

**OPPORTUNITIES INDUSTRIALIZATION
CENTERS INTERNATIONAL (OICI)**

***Institutional Capacity Building Programme
(ICB)***

MID-TERM REVIEW

**Prepared by
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Opportunities Industrialization Centers International, Inc. (OICI) received a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to implement a five-year Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) Initiative, which was approved in the fourth quarter of FY 2004. The purpose of the ICB initiative has been to support OICI's Title II programs currently operating in Guinea and Ghana. The goal of the ICB initiative has been to increase the impact of food security programs in the field, by working together with local community organizations and international partners. The ICB proposal identified the following expected results:

- Responsive and efficient program management achieved; and
- Technical excellence and innovation supported.

In May 2006 TANGO International was contracted to undertake a mid-term review in order to assess OICI progress towards implementation of the ICB grant. This report documents the impact of the ICB grant on the stated goal, to *increase the impact of food security programs in the field* in order to enhance the institutional capacity to undertake Title II food security programs. The report outlines progress toward realizing results at the half-way point of the ICB, examines results achieved, and sets forth recommendations for OICI management consideration as it implements the final two years of the ICB and strategizes for the future.

Key Findings

The evaluator believes that OICI has achieved substantial gains in both of the expected results – responsive and efficient program management and enhanced support for technical excellence and innovation. Although it is too early to assess the overall goal of the project – the impact of ICB on food security and program implementation activities – progress toward this goal is clearly occurring. However, due to the late approval and funding of the ICB, most of the activities, particularly the training and manual development, have only occurred over the course of the last year. OICI is now well placed to implement monetization as well as commodity management, instead of remaining dependent on others to implement; OICI can begin to take on leadership in these areas instead of participating as a junior partner.

Specific Achievements:

- ♦ The professionalism and the technical skills of OICI staff involved in food security programming have increased since the ICB inception. The training program established and overseen by the food security team has strengthened field staff capacity and program monitoring and evaluation.
- ♦ ICB has exceeded several targets, particularly in training staff and improving capacity in some key technical and conceptual programming areas.

- ◆ ICB has used resources efficiently: Ghanaian & Guinea Teams were trained together; Supply chain management & Monetization training occurred back-to-back to maximize resources. The training workshops have provided an important mechanism to bring together Staff, who learned new sets of skills, from different country offices.
- ◆ The cross-fertilization of training, including Staff from Africare, World Vision, and ADRA, allowed OICI Staff to learn from the experience of other organizations and country contexts.
- ◆ Training has been used to create a core of technical staff in West Africa who will use some of the tools to expand their activities and vary OICI programming and portfolio. Regional Staff now hopefully will be able to work together to design and develop new proposals as well as build on new tools and techniques. This is essential for OICI to compete with other organizations for Title II as well as other programming in West Africa. Staff can now assume a larger role within the PVO and development community in specific country contexts as well as within the OICI programming strategy.
- ◆ OICI brought in technical expertise to produce sixteen specific technical manuals and tools based on best practices in the programming sectors of agricultural extension, water and sanitation, post-harvest crop management, and animal husbandry.
- ◆ OICI has created its first Commodity Tracking System, which commenced in 2005.

Setback: MYAP development has been put on hold because of the USAID Title II downsizing and prioritization process. FFP has prioritized sixteen countries for Title II support; neither Ghana nor Guinea is included. OICI now must try to identify potential countries for MYAP development. The problem is that OICI is not currently strategically placed in countries such as Sierra Leone or Liberia, where other PVOs that have experience in those country contexts have comparative advantage in developing their Title II programs.

ICB Shortfalls:

- ◆ OICI has been unable to expand Food Security Programming with FFP. Their current DAPs may be discontinued and OICI lacks comparative advantage in FFP priority countries.
- ◆ The timeframe has been problematic: The ICB was approved late, creating substantial difficulties in achieving the objectives, although OICI has done a commendable job in achieving most targets. Although the original proposal was originally scheduled to commence from October 2003, the ICB was not approved until June 2004. ICB funding did not arrive in time to contribute to the first year development of the Ghana & Guinea DAPs.
- ◆ The ICB design was too prescriptive, not allowing for the flexibility of changing contexts. For example:
 - The CRS partnership in Ghana has never coalesced or developed sufficiently.

- It has not been possible to test the Internal Capacity Assessment tool in partnership with Africare, primarily because Africare did not prioritize this activity in its own ICB.
- It has proven impossible to develop a DAP in Chad or other country offices, particularly in the two West African countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone.
- ◆ Recruitment of key positions at OICI headquarters has been slow. The M&E Coordinator position was vacant for nearly a year, which adversely affected M&E activities. As a result, OICI was dependent on FANTA assistance in M&E programming. OICI M&E systems are relatively weak. The Program Assistant position was similarly unfilled for months.
- ◆ The management structure in OICI hobbled ICB progress for awhile. Prior to its current leadership, OICI experienced a lack of transparency and an arbitrary decision-making process. Over the past two years, OICI has facilitated key structural and human resources changes at the senior management level. Two of the Vice President positions have been abolished because the organization appeared too top-heavy. The Finance department was particularly poorly served and after restructuring is now led by a more professional Finance VP. As a consequence, some good people left the organization and the organization was beset by an atmosphere of crisis management that affected program progress and quality. Finally, when the CEO and the VP-Finance were forced out of the organization, new board members selected a new CEO and OICI commenced the rebuilding process.
- ◆ As part of the restructuring process, some positions have not been replaced, including for example, a Health/nutrition/HIV-AIDS Director and a Small Enterprise Development Director. The country offices have developed new project management teams, and M&E systems are managed by capable hands now. A new VP-finance has established the necessary controls and installed corrective measures to improve the business operations climate.

Key Recommendations

Below is a much abbreviated version of the key recommendations, which are discussed in detail at the end of this report:

- 1. Continue to Systematically Build Capacity.**
- 2. Consider strengthening the Food Security Unit by adding key Staff.**
- 3. Develop a Food Security Framework that defines OICI food security programming.**
- 4. Build on Monitoring & Evaluation Progress.**
- 5. Develop Sustainability Mechanisms in the DAPs.**
- 6. Consider establishing strategic coalitions with PVOs in order to develop new food security programs in USAID priority countries and elsewhere.**
- 7. The ICB Final Evaluation Process should include sufficient time and financial resources for field visits to the country offices.**

II BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

OICI is a non-profit, nongovernmental international development organization headquartered in Philadelphia and currently working with 49 affiliated programs in 22 countries – 20 in sub-Saharan Africa, one in Poland, and one in the Philippines. Since 1970 when the first international OIC programs were started in Ghana and Nigeria, OICI-supported programs have served at least a quarter-million youth and adults, more than half of them women, in a broad range of countries. Dedicated to “transforming hopelessness to hope” through sustainable human resource development services and direct humanitarian relief, OICI aims to improve the quality of life of low-income, disadvantaged individuals in developing and transitional countries.

