APPENDIX B

Food Security Program Final Evaluation Report

WEST BANK FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM:

Final Evaluation Report

Submitted to:

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Table of Contents

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Figures

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A. Food Security in the oPt: A Brief Overview

The protracted political crisis in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) which ensued after the breakout of the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* in September 2000 has been consistently and progressively damaging the fragile Palestinian economy. Between 1999 and 2007, the restrictions of movement of people and commercial goods, the closure of the Israeli labor market to Palestinians, as well as the repeated destruction of physical assets during regular military incursions are key elements in the economic downturn in the oPt. During the period 1999-2007, punctuated by a very modest recovery during 2003-2005 driven by increased public spending, remittances and international aid, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita declined by about one third as the modest growth in the GDP could not keep pace with the rapid population growth.[1]

The economic decline has been having adverse effects on the livelihood of Palestinian households, causing spiraling levels of unemployment, poverty and food insecurity. The2006 Comprehensive and Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA) conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Food Program (WFP) revealed that 34% (1,322,019) of the population of the WBGS is food secure, 20% (777,658) is marginally secure, 12% (466,595) is vulnerable to becoming food insecure and 34% (1,322,019) is food insecure.

The CFSVA also concluded that economic access to food continues to be the most significant food security concern in oPt. Food price increases in the face of drastic reduction of livelihoods, cash income and consumers' purchasing power have created a kind of "market-induced shock" to vulnerable households. Physical fragmentation of the West Bank, created by the construction of the Barrier Wall and internal closure systems, has resulted in a horizontal trisection—limiting the flow of commodities among north, central and southern regions—and a vertical bisection—severing the agricultural productive Jordan Valley from its absorbing markets.[2] Clearly, many markets have closed or have been relocated, increasing transaction costs and restricting the access of some population groups to buy or sell products.

Among the most severely affected by the adverse economic conditions are farmers' households, whose incomes have substantially diminished due to their inability to market their products outside the oPt on the one hand, and their high production cost due to inefficient farming practices on the other. Equally affected, were poor rural households whose livelihoods have been traditionally dependent on access to employment opportunities inside Israel, most of whom, according to the CFSVA have exhausted their coping strategies and, as a result, find many food items beyond their reach. Among these, according to official statistics, women-headed households were worst-off. Weak in capacity and resources, cooperatives and local charitable organizations have not been able to effectively help their members and constituents in coping with their difficult conditions.

Table 1: Macroeconomic Indicators in the oPt for various years between 1999 and 2006

Macroeconomic Indicators	1999	2002	2005	2006[3]
Real GDP (millions, US$)	5,095	4,169.3	4,456.4	1,101.1
GDP per capita in PT (US$)	1,687.3	1,203.4	1,268.2	305.5
Population growth rate in (PT) (%)	4.2	5	4.5	4.4
Inflation (%)	5.5	5.7	3.5	0.95
Total Palestine workforce (PT) ,000	672	708	633	621
in (WB) ,000	*466*	*488*	*453*	*452*
in (GS) ,000	*205*	*219*	*180*	*169*

[1] PCBS, National Accounts Data.
[2] OCHA. (October 2006). Territorial Fragmentation of the West Bank – Map included in the CAP 2007.
[3] Data for GDP, per capita GDP and the inflation rate are for the first quarter of 2006. Data on the workforce, unemployment rates and poverty rates are for the third quarter 2006.

Unemployment rate (PT) (%)	16.3	31	23.5	24.2
in (WB) (%)	*9.6*	*28.2*	*20.3*	*19.1*
in (GS) (%)	*17*	*38*	*30.3*	*36.3*
Poverty rate (PT)	21	60	52	56
in (WB) (%)	*n.a.*	*55*	*46*	*43*
in (GS) (%)	*n.a.*	*70*	*63*	*80*

Source: PCBS, Labor Force Survey, National Accounts (various issues), MAS Economic Monitor (various issues).

Against this backdrop, ACDI/VOCA received a US$ 5 million grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to implement the West Bank Food Security (WBFS) Program, which was designed with the goal of promoting sustainable livelihoods and reducing food insecurity among 2,175 poor and marginalized smallholder households in the West Bank (15,225 beneficiaries) by improving agricultural production, processing and commercial farming and agribusiness.

B. Evaluation Objective and Methodology

With one month before the completion of USAID financing, ACDI/VOCA commissioned Al-Sahel for Institutional Development and Communication (Al-Sahel) to conduct a final evaluation of the Program. As stated in the evaluation terms of reference, the program is being evaluated during the last month prior to the completion of financing by the USAID. This final evaluation serves three purposes:

1. To determine how well the WBFS Program sub-recipients achieved their goals and objectives in relation to the program;

2. To assess the impact on the beneficiaries (cooperatives, cooperative members, and rural households); and,

3. To assess the sustainability of the program activities.

The evaluation purpose was pursued through a participatory quantitative and qualitative assessment that utilized the following tools and sources of information:

1. A desk review: The consultants conducted a comprehensive and exhaustive review of the project's documents. This included a review of, *inter alia*, the WBFS Program proposal submitted to USAID; the cooperative agreement between USAID and ACDI/VOCA; the sub-recipients proposals and progress reports; the quarterly progress reports prepared by ACDI/VOCA and submitted to USAID; project baseline survey reports and monitoring data; cooperative assessment reports; training materials; brochures; and, publications issued through the project. Several other reports and publications related to the general socio-economic and food security conditions in the oPt were also reviewed by the consultants in preparation of and during the evaluation.

2. Semi-Structured Interviews (SSIs): Several SSIs were conducted with project stakeholders to allow for validation of preliminary findings, and conversation and reciprocal transmission of information between the evaluators and the key informants being interviewed. SSIs were conducted with the WBFS Program Key Personnel, sub-recipient organizations staff, a sample of fifteen cooperatives targeted by the program and fifteen beneficiary households. In most SSIs, the evaluation team conducted a further review and analysis of project related documents, such as training materials, monitoring and management forms, procurement related documents, etc.

3. Beneficiaries Survey: To facilitate the measurement of WBFS Program impact, a household survey of a stratified random sample of the Program beneficiary households was carried out. Five different questionnaires were developed for the five Program components on the basis of the questionnaires used in the baseline survey, with a focus on measuring the project-specific indicators and projects' impact. The sampling frame on which basis the sample of respondents was selected comprised the individuals who benefitted from the Program's different components (1,940 beneficiaries). The sample size will be

determined using a combination of a stratified sample process and a simple random sample process. The former was used for the four components where cooperatives were involved. The latter was used for the Rural Household Support component where there was no substantial involvement of cooperative. For the stratified sampling process, each stratum included the beneficiary cooperative members in each targeted cooperative under a specific component. While the stratified sampling process was slightly more time consuming and required surveying a greater number of people overall than a simple random sample process, it was deemed necessary for dissemination of results at the cooperative level. The following table provides the number of questionnaires completed with the program beneficiaries by component.

Table 2: Indicative sample size using a stratified sampling process

Component	Total N°. of Beneficiaries	Number of Completed Questionnaires	Percentage
#1: Small Ruminant Dairy Production…	165	114	69.1
#2: Horticulture Production…	354	187	52.8
#3: Improved Olive Oil Production…	455	196	43.1
#4: Improved Household Value Added…	176	153	86.9
#5: Rural Household Support	790	260	32.9
Total	**1,940**	**910**	**46.9**

4. **Focus Group Meetings**: Five small discussion groups were organized with beneficiaries of the different Program components. These Focus Groups were mainly utilized to assess strategies used and results achieved. Each Focus Group was organized with a group of 10-15 beneficiaries, selected in collaboration with the implementing partner organizations (sub-recipients) and local committees.

C. Evaluation Limitations

While several information and data collection techniques were used by the evaluation team, including the utilization of the baseline data and conducting a post-completion survey of the Program's end beneficiaries, these techniques may have been –in some cases- too narrow to assess the full impact of the WBFS Program. While the interview coverage is quite substantial (54% of the total target cooperatives), the results emerging from these interviews may not be entirely conclusive. This is particularly true when it comes to the findings related to the satisfaction of cooperatives with the support extended to them by the program and the impact of this support on the way they conduct their business. This notwithstanding, the evaluation findings set forth in this report are believed to be representative of the general situation of cooperatives and end beneficiaries at the end of the project.

Measuring the impact of the Program was another constraint. As we shall examine below, several extraneous factors have stood in the way of the Program from achieving its full potential by the end of Program activities. Add to this the fact that the period following the completion of several Program activities was too short to enable an accurate and objective measurement of the full impact of the project. Accordingly, when reading the sections on impact (and to a lesser degree on effectiveness), it would be very helpful for the reader to keep this in mind. Conducting the evaluation one year after the completion of all Program activities, may be more useful in ascertaining a more accurate measurement of its impact.

The fact that a number of cooperatives and cooperative members and farmers who were surveyed at the baseline changed and/or were replaced during implementation, along with the tendency of beneficiaries to underestimate the benefit they accrued as a result of the Program on the one hand and their inability to recall with accuracy quantities/value of production on the other hand added another dimension to the above constraint. While the evaluation team was able to deal with most of these issues, the fact remains that quantitative evaluation findings cannot be used in isolation from the qualitative findings, as both complement each other.

D. Report Structure

The report is presented in seven chapters. This chapter introduces the program and the evaluation in brief. Chapter two assesses the WBFS Program as initially designed in 2006. Here discussed are the existing context and future as anticipated at the time, the original goals and objectives, and the methods and resources expected to be used to achieve them (strategy, components, organizational structure and staffing, funding, planning and management), and the expected results.

Chapters three through seven provide an assessment of the five Program components and all the above as they unfolded in practice. Here discussed are the changing contexts and circumstances, the strategies, components and activities as they were implemented in practice, and the program planning and management process that guided them, and the actual results compared to initial objectives and expected results for each component.

The Appendix includes the list of the people interviewed during the evaluation.

CHAPTER TWO: THE WBFS PROGRAM AS DESIGNED AND ITS ASSESSMENT

A. Context at the Time of Design

As reflected in the WBFS Program proposal, the Program was designed within the context of diminishing livelihoods and uncertain political and economic future. At the time of the design, as the Program proposal highlights, Palestinian were experiencing reduced purchasing power as a result of a number of unfavorable economic and political conditions including border closures, increased number of checkpoints and movement restrictions, and loss of income by some 130,000 PA employees. According to the Program proposal, food insecurity was estimated at 37% of the West Bank population, and anticipated to increase to 51% by the end of 2006. Poverty rates stood at 75% and 73% in the northern and southern West Bank, respectively. And unemployment rates at the national level (West Bank and Gaza Strip) estimated at 31%.

From a livelihood perspective, the situation in the West Bank was bleak. A growing proportion of rural and farmer households, once considered immune to food insecurity by virtue of their having access to natural and physical capital, were quickly entering into the circle of food insecurity as they were no longer able to cope with the loss of income (as a result of reduced local consumption and rising dependency) and increasing prices of agricultural inputs. Small growers had very limited opportunities to sell their products outside the West Bank, further squeezing their already tight profit margin and rendering their work in agriculture unfeasible.

Agricultural cooperatives, like most small businesses and civil society organizations in the oPt, were losing ground and unable to effectively help their members and constituents overcome the difficulties that the general political-economic situation was imposing upon them. Most of these cooperatives have been traditionally weak, from both administrative and technical perspectives, and unable to provide value-added services to their members. Little was being done by the PA in the political and economic spheres to rejuvenate market and tackle the stifling trade and slowed investment.

In addition to border closings and movement restrictions, the barrier wall construction continued to impact food security and livelihoods. The Program proposal highlights that "populations living near the barrier wall are often unable to reach their jobs, markets or farmland. Among those affected by the barrier wall, 53% are reported to have reduced their food supplies, 51.5% are living below the poverty line, and 47.7% are reported to be disconnected to a sewage disposal system."

The context within which the WBFS Program was designed included the optimism generated from the successful experience of ACDI/VOCA in previous agribusiness and rural livelihood support projects, including a relatively recent United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funded small grants and agribusiness development programs which were implemented between 2002 and 2006 in partnership with local non-governmental organizations. This WBFS Program expands and refines these projects. Documents reflecting on the experience of ACDI/VOCA's previous agribusiness and food security programs in the oPt confidently stated that the working models of these programs –and proposed for implementation in the WBFS Program- and their focus on agricultural and agribusiness development could be replicated in the future. This was especially true when the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) concluded in 2006 that "it is of utmost importance to invest in Palestinian agriculture in order to tackle… issues that dramatically affect the agricultural sector and the populations who depend on farming livelihoods."

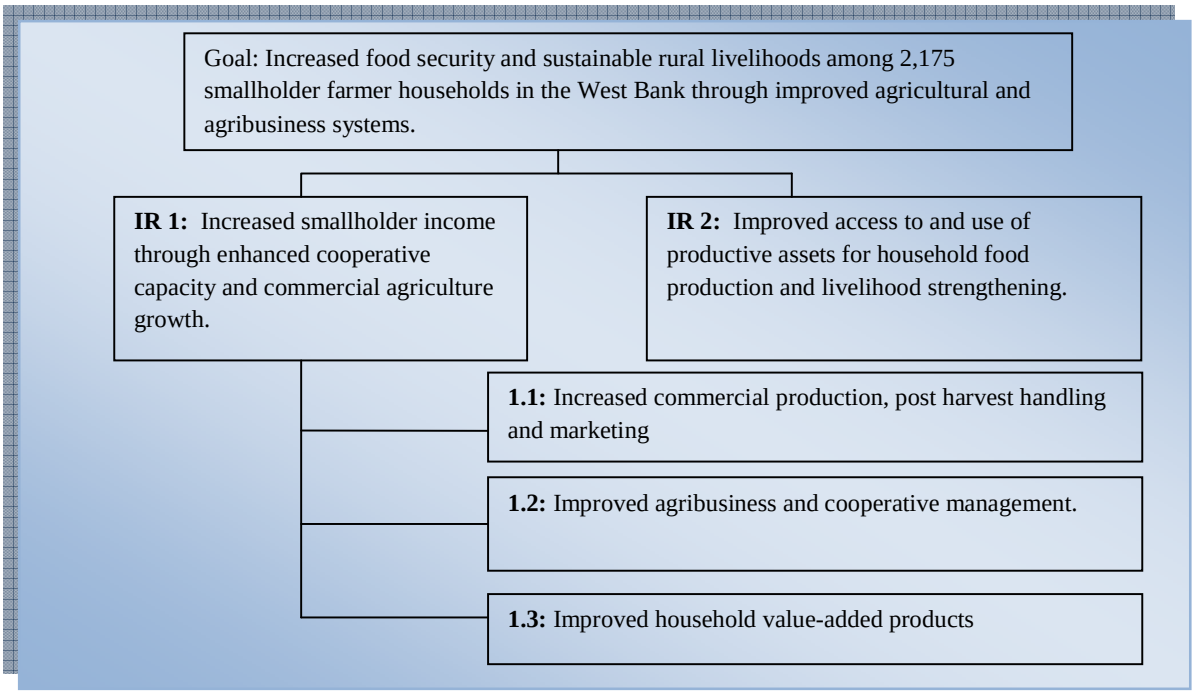
B. Program Goal, Intermediate Results and Strategy Components

The WBFS Program was designed with the overall goal of promoting sustainable livelihoods and increase food security among 2,175 poor and marginalized stallholder households in the West Bank (15,225 direct and indirect beneficiaries) by improving agricultural production, processing and commercial farming and agribusiness. Under this goal, two intermediate results (IR) were envisaged, namely:

- IR-1: Increased smallholder income through enhanced cooperative capacity and commercial agricultural growth: three result outputs were designed to contribute to achieving IR-1, all of which organized under cooperative agribusiness growth strategy. These were: increased commercial production, post harvest and processing; improved agribusiness and cooperative management; and, improved household value-added products.

- IR-2: Improved access to and use of productive assets for household food production and livelihood strengthening. This result envisaged assisting rural households in improving their use of productive assets (including water and land assets as well as unemployed household labor), enhancing household agricultural production techniques, and increasing livelihoods security by expanding generation of additional household food and income. Within the framework of this results, three activities were envisaged, namely: establishing and improving home gardens; construction of cisterns, small greenhouses and grey water treatment units for home garden irrigation and production; and, application of improved farming technologies such as drip irrigation, cultivation practices, planning and integrated pest management.

Figure 1: WBFS Program Results Chain



The cooperative agribusiness growth (CoAG) and rural household support (RHS) strategies were selected on the basis of lessons learned from ACDI/VOCA's previous programs and projects in the oPt, which suggested that augmenting internal food security by means of increasing overall production and reducing costs of production, and promoting market access are among the most effective means for improving food security and livelihoods.

A three-tier methodology would be used to implement the CoAG and RHS strategies. The first tier consisted of Grants Management, and the second comprised direct technical assistance. Under the former, ACDI/VOCA would use its well-established grant funding approach to channel USAID development assistance to local NGOs to implement the development interventions it identified in the Program design document. The grants management system would facilitate effective coordination and enable the selection (through a competitive application process) and performance monitoring of implementing partners effectively. The second tier involved the direct engagement of ACDI/VOCA in the provision of short-term technical assistance and training through in-house staff and external consultants. Direct technical assistance was envisaged to include training of farmers and cooperative leaders on topics related to greenhouse production, cooperative development, marketing, small ruminant sheep dairy

production and farming as a business. The third tier involved coordination with partners and with external stakeholders, particularly USAID-funded projects, to maximize the effectiveness and efficacy of the Program.

Gender integration comprised the third methodological approach of the WBFS Program. Women would be integrated into the Program primarily through the RHS activities, and more generally through other activities. Inclusion of women in training and designating them as the direct beneficiaries of the support provided by the WBFS Program to the extent possible, and giving priority to female-headed households in the selection of beneficiaries would be the techniques used for gender integration. The Program design envisaged that women would represent at least 43% of the overall program beneficiaries, and 32% of the RHS component.

B.1. Cooperative Agribusiness Growth

The CoAG strategy component was envisaged to "reap the quickest and most sustainable impact for smallholder farmers active in small scale agribusiness production and processing." As explained below, this was to be done through working with cooperatives in various agricultural sectors to increase value and improve marketability of crops and processed foods in the local and Israeli markets. Towards this end, farmers would be provided with assistance to address production and marketing constraints on the one hand, and support would be given to clusters of farmers to adopt collective schemes in production, post-harvest handling and marketing.

B.1.1. IR-1.1. Increased commercial production, post harvest handling and marketing

Three agricultural sub-sectors were to be targeted through the increased commercial production, post harvest and marketing activities. These were: olive oil, small ruminant dairy, and horticulture production.[4] The following is a summary of what would be done under each of these.

- Improved olive production, harvesting, pressing and oil storage: Targeted interventions would include support to olive oil producer cooperatives and their members to increase quantity and quality of olive oil produced. This would be done through introducing pre-tested collective olive harvesting, pressing and oil storage methods within the targeted cooperatives. The introduction of the collective olive pressing and oil storage (COPOS) program would entail training in principles, methods and benefits of the COPOS program, as well as training to the cooperative management teams on issues related to management of collective oil production schemes. The WBFS Program would also finance the procurement and distribution of harvesting materials, storage tanks, and management tools. In addition, it would provide 50% matching support to the target cooperatives for upgrading phyto-sanitary capacity of leased private oil extraction presses. The expected results were as follows:

    - Increased Income of US$ 375,000 for targeted cooperative members from quality price premiums of US$ 1,250 per metric ton of olive oil.
    - Enhanced knowledge and skills for 500+ farmers in collective olive harvesting pressing, processing and oil storage.
    - Increased capacity of 11 olive oil producing cooperatives to produce 200 metric tons of high-quality virgin and extra-virgin olive oil, of which at least 80 percent would be extra-virgin.

- Improved small ruminant dairy production (SRDP): A pilot project would be implemented in cooperation with the Palestinian Livestock Cooperative Union (PLCU) whereby local sheep and goat milk would be collected from 150 members of livestock cooperatives, processed and marketed by existing dairy producers, thus building sustainable marketing linkages. This would be done in conjunction with technical assistance to the target cooperatives and their members to help them improve their milk production, quality/hygiene control processes, and cooperative management systems. The project would also provide up to 67% support funding to targeted farmers investing 33% of the cost of essential tools for commercial milk production, such as milking machines and cans. The expected results were as follows:

    - 3,750 liters/day sheep's milk processed into cheese and yogurt.
    - Increased income of approximately US$ 11/day for each of the 150 targeted farmers.
    - Strengthened dairy cooperatives' institutional capacity.

[4] For additional information on the rationale behind targeting these sectors, please refer to the WBFS Program proposal.

- Improved management and quality of processing in participating dairy plants.
- Improved pasteurized sheep' milk product marketing.

- Horticulture production and marketing for vegetable farmers and cooperatives (HPM): ACDI/VOCA would leverage its experience in implementing similar previous projects in the horticulture sub-sector to introduce modern and advanced agricultural techniques and practices in greenhouse production in the northern parts of the West Bank. This would include the construction and rehabilitation of some 350 greenhouses (315 dunums), and the provision of technical and extension services in integrated pest management (IPM) techniques, crop management, protected agriculture, crop diversification and quality standards to 350 vegetable farmers and their agricultural cooperatives. IPM technical training for farmers will cover cultivation practices, planning and scheduling of crop cultivation, composting, water use, drip irrigation techniques and maintenance, soil management, minimizing use of pesticides and insecticides and other relevant topics. Materials necessary for IPM production, such as mesh, double doors, and traps for natural enemies would also be provided to beneficiary farmers. In addition to this, ACDI/VOCA would train farmers on employing Farming-as-a-Business (FaaB) techniques as a way of improving their farm management practices and enhancing profitability.

  ACDI/VOCA, within the framework of the HPM component, would complement the above activities by assisting cooperatives in improving their access to markets, particularly to the Israeli market. This would be done through technical assistance for improving production protocols followed by farmers and their cooperatives, and developing and installing the necessary systems for quality-assurance and post harvest handling to improve the marketability of agricultural crops produced. The results envisaged under the HPM component were as follows:

  - Decreased input costs for 350 farmers and cooperative members.
  - Increased income for 350 targeted farmers and cooperative members.
  - Chemical residue reduced by 30% on IPM produced crops.
  - Improved marketing channels for IPM produced crops in the West Bank and Israel.
  - Increased production quality standards.

B.1.2. IR-1.2. Improved agribusiness and cooperative management

In conjunction with and to complement IR-1.2, the WBFS Program would address the traditionally weak management, organization and marketing functions, which have rendered these cooperatives unable to operate profitably and effectively serve their members. This would be approached through two strategies, namely: agricultural cooperative capacity building; and marketing assistance. Under the former, cooperatives would be assisted in developing their internal systems, procedures, databases and organizational profiles (electronic and print). They would also be provided with training on cooperative principles, management and business-oriented administration. Under the latter –marketing assistance, assistance would be provided to cooperatives in developing marketing plans, exploring marketing opportunities, and preparing samples, product fact sheets and other marketing tools. The results envisaged from these two strategies are summarized in the table below.

Table 3: Expected Results: Improved agribusiness and cooperative management (IR-1.2)

Agricultural cooperative capacity building	Marketing assistance
- Internal systems (membership, accounting and financial management) improved and implemented in 12 farmer cooperatives. - Membership databases established and used in 12 farmer cooperatives. - Twelve (12) cooperative production profiles and promotional means developed - One hundred and twenty (120) cooperative staff and members trained in business management, integrated crop management production and marketing. - Sixty (60) cooperative board members trained on cooperative management and good governance. - Improved business capacity confirmed through the	- MIS systems established and 10 marketing plans developed - Over 30 business meetings, workshops, field visits and promotional events conducted, resulting in increased business transactions - Legal protocols and contracts established, including guidance created to mitigate risks and ensure timely payment - Samples, product sheets and other marketing media designed and produced for 10 cooperatives. - The creation of web pages in Arabic and Hebrew for six cooperatives. - 20% increase in vegetable produce sales to Israel

Agricultural cooperative capacity building	Marketing assistance
number of new contracts, sales or Memoranda of Understanding with Israeli and Palestinian buyers.	

B.1.3. IR-1.3. Improved household value-added products

Through supporting targeted clusters of women cooperatives and women organizations that produce market-consistent food products in improving the quality of and marketing their products (traditional foods), this activity would create a viable source of additional household income and food for marginalized families who do not own sufficient areas of cultivable lands. Emphasis would be given to linking participating cooperatives and women groups to one or more local food trading firms through business agreements, and improving the business operations of the participating cooperatives and women organizations. More specifically, 160 women from 10 women's cooperatives/groups would be trained on production and marketing of consistent traditional Palestinian products; 10 women cooperatives/organizations would be trained in small business and marketing and provided with support to start and sustain operations; and assistance would be provided to the target cooperatives/organizations in marketing their processed foods. The expected results were as follows:

- Ten (10) women cooperatives/groups trained in business management and marketing, and operating as a small business.
- Enhanced skills and knowledge of 160 women in home-based food processing.
- At least 4 new product brands introduced into the local market.
- Increased average monthly income of US$ 100 for each target household.

B.2. Rural Household Support

To address food insecurity among poor rural households, ACDI/VOCA would partner with the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem (ARIJ) within the framework of the WBFS Program to improve access to and use of productive assets for household food production and livelihood strengthening through a rural household support (RHS) strategy. This involves the provision of assistance to 700 marginalized poor households in establishing half-dunum home-based agricultural gardens that would provide a source of food and additional potential source of income for the household. For each home garden, through its partner organizations, would construct a cistern, gray wastewater treatment unit or small greenhouse ($90m^2$), depending on its specific need and appropriateness of geoclimatic conditions. Irrigation networks, seeds, and pumps, as well as agricultural training would be provided to supplement the home gardens and make their utilization more efficient and effective. The expected results of the RHS strategy component interventions were as follows:

- Increased access to and productive use of natural and household resources necessary to grow food.
- Decreased household expenditure on water.
- Enhanced skills and knowledge on topics such as water conversation, drip irrigation maintenance and cropping practices.
- Increased access to and productive use of land for production throughout the year.
- Increased vegetable production.
- Enhanced skills and knowledge on topics such as water management, fruit and vegetable cultivation, and pest management.

Critical to the success of the RHS component was the timely construction of home gardens. The WBFS Program proposal envisaged completion of home gardens involving cistern construction before the winter season to allow for rainwater collection, whereas no such stipulation was spelled out for home gardens involving greenhouses and gray wastewater treatment units.

C. Resources: Organizational Structure, Human Resources, and Funding

C.1. Organizational Structure and Human Resources

The following observations can be made about this structure:

a) The core of the structure was to be the Executive Management and Project Staff. This would consist of ACDI/VOCA's Chief of Party and his Deputy; a Monitoring and Evaluation/Compliance Manager; a Financial Manager and a Bookkeeper; an Office Manager; and Program Specialists (Agriculture/Agribusiness, Cooperative Development, and Food Security). This core team would be collectively responsible –under the direct supervision of the Chief of Party and in close coordination with the USAID assigned Cognizant Technical Officer- for the implementation of the Program activities.

b) Each of the Program Specialists would be responsible for overseeing the implementation of one or more of the five Program components. Each Specialist would work with prospective grantees on grant proposals, activity start-up and implementation, conducting field visits at project sites and verifying achievement of the outputs. The Program Specialists would work together as a team to ensure the proper integration of the various program activities.

c) Each of the grantees selected to implement a Program component would hire the appropriate number of staff necessary for successfully implementing that component's activities. The number and qualifications of staff was not explicitly identified at the Program design, however, it was implicit that ACDI/VOCA would ensure – through the grant making process- that grantees hire the adequate number and type of staff, commensurate with the need under each component.

