity to Facilitate the Supply of Quality Grain, Curb Food Insecurity, and Improve Nutrition in Nigeria	COVID - Nigeria	100%	\$1,710,928	\$1,710,928	\$5,713,120	11-Apr-2021	Nigeria
14	Partners for Development	Investment in Delta State Aquaculture (IDSA) Project	COVID - Nigeria	100%	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$1,134,710	28-Apr-2021	Nigeria
15	Thrive Agric LTD	Using Innovative Technologies to Provide Agricultural Services and Products to Smallholder Farmers in Kaduna, Kebbi, and Kano that Strengthen their Yields, Market Linkages, and Incomes	COVID - Nigeria	100%	\$1,896,942	\$1,896,942	\$11,304,615	4-May-2021	Nigeria
16	Burt's Bees Inc	The SheKeeper Project	CBC - Ghana	100%	\$456,100	\$456,100	\$1,587,996	6-May-2021	Ghana

NO.	GRANTEE	PROJECT TITLE	FUNDING SOURCE	PERCENT OF FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT FROM FUNDING SOURCE	GRANT AMOUNT	CO-INVESTMENT	DATE APPROVED BY USAID	COUNTRY OF IMPLEMENTATION
17	PYXERA Global	West Africa Agricultural Resilience Program (WAFARP)	COVID - Nigeria	100%	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$1,229,960	28-Apr-2021	Nigeria
18	Neema Agricole du Faso (NAFASO SA)	Strengthening the Quantity and Quality of White Rice Produced for the Burkinabe and West African Market through Support to Rice Producers, Processors, and Distributors	COVID - Sahel	100%	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$4,374,714	4-May-2021	Burkina Faso
19	OCF Africa Fertilizers Nigeria Limited	Increasing Staple Yields and Incomes in Northwest Nigeria by Establishing a Fertilizer Blending Plant in Kaduna and Providing Specialty Fertilizers and Training to Smallholder Farmers	COVID - Nigeria	100%	\$1,435,903	\$1,435,903	\$11,796,431	2-Jun-2021	Nigeria
20	Red River Foods Ghana Limited	West Africa Cashew Export Development Initiative	CBC - Côte d'Ivoire	33%	\$1,003,895	\$3,011,686	\$46,781,695	2-Jun-2021	Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Togo, Guinea Bissau, and Ghana
21	Entreprise Aïssatou Gaye	Modernizing and Expanding Rice Production in the Ross-Béthio Area of Senegal's St. Louis Region	COVID - Senegal	100%	\$450,842	\$450,842	\$5,330,122	2-Jun-2021	Senegal
22	WARC Ghana Limited	The New African Farmer: Regenerative Agriculture in Ghana	CBC - Ghana	100%	\$1,199,580	\$1,199,580	\$5,983,618	2-Jun-2021	Ghana
23	Premier Seeds Nigeria Limited	Production and Dissemination of Improved Maize, Rice, Soybean, and Cowpea Seeds in Nigeria	R&D - Nigeria	100%	\$394,236	\$394,236	\$616,700	17-Jun-2021	Nigeria
24	Babban Gona Farmer Services Nigeria Limited	Scaling up harvest and post-harvest services for smallholders	COVID - Nigeria	100%	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$15,408,051	17-Jun-2021	Nigeria

NO.	GRANTEE	PROJECT TITLE	FUNDING SOURCE	PERCENT OF FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT FROM FUNDING SOURCE	GRANT AMOUNT	CO-INVESTMENT	DATE APPROVED BY USAID	COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION OF
25	Black Buffalo International LTD	The Alaffia Alliance Project	W-GDP - Ghana	76%	\$552,685	\$724,358	\$1,365,273	16-Jul-2021	Ghana and Togo
26	La Laiterie du Berger	Developing Senegalese Milk Collection Network and LDB's Social Impact Monitoring	CBC - Senegal	100%	\$518,879	\$518,879	\$3,415,478	11-Aug-2021	Senegal
27	Agro Boye Business SUARL	Installation of a new modern agricultural farm in the Thiagnaldé region near Saint Louis, Senegal.	CBC - Senegal	100%	\$1,129,514	\$1,129,514	\$5,169,275	11-Aug-2021	Senegal
28	La Petite Damba	Scale fonio production for EU and US exports	CBC - West Africa	100%	\$258,246	\$258,246	\$747,265	24-Aug-2021	Guinea
29	Tolaro Global	Expanding the Capacity of a Beninese Cashew Processing Plant to Increase Organic Cashew Exports	CBC - Prosper Africa	100%	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$9,262,225	24-Aug-2021	Benin
30	Tomato Jos Farming and Processing Limited	Kangimi Maize/Soybean Smallholder Capacity Expansion	COVID - Nigeria	100%	\$1,202,650	\$1,202,650	\$8,059,686	24-Aug-2021	Nigeria
31	Compagnie Ouest Africaine de Credit-Bail (Locafrique)	Facilitating the Development of Inclusive Financing Mechanisms in Senegal.	COVID - Senegal	100%	\$1,499,317	\$1,499,317	\$22,749,264	11-Aug-2021	Senegal
32	Libassa Ecolodge Inc	Development of Warkolor Forest Ecolodge	CBC - Liberia	100%	\$262,124	\$262,124	\$370,700	24-Aug-2021	Liberia
33	Nature's Bounty Health Products Ltd	Stemming the Economic Shocks of COVID-19 on Smallholder Farmers and Sustaining Jobs in the Fruit Value Chain	COVID - West Africa	100%	\$499,768	\$499,768	\$4,807,231	24-Aug-2021	Nigeria

NO.	GRANTEE	PROJECT TITLE	FUNDING SOURCE	PERCENT OF FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT FROM FUNDING SOURCE	GRANT AMOUNT	CO-INVESTMENT	DATE APPROVED BY USAID	COUNTRY IMPLEMENTATION OF
34	La Ferme Semencière Ainoma	Vegetable Production and Empowerment of Rural Women in the COVID-19 Context	COVID - Sahel	100%	\$461,527	\$461,527	\$477,477	8-Sep-2021	Niger Republic
35	Inpharma Laboratories Pharmaceutical Industry, SA	Construction and equipment's of a Disinfectant Production Unit	COVID - Cabo Verde	100%	\$221,968	\$221,968	\$707,246	15-Sep-2021	Cabo Verde
36	Nimba Ecolodge and Reserve	Development of Nimba Ecolodge & Reserve	CBC - Liberia	100%	\$335,349	\$335,349	\$468,841	15-Sep-2021	Liberia
37	AGROSERV Industrie SA	Strengthening competitiveness of the maize value chain	COVID - Sahel	100%	\$1,499,953	\$1,499,953	\$8,443,485	15-Sep-2021	Burkina Faso
38	Delta SA	Management and Maintenance of Sewerage and Storm Water Networks in Dakar Suburbs	WASH - Senegal	100%	\$999,493	\$999,493	\$1,913,852	15-Sep-2021	Senegal
39	Nalmaco Nigeria Limited	Grain aggregation and processing project	COVID - Nigeria	100%	\$834,063	\$834,063	\$3,950,467	28-Sep-2021	Nigeria
40	African Guarantee Fund – for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Ltd	COVID-19 Guarantee Fund	COVID - West Africa	100%	\$2,500,000	\$2,500,000	\$160,000,000	28-Sep-2021	Burkina Faso, Mali, Nigeria
41	Savannah Fruits Company Limited	Development of Export Shea Butter Supply Chain to Create Large Scale Smallholder Jobs and Sales	W-GDP - Ghana	15%	\$215,886	\$1,473,370	\$9,312,201	5-Oct-2021	Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Mali
42	Injaro Investments Limited (Cabo Verde)	Pro-Impacto SME Value Fund	COVID - Cabo Verde	60%	\$600,000	\$1,000,000	\$12,000,000	28-Sep-2021	Cabo Verde
43	AFEX Commodities	Quality Enhancement Center (QEC)	COVID - Nigeria	100%	\$1,655,224	\$1,655,224	\$29,799,659	5-Oct-2021	Nigeria