The overall goal of the Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) program was to improve the OICI institutional capacity to undertake effective food security programming using USAID P.L.480 Title II resources. The objectives were to strengthen the institutional and technical capacities of OICI to design and manage sound and appropriate food aid interventions; to manage for results; to account for Title II commodities; and to improve collaboration among Title II PVOs. To this effect, OICI sought to give particular attention to strengthening its capacity to integrate direct relief food distribution and nutrition and health related programs into its traditional food production, storage and processing and other income generating interventions. These include the capability to conduct food assessments, the ability to design and manage programs, and above all, the ability to monitor and evaluate its program processes and impacts for fine-tuning its operations from lessons that will be learned in the process.

ICB funds have also supported needs assessments aimed at initiating Title II activities in new countries or in new regions not currently served by OICI Title II activities.

The two Strategic Objectives (SO) of the ICB grant have included:

SO1: Responsive and efficient program management achieved.

IR 1.1 Scale efficiencies achieved through collaboration with other PVOs and program integration.

IR 1.2 OICI capacities in key technical areas strengthened.

IR1.3 OICI's human resources for food security program management strengthened.

SO2: Technical excellence and innovation supported.

IR 2.1: Promising tools, methods and best practices identified and disseminated, and headquarters/field technical information exchange facilitated.

IR2.2 Participation in food aid community discussions and decision-making enhanced.

OICI's five-year ICB Program was approved in the fourth quarter of FY 2004 which also constituted the first year of implementation. In essence the program has been operational for approximately two years at the time of this midterm evaluation.

III EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

1. Evaluation Objectives

The purpose of the mid-term review has been to assess the extent to which activities are occurring as originally planned. The evaluation should also provide an opportunity for OICI staff to step back and review these plans and ascertain the extent to which they are meeting the capacity building needs of the organization. This review therefore seeks to be directed toward learning as well as measuring results achieved.

The evaluator has been asked to i) assess the degree to which program benchmarks with respect to specific activities as well as larger objectives have been achieved at this point in the implementation of the initiative, and ii) make recommendations about how future activities may be directed to best achieve program objectives, with the possibility that program goal and objectives may need to be revised on the basis of developments since the inception of the initiative. The midterm review should assess:

- ◆ How effectively program design, implementation, M&E have been integrated around food security program goals,
- ◆ How appropriate are ICB activities for meeting the capacity-building needs of OICI,
- ◆ OICI progress toward achieving ICB program goals,
- ◆ Achievement of planned activities;
- ◆ How effectively staff at all levels of the organization understand food security program goals and incorporate them into their implementation or management responsibilities,
- ◆ Perceptions of organizational strengths and weaknesses in program design, implementation, evaluation, and
- ◆ Suggestions for how the remaining resources may be most effectively used to strengthen OIC capacities to implement effective food security programs.

The ICB Midterm Review Scope of Work (SOW) is attached as **Appendix A**.

2. Mid-Term Review Approach & Schedule

The midterm evaluation process commenced with a review of key documents produced and used by or for the ICB, including:

- ◆ *ICB Proposal* of March 2004;

- ◆ *ICB Annual Reports, 2004 & 2005;*
- ◆ *Enhance Program DAP, OICI Ghana, June 2004;*
- ◆ *Guinea Food & Livelihood Security Project DAP, February 2004*
- ◆ *Food Security Assessment Report, Ghana, 2004*
- ◆ *Baseline Study of Food & Livelihood Security, Guinea, February 2005*
- ◆ *Baseline Survey for ENHANCE, Ghana, 2005*
- ◆ *Workshop Report on Development Relief Approach, TANGO, February 2006*
- ◆ *Risk & Vulnerability Assessment Guideline, TANGO, February 2006*
- ◆ *ENHANCE Monitoring & Evaluation Manual, Ghana, March 2006*
- ◆ *OICI Program Operations: Background & Strategy, May 2006.*

The evaluator held initial phone discussions with the OICI Director of Food Security Programs prior to undertaking the office and field interviews in order to achieve clarity on the mid-term review objectives, process, and logistical arrangements. A topical outline for Interview Focus Questions was developed and shared with the OICI Director of Programming prior to commencing the interviews. The topical outline was amended a second time in Philadelphia after key program management staff got the chance to suggest changes and additions.

The Headquarters and Field Staff Focus Interview Topical Outline is attached as **Appendix B.**

In order to fulfil the SOW described above, the evaluator visited the OICI headquarters in Philadelphia for three full initial days of discussions with key OICI headquarters staff during the third week of June 2006, followed by three days of meetings in Washington DC with NGO partner agencies Africare and ADRA as well as USAID officials familiar with the OICI ICB, before returning to Philadelphia to debrief on the Washington DC meetings and complete the interview schedule with the Vice President of Programs.

A complete list of persons and positions interviewed by organisation is attached as **Appendix C.**

OICI field offices in Ghana and Guinea contributed to the midterm review by interviewing their key program staff in a focus group setting and then sending the results of the discussions to the Evaluator. Finally, the USAID Food for Peace Office in Ghana provided perspectives on the ICB contribution to food security programming in the Ghana context.

3. Analysis & Documentation of Findings

The midterm review allowed time for debriefings and provided ample opportunity for discussion of findings, particularly with the Director of Food Security Programs, who participated in the review focus group discussions in Washington DC. The evaluator amalgamated the interview notes into Focus Interview

matrices, which are included as **Appendix D**. The interview discussions form the most substantial inputs into the midterm review analysis, which is presented below.

IV MIDTERM REVIEW FINDINGS

The ICB has sought to realize two strategic objectives, to

- (1) Achieve responsive and efficient program management through three relevant intermediate results, and
- (2) Support technical excellence and innovation through two IRs.

1. General Findings: Overall Improvements in OICI Capacity to Implement Food Security Programs

Program management, professionalism and the technical skills of staff involved in food security programming have increased substantially since the inception of the current ICB. Training events have improved OICI staff understanding of program design and implementation, development-relief programming, as well as commodity management. OICI management has successfully restructured and brought in new staff to manage food security programming at headquarters and country office levels, providing Title II programs with a highly competent team for grant management, financial tracking, and commodity management.

The intensive training program was designed and developed to strengthen the understanding of field staff and managers as well of food security concepts, commodity management, monetization, the application of assessment methods, and some monitoring and evaluation. As a result, the perception of food aid within the agency has improved and personnel in the field offices as well as headquarters are more receptive to projects that use food as a resource. OICI has dedicated enhanced attention to program learning, documentation, and development of best practices models at the field level in Ghana and Guinea as well as from headquarters.