The core Program structure and grantee project staff would be well supported by locally and externally recruited consultants hired to assist in such work as agricultural cooperative development, domestic and international marketing, agricultural systems, and greenhouse production.

C.2. Funding

Overall funding for the contracts portion of the Program (pass through sub-contracts), the bulk of which would go to finance physical assets to cooperatives and farmers, was expected to be US$ 2.55 million (Table 4). This amount would be almost equally split between year one and two of the Program's lifetime. The remaining US$ 2.45 million would be earmarked for salaries, fringe benefits, allowances and travel and per diems (29%); direct training provision by ACDI/VOCA (0.25%); short-term technical assistance (0.74%); indirect costs (12.6%); and, other direct costs (6.2%).[5]

Table 4: The WBFS Program budget (US$), by year

Line Item	Year One	Year Two	Total
Salaries and Services	$345,216	$439,593	$874,809
Fringe Benefits	$124,581	$127,583	$252,164
Allowances	$101,610	$88,201	$189,811
Travel and Per Diems	$77,212	$58,223	$135,435
Training	$5,125	$7,390	$12,515
Consultants	$22,250	$14,868	$37,118
Other Direct Costs	$322,943	$308,050	$630,984
Pass Through Subcontracts	$1,208,225	$1,350,224	$2,588,449
Total	**$2,457,800**	**$2,542,200**	**$5,000,000**

[5] The percentage of the total grant amount; i e. US$ 5 million.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) was given special emphasis in the WBFS Program. Almost four pages out of the 30-page program proposal were devoted to it. This was for two reasons: 1) M&E is an important management tool, especially for a multi-dimensional complex program in a complex working environment such as the WBFS Program, and 2) it was a 'development experiment', one of a new generation of ACDI/VOCA's agribusiness development and food security programs being tested in the West Bank.[6] The M&E system played the key role of extracting policy lessons from program experience.

Consequently the proposal document set out in some detail the system and scope of M&E. This included its purpose, strategy and coverage, outputs and activities, a schedule of M&E activities and details on these. The overall M&E system was later further developed –during the first two months of operation- to include a detailed M&E Plan that integrated programmatic M&E with US government (USG) regulatory compliance and financial management requirements.

The M&E plan provided three primary functions: (1) collect and analyze data; (2) provide "real time" measurement of achievements toward the program's anticipated positive results via interventions and activities; and (3) serve as a management tool to adjust activities, address unforeseen constraints, and document and evaluate effectiveness. The M&E plan would act as a tool to monitor, report, analyze and disseminate data on indicators, yearly targets, activities and anticipated results. It would also incorporate a mix of quantitative (surveys and secondary data) and qualitative data (focus groups, key informant interviews). The main program-level performance indicators that were formulated and elaborated in the Monitoring Plan are presented in the overleaf (Table 5: Indicator Performance Tracking Table).

The strategy and coverage of the M&E system involved:

- A 'rigorous but minimalist approach' focused on a few, key set of objectives and results-related questions and using only essential data collection and reporting
- A mix of methodologies – quantitative, qualitative, surveys baselines, final evaluation, etc.
- Being participatory - beneficiaries and grantees involved in establishing indicators (KPI), program baselines, and performance assessments.
- Program monitoring mechanisms would include data entry into MIS, GIS, monthly monitoring of objectives, and regular beneficiary assessments (particularly trainees).
- Special efforts to test and develop the M&E system, with a particular focus on facilitating management decision making and high-level monitoring.
- M&E of the program at several levels including inputs, outputs, performance , and impact.

M&E staffing and institutional resources included an in-house local M&E specialist to design and lead the effort. This specialist would work with the WBFS Program staff and grantees to carry out the M&E activities. In addition external consultants would provide special technical backstopping particularly during the initial stages of M&E design, KPI establishment, baseline survey and final evaluation.

[6] Interview with ACDI/VOCA D/COP.

Table 5: WBFS Program Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT)

		2007				*2008*				*LOP*
		Q1	***Q2***	***Q3***	***Q4***	***Q1***	***Q2***	***Q3***	***Q4***	
	Annual Monitoring Indicators	**target**	**target**	**target**	**target**	**target**	**target**	**target**	**target**	**target**
	Program Level Indicators									
PI1	Total # of beneficiary HH assisted	0	60	599	1,004	1,794	2,105	2,175	2,175	2,175
	- Men	0	54	307	471	1,039	1224	1,238	1,238	1,238
	- Women	0	6	292	533	755	881	937	937	937
	Total Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries assisted	0	420	4,193	7,028	12,558	14,735	15,225	15,225	15,225
	- Male	0	234	2,104	3,483	6,421	7,539	7,763	7,763	7,763
	- Female	0	186	2,089	3,545	6,137	7,196	7,462	7,462	7,462
PI2	% of trained producers with knowledge of improved production techniques	0	TBD	50%	TBD	70%	70%	70%	TBD	70%
	IR 1: Cooperative Agribusiness Growth Component (CoAg)									
Imp.1.1	$ Value of Commodities sold by members through their cooperative *	0	0	91,800	40,250	1,228,250	453,100	507,100	314,050	2,634,550
	- Horticulture	0	0	0	0	198,000	297,000	391,500	274,050	1,160,550
	- Small Ruminant milk	0	0	91,800	20,250	20,250	116,100	75,600		324,000
	- Olive oil	0	0	0	0	980,000	0	0		980,000
	- Traditional Food	0	0	0	20,000	30,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	170,000
Imp.1.2	Metric tons of crops/commodity sold through cooperatives **									
	- Horticulture	0	0	0	0	330	495	652.5	456.75	1,934
	- Small Ruminant milk	0	0	136	30	30	172	112	0	480
	- Olive oil	0	0	0	0	200	0			200
	- Traditional Food	0	0	0	8	12	16	16	16	68
Imp. .3	% of residue analysis tests accepted	0	0	0	0	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
Imp.1.4	Average price/kilo of selected crops ***									
	-olive oil	0	0	0	N/A	$4.90	$4.90	$4.90	$4.90	$4.90
	-tomatoes	0	0	0	N/A	$0.60	$0.60	$0.60	$0.60	$0.60
	-cherry tomatoes	0	0	0	N/A	$0.00				
	-cucumbers	0	0	0	N/A	$0.50	$0.50	$0.50	$0.50	$0.50
	-bell pepper	0	0	0	N/A	N/A				
	-snow peas	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	TBD			
	-green bean	0	0	0	N/A	$0.50	$0.50	$0.50	$0.50	$0.50
Imp.1.5	# of new market linkages	0	0	1	4	0	5	5	5	20
Imp.1.6	Average Org Assessment Rating	TBD	TBD	0	70%	70%	70%	70%	TBD	70%
	- Horticulture			70%	70%	70%	70%	70%		70%
	- Small Ruminant milk			70%	70%	70%	70%	70%		70%
	- Olive oil			70%	70%	70%	70%	70%		70%
	- Traditional Food			70%	70%	70%	70%	70%		70%
Mon1.7	Number of improved commercial greenhouses	0	0	0	257	20	76	0		353
	- # of rehabilitated greenhouses	0	0	0	130	20	76	0		226
	- # of new greenhouses	0	0	0	127	0	0	0		127
Imp.2.1	% increase in household income									
	- Horticulture				N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		70%
	- Small Ruminant milk				60%	N/A	N/A	N/A		70%
	- Olive oil				N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		70%
	- Traditional Food				33%	N/A	N/A	N/A		70%
	IR 2: Rural Household Support (RHS)									
Imp.2.2	Cubic meters of water storage capacity	0	0	9,800	4,200	2,100	2,100	5,600	0	23,800
Mon.2.3	Number of households implementing home gardens									
	- Cisterns	0	0	140	0	30	30	80	0	280
	- GWWTU	0	0	50	0	0	0	60	0	110
	- Greenhouses	0	0	140	120	20	100	20	0	400

E. Assessment of the Program Design and its Relevance

Overall, the WBFS Program was very well designed, and quite innovative in several of the approaches it proposed. The design document was well informed about what it took to promote sustainable livelihoods and enhance food security in the oPt. It was also, quite commendably, well-informed about the context within which it was to attempt to do so. It comprehensively identified all the basic objectives that would need to be met over time, the methods – strategies, components, tasks – needed to meet them, and the resources - human and financial – that would have to be in place for this.

Particularly remarkable was the detail with which some aspects of the program were spelled out. Examples include the type of M&E that would need to be done to both help manage what was a complex and ambitious program, and the activities that would be implemented under each of the Program components. The lengths to which the WBFS Program design team went to identify prospective grantees and cooperatives –evidenced by the relatively comprehensive information provided about them in the proposal- and the participatory design process are quite evident. This is highly commendable and warrants special praise.

The linkage that the Program design made between development and emergency assistance through the use of a livelihood development approach –albeit not explicitly mentioned as such in the Program proposal- is also quite remarkable and demonstrates the design team's robust understanding of development approaches and the local context. Similarly, the design's attention to institutionalization of improvements introduced in cooperative management, as well as the detailed description of the coordination processes with other USAID-funded programs and other stakeholders to create synergy and avoid duplication are worthy of special applaud. These –in the opinion of the evaluation team- are among the distinctive aspects of the WBFS Program design.

Below, with some benefit of hindsight no doubt, we will discuss three aspects of the WBFS Program proposal that might have been improved given what could have been known at that time. The value of doing this is two-fold. First, it helps identify where an issue that might have arisen later in program implementation had its roots in the problem of how the program was designed, or at least, in part resulted from the way it was designed and not simply in the way it was implemented. Second, identifying improvements may offer lessons for how future similar programs should be designed.

a) Lack of a section on Assumptions and Risk Management in the Program proposal: Such a section in the Program design document would have prompted the designers to consider the possibility of some of their optimistic assumptions not being borne out and taking account of this possibility in the design. For example, not only would the Program proposal document have suggested the risk of delays in procurement of equipments and inputs, it might have explored how this might affect the program (especially given the agricultural seasonality) and how to respond (risk management).

   Thus a possible slower implementation scenario might have been allowed for, given that much of the program area and potential projects required USAID vetting a Geographic Code Waiver approval. As it was, the wide scope and rapid pace of the program as designed assumed a best-case scenario which then the program was under pressure to live up to. To an extent, some risks and mitigation measures were identified in the M&E system developed after the commencement of the Program, but, again, these were somewhat narrowly focused and assumed a rather optimistic scenario. While the M&E Plan was envisaged to be a work-in-progress document and continuously updated to accommodate changes and issues emerging during implementation, very little updating thereof took place.

b) The challenge of changing farmers' attitudes was slightly underestimated: The experience of ACDI/VOCA and other development organizations in the oPt in working with farmers and introducing new farming practices could have been cited to justify special efforts for changing farmers attitudes under the WBFS Program. The focus on imparting knowledge and skills through extensive training is quite commendable and demonstrates the designers' cognizance of the challenge of changing practices, but insufficient to sustain results and commitment to new practices on the long-term.

c) Incongruence between targeting the poorest households and requiring relatively high levels of contribution/cost sharing from them: While beneficiary contributions are regarded as an essential element to sustainability, considering that the Program was designed to target poor households, it would have been more effective had the 25% contribution requirement been significantly reduced (for example, to 10%). As we shall examine later, the 25% contribution requirement has indeed constituted a "barrier to benefit" for several extreme poor households who would have greatly benefitted from the Program interventions. In-kind contributions along with a waivers process for reducing the required contribution amount could have been considered and negotiated with USAID at the time of design.

These design weaknesses notwithstanding, the evaluation team believes that the WBFS Program as designed and as implemented was and remains unquestionably relevant to its context and responds to real needs of its target beneficiaries. The premise that efforts need to be made to improve livelihoods through strengthening livelihood capitals (human, physical, social, natural and financial) is -beyond doubt- a critical factor to ensuring the food security of people. Without doubt, the livelihood development approach followed by the WBFS Program is among the most effective and efficient approaches to ensuring the target groups sustainable livelihoods.

In terms of its policy and strategy linkages, the project is believed to be highly relevant to the sectoral policies in the oPt (particularly those related to facilitating private sector growth and development; i.e. cooperatives), as well as to the USG objective of promoting stability in the Palestinian Administered Territories and USAID's objectives related to enhancing agricultural production and agribusiness development. More specifically, the WBFS Program activities directly address USAID West Bank and Gaza objectives of increasing access to markets through private sector revitalization by improving the commercialization of smallholder farmer products.

Moreover, the Program is highly relevant to and in line with the organizational capacities and strategies of ACDI/VOCA and the implementing organizations. The overall goal, objectives and results of the project are congruent with each other, and are believed to be relevant –both individually and collectively as manifested in the result chain- to the problem analysis presented in the project proposal document.

CHAPTER THREE: THE SMALL RUMINANT DAIRY PRODUCTION COMPONENT

A. Overview and Performance Targets

On 12 March 2007, ACDI/VOCA and the PLCU signed an agreement to implement a six-month pilot small ruminant dairy collection, processing and marketing project with two livestock cooperatives in the villages of Saida (Tulkarem governorate) and Bazarya (Nablus Governorate). In December 2007, a proposal submitted by PLCU for a second phase continuation was approved for implementation by ACDI/VOCA and USAID. This phase focused on strengthening the processes and results achieved under phase one through continuing technical support to the targeted cooperatives, and expanding the pilot into a third cooperative in the town of Yatta (Hebron Governorate). The overall goal of the project in both phases was to increase the income and improve the livelihood of 150 sheep farmers (65 under phase one and an additional 85 under phase two). This goal was to be achieved through a capacity building strategy that involves the provision of training to farmers and cooperatives; equipment necessary for hygienic milk production, testing, collection, and storage; and, marketing services. While similar in many instances, the project specific objectives and results under phase two differed from those in phase one as shown in the table below.

Table 6: Specific objectives of the SRDP project implemented by PLCU (Phase I and II)

Phase I Objectives	**Phase II Objectives**
Obj#1: To increase the capacity and enhance the skills of 65 sheep farmers to produce high quality raw milk that satisfies the requirements of the Palestinian Raw Milk Standard (MF-600-1999). Results: - Enhanced skills and knowledge of farmers on milk analysis and collection management. - Enhanced skills and knowledge of milk hygiene, milk quality and collection. - Enhanced skills and knowledge of farmers on sheep and goat farming and farm management. - Increased skills and knowledge of sheep farming and collective processing. - Improved sheep milk quality and milk collection process. - Reduced risk of sheep milk contamination. - More efficient milking operations.	Obj#1:To Collect and sell 1,500 liters of sheep milk daily from Bazarya and Saida Livestock Cooperatives through managing and supervising the milk collection process and establishing business relationships between the cooperatives and Al-Jibrini Dairy Factory. Results: - 65 beneficiaries ready to participate in the milk collection scheme developed through the project. - Two milk collection centers ready for milk collection. - 1,500 liters of clean and tested milk collected daily from Saida and Bazarya Cooperatives. - Increased skills and knowledge of sheep farming and collective processing.
Obj#2: To increase the capacity and managerial skills of six cooperative employees and 14 board members in Bazarya and Saida Cooperatives to effectively manage the collection of 2,000 liters of milk daily. Results: - Improved cooperative and managerial skills of 14 board members and 6 employees. - Increased control of the cooperative in internal processes and the milk collection process. - Increased feasibility of the milk collection process.	Obj#2: To increase the capacity and enhance the skills of 85 new sheep farmers to produce high quality raw milk that satisfies the requirements of the Palestinian Raw Milk Standard (MF-600-1999). Results: - Enhanced skills and knowledge of 85 new farmers on milk analysis and collection management. - Enhanced skills and knowledge of milk hygiene, milk quality and collection. - Enhanced skills and knowledge of farmers on sheep and goat farming and farm management. - Increased skills and knowledge of sheep farming

Phase I Objectives	Phase II Objectives
	and collective processing. - Improved sheep milk quality and milk collection process. - 1,500 liters of clean and tested sheep milk collected daily from Saida, Bazarya and Yatta. - Empowered farmers with best practices and skills in sheep farm management and clean milk production.
Obj#3: To improve marketing of the sheep milk products. <u>Results:</u> - Increased consumer awareness of the existence of new sheep milk products in the local market. - Increased demand for sheep milk products.	Obj#3: To increase the capacity and managerial skills of cooperative employees and board members of the three targeted Cooperatives to effectively manage the collection of 3,000 liters of milk daily. <u>Results:</u> - Improved cooperative and managerial skills of 7 board members and 1 employee of Yatta Cooperative. - Increased control of the cooperative in internal processes and the milk collection process. - Increased feasibility of the milk collection process.
	Obj#4: To improve marketing of sheep dairy products through marketing and promotional activities. <u>Results:</u> - Increased consumer awareness of the existence of new sheep milk products in the local market. - Increased demand for sheep milk products.

The activities designed for the achievement of the above results:

- Organizing 23 training workshops with farmers on: milk analysis and collection management; milk hygiene, milk quality and milk collection; sheep and goat farming and farm management.
- Conducting extension 900 visits to farmers (600 extension visits during Phase one and 300 during phase two).
- Distributing 235 thirty-liter milk cans (150 and 85 in phases one and two, respectively).
- Distributing 25 milking machines (only in phase one).
- Preparing and distributing a manual on clean milk production practices and farm management.
- Conducting two central workshops for cooperatives boards and staff on the principles of cooperative work and cooperative management (one in each phase).
- Providing technical assistance to cooperatives to develop their management and financial systems, including on-site training on the application of these systems.
- Supporting the three target cooperatives' infrastructure by providing each with a small refrigerator, milk cooling tank, weighing balances and milk analyzers.
- Conducting a marketing campaign of the new dairy products to include customized labels, radio and television advertisement, banners and billboards.

B. Assessment of Component Implementation

B.1. Project Start-up and Development

As noted above, the first phase of the SRDP project commenced with the signature of the grant agreement between PLCU and ACDI/VOCA on 13 March 2007 -already after the beginning of the period during in which the seasonal milk production is at its height (February - May), with a designed duration of four and a half months and expected funding of US$89,602.[7] PLCU began work immediately, benefiting from the preparatory work it had started before the contract signature. By that time, PLCU had prepared training materials, began contacting prospective suppliers and conducted meetings with the targeted cooperatives and farmers.

The project was envisaged to be implemented with the assumption that the milk collection tanks and other milk collection equipment to be provided by the project would be procured and delivered to the cooperatives before the height of the milking season to enable the farmers to capture the full benefits expected at the time of the project design. This, however, was not possible as a waiver for the procurement of equipment from local suppliers had be approved by USIAD on account of no U.S. supplier interest in the procurement solicitation. This waiver request, submitted on 13 March 2007, was not granted until 5 May 2007. As we shall examine latter, this caused frustration among the beneficiary farmers who were expecting to derive income from selling fresh milk and practice what they had been trained on when their milk production is abundant. It also led to underperformance vis-à-vis expected milk collection targets.

Between March and May 2007, PLCU and ACDI/VOCA focused their efforts on recruiting the project staff, finalizing contracts with farmers, leveraging beneficiary contributions, and delivering training and milking equipment to the beneficiary farmers. Significant efforts were also made in working with Al-Qaisi Dairy Factory – the dairy producer selected to procure milk from farmers- on improving quality standards and marketing.

By the time the milk collection tanks, milk collection cans, milking machines, and milk testing equipment had arrived, PLCU had already completed most of the training courses it had planned and was well positioned to work with farmers on the implementation and institutionalization of the milk collection system. It should be noted here that this was possible only because PLCU decided to take the risk and order the procurement of the milk storage refrigerated tanks from a local supplier while the waiver request was pending USAID's approval. While unorthodoxly risky, the PLCU's decision to commence the local procurement process prior to receiving USAID's approval on the source of origin waiver request is the principle reason behind the ability of the project to deliver the results it did.

Phase two of the project commenced on 15 February 2008, with a lifetime of four and a half months and a confirmed budget after amendment of US$ 52,173. This phase put a greater emphasis on marketing and promotion, as well as strengthening business relations between the cooperatives and the dairy producer (Al-Jibrini Dairy Factory). It also had the benefit of incorporating lessons learned from phase one, and as such no provisions were made therein for the procurement of equipment, particularly the milk cooling tank, that require source of origin waivers from USAID. This was predicated on the assumption that the milk cooling tank provided to Saida cooperative could be transferred to the Yatta cooperative after the former had shown indications that it wished to withdraw from the project, and especially since the cooling tank provided to Yatta cooperative was leased. As it was, Saida Cooperative decided to withdraw from the project at the beginning of phase two on account of "unfavorable milk prices provided by the dairy factory"[8] and its members' desire to process milk and sell dairy products themselves due to rising prices of dairy products.

The following sections provide more details on the achievements of the project's objectives and results. In several places, the objectives and results of the project under both phases were grouped and aggregated by the evaluation team to facilitate readers comprehension of findings on the one hand, and to avoid redundancy in the analysis on the

[7] PLCU was not vetted by USAID until March 12, 2007. The target cooperatives were submitted for vetting on Feb 19. No vetting determination received from USAID, who instructed ACDI/VOCA to work with cooperatives through in-kind grants until a detmination could be made. Vetting requirement was later removed (June 18). Until then, ACDI/VOCA could not provide any of the two participating cooperatives with more than $2,500 in assistance.

[8] Al-Sahel interview with Mr. Jamil Ibrahim, Saida Cooperative Chairman.

other. The latter was deemed to be particularly important due to the similarity between the objectives and results in both phases.

B.2. Effectiveness

We shall discuss here the project's achievement of its specific objectives, as highlighted above. In doing so, we rely on several sources of information, namely: information made available by ACDI/VOCA and PLCU; information gathered through interviews with the three target cooperatives and beneficiary farmers; and, relevant survey findings.

B.2.1. Objective 1: Increasing farmers' capacity to produce high-quality raw milk

This objective was pursued through a combination of training and provision of equipment to farmers. While farmers training focused on increasing farmers' knowledge (and consequently practices) of the ways through which milk production hygiene standards can be improved through a variety of measures, the distribution of milk collection cans and milking machines to farmers intended to reduce the risk of milk contamination and make the milking processes more efficient.

Both anecdotal evidence and survey results clearly indicate that this objective was fully achieved, albeit the degree to which individual farmers' capacity was built differed from one farmer to another. Field observations and focus group discussions with farmers in the three targeted cooperatives clearly revealed that the overwhelming majority of beneficiary farmers have improved their knowledge of the processes needed for the production of high-quality, hygienic milk. Many of whom, in interviews, were eager to explain the entire process needed to be in place to ensure high-quality, hygienic milk production.

Field observations and survey findings have also shown that a significant proportion of the beneficiary farmers have begun paying more attention to the way they clean their farms and livestock udders, the way they feed their livestock and they way they manage their farms. When comparing baseline data and the results of the survey conducted within the framework of this evaluation on key capacity indicators in this regard, significant improvements can be observed.[9] The most salient of these are the following:

a) Increased frequency of cleaning livestock farms: When comparing baseline indicators with the evaluation survey findings in relation to the frequency at which farmers clean their farms, we notice a significant increase in the percentage of farmers who clean their farms on a daily basis increased from 26.2 percent at the baseline to a whopping 56 percent at the end of the project, which is quite significant given the fact that baseline report noted tendency of beneficiaries to provide "more favorable answers" of fear of losing their opportunity to be part of the project.

Table 7: Frequency of cleaning livestock farms, pre- and post-project compared (% farmers)

Locality	Reference	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Total
Saida	Baseline	13.8	6.9	69.0	10.3	**100**
	At evaluation	5.3	15.8	63.2	15.8	**100**
Bazaria	Baseline	37.5	28.1	15.6	18.8	**100**
	At evaluation	72.4	3.4	20.7	3.4	**100**
Yatta	Baseline	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**N/A**
	At evaluation	74.1	18.5	0.0	7.4	**100**
Total	**Baseline**	**26.2**	**18.0**	**41.0**	**14.8**	**100**
	At evaluation	**56.0**	**12.0**	**24.0**	**8.0**	**100**

b) Increased proportion of farmers utilizing improved techniques in cleaning farm tools and equipment, as well as sheep and goat udders: As Tables 8 and 9 below show, the percentage of farmers who utilize

[9] Baseline data for Yatta Cooperative farmers is not available. Thus, conclusions on improvements are made on the basis of the improvements observed in key indicators for Bazarya and Saida farmers only.

disinfectants when cleaning farm tools and equipment and livestock udders have increased quite significantly from its pre-project levels. This is indicative of the effectiveness of training and extension in improving the knowledge and practices of farmers in this regard, which has a direct effect on the milk hygiene and quality.

Table 8: Use of disinfectant in cleaning farm tools, pre- and post-project compared (% farmers)

Techniques used in cleaning tools and equipment	**Locality (baseline)**			**Locality (at evaluation)**			
	Saida	Bazarya	**Total**	Saida	Bazarya	Yatta	**Total**
	%	%	**%**	%	%	%	**%**
Water only	6.9	15.6	**11.5**	10	25	5.7	**15.2**
Water with salt	6.9	15.6	**11.5**	0	4.5	8.6	**5.1**
Water with disinfectant	86.2	68.8	**77.0**	90	70.5	85.7	**79.8**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Table 9: Use of disinfectant in cleaning sheep and goat udders, pre- and post-project compared (% of farmers)

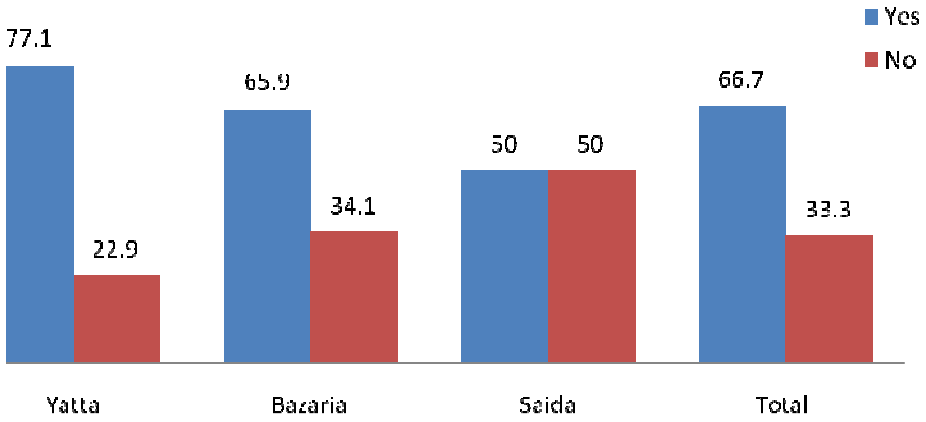
Techniques used in cleaning tools and equipment	**Locality (baseline)**				**Locality (at evaluation)**		
	Saida	Bazarya	**Total**	Saida	Bazarya	Yatta	**Total**
	%	%	**%**	%	%	%	**%**
Water only	13.8	9.4	**11.5**	40	40.9	14.3	**31.3**
Wetted cloth with disinfectant	6.9	3.1	**4.9**	30	52.3	40	**43.4**
Water and salt	0	0	**0**	0	4.5	45.7	**18.2**
Other	79.3	87.5	**83.6**	30	2.3	0	**7.1**
Total	100	100	**100**	100	100	100	**100**

What is noteworthy to mention here is that the percentage of farmers who indicated use of disinfectants at the baseline were using ammonium-chloride-based and scented disinfectants, which are strongly inadvisable. This was not the case at the end of the project, where only 23 percent of the farmers who indicated using disinfectants also indicated to scented and/or ammonium-chloride based detergents.

c) Substantially increased proportion of farmers who can properly identify feeding requirements for sheep as well as milk quality attributes: The number of farmers who could articulate what the type and quantities of feed needed for sheep and goats reached 95 percent and 92.3 percent of the surveyed farmers in Yatta and Bazarya respectively, whereas the percentage was 62.1% in Saida at the time of the baseline survey. Similarly, the percentage of farmers who could name at least three types of milk analysis tests that reveal the quality of milk reached 91.3 percent (87.2 percent, 92.6 percent and 94.8 percent in Saida, Bazarya and Yatta, respectively). The most common tests mentioned were the PH test, the added milk test, the fat content test and the protein test. This is quite an astounding level of recall given the fact that none of the farmers knew anything about milk quality attributes before the project.

d) Increased percentage of farmers who utilize farm records: At baseline, only 39.3 percent of the beneficiaries indicated use farm records (58.6 and 21.9 percent in Saida and Bazzarya respectively). This proportion grew to 66.7 percent at evaluation as shown in the figure below. The records that the farmers mentioned using include vaccination schedules; expenses and revenue records; livestock records like (numbers , date of birth…vaccination); pregnancy and delivery schedule; medication schedules; and feeding schedule. While the above percentages and the diversity of farm records mentioned by surveyed farmers struck the evaluation team as too high, field observations suggest that it quite possible that project has been effective in mainstreaming the use of farm records among farmers through training and extension.