NO.	GRANTEE	PROJECT TITLE	FUNDING SOURCE	PERCENT OF FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT FROM FUNDING SOURCE	GRANT AMOUNT	CO-INVESTMENT	DATE APPROVED BY USAID	COUNTRY OF IMPLEMENTATION
	Exchange Limited								
44	Injaro Investments SA (Côte d'Ivoire)	Boost Côte d'Ivoire Agriculture (Boost CIAg)	CBC - Côte d'Ivoire	100%	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$5,351,150	8-Sep-2021	Côte d'Ivoire
45	West Africa Water SA	Production and Commercialization of Safe Drinking Water in Senegal	WASH - Senegal	100%	\$505,029	\$505,029	\$749,546	22-Oct-2021	Senegal
46	Stichting Organic Development Finance	Creating an affordable supply chain finance impact fund for organic food producers in West Africa	COVID - West Africa	100%	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$18,500,000	22-Oct-2021	Benin, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, and Togo
47	Mali Shi SA	Transforming Smallholder Fonio into an Export-Ready Cash Crop through Supply Chain Development.	CBC - West Africa	100%	\$1,985,087	\$1,985,087	\$11,658,240	22-Oct-2021	Mali
48	International Finance Infrastructure Ltd	Farmer Management System (FaMaS)	R&D - Nigeria	100%	\$255,166	\$255,166	\$1,411,760	22-Oct-2021	Nigeria
49	Newpal Nigeria Ltd	Input and input financing services for maize, rice, and soybean	COVID - Nigeria	100%	\$1,751,065	\$1,751,065	\$4,518,929	22-Oct-2021	Nigeria
50	LoftyInc Allied Partners	Project Sparrow	R&D - Nigeria	100%	\$1,440,887	\$1,440,887	\$6,572,011	22-Oct-2021	Nigeria
51	Label d'Or	Construction of a Modern and Certified Shea Butter Processing Factory in Togo	CBC - West Africa	100%	\$513,888	\$513,888	\$2,511,078	9-Nov-2021	Togo
52	EcoCajou	To set a 10 000 Mt/ processing capacity cashew factory in Côte d'Ivoire	CBC - Côte d'Ivoire	100%	\$800,000	\$800,000	\$13,623,473	9-Nov-2021	Côte d'Ivoire

NO.	GRANTEE	PROJECT TITLE	FUNDING SOURCE	PERCENT OF FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT FROM FUNDING SOURCE	GRANT AMOUNT	CO-INVESTMENT	DATE APPROVED BY USAID	COUNTRY OF IMPLEMENTATION
53	La Banque Agricole	Commercialization and installation of solar water pumps	COVID - Senegal	100%	\$1,003,779	\$1,003,779	\$6,019,596	22-Oct-2021	Senegal
54	WorldFish (ICLARM)	Introduce new tilapia breed, test, and disseminate	R&D - Nigeria	100%	\$499,801	\$499,801	\$922,693	9-Nov-2021	Nigeria
55	FreezeLink	Cold Chain Solutions For HEC, Fisheries, Food, and Vaccines	CBC - Ghana	100%	\$767,158	\$767,158	\$6,405,126	18-Nov-2021	Ghana
56	Entreprise SALMA	Modernization of the animal feed production unit	COVID - Sahel	100%	\$439,355	\$439,355	\$496,080	18-Nov-2021	Niger Republic
57	AVI NIGER	Reviving Egg Production	COVID - Sahel	100%	\$558,370	\$558,370	\$614,562	24-Nov-2021	Niger Republic
58	CCPHN	Increase potatoes storage capacity	COVID - Sahel	100%	\$463,158	\$463,158	\$583,200	24-Nov-2021	Niger Republic
59	Maphlix Trust Ghana	Expansion and Processing of Orange Flesh Sweet Potatoes	CBC - Ghana	100%	\$970,023	\$970,023	\$5,933,946	26-Nov-2021	Ghana
60	Amaati Company	Fonio Production Revival in Northern Ghana	CBC - Ghana	100%	\$742,685	\$742,685	\$4,460,778	26-Nov-2021	Ghana
61	Nuts for Growth	Pre-financing shea cooperatives	CBC - Ghana	100%	\$980,000	\$980,000	\$5,868,400	26-Nov-2021	Ghana
62	DTRT	Integrated Fabric Mill and Garment Factory	CBC - Ghana	100%	\$760,000	\$760,000	\$23,124,990	26-Nov-2021	Ghana
63	Coliba	Plastic Waste Processing Facility	CBC - Côte d'Ivoire	100%	\$850,000	\$850,000	\$6,091,080	21-Dec-2021	Côte d'Ivoire
64	Sinergi Burkina	TA for diversified BF-only fund	CBC - Sahel (Burkina Faso)	100%	\$1,004,970	\$1,004,970	\$7,869,930	21-Dec-2021	Burkina Faso
65	Atlantic Cocoa	Increase production of certified organic cocoa beans	CBC - Liberia	100%	\$250,451	\$250,451	\$1,444,975	21-Dec-2021	Liberia