The Food security team has developed a good relationship with other partners in the field, including ADRA and Africare. Building on this collaboration, future efforts could focus on sharing responsibilities with regards to emergency preparedness interventions and transitions and building field capacity in relief development programming.

Several important events have contributed to improved understanding of food security programming within the organization:

1. Key positions have been filled, including the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) position, the Program Assistant, as well as the essential Food

- Security Director position, although some of the positions were vacant for relatively long periods of time, adversely affecting program progress.
2. Training in several key programming areas has been successfully completed. The training workshops included:
 - a. Development-relief,
 - b. Supply chain management, and
 - c. Monetization.
 3. The training workshops have given OICI a core of technical personnel who are now available to assist country offices throughout the West Africa region.
 4. The OICI food security unit, working through consultants and OICI technical staff in Ghana and Togo, has developed seven manuals in order to improve the technical quality of agricultural extension, water and sanitation, post-harvest crop management, and animal husbandry interventions in their food security programming.
 5. The Ghana and Guinea country offices both reported improved technical assistance from headquarters during the past two years resulting from increased field visits from headquarters as well as improved quality of management and field staff at both headquarters and in the field. The field offices would like to see intensified visits focused on specific technical assistance and enhanced involvement by the food security team in field activities.
 6. USAID has continued to be supportive of OICI efforts in relation to ICB activities and the learning food security curve for the organization.

Appendix F presents the OICI ICB performance indicator tracking table, which covers the initial two years of the ICB.

2. Review of Program Management Responsiveness & Efficiency – SO1

The first strategic objective sought to accomplish the following:

SO1: Responsive and efficient program management achieved

We will initially assess the first Intermediate Result, **IR 1.1** – *Scale efficiencies achieved through collaboration with other PVOs and program integration.*

The following constitute the primary activities of IR 1.1:

- Conduct food security assessments and develop two new food security program models in Africa.
- Collaborate with Africare to conduct FS Assessment (1 of 2 cited above) in a new target country.
- Redesign Guinea and Ghana Title II program models integrating developmental relief with PVO partners in emergency areas.

Supporting Activities:

- Integrate FS designs with the OICI Farmer-to-Farmer, Food for Progress and conflict resolution/mitigation programs.
- Integrate into FS programming food distribution with PLWHA and OVCs.
- Collaborate with CRS on developing common indicators in Ghana.
- Obtain mission support for program to respond to PLWHA and OVC.

Food Security Assessments: Even prior to the ICB, OICI has used food security assessments as an input to program design, activity development, and targeting for the DAPs. These food security assessments in Ghana and Guinea have been of high quality. The Ghana program for example utilized the food security assessment nutrition data to design a critical MCH food distribution component, promote HIV/AIDS programming activities, and target community selection. The assessments however were undertaken prior to the DAP project design process and during the time when the ICB proposal was under review prior to its approval. OIC-Guinea is planning to use the data from the assessment to design a Food for Education proposal.

Needs assessments have included:

1. Secondary data review;
2. Informal meetings with donors, NGOs, & USAID; and
3. Four Focus groups in target area in Guinea; each of the focus groups analyzed fifteen discussion questions.

The original ICB design however called for a partnership or collaboration between OICI and Africare to jointly conduct at least one food security assessment in a new target country. This has not taken place; nor apparently is a joint assessment planned for the future. One issue is that Africare did not budget for this activity. OICI is apparently planning other assessments in the pipeline, though they have yet to be defined. Assessments will hopefully lead in to project designs and proposals.

Program Design & Proposal Development: OICI has not used ICB funds to develop new proposals, which is not allowed anyway by USAID Food for Peace. In fact, the two DAPs currently implanted by OICI in Ghana and Guinea were designed and commenced during the ICB approval process; this ICB didn't contribute to DAP designs. There has been a problem of continuity in the DAPs. The previous DAPs required a year of extension until the current DAPs were approved and commenced implementation. The current DAPs may end prematurely in Ghana and Guinea, which are no longer Title II countries for USAID. OIC personnel in the two country programs are naturally quite anxious about the future of these programs.

USAID considers the both of the OICI DAPs in Ghana and Guinea to be strong proposals and well designed, partly a result of the strong food security assessment process. This evaluator concurs. USAID pronounced the OIC-Ghana DAP to be the strongest of all the proposals submitted for funding.

HIV/AIDS programming is well integrated into the food security program strategy. Agriculture and health are strong components of the Guinea program although the sectors are only weakly linked. For example, agriculture extension activities should be closely linked to Health activities within the communities; such a linkage is currently missing in the program approach.

The current ICB has not contributed to the expansion of the OICI programming portfolio. No new DAPs or MYAPs have been designed during the past two years. OICI is now in a bit of a dilemma concerning future Title II programming, particularly since USAID FFP announced the list of narrowing priority Title II countries, which does not include either Ghana or Guinea. OICI does not currently have a presence in two other countries on the list, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Other larger NGOs have decades of experience in these two West African countries and in at least one case have formed coalitions to partner together in designing fundable MYAP proposals. It would be difficult for OICI to compete for fundable proposals within this context.

OICI regional teams are nevertheless now in the early planning stages of initiating a MYAP design strategy aimed at developing MYAPs, drawing on the training, which is described below. It is hoped that regional Staff in West Africa can now become directly as well as indirectly involved in the design and development of fundable project proposals. OICI has targeted the design and development of one new food security program sometime during FY07 and another two the following year.

In total, four MYAPs are planned for the future, if funding can be secured. The training workshops have theoretically increased OICI competitiveness. It is hoped that OICI is now well placed to rapidly respond to proposal development and implementation, although this has yet to be demonstrated. New proposals have not been forthcoming since the inception of the ICB.

Finally, ICB has not promoted a model or conceptual framework for food security; such a model would help OICI promote a food security program approach or focus. Lack of a conceptual food security framework has contributed to a failure to redesign the Title II program models in Guinea and Ghana by integrating developmental relief with PVO partners in emergency areas. Such a model will prove essential in future efforts in all priority Title II country contexts. FFP priority countries all require a development-relief approach.

Program Integration: In general, program coordination is country specific. One project can help strengthen and improve other projects. OICI is now promoting a regional approach that necessitates much better program coordination; one country office can assist in another country context.

FS programming approaches and knowledge are not currently integrated into other OICI international programmes, such as the Farmer to Farmer program or

the BGB curriculum. The country offices, however, host the farmers participating from the Farmer to Farmer program. Farm Serve feeds into other projects and Farm Serve volunteers continue to provide advice on agricultural practices to Title II project participants in Ghana and Guinea.