Figure 2: Percentage of farmers using farm records



The provision of stainless steel milk cans to the beneficiary farmers has indeed made the milk production process more hygienic, as anecdotal evidence suggests that milk was usually collected in plastic buckets before the project. Farm observations in all three cooperatives confirmed that farmers are still using these cans. The main shortcoming in this regard is that the number of distributed cans to individual farmers was not sufficient in some cases to substitute the need for plastic containers as their daily production of milk is beyond the holding capacity of the distributed containers. This notwithstanding, these farmers' capacity to produce hygienic milk has been undoubtedly improved.

In terms of increasing the efficiency of the milk collection process, results have been mixed. If we consider the savings[10] that farmers accrued as a result of selling their milk to the Al-Qaisi (phase one) and Al-Jibrini (phase two) dairy factories instead of processing it, then we can reach an unquestionable conclusion that the capacity building strategy –an essential precondition to increasing the quality and salability of fresh milk in this case- has indeed increased the efficiency of the milk collection process. However, if we consider that the level of actual utilization of the 25 milking machines by farmers, which is the main indicator used in the project design to measure improved milk production efficiency, we conclude that the project has not been successful in making the milk collection process more efficient.

> *"I have owned sheep for more than ten years, but I never knew that so many factors affect milk attributes… [I also never considered] how simple things such as cleaning the parlor and separating ewes from lambs, and separation of ewes into different feeding groups could have a significant impact on milk production and quality… At first I was not convinced and thought that these new concepts and techniques were all nonsense. But I quickly changed my mind… Now, as you can see, I practice everything I have been trained on… I keep farm records that contain daily information on what and how much I feed each sheep, I clean the parlor after each milking to reduce contamination, and I have been able to group my sheep into three different feeding groups which helped me reduce costs and increase production. I am now thinking of expanding my farm and doing more to develop production."*

Field observations and findings of farmers' interviews revealed that very few –if any- of the 25 Bazarya and Saida farmers who received the milking machines through the project are actually using them on a regular basis. This is mainly because the use of these milking machines is best suited for elevated[11] parlors so as to avoid having the teat cups and the vacuum pipes touch the floor (to avoid milk contamination), whereas the parlors in both Bazarya and Saida are not elevated. One farmer told the evaluation team that he stopped using the machine two days after he first used it because the ewes kept stepping and trampling over its pipes. Cooperative leaders interviewed confirmed that this farmers' case also applies to most farmers who received the milking machines. This is unfortunate,

[10] Refer to section on Impact for calculation of these savings accrued by farmers as a result of selling fresh milk compared to processing it.
[11] Refer to section B 2.3. for further details on the marketing activities and achievements thereof.

especially given the relatively high cost of these machines and the proportionate high level of amount of contribution paid by farmers who received it.

While the achievements made in capacity building are quite significant –even admirable given the project time frame and budget, the evaluation team believes that more needs to be done to raise the capacity of the farmers and their cooperatives on the one hand to improve the quality of milk produced, and on the other hand change farmers' attitudes towards the production of high-quality and hygienic raw milk. Milk test records show that some milk consistency issues are still prevalent (and have been raised as concerns several times by the both Al-Qaisi and Al-Jibrini), while field observations revealed that some parlor cleanliness and hygiene issues are still unaddressed. Highlighting these issues, as noted before, is not to discredit achievements, rather to signal areas where follow-up interventions could be needed. After all, there is only so much that can be done through a pilot project that spans five months.

B.2.2. Objective 2: Building the capacity of beneficiary cooperatives

As noted above, the cooperative capacity building objective of the SRDP project focused on improving the institutional capacity of the targeted cooperatives through providing them with cooperative management systems (including systems for milk collection and quality control), as well as building the capacity of cooperative employees and board members -through training- in cooperative management and milk collection processes. The capacity building objective also included the provision of milk cooling tanks, milk analyzers and weighing scales to augment the feasibility of the collective milk collection process.

On the balance, the evaluation team believes that cooperatives capacity building objective has been satisfactorily achieved, as measured by achievements of the expected results. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the cooperatives are capable of carrying out their responsibilities vis-à-vis the milk collection process as a result of training, extension and follow-up by PLCU.

Twenty eight staff and Board members of the three targeted cooperative have received training on cooperative management and work principles, which –according to cooperative leaders interviewed- has helped the cooperative leaders better understand the role they should play in organizing members and improving the services provided to them. Likewise, the training provided to the lab technicians and cooperative employees responsible for the milk collection process in the three cooperatives on the management of the collection of milk has been essential in building the capacity of the cooperatives in effectively managing the process. The fact that cooperatives have milk collection records that contain detailed information on the chemical attributes (through tests conducted) for each batch of collected milk accepted from each farmer is –in the opinion of the evaluation team- sufficient evidence that adequate capacity for effective collective milk collection has been built.

This technical capacity was further augmented by physical and administrative capacity building activities. The provision of the milk cooling tanks (holding capacity:1000 liters) to Saida and Bazarya, and the procurement of Yatta Cooperative of a similar cooling tank, has increased the physical capacity of these cooperatives to administer a collective milk collection and marketing service for their members. It has also made this service –as envisaged in the project design- more feasible as it subsidized a significant part of its start-up cost. In terms of capacity building at the administrative level, the project has also left clear marks.

The administrative and financial systems developed by the project for Bazarya and Yatta Cooperatives have helped these cooperatives properly document a significant amount of their work, which –according to interviewed cooperative leaders- was done in a haphazard manner before the project. Particularly significant is the development of milk collection system, which includes procedures, work instructions, and forms that have been instrumental in helping the cooperatives effectively manage and institutionalize the milk collection process. The financial, administrative and milk collection system struck the evaluation team as, both, comprehensive and user-friendly, which may explain why cooperative leaders and staff interviewed expressed their satisfaction thereof.

The following key observations could be made in relation to the cooperative capacity building objective and how it was pursued:

a) Training provided to cooperative Board members and staff on cooperative principles and cooperative management was too brief and the results –how much was learnt and/or retained- unclear. While the

cooperative leaders interviewed generally were highly appreciative of the training workshop on cooperative management and reported that it helped them transform the way they work, the evaluation team maintains that this contention is largely unrealistic given that the training was limited to for five hours and covered rudimentary topics. The emphasis of the training approach was on lecturing and teaching –generally speaking- the technical skills and procedures to implement the collective milk collection system.

Particularly lacking was any capacity building related to the enhancing the role of the cooperative Boards in promoting members' commitment to the milk collection and marketing process as an effective means of increasing the profitability of the cooperative. Enhanced capacities in this area would have better equipped the cooperatives (particularly Saida and Bazarya, where milk consistency issues had arisen the most and where farmers were most reticent to engage effectively in the project) to socially pressure member farmers into engaging more effectively in the project. Building cooperative capacity in cost recovery (associated with managing the milk collection and marketing service) was equally lacking. The pilot nature of the project as well as its short lifetime may have been why such capacity building efforts were left out.

b) The utility of some parts of the administrative and financial systems developed by the project has been somewhat limited. A review of the cooperative documents revealed that several aspects of both the financial and administrative systems have not been implemented and/or used either because an occasion has not arisen since their adoption to warrant their use (for example elections), and/or due to limited knowledge/capacity among the staff on how to use them. Examples include the partial application of the inventory system, the financial reconciliation procedures, and the marketing system. This is understandable, however, given the fact that these systems have been recently completed (May 2008) and training on their use has been relatively limited. The evaluation team did sense that both cooperatives, particularly Yatta Cooperative, is keen on fully applying these systems through learning-by-doing, which is to be worthy of recognition.

c) The withdrawal of Saida Cooperative from the project has had a negative impact not only on the overall volume of collected milk target as we shall examine below, but also on the projects' effectiveness and efficacy in relation to the cooperative capacity building objective; i.e. the degree to which capacity had been built. It is unquestionable that had Saida Cooperative been excluded from the project from the beginning and the resources devoted to it were directed towards the other two cooperatives, the overall capacity of these cooperatives would have been strengthened more substantially. Of course, this much is easier said in retrospect than at the beginning of the project when all institutional indications suggested that Saida Cooperative and its members would be ideal candidates for this pilot project. It should, however, be noted for future programming consideration.

B.2.3. Objective 3: Improving the marketing of sheep milk products

Significant efforts were made by both PLCU and ACDI/VOCA to improve the marketing of the milk products manufactured from the milk collected through the project. This included, *inter alia*: providing assistance to two dairy plants (Al-Qiasi in phase one and Al-Jibrini in phase two) in product development for sheep and goat dairy products such as yogurt, yogurt paste (*labaneh*), white goat/sheep cheese (*Halloumi*) and other types of cheeses that require different processing and storage techniques; conducting direct promotion sales visits to popular supermarkets in the cities of Ramallah, Tulkarem and Jenin with the purpose of promoting the newly produced brands as well as addressing concerns of the supermarkets that carry the new brands; and, conducting several advertising campaigns using billboards, posters, information leaflets, tabloids, newspapers, and local television and radio. More than 35 tasting event were also organized in a popular shopping centers in several West Bank cities where the products are distributed. Moreover, efforts to improve the merchandizing of the newly produced sheep and goat dairy products were made, including in-store promotions, product information tags and shelf display improvements.

While the effectiveness of these marketing efforts could not be accurately ascertained by the evaluation team as it requires a different measurement approach than the one used in the evaluation, the team contends that these efforts were extremely important in creating demand for the newly manufactured products in a characteristically very competitive, price elastic market. These efforts are thus worthy of applaud.

In terms of the anticipated results under the marketing objective[12], the evaluation team believes that they were achieved. An accurate measurement of the level to which these results were achieved, however, could not be ascertained as it requires data collection techniques that are beyond the scope of this evaluation. That said, the considerably large number of advertisements through various sources of media and the frequency thereof; combined with the promotional activities and sales visits carried out by both PLCU and ACDI/VOCA in both phases of the project have undoubtedly increased consumers awareness of the existence of these new brands.

The evaluation team cannot be as conclusive, however, when it comes to the project result related to increasing demand for sheep and goat dairy products. This is largely because data required for measuring market growth demand could not be readily obtained by the evaluation team, and –to a lesser extent- because of the unsteady demand for fresh milk by the dairy producers in both phases due to marketing problems. While a substantial 79,000 liters (79 MT) of milk were collected, processed and marketed by Al-Qaisi and Al-Jibrini dairy factories, this volume alone cannot be used as an indicator for increasing demand. At best, it is an indicator for increased sales of sheep and dairy products, which, in turn, could be the consequence of interplay of various factors that cannot be entirely attributable to the marketing interventions of the project.

It should be noted here that increasing demand for new products in a relatively mature market and/or gaining consumer loyalty for a new brand usually requires a great deal of effort and resources which could not be made through the SRDP project. Despite the commendable marketing efforts and activities undertaken by PLCU and ACDI/VOCA, the evaluation team is of the opinion that the result related to increasing demand for sheep dairy products may have been too optimistically broad to be included as a result to measure the achievement of the project's marketing objective. A better result could have been "increased sales of sheep and goat dairy products".

The following observations could be made about the marketing efforts made through the project. These are made with the view of generating lessons learned for future programming as most of them could not be tackled through the WBFS Program either because of limited resources allocated to the SRDP project and/or the restrictions on the use of USAID funds:

a) While the substantial marketing activities that have been implemented through the projects have been effective in raising consumers awareness of the newly introduced products and –to a lesser extent- increasing demand, they may have been more effective had they been built on an analysis of consumers' preferences and purchasing habits. For example, a consumer survey may have identified issues related to consumers' preferences in relation to dairy products that could have been tackled in marketing and product development. Advertising and promotion cannot be the primary techniques in increasing demand, especially if grounded by traditional predispositions about consumers preferences.

b) The project budget earmarked to marketing was limited and technical assistance in marketing was too narrowly focused on advertising and promotion. Given the fact that sheep and goat dairy products existed in the local market, the project may have benefitted from higher allocation to marketing and more focus on product differentiation through –for example- packaging or Guerilla Marketing techniques.[13]

c) Linked to the previous point, technical assistance to the dairy producers in production management may have been extremely beneficial in improving the marketability of the produced dairy products. Such assistance may have effectively been able to provide solutions to the producers to enable them to reduce their relatively high cost of diary production and improve their ability to produce homogeneous products more consistently.

d) While focusing the marketing activities on one dairy producer was in line with the resources made available to the project and its pilot nature, it entailed the risk of transferring downstream supply chain

[12] As noted earlier in the report, these results were: increased consumer awareness of the existence of new sheep milk products in the local market; and, increased demand for sheep milk products.

[13] It was assumed that the dairy factories would take greater responsibility for this, predicated on the assumption that they have the requisite experience in marketing their own products.

constraints to the cooperative. This risk materialized indeed, rendering the project unable to meet its target for volume of milk marketed, which in turn prompted several farmers to suspend their engagement in the collective marketing initiative. Diversifying the client base of the cooperatives –i.e., having business relations with two or more dairy producers as opposed to just one- may have circumvented the effect of marketing constraints faced in both phases of the project.

B.3. Efficiency

For the purposes of this evaluation, the assessment of the SRDP project efficiency was done through investigating the following efficiency factors: i) project actual costs compared with appraisal estimates and any revisions; ii) implementation performance; iii) the level of benefits and their growth curve compared with expectations; iv) utilization rates for project facilities and services; quality of inputs provided; and adequacy of the project benefits stream vis-à-vis its costs.

On the balance, the SRDP project has demonstrated considerable efficiency in transforming available inputs and resources into outputs. This, as we shall examine in further detail below, is largely attributed to the effective use of financial (and human) resources, the high level of cost effectiveness of the overall intervention, and the quality of inputs provided.

B.3.1. Utilization of Resources

Table 10 below sets out detailed breakdown of the SRDP budget and actual expenditure. A total of US$126,000 was allocated to the two phases of the SRDP project, with US$ 73,827 under phase one and US$ 52,173 under phase two. As shown in the table below, the actual total expenditures as well as expenditures on the budget line items were in line with initial project estimates. Only minor deviations occurred as a result of the increasing prices of equipment, which could not be anticipated at the time of design. It is thus quite commendable that the project was implemented without any substantial cost overruns.

The budget structure in terms of the percentage of funds earmarked and spent on equipment (43 percent) and marketing (17.5 percent) is commensurate with what the evaluation team believes is needed for such type of a project. The fact that savings in administrative and staffing costs were reallocated to equipment budget line items is worthy of recognition as it increased the efficiency of budget utilization. The evaluation team is of the opinion that the project budget as designed and as discharged has been highly effective in producing the project's results.

Table 10: SRDP budget as planned and implemented

	Phase I				Phase II				Total Phase I & II			
Description	**Budget**	**% of total Budget**	**Actual Expenditures**	**% of Total Expenditure**	**Budget**	**% of total Budget**	**Actual Expenditures**	**% of Total Expenditure**	**Budget**	**% of total Budget**	**Actual Expenditures**	**% of Total Expenditure**
Equipment												
One-Ton SS Recep ion Tank	9,000 00	12 2%	10,152.29	13.7%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	9,000.00	7.1%	10,152.29	8.0%
Milk Analyzer Equipment	3,600 00	4.9%	3,867.49	5.2%	3,300 00	6.3%	3,300.00	6.4%	6,900.00	5 5%	7,167.49	5.7%
Refrigirators	525 00	0.7%	546.00	0.7%	410 00	0.8%	410 00	0.8%	935.00	0.7%	956.00	0.8%
Electronic Balance	825 00	1.1%	918.38	1.2%	680 00	1.3%	680 00	1.3%	1,505.00	1 2%	1,598.38	1.3%
Milk Cans (3 liters)	9,000 00	12 2%	9,536.97	12.8%	4,285 28	8.2%	4,285.28	8.3%	13,285.28	10.5%	13,822.25	11 0%
Portable Milking Machines	16,875 00	22 9%	17,983.58	24.2%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	16,875.00	13.4%	17,983.58	14.3%
Computers & Printers	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	2,490 00	4.8%	2,490.00	4.8%	2,490.00	2 0%	2,490.00	2.0%
Total Equipment	**39,825.00**	**53.9%**	**43,022.71**	**57.9%**	**11,165.28**	**21.4%**	**11,165.28**	**21.5%**	**50,990.28**	**40.5%**	**54,187.99**	**42.9%**
Marketing												
Promo ional Material	2,400 00	3.3%	1,948.85	2.6%	15,303.37	29.3%	15,303.37	29 5%	17,703.37	14.1%	17,252.22	13.7%
Marke ing Consultant & Volunteers	3,000 00	4.1%	2,349.55	3.2%	1,500 00	2.9%	1,500.00	2.9%	4,500.00	3.6%	3,849.55	3.1%
Design/Prin ing of Products Sheets	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	970 00	1.9%	970 00	1.9%	970.00	0 8%	970.00	0.8%
Total Marketing	**5,400.00**	**7.3%**	**4,343.40**	**5.8%**	**17,773.37**	**34.1%**	**17,773.37**	**34.3%**	**23,173.37**	**18.4%**	**22,116.77**	**17.5%**
Training Sessions												
Training Material	1,200 00	1.6%	1,142.85	1.5%	1,649.79	3.2%	1,651.60	3.2%	2,849.79	2.3%	2,794.45	2.2%
Training Workshop/Closeout Workshop	1,237 50	1.7%	1,242.74	1.7%	995 05	1.9%	995 05	1.9%	2,232.55	1 8%	2,237.79	1.8%
Total Training Sessions	**2,437.50**	**3.3%**	**2,385.59**	**3.2%**	**2,644.84**	**5.1%**	**2,646.65**	**5.1%**	**5,082.34**	**4.0%**	**5,032.24**	**4.0%**
Staffing												
Project Coordinator	6,800 00	9.2%	6,273.55	8.4%	6,426 00	12.3%	6,426.00	12.4%	13,226.00	10.5%	12,699.55	10.1%
Extension Agent/Milk Quality	5,000 00	6.8%	4,612.90	6.2%	4,725 00	9.1%	4,725.00	9.1%	9,725.00	7.7%	9,337.90	7.4%
Extension Agent/Vet	6,000 00	8.1%	5,535.48	7.4%	1,134 00	2.2%	1,134.00	2.2%	7,134.00	5.7%	6,669.48	5.3%
Accountant/Admin. Assistant	2,700 00	3.7%	2,490.97	3.4%	2,250 00	4.3%	2,250.00	4.3%	4,950.00	3 9%	4,740.97	3.8%
Total Staffing	**20,500.00**	**27.8%**	**18,912.90**	**25.4%**	**14,535.00**	**27.9%**	**14,535.00**	**28.0%**	**35,035.00**	**27.8%**	**33,447.90**	**26.5%**
Administrative Costs												
Transportation	1,250 00	1.7%	1,250.00	1.7%	2,430 00	4.7%	2,134.60	4.1%	3,680.00	2 9%	3,384.60	2.7%
Telecommunicatons	750 00	1.0%	780.82	1.1%	602.40	1.2%	573 82	1.1%	1,352.40	1.1%	1,354.64	1.1%
Sign Boards	285 00	0.4%	271.39	0.4%	126.12	0.2%	126.13	0.2%	411.12	0.3%	397.52	0.3%
Utilities	480 00	0.7%	476.16	0.6%	394.60	0.8%	392 95	0.8%	874.60	0.7%	869.11	0.7%
Office Rent	1,400 00	1.9%	1,400.00	1.9%	1,800 00	3.5%	1,800.00	3.5%	3,200.00	2 5%	3,200.00	2.5%
Office Supplies	1,500 00	2.0%	1,496.32	2.0%	674 56	1.3%	672.77	1.3%	2,174.56	1.7%	2,169.09	1.7%
Bank Fees	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	27.14	0.1%	27.14	0.1%	27.14	0 0%	27.14	0.0%
Total Administrative Costs	**5,665.00**	**7.7%**	**5,674.70**	**7.6%**	**6,054.82**	**11.6%**	**5,727.41**	**11.0%**	**11,719.82**	**9.3%**	**11,402.11**	**9.0%**
GRAND TOTAL	**73,827.50**	**100.0%**	**74,339.30**	**100.0%**	**52,173.31**	**100.0%**	**51,847.71**	**100.0%**	**126,000.81**	**100.0%**	**126,187.01**	**100.0%**

B.3.2. Targeting and Beneficiary Selection
The SRDP envisaged targeting farmers largely on the basis of socio-economic criteria, as shown in the table below:

Table 11: Socio-economic indicators for beneficiary selection under the SRDP project

Criterion	Description
Income:	Households with limited income sources; households that have lost their main source of income due to the Intifada; households with a monthly income of NIS 1200 or lower.
Head of household:	Female-headed households
Assets:	Household with limited ownership of goats, minimum savings, and very limited assets (poor households). The main source of income from the goat rearing.
Size and composition of household:	Families with a high dependency ratio, and/or families with a high proportion of young children.
Agricultural land:	Families who have limited land ownership.
Number of sheep:	Farmers who own 30-40 or more milking goats**.**
Cooperative membership:	Farmers who are cooperative members.
Farm adaptability:	Farms which are capable for rehabilitation and enlargement
Commitment:	Serious farmers who demonstrate commitment to the project activities. For those who want to get milking machine they must to commit providing the factory with at least 40 liters of milk daily .
Ability to meet cost leverage:	Farmers who are able to pay their contribution in cash or in kind.

Baseline survey results show that the project was successful in reaching out the beneficiaries it originally envisaged targeting. The evaluation survey results confirmed this conclusion, albeit it also highlighted varied levels of targeting efficiency when it comes to assets and gender criteria. Women comprised 7 percent of the total SRDP project beneficiaries, while the percentage of beneficiary farmers who own less than 30 heads of sheep and goats comprised close to 40 percent of the total number of beneficiaries.

Having said this, however, the evaluators would like to make the following two observations about the selection criteria:

a) The criterion stipulating that beneficiaries must have a minimum ownership of 30 milking goats implicitly excludes some poor smallholder farmers, thus food insecure or vulnerable farmers. This is not to generalize and say that farmers who have ownership of 30 goats and received service through the project are not poor and those who have less are, rather to signal that such criteria must be cross checked with others at all times.

b) While in-kind contributions were identified in the selection criteria as an acceptable means for leveraging beneficiary contributions, no mechanism was put in place by the project to accept them and only in-cash contributions were accepted. While the evaluation team did not come across any farmer who could not be enlisted to benefit from the project due to his/her inability to leverage the required cash contribution, the fact remains that in-cash contributions constitute a form of "barrier to benefit" to many poor households. Food security projects must take this into serious consideration when formulating beneficiary selection criteria so as not to implicitly exclude any beneficiaries who could effectively benefit from these projects.

B.3.3. Implementation Efficiency
As noted in section B.2.1 above, the implementation of the project was delayed by some three months as a result of the delay in the USAID approval of the geographic code procurement waiver for the stainless steel tanks. This delay, combined with the late vetting approval received for PLCU mentioned above, would have been detrimental to the project, had the PLCU not taken all the necessary preparatory steps needed to install and commence the milk collection process immediately once the approval was granted. This, again, is worthy of recognition as it not only saved the project from failing, but also because it reduced the risk of a substantial cost overrun. As it was, the

project was implemented within the period originally planned despite procurement delays in phase one, and without any substantial cost deviations.

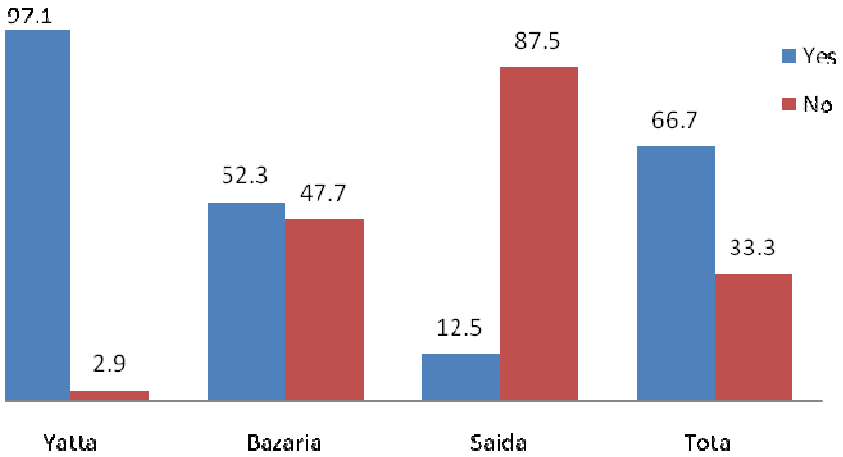
B.3.4. Utilization of Services

The efficiency of the project in terms of the level of beneficiaries' utilization of the physical assets they received through the project has been mixed. Judging utilization efficiency by the proportion of beneficiaries who have improved their farm management and hygiene practices (section B.2.2.) as well as the high level of utilization of milk cans (3 liters), we conclude that the project has been efficient. Also, if we also use the extremely high level of utilization of assets provided by the project and the high level of participation in the milk collection process among the beneficiaries belonging to Yatta Cooperative as a proxy for utilization, we conclude that utilization efficiency has been extremely high.