NO.	GRANTEE	PROJECT TITLE	FUNDING SOURCE	PERCENT OF FUNDING SOURCE	AMOUNT FROM FUNDING SOURCE	GRANT AMOUNT	CO-INVESTMENT	DATE APPROVED BY USAID	COUNTRY OF IMPLEMENTATION
66	SUCLA	Tuna processing capacity expansion	COVID - Cabo Verde	52%	\$259,628	\$499,284	\$1,423,884	18-Jan-2022	Cabo Verde
67	Fresk D'Gustinh	Fish processing plant	COVID - West Africa	100%	\$360,437	\$360,437	\$841,472	2-Feb-2022	Cabo Verde
68	Koudjis	Construction of a new animal feed mill in Abidjan	CBC - Côte d'Ivoire	100%	\$799,335	\$799,335	\$14,500,118	2-Feb-2022	Côte d'Ivoire
69	Kiara Rice Mill	Paddy rice production	CBC - Nigeria	100%	\$1,310,947	\$1,310,947	\$11,077,920	2-Feb-2022	Nigeria
70	Zena ExoticFruits	Food and fruits processor and exporter to EU & USA	CBC - Senegal	100%	\$773,679	\$773,679	\$2,827,225	16-Feb-2022	Senegal
71	Agrosolucoes	Vegetable and fruits farming	COVID - West Africa	100%	\$295,381	\$295,381	\$950,452	16-Feb-2022	Cabo Verde
72	Esteval	Expansion of Fruit Processing Capacity	CBC - Senegal	100%	\$535,818	\$535,818	\$2,854,445	24-Mar-2022	Senegal
73	AgroKom	Construction of a New Processing Facility for Soy and Shea	CBC - West Africa	100%	\$695,314	\$695,314	\$4,227,795	24-Mar-2022	Togo
74	PromoFruits	Strengthening local value-added fruit juice processing capacities while creating permanent market access for fruit producers in Benin	CBC - Prosper Africa	100%	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$6,481,472	24-Mar-2022	Benin
75	Traxi Continental Limited	Agricultural Mechanization	CBC - Nigeria	100%	\$308,928	\$308,928	\$791,030	24-Mar-2022	Nigeria
76	ShEquity	ShEquity Women Investment Ecosystem.	COVID - West Africa	100%	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000	\$15,000,000	24-Mar-2022	Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger, and Nigeria
	TOTAL				\$55,067,977	\$71,259,620	\$664,580,764		

ANNEX F: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED

No.	First Name	Last Name	Organization	Job Title	Gender	Type	Country
1	Pégnani	Ouarma	CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BURKINA	Directeur développement International et du Partenariat	M	AGOA Assisted	Burkina Faso
2	Gerard	Amoi Amangoua	APEX CI		M	AGOA Assisted	Côte d'Ivoire
3	Sammy	Acquah	Akosombo Ltd AICL	Manager Int. Marketing	M	AGOA Assisted	Ghana
4	Kwabena	Kyei	Kad Manufacturing	Financial Manager	M	AGOA Assisted	Ghana
5	Linda	Yaa Ampha	Kad Manufacturing	CEO	F	AGOA Assisted	Ghana
6	Oluwayemisi	Oguh	Demamy Concepts Ltd	CEO/Founder	F	AGOA Assisted	Nigeria
7	Ellah Omesi	Samuel	Pleroma Farm	CEO/Founder	F	AGOA Assisted	Nigeria
8	Charles	Sie Kam	CORIS BANK INTER.	Responsable Finance inclusive	M	Financial Institution	Burkina Faso
9	Job	Zongo	SINERGI BURKINA	CEO	M	Financial Institution	Burkina Faso
10	Michael	Oluwagbemi	LoftyInc Capital LLC	Executive Partner	M	Financial Institution	Nigeria
11	Alioune	Seydi	BANQUE AGRICOLE	Financial controller Director/	M	Financial Institution	Senegal
12	Cheikh	Ndiaye	BANQUE AGRICOLE	Commercial and marketing Director	M	Financial Institution	Senegal
13	Lbrahlma	Diakhoumpa	LOCAFRIQUE	Deputy General Director	M	Financial Institution	Senegal
14	Maxwell	Osei-Kusi	GEPA	Market Research Director	M	Gov. Institution	Ghana
15	Agnes Gifty	Adjei-Sam	Ghana GEPA	Director Marketing & promotion	F	Gov. Institution	Ghana
16	Eric	Savado	AGROSERVE SA	MEL Manager	M	Grantee	Burkina Faso
17	Michel	Barro	AGROSERVE SA	Project Manager	M	Grantee	Burkina Faso
18	Siaka	Sanon	AGROSERVE SA	CEO	M	Grantee	Burkina Faso
19	Fogué	Koudouahou	GROUPE WAKA	CEO	M	Grantee	Burkina Faso

No.	First Name	Last Name	Organization	Job Title	Gender	Type	Country
20	Alimata	Sawadogo	KALI'S SERVICES SARL	CEO	F	Grantee	Burkina Faso
21	Abdoulaye	Sawadogo	NAFASO	CEO	M	Grantee	Burkina Faso
22	Samiratou Cyrielle	Traore	SINERGI BURKINA		M	Grantee	Burkina Faso
23	Jael Alves	Monteiro	Confecoes Alves Monteiro	CEO	F	Grantee	Cabo Verde
24	Olga	Yenou	TAFI/ TAFISSA	CEO	F	Grantee	Cote d'Ivoire
25	Soumaila	Diakite	CLARAMOND AG	Regional manager	M	Grantee	Côte d'Ivoire
26	Nasser	N'dri	ECOCAJOU		M	Grantee	Côte d'Ivoire
27	Innocent	Monnet	ECOCAJOU	Deputy General Director	M	Grantee	Côte d'Ivoire
28	Tahirou	Sanogo	FOODS CO	CEO	M	Grantee	Côte d'Ivoire
29	Yves	Kamaclo	OIKO CREDIT	Regional manager	M	Grantee	Côte d'Ivoire
30	David	Whitworth	8 degrees	Director Sourcing & Impact	M	Grantee	Ghana
31	Shannon	Hess	Burt Bees	Director – Sourcing	F	Grantee	Ghana
32	Keren	Pybus	Ethical Apparel Africa	CEO& CO-founder	F	Grantee	Ghana
33	Paloma	Schackert	Ethical Apparel Africa	COO	F	Grantee	Ghana
34	Mallory	Savisaar	Global Mamas	CEO	F	Grantee	Ghana
35	Barbara	Gbologah-Quaye	Pyxera		F	Grantee	Ghana
36	David	Lederer	Red River Foods Ghana Limited	Project Manager	M	Grantee	Ghana
37	Cathrin	Schriever	WARC Ghana Limited		F	Grantee	Ghana
38	Joseph	Wamah	Ecolodge	Project Cordinator	M	Grantee	Liberia
39	Adeoluwa	Adeshola	Adfunke Desh Nigeria	CEO	M	Grantee	Nigeria
40	Nathaniel	Etim	AFEX Commodities Exchange	Fund Manager	F	Grantee	Nigeria

No.	First Name	Last Name	Organization	Job Title	Gender	Type	Country
41	Farhat Kunmi	Olayiwola	AFEX Commodities Exchange.		F	Grantee	Nigeria
42	Nneka	Chime	CrossBoundary	Principal	F	Grantee	Nigeria
43	Aramide	Seriki	IITA BIP	Outgrower Unit (MEL)	M	Grantee	Nigeria
44	Victoria	Ayeni	IITA BIP	Outgrower Manager	F	Grantee	Nigeria
45	Akinsiku	Damilola	ITTA-BIP	Marketing Manager	F	Grantee	Nigeria
46	Femi	Oluwagbemi	LoftyInc Capital LLC	Business Development	M	Grantee	Nigeria
47	Abubakar	Aliyu	Nalmaco Nigeria Limited	Director Operations	M	Grantee	Nigeria
48	Affiong	Williams	Nature's Bounty	CEO	F	Grantee	Nigeria
49	Victor	Igbowe	Newpal Nigeria	Associate	M	Grantee	Nigeria
50	Paul	Anavhe	Newpal Nigeria Limited (Newpal)	Deputy Director	M	Grantee	Nigeria
51	John	Samuel	Newpal Nigeria Ltd	CEO/Founder	M	Grantee	Nigeria
52	Oluwatoba	Asana	OCP Africa Fertilizers	Head Production and Technical	M	Grantee	Nigeria
53	Kelechi	Nnana	Partner for Development	MEL Manager	M	Grantee	Nigeria
54	Ediri Iragua	Kingsley	Partners Development	Country Manager	M	Grantee	Nigeria
55	Samsoni	Afolabi	Premier Seed	CEO	M	Grantee	Nigeria
56	Samuel	Amuako	PYXERA Global	MEL	M	Grantee	Nigeria
57	Ann	Oden	PYXERA Global	Chief of Party	F	Grantee	Nigeria
58	<u>Monjola</u>	Bamiteko	Reelfruit	Operations	F	Grantee	Nigeria
59	Geraldine	Ugwuonah	REMIF REMS	CEO	F	Grantee	Nigeria
60	Ayodeji	Arikawe	Thrive Agric		M	Grantee	Nigeria
61	Art	Cardoso	Tomato Jos	Chief Production Officer	M	Grantee	Nigeria