Agriculture programming liaison and coordination with food security is currently not strong. Similarly, although OICI programming and headquarters Staff are now aware of the importance of integrating nutritional analysis and nutritional programming into OIC programming, this has yet to be applied.

Program integration within projects could be stronger. The ICB could be used to promote a program approach integrating health and agriculture extension techniques and methodologies for example. Agricultural extension should feed directly into the Positive Deviance, or Hearth model of nutrition programming, for example. The development and proactive dissemination of a food security framework (discussed above in the previous section) would help field staff to realize these types of linkages as necessary in promoting food security.

Documents are shared across the organization so that field Staff as well as headquarter Staff in all programming areas are aware of progress in other programs. Field offices referred in particular to the usefulness of documents relating to HIV/AIDS, FarmServe, and food aid issues emanating from Washington. The Food Security Group is involved in ensuring a thorough review process that includes all departments.

The OICI approach to food security should be included during Staff orientation as they come on board; this is not currently the practice.

Collaboration with other PVOs: OICI has established and maintained effective functional partnerships with other PVOs operating in Ghana and Guinea. The DAPs in each of those countries have joint monetization arrangements, led by CRS in Ghana and Africare in Guinea, which includes ADRA as well as OICI in the Monetization group. The monetization process is quite smooth and running well, especially in Guinea. The monetization partnership includes joint decision-making, but OICI is not registered to actually carry out the monetization, which is done by Africare in Guinea and CRS in Ghana. The partnering experience has not been as smooth with CRS as with Africare and ADRA. Together the PVOs make commodity requests and coordinate commodity arrival in country although each PVO prepares separate call forwards. As is the case with other PVOs, OICI continues to monetize eighty percent of food commodities in Guinea.

OICI participates in periodic Monetization Coordination Meetings to discuss the commodity monetization process. These meetings, involving ADRA, Africare, and OICI, also provide settings to discuss a range of issues related to program implementation. Cross visits to project sites have been arranged. For example, the OICI Health Coordinator was able to visit Africare's health program activities

in Guinea, meeting with field staff to exchange health programming experience. Similarly, the OICI Agriculture Coordinator, accompanied by the M&E officer, observed ADRA agricultural credit and extension service activities.

OICI collaborated with CRS in a very lengthy but successful process to develop common monitoring and evaluation indicators relating to MCH and HIV/AIDS activities for their DAP programs in Ghana. OIC-Ghana in turn provides boreholes to communities working through CRS. Counterpart International is providing training to OICI staff on HIV/AIDS in Ghana as well. OIC-Ghana has partnered with Heifer International and Counterpart International to enhance animal husbandry and MCH program strategies.

The most substantial collaboration occurred in two training workshops organized by OICI for two back-to-back weeks in Guinea, the first week devoted to Supply Chain Management and the second week devoted to Monetization. Ten participants from Africare, ADRA, and World Vision participated with OICI field staff in the workshops.

Collaboration is clearly strongest at the country office levels. Because each PVO is competing for ICB support from USAID, which administers each ICB grant separately, the system unfortunately discourages organizational coordination in a systematic way. It is also true that collaboration activities proposed in one ICB by one PVO may not show up as an activity in another PVO's ICB. For example, OICI proposed to jointly undertake food security assessments as well as test capacity building index methodologies with Africare in its ICB proposal, but Africare did not include nor budget for these activities in its proposal.

IR 1.2 OICI capacities in key technical areas strengthened

Primary Activities in support of IR 1.2 have included:

- Standardize FS assessment methodology incorporating risks and vulnerabilities analysis and adopt standard Design, Monitoring and Evaluation (DME) methodologies into FS programming.
- Train staff in developmental relief and new food security framework through joint and/or in-house workshops.
- Train staff in Supply Chain Management (SCM) through CARE technical assistance.
- Train staff in Health and Nutrition (H&N) and HIV/AIDS programming through technical assistance from partner PVOs, academic and research institutions

Supporting Activities:

- Participate in training on Design, Monitoring and Evaluation (DME).
- Participate in market analysis and Bellmon determination training.
- Participate in environmental compliance and gender training.

- Define OICI SCM strategy.
- Adopt H&N assessment tools, and integrate nutrition education in FS design.

Capacity Building through Training: Capacity building is a niche of OICI, which structured the ICB to create training opportunities in several key programming areas over the initial two years of the ICB. The capacity building strategy represents perhaps the strongest use of ICB resources.

The evolution of OICI as a Title II FFP implementing partner has been a long-term process for the organization, which is smaller, less bureaucratic, and less experienced in food security programming than many of USAID's other traditional PVO partners such as CARE, World Vision, CRS, Save the Children, ADRA, or Africare. OICI is clearly successfully making rapid strides toward achieving the broad goal of building capacity in order to more efficiently manage Title II programs. Capacity building remains an ongoing process for OICI's food security team.

ICB promoted training workshops have increased the capacity of Staff to implement project activities and take on new technical activities that OICI has not heretofore taken on, such as monetization, commodity management, and project design and development; OICI now has new programming capacity in those areas. The impact from the training activities hasn't yet emerged however.

The quality of training offered by the OICI through consultants and partners has been rated across the board as very good. Responses to the Interview Focus Questions for OICI Field Personnel as well as through individual participant evaluations at headquarters and with partners consistently gave high ratings to the training methodologies as well as content of the OICI-sponsored workshops.

To summarize the training workshop events:

- ◆ Fourteen management-level staff members have received training in development-relief and the USAID food security framework, which was facilitated by the consulting group TANGO International. The training was rated as very good by participants, supplying field staff and management with newly acquired skills to design food security programs in a development-relief transitional country setting. However, field Staff have yet to apply the results or outcomes of the development relief workshop.
- ◆ Ten management and field Staff received training in supply chain management, which was facilitated by CARE. The OICI Director of Food Security followed up the workshop by providing staff with training in commodity management and logistics, including call-forwards, port operations, transportation, storage, and distribution. One outcome was the initiation of a commodity tracking system, the first for OICI, providing the organization with incipient capacity to track and manage

commodities. Prior to the commencement of the current DAP, OICI had never been involved in direct distribution of Title II commodities. Field Staff have now been introduced to USAID food programming regulations and procedures. Successful commodity management training will undoubtedly be of critical importance to OICI in both the medium term as well as long term. In the medium-term, OICI may be the only FFP PVO remaining in Ghana and Guinea during the last two years of the program (if the Title II programs continue) as other PVOs withdraw, thereby requiring OICI to assume sole responsibility to manage the commodities. In the long-term, strong commodity management capacity will enhance OICI's reputation to undertake food programs in other Title II countries, thereby strengthening OICI comparative advantage.