However, using the farmers' level of utilization of the milking machines, the overall level of farmers' participation in the collective milk collection and marketing service, and the cooperatives utilization of the stainless steel tanks with which they were provided as proxies for utilization efficiency, we conclude that the project's efficiency has been subpar. The interplay of several factors is believed to have contributed to this, namely:

a) Farmers' commitment and attitudes towards cooperative work: Despite the fact that farmers did indeed participate in the milk collection and marketing process and were able to market a substantial volume of milk at very favorable prices that increased their income as we shall examine below, anecdotal evidence gathered through interviews with beneficiary farmers suggests that they are still not entirely appreciative of collective marketing through their cooperatives, and are less convinced that selling fresh milk at the prices they received from Al-Qaisi and Al-Jibrini is more profitable than processing milk into dairy products themselves. Evaluation survey results confirmed this by revealing that a whopping 87.5 percent and 47.7 percent of the project beneficiaries from Saida and Bazaria respectively believe that the collective milk collection and marketing has not increased their income, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 3: Beneficiaries opinion regarding the profitability of marketing fresh milk (% of farmers)



While farmers beliefs about profitability is simply wrong, as we shall examine in the section on impact below, the disbelief in the feasibility and profitability of collective marketing of milk, combined with the factors highlighted below, is probably one of the main reasons behind the low levels of utilization. It is also likely to be the reason why Saida cooperative decided to withdraw from the project and why a large proportion of the farmers Bazaria stopped collecting milk for marketing through their cooperative. What is noteworthy here is that the withdrawal of Saida from the project has caused a significant utilization gap for the project, as the equipment with which it was provided (valued at US$ 9,300) has been sitting idle at the time of the evaluation for more than six months.

b) The delay in milk collection: The delay in implementation of phase one of the project essentially meant that the height of the milk season could not be captured, thus reducing the incentive for effective utilization of equipment on the one hand and for participating effectively in the milk collection process on the other.

c) The limited suitability of parlors for the effective use of milking machines (see above, B.3.4). This has rendered milking machines in several cases impractical for daily use by farmers, which reduces their utilization efficiency.

d) Limited participation in of beneficiaries in milk collection and marketing: With the exception of Yatta Cooperative members, survey results show that a significant proportion of the beneficiaries did not participate in the milk collection process, and those who did sold small proportions of their total milk produced through their cooperative (Table 12). This was a major reason behind the generally low utility rates of equipment and the under-performance with regard to milk marketing targets.

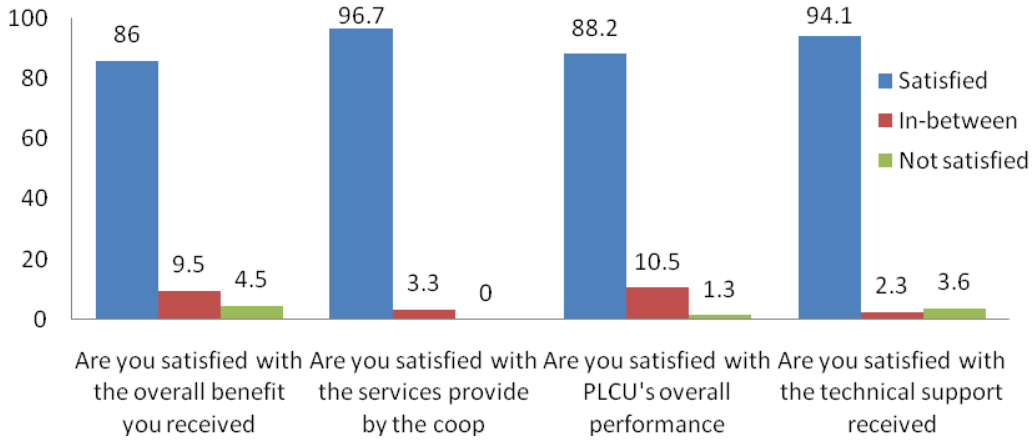
Table 12: Distribution of the beneficiaries with respect to the percentage of milk produced sold through their respective cooperatives during the last season

Cooperative	Percentage of milk produced sold to cooperative				
	0 (liters)	1-20 (liters)	21-50 (liters)	51-99 (liters)	100 (liters)
Yata	2.8	13.9	13.9	5.6	63.9
Bazaria	47.9	8.3	22.9	0	20.8
Saida	83.3	0	6.7	6.7	3.3
Total	43.0	7.9	15.8	3.5	29.8

B.3.5. Beneficiary Satisfaction

From a beneficiary satisfaction perspective, the project was highly efficient. The evaluation survey findings show that despite the relatively low levels of beneficiary participation in the milk collection and marketing processes, there is a substantial level of satisfaction in among beneficiaries in the three target cooperatives with different aspects of the project. As the figure below shows, the beneficiaries' overall satisfaction exceeded 86 percent in all project performance categories. This is quite substantial.

Figure 4: Level of beneficiaries' satisfaction with various aspects related to project implementation (% beneficiaries)



B.3.6. Achievement of Target Indicators

Table 13 below juxtaposes the planned targets against the achieved targets under both phases of the SRDP project. While this table presents project performance target indicators at the level of project impact and results, the main focus here –for efficiency measurement purposes- shall be on output related indicators, which appear in italics in the below table.

The table, which is based on PLCU and ACDI/VOCA reported data, shows that most planned output targets were either fully achieved or surpassed, with the exception of the targets related to the distribution of milk cans

under phase two (which fell 29 percent short of target), and the target related to the number of direct women beneficiaries. On the balance, the efficiency of the project in terms of output achievements is considered satisfactory given all the above mentioned constraints.

Table 13: Planned vs. achieved performance target indicators

	Program Indicators	*SRDP PHASE I*			*SRDP PHASE II*[14]		
		Targeted	*Actual*	*% of target*	*Targeted*	*Actual*	*% of target*
PI1	*Total # of beneficiary HH assisted (cumulative)*	80	79	99%	185	184	99%
	- Men	72	74	103%	159	167	105%
	- Women	8	5	63%	14	13	93%
	Total Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries assisted	560	489	87%	1,211	1284	106%
	- Male	312	269	86%	678	719	106%
	- Female	248	220	89%	533	565	106%
PI2	% of trained producers with knowledge of improved production techniques	1	0	80%	70%	0	0%
IR 1: CoAg Growth Component							
Imp. 1.1	US$ Value of small ruminant milk products sold by members through their cooperative	91800	18910	21%	312,000	$62,952	20%
Imp. 1.2	Metric tons of small ruminant milk products sold through cooperatives	136	22	16%	312	57	18%
Imp. 1.5	# of new market linkages	1	1	100%	1	2	200%
Imp. 1.6	Average Organizational Assessment Rating	70%	70%	100%	70%	70%	70%
In.1.1: Capacity Building							
In.1.1.1	*# of small ruminant farmers trained on farm management*	30	88	293%	85	117	138%
In.1.1.2	*# of small ruminant farmers trained on milk analysis and collection management*	30	119	397%	85	103	121%
In.1.1.3	*# of small ruminant farmers trained on milk quality*	60	79	132%	85	117	138%
In.1.1.4	*# of cooperative staff and board members trained on cooperative management*	20	21	105%	8	7	88%
In.1.1.6	*Total number of conducted workshops*	11	13	118%	14	18	129%
In.1.3 equipments & devices							
In.1.3.1	*# of distributed milk cans*	150	150	100%	85	60	71%
In.1.3.2	*# of distributed portable milking machines*	25	25	100%	0	0	0%
In.1.3.3	*# of distributed milk cooling tanks*	2	2	100%	1	1	100%
In.1.3.4	*# of distributed milk analyzers*	2	2	100%	1	1	100%
In.1.3.5	*# of distributed weighing*	2	2	100%	1	1	100%
In.1.3.6	*# of distributed refrigerators*	2	2	100%	1	1	100%
In.1.3.7	*# of distributed computers*	0.0	0.0	0.0	2	2	100%
	In. 1.4 Extension & marketing visits						
In.1.4.1	*# of conducted extension visits*	600	636	106%	300	384	128%
In.1.4.1	*# of conducted marketing visits*	50	94	188%	100	308	308%

[14] As mentioned earlier, Phase II of the SRDP project targeted 185 farmers, of which 80 were targeted also under Phase I.

B.4. Impact

B.4.1. Economic impact: impact on beneficiaries' livelihoods and food security

The project sought to increase the income and improve the livelihood of the beneficiary farmers through increasing the feasibility of milk production, collection and marketing for farmers and their cooperatives on the one hand and improving farmers' capacity in producing milk on the other. The premise on which this two-tier strategy was based revolved around the principle of reducing cost of milk production and processing.

Although the proxy performance target indicators used for measuring the achievement of the project's goal (US$ value and Metric tons of small ruminant milk products sold by members through their cooperative) were not achieved, evidence gathered through interviews with farmers and from project documents indicates that the project did indeed contribute to increasing farmers' income, albeit to varying degrees. This conclusion is based on the following findings and conclusions:

a) Percentage of surveyed farmers reporting income increases: As noted above, survey results show that 66.7 percent (123) of the target beneficiaries believe that their incomes have increased by 28.2 percent as a result of the project.

b) Production cost savings accrued to farmers as a result of milk marketing: On average, processing milk into cheese costs between NIS 15-19, most of which comprising economic costs that are unaccounted by farmers. If we consider that farmers received NIS 3.6 per liter of milk sold through the project, and factor that each kilogram of cheese requires anywhere between 3.5-6.6 liters of milk , we can easily conclude that the opportunity cost of processing one kilogram of cheese is at least NIS 2.4 per liter. This opportunity cost has been transformed into savings to farmers through the project. Factoring the time spent on marketing of cheese by farmers and the telecommunication and transportation costs associated with it, will increase these savings.

c) Production cost savings accrued to farmers as a result of improved farm management skills: Anecdotal evidence suggests that significant beneficiary farmers accrued substantial savings as a result of the new practices they started using in relation to farm management and feed. One of the farmers interviewed in Yatta estimated the cost savings he accrued as a result of improved feed management for his 32 heads to be in the realm of NIS 1500 in four months.

While the level of correlation and relationship between the increase in income accrued by farmers and their level of food security could not be ascertained by the evaluation, especially given the exponential increase in food and feed prices that have ensued after the commencement of both phases of the project, it is unquestionable that the accrued income increases have increased the beneficiaries access to food, or at least cushioned them from becoming more vulnerable or food insecure.

The contribution of the project to the overall WBFS Program target envisaged form the SRDP component (Increased income of approximately $11/day for each of 150 targeted farmers), however, has not been simply because the number of beneficiary farmers who were involved in milk collection and marketing was far below the 150 farmers target. This underperformance, in the opinion of the evaluation team, is much more related to the optimistic original target for the number of farmers who will accrue income increases rather than project failure. It may have been more realistic at the design to anticipate a 30 percent dropout rate among beneficiaries and, thus, set the target of increased income for 100 farmers instead of all the 150 farmers. Had this been the case, the project would have been much closer to achieving its income impact target.

From a utilization perspective, the general state of food security has improved as a result of improved milk hygiene and reduced risk of milk contamination (see B.2.2 above). However, the significance of this improvement could not be ascertained by the evaluators as it is beyond the scope of this evaluation.

In terms of improving the livelihood of the beneficiaries, the provision of training and equipment to the beneficiary farmers and their cooperatives have undoubtedly increased their physical, financial, human and social capitals. This

in turn has expanded their livelihood assets and diversified their capacity (livelihood strategies) to cope with adverse conditions in the future.

B.4.2. Sectoral impacts

As a pilot project, the SRDP –in the opinion of the evaluation team- has left a substantial mark on the small ruminant sector. It has demonstrated, and effectively so given its short lifetime and resources- how with little resources and business acumen effective private-private relationships could be built to serve economic and agricultural sector development. It has also demonstrated to farmers how traditional ways of conducting business need to be adapted to keep pace with global trends and practices, and –more importantly- it showed them how this is possible. Moreover, the project has introduced a new approach to small ruminant sector development that had not existed in the oPt before, thus increasing the potential for mobilizing funding and investments in its support. Already, two projects funded by Oxfam GB have been launched to replicate the SRDP experience in Tubas and the Jordan Valley areas. This may have not been possible without the experience of the SRDP.

B.4.3. Impact on Women

It may very well be true that project was not entirely successful in mainstreaming gender as it originally envisaged, but its impact on some women in the beneficiary households has been significant. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the burden of milk processing, most often shouldered by women, has been significantly reduced within the beneficiary households that were part of the milk collection and marketing. According to PLCU reports and interviews and evaluation focus group discussions, the milk collection and marketing service introduced through the project has relived women from a very onerous responsibility and enabled to spend more time with their children and family members.

B.4.4. Overall Assessment of Impact

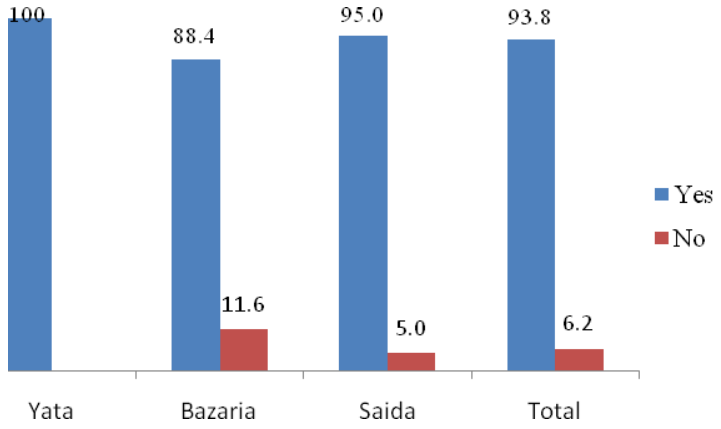
On the balance, the impact of the project on the food security and livelihood conditions of the beneficiary households has been moderate, despite the general increase in incomes of some 67 percent of the beneficiaries. The overall impact rating is largely fueled by the project's inability to meet its goal level performance targets, particularly that related to the value of milk sold, and the relatively small proportion of beneficiaries who indicated that their incomes have increased substantially (in real terms) as a result of the project (Table 14).

Table 14: Percentage distribution of beneficiaries who reported increased income with regard to level of increased income

Cooperative	**5-10%**	**11-20%**	**21-35%**	**36-50%**	**51%+**	**Total**
Yatta	20.6	17.6	17.6	35.3	8.8	**100**
Bazaria	17.4	52.2	21.7	4.3	4.3	**100**
Saida	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Total	**19.0**	**32.8**	**19.0**	**22.4**	**6.9**	**100**

This is not to say that the project did not have other equally important impacts. In fact the sectoral impact, the impact on women and the impact on internal relations within the target cooperatives could outweigh the food security and livelihood impact targets. The evaluation team contends that if the beneficiary cooperatives re-establish the marketing linkages established by the project and resume the milk collection and marketing service, the impact on food security and livelihood will likely surpass its original target. The onus is now with these cooperatives to tap the resources the project has made available to them, especially since 93.8 percent of the beneficiaries have indicated willingness to market milk through their cooperatives if the opportunity arises (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 5: Would you market fresh milk through the cooperative if the possibility arises again/continues? (% of farmers)



B.5. Sustainability

The likelihood of the sustainability of project results mixed. It is likely for Yatta Cooperative, but unlikely for Saida and Bazaria Cooperatives. The following points summarize the foundations on which this conclusion is based:

- Higher level of commitment to and sense of ownership of the collective milk collection and marketing service among the Yatta Cooperative farmers when compared to Saida and Bazaria Cooperatives: In interviews, the Yatta Cooperative and its farmers struck the evaluation team as more highly committed, more business oriented and better organized than the cooperatives in Saida and Bazaria. This despite the fact that the Yatta Cooperative and its farmers received relatively less technical and financial support from the project than the other two cooperatives. The Yatta Cooperative management is highly engaged in administering the milk collection process and is extremely cautious to follow strict standard measures when it comes to testing milk samples, storage, and record keeping. This is not the case in the other two cooperatives.

- Stronger business relations between Al-Jibrini Dairy Factory and Yatta Cooperative: Yatta Cooperative is the only of the three beneficiary cooperatives who indicated having good relationship with Al-Jibrini Dairy Factory. It was also the keenest to maintain this relationship. Anecdotal evidence suggests that Al-Jibrini has a reciprocal sentiment, which increases the chances for continued business relations.

- Proximity of Al-Jibrini Dairy Factory to Yatta Cooperative: The fact that Al-Jibrini Dairy Factory is located much closer to the premises of the Yatta Cooperative (located in the same governorate) than to the premises of Saida and Bazaria Cooperatives, makes it more cost efficient for Al-Jibrini to deal primarily with Yatta Cooperative as it reduces the cost of transportation and lead time.

- Higher quality milk in Yatta than in Saida and Bazzaria, particularly the latter: A review of a random sample of milk test results revealed that, on the balance, the quality of milk collected from Yatta is higher than in Saida and Bazarya, particularly the latter. A higher protein and soluble content, and PH closer to 4.5 were more systematically found in the samples reviewed in Yatta than those examined in Bazaria and Saida.

- Larger cooperative members' ownership of small ruminants in Yatta than in Saida and Bazaria: The fact that Yatta Cooperative members have a combined ownership of some 60,000 heads of sheep and goats makes the cooperative an ideal milk supplier for any dairy producer.

The above notwithstanding, Bazaria and Saida Cooperatives could resume milk collection and marketing if they manage to forge a business relationship with dairy producer for this purpose. As noted earlier, the fact that 88.4 percent and 95 percent of the Saida and Bazaria Cooperative members have indicated willingness to resume marketing milk through their respective cooperative is strong enough indicator that the likelihood of sustainability of the project in these cooperatives could be improved on medium- or long-run.

C. Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

The SRDP project was well designed and demonstrated high level of relevance to the local context and to the overall goal of the WBFS Program. Its foremost strength is its innovative approach to sector development and focused cooperative capacity building strategy. Commendably, the project as designed did not gold plat expected results and sought to do only what is necessary in a pilot project.

Despite encountering substantial delays as a result of administrative procedures related to procurement of equipment, PLCU managed to effectively implement the project on time and within the parameters of the allocated budget. PLCU is to be commended for this and for its ability to achieve the specific objectives of the SRDP project, namely building the capacity of farmers and their cooperatives in producing high-quality hygiene milk, and marketing processed sheep and goat milk products. The evaluation findings clearly show that substantial achievements have been realized in this regard, although they also suggest that slightly better results could have been achieved.

The project had moderate immediate impact due to the inability to meet it impact target indicators. Sufficient evidence also could not be gathered to support the conclusion that the project was able to increase the food security of its beneficiaries as originally envisaged in the project design. Gathering such evidence would have required more time and resources than what was made available to the evaluation team and would have necessitated a different assessment approach than the one used in this evaluation. However, sufficient evidence exists to support the conclusion that the project has contributed to increasing the income of a large proportion of the farmers by way of facilitating marketing of milk at favorable prices to the farmers and helping farmers cut their milk production and livestock rearing costs. The project has also left a tangible impact on the livelihood of the beneficiaries by imparting knowledge and skills, and providing equipment which augmented their human, physical and social capitals and diversified their livelihood assets. Moreover, the project has had a substantial impact on women in the beneficiary households as it allowed them more time to spend with their children and family members by reducing their workload related to processing milk for livelihood purposes.

The sustainability of the project is likely in Yatta and unlikely in both Bazaria and Saida. This is largely due the suspension of the milk collection service in the latter cooperatives, and the higher levels of commitment among the beneficiaries in the former than the latter. Despite this, the likelihood of sustainability of the project in the latter localities could be improved if the milk collection and marketing service could be resumed.

The main lessons learned from the SRDP are the following:

a) The small ruminant sector faces major difficulties as a result of increasing feed prices. These difficulties, however, could be effectively overcome through farm management improvement and marketing strategies. Such strategies would not only improve sector viability, but also contribute to improving the livelihood of important vulnerable group, smallholder farmers.

b) Livestock cooperatives can play an effective role in sector development interventions. However, for these cooperatives to do so, their technical, administrative and management capacities would need to be built. Substantial proportion of such capacity building efforts would need to be focused on working with cooperative leaders and staff towards establishing effective management and accountability systems, as well as developing business acumen. Special emphasis should also be given to establishing cost recovery systems and helping cooperatives establish complementarities between the services they provide to reach economies of scale and improve service provision.

c) Working with livestock farmers and convincing to change traditional practices can be extremely challenging. Extensive extension, support and learning by doing and observing are among the most successful strategies that could be used in gaining the confidence of livestock farmers and getting them to agree to change their common way of doing things.

d) It is extremely important that realistic performance targets are set during the project design as these targets will be the basis on which the project is evaluated. This is particularly important when setting objective and goal level indicators. Thus, it is unrealistic to expect that project beneficiaries will accrue the same level of benefit by a project, as individual differences and personal characteristics are major factors in determining the level of benefit that a beneficiary could be expected to accrue. Hence, the expectation that all the SRDP beneficiaries will accrue the same level of increase in income (US$11/day) as a result of being targeted by the project was unrealistic as it was predicated on the erroneous assumption that all beneficiaries will equally be willing to effectively participate and implement what the project sought to introduce. Setting a lower target for the number of beneficiaries expected to accrue the income increases would have been more realistic.

e) Introducing new technologies to farmers should be part-and-parcel of an integrated performance improvement/farm development approach, and one that can bridge all technical gaps that may hinder application of the new technology. As it was, the introduction of the milking machines to SRDP project beneficiaries proved to be an inefficient strategy as the parlors were not well-suited for the effective utilization of these machines. Had the project made allocations for farm adaptation, the rate of utilization would have most likely been much higher.

f) Addressing supply chain constraints is critical to the effectiveness of sectoral development interventions. The experience of SRDP suggests that tackling downstream supply chain constraints is as important as developing the supply chain upstream. Accordingly, integrated interventions that tackle supply chain constraints throughout the chain are more effective in creating sustainable improvements on the long-term.

g) Planning for implementation of any development project must anticipate risks associated with project implementation and their impact on the project performance, and build well-though out risk mitigation measures to prevent these risks from materializing. Special emphasis in such considerations should be put on factors that may affect implementation delays and cost over runs. Donor approvals, exchange rate fluctuations, availability of local materials, and supply chain constraints are among the most critical factors that affect the timely implementation of any project and are often underestimated at the time of design.

h) USAID funded projects involve standard provisions that restrict the use of US Government funds to a certain commodities, products and works that may not be commensurate with what would be needed for integrated agricultural development projects targeting the poor. Moreover, the USAID provisions stipulating substantial USAID involvement in key project matters and approvals of procurement of supplies above a specified threshold level could sometimes cause unexpected implementation delays, which could be detrimental to projects with short lifetime and/or whose successes are contingent on implementing activities during a very specific period. Accordingly, care should be exercised when exploring USAID funding should be explored

The key recommendations emerging from this evaluation for immediate action are the following:

a) ACDI/VOCA and PLCU are strongly encouraged to seek funding to provide additional support to the three target cooperatives to resume (in the case of Bazaria and Saida) and improve their milk collection and marketing services. Special emphasis should be on closing the hygiene gaps (i.e. improving parlor hygiene conditions), establishing milking sites, and building effective marketing strategies.

b) Linked to the previous point, PLCU should encourage Saida and Bazaria Cooperatives to either seek out ways to resume their milk collection and marketing activities or return to PLCU the equipment they received through the project. PLCU should seek legal advice in this matter and act accordingly. Should the Cooperatives decide to return the equipment, PLCU should seek a recipient cooperative that would be

willing to repay Saida and Bazaria Cooperatives their contribution. Yatta Cooperative could be an ideal candidate.

c) PLCU should continue its support to Yatta cooperative over the short-term and seek out ways to encourage and assist other cooperatives to introduce the milk collection and marketing service within their package of services. Exchange visits to Yatta Cooperative could be an effective means of doing this.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE HORTICULTURE PRODUCTION AND MARKETING COMPONENT

A. Overview and Performance Targets

After having received USAID's technical approval on 12 February 2007 on the pre-selection of nine cooperatives[15] for possible inclusion under the Horticulture Production and Marketing (HPM) Component of the WBFS Program, ACDI/VOCA sent a Request for Proposals (RFP) from non-governmental organizations for the implementation of the HPM component activities with six of the nine pre-selected cooperatives. The RFP along with detailed proposal instructions were sent to three NGOs, namely: TALEM, ANERA and ESDC on 20 February 2007. TALEM declined to submit a proposal one day before the deadline for submission of proposals, while ESDC and ANERA decided to submit a joint proposal whereby the latter is primary grantee and the former a secondary.

ANERA's proposal was favorably reviewed by ACDI/VOCA and sent to USAID for technical review and approval, which was granted on 20 April 2007 contingent upon the cancellation of one activity: renovation of cooperative facilities. A sub-award agreement in the total amount of US$756,623 was signed between ACDI/VOCA and ANERA on 25 April 2007, with an agreed completion date of 15 July 2008. The Project was designed with the goal of the project was "to promote sustainable livelihoods and reduce food insecurity among poor and marginalized farmers and households by improving commercial smallholder farming and agricultural business opportunities and by working with agricultural cooperatives."

Through targeting 350 farmers belonging to the agricultural cooperative in six localities (Thinaba; Baqa Al-Sharqeya; Qalqilia; Qabatia; Tamoon and Atouf; and, Bardala), the project sought to achieve its livelihood and food security improvement goal through pursuing the following specific objectives over its lifetime:

- Improve the income level of 350 vegetable farmers by 15 percent from greenhouse operations through reducing input costs (promoting collective purchasing) and increase sales prices (promoting collective marketing through coops);
- Increase production of safe and healthy vegetables by adding new 95 dunums of greenhouses and rehabilitating another 220 dunums to be more suitable for application of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques;
- Build the technical capacity and know-how, through training and extension, of 350 farmers in environmentally-safe greenhouse vegetable production techniques such as IPM and Integrated Crop Management (ICM) to be applied for all assets of the farmers including the newly established/rehabilitated greenhouses;
- Train 350 farmers on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) techniques to meet the phyto-sanitary requirements and market protocols for marketing their produce in the local market and exporting it to the Israeli market;
- Build the human and institutional capacities of the target cooperatives through various trainings as well as collective systems development and implementation in the cooperative and in the farms of participating members;
- Foster improved relations among cooperative members through training and other technical assistance tools;
- Initiate and engage in marketing linkage exercises between the six participating cooperatives and local and Israeli buyers;
- Improve competitive growth through a stronger cooperative structure;
- Achieve production quality requirements and smallholder awareness of production quality standards and market orientation;
- Increase effective acquisition and utilization of market information to respond to market demand;

[15] A total of 19 cooperatives were Assessed by ACDI/VOCA staff using the Cooperative Assessment Tool (CAT) customized by ACDI/VOCA staff. This tool was used to assess the cooperatives against 13 different governance, management, and service categories.

- Improve collective purchasing and marketing;
- Develop cost-effective cooperative approaches to reach a large farmer base; and,
- Expand cooperative and farmer member market and supply linkages.

The project objectives would be pursued through a two-track strategy. The first track would focus on cooperative development and growth (much in line with the WBFS Program design), and was envisaged to focus on building cooperative marketing capacities and improving their business practices to enable them and their members to compete in the market on an equal footing with the other larger private sector firms. This was to be done through in-depth organizational assessments of the six selected cooperatives to identify their collective and individual organizational development needs. Based on the assessment conducted by ACDI/VOCA of the target cooperatives, the project design envisaged developing systems for improving management, financial administration, accountability and members services functions, as well as providing the cooperatives with training and equipment to improve their post-harvest handling practices and business [and marketing] management. Provision of technical assistance by external Palestinian and Israeli marketing experts was also envisaged to assist the cooperatives in establishing marketing linkages and building relationships with Israeli buyers.

The second track would focus on building cooperative farmers' capacities to effectively contribute to the success of the activities described in the first track, whereby farmers showing interest to sell to prospective Israeli or Palestinian buyers, willingness to adopt and follow production protocols for intended markets and ability to meet other post harvest requirements would be selected. Through working with these farmers, the project would rehabilitate/construct plastic and net greenhouses for 350 farmer members of the six proposed vegetable-producing areas. This would be complemented with capacity building work with technical training and extension services in IPM and ICM techniques, protected agriculture, crop diversification, value chain assessments, production protocols, phyto-sanitary requirements and quality standards for the beneficiary greenhouse vegetable farmers. The project proposal stated that if other technical needs are identified during project implementation, these needs would be addressed through technical assistance, local consultancy and training support.