No.	First Name	Last Name	Organization	Job Title	Gender	Type	Country
62	Esson	Akola	Tomato Jos		M	Grantee	Nigeria
63	Zaman	Tumi	Tomato Jos	Monitoring and evaluation	M	Grantee	Nigeria
64	Habiba	Sulaiman	WACOT Rice	Business Development	F	Grantee	Nigeria
65	Mamadou	Boye	Agro Boye	Director General	M	Grantee	Senegal
66	Serigne Aliou	Diop	ASPEX SN	Export Director/Facilitation	M	Grantee	Senegal
67	Salamba	Diene	BIOSENE	CEO	F	Grantee	Senegal
68	Nome	Diaw	BIOSENE		M	Grantee	Senegal
69	Arona	Diaw	LA LAITERIE DU BERGER		M	Grantee	Senegal
70	Amadou	Gueye	WEST AFRICA WATER	Director General	M	Grantee	Senegal
71	Ouleye	Coumbaba	WEST AFRICA WATER SA	Responsable suivi évaluation du projet WATIH	F	Grantee	Senegal
72	Afua	Eshun	Borderless Alliance	Programs Advisor	F	Trade Body	Ghana
73	Justin	Bayili	Borderless Alliance	Executive Secretary	M	Trade Body	Ghana
74	Julius Bradford	Lampitey	Ghana Chamber CCI		M	Trade Body	Ghana
75	Anne Judith	Bisso	USAID/COTE D'IVOIRE	Private Sector Officer	F	USAID	Côte d'Ivoire
76	Legbre Charles	Pythagore Guigui	USAID/COTE D'IVOIRE	Private Sector and Trade	M	USAID	Côte d'Ivoire
77	Plato	Heronimus	USAID/Ghana		M	USAID	Ghana
78	James	Lykos	USAID/Ghana		M	USAID	Ghana
79	Kafui	Djonou	USAID/West Africa		F	USAID	Ghana
80	Michael	Nicholson	USAID/West Africa		M	USAID	Ghana
81	Evelyn	Ayivor	USAID/Nigeria	COR	F	USAID	Nigeria
82	Oladele	Kolade	USAID/Nigeria	M&E	M	USAID	Nigeria

No.	First Name	Last Name	Organization	Job Title	Gender	Type	Country
83	Olagoke	Akinlabi	USAID/Nigeria	M&E	M	USAID	Nigeria
84	Said	M'boub	USAID/SRO	USAID Sahel Regional Office	M	USAID	Senegal
85	William	Bradley	USAID/Senegal	Private Enterprise Officer	M	USAID	Senegal
86	Constant	Zoh	WATH	Grant Team	M	WATIH	Côte d'Ivoire
87	Nadia Carole	Bouagnon	WATIH	Grant Team	F	WATIH	Côte d'Ivoire
88	N'bondanna	Ganon	WATIH	MEL Team	M	WATIH	Côte d'Ivoire
89	Regis	Ouattara	WATIH	PPP Manager	M	WATIH	Côte d'Ivoire
90	Abdul-Salam	Rahaman	WATIH	MEL Team	M	WATIH	Ghana
91	Charles	Polet	WATIH		M	WATIH	Ghana
92	Mevayera	Umokoro	WATH		M	WATIH	Nigeria
93	Robin	Wheeler	WATH	Chief of Party	M	WATIH	Nigeria
94	Komenan Emilie	Sandrine	WATHI	MEL and Gender	F	WATIH	Nigeria
95	Emmanual	Aziano	WATIH	R and D Manager	M	WATIH	Nigeria
96	Hussaini	Dahiru	WATIH	Grant officer	M	WATIH	Nigeria
97	Larry	C. Moore	WATIH	PPP Manager/Covid19 grant	M	WATIH	Nigeria
98	Precious	Okafor	WATIH	Grants Manager	F	WATIH	Nigeria
99	Aminata	Mbaye	WATIH		F	WATIH	Senegal
100	Bamba	Fall	WATIH		M	WATIH	Senegal
101	Etienne	Chia-Ah	WATIH		M	WATIH	Senegal
102	Lotfi	Kourdali	WATIH		M	WATIH	Senegal

ANNEX G: SUMMARY OF RESULTS TO DATE

The Trade Hub is reporting progress against the targets approved in the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Plan. At the end of this reporting period, WATIH achieved 50 percent or above of the year 3 annual targets for 11 of the 23 indicators and on track to achieve the others within Q3 and Q4 of the fiscal year. Most of those below 50 percent are linked to agricultural seasonality whose results are expected in the third and fourth quarter of the fiscal year. The mission funding source-level indicators segregation are in an annexed Excel spreadsheet submitted along with this report.

TRADE HUB INDICATORS	BASELINE FY20	LOA TARGET	FY20 ACHIEVE MENT	FY21 ACHIEVEME NT	FISCAL YEAR 2022							LOA PERFORMANCE ACHIEVED TO THE END OF REPORTING PERIOD		
					ANNUAL TARGET	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL	ANNUAL PERCENT ACHIEVED	NUMBER	LOA PERCENT ACHIEVED	ON TARGET Y/N
Custom 1: Value of exports in targeted agricultural and non-agricultural commodities from supported firms/associations/entities	0	\$300,000,000	\$350,814	\$6,388,139	\$105,000,000	\$2,205,699	\$9,613,020			\$11,818,719	11.3 %	\$18,557,672	6.2 %	Y
EG.3.1-14: Value of new USG commitments and private sector investment leveraged by the USG to support food security and nutrition	0	\$421,600,000	0	\$64,886,599	\$126,480,000	\$30,621,960	\$83,616,012			\$114,237,972	90.3 %	\$179,124,571	42.5 %	Y
Custom 2: Value of new USG commitments and private sector investment leveraged by the USG to support non-agricultural commodities	0	\$74,400,000	0	\$9,913,717	\$22,320,000	\$6,168,039	\$44,718,771			\$50,886,810	228.0 %	\$60,800,527	81.7 %	Y
Custom 3: Number of new jobs created/sustained by assisted firms/associations/entities as a result of USG assistance	0	60,000	0	7,278	18,000	1,084	2,956			4,040	22.4 %	11,318	18.9 %	Y
EG.3.2-26: Value of annual sales of producers and firms receiving USG assistance	Baseline is Crop/Location Specific	\$375,000,000	\$350,813	\$70,875,829	\$131,250,000	\$3,090,172	\$2,819,496			\$5,909,668	4.5 %	\$77,136,311	20.6 %	Y
GNDR-2: Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources	0	50 %	0 %	31 %	40 %	33 %	23 %			23 %	57.5 %	31 %	62 %	Y
GNDR-8: Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment	0	500	0	192	169	109	53			162	95.9 %	354	70.8 %	Y