- ◆ The same ten management and field Staff received training in monetization, which was facilitated by a consultant provide by Save the Children in a workshop immediately following the supply chain management workshop. Workshop participants ranked the monetization workshop as particularly creative and practical.
- ◆ Over fifty Staff received training in health and nutrition and HIV/AIDS programming through technical assistance from partners PVOs, notably CRS.
- ◆ Five food security team management Staff received training in environmental analysis, providing OICI with some in-house capacity in environmental assessment and analysis methodologies.
- ◆ Nine food security team members have participated in gender analysis training.
- ◆ Although OICI field Staff in the two Title II countries participated in research that contributed to the Bellmon Analyses for Ghana and Guinea, OICI personnel have yet to participate in formal market analysis and Bellmon determination training.

Although the training workshop process received highly favourable ratings, participants offered a few bits of advice to galvanize improvements in future training events. Training Francophone & Anglophone speakers in English in one setting was a challenge. More days were needed, given the translation requirements, which slowed down the training workshop process. Training Staff from different settings was a positive development in another sense however. Field Staff learned from each other and allowed OICI to form regional technical teams that could use their training across the region. The Monetization workshop was rated as the most participatory and therefore most engaging of the workshops discussed above.

Most of the training events outlined above – particularly the development-relief, supply chain management, and monetization workshops, brought together Staff from both Ghana and Guinea programs, allowing cross-learning. The demand to participate in these workshops has been high. In addition, other partners and

PVOs, including Africare, ADRA, and World Vision, sent representative Staff to participate in workshops.

Particularly notable is that OICI now has a cadre of qualified food security field staff, project managers and headquarters management. However, that cadre currently represents a thin layer; the departure of one or two DAP managers and key technical staff in the field or managers at headquarters would leave OICI exposed.

Staff can theoretically return and re-train other Staff. In reality, OICI-Ghana and Guinea Staff remain a bit discouraged because the programs may be discontinued relatively soon, and the retraining process has been negatively affected. The incentive to apply the training has been lost. The challenge is to apply the training in new geographical localities.

Field as well as headquarters Staff mentioned other programming areas in need of capacity building exercises, including:

- ◆ M&E and MIS development;
- ◆ MCH, and health programming;
- ◆ Agricultural production development methods;
- ◆ Agricultural extension methods as well as agricultural marketing to be able to promote training to farmers;
- ◆ Nutrition and sanitation;
- ◆ HIV/AIDS care & support; and
- ◆ Small business micro-enterprise development.

OICI has used the training to galvanize the production of technical manuals such as the Risk-Vulnerability manual, developed in partnership with TANGO International, which has direct relevance in the FFP priority countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone, where OICI is contemplating Title II program proposals.

Monitoring & Evaluation: OICI has only relatively recently initiated a strong effort to improve the M&E capacity of the field offices implementing DAPs. Prior to the present ICB, M&E capacity demonstrated in DAP implementation was poor. In addition, M&E was not given much priority by OICI senior management. Through the current ICB, senior management committed to the important task of improving its M&E focus from headquarters as well for the field programs.

One initial step was to expose six Title II staff to food security methodologies incorporating risks and vulnerability analysis standardized for Design, Monitoring and Evaluation. OICI has also initiated a great deal of emphasis on the importance of good effective baselines and appropriate ways to carry out these studies. The baselines conducted in Ghana and Guinea will allow OICI to evaluate appropriate indicators useful to track to test program effects and impact. Although USAID is satisfied with the timeliness and content of quarterly and annual reports, less emphasis has been given to annual monitoring systems and

good report writing. This was primarily due to personnel constraints, changes, and vacancies during the initial two years of the ICB. OICI has hired an M&E specialist, who came on board earlier this year. The position was vacant for the better part of a year. The long vacancy did not allow OICI to move forward in terms of M&E systems, which suffered as a result.

The previous M&E Specialist had developed M&E instruments and tools, including DAP Reporting Manuals for the two programs in Ghana and Guinea, which were deemed to be inappropriate and not useful in the country office settings, although this evaluator found the manuals to be coherent and useful. The Dap Reporting Manuals were comprehensive and offered field staff an introduction to M&E systems, USAID FFP M&E reporting requirements and guidelines, an introduction to Performance Monitoring Plans, a clear explanation of the performance indicators to be monitored in the M&E system, and a clear but long computerized M&E reporting system. Although a lot of thought and work went into creating the M&E manuals, OICI Staff complained that the data bases created from headquarters were neither strong nor user friendly and were one of the disconnections between headquarters and the field, which perceived the data bases as too headquarter-based, not based on actual field experience or context, incomplete, and not holistic. The system failed to account for variations in the field, differences between the Ghanaian and Guinea programs. The current M&E specialist is attempting to standardize M&E for use in both DAP programs.

Although the personnel changes and planned systems changes augur improvements in the M&E systems, OICI has yet to implement improved M&E systems. The plan is to establish a MIS structure to facilitate and manage the program Results Framework as well as provide field Staff with the ability to access M&E reports and other pertinent reports from other country office contexts with the OICI global world. OICI has in place an Intranet, which is underused. It is hoped that OICI can establish an MIS to connect the field offices with headquarters within the next year. But this will be a large endeavor requiring some financial and human resource commitment.

Interview discussions with OICI personnel revealed a desire for enhanced support in M&E. OICI management recognizes that M&E systems remain are currently not an organizational strength, although the recent personnel changes offer promise and potential. Control mechanisms are weak; a commodity management & tracking system is needed. M&E capabilities have recently increased throughout the organization with the hiring of the headquarters M&E specialist, as well as an M&E consultant in Ghana, where M&E is better integrated into program activities than has been the case in Guinea. The Ghana country office for example hired experienced M&E manager and officer as well as a consultant to redesign the M&E system; commenced planning on a comprehensive MIS; and developed qualitative and quantitative tools for assessments and evaluations. OIC-Ghana also actively engaged the USAID FFP in constructive discussions in successful efforts to improve M&E and

reporting of program results, which has been a wise collaboration process. In Guinea, the M&E officer reports directly to the CD in an effort to promote accountability. However, M&E is therefore removed from effective program implementation.

For over six months, M&E functions were outsourced, principally to FANTA. OICI belongs to the FANTA working group, which meets bi-monthly in DC to establish performance indicators that can cut across different programs and geographic regions; the goal is to create objective, cross-cutting, systematically applied indicators.

Finally, as the food security team focuses more intensively on program management support, monitoring and evaluation will become increasingly important. Knowledgeable personnel with M&E skills will be critical to ensure that OICI can engage in dialogues with USAID on appropriate sampling strategies, indicator selection, and baseline data collection. The emphasis should be on information systems that allow for program learning and contribute to program quality, not just on meeting donor requirements.