B. Assessment of Component Implementation

B.1. Project Start-up and Development

Project implementation began on schedule on 1 May 2007. The first two months of the project were utilized for staff and beneficiary mobilization, cooperatives visits and assessments, and planning of workshops and preparation of training materials. In early June 2007, after further assessment by the project team, a request to drop the North Jordan Valley Cooperative in the village of Bardala was made because the cooperative was selected to receive similar assistance to that planned by the project from an AusAid funded project implemented by CARE.

Coincidently, serious doubt was emerging about the seriousness and commitment of the cooperative in Tammoun as a result of its failure to follow-through with several crucial matters needed for the timely and effective implementation of the project. At the request of ANERA, the project Steering Committee approved dropping both Tammoun and Bardala Cooperatives, and replacing them with Al-Jalameh Cooperative in late June 2007. By that time, however, significant effort and time had been invested in cooperative meetings and beneficiary selection in both Bardala and Tammoun by ANERA and ESDC, while ACDI/VOCA had invested resources in conducting one Farming as a Business (FaaB) training workshops with Tammoun Cooperative members.

While dropping both Bardala and Tammoun Cooperative did not impact the project in terms of the total number of beneficiaries targeted, it did however force a change to the type of planned activities and the number of targeted beneficiaries in each cooperative. The net greenhouses that were planned in Bardala could not be implemented in any of the five selected cooperatives due to their unsuitability to the weather conditions, and had to be replaced by plastic greenhouses. The number of beneficiaries planned for in Tammoun and Bardala were distributed among the five participating Cooperatives as shown in the table below.

Table 15: Number of new and rehabilitated greenhouses planned

Cooperative	# of new constructed units	# of rehabilitated units
Qalqilia Coop	30	66
Thinnabeh Coop	27	32
Baqa Coop	20	10
Qabatia coop	30	76
Al-Jalameh coop	20	42
Total	**127**	**226**

Despite the obstacles faced which caused implementation delays, ANERA was able to fast-track activities and regain much of the time lost at in the first few months of implementation. By September 2007, the contract for the rehabilitation and construction of the greenhouses was already awarded, the majority of the beneficiaries selected, and most training courses planned. Also by that time, an agreement was reached between ACDI/VOCA and ANERA, whereby the former would be directly involved in the project implementation through building on the FaaB training it was implementing within the framework of the project by providing technical assistance to the five beneficiary cooperatives to improve their export potential. This was largely facilitated by ACDI/VOCA's ability to leverage support to the target cooperatives to obtain Global Gap certification from the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees, which provided all physical inputs needed for this purpose.

B.2. Effectiveness

Given the relatively large number of specific objectives identified in the project proposal and the high level of complementarities among them, the project effectiveness will be assessed through assessing the degree to which the project has been able to improve the income level of vegetable farmers; and, to build the human and institutional capacities of the target cooperatives.

B.2.1. Farmers' Income

As noted above, the project sought to increase the income of farmers through reducing input costs and increasing sales prices. The reduction of input cost was envisaged to be done through three main strategies, namely: i) encouraging farmers to adopt IPM and ICM techniques, thus reduce their production and land maintenance costs , ii) introducing improved farm management practices to allow farmers to ascertain level of cost and profitability and take actions as necessary; and iii) encouraging farmers and their cooperatives to adopt collective marketing. The objective related to increasing sales prices was primarily pursued through encouraging farmers to improve the marketability of their crops in Israeli and international markets as well as through promoting export-oriented, cash crops, and establishing marketing links to allow these farmers to sell their products at favorable prices. Critical to this was the ability of the project to assist farmers in marketing their products during the period in which international prices are at their seasonal peak; i.e. when demand is high and supply is low.

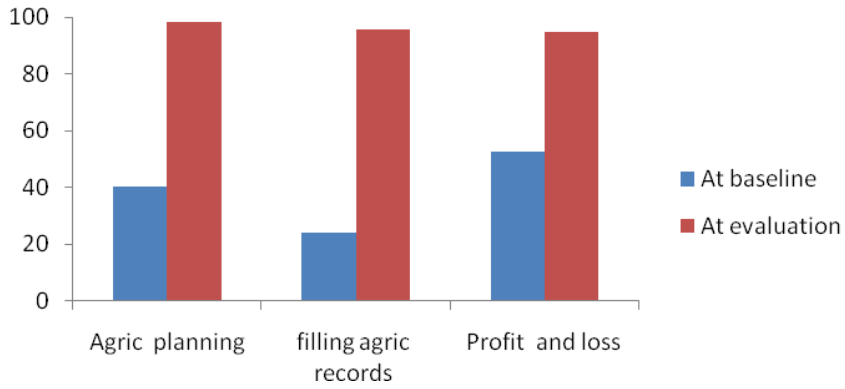
A) Farmer training

Significant efforts and resources were geared toward farmer capacity building under the HPM project. Fourteen FaaB training workshops were implemented with the participation of 328 farmers from the five target cooperatives. These workshops were complemented with 12 follow-up training courses attended by 186 beneficiaries and six exchange visits to a Khaizaran Farm in Tubas area where FaaB principles are rigorously followed. In addition to the FaaB training, 14 training courses were implemented with the participation of 329 farmers.

While the sheer number of the training courses is worthy of recognition in its own merit as it is sufficiently indicative of improved farmer capacity, the effectiveness of these training is even more laudable. Field observations gave a very clear indication that the utility of farm records and farm management practices are extremely high. All farmers interviewed had farm records in which they kept daily record of all of their farm activities, including cost

and income calculations. Many of these farmers kept very detailed records of all of their expenditures (including business-related costs in several cases) and made calculations monthly calculations of their profits and losses as well as cash flows. Evaluation survey results confirmed field observations in this regard by showing that almost all beneficiaries are using farm records for business management purposes. The survey results have also shown that the proportion of farmers who use farm records for these purposes has significantly increased from the baseline as shown in the figure below.

Figure 6: Percentage of farmers utilizing various farm management techniques, before and after project compared

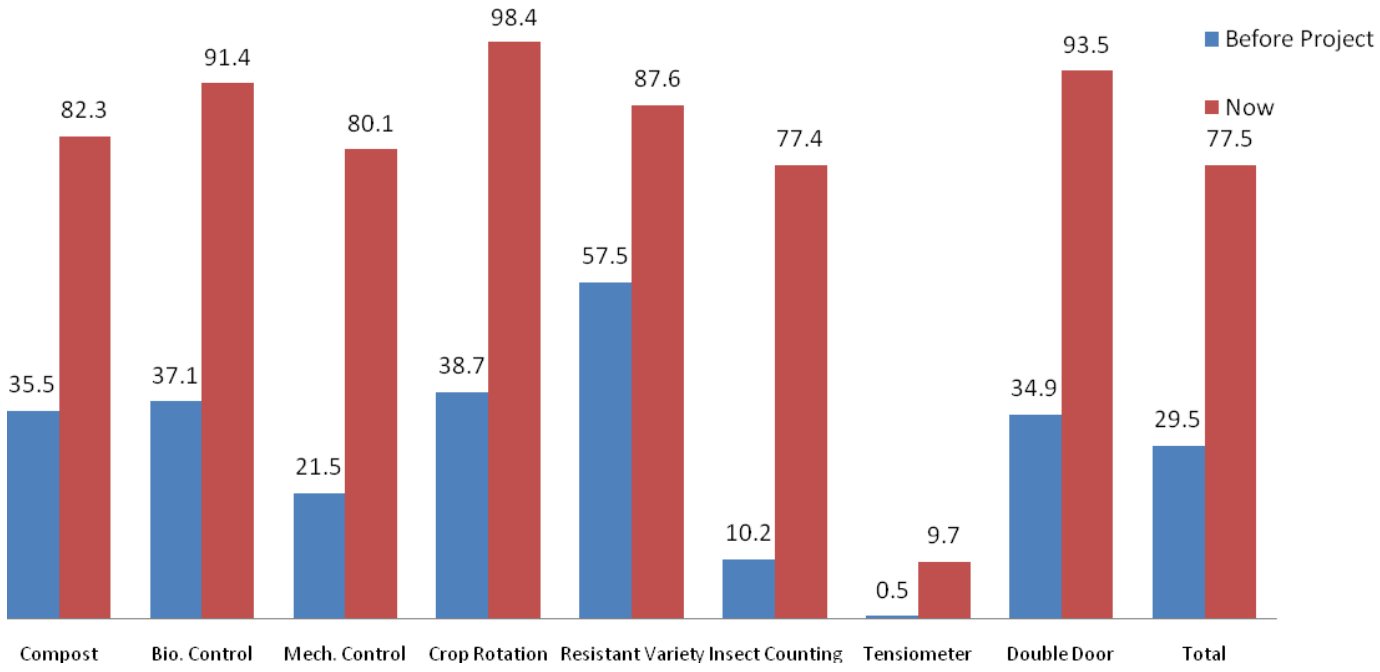


According to farmers, the utilization of farm records, enables them to cut their losses once they loss recurs. As on farmer put it, "farm records help us recognize our loss much quicker, and because of that we could stop whatever it is we are doing that is causing us to lose, even if it is ceasing cultivation". The high level of use of farm records and the potential they provide for improved commercialization of agriculture are considered by the evaluation team as a huge success. ACDI/VOCA and its staff who conducted the FaaB training are to be congratulated on this achievement.

The IPM training had similar results, although the level of its application among farmers was lower than in the case of FaaB techniques. While all farmers visited applied IPM techniques, the majority of them were not applying it in an integrated approach. This notwithstanding, the results have been quite positive. Farmers interviewed expressed their high level of satisfaction with the IPM/ICM training they received, highlight that the application of IPM and ICM techniques has accrued them savings ranging between NIS 400-700 per season per dunum; i.e. an average of NIS 800-1300 per year. This is quite significant for farmers, as this average savings equates to production cost savings of 5-10% per year.

According to the evaluation survey results, the application of IPM/ICM techniques by has substantially increased as a result of the project. Results show that the proportion of farmers applying these techniques has increased by 163 percent (29.5 percent to 77.5 percent) from its baseline level as shown in the figure below. This quite a substantial improvement given the traditional challenge associated with introducing change to common and well-entrenched practices known to farmers.

Figure 7: Percentage of farmers utilizing various IPM/ICM techniques, before and after project compared



B) Greenhouse Construction and Rehabilitation

The effectiveness of greenhouse construction and rehabilitation on farmers' income has been substantial. Survey results show that the both activities have substantially increased the productivity –thus the income- of the beneficiary farmers.

Table 16: Total quantity and value of crops sold in local market

Crops	New construction			Rehabilitation			Total		
	Total quantity (Kg)	**Price (NIS)**	**Value (NIS)**	**Total Quantity (Kg)**	**Price (NIS)**	**Value (NIS)**	**Total Quantity (Kg)**	**Price (NIS)**	**Value (NIS)**
Tomatoes	464850	1.2	557820	533900	1.5	800850	998750	1.4	1358670
Cucumbers	510853	1.6	817365	712872	1.55	1104952	1223725	1.5	1922316
Green Beans	9200	3.4	31280	10500	2.5	26250	19700	3	57530
Green Peppers	25000	1	25000	59000	2.3	135700	84000	1.7	160700
Jews Mallow	11200	2	22400	84001	2.5	210002	95201	2.4	232403
Pumpkin	20610	3.6	74196	31500	3.5	110250	52110	3.5	184446
Cow peas	1000	5	5000	15700	4	62800	16700	4.5	67800
Peas	11000	0.8	8800	0	0	0	11000	0.8	8800
Others	0	0	0	4000	1	4000	4000	1	4000
Total	**1,053,713**		**1,541,861**	**1,451,473**		**2,454,804**	**2,505,186**		**3,996,665**

Based on the figures in the table above, the average area of land owned by the beneficiaries of new construction (2218m^2) and rehabilitation (2233m^2), and the average area of greenhouse constructed (630m^2) or rehabilitated by the project (1000m^2), we can conclude the following through a simple arithmetic[16]:

- The new construction activity has increased the income of its beneficiaries by an average of NIS 5,340 last season.
- The rehabilitation activity has effectively increased the income of its beneficiaries by an average of NIS10,570 last season.

The reason for the difference in the value of increase in income is quite simple: the average area of the rehabilitated greenhouses is almost double that for the new construction. Further analysis of the efficiency of both activities is discussed below.

C) Market Linkages

Considerable efforts were made by ACDI/VOCA to establish business linkages between the target cooperatives and Israeli buyers. These efforts began in late May 2007 with the hiring of an Israeli agribusiness and marketing consultant to identify market needs and potential buyers, assist the cooperatives to acquire market information, and coordinate business meetings with potential buyers and make arrangements for exchange visits, among others. Contact was initiated by the consultant with several Israeli traders and buyers in close coordination with ACDI/VOCA's COP and DCOP, and initial visits were conducted to most of the traders and buyers contacted to discuss their willingness and readiness to work with the target cooperatives. The results of these meetings were encouraging, and, consequently, face-to-face business meetings were organized between cooperatives and three Israeli companies (MOR-10, Agro-Star and Agrexco).

Meetings were organized between Agro-Star and Thinnaba and Baqa Cooperatives, and an agreement was reached with these cooperatives to cultivate and market a cluster of cherry tomatoes in 25 dunums for export and for the Israeli market with the participation of 33 farmers (18 from Baqa and 17 from Thinnaba). The plan was to begin cultivation at the beginning of October for first harvest in November when the international market prices are at their height. Following this agreement, ACDI/VOCA coordinated a technical training for farmers in both cooperatives with Agro-Star with the purpose of introducing to farmers all the requirements and special conditions for planting and cultivation of cluster cherry tomatoes. Follow-up meetings were later conducted, in which a formal agreement was signed and information regarding the production, quality standards and packaging and transport was provided by Agro-Star. ACDI/VOCA commissioned an Arab-Israeli agronomist and an export specialist to provide guidance and extension support to the cooperatives; including the provision of advice on the species of tomatoes to cultivate, quality monitoring and grading and packaging.

Meetings were also organized between Agrexco and the heads of Al-Jalameh and Qabatya Cooperatives in July 2007 to discuss business cooperation opportunities. These meetings resulted in an initial agreement between the two cooperatives and Agrexco for the pilot cultivation of 10-15 dunums of green Italian zucchini in Al-Jalameh and 10-15 dunums of snow peas in Qabatia. However, Al-Jalameh Cooperative decided to disengage for this initial agreement. ACDI/VOCA continued coordination with Agrexco, and managed to facilitate the formalization of an agreement between Agrexco and Qabatya Cooperative in December 2007 for the cultivation of and marketing of 15 dunums of snow peas by 24 cooperative member farmers. According to this agreement, planting would take place in November with harvest of ten tons of snow peas slated to begin in late January 2008.

The 59 farmers began cultivation of the crops on time under the close supervision and guidance of the consultant hired by ACDI/VOCA. In the meantime, and as a result of the Israeli companies' request for EurepGap certification from the cooperatives and their farmers, ACDI/VOCA was heavily engaged in coordinating with PARC to leverage its activities for the provision of GlobalGap certification for the three cooperatives with the framework of a Dutch-funded project it was implementing. Consequently, PARC agreed to supply the participating 57 farmers and their cooperatives with inputs and cover the GlobalGap certification fees.

[16] This is based on three step process: 1) dividing the value of reported production sold last season by the number of respondents in each category (82 farmers for new construction and 104 farmers for rehabilitation) to get the average income per beneficiary from the sale of agricultural products ; 2) dividing the average income per beneficiary in each category by the average area of greenhouses owned and cultivated last season for each category of farmers to get the income from each square meter of cultivated greenhouses; and, 3) multiplying the result from (2) by the average area of greenhouse constructed/rehabilitated to get the income derived directly from that service.

ACDI/VOCA immediately began work on readying the cooperatives for certification by contracting two local extension consultants and a quality assurance coordinator to assist the cooperatives and member farmers in meeting the production and processing standards. A GlobalGap consultant was also recruited to develop and assist in the implementation of a cooperative management system in the cooperatives and assist them throughout the certification process. To further facilitate the certification process, ACDI/VOCA, based on USAID approval, amended the grant agreement with ANERA in December 2007 and allocated funding for the construction of three cold storage units in the three cooperatives undergoing the GlobalGap certification process.

The efforts and resources that have been devoted by ACDI/VOCA and ANERA to establish market linkages between the cooperatives and Israeli buyers have been remarkable and have had an astoundingly quick impact on the institutional capacity of the cooperatives and on the individual capacity of the 57 participating farmers as we shall examine in the following section. However, in terms of contribution to increasing the farmers' incomes, the effectiveness of these efforts have been far below expectations. As it was, the farmers who participated in export contracts ended up losing instead of generating income and making profits. Several factors contributed to this, most of which were beyond the intervention capacity of ACDI/VOCA. The most salient of these factors are the following:

a) The weather crisis: The rainfall patterns combined with below average precipitation rates have classified the agricultural year 2007/2008 as a year of drought. This was compounded by several days of frost during early January 2008, which destroyed entire fields. The effect of the frost in particular on the beneficiary farmers was catastrophic as it wiped out a large proportion of their export crops, and substantially stunted the growth, productivity and quality characteristics of the crops that seemed to have withstood the frost. Consequently, the salability of the export crops was hugely constrained by below standard crops and the late marketing; i.e. marketing could not be done during the period in which international market prices are at their height as originally envisaged. For example, snow peas were slated for harvest 45-60 days after its cultivation in mid January, however, harvest was not possible due to stunted growth until early March, i.e. more than one and a half month late.

b) Late cultivation: Compounding the effect of frost on crops growth and productivity was the relatively late cultivation which was largely due to the delay in signature of agreements between the cooperatives and the Israeli companies. The late cultivation of cherry tomatoes made it subject to cold weather conditions before its buds could grow to tolerate such weather, thus its first harvest was delayed by more than two weeks from what was originally planned for, which is quite a substantial delay in export agricultural commodity markets and one which carries heavy price consequences.

c) Below average international market prices for selected crops: While global market prices for agricultural commodities were on an upward trend since early 2007, the prices of a number of commodities were characteristically volatile. While tomatoes and snow peas were not among these crops, in 2008 their prices in the market prices were 5-8 percent below their average for the same period in the two preceding years due to above average imports. This directly affected the prices that could be gotten for these crops downward, squeezing the profit margin of, both, the Israeli companies and the beneficiary farmers.

d) Farmers' attitude to grading and packaging: Anecdotal evidence suggests that despite their high level of awareness and high level knowledge of grading process requirements and packaging techniques, farmers did not develop the attitude necessary for ensuring that these requirements are adhered. Grading was done effectively by farmers, and the grading committees established within cooperatives did not seem to have the authority to enforce adherence to the required grading standards until late into the season. According to ACDI/VOCA staff, a significant proportion of the exported crops were either rejected or sold in secondary markets due to grading quality issues, which in turn reduced sale revenue.

e) Delay in certification: The certification of the three cooperatives came much latter than expected, thus limiting the sale of the largest proportion of the quantities produced within the framework of the project to European wholesalers who are notorious for buying at low prices.

f) Limited experience of Agrexco in snow peas export: Agrexco signed the agreement with Qabatia Cooperative for piloting the snow peas cultivation and marketing. This rubric was used because Agrexco had never been engaged in snow peas export before. As a result, the company was not able to properly advise the farmers and their cooperative of the market information needed for effective production and marketing, including inability to provide advice on the proper packaging, acceptable residue levels and sale prices.

g) High transportation cost and transport through put: Delays in transporting crops as a results of long processing time and back-to-back systems at Israeli checkpoints have added to the margin squeeze of farmers (due to the high cost of back-to-back transport) and often caused irreversible damage to the inbound crops (as a result of direct exposure to weather elements and long waiting times), which directly affected acceptability and prices of exported goods. While ACDI/VOCA made highly commendable efforts to liaise with the Israeli Civil Administration to expedite the crossing process of agricultural commodities originating from the three cooperatives and inbound for export, very little was done at checkpoints to ensure that this happens. The Project Manager estimated that 10-20 percent of the total shipments sent for export by the three cooperatives sustained substantial damage at the Israeli checkpoints and were unfit for sale in neither the export market, nor in Israel.

The ability of the cooperatives to export and meet their production-for-marketing targets despite all the above factors and their compound effect should not be taken lightly. In fact, it deserves both praise and admiration. The evaluation team strongly believes that while the market linkages established by through the project did not meet their intended target for increasing farmers' incomes, it does not discredit or take away from the achievements made by the project in this regard. The long term impact of the export experience –as we shall examine below- has a strong potential for far outweighing the positive results achieved by the project vis-à-vis increased farmer's income through construction and rehabilitation of greenhouses.

B.2.2. Farmers' Knowledge and Practices

We highlighted in "Section A" of this chapter how the project envisaged building the capacity of the beneficiary farmers toward improved agricultural practices. In section B.1.1. above we discussed the effectiveness of IPM/ICM training on farmers' practices and income. We shall briefly discuss here the effectiveness of other training programs in terms of their contribution to increasing production of safe and healthy vegetables.

In addition to the IPM/ICM and cherry tomato cultivation for export training courses mentioned above, ANERA implemented the training courses on soil management and irrigation, food hygiene and safety, and chemical residue traceability training courses. All of these training courses focused on raising the breadth and depth of farmers' knowledge of the importance of safe agricultural practices from a food security and sustainable agriculture perspectives. To a large extent, these trainings also focused on making the linkage between reducing the level of reliance on pesticides and insecticides and production cost reduction.

Evaluation survey results show that the effectiveness of these training courses have been very high. While the percentage of farmers who reported knowledge of different agricultural terms and concepts related to "Good Agricultural Practices" did not substantially increase from its baseline levels, the proportion of farmers who could properly explain what is meant by safe agriculture and good agricultural practices increased substantially. On average, 88 percent of the surveyed beneficiaries could provide definitions for all terms related to agricultural product safety which were part of the training they received. And, an average of 92 percent could describe the key processes needed to ensure the safety of agricultural crops. The overwhelming majority of these farmers also indicated practice of these processes in their farms. This level of knowledge is unequivocally high and demonstrates the project's success in building the knowledge among farmers on agricultural product safety issues.

Much like the case with IPM/ICM, evaluation field observations confirmed that there is a very high level of correlation between knowledge of good agricultural practices and practice. The overwhelming majority of beneficiary farmers visited indicated significant reduction in the use of chemical pesticides and insecticides, and many of them claimed using 10-20 percent of what they had been used to over the years. None of the farmers surveyed and/or interviewed indicated using Methyl Bromide to sterilize the soil. All of them reported using soil solarization techniques. This constitutes sufficient evidence, in the opinion of the evaluation team, to support the

conclusion that agricultural crops produced by the beneficiary farmers are now safer and more environmentally friendly than the level at which they were before the project.

B.2.3. Cooperative Development and Growth

Cooperative capacity building activities were implemented largely as planned, and achievements were in line with what had been expected at the time of design. Capacity building activities aimed at building the management and administrative capacity of the cooperative staff and leaders, as well as building the physical/organizational capacity of the five target cooperatives. The capacity building activities were based on an assessment conducted by ACDI/VOCA's Cooperative Assessment Specialist, through which broad areas for capacity building interventions were identified. The following points summarize all the capacity building activities that were implemented within the framework of the HPM project.

- Procurement and supply of computers and printers: based on the recommendations of an assessment of the information technology resources and infrastructure available in the five target cooperatives which was conducted by an external consultant commissioned by ANERA and ESDC, four computers and printers were procured and delivered to Baqa, Thinnabeh, Qabatia and Al-Jalameh Cooperatives. Qalqilya Cooperative was provided with a photocopier. The provision of this equipment was instrumental for the effective implementation of other capacity building interventions.

- Introducing a management system in all five cooperatives: A management consultant commissioned by ANERA developed a model cooperative management system for the beneficiary cooperatives on the basis of organizational gap analyses for two of the most active of the five cooperatives, i.e. the two that have the most number of services. In working with ANERA, ESDC and ACDI/VOCA, the consultant developed a comprehensive management system, complete with procedures and electronic forms. This system was reviewed and approved by ACDI/VOC A, ANERA and ESDC and latter presented to and discussed with the five cooperatives in a central workshop in Ramallah. The system was customized for each of the five cooperatives and, latter, adopted by them. Training and coaching was provided to the cooperatives through the project to ensure its full adoption and implementation. The management system and its accompanying procedures and forms covered all aspects of management services carried out by the cooperatives, and thus was intended to help them improve internal decision making, adopt better controls and strengthen overall management, governance and transparency. It was also intended to assist them in adopting other necessary management requirements needed for GlobalGap certification, such as record keeping on member farmers.

- Introducing an electronic financial system in all five cooperatives: A financial consultant was developed a financial system using the same process used for developing the management system. "Sham", computer-based accounting software developed locally, was procured by ANERA and installed in all five cooperatives. An external consultant was later commissioned to work with the cooperatives on customizing the financial system to better fit their own needs and to integrate this system with the previously developed management system. A central training workshop was conducted for the Board members and staff of the five cooperatives to encourage and help them institutionalize the system within their cooperatives. Two follow-up training on the use of the "Sham" were also conducted with the participation of five Board members (one from each cooperative) and the five accountants of the target cooperatives.

- Training on cooperative principles and democratic governance: Fifteen one-day training workshops were conducted with 287 beneficiaries of the five cooperatives. This workshop aimed at strengthening the cooperative values among the beneficiaries, and imparting knowledge to them on issues related to cooperative management and governance. The training outline focused on introducing cooperative principles, Cooperative Law and bylaws, cooperative governance, cooperative business skills.

- Workshop on cooperative management: A central workshop entitled "Cooperative Management Development and Sustainability" was held in Ramallah in February 2008 with the participation of 25 Board members and staff from the five cooperatives. The workshop included keynote speeches and presentations by prominent cooperative leaders on issues related to cooperative values and principles, cooperative accounting and financial planning; cooperative business ventures as means for effective member services

and sustainability; collective purchasing and marketing; and marketing and promotional campaigns. The workshop also included a case study presentation on the Ramallah Poultry Farmers Cooperative, which is one of the well-known cooperatives in Palestine for its good governance practice and first-rate financial performance.

- GlobalGap certification, provision of grading and packaging tools and cold storage facilities, and marketing/export linkages (*described above).*

- Website and brochure development: Within the framework of ACDI/VOCA's support to the five cooperatives, an internet domain name was obtained for each cooperative and a website was developed for each of them by an external e-marketing consultant. This consultant also developed a brochure for each of the five cooperatives.

The cooperative capacity building objective was unquestionably achieved. Where cooperatives had little knowledge of how to plan, manage and implement, document and report on their activities and services, the training resulted in all of them learning at least the basics in all of these. This was a commendable result given that the entire allocation for training over the lifetime of the project was $78,000, 9.9% of total budget. It was also commendable given that training fell largely on the shoulders of the project team.

The provision of the management and financial systems has transformed the way the cooperatives conduct their business. Where cooperatives had rudimentary manual systems and procedures to manage their business processes, the systems provided by the project helped them improve the way they operate by increasing efficiency, accuracy and organization, and, more importantly, be able to organize membership services and governance. The databases developed through the project to assist the cooperatives in the GlobalGap certification process have -without doubt- improved the capacity of these cooperatives to explore marketing opportunities for their willing members and speak on their behalf. Coalescing information on the area of land cultivated by members and the types of crops cultivated which used to be considered an impossible task by cooperatives, can now be done with a click of a button by them.