TRADE HUB INDICATORS	BASELINE FY20	LOA TARGET	FY20 ACHIEVE MENT	FY21 ACHIEVEME NT	FISCAL YEAR 2022							LOA PERFORMANCE ACHIEVED TO THE END OF REPORTING PERIOD		
					ANNUAL TARGET	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL	ANNUAL PERCENT ACHIEVED	NUMBER	LOA PERCENT ACHIEVED	ON TARGET Y/N
through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations														
YOUTH-3: Percentage of participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources who are youth (15-29)	0	50 %	0 %	44 %	35 %	16 %	27 %			27 %	77 %	44 %	88 %	Y
EG.3.2-7: Number of technologies, practices, and approaches under various phases of research, development, and uptake as a result of USG assistance	0	25	0	0	10	0	6			6	60 %	6	24 %	Y
EG.3-2: Number of individuals participating in USG food security programs	0	475,000	65	93,137	222,500	11,521	11,619			23,140	10.4 %	116,342	24.5 %	Y
Sub Purpose 1 - Increased productivity and profitability of farmers and firms														
EG.3-10,-11,-12: Yield of targeted agricultural commodities among program participants	Rice – 2.9 Maize -2.1 Soybean –0.9 Cowpea –1	50% above BL	0%	Rice – 3.3 Maize – 3.0 Soybean –TBD Cowpea - TBD	25% above BL	TBD	TBD			TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	Y
Custom 4: Profitability of non-agricultural commodities as a result of the Trade Hub assistance ⁵⁶	Baseline is Crop/Grantee Specific	50% above BL	0%	NA	25% above BL	TBD	TBD			TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	Y
EG.3.2-24: Number of individuals in the agriculture system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance	Baseline is Crop/Location Specific	427,500	0	76,005	200,250	0	0			0	0 %	76,005	18 %	Y
EG.3.2-25: Number of hectares under improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance	Baseline is Crop/Location Specific	403,750	0	74,377	189,125	0.35	0.0			0.35	0 %	74,377.35	18 %	Y
Sub Purpose 2 - Increased market linkages and smallholder farmer participation														

TRADE HUB INDICATORS	BASELINE FY20	LOA TARGET	FY20 ACHIEVE MENT	FY21 ACHIEVEME NT	FISCAL YEAR 2022							LOA PERFORMANCE ACHIEVED TO THE END OF REPORTING PERIOD		
					ANNUAL TARGET	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL	ANNUAL PERCENT ACHIEVED	NUMBER	LOA PERCENT ACHIEVED	ON TARGET Y/N
Custom 5: Number of buyer/seller linkages established in targeted agricultural/non-agricultural sector as a result of USG assistance	0	75	8	29	25	13	1			14	56.0 %	51	68 %	Y
EG.2.2-1: Number of firms receiving USG-funded technical assistance to export	0	100	42	45	31	19	6			25	80.6 %	112	112 %	Y
EG.2.2-2 Number of firms receiving USG assistance that have obtained certification with (an) international quality control institution(s) in meeting minimum product standard	0	35	0	0	9	0	2			2	22 %	2	6 %	Y
CBLD-9 Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance.	0	90 %	0 %	0 %	60 %	NA	100 %			100 %	167 %	100 %	111 %	Y
Sub Purpose 3 - Increased access to finance and investment														
EG.3.2-27: Value of agriculture-related financing accessed as a result of USG assistance	0	\$351,135,000	0	\$28,718,963	\$165,240,000	\$7,953,812	\$61,393,748			\$69,347,560	42.0 %	\$98,066,523	27.9 %	Y
Custom 6: Value of non-agriculture-related financing accessed as a result of USG assistance	0	\$61,965,000	\$-	\$2,474,524	\$29,160,000	\$1,429,909	\$45,718,77			\$47,148,680	161.7 %	\$49,623,204	80.1 %	Y
EG 4.2-1: Total number of clients benefiting from financial services provided through USG-assisted financial intermediaries, including non-financial institutions or actors	0	90,000	0	80,422	30,000	109	9,499			9,608	32.0 %	90,030	100.0 %	Y
HL.8.4-1 Value of new funding mobilized to the water and sanitation sectors as a result of USG assistance	0	\$4,500,000	0	0	\$1,500,000	\$48,377	\$922,324			\$970,701	65 %	\$970,701	21.6 %	Y

ANNEX H: COUNTRY PROFILES

BENIN

PromoFruit, was one of the beneficiaries under the USAID-sponsored WATIH initiative in Benin. PromoFruit received a Catalytic Business Concept grant of US \$2,000,000 in March 2022, with a co-investment amount of US \$6,481,472. The award, which serves to strengthen the grantee's fruit juice processing capacity in Benin, was provided through the Prosper Africa Fund. The co-investment leverage undertaken by the grantee represented a leverage ratio of 1:3.3 (somewhat more modest than in other larger countries in the region) and is indicative, among other things, of the modest industrial and investment profile of Benin. The project, situated in Southern Benin, is just commencing. The current insecurity in Northern Benin might affect the production and supply of fruits, the feedstock for PromoFruit.

Benin also benefited from two other CBC projects (Tolaro Global and Red River). Tolaro Global is based in Benin and also operates in Togo. Red River is based in Cote D'Ivoire, but operates in several countries, including Benin. Benin also benefited from two COVID-19 initiatives from Stichting Organic Development Finance, (which was a multi-country initiative) and ShEquity (which also impacted on several countries). (See the list of 76 projects covered by the Evaluation Report set out in Annex E).

Benin has a trade corridor leading up into the Sahel region and a close trading partner with neighboring Nigeria. Its capital, Cotonou, is on the main regional intra-regional trade route in West Africa, being the coastal road from Abidjan to Lagos via Accra, Lomé, and Cotonou. The processed fruit juice of PromoFruit will undoubtedly contribute to intra-regional trade in the Sahel and Nigerian and global markets, especially in the United States and Europe, and underline WATIH's relevance to the economic transformation aspirations of Benin and the ECOWAS region.