ICB Performance Indicators: Although considerable effort has been focused on strengthening the field office capacity to improve monitoring and evaluation capacity and enhances M&E systems, less attention has been concentrated on monitoring the **impact**, in addition to the outputs, of the ICB. Although efforts have been made to track a number of output indicators (for example, types of training modules developed, number of training events conducted, number of participants trained, number of training manuals developed, number of baselines and assessments conducted, number of staff or specialists hired), less emphasis has been gone into tracking program quality improvements (outcome measures).

The main problem with the Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) is that it does not really have any measures of capacity building or quality program improvements. It primarily consists of indicators that track output. In addition, the annual reports currently only reflect outputs achieved and beyond that provide only a limited amount of information. M&E and annual reports give the food security team a great opportunity to capture issues related to program quality and lessons learned.

IR1.3: OICI's human resources for food security program management strengthened

Primary Activity

- Develop staffing plan utilizing field-based regional staff.

Supporting Activities

- Develop Design, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist staff position.
- Develop Supply Chain Management Specialist staff capacity.

Strengthened Human Resources: As mentioned above, the training strategy has improved field staff as well as management capacity in program diagnostics and design, commodity management, and monetization. Intended to strengthen Staff capacity, the ICB has succeeded. Field Staff are now qualified to implement food security and development-relief transitional programs as a result of the workshops. Training workshops have also imbued staff with a better understanding of DAPs and the process of design and implementation. The OICI food security team has encouraged cross-learning between the two DAPs in Ghana and Guinea.

However, the results from the Development-Relief workshop have yet to be demonstrated. OICI has not developed new food security programming during the short life of this ICB.

One issue is that all country office personnel realize that the DAPs may close down within the next year in Ghana and Guinea. Morale of DAP field Staff is in serious question due to threat of DAP cut-off after FY07. USAID is evaluating the feasibility and desirability of prematurely cutting off the Title II programs before project participants have the opportunity of benefiting in any type of sustainable fashion from a full project cycle. Many in FFP would like the current programs to be able to continue through the projected end of project even in the non-prioritised countries such as Ghana and Guinea, where OICI is currently based. In the meantime, OICI would like to create a core group of regional technical personnel with expertise in different development arenas to search for opportunities for program development and proposal funding elsewhere.

Staffing Structure & Plan: The food security staffing structure has been in flux and seen substantial changes over the past two years. The food security team is in a much stronger position, with the key positions filled following a substantial period of unfilled key positions. OICI has made significant strides in promoting professionalism within the management structure of the organization and the food security program over the past year. Specifically, OICI program management includes a Director of Food Security, an Assistant to the unit, and a Monitoring & Evaluation Director. Program decision-making is a result of team efforts, taking into account the program approach and the geographic targeting.

New programming roles & responsibilities as well as new personnel active on the food security team include the following:

- ◆ The VP – Food Security position has been eliminated. Now there is a VP for Programming with the Director of Food Security reporting to the VP;
- ◆ A Dir of Agriculture has been brought in. This position currently concentrates substantially on implementing the Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer program, leaving little time to devote to supporting food security program field staff in technical assistance in agricultural systems, extension methodologies, or agricultural marketing.

- ◆ New job descriptions have been created. Field Staff have been able to feed off of the experience and expertise that has recently been brought into headquarters.
- ◆ The M&E position was a vacuum for virtually a full year; the ICB helped to deliver the M&E Director position.
- ◆ Ghana and Guinea country offices have developed new project management teams, including new M&E officers.
- ◆ The original ICB proposal budgeted forty percent for an Associate Director of Food Security. That position has remained unfilled.
- ◆ Administrative functions have recently been filled with the hiring of a Program Assistant.
- ◆ Country offices have strengthened their technical capacity to implement programs. OICI-Ghana for example has hired HIV/AIDS specialists and agriculture marketing specialists in addition to partnering with Heifer International and CPI to improve animal husbandry and MCH staff capacity. Other country office positions have remained unfilled however, affecting program quality.
- ◆ Some headquarters food security team programming positions remain unfilled. OICI lacks health/sanitation/HIV expertise at HQ; these positions are needed. The health/nutrition position has remained empty for years. At least one person is needed to provide OICI food security programming with technical assistance in support of nutrition, HIV/AIDS, and MCH programming. OICI management and field offices all recognize this as a current void in the organization.

The original proposal called for the establishment of a regional management and technical assistance unit to oversee and manage programming in the West Africa region. The regional unit was never formally created or put into place, because OICI was never able to financially support it. The newly constituted OICI Board of Directors shut down the Unit. The rationale for the regional positions remains under debate, given the growing regionalization of OICI programming and an intensified effort to improve program quality across the region that began with the regional workshops.

What remains clear however is that OICI would like to create a team of regional technical staff to develop programs and support those programs with technical expertise. Staff based in country offices could provide technical assistance to other country office programs while managing or implementing country specific programs. This unit may not be required and OICI lacks the financial wherewithal to finance such a unit at the regional level anyway.

3. Support for Technical Excellence & Innovation – SO2

SO2: Technical excellence and innovation supported

IR 2.1: Promising tools, methods and best practices identified and disseminated, and headquarters/field technical information exchange facilitated.

Primary Activities

- Formalize and document OICI methodology in extension and capacity building and share with the broader community.
- Collaborate with Africare on testing Africare's capacity building index, and co-publish with Africare results of collaboration.

Supporting Activity

- Document and share agriculture, Watsan and other FS program experiences and best practices across OICI programs and the broader community through targeted workshops, conferences and publications.

Development of Tools & Best Practices: OICI hired three consultants to work with technical staff from the Ghana DAP to develop draft manuals and modules based on best practices in the programming sectors of agricultural extension, water and sanitation, post-harvest crop management, and animal husbandry. The manuals have very recently been developed and are still at the draft stage. None of them has therefore been used in the field as of yet, although OICI-Ghana has already reported an improvement in extension methodologies resulting from the revision and upgrading of the training manuals. The next step will be to publish the manuals and make them available for use by other organizations as well as by OICI field staff. OICI plans to simultaneously translate the English manuals into French for use in Guinea. The documents are in the process of being retooled drawing on comments from the field. Organizations (ADRA in particular mentioned this) are aware of these tools and eagerly await final publication and dissemination across PVOs.