Engaging in the GlobalGap certification process and having been through the process of exporting has built a tremendous capacity within the three cooperatives, despite the unfavorable results when it comes to economic returns. Going through the GlobalGap certification process and, later, the export process has raised the level of awareness and knowledge of these cooperatives of exporting requirements and they are now substantially better positioned to engage in export activities than ever before. The physical infrastructure they have received through the project for this purpose gives them a competitive advantage over others in this field. Meeting face-to-face with Israeli buyers and export companies should not be under-estimated as it significantly improved the cooperatives business negotiations capacity. As one of the cooperative leaders put it to the evaluation team, "the project helped us become experts in the export business in no-time, and we can now advise others what to do". The capacity built through the GlobalGap certification and export process is highly commendable given the fact that it was added to the project during implementation on the basis of an emerging opportunity.

Finally, the evaluation team views the integrated capacity building approach followed by the project and the high level of commitment of the project team with high regard. It is this approach and commitment that has made all of the above achievements possible. ACDI/VOCA and ANERA are particularly commended for their ability to manage such a highly demanding approach to capacity building.

The main shortcoming that the evaluation team would like to highlight is the delay in the production of cooperative brochures and establishment of the cooperative websites, which were completed towards the end of the project, and the limited attention to cooperative capacity building in the area of website maintenance. While the former is not substantial on the grand scheme of the project, the latter is slightly more substantial from a sustainability and efficiency perspective. It was clear through interviews that cooperatives do not have the requisite capacity to update their websites or use email. The long-term effectiveness and utility of the website development should thus be examined in an ex-post evaluation.

B.3. Efficiency

For the purposes of this evaluation, the assessment of the project efficiency was done through investigating the following efficiency factors: i) project actual costs compared with appraisal estimates and any revisions; ii) implementation performance; iii) the level of benefits and their growth curve compared with expectations; iv) utilization rates for project facilities and services; quality of inputs provided; and adequacy of the project benefits stream vis-à-vis its costs.

On the balance, the HPM project has demonstrated considerable efficiency in transforming available inputs and resources into outputs. This, as we shall examine in further detail below, is largely attributed to the effective use of financial (and human) resources, the high level of cost effectiveness of the overall intervention, and the quality of inputs provided.

B.3.1. Utilization of Financial and Human Resources

Funding: The total planned budget to the HPM project was US$ 788,751, of which 66 percent was allocated to greenhouse construction and rehabilitation; 9.7 percent to training and technical assistance; and, 18.5 percent to project staff salaries and benefits. The remaining 5.8 percent were allocated to equipment, local travel, and operational and indirect costs. Table 16 below provides further details on the project budget as designed and as discharged.

The total expenditures incurred by the HPM project were in line with what had been planned. Over expenditure in certain line items was within the allowable threshold agreed between ACDI/VOCA and ANERA. The overall budget was not affected by these over-expenditures due to under-expenditure in other line items and savings accrued from beneficiary contributions as a result of exchange rate fluctuations. Financial documentation and reporting overall was also well designed, well kept and followed. The full extent of the monitoring and evaluation system and processes described in the project proposal were adequately operationalized.

Staffing: The expertise of the project staff was found to be well in-line with what is needed and their qualifications and responsibilities were commensurate with each other. The high level of coordination between ANERA and ESDC and the high level of cooperation between the project team on the technical levels may have been the one of main reasons for the effective utilization of financial resources as it minimized the need for external assistance and played a major role in closing the skill gap when needed on both administrative and technical levels.

Table 17: HPM budget as planned and as discharged

	Summary Program Contribution Report	Total Program			
Line#	Description	Budget Amount	% of Total Budget	Cumulative Expenditures	% of Total Ependitures
1	**Greenhouses**				
1.1	Construction of Plastic Greenhouses (650 m2 each)	425,331.00	53 9%	425,331.00	54.0%
1.3	Rehabilitation of Greenhouses (1 Dunum each)	89,442.00	11 3%	89,442.00	11.3%
1.8	Traps	2,290.00	0 3%	2,290.75	0.3%
1.9	Sign boards and Banners	3,352.00	0.4%	2,596.89	0.3%
	Total Greenhouses	**$520,415.00**	**66.0%**	**$519,660.64**	**65.9%**
2	**Training & Technical Assistance**				
2.1	Training & Technical Assistance Targeting Cooperatives				
2.1.1	Coop Principles & Democratic Governance Wkshp	1,820.00	0 2%	1,733.00	0.2%
2.1.2	Central Workshop - Coop Management	2,700.00	0 3%	2,086.00	0.3%
2.1.4	Consultants	7,500.00	1 0%	7,500.00	1.0%
2.1.5	Accounting Software and Training	5,695.00	0.7%	5,695.00	0.7%
2.1.6	Computers & Printers	4,785.00	0.6%	4,785.00	0.6%
2.1.7	Project Website for promotion & Networking	3,263.00	0.4%	3,263.00	0.4%
2.1.9	Grading & packaging Tools & S ickers & Cold Storage	39,390.00	5 0%	38,439.00	4.9%
	Sub-Total	$65,153.00	8 3%	$63,501.00	8.1%
2.2	Training & Technical Assistance Targeting Farmers				
2.2.1	IPM Training - 3 days each wkshp, 3 wkshps each coop	7,920.00	1 0%	7,920.00	1.0%
2.2.2	Soil Management and Irriga ion Quality Workshops	1,440.00	0 2%	1,327.97	0.2%
2.2.4	Pesticides Residue Testing	3,500.00	0.4%	3,521.14	0.4%
	Sub-Total	$12,860.00	1.6%	$12,769.11	1.6%
	Total Training & Technical Assistance	**$78,013.00**	**9.9%**	**$76,270.11**	**9.7%**
3	**Publications**				
3.2	Cooperative Brochures & Business Cards	2,400.00	0 3%	2,350.00	0.3%
	Total Publications	**$2,400.00**	**0.3%**	**$2,350.00**	**0.3%**
4	**Salaries and Benefits**				
4.1	Salaries				
4.1.1	Project Manager (100% of Time)- ANERA	36,250.00	4.6%	37,950.00	4.8%
4.1.2	Accountant (10% of Time)	2,936.00	0.4%	2,936.00	0.4%
4.1.3	Manager - Finance & Administration (10% of Time)	642.00	0.1%	642.00	0.1%
4.1.4	Project Assistant (100% 0f Time) - ANERA	9,450.00	1 2%	10,050.00	1.3%
	Sub-Total	$49,278.00	6 2%	$51,578.00	6.5%
4.2	Benefits				
4.2.1	Benefits - 20%	9,856.00	1 2%	9,856.00	1.3%
	Sub-Total	$9,856.00	1 2%	$9,856.00	1.3%
	Total Salaries and Benefits	**$59,134.00**	**7.5%**	**$61,434.00**	**7.8%**
5	**Local Travel**				
5.1	Vehicle Fuel	2,900.00	0.4%	2,900.00	0.4%
5.2	Vehicle Maintenance	725.00	0.1%	992.52	0.1%
5.3	Vehicle Insurance and Registration	1,450.00	0 2%	1,450.00	0.2%
	Total Local Travel	**$5,075.00**	**0.6%**	**$5,342.52**	**0.7%**
6	**Equipments**				
6.1	Computer - Laptop & Printer)	1,435.00	0 2%	1,435.00	0.2%
6.2	Printer	494.00	0.1%	418.03	0.1%
	Total Equipments	**$1,929.00**	**0.2%**	**$1,853.03**	**0.2%**
7	**Office Rent**				
7.1	(26% of Ramallah office)	2,610.00	0 3%	2,610.00	0.3%
	Total Rent	**$2,610.00**	**0.3%**	**$2,610.00**	**0.3%**
8	**Direct and Indirect Cost**				
	Total Direct Cost 1-7	$669,576.00	84 9%	$669,520.30	84.9%
	Indirect Cost (48.69% of ANERA Personnel Costs)	$28,792.00	3.7%	$28,792.34	3.7%
	Total Direct and Indirect Cost (ANERA)	**$698,368.00**	**88.5%**	**$698,312.64**	**88.6%**

	Summary Program Contribution Report	Total Program			
Line#	Description	Budget Amount	% of Total Budget	Cumulative Expenditures	% of Total Ependitures
9	**Pass through to ESDC**				
9.1	Salaries				
9.1.1	Director (18%)	6,436.00	0.8%	6,899.00	0.9%
9.1.2	Project Coordinator 1 (50% of Time)	13,581.00	1.7%	10,888.80	1.4%
9.1.3	Project Coordinator 2 (50% of Time)	13,581.00	1.7%	14,100.50	1.8%
9.1.4	Agronomist 1 (100% of Time)	15,857.00	2.0%	17,002.00	2.2%
9.1.5	Agronomist 2 (100% of Time)	15,857.00	2.0%	17,002.00	2.2%
9.1.6	Administrative Assistant (30%)	3,140.00	0.4%	3,490.00	0.4%
	Sub-Total ESDC Salaries	**$68,452.00**	**8.7%**	**$69,382.30**	**8.8%**
9.2	**Other ESDC Direct Costs**				
9.2.1	Office Rent (25%)	4,531.00	0.6%	4,531.00	0.6%
9.2.2	Office supplies	3,625.00	0.5%	3,571.27	0.5%
9.2.3	Telecommunication	3,625.00	0.5%	3,492.33	0.4%
9.2.4	Local Travel / Transportation	10,150.00	1.3%	8,968.46	1.1%
	Sub-Total Other ESDC Direct Costs	**$21,931.00**	**2.8%**	**$20,563.06**	**2.6%**
	Total Pass through to ESDC	**$90,383.00**	**11.5%**	**$89,945.36**	**11.4%**
	Grand Total	**$788,751.00**	**100.0%**	**$788,258.00**	**100.0%**

B.3.2. Targeting and Beneficiary Selection

Considerable efforts were put into the beneficiary selection process. ANERA and ESDC began with visiting all target cooperatives and meeting with cooperative members to explain the project objectives and its implementation processes. Public advertisements soliciting applications from interested cooperative farmers were posted in public places within the targeted communities. These advertisements included a brief description of the project, beneficiary selection criteria, and instructions on how and when to apply.

Once the application deadline was reached, a preliminary review of the applications was done by a committee comprising ANERA, ESDC, ACDI/VOCA and representatives from each cooperative. The preliminary review involved verification of completion of applications by beneficiaries and an exclusion of all single applicants; i.e. those not having dependents, and those indicating lack of readiness/willingness to leverage the required contribution. Farmers with comparatively large ownership of greenhouses were excluded from receiving new construction, but not from the greenhouse rehabilitation activity. A list of potential beneficiaries was thus prepared in each cooperative, and verification visits to applicants were conducted by ANERA Field Coordinators to all farmers on these lists. In addition to verifying information provided in the application, these visits were intended to assess farmers readiness to introduce new agricultural techniques and collective activities, such as collective marketing and purchasing. Once all field visits were completed and verification data entered into a database, the selection committee met again to make the final selection of beneficiaries. The selection process was guided by the number of new greenhouses and greenhouse rehabilitation interventions allocated for each cooperative.

This process was effective in identifying those beneficiaries most in need of assistance. Involving the cooperatives in the selection process was an efficient way of creating a sense of ownership and verifying eligibility of applicants in a timely manner (cooperative leaders involved knew the beneficiaries and their socio-economic conditions, and thus could verify application and field data). The selection process was also highly efficient in terms of its ability to select farmers who could effectively contribute to the project's objectives and overall goal.

This notwithstanding, the evaluation survey indicated to a few number of inclusion errors, where a number of farmers who have ownership of greenhouses in excess of three dunums received new greenhouses through the project. According to ANERA, this inclusion was primarily due to the limited number of cooperative members in certain localities compared to the number of allocated number of greenhouses for new construction. Moreover, some exclusions errors were noted, where some farmers who could have effectively benefited from the project's new construction activities were excluded due to their inability to provide the required in-cash leverage, which was meant to increase ownership and, thus, sustainability. The exclusion of these individuals, albeit unintended by the project's selection criteria, is quite unfortunate especially since the HPM project was designed to improve the food

security mainly through addressing economic access constraints faced by vulnerable farmer households. As it was, the poorest and most vulnerable farmers may have not been able to equally benefit from the project as their fellow less vulnerable farmers due to the high level of in-cash contribution required by the project.

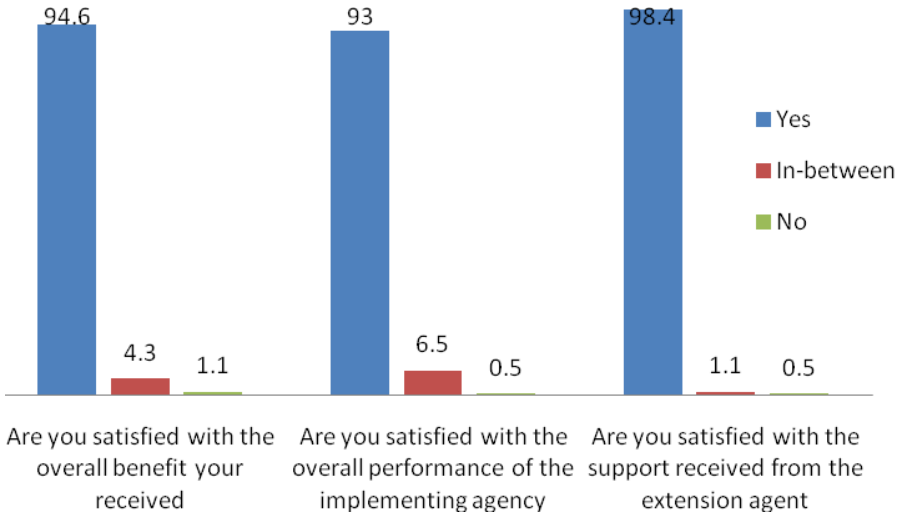
B.3.4. Utilization of Services

As shown in Section B above, the overwhelming majority of the farmers have introduced IPM/ICM techniques in their farms, and cooperatives' level of reliance on the management and financial systems with which they were provided is very high. Judging by this, the evaluation team contends that the utilization efficiency of the project results is very high. Future utilization prospects are equally high, albeit there is some concern about the future utilization of the cold storage, grading and packaging facilities. This concern emanates from the fact that none of the three cooperatives were using these facilities at the time of the evaluation on account of expiration of all export contracts facilitated by the project. A more objective assessment of the utilization rates of these facilities could thus be part of an exp-post evaluation.

B.3.5. Beneficiary Satisfaction

From a beneficiary satisfaction perspective, the project was highly efficient. The evaluation survey findings show that 95 percent of the project beneficiaries are satisfied with the overall stream of benefits they received through the project. Of those, 96.8 percent are satisfied with the economic return they were able to accrue as a result of the project. Extension services provided by the project seem to have been particularly efficient in terms of their contribution to the overall level beneficiary satisfaction, as 98.4 percent of the interviewed beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the services provided by the project's extension agents. These extraordinary levels of satisfaction indicate that the project was able to deliver to farmers the outputs and results it promised them at the end of the project.

Figure 8: Level of beneficiaries' satisfaction with various aspects related to project implementation (% beneficiaries)



B.3.6. Achievement of Target Indicators

Table 18 below sets out the project's planned performance targets against those achieved. On the balance, all output targets (italicized in the table below) were achieved or surpassed. The under achievement or lack thereof in certain training outputs is justified by an agreement reached between ACDI/VOCA and ANERA that these training would be covered by PARC within the framework of the GlobalGap certification process. Based on project documents obtained from ACDI/VOCA, these seem to have been implemented as planned. At the same time the under achievement on output targets related to number of trainees is due to over-estimation at project design, thus underperformance here is acceptable.

Table 18: Planned vs. achieved performance indicator targets under the HPM project

Code	Program indicators	Cumulative		
		Targeted	achieved	% of target
PI1	**Total # of beneficiary HH assisted (cumulative)**	**413**	**386**	**93%**
	No of beneficiaries			
	- Male	**413**	**372**	**90%**
	- Female	**0**	**14**	**-**
	Total # of direct & indirect beneficiaries assisted (cumulative &disaggregated by sex)	**2891**	**2143**	**74%**
	- Male	**1652**	**1295**	**78%**
	- Female	**1239**	**848**	**68%**
P12.	% of trained producers with knowledge of improved production techniques	**75%**	**100%**	**130%**
IR 1: Cooperative Agribusiness Growth Component (CoAg)				
Imp 1.1	$ Value of Commodities sold by members through their cooperative	**$1,175,000**	**$674,562**	**57%**
Imp 1.2	Metric tons of crops/commodity sold through cooperatives	**2500**	**1430**	**57%**
Imp. 1.3	% of residue analysis tests accepted			
Imp. 1.4 Average price $/kilo of selected crops				
Imp 1.4.1	- Tomatoes			
Imp 1.4.2	- Cherry tomatoes			
Imp 1.4.3	- Cucumbers			
Imp 1.4.4	- Bell Pepper			
Imp 1.4.5	- Green bean			
Imp 1.4.6	- Snow peas			
Imp 1.4.7	- Jews Mallow			
Imp. 1.5	*# of new market linkages*	**6**	**3**	**50%**
Imp. 1.6	Average Organizational Assessment Rating	**70%**	**N/A**	**N/A**
Mon 1.7	# of improved commercial greenhouses			
	- # of green houses rehabilitated	**226**	**226**	**100%**
	- # of plastic houses constructed	**127**	**128**	**101%**
In.1.1: Capacity Building Indicator				
In.1.1.	***# of workshops***			
In.1.1.1	*# of coop principle and democratic governance workshops*	**14**	**15**	**107%**
In.1.1.2	*# of central training / Coop management workshops*	**1**	**1**	**100%**
In.1.1.3	*# of FaaB workshops*	**14**	**14**	**100%**
In.1.1.4	*# of post harvest handling workshops*	**14**	**0**	**0%**
In.1.1.5	*# of IPM workshops*	**14**	**14**	**100%**
In.1.1.6	*# of soil management & irrigation quality workshops*	**14**	**14**	**100%**
In.1.1.7	*# of green house management & alternative farming workshops*	**14**	**0**	**0%**
In.1.2.	***# of trained persons in the workshops***			
In.1.2.1	*# of coop principle and democratic governance workshops*	**353**	**287**	**81%**
In.1.2.2	*# of central training / Coop management workshops*	**30**	**25**	**83%**
In.1.2.3	*# of FaaB workshops*	**353**	**328**	**93%**
In.1.2.4	*# of post harvest handling workshops*	**353**	**0**	**0%**
In.1.2.5	*# of IPM workshops*	**353**	**329**	**93%**
In.1.2.6	*# of soil management & irrigation quality workshops*	**353**	**312**	**88%**
In.1.2.7	*# of green house management & alternative farming workshops*	**353**	**0**	**0%**
In. 1.3	***Extension***			
In. 1.3.1	*# of extension visits*	**6480**	**6040**	**93%**

B.4. Impact

The project has left a clear mark on the livelihood of the beneficiary farmers and their cooperatives. While much of the project impact areas have been discussed in section B.2 above, the following points summarize what the project had been able to achieve vis-à-vis its intended goal of increasing the food security and livelihoods of the beneficiaries and their households:

- The project is believed to have increased the income of 127 farmer households by an average of NIS 5,340, and the income of 226 others by NIS10,570 last season. This increase in income is directly related to increased productivity of agriculture through the construction of new greenhouses (for the former group) and the rehabilitation of existing greenhouses (for the latter group). This additional income would significantly increase with year-round cultivation. The increase in farmers' income has reduced the vulnerability of the beneficiary households to food security as it decreased their economic food access gap and augmented their livelihood resources through the provision of productive assets to them.

- The project has contributed to increasing the overall national capacity for local production of greenhouse crops. This was done by bringing 80 dunums of greenhouses under cultivation.

- The project has improved the capacity of five target cooperatives to provide improved value-added services to their members. This was done through a variety of technical assistance interventions that built the internal organizational and institutional capacity of the target cooperatives. Now, three cooperatives representing more than 250 farmer households are ready to immediately engage in the profitable export business, and if they so chose they can effectively contribute to improving the local economic conditions within the communities they serve through the creation of employment opportunities.

> *"I cultivated 2,800 tomato seedlings in one dunum for export. Based on what we were told, I expected to export five tons and generate an income of NIS 25,000. But, what I got was less than NIS 5,000, which does not cover my production costs. It was a very bad season by all means, and I cannot blame [ACDI/]VOCA or anyone else. Everything went against our wishes… Going through the export experience was very good for all of us, I think. It taught me personally what is needed to produce high-quality crops, and I believe that I am now able to export if the opportunity arises again. Next time, however, we have to plan a lot more carefully and be prepared to ask for better contract terms…*
>
> *The training we received was excellent by all means. We have receive training in the past, but it was not like the training this project provided… I have changed the way I do things around my farm as a result of the training… I now monitor my irrigation schedule; I use much, much less chemical pesticides; I pay attention to the safety period; and I maintain records of everything I do in the farm. I even started calculating my profits and expenditures down to the last Agorot… I just was going through my records now, and I realized that my cost of production dropped by 18 percent."*

- The project has effectively improved internal relations between the target cooperatives. Evaluation survey results revealed that 88.2 percent of the beneficiary farmers feel that their relationship with their cooperative has increased as a direct result of the project, while the remaining 11.8 feel that their relationship with their cooperative has not changed.

- From a food safety and utilization perspective, the project has undoubtedly contributed to major improvements. In addition to what was mentioned earlier regarding the reduced use of chemical pesticides and insecticides, anecdotal evidence gathered within the framework of this evaluation strongly suggest that the application of safe agriculture techniques has transcended the 306 dunums targeted by the program as farmers began implementing IPM/ICM techniques in the majority of their land holdings.

The project has had a negative short-term impact on the 59 farmers who participated in the export contracts, as these farmers sustained income losses due to the failure of the export contracts to deliver sufficient income to these farmers to cover all of their production costs. These farmers may very well be worst off now as a result of their export losses than they were before the project. However, as noted earlier, the knowledge and experience these farmers gained as a result of their involvement in the export process has been substantially greater than the remaining beneficiary farmers. This may act a counterweight to the loss they sustained on the medium long-term.

B.5. Sustainability

Overall, the likelihood of the sustainability of the project results is quite likely due to the following factors:

a) Strong sense of ownership of the physical infrastructures established through the project among beneficiaries. This is largely because the infrastructures provided to them were –and still are- highly relevant to their needs, but also because they took part in and contributed to their implementation.

b) Commitment of cooperative leaders to maintain the systems developed through the project and to seek ways to re-engage in export marketing. In interviews cooperative Board members showed strong interest in re-engaging with Israeli companies to export products. Already the Thinnaba cooperative has signed a contract with an Israeli wholesaler for the marketing of agricultural products in Israel. This would not have been possible without the project. Moreover, there is strong evidence to suggest that Israeli exporters have become aware of the readiness of the three cooperatives that received the GlobalGap certification for export and have begun contacting them to explore joint business activities.

c) Simplicity of technologies introduced and low cost of maintenance and operation of the infrastructure established. The bias against high-cost, advanced technologies was stressed in the project's design which helped the project maximize the potential of project sustainability. Both the greenhouses and the cold storage units could be maintained and operated quite easily by the project beneficiaries themselves or by local contractors when needed.

C. Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

The HPM project was well designed and demonstrated high level of relevance to the local context and to the overall goal of the WBFS Program. Its foremost strength is its integrated approach to capacity building which involved targeted training and extension to farmers and their cooperatives on the one hand, and establishment of facilities to complement capacity building.

Despite several extraneous factors that forced implementation delays that made it very difficult for ANERA, ESDC and ACDI/VOCA to keep their planned sequence of activities and achieve some of the project's key performance targets, the project was implemented on time and within the parameters of the allocated budget. The cooperation and close collaboration among the three partners –ANERA, ESDC, and ACDI/VOCA- was instrumental in making this possible. The partners are commended for this achievement.

The project objectives have been met effectively. The evaluation findings show that the average increases in income among the beneficiaries of new greenhouses was in the realm of NIS 5,340, while it was around NIS 10,570 among the beneficiaries of the greenhouse rehabilitation activity. With the cost savings accrued by beneficiaries as a result of utilizing IPM/ICM and other farm management techniques on which they were training, it is highly likely that these values are higher. However, the effectiveness of the project in terms of the economic return to beneficiary farmers (59) from export activities was well below expectations, but this was largely due to factors beyond the control of the implementing partners. The evaluation team is convinced that the partners have done all they could to mitigate the effect of these factors, but the multitude of these factors overpowered all of the mitigation efforts made.

The project's capacity building activities aimed at cooperatives have transformed the way the five target cooperatives discharge their responsibilities and better positioned them to provide improved value-added services to their members, with a high degree of transparency and efficiency. The cold storage, grading and packaging

facilities provided to three of the five target cooperatives, and the GlobalGap certification these cooperatives received and their involvement in exporting members' crops through Israeli companies –brokered by ACDI/VOCA, were invaluable in raising cooperatives' organizational capacity. Going through the entire export process and meeting the GlobalGap requirements have essentially enabled the three cooperatives to take quantum leap and join the ranks of globally certified cooperatives and agricultural producers. This is highly commendable given it was possible in a relatively very short period of time and without being an integral part of the project design.

Based on the assessment of the way resources were used, the beneficiary selection process, achievement of planned outputs and beneficiary satisfaction, the evaluation team is of the opinion of that the project was efficiently implemented. The outputs produced were in line with original expectations in terms of quantity and quality. The project budget was discharged much according to what had been agreed, and financial processes and documentation were well maintained. The project was well staffed, and the human resources seemed to have the requisite backgrounds and experience for implementing the project activities. Beneficiaries' satisfaction, used as a proxy for achievement of declared results and outputs, was remarkable, with more than 94 percent of the beneficiaries indicating satisfaction with the overall stream of benefits they received, and more than 98 percent indicating satisfaction with the economic return accrued as a result of the project.

The immediate impact of the project could be easily be observed by the evaluators. Driven by productivity gains as a result of increased area of land under cultivation, the project increased the seasonal income of 128 farmer households who received new greenhouses and 226 farmer households who received greenhouse rehabilitation by an average of NIS 5,340 and NIS10,570, respectively. It has also contributed to increasing the farming income of all 354 beneficiaries by 10-15% percent as a result of facilitating an equal reduction in production cost. The increase in income essentially means that the project has decreased the food insecurity or vulnerability thereto of the 354 beneficiary households. The project has also contributed to increasing the overall national capacity for local production of greenhouse crops by bringing 80 dunums of greenhouses under cultivation; improved the capacity of five target cooperatives to provide improved value-added services to their members and increased their potential contribution to local economic development; improved internal relations within the target cooperatives; and noticeably improved the safety of agricultural products. The direct impact of the program on women, however, has been marginal.

The project has had a negative short-term impact on the 59 farmers who participated in the export contracts, as these farmers sustained income losses due to the failure of the export contracts to deliver sufficient income to these farmers to cover all of their production costs. This notwithstanding, the knowledge and experience these farmers gained as a result of their involvement in the export process has been substantially greater than the remaining beneficiary farmers. This may act a counterweight to the loss they sustained on the medium long-term.

The sustainability of the project is quite likely due to the high sense of ownership among the beneficiaries of the newly constructed and rehabilitate greenhouses; the commitment of the cooperative leaders to use and maintain systems, the level of institutionalization of these systems; and the adequacy of technologies introduced by the project for the local context.