BURKINA FASO

The WATIH program does not have an in-country presence in Burkina Faso but operates and follows up on activities from Côte d'Ivoire. Some stakeholders pointed out that this situation affected communications, with some potential grantees claiming not to be aware that funds were exhausted and there were no grants available. Some local firms opined that Burkina Faso merited an allocation bigger than was awarded to grantees. Those were remarks of firms that had already mobilized large, blended finance amounts with support from other donors. However, the ET understands that the proportion of budget allocation per country depends on a mix of factors, such as the value of buy-in by the USAID Mission, the priorities of funding Missions versus types of applications received per country, and the quality of applications received. Managers of the WATIH program awarded three local grants with a total value of US \$3,504,923, representing 3.7 percent of the budgetary resources of WATIH. The three Burkinabe grantees mobilized a total co-investment of \$20,688,129. This implies that every US \$1 invested by WATIH leveraged an additional investment of \$6, representing a leveraging ratio of approximately 1:6.

According to the grantees interviewed, the co-creation process was long and complicated. The WATIH managers provided letters of intent to grantees to facilitate their engagement with financial institutions for funding as co-investment. The Team noted that some banks, especially Coris Bank, were enthusiastic about supporting agri-business projects alongside donors. Co-

financing arrangements with other donors, including the British DFID and financing agencies backed by France and Nordic countries, were proactively encouraged by WATIH managers. Coris Bank, a private financing partner for several agri-business firms (including NAFASO), was keen to have a strong business relationship with WATIH to develop more co-financing opportunities down the track. Although Coris Bank was eligible to apply for a WATIH grant for itself, it did not do so.

Two WATIH grantees (Agroserve and NAFASO) have experience in the mobilization of donor-backed finance. Sinergi BF, a local financing institution, benefited from a catalytic grant. Some unsuccessful grant applicants (e.g., GROUPE WAKA) questioned the integrity of WATIH's activity model and its grant application process. In contrast, others complained about not receiving feedback on their application status (e.g., KALI'S).

Six non-local grantees implementing activities in several countries, including Burkina Faso, received grants amounting to US \$12,497,156 and a gross co-investment of US \$273,312,345. That implies that every US \$1 invested by the USAID under the WATIH initiative attracted an additional investment of US \$21.9, representing a leveraging ratio of 1:21.9. The six non-local beneficiaries of WATIH grants included Stichting Cordaid, Koster Keunen, Cross Boundary, Red River Foods, Africa Guarantee Fund, and Stichting Organic Development Finance. Recently, another grantee, ShEquity, was added to this list. Prosper Africa covered 67 percent of one transaction involving Red River Foods Ghana Ltd worth US \$2,007,791 and African Guarantee Fund's Covid-19 fund represents 58.5 percent of the co-investment total amount of non-local grantees active in Burkina Faso.

Conservatism in rural Burkina Faso affects women's land ownership. Insecurity prompted the restructuring of some WATIH activities where rural insecurity adversely affected rural supply chains, especially in areas closer to the country's borders with Mali and Niger. The military coup and the associated political instability had little or no material impact on private sector activities and development prospects. Besides, the security situation in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso remained good, but some international organizations relocated to Niamey due to the recent rise in political instability. Despite the insecurity and political instability, the pace of private sector activity remains firm and unaffected by security concerns.

As regards AGOA, the Chamber of Commerce expressed interest in working closely with WATIH by serving as the representative of WATIH in the absence of a WATIH Office in Burkina Faso. The concern with aid under the AGOA program is the risk of cancellation following an adverse annual assessment of the beneficiary country, anytime by the US government. The activities in Burkina Faso highlight grantees' experience working with donor partners. The Team noted that despite pockets of insecurity and political instability, WATIH grant-supported projects in Burkina performed better than projects in other countries in the Sahel and the West African region.

THE REPUBLIC OF CABO VERDE

Five private sector grants were approved under the WATIH program in the Republic of Cabo Verde, with a total value of US \$2,377,070 matched by a cumulative co-investment amount of US \$15,923,054. The five grants account for 2.5 percent of the total WATIH grant pipeline for West

Africa in support of an entire local population of 566,878.⁵⁷ Although the population of the Republic of Cabo Verde is small, the country has a weak economy and significant environmental challenges and is very isolated from the rest of West Africa. Despite these challenges, the country has logistical and trade advantages to export to the US (one regular freighter per month to Massachusetts plus three direct air flights to Boston per week).

The five grantee companies are (i) Agrosolucoes, which is extending its agricultural infrastructure; (ii) Fresk D’Gustinh, a fishmonger who has acquired a new fishing boat; (iii) Injaro Investments Ltd (Cape Verde), also registered as Injaro Procapital, that finances agricultural exporters; (iv) Inpharma Laboratories Pharmaceuticals SA, which is producing a new disinfectant, and (v) SUCLA, a Tuna processing company, which is also extending its processing plant. The five grants approved between September 2021 and February 2022 were part of the WATIH plan to commit the remainder of available COVID-19 and CBC funds. The US Embassy and its Economic and Commercial staff played a role in putting these activities together.

Given the socio-economic situation in the Republic of Cabo Verde, some recommendations for action may be necessary to sustain existing projects and others that may come on stream during the remaining life of the WATIH.

CÔTE D’IVOIRE

The portfolio of WATIH projects in Côte d’Ivoire is diverse and includes plastic waste, animal feed, cashew nuts, cocoa, and fruit juice. The USAID encouraged WATIH to target more promising opportunities by supporting processing and industrialization in line with the government of Côte d’Ivoire’s economic transformation policy and looking for strategic opportunities not necessarily in predefined sectors. The projects focused on exports, investment, and jobs. Concerning jobs, for instance, the grantee projects aimed for an average of 500 new industrial and related jobs per project. The WATIH program had made satisfactory progress in Côte d’Ivoire based on strong foundations with solid achievements in terms of contribution to job creation and exports. The strategic intents for export development were also innovative, focusing on non-traditional export commodities rather than coffee and cocoa, the traditional export commodities.

As of March 2022, three CBC grants were approved for the local private sector in Côte d’Ivoire with a total grant value of US \$3,449,335 and co-investments amounting to \$39,565,821. This shows a high leverage ratio of 1:11.5, consistent with the country’s well-developed financial system and private sector actors with the capacity to attract investment from domestic and foreign sources. The grants were awarded to Coliba, EcoCajou, and Injaro Investments SA (Côte d’Ivoire). Two grant applications for US \$192,000 and US \$1,000,000 in favor of TAFI and Clarmondial, respectively, were close to approval at the time of this report.

Coliba is a waste management company that has secured co-investment from Dakar Network Angels and GreenTec Capital Partners of Germany. The GSMA Ecosystem Accelerator is sponsored and financed by British Aid, Australian Aid, and German Cooperation (BMZ). Clarmondial is an investment advisory organization based in Switzerland with links to East, West, and Southern Africa. Clarmondial is in the process of setting up a Food Securities Fund, an

⁵⁷ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/cape-verde-population>

innovative blended finance fund aimed at agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa. Nafisa is a cocoa processing company.

The WATIH team in Côte d'Ivoire had a good working relationship with financial institutions, facilitated by a regional office in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. OIKOS Bank, a Danish co-operative bank offering retail and private banking services, has an international wing involved in fair trade cocoa and chocolate. However, neither the WATIH nor AGOA program is well-known in Côte d'Ivoire. The private sector firms confirmed that initial contacts with WATIH had been slow and bureaucratic; WATIH subsequently fine-tuned and simplified its processes for evaluating grant applications and is now on track. Managers of WATIH run part of their regional program management and the Cote d'Ivoire program management from Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. Records show that WATIH's grantee projects benefited from dedicated support from WATIH and USAID.