The sixteen draft manuals, which document food security program experiences and best practices across OICI food security programs as well as other program experiences, include;

- ◆ Community animation and training, which consists of group management & dynamics, team building, effective communication, facilitation techniques, conflict resolution, crisis management, and record keeping and bookkeeping;
- ◆ Financial and business management, which consists of credit management, micro-credit approaches, entrepreneurial skills development, causes & consequences of poverty, financial planning, and financial decision-making;
- ◆ Water and sanitation, consisting of WATSAN committee formation, water supply systems, project cycles, hygiene and sanitation, and technical planning issues;
- ◆ Micro-enterprise development, consisting of enterprise assessment methods, business planning, enterprise initiation, costing and pricing,

marketing, processing, packaging and labelling, rural enterprise development and marketing issues, and pricing goods and products.

- ◆ Agriculture, consisting of post-harvest systems, causes of post-harvest losses, storage treatment, solar heaters for cowpea storage, types of storage structures, participatory farm management, causal diagramming, participatory budgeting, resource allocation mapping, resource flow diagrams, record-keeping, and vegetable production, including kitchen gardens;
- ◆ Maternal & Child Health and Nutrition (MCH), consisting of community participatory methods, nutrition, the prevention and treatment of illnesses and malnutrition, growth monitoring, prevention & treatment of water-borne diseases, diarrhoeal diseases, HIV/AIDS, water treatment, hygiene and health, and sanitation;
- ◆ Marketing, consisting of agricultural marketing, marketing channels, agricultural marketing functions, and problems, solutions, and strategies relating to agricultural marketing.

Besides printing up the draft technical manuals, the ICB has not contributed to promoting extension methodologies. The programming extension approach was already built into the DAP proposals; the ICB has not added to that approach. In general, OICI works through host government extension agents to implement extension activities.

The original ICB proposal called for Africare and ICB to partner in testing their Capacity Building Index. Unfortunately collaboration around this activity never took place because Africare did not promote this or budget for this activity in its own ICB. OIC has a functional relationship with Africare and ADRA at the field level; extension staff occasionally work together in the field and the Country Directors often collaborate.

Finally although OICI has not attended FANTA training workshops in support of food aid standards, OICI has relied on FANTA to support M&E functions for the DAPs for approximately one year while OICI was searching for a suitable M&E Coordinator. FANTA has helped OICI develop appropriate performance indicators to track project performance, effects and impact. FANTA's contribution to the OICI programs has been profound.

IR2.2 Participation in food aid community discussions and decision-making enhanced

Primary Activity

- Participate actively in FAM and FANTA activities, notably in developing food aid standards.

The Food Security Dialogue & Advocacy: OICI has not specifically taken positions on food aid, food security, and monetization, but defers to the Food Aid Coalition, which has taken positions on the WTO, monetization, and food aid. The ICB allows OICI headquarter personnel, particularly the Food Security Director but also the M&E Director, to regularly participate in the Food Aid Coalition meetings, activities and working groups, increasing the OICI understanding of the global environment relating to its work. OICI used to participate as well in the Food Aid Management (FAM) group, which has been defunct since 2005 after USAID discontinued funding support.

The Food Aid Coalition, which is currently undergoing a crisis of sorts resulting from differences in opinion over its focus and purpose involving some of the larger and more influential PVOs, has advocated on specific issues of interest to the PVO community. The current big issue is that of the future of monetization to help support Title II programs. The coalition also advocates for fully funded DAPs. OICI is an active member of the Food Aid coalition. OICI also participated in the Kansas City meetings, where the Food Aid Coalition strategized about positions vis-à-vis food aid and the future of the coalition. OICI by itself does not engage in advocacy, but joins coalitions.

Field offices have managed to move forward without input from the headquarters-based food security team; for example OICI-Ghana has developed a magazine called “Opportunity” which discusses development programming in the Ghanaian context. The food security team hopes in the future to create a functioning website to promote enhanced visibility of food security and food aid issues as well as sector-specific state-of-the-art developments.

4. Other Findings: ICB Budgeting and Finance

OICI initially budgeted \$1.3 million to support ICB activities; FFP finally approved the ICB for one million dollars over five years, an amount that appears to be adequate to implement most of the activities proposed. However, fund disbursement for the ICB was delayed during 2004, the initial year of the ICB. Programme activities were therefore delayed for nearly a year, including the hiring of key personnel, affecting ICB start-up activities and seriously delaying ICB progress. After the slow start, the food security team has promoted an activity implementation schedule to catch up.

Although the funding for the DAPs may not have been adequate, the ICB has been adequately budgeted. Some line items are under-budgeted however, though the ICB funding arrangements are relatively flexible. The food security team is particularly scrambling to undertake international travel, training, and consultancies. Funding for the DAPs (and OICI entire global Title II portfolio) through FY 08-09 is in jeopardy because Ghana and Guinea are not listed amongst the fifteen priority Title II countries and USAID FFP is facing serious budget constraints.

V MIDTERM REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

This evaluator believes that OICI Staff have used the ICB resources efficiently and effectively to strengthen food security programming. From an external perspective, the program designs are of high quality and were based on a good understanding of the food security context. OICI has rebuilt the capacity of field and headquarters Staff to improve the technical quality of food security programming and create a cadre of Staff to allow OICI to expand quality programming. The following recommendations are for the consideration of OICI as the organization moves into the second half of the ICB five-year programming timeframe and constructs strategies for the future.

1. Continue to Systematically Build Capacity

It is important to continue to strengthen OICI capacity in food security and vulnerability programming, including disaster preparedness and program implementation. OICI needs to become more competitive in food security programming, so training and capacity building activities must continue to be emphasized, particularly in the realms of development-relief programming and programming within conflict-prone areas, which are the types of countries that USAID is prioritising and is seeking PVO partners.

Training & capacity building is the OICI niche and is an excellent approach. Promote follow-on training to ensure full utilization of the training. Include Executive Staff in training events. Program success depends on attracting and retaining qualified, capable staff both in headquarters and the field. The food security team should not overlook orientation training and training in specific technical areas for staff themselves. Providing opportunities for professional development and mentoring should be an integral part of any training strategy.

The food security training strategy should seek to build a DAP leadership pipeline to provide more depth throughout the continent and from headquarters. This pipeline should draw not only on those with commodity management experience, but also on potential managers with strong programming experience.

Potential training subjects or retraining exercises include:

- ◆ Holistic food security framework and its application (explained in more detail below under Recommendation #3);
- ◆ Detailed MYAP and other project design process, including problem analysis based on food security assessments;
- ◆ Participatory extension methodologies;
- ◆ Monitoring & Evaluation refresher training (explained more thoroughly below under Recommendation #4).
- ◆ Technical training related to the publication of key programming manuals.

2. Consider strengthening the Food Security Unit by adding key Staff.

If OICI is seriously considering expanding its food security programming portfolio, including pursuing Title II program opportunities, the organization should consider filling essential positions which in turn will strengthen the organization over the long term. ICB and food security programming is currently understaffed at headquarters. A Program Assistant and the M&E Coordinator are finally on board. The programming department in general and the food security unit in particular should consider adding:

- ◆ An Assistant Director of food security to either concentrate on commodity management, commodity accounting, contracts, the monetization process, and the food aid tracking process; while the Director of Food Security focuses on program quality issues, liaison in Washington, liaison with country offices, and new project proposals in coordination with the Grants Director;
- ◆ A Health/HIV/AIDS/Nutrition/Sanitation Coordinator/Director or Technical Advisor. This position is very important but funding constraints have kept this position empty. Title II and food security programs normally require the integration of nutrition programming and some kind of nutrition tracking. HIV/AIDS program activities are really required in any kind of food security program. Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) or hygiene and sanitation project activities are frequently designed to respond to community food security constraints.
- ◆ A Grants person to develop proposals and lead the process of grant and proposal documentation (although external consultants can also help fulfil part of this role if OICI decides it is too early to expand in this area).

Although national Staff based overseas currently fulfil some of the technical expertise voids mentioned above, it is important to fill these voids at headquarters.

As a point of comparison, the evaluation team observed the staffing arrangements of other mid-sized organisations currently undertaking Title II and food security programming. (Africare and ADRA each currently implement eleven Title II projects):

- ◆ ADRA's Food Security Unit consists of six core members (and a seventh core member who is not currently on board):
 - 1 Food Security Director;
 - 2 Assistant Directors concentrating on:
 - Commodity logistics, including contracts, monetization, and commodity training
 - Liaison with country offices, FFP, USDA, and partners.
 - 2 Grant Managers, concentrating on:
 - Grant documentation, amendments, program close-out;

- Requests, reports, amendments, CSR4 reports, logistics input, M&E
- 2 M&E staff, concentrating of indicators, Detailed Implementation Plans, IPTTs, contracts with M&E officers in the field, and M&E training.
- Emergency Programming Assistant Director (not currently in place in ADRA)
- Administrative staff.
- Other Sectors coordinate with the Food Security Unit and provide technical assistance when needed, including
 - Internal Compliance Finance, which oversees country office accounting, training, and closing audit recommendations;
 - Health Sector, led by a Nutrition/Public Health Expert (this position is completely funded through the Food Security Unit);
 - Economic Development Sector, consisting of two Staff.
- ◆ Africare's Food for Development Division currently consists of five staff, including:
 - Director of Food for Development;
 - 2 FFD Program Managers, who split up responsibilities in overseeing the eleven country programs;
 - Commodities/Monetization Manager;
 - Office Assistant;
 - One additional Program Manager who is not currently on board.
 - The Director of Health & HIV/AIDS provides technical assistance to support Food for Development activities.
 - The Director of Agriculture similarly provides technical assistance.

3. Develop a Food Security Framework that defines OICI food security programming.

A cohesive holistic food security framework would help define a programming approach based on the premise that food security is a compendium of food availability, assess, and utilization, the understanding of contextual basic causes of food insecurity, and a coordinated or integrated programming approach. Food security or livelihood frameworks help organizations to define a programming approach for potential donors that root their program design in a coherent strategy. Food security frameworks offer a means to integrate program components, which is always attractive to potential donors. For example, USAID commented, during the course of this mid-term review, that nutrition components need to be more effectively integrated with agricultural development components. A coherent framework could help drive a strategy toward improving the nutrition-agriculture linkages and as well help field Staff to step out of their sector boxes to coordinate their activities. Many organizations, such as CARE or Save the

Children, have developed food security or livelihoods programming frameworks, which are displaced beside their core values and mission statements to define their organizational approach.

OICI should consider bringing in short-term assistance to facilitate a process of food security framework development.

4. Build on Monitoring & Evaluation Progress

OICI has made substantial strides in building monitoring and evaluation capacity at the country office and headquarters levels, primarily by hiring new talented M&E experts. The area of M&E should continue to be a high priority for technical assistance, as monitoring and evaluation activities need to be strengthened throughout the DAPs and the organization. Capacity should be built within field offices to do good monitoring and evaluation that contributes to program learning and reporting on DAP results. This would also allow OICI to engage USAID, FANTA and others on appropriate practices with regards to baselines and selection of indicators. Specifically,

- ◆ It is time to establish an organization-wide Management Information System to facilitate and manage the program Results Framework and provide country offices with a means of easily accessing pertinent reports and state-of-the-art technical developments. The MIS would also improve reporting from the country offices.
- ◆ Establish effect-level and impact-level indicators for the ICB to be able to measure qualitative program improvements and the effects of capacity building (not just the outputs).

5. Develop Sustainability Mechanisms in the DAPs

Given the real possibility that OICI will be forced to curtail DAP programming activities in Ghana and Guinea, OICI Staff should construct adaptable exit strategies that promote sustainable mechanisms to sustain OICI field efforts even after OICI leaves the working areas.

OICI should develop a long-term approach to sustainable development that includes agriculture, health, and nutrition in its programming approach. New proposals should promote synergies more broadly, bringing in agriculture and nutrition outcomes.

6. Consider establishing strategic coalitions with PVOs in order to develop new food security programs in USAID priority countries and elsewhere.

It is now clear that USAID will no longer fund Title II programs in Ghana, Guinea, and many other countries in Africa where Food for Peace once operated after FY07 or FY08. FFP will be operating in far fewer countries and the competition

amongst PVOs to implement country programs will intensify. FFP is limiting Title II programming in West Africa to the transitional countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone, where OICI has limited programming experience but where other larger PVOs have worked for decades. OICI is at a comparative disadvantage attempting to design new project proposals in these countries. It is therefore strategically advisable to form alliances with like-minded PVOs in order to establish consortia that would be able to develop strong proposals drawing on comparative sectoral strengths by organization, sharing resources, and allocating geographic targeting by PVO. While it is undoubtedly true that OICI has had some bitter experiences with consortia proposals and PVO alliances in the past, it is also true that USAID is increasingly encouraging MYAP design and development through consortia, which can provide economies of scale and strong project designs. It is also true that standing alone, OICI is currently in a weak position vis-à-vis MYAP food security programming potential in Liberia and Sierra Leone.

OICI should nevertheless immediately commence the process of organizational and country assessments to find the right fit and expand food security programming potential in the region.

7. The ICB Final Evaluation Process

OICI should ensure that the Final Evaluation of the ICB, which will be undertaken in approximately two years, allows sufficient time and resources for the evaluation team to visit the field offices in Guinea and Ghana and discuss program outcomes with a wide variety of field staff and partners.