The main lessons learned from the HPM project are the following:

a) Agricultural cooperatives could be effective agents for agricultural development if given the appropriate resources, training and coaching. The HPM project experience has shown that cooperatives have the desire to grow and provide value-added service to their membership base, but lack the technical knowledge, expertise, and –sometimes- attitude to make this possible. Their business acumen is particularly weak.

b) Marketing agricultural products remains the main constraint facing agricultural development, and the principal reason behind the food insecurity of Palestinian farmers. Effective interventions are thus crucially needed to address the marketing constraints faced by agricultural producers. Helping farmers and their cooperatives obtain EurepGap and GlobalGap certification are extremely effective strategies for doing just that.

c) Limited access to external markets is the most critical factor behind the marketing problems faced by Palestinian agricultural producers. However, lack of experience among Palestinian farmers and their

cooperatives in export processes and requirements is equally critical. Given the current political environment, the most effective interventions to address the marketing problems are those that help farmers and their cooperative improve their capacity and readiness for exports.

d) The integrated approach to cooperative capacity building is crucial to the success of any cooperative capacity building intervention. The integrated approach to capacity development was the reason why the HPM was successful in achieving its capacity building targets. To this end, capacity building programs should include provisions for systems development, farmer training and coaching, cooperative Boards' training and coaching, cooperative facility upgrades and development, and –most importantly- specialized training on specialized business topics such as business negotiations and contract management, international commodity market training, and marketing management.

e) Timely cultivation, strict grading and packaging systems and processes are critical factors to the success of any agricultural export venture. Thus, planning for such venture must be grounded with accurate market information and solid risk mitigation measures. In the Palestinian context, risks to be considered should include, inter alia, availability of inputs, closures and changing transport procedures, farmers' attitudes towards adherence to grading and packaging, Palestinian Authority phyto-sanitary certifications, and weather conditions.

f) In development programming, and particularly in food security programs, beneficiary selection criteria should be carefully crafted to ensure congruence between the programming objectives and the beneficiary selection criteria. If the objective of a food security program is being pursued through interventions at the household level, then households most in need should be targeted and selection criteria to enshrine this approach should be established. It follows that beneficiary contributions –if required by a donor- should be set at a level that does not prevent those most in need from benefiting from the intervention.

The key recommendations emerging from this evaluation for immediate action are the following:

a) ACDI/VOCA should seek out ways to extend further support to the three targeted cooperatives. In particular, it should assist them in identifying export opportunities on the basis of solid market information. Within the framework of this support, training should be provided on business negotiations and business planning. USAID is strongly encouraged to extend further support to ACDI/VOCA for this purpose.

b) The three cooperative are strongly encouraged to further institutionalize the systems developed by the project. They should convene a General Assembly meeting to discuss and formally approve these systems as soon as possible.

c) The three cooperatives are strongly encouraged to explore export opportunities. In this regard the cooperatives must not expect buyers to set a minimum price for the crops to be purchased, as this is not a common practice in the agricultural commodities trade market. Instead, cooperatives should negotiate better contract terms and provide incentives to buyers to gain preferential treatment and facilities from them.

d) ANERA should publicize the success of the HPM project and seek out funding for its replication.

CHAPTER FIVE: OLIVE OIL PRODUCTION, HARVESTING, PRESSING AND OIL STORAGE

A. Overview and Performance Targets

After having completed an assessment of 19 potential oil producer cooperatives -through which 11 cooperatives were pre-selected for inclusion in its Olive Production, Harvesting, Pressing and Oil Storage (OPHPOS) component of the WBFS Program, ACDI/VOCA sent an RFP along with detailed proposal instructions in April 2007 to three local organizations: the Palestine Trade Center (PalTrade); the Economic and Social Development Center (ESDC); and the Near East Foundation (NEF). The three organizations were pre-qualified on the basis of their previous experience in olive oil sector development projects and their demonstrated management and financial capacity. One week before the proposal submission deadline, ESDC informed ACDI/VOCA of its intent not to participate in the bid, leaving the competition between PalTrade and NEF. By end of May, ACDI/VOCA had informed PalTrade that its proposal was favorably accepted, conditional upon certain modifications.

PalTrade proceeded with introducing these modifications and sent a revised proposal to ACDI/VOCA, which in turn reviewed it and forwarded it to the USAID CTO for approval on 22 June 2007. On 28 June 2007, the CTO provided her comments on the proposal. The comments were discussed in a meeting in early July 2007, and on 11 July 2007 USAID informed ACDI/VOCA of its approval of the project. The project agreement was signed on 18 July 2007, with an estimated completion date of 31 January 2008. The relatively long lead-time between the proposal submission and contract signature was largely due to time spent on identifying and recruiting the needed technical staff after the refusal of PalTrade's implementing partner, Al-Zaytouna, and four other local organizations that were identified by PalTrade as alternative partners during contract negotiations with ACDI/VOCA to sign the USAID mandatory Anti-Terrorism Clause (ATC). This delay, as we shall examine later, stalled the launch of the project and was one of critical factors that constrained the project from achieving its envisaged results.

The Palestinian olive agricultural sector has a significant national value as it symbolizes Palestinian history and resilience, as well as its historic contribution to the local economy and employment. The importance of olive sector is demonstrated in a number of ways, inter alia: its significant contribution to agricultural income, where it makes up about 15% of the agricultural output in bountiful seasons; its contribution to agricultural exports (US$ 15 million per annum); and its significant contribution to the creation of seasonal jobs (about three million person workdays in bountiful years). Palestinian olive oil has a characteristically unique flavor and aroma, with a relatively high percentage of liquefaction. It supposedly tops some 25% of total olives -compared to 15% in most other countries- which offset the processing cost associated with its collection and transportation. Palestinian olive oil also has strong historical and religious value around the world, giving it a special "country of origin" advantage in some countries; i.e. a significant export potential. Its strengths and advantages aside, the olive oil sector suffers from a number of weaknesses, namely: (i) outdated and inefficient production techniques; (ii) low and fluctuating productivity of groves; (iii) increasing transportation costs and relatively high labor costs; (iv) lack of access to finance; (v) lack of adequate storage facilities; and (vi) weak marketing and distribution, both at the local and international levels. Palestinian farmers produce an average of 20 - 22 thousand tons of olive oil annually. Local consumption only accounts for 12 thousand tons leaving an annual surplus of 10 thousand tons. Some of the main reasons for such surplus are the fragmented production and distribution and the lack of knowledge and equipment to deliver world-class olive oil.

In line with the overall WBFS Program goals and the objectives set by ACDI/VOCA for the OPHPOS component, PalTrade designed under the rubric of increasing smallholder income through enhanced cooperative capacity and commercial agribusiness growth. In particular, the project goal was strengthening backward linkages and managing the relationship throughout the value chain via a market driven strategy using the selected cooperatives as the main driver for developing the value chain. The aim was to improve the management procedures and controls along with the overall efficiency of the value chain by utilizing best international practices in the olive oil industry, while the main objectives were:

- To develop the management, financial and business systems for 11 targeted cooperatives and encourage collaboration among farmers in terms of collective operations including procurements, olive pressing, production and storage of extra virgin olive oil and marketing.

- To train farmer groups and cooperatives on techniques and procedures of olive harvesting, post harvest handling and oil storage.

- To assist farmers and their cooperatives in the production of high quality olive oil through the provision of ventilated crates, stainless steel storage tanks and other post-harvest materials that improve post-harvest practices and quality, as well as providing targeted rehabilitation and maintenance of cooperative olive presses.

Towards the achievement of this chain of results, the project envisaged providing support to clusters of farmers affiliated with olive producing cooperatives in adopting the "well-tested" collective olive pressing and oil storage (COPOS) scheme. Eleven cooperatives and 500 of their member farmers would be targeted to adopt this scheme, which would increase their olive oil quality and value, and improve their production methods. In doing so, the project would help farmers and their cooperatives improve the marketability of their olive oil which would culminate in the sale of a total of 200 metric tons of high quality, extra-virgin olive oil, with a total value of US$980,000.

The implementation began immediately after the signature of the contract with ACDI/VOCA. First done was the advertising of the project in the eleven target cooperatives to facilitate the expeditious selection of beneficiaries, and the assessment of the eleven cooperatives capacity development needs. The former was completed in August, and the latter in early September 2007. A total of 559 applications were received from the eleven target cooperatives, of which 500 were favorably selected on the basis of an evaluation against pre-set standard criteria (household income, household size, dunums owned, and ability/readiness to leverage the required in-cash contribution). Table below shows the distribution of the beneficiaries according to the target cooperative to which they belong.

Table 19: Distribution of OHPOS project beneficiaries by cooperative

Cooperative/Society Name	Village/Locality	District	No. of Beneficiaries
Marj Sanur Olive Oil Cooperative	Sanur	Jenin	15
Azoun Cooperative	Azoun	Qalqilia	31
Tulkarem Cooperative for Organic Olive Oil	Tulkarem	Tulkarem	20
Palestine Fair-Trade Association	Jenin	Jenin	157
Sir Agricultural Cooperative	Sir	Jenin	16
Kofr Allabad Cooperative for Olive Pressing and Marketing	Kofr Allabad	Tulkarem	28
Cooperative Society for Pressing Olives (CSPO)- Beit Jala	Beit Jala	Bethlehem	16
Agricultural Cooperative for Investment and Development	Salfit	Salfit	112
Immatin Cooperative for Olive Pressing, Processing and Marketing	Immatin	Qalqilia	35
Baqa Al-Sharqiya Cooperative for Olive Pressing	Baqa Al-Sharqiya	Tulkarem	26
Ya'bad Cooperative Society for Olive Pressing	Ya'bad	Jenin	44
Total			**500**

Ya'bad cooperative was removed the list of 11 targeted cooperatives as its farmers (44) elected not to participate as originally agreed due to the expected low yield in 2007. The farmers felt that the expected amount of oil that will be left after withdrawing amounts for home consumption and for gifts to relatives and friends will not be sufficient to initiate collective storage and marketing. Accordingly, PalTrade proceeded the implementation of the project with the participation of 10 cooperative and 456 farmer members.

B. Assessment of Component Implementation

B.1. Effectiveness

B.1.1. Cooperative Growth and Development

Cooperative capacity building activities were implemented largely as planned, albeit some caveats in terms of results were observed as we shall examine below. Capacity building activities implemented within the framework of the project aimed at building the management and financial capacity of the cooperative staff and leaders, as well as building the physical/organizational capacity of the ten target cooperatives. As noted earlier, the capacity building activities were based on an assessment conducted by ACDI/VOCA's Cooperative Assessment Specialist, through which broad areas for capacity building interventions were identified. The following points summarize all the capacity building activities that were implemented within the framework of the OHPOS project.

- Procurement and supply of computers and printers, stainless steel tanks, PH meters, ventilated crates, pruning tools, and scales: Immediately after the launch of the project, PalTrade conducted a complementary needs assessment to verify the initial physical capacity development needs in the ten cooperatives identified in ACDI/VOCA's cooperative assessment report. Based on this assessment, a list of physical assets/equipment needed by the cooperatives to effectively engage in the COPOS scheme was coalesced, procured and delivered to the cooperatives (see table below). As we shall examine below, the delivery of a several of these equipment was substantially delayed to the detriment of some project results.

Table 20: Equipment and facilities provided to beneficiary olive producer cooperatives

Cooperative	No. of Farmers	Ventilated Crates	Scales	Photocopier	Computers	Printer	1-Ton SST	5-Ton SST	PH-Meter/Lab
Sanor	15	340	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Fair Trade	157	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
Azzon	31	425	1	0	1	1	1	1	0
Sir	16	200	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Immatin	35	405	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Beit Jala	16	1160	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
Tulkarem	20	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Kofr Labad	28	250	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Baqa El Sharqia	26	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
Salfit	112	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0
Total	**456**	**2780**	**8**	**1**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**8**	**8**

- Minor rehabilitation works in olive presses owned/leased by five cooperatives: minor rehabilitation works to improve the general hygiene and phyto-sanitary conditions were carried out in five of the target cooperatives (Sanour, Fair Trade in Jenin, Immatin, Beit Jala and Baqa Al-Sharqeya). The other five cooperative presses were excluded either because they were deemed to be in need of major rehabilitation works that are beyond the financial capacity of the project to implement, or because their general phyto-sanitary and hygiene conditions were deemed appropriate.

Table 21: Description of olive press rehabilitation works

Cooperative	Rehabilitation Description
Sanor	Floor tiling, siding, isolating press boiler, and minor press maintenance works.
Fair Trade-Jenin	Installing iron concrete floor support, tiling and siding, and minor painting works.
Immatin	Floor tiling and rehabilitation of doors and windows .
Beit Jala	Paving press loading and waiting area.
Baqa El Sharqia	Floor tiling and siding, procurement of a heavy-duty fan, and press boiler isolation.

- Introducing a financial and management system in all ten cooperatives: A management consultant commissioned by PalTrade within the framework of the project developed "A Quality Management System for Olive Oil Cooperatives" and a financial system for introduction in the target cooperative. The consultant presented these systems to the olive cooperatives' representatives in a central workshop and latter began visiting the cooperatives to customize the systems and train the cooperatives on their implementation.

- Introducing a collective olive pressing system in all ten cooperatives: This involved the design, deployment and training of cooperative leaders on a computerized system for managing the COPOS scheme. The system was installed in all ten cooperatives and a total of 20 cooperative representatives attended.

- Training of cooperative staff, designated lab technicians and olive press technicians on the COPOS scheme: This training aimed at imparting the necessary knowledge among cooperative staff and technicians responsible for the olive pressing and olive oil collection and testing to effectively implement the COPOS schemes. The training included presentation of the attributes of high-quality olive oil and the factors that influence quality pre- and post olive harvest and oil pressing, standard COPOS pressing techniques, olive testing procedures, and olive oil collection management.

The OPHOS project has effectively built the physical and administrative capacity of the ten target cooperatives to implement the COPOS scheme. This was largely possible through the provision of equipment and the introduction of the collective olive pressing management system as well as the training of cooperative leaders and staff on its implementation. As a result of these interventions, the ten olive producer cooperatives have –without doubt- become more cognizant of the importance of collective olive pressing as a strategy for obtaining higher quality and higher value yields, and –more important- have the means to implement and effectively manage such collective pressing programs. The project's effectiveness in terms of building the managerial and financial capacity of these cooperatives, however, has been mixed. This is largely due to incongruence between the systems developed and some cooperatives' needs on the one hand, and the under-utilization of some cooperatives of the administrative and financial systems developed through the project on the other.

Having said this, the following observations could be made about the cooperative capacity building approach followed by the project and its results:

a) The lack of readiness of some cooperatives to implement the COPOS scheme has substantially constrained the project from achieving its cooperative capacity building objectives: It was clear from interviews that the level of commitment to and belief in the COPOS scheme among cooperative leaders has not matured equally among the target cooperatives. While some cooperative leaders showed high levels of enthusiasm about the value of the COPOS scheme –although highlighting the need for effective marketing to complement it, others dismissed its importance altogether and highlighting that they have always been convinced that COPOS schemes will not work. This predisposition was a major constraint to effective olive oil collection as we shall examine below, but more importantly is believed to be the reason why some cooperatives did not utilize the management and financial systems developed by the project. It is unfortunate that the initial cooperative organizational assessments conducted by ACDI/VOCA, and on which basis the target cooperatives were selected, and those conducted by PalTrade during implementation were not able to identify these readiness issues or put adequate measures to mitigate their effect.

b) Training developed capacities in narrow technical skills to the neglect of broader cooperative developmental knowledge and skills: Training focused largely on people and skills required for the successful functioning of the COPOS scheme to the neglect of others. It focused on narrow technical skills to ensure persons such as the cooperative technical staff, and to a lesser extent, the officers and some cooperative members understood how to implement the procedures for preparing and implementing collective olive oil processes. The one-day workshops, with several topics packed within them, were too short to adequately teach these topics. They were even more inadequate for training in broader cooperative developmental skills. Symptomatic of a rather narrow, utilitarian view of training and capacity building was the training on financial and management systems. This was reduced to a central five-hour workshop and a few coaching visits by the consultant rather than being a more comprehensive tool for ensuring the proper adoption and adherence to the systems. Consequently, training was much less successful in

building the more cooperative developmental capacities highlighted in the project proposal. Such training might have eased problems faced in the program such as the difficulty some cooperatives had regarding integrating the developed systems in their operations.

c) Systems and training documentation focused effectively on specific procedures and guidelines to the neglect of documentation serving broader capacity development needs: Consistent with the above, documents produced in support of capacity building tended to be short procedural guidelines, memos, financial agreements and protocols. These laid out how to implement and report on the COPOS scheme.

d) The overall quality of some equipment provided was not commensurate with the level of capacity building envisaged in the project proposal: This is largely related to the pruning tools and collection sheets, and to a lesser extent, printers. Shears provided were of obvious low quality and sheets distributed to farmers to collect olive were too small. Two of the cooperatives interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the printer and scale they received highlighting that the former did not function properly when it was installed and was not replaced despite several requests made to PalTrade to follow-up with the supplier, whereas the latter had problems in calibrating.

e) The substantial delay in the delivery of equipment to the cooperatives may have further reduced their commitment to the project: Major delays were encountered by PalTrade in delivery of equipment to cooperatives, which reduced the incentive for cooperatives to effectively engage with PalTrade. The most prominent of these delays was related to the delivery of the 5-Ton stainless steel tanks, which were not delivered to the cooperative until January 2008, after the end of olive harvesting season, due to PalTrade's refusal to accept the below standard tanks delivered by the supplier in November. As we shall examine later, while PalTrade's refusal to accept the tanks may have had negative consequences on the overall commitment of cooperatives to the project, its positive strategic consequences on sustainability of the tanks are unquestionable.

B.1.1. Farmers Capacity to Produce High Quality Extra-Virgin Olive Oil

Through the provision of ventilated crates for olive collection, pruning and harvesting shears and training and awareness workshops, the project envisaged enhancing cooperatives farmers' knowledge on the COPOS scheme, as well as improving their practices. Evidence gathered through farmers' interviews and evaluation survey results strongly indicate that substantial achievements were made in this regard. The tables below confirm this by showing significant increases in the proportion of beneficiary farmers who practice the right olive oil production techniques, whereas the section on the project impact below provides an account of the rather considerable economic benefits accrued by the beneficiaries as a result of these practices.

Table 22: Beneficiaries management of Jool (% of farmers indicating practice)

Cooperative	Separate the jool before picking to pressed alone	Jool and olive pressed together	Jool is not collected at all	Others	Total
Immatin Cooperative	14.3	0.0	85.7	0.0	100
Eastern Baqa	16.0	0.0	84.0	0.0	100
Beit Jala Cooperative	60.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	100
Tulkarem Cooperative	35.3	0.0	64.7	0.0	100
Salfeet Cooperative	93.1	0.0	0.0	6.9	100
Sanour Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100
Seir Cooperative	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100
Kufr Al-Labad Cooperative	26.1	0.0	73.9	0.0	100
Azzoun Cooperative	31.0	27.6	31.0	10.3	100
Total (at Evaluation)	**38.7**	**4.1**	**54.6**	**2.6**	**100**
Total (at Baseline)	**56.4**	**27.3**	**15.5**	**0.9**	**100**

Table 23: Frequency cleaning of olive fruits (% of farmers indicating practice)

Cooperative	Daily	When the harvest is finished	Clean the olive at the press	Total
Immatin Cooperative	91.4	8.6	0.0	100
Eastern Baqa	100.0	0.0	0.0	100
Beit Jala Cooperative	20.0	60.0	20.0	100
Tulkarem Cooperative	94.1	5.9	0.0	100
Salfeet Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	100
Sanour Cooperative	86.7	13.3	0.0	100
Seir Cooperative	93.8	6.3	0.0	100
Kufr Al-Labad Cooperative	95.7	4.3	0.0	100
Azzoun Cooperative	96.6	3.4	0.0	100
Total (at Evaluation)	**93.3**	**6.2**	**0.5**	**100**
Total (at Baseline)	**79.7**	**3.4**	**11.9**	**5.1**

Table 24: Tools used by the beneficiaries to pick the olive fruits (% of farmers indicating practice)

Cooperative name	By hand	Stick	Rake
Immatin Cooperative	100.0	0.0	94.3
Eastern Baqa	100.0	0.0	100.0
Beit Jala Cooperative	0.0	0.0	100.0
Tulkarem Cooperative	100.0	5.9	100.0
Salfeet Cooperative	3.4	3.4	100.0
Sanour Cooperative	100.0	0.0	100.0
Seir Cooperative	93.8	0.0	100.0
Kufr Al-Labad Cooperative	100.0	4.5	100.0
Azzoun Cooperative	100.0	55.2	100.0
Total (at Evaluation)	**82.5**	**9.8**	**99.0**
Total (at Baseline)	**38.3**	**88.7**	**61.7**

Table 25: Percentage distribution of farmers according to type of containers they use to keep the harvested olives (% of farmers indicating practice)

Cooperative name	Bags	Ventilated Crates	Both	Others	Total
Immatin Cooperative	20.0	74.3	5.7	0.0	**100**
Eastern Baqa	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Beit Jala Cooperative	0	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Organic Oil Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Salfeet Cooperative	3.4	89.7	6.9	0.0	**100**
Sanour Cooperative	6.7	0.0	93.3	0.0	**100**
Seir Cooperative	0	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Kufr Al-Labad Cooperative	91.3	8.7	0.0	0.0	**100**

Azzoun Cooperative	37.9	34.5	17.2	10.3	**100**
Total (at Evaluation)	**42.8**	**43.8**	**11.9**	**1.5**	**100**
Total (at Baseline)	**61.8**	**19.1**	**18.2**	**0.9**	**100**

Table 26: Frequency of olive pressing (% of farmers indicating practice)

	How often do you press your harvested olives?			
Cooperative	**Daily**	**On steps**	**After picking all the fruits**	**Total**
Immatin Cooperative	58.8	32.4	8.8	**100**
Eastern Baqa	0.0	100.0	0.0	**100**
Beit Jala Cooperative	20.0	0	80.0	**100**
Tulkarem Cooperative	0.0	100.0	0.0	**100**
Salfeet Cooperative	17.2	82.8	0.0	**100**
Sanour Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Seir Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Kufr Al-Labad Cooperative	4.3	95.7	0.0	**100**
Azzoun Cooperative	0.0	100.0	0.0	**100**
Total (at Evaluation)	**72.1**	**28.3**	**0.0**	**100**
Total (at Baseline)	**20**	**60.0**	**20**	**100**

B.2. Efficiency

B.2.1. Utilization of Financial and Human Resources

Funding: The total budget to the HPM project was US$ 204,523, of which 50.1 percent was allocated to tools and equipment; 13.6 percent to training and technical assistance; and, 21.6 percent to project staff salaries and benefits. The remaining 14.5 percent were allocated to indirect costs. Actual total expenditures were US$174,527, of which 56.5 percent was for tools and equipment; 8.1 percent was for training and technical assistance; and, 24.4 percent was to project staff salaries and benefits. The remaining 11.5 percent were allocated to indirect costs. The variance between budget and actual expenditures was due to cost savings in certain budget line items (such as 5-Ton stainless steel tanks), cancellation of the olive flow research activity due to the lack of local presses for this purpose, reduction in the number of some equipment purchased, and an original overestimation of the cost of training. Table 27 below provides further details on the project budget as designed and as discharged.

It is quite obvious that the budget required for the implementation of the project was underestimated at the time of design. Substantially more funds were needed to procure the high quality pruning tools needed to effectively implement the COPOS, and equally substantial funds were needed to rehabilitate the cooperatives presses. Consequently, at the encouragement of USAID personnel to find ways of implementing the program in a manner that would not require a lengthy delay due to source origin waivers in order to provide the required materials during the olive harvest season (October-December), certain sacrifices on quality were made. While this is commendable from a management perspective, it led a certain degree of efficiency loss; i.e. resources were not used in the most cost effective manner. A better alternative would have been to request USAID's approval on increasing the total budget to ensure that the needed works and level of quality of equipment could be raised. But this would have been had to be done very early in the project implementation.

Staffing: The project structure envisaged in the project proposal was well instituted and all identified staff positions were filled. The expertise of the project staff was found to be well in-line with what is needed and their qualifications and responsibilities were commensurate with each other. The technical staff hired by the project had been part of the implementation of several COPOS schemes and seemed to have high-end technical skills. Much of the technical training on olive harvesting and pressing techniques was shouldered by them, quite commendably.

Table 27: OHPOS project budget and expenditures

Line	Description	Total Program			
		Budget Amount	% of total Budget	Cumulative Expenditures	% of expenditures
1	**Tools and Equipments**				
1.1	Ventilated harvesting crates/sacks	4,500.00	2.2%	2,199.31	1.3%
1.2	Storage tanks (five-ton capacity)	58,500.00	28.6%	45,513.00	26.1%
1.3	Transport tanks (one-ton capacity)	16,500.00	8.1%	25,500.00	14.6%
1.4	Oil testing lab	4,500.00	2.2%	4,846.00	2.8%
1.5	Scales	2,475.00	1.2%	3,279.56	1.9%
1.6	Harvesting & Burning Tools	4,020.00	2.0%	4,838.23	2.8%
1.7	Computers and printers	4,500.00	2.2%	4,950.00	2.8%
1.8	Rent - additional storage space (3 months per site)	-		-	
1.9	Press Rehabilitation (minor)	7,500.00	3.7%	7,500.00	4.3%
	Total Tools and Equipments	**$ 102,495.00**	**50.1%**	**$ 98,626.10**	**56.5%**
2	**Training & Technical Assistance**				
2.1	Training & Technical Assistance Targeting Cooperatives				
2.1.1	Coops coordinators Training/ collective pressing scheme & Management	1,900.00	0.9%	1,440.39	0.8%
2.1.2	Training/ Olive Oil testing	3,060.00	1.5%	1,141.00	0.7%
2.1.3	Training/ Coops System Development	800.00	0.4%	-	
2.1.4	Training / Press Technicians	1,840.00	0.9%	419.14	0.2%
2.1.5	Close out workshop	1,000.00	0.5%	770.80	0.4%
2.1.6	Local Technical Consultant(s) (coop, financial, IT systems)	7,500.00	3.7%	7,636.71	4.4%
2.1.7	Local Awareness/Promotion Program	3,500.00	1.7%	1,530.00	0.9%
	Sub-Total	$ 19,600.00	9.6%	$ 12,938.04	7.4%
2.2	Training & Technical Assistance Targeting Farmers			-	
2.2.1	Farmers Training/ Olive harvesting/handling, Oil quality, collective pressing scheme	5,280.00	2.6%	1,191.77	0.7%
	Sub-Total	$ 5,280.00	2.6%	$ 1,191.77	0.7%
2.3	Consulting/Research/Field Coordination				
2.3.1	Olive Oil Production Consultants & Field Coordinators	-		**-**	
2.3.2	Technical research on oil yield from olive fruit	3,000.00	1.5%	-	
	Sub-Total	$ 3,000.00	1.5%	**$ -**	
	Total Training & Technical Assistance	**$ 27,880.00**	**13.6%**	**$ 14,129.81**	**8.1%**
3	**Salaries and Benefits**				
3.1	Salaries				
3.1.1	Project Manager - (50%)	7,374.00	3.6%	7,109.50	4.1%
3.1.2	Project Technical Assistant - (80%)	6,375.00	3.1%	5,823.50	3.3%
3.1.3	Accountant - (75%)	4,914.00	2.4%	4,914.00	2.8%
3.1.4	Administrative Assistan (80%)	3,032.00	1.5%	3,092.80	1.8%
3.1.5	Project Field Coordinator (80%)	4,032.00	2.0%	4,160.00	2.4%
3.1.6	Part-time Trainer / Extention Agent 1 Coops / Farmers	2,520.00	1.2%	2,600.00	1.5%
3.1.7	Part-time Trainer / Extention Agent 2 Coops / Farmers	1,500.00	0.7%	1,500.00	0.9%
3.1.8	Part-time Trainer / Extention Agent 3 Press maintinance	600.00	0.3%	480.00	0.3%
3.1.9	Part-time Trainer / Extention Agent 4 Oil Quality	1,500.00	0.7%	1,500.00	0.9%
3.1.10	Cooperative Site/Pressing Coordinators (11)	9,900.00	4.8%	9,000.00	5.2%
	Sub-Total	$ 41,747.00	20.4%	$ 40,179.80	23.0%
3.2	Benefits				
3.2.1	Benefits -Project Manager	745.00	0.4%	797.56	0.5%
3.2.2	Benefits- Project Assistant	740.00	0.4%	586.07	0.3%
3.2.3	Benefits -Accountant	605.00	0.3%	596.42	0.3%
3.2.4	Administrative Assistan	414.00	0.2%	345.82	0.2%
	Sub-Total	$ 2,504.00	1.2%	$ 2,325.87	1.3%
	Total Salaries and Benefits	**$ 44,251.00**	**21.6%**	**$ 42,505.67**	**24.4%**

Line	Description	Total Program			
		Budget Amount	% of total Budget	Cumulative Expenditures	% of expenditures
4	**Other Direct Cost**				
4.1	Transportation	10,500 00	5.1%	10,771.86	6.2%
4.2	Office supplies	1,100 00	0.5%	1,020.15	0.6%
4.3	Telecommunication	6,007 00	2.9%	1,064.56	0.6%
4.4	Printed materials	1,000 00	0.5%	-	
4.5	Promotional Oil Samples	840 00	0.4%	894.58	0.5%
4.6	Project Signs, labels and Banners	1,500 00	0.7%	1,852.11	1.1%
4.7	Bank fees	700 00	0.3%	412.26	0.2%
4.8	Audit	5,000 00	2.4%	-	
4.9	Office rent (15% of Ramallah office)	3,250 00	1.6%	3,250.00	1.9%
	Total Other Direct Costs	**$ 29,897.00**	**14.6%**	**$ 19,265.52**	**11.0%**
	Currency Variance				
	Grand Total	**$ 204,523.00**	**100.0%**	**$ 174,527.10**	**100.0%**

B.2.2. Targeting and Beneficiary Selection

PalTrade began with visiting the leaders of all target cooperatives to explain the project objectives and its implementation processes. Public advertisements soliciting applications from interested cooperative farmers were posted through the cooperatives in public places within the targeted communities. These advertisements included a brief description of the project, beneficiary selection criteria, and instructions on how and when to apply. Once the application deadline was reached, a preliminary review of the applications was done by a committee comprising representatives from each cooperative, and then sent to PalTrade for further review. Of the total 559 applications that were received, PalTrade selected 500 beneficiaries. As noted above, this number dropped to 456 with the withdrawal of Ya'bad Cooperative from the project. In most cases No filed visits or interviews were conducted by PalTrade to verify application information, especially when it comes to the larger cooperatives whose members span several communities.

While efficient in terms of time requirements and resource utilization, this process was not entirely effective in identifying those beneficiaries most in need of assistance. Evaluation survey evidence indicates, albeit inconclusively, that several of the selected farmers may have been deemed ineligible had visits been conducted as their reported income to the survey questionnaire does not necessarily classify them as resource poor, or of large families. Moreover, some possible exclusion errors were noted.

B.2.5. Beneficiary Satisfaction

Despite their complaining about the low quality of pruning tools they received, surveyed beneficiaries seemed positive –on the balance- about the benefits they had accrued as a result of the project, namely production of high-quality olive oil. This, if nothing else, is indicative of the success of the project to deliver the results it had promised to farmers. The evaluation survey findings show that 64.7 percent of the project beneficiaries are satisfied with the overall stream of benefits they received through the project. Of those, about 80 percent are satisfied with the economic return they were able to accrue as a result of the project. A whopping 85.9 percent of the surveyed beneficiaries indicated satisfaction with the overall performance of PalTrade, while 78.7 percent reported satisfaction with the extension services provided by the project, which came as a surprise to the evaluation team given the relatively few number of extension visits reported by PalTrade. The proportion of beneficiaries indicating an average level of satisfaction (in-between) was considerably high (between 14.2-30.4 percent). The tables below summarize the survey findings in relation to the beneficiaries' satisfaction.

Table 28: Beneficiaries satisfaction with various aspects of project (% of farmers indicating response)

	Are you Satisfied with the overall level of benefit you received?			
Cooperative	**Satisfied**	**In-Between**	**Not Satisfied**	**Total**
Immatin Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Eastern Baqa Cooperative	32.0	68.0	0.0	**100**
Beit Jala Cooperative	33.3	33.3	33.3	**100**
Tulkarem Cooperative	38.5	61.5	0.0	**100**
Salfeet Cooperative	56.0	36.0	8.0	**100**
Sanour Cooperative	93.3	0.0	6.7	**100**
Seir Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Kufr Al-Labad Cooperative	35.0	45.0	20.0	**100**
Azzoun Cooperative	72.4	27.6	0.0	**100**
Total	**64.7**	**30.6**	**4.7**	**100**
	Are you satisfied with the PalTrade's performance?			
Cooperative	**Satisfied**	**In-Between**	**Not Satisfied**	**Total**
Immatin Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Eastern Baqa Cooperative	88.0	12.0	0.0	**100**
Beit Jala Cooperative	33.3	33.3	33.3	**100**
Tulkarem Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Salfeet Cooperative	60.0	40.0	0.0	**100**
Sanour Cooperative	93.3	6.7	0.0	**100**
Seir Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Kufr Al-Labad Cooperative	90.0	10.0	0.0	**100**
Azzoun Cooperative	79.3	20.7	0.0	**100**
Total	**85.9**	**13.5**	**0.6**	**100**
	Are you satisfied with the services of the extension agent?			
Cooperative	**Satisfied**	**In-Between**	**Not Satisfied**	**Total**
Immatin Cooperative	87.5	8.3	4.2	**100**
Eastern Baqa Cooperative	88.0	12.0	0.0	**100**
Beit Jala Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Tulkarem Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Salfeet Cooperative	12.0	48.0	40.0	**100**
Sanour Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Seir Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Kufr Al-Labad Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	**100**
Azzoun Cooperative	72.4	24.1	3.4	**100**
Total	**78.7**	**14.2**	**7.1**	**100**

B.2.6. Achievement of Target Indicators

Table 29 below sets out the project's planned performance targets against those achieved. Judging by the level of achievement of output targets (italicized for easy reference), which are used primarily here for measuring efficiency, the project's efficiency has been below expectation. Output targets related to training (i.e. number of trainees) have

been underachieved. This was mainly because several invited trainees were not able to attend the entire training program (partial attendance).

Similarly, with the exception of the number of pruning tools which were reduced to as a result of the reduction in the number of beneficiaries, most output targets related to the provision of equipment were not met. Notwithstanding the beneficiary satisfaction highlighted above, the evaluation team considers this underperformance and the surrounding circumstances leading to it materialization (cost underestimation at design, delayed launch, and lack of commitment of farmers) as major factors behind the relatively low level of achievement in other performance indicators. The effect of the project design -particularly its costing, sequencing, assumption and risk mitigation measures- on its implementation and level of achievement of results cannot be underestimated.

Table 29: Project Performance Indicators: Planned vs. Achieved

Reference	Indicator	*LOP*		
		Target	***Actual***	***% of Target***
	Program Level Indicators			
PI1	Total # of beneficiary HH assisted (cumulative) no of beneficiaries	**588**	521	89%
	- Male	**525**	492	94%
	- Female	**63**	29	46%
	Total Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries assisted (cumulative and disaggregated by sex)	**4,116**	3,647	89%
	- Male	**2,289**	3,444	150%
	- Female	**1,827**	203	11%
PI2	% of trained producers with knowledge of improved production techniques	**75%**	0	0%
	IR 1: Cooperative Agribusiness Growth Component (CoAg)			
Imp. 1.1	$ Value of olive oil sold by members through their cooperative	**980,000**	294,873	30%
Imp. 1.2	Metric tons of olive oil sold through cooperatives	**200,000**	44,221	22.1%
Imp. 1.4	Average price/kilo of olive oil ($)	**$4.90**	$6	114%
Imp. 1.6	Average Organizational Assessment Rating	**70%**	N/A	N/A
	IN.1.1: Capacity Building			
In. 1.1.1	# of trained farmers in the olive harvesting and collective pressing scheme	**500**	359	72%
In. 1.1.2	# of trained persons in the collective pressing scheme management workshop	**11**	14	78.6%
In. 1.1.3	# of trained persons in the collective pressing management software and forms workshop	**11**	20	182%
In. 1.1.4	# of trained persons in the olive oil testing workshop	**25**	17	68%
In. 1.1.5	# of trained persons in the cooperative management system workshop	**11**	17	154.5%
	IN.1.2 Olive oil equipment & devices			
In. 1.2.1	# of distributed olive oil storage & transport tanks	**19**	10	53%
In. 1.2.2	# of distributed ventilated harvesting crates	**6750**	2780	41%
In. 1.2.3	# of distributed scales	**6**	8	133%
In. 1.2.4	# of distributed olive oil testing labs	**10**	8	80%
In. 1.2.5	# of distributed pruning tools	**500**	455	91%
In. 1.2.6	# of distributed computers and printers	**11**	8	73%
In. 1.2.7	# of rehabilitated olive presses	**5**	5	100%
	In. 1.3 Extension visits			
In. 1.3.1	# of extension visits	**1000**	487	49%

B.3. Impact

To be objective, is to conclude that the full impact of the OHPOS project cannot be ascertained without at least two olive harvest seasons have lapsed after its completion. This would allow for a better measurement of the impact on the cooperatives and farmers livelihoods, especially since the project was implemented in a year in which olive production is low. Olives are seasonal crops with an alternative bearing cycle of two years.

This notwithstanding, early impact could be observed, namely:

a) Change in farmers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards cooperation and untraditional olive harvesting methods: The collective pressing process and the positive results it brought about have noticeably changed farmer's attitudes towards cooperative work. Interviewed cooperatives indicated that their membership has grown significantly as a result of the project. Survey results also confirm that beneficiary members' relationships with their cooperatives have been strengthened as a result of the project. Indicators on changed practices and attitudes exhibited above clearly show that a majority of the beneficiaries who received training and benefited from the project will be utilizing the improved olive harvesting techniques in future seasons.

b) Increased farmer profitability and improved framer household livelihood: While the low yield season in 2007 was a major factor behind the generally high olive oil process (to the relative disregard to quality attributes), evaluation evidence clearly suggest that beneficiary farmers who have produced extra-virgin olive oil were able to obtain higher prices for their oil than those who only produced virgin oil. Bothe survey results and PalTrade data confirm this evidence. PalTrade data shows that the average price obtained for the 44.2 metric tons of extra-virgin olive oil sold by the project beneficiaries was US$ 6/kilogram, or at a premium of US$ 1.1 over market price. Survey results confirmed this figure by showing that the average price received by farmers through the sale of extra-virgin olive oil through their cooperatives was NIS 23.125/kg, which is even higher than the premium reported by PalTrade. This increase in income has undoubtedly had a positive effect on the livelihood of the farmers, where the average increase in disposable income made possible through the project was at least US$240 per farmer in the 2007 season[17].

Table 30: Distribution of the beneficiaries with respect to their sales and prices of olive oil (through the cooperatives only)

	Average quantity & price (container of 16 kg)	
Cooperative Name[18]	**Sold**	**Price (NIS)**
Immatin Cooperative	5.8	384
Eastern Baqa	11.3	384
Beit Jala Cooperative	2.1	480
Tulkarem Cooperative	0.0	0
Salfeet Cooperative	23.9	352
Sanour Cooperative	14.7	380
Seir Cooperative	0.0	0
Kufr Al-Labad Cooperative	0.0	0
Azzoun Cooperative	18.8	336
Total	**15.0**	**370**

[17] On the assumption that the average farmer sold 240 kilograms of extra-virgin olive oil through the cooperative at a premium price of US$1 above the market price for each kilogram sold. Given the fact that many farmers sold more quantities than what the cooperative sold for them, and that several cooperatives and farmers were able to sell at higher that the average price of NIS 370, the average increase in income for individual farmers is probably higher.

[18] Beneficiaries from cooperatives whose names do not appear in this table were not interviewed as it was not possible for the evaluation team to gain access to them.

c) Improved export potential: The project contributed to improving the exportability of Palestinian olive oil. With the increasing global demand for extra-virgin olive oil, and the increased capacity among Palestinian farmers and cooperatives meeting this demand, the Palestinian olive oil sector stands better poised to tap any available exporting opportunities in the future. The increase in olive oil exports will immediately have a growth effect on the local economy.

d) Cooperatives institutional and organizational capacity building: Through the provision of office equipment, oil testing, weighing and storage facilities and training to the beneficiary cooperatives, these cooperatives have become better able to serve their members and seek out ways to sustain their services. Three out of the four interviewed cooperatives reported that they are already seeking opportunities to for marketing extra-virgin olive oil for the 2008 season.

The project had little direct impact on women as only 29 women were registered as beneficiaries. No negative impacts could be observed as a result of the project.

That said, that evaluation team is of the opinion that the impact of the project would have been maximized had the stainless steel tanks been delivered before the harvest period, and provisions in the project design were made to: i) introduce an integrated approach to cooperative capacity building; ii) strengthen the marketing capacity and business acumen within cooperatives; iii) ensure proper rehabilitation and development of cooperatives' olive presses; iv) allocate more substantial budget to harvest tools; and v) provide effective and efficient transport tools to farmers. Moreover, the implementation of the project in a more bountiful year would have undoubtedly improved results and increased impact.

"I have been hearing about collective olive pressing for quite some time now, and how it helps farmers produce better quality oil for export and this is why I was eager to participate in the project. I learned a lot from the COPOS training we received, and was able to produce 100% extra-virgin olive oil last year… I sold about 150 kilograms through the cooperative to one of the export companies at a price of NIS 23 per kilogram, which was at least NIS 3 above the market price. I was very happy and made me feel that my and my family's effort in harvesting the olive and pressing it on a daily basis did not go to waste… I hope that we can do the same this year.

B.5. Sustainability

Overall, the sustainability of the project is likely, albeit the likelihood of sustainability in some cooperatives that are not convinced with the COPOS scheme and have not managed to establish the critical mass of farmers needed to make collective marketing feasible is highly unlikely. The most prominent of these latter cooperatives are the Beit Jala and the Tulkarem Cooperatives. PalTrade's intention to continue working with the willing among the target cooperatives within the framework of a French-funded olive oil marketing program increases the overall chances of sustainability of the OHPOS project.

Farmers' changed practices vis-à-vis harvesting processes will most likely be sustainable despite the fact that most pruning tools provided to these farmers to sustain several of these practices have been broken. Anecdotal evidence gathered through interviews suggests that farmers will most likely replace these pruning tools next season. Ventilated boxes are still kept by the cooperatives for farmers' use next season.

The sustainability of the stainless tanks is particularly sustainable. This is due to their high quality of production, which is largely attributable to PalTrade's due diligence in follow-up and monitoring of the supplier throughout the production process of these tanks. The assertion that PalTrade made, particularly the Project Manager, that these tanks must be manufactured according to world-class standards is worthy of special praise here as it has contributed to increasing the durability of these tanks and stretched their lifetime to at least 10 years. The onus is now with the cooperatives to effectively use them, and only time will tell if this will happen.

The cooperatives systems will probably not be sustainable in the larger and better established cooperatives such as Beit Jala Cooperative, but are likely to be sustainable over the medium term in the smaller, newly established cooperatives. The evaluation team believes that the sustainability of these systems would have been increased had more time been allocated to their development and implementation within cooperatives. It is highly likely that these systems will be considered as building blocks by any future capacity building activity in the target cooperatives.

C. Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

On the balance, PalTrade's OHPOS project made modest achievements and did not contribute to the overall goal and objectives of the WBFS Program as originally envisaged. This was largely due to relatively late start resulting from –what should have known been at the time of design- partnership problems in relation to the signature of the mandatory ATC, clear underestimation of budget requirements, and relatively ineffective targeting of cooperatives. This notwithstanding, the OHPOS project has made a number of achievements. These were related to capacity building of farmers and their cooperatives capacity to engage in COPOS schemes in the future.

The full impact of impact of the project could not be ascertained with accuracy. However, early impacts related the projects achievements could be observed. These were: changed farmers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards cooperation and untraditional olive harvesting methods; increased farmer profitability and improved livelihood of framer households; improved export potential of Palestinian olive oil; and, improved cooperative capacity for implementing the COPOS scheme.

Three main lessons learned can be highlighted from the implementation experience of the project, namely:

a) The Palestinian olive oil sector has a significant export growth potential. Tapping this potential fully, however, requires concerted capacity building and export promotion and development efforts from several stakeholders. Several olive producer and agricultural cooperatives have been targeted by development programs and projects for the purpose of increasing their capacity to produce high-quality, exportable olive oil. Many of these interventions have failed and many succeeded. It is thus essential for any future program with a similar goal to examine the lessons learned from these interventions, including this one, and scrutinize with utmost diligence the readiness of these cooperatives for effective involvement in such interventions.

b) In addition to assessing farmers' and cooperatives readiness to engage, interventions similar to the OPHOS project, must consider the alternative bearing cycle of olive trees. Launching a new collective olive harvesting, pressing and oil storage program in low yield year will likely have lower results than if implemented in a high-yield yield, all other things being equal of course.

c) Careful budgeting and implementation scheduling are critical to any project design, but particularly so for short-cycle projects. In budgeting, market prices of equipment and services should be investigated and scrutinized, and contingency reserve should be allocated. Implementation planning must assume the worst-case scenario and develop appropriate mitigation measures. If a project faces a risk of failure due to these risks, whether in design or during implementation, they should be immediately ceased.

The recommendations emerging from the evaluation of the OPHOS project are the following:

a) ACDI/VOCA is strongly encouraged to avoid further engagement in the olive oil sector as many other organizations are now active in the sector. Re-engagement should be considered only when there is a real need for ACDI/VOCA's experience in agribusiness development.

b) Given the considerable experience it has developed over the years in the olive oil sector, PalTrade is strongly encouraged to continue working in the sector. Future programming in the sector should make provisions for integrated capacity building approaches, including training of cooperatives on sales negotiations and pricing techniques, as well as the generic type cooperative management training.

c) Future projects aiming at expanding or replicating the collective pressing project must take into consideration the timing issues given that the olive harvesting season is rather short. Given the difficulties often associated with delivery of procured goods logistics management must be given utmost attention.

d) As the 2008 olive season is quickly approaching, PalTrade and ACDI/VOCA are strongly urged to contact the cooperatives targeted under the OPHOS project and encourage them to start preparing for replicating the COPOS scheme this year. The two organizations are also strongly encouraged to provide whatever means of support available to them and needed by these cooperatives to remobilize members and identify marketing links. Through such support, both PalTrade and ACDI/VOCA could ensure that the equipment they provided to these cooperatives are being effectively used and are problem free.

e) Linked to the above, PalTrade is strongly encouraged to leverage funding and technical support to the cooperatives targeted by the OPHOS project from its French-funded olive oil marketing project. If possible, support should be channeled to filling the organizational capacity gaps left unaddressed by the current project.

CHAPTER SIX: IMPROVED HOUSEHOLD VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS

A. Overview and Performance Targets

Within the framework of its cooperative growth and development, and marketing strategies of the WBFS Program, ACDI/VOCA awarded the Economic and Social Development Center (ESDC) on 1 October 2007 a sub-award in the value of US$91,986 to implement the proposal it had submitted two months earlier. The project, which was titled "Promoting Sustainable Livelihood of Palestinian Rural Women through Value Added Cooperative Food Processing" (VACFP), aimed to increase food security and sustainable rural livelihoods among 160 rural women households through improving their and their cooperatives capacities to produce and market value added food products. The specific objectives of the project were as follows:

a) To increase the income level of 160 rural women by 33% by the end of the project.
b) To build the target cooperatives/associations' capacities in homemade food processing and effective marketing techniques.
c) To build the cooperatives/associations' management, operational and organizational capacities of ten targeted cooperatives.
d) To promote the concepts of group business synergy through cooperation, teamwork and self reliance in two targeted districts: Hebron and Bethlehem.
e) To preserve surplus of fresh vegetables and fruits that used to go to waste.
f) To link the 10 targeted cooperatives with local and external buyers.
g) To strengthen self-initiative among women's cooperatives/associations, and their relevance as a contributing participant in the Palestinian economy and civil society.

The project would achieve these objectives by means of working on market-led technical assistance, production and marketing / promotional support as follows[19]:

First, ESDC would tailor its technical assistance to each targeted cooperatives based on findings and recommendations of a market assessment that it would commission.

Second, ESDC would build the technical capacities of the target group qualitatively (160 rural women in the districts of Hebron and Bethlehem) by assisting them to produce healthier, standardized and hygienic processed food items that are appropriate for small-scale home-based food production, and, if needed by providing them with relevant technical assistance, local consultancy and training support.

Third, ESDC would build cooperative capacities and improve their business practices to enable them to compete in the free market on an equal footing with the private sector. After carrying out in-depth organizational and financial assessments of the selected cooperatives, the project team would engage in various activities with these cooperatives that aim to develop internal systems, including financial and management manuals, with a particular focus on member services, market linkages (through a central promotional exhibition), production and business profiles to promote their products and services. These coops would also be assisted in assessing the Palestinian Standards Institute (PSI) requirements and determine which specific sorting and packing operations are required. In addition, the project team and Cooperative Development Specialist from ESDC would conduct one central workshop for cooperative staff on cooperative principles, business planning and business management to introduce cooperative boards and management on good governance issues, including accounting, business transparency and efficiency, and formulate plans to use cooperative assets to facilitate handling, packaging, logistics and storage.

The proposed interventions would also introduce other support to the target women and their cooperatives, including materials necessary for faster and standardized production, such as food processors and kitchen utensils. Testing of quality in processed food items will take place periodically to ensure safety and success of the technical training

[19] VACFP proposal, page 8.

interventions. Through the support of ESDC's marketing specialist, the project team would work with cooperative leaders to identify potential buyers in local and external markets, and improve linkages through meetings, field visits and other events to build relationships.

Much of what had been designed for was implemented. Immediately following the contract with ACDI/VOCA, ESDC, in close coordination with ACDI/VOCA, organized a project launch event through which it and ACDI/VOCA explained the objective of the project and its work modalities. It also began the recruitment process for two Field Coordinators and soliciting proposals from marketing and management consultants to carry out the market assessment and the cooperative management systems development. The process of staff recruitment was completed by the end of October 2007, and the hired staff commenced work on 1 November 2007. The marketing consultants began his 7.5 day task also in the same period. The management consultant, however, was not recruited until 1 March 2008 for a consultancy period of 35 days.

Concurrently, ESDC launched the project in the below listed cooperatives by meeting with the cooperative leaders again to explain the project purpose and work modalities.

- Hebron Cooperative for Agricultural Processing
- Dura Cooperative for Agricultural Processing
- Ithna Cooperative for Rural Development
- Beit Ummar Women Association
- Beit Inoun Women Cooperative
- Batir Center for Women and Child
- Husan Women Cooperative
- Injaz Women Cooperative
- Thahirieh Women Cooperative
- Beer Al Hummus Women Association

Local committees were formed in these meetings to assist in the project implementation, project advertising, and beneficiary selection, which took place largely as planned and were completed by end of December 2008. In the mean time, the cooperatives/associations of Beit Inoun, Injaz, and Thahirieh withdraw from the project for their own reason. They were immediately replaced by Al-Shawawreh Women Center, Bani Naim Women Charitable Society, and Tqoa'a Women Association.

The main changes that were introduced to the original proposal during implementation were the following:

a) Increasing the number of planned training hours to 100 and reducing the theoretical training hours to 80 hours.

b) The exhibition planned to take place in Ramallah was replaced by two exhibitions, one in the city of Hebron and one in the city of Bethlehem. The change was introduced on the basis of discussions with ACDI/VOCA were it was believed that organizing exhibitions in urban centers that are closer than Ramallah to the cooperatives would be more effective for establishing market links.

B. Assessment of Component Implementation

B.1. Effectiveness

Due to the large number of objectives identified in the project proposal and the high level of linkage between many of them, this section examines effectiveness from the perspective of the contribution of the project to the capacity building of women and their cooperatives/associations, as well as its contribution to raising the income of the targeted women.

B.1.1. Capacity Building of Rural Women and the Cooperatives

What had been planned for in the project design in terms of building the capacity of the beneficiary women and their cooperatives/associations was implemented, although some variations were noted over and above what was mentioned in the previous section. The cooperative development and capacity building activities were as follows:

a) Provision of training on cooperatives principles and business management: A central training workshop was held in Bethlehem with participation of 34 women cooperative/association leaders from the targeted organizations. The training covered the main topics of cooperative principles, business planning and business management, and good governance. The training also touched upon basic accounting, and business planning knowledge areas.

b) Provision of management and financial systems, and training: On the basis of the systems developed within framework of the HPM project, the management consultant hired by ESDC developed management and financial systems for the women cooperatives targeted under the VACFP project. The consultant introduced Cooperative/Association Board members to these systems in brief workshop held individually with each cooperative, and transferred over to the cooperatives for implementation. The management consultant conducted a few follow-up visits to oversee implementation of the systems and help the organizations in any issues arising from implementation.

c) Provision of training and coaching on marketing, as well as providing assistance in identifying market links: A marketing consultant was commissioned by ESDC to assist the target organizations in developing their marketing capacity through providing with training and helping them market their products. The consultant also carried out two central training workshops for the target cooperatives'/associations' leaders in Hebron and Bethlehem on marketing techniques and methods. These workshops aimed at imparting knowledge to participants (17 in Hebron and 16 in Bethlehem) on market channels, market plans, marketing techniques and negotiations.

d) Provision of food processing equipment and prepping kitchens: In line with what had been planned, and following the discussion of the market assessment results with the target cooperatives in which the food products to be produced by each cooperative/association were identified, ESDC procured kitchen equipment, tools and utensils for all the target cooperative, each according to its identified need. Each cooperative was also provided with packaging materials, product identification labels carrying the brand name of the manufactured product, and a stamp.

e) Organization of two exhibitions: Two exhibitions were organized in the cities of Bethlehem and Hebron to showcase and promote the processed food products produced by the target cooperatives/associations.

In addition to these activities, the beneficiary women were subject to a 10 hour-technical training on topics related to, inter alia, food preservation and hygiene, good manufacturing practices, quality control, nutritional value of various processed foods, and safe handling and use of raw materials. This training was followed by 20 hours of practical training on the application the first training in the production of the specific product the cooperative members were going to produce.

Based on the sheer number of capacity building activities implemented over the course of the project, the relatively high level of attendance rates in the training courses, and the acceptable level of utilization by cooperatives/associations of the systems developed and introduced by the project, the evaluation team believes that significant capacity has built among the target cooperatives. Where the target cooperatives/associations had little organizational capacity and knowledge of how to produce, package and market high quality home-style foods the training resulted in all of them learning at least the basics in all of these. The kitchen equipment and tools provided to them, albeit below expectations, have also increased their organizational capacity to carry out, organize and control the quality of such work. Where most of the target cooperatives had no standardized products that they could sell in the local market, the project helped them establish such products, and under a brand name.

The provision of the management and financial systems has transformed the way several of the target/cooperative cooperatives conduct their business. Where cooperatives had no systems and procedures to manage their