GHANA

Ghana hosts two important USAID missions, the West Africa Regional Mission, and the bilateral Ghana Country Mission, with interest in WATIH activities. The country also hosts the headquarters of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is potentially advantageous to WATIH, depending on how far grantees adopt export targets and the extent to which WATIH engages its strategy with AGOA.

The grantee pipeline in Ghana represents 14 percent of total approved grants within the entire WATIH portfolio and received US \$9,559,241 as grants and US \$68,034,917 as co-investment, representing a financial leverage ratio of 1:7.11 achieved by WATIH in Ghana. The high leverage ratio indicates that the selected projects are commercially and financially viable and buoyed by co-investment partnerships. There are 13 grantee projects at the time of the review, of which 11 were approved between January and November 2021. Of the 13 grantees, 11 are Ghana-based, and two are outside Ghana but partly operating in Ghana. The grantees include Amati, Black Buffaloes International, Burt's Bees Inc, DTRT, 8 Degrees North, Ethical Apparel Africa, FreezeLink, Global Mamas, Nuts for Growth, Maphlix Trust Ghana, Savannah Fruits Company, ShEquity, and WARC Ghana Ltd.

Despite a slow start and delays during the co-creation in the application process and initial grant disbursement, WATIH managed to put activities back on track with a new team. Following the strengthening of the PPP team, commendable strides began to emerge. For example, Ethical Apparel Africa, a garment manufacturer, and exporter, has already generated US \$2 million in exports, leveraged US \$2.29 million in private capital, and created 352 jobs - 77 percent of which are women, while training 585 workers and having shared operational practices with two other local apparel manufacturers.⁵⁸

The project, in general, is on track to achieve catalytic effects for businesses despite the implementation challenges observed during start-up.

LIBERIA

Liberia has three ongoing WATIH projects supported by a total grant of US \$847,924 and matching co-investments worth US \$2,284,516. The first project to receive an award of US \$262,124 was Libassa Ecolodge Inc. in August 2021. The award is to support the development of

⁵⁸ Source from annual report: West Africa Trade Investment Hub Annual Report Year 2 Oct 29, 2021, Resubmitted Dec 3, 2021, Clean Copy

Warkolor Forest Ecolodge to create sustainable jobs in the tourism sector. In September 2021, the Nimba Ecolodge and Reserve also received a grant of US \$335,000 to support the development of an eco-friendly tourism facility in the East Nimba Nature Reserve to help protect its forest and plants from illegal activities. The management of this project was satisfied with the grant application and co-creation process, as well as training in MEL and reporting and gender issues, to guarantee the successful implementation of the project.

Despite the training and assistance received from WATIH, Nimba Ecolodge is facing a delay in signing an MoU with the Forest Development Authority, which could influence the results if not resolved as soon as possible. As a mitigating measure, the Nimba Ecolodge informed WATIH and USAID/Liberia of the problem. USAID/Liberia supported the grantee to secure the MOU with WATIH managers proactively engaging the Forest Development Authority to resolve this challenge.

The third business, Atlantic Cocoa, was awarded a US \$250,451 grant to increase the production of certified organic cocoa beans in December 2021. Atlantic cocoa is on track to increase its value of exports by US \$600,000 by the close of 2022. The three businesses all received CBC grants. Project implementation is lagging for all three projects, but they receive continued technical support from WATIH.

NIGER

Niger is one of the countries where WATIH does not have a physical presence. The implementation of WATIH programs in Niger is managed by the Abidjan-based sub-regional office of the USAID in Côte d'Ivoire. The scarcity of skilled labor and the limited supply of credit due to undercapitalized and inefficient financial institutions and non-existent financial markets are constraints to business. For the latter reason, WATIH provided letters of intent to boost the involvement of the financial sector in agri-business and SME financing.

As in Burkina Faso and Niger, conservatism in the rural areas makes it difficult for international development agencies to intervene in gender-related issues, such as land ownership and management of household budgets where women have started activities generating revenue. Insecurity has grown in areas adjacent to Nigeria and other frontier zones. Climate change has had some negative effects, with variations in rainfall with dire consequences for agricultural production. These factors have affected the growth of trade.

All WATIH grants for Niger were approved and financed by the COVID-19 Response Facility. Four grants were given to the local private sector, with a total value of US \$1,922,410 and a co-investment total of US \$2,171,319. The resulting co-investment leverage ratio was low (1:1.3). WATIH accepts low leverage rates for COVID-19-related projects but not CBC. The grants awarded to AVI Niger, CCPHN, Enterprise Salma, and La Ferme Semenciere Ainoma were all in response to challenges faced by local businesses. AVI Niger is a poultry project likely to face problems concerning avian flu in Niger. In light of the weakness of the Niger economy and economic and civic culture, some recommendations to address the challenges in the operating environment are necessary.

NIGERIA

Nigeria hosts WATIH's Headquarters with the largest staff, made of the senior management, PPP Grants, MEL, and the Communication teams. Nigeria has 26 percent of the grantee pipeline in the

WATIH program, with a total grant value of US \$18,985,155 and co-investment of US \$129,557,226. Nigeria has 20 projects under the CBC, COVID-19, and R&D schemes.

Two grantees (IITA Business Incubation Platform Limited and Newpal Nigeria) are yet to achieve their first milestone. Despite the slow start, there is support for program design focusing on trade and investment via catalytic grants to private sector firms with mobilization of co-investment. The innovation to let the private sector be in the driving seat and lead the grant and co-investment co-creation process has been welcomed by all projects interviewed.

R&D projects specific to Nigeria are innovative. However, they must be implemented with a commercial approach for viability and sustainability. For example, improved agricultural practices to produce improved seeds could be beneficial to raising agricultural production. These WATIH activities are linked to the Feed the Future[1] initiative.

AGOA promotion in Nigeria needs to be strengthened and focus more on ensuring that technical help reaches grantees who already have export proposals.

WATIH has created an opportunity to promote gender issues in Northern zones where rural cultural change is slow, despite rapid urban changes. However, the deteriorating security situation, especially in northern Nigeria, high inflation, and the near collapse of the value of the Naira present difficulties to many companies, with many transactions now being dollarized. Given the deterioration in security and the macroeconomic challenges facing the country, there is the need for some recommendations to help deal with the issues arising.

SENEGAL

Like Ghana, Senegal hosts a USAID Sahel Regional Office and a Senegal Bilateral Office. The Senegal WATIH bilateral program is both diverse and dynamic and duly affected by the slow start-up of the program at the regional level.

The portfolio of eleven grantee projects covers diverse sectors, including agriculture, apparel, health, and water and sanitation. The Trade Hub team is highly motivated, and from the Senegal perspective, their efforts have been both timely and effective. The Senegal WATIH and USAID staff built a formidable team spirit and worked to reach a consensus on how to engage local firms. USAID/Senegal believes WATIH got this right and is pleased with the program results.

Although the WATIH project co-creation process was initially slow, program management systems were strengthened by a dedicated WATIH team, and the results are self-evident in the field. During the interviews in Senegal, the Evaluation Team noticed that further to the ties between WATIH and the private sector grantees, there was also a good working relationship between the grantees and USAID.

The grants allocated in Senegal were a mix of CBC and COVID-19. Eleven grant awards benefited private sector firms, with the grant total amounting to US \$18,286,597 and a total co-investment leverage amount of US \$54,243,673. These aggregate figures produced an overall co-investment leverage of 1:3, lower than Ghana's but indicative of a broader range of diverse types of projects, not all requiring co-investment. The eleven grantees included: Agro Boye Business, Banque Agricole, Biosene, Club Tiossane, Entreprise Assitou Gaye, Estevel, Delta SA, La Laiterie du Berger, Locafrique, West Africa Water and Zena ExoticFruits. These grantees operate in textiles and clothing, public water supply, health, and various aspects of agriculture, including fruits and dairy, making a diverse project portfolio. The portfolio also included financial sector actors,

including Banque Agricole and Locafrique. The former was a bit critical of WATIH procedures, almost arguing for a twin-track system where more advanced partners would benefit from quicker or more streamlined processes

TOGO

The WATIH program has no operational office in Togo. Thus, WATIH activities in Togo are managed by the WATIH and USAID Teams based in the Ghanaian and Nigerian offices of the USAID. The program has so far awarded a total grant of US \$2,508,202 from the Prosper Africa and the West Africa funds.

Tolaro Global received a grant of US \$1 million to expand the capacity of its Cashew Processing Plant to produce value-added organic cashew products for exports, followed by AgroKom with a US \$695,314 grant award (in March 2022) for the construction of a new processing facility for Soy and Shea. Label d'Or received the third biggest grant of US \$513,888 to facilitate the construction of a modern and certified Shea Butter Processing Factory. Finally, on the back of a grant award of \$299,000, Agbanga Karite Alaffia SARL is developing a project to produce 787MT of fair-trade certified shea kernel.

Agbanga Karite Alaffia SARL is the only firm in Togo that received a COVID19 Response Facility grant, while the remaining three grantee companies received Catalytic Business Concept grants. The four Togolese entities attracted a gross co-investment amount of US \$16,600,587. This figure implies that every US \$1 invested in the WATIH by USAID attracted an additional investment of US \$6.6, representing a leveraging ratio of 1:6.6 for its WATIH operations in Togo.

A factor that could cause the non-achievement of results is the deteriorating security situation in the northern part of Togo, where shea nuts grow, shea butter is produced, and the heartland for the production of cashew nuts.

ANNEX I: PROFILE OF THE EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation team is composed of the Team Leader, a Trade and Integration Expert, an Investment Expert and two Research Officers with extensive experience across West Africa. Profiles of the team members are presented below:

Terence Lacey (PhD), Team Leader

Terry has over 40 years of experience in evaluating agribusiness, trade, and energy projects, as well as trade agreements in development in Anglophone and Francophone West Africa, especially in Nigeria, Ghana, and the Sahel. He established the evaluation of a regional food markets programme in West Africa and participated in the evaluation of Food Trade East and Southern Africa (both with DFID). He also organized the final evaluation for 66 Local Government Areas in Nigeria with GTZ; implemented evaluations as Team Leader or Senior Expert in ASEAN promotion of clean energy and cogeneration with the EU; and implemented a major evaluation of local SME Cooperative Development & Investment Projects in China for the French cooperative movement and the EU. The Consultant has experience working with senior government officials, regional organizations like ECOWAS, donors, and agencies (EU Commission & Member States, DFID, USAID and Millenium Challenge, UNDP, FAO, World Bank, commercial Banks, DFIs, CEOs of SMEs, and media). Dr Lacey has degrees in Economics & International Relations (BA Econ), in French Nuclear Technology (MA Econ) and a PhD in economic and social development & security in developing countries all from University of Manchester. He is also fluent in French.

Noel Kossonou, Trade and Integration Expert

Noel has 20 years' experience in West Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Togo, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal) related to project management; establishing and maintaining partnerships with Donors and National and Regional Institutions in Trade and Transport Programs, particularly USAID, DFID, JICA, ECOWAS, UEMOA, CILSS, and EU. Noel has extensive knowledge and experience in trade facilitation, regional trade policies, trade transport protocols, and has provided technical support for facilitating cross-border trade in West Africa. Noel holds master's in international Trade and Law from IPE Management School, Paris, France. He is bilingual in both English and French.

Ali Diallo, Investment Expert

Ali has over 20 years of experience in investment, financing, management, corporate governance, and consulting across Africa. He has strong knowledge of African contexts, markets, business environments and financial ecosystem. Ali is experienced in facilitating financing across Africa in terms of investment, working capital, equity, grants and guarantees, and in conducting market studies and development of business plans. He has led assignments aimed at identifying co-sharing investments and job creation opportunities for the private sector in select West African countries. Ali served as financial expert on several donor-funded projects and provided technical assistance including facilitating access to finance for entrepreneurs and projects in West Africa. He holds a master's degree in business administration from Laval University. He also holds postgraduate diplomas in banking, finance, and insurance. Ali is bilingual in both English and French.

Yacouba Romba, Research Officer (based in Burkina Faso)

Yacouba has over 17 years' experience in third parties' relationship financial analysis, business and investment analysis, fund raising, accountancy and procurement management. He has conducted market research for several research firms and donor agencies in the sub-region.

Yacouba holds a masters in international finance from University of Tunis, Tunisia. He is proficient in the use of computerized management tools. He is proficient in both English and French.

Abdoulaye Falla, Research Officer (based in Niger)

Abdoulaye has over 15 years of experience in monitoring and evaluation activities. He has worked on a number of agricultural projects including West African Food Markets, WFP Processed Food Fortification Project, AGRA Rapid Assessment of COVID on agricultural priority value chains and agricultural cooperatives. Abdoulaye is experienced in conducting surveys and providing support services regarding data analysis to a number of development agencies. Abdoulaye holds a Masters in Mathematics for Financial Instruments from University of Barcelona, Spain, and undergraduate degree in Statistical Economics from University of Sciences and Technologies Houari Boumedienne (USTHB), Algeria. He also has a Diploma in M&E from NILERD. Abdoulaye is proficient in Arabic, English, French, Hausa, and Djerma.

ANNEX J: WATIH PROJECT DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

1. WATIH contract, including all modifications, and WATIH monitoring and evaluation plan as well as indicator tables.
2. WATIH annual work plans
3. USAID/Nigeria Feed the Future strategy
4. USAID/West Africa Feed the Future strategy
5. USAID/Ghana Feed the Future strategy
6. USAID/Nigeria CDCS
7. USAID/West Africa RDCS
8. USAID/Ghana CDCS
9. Private sector strategies for different USAID Missions
10. WATIH Annual Report (October 2019–September 2020)
11. WATIH Annual Report (October 2020–September 2021)
12. WATIH FY2022 Annual Work Plan, November 2021
13. WATIH Baseline Survey Report
14. WATIH Action Plan for Remaining Co-Investment Funding, October 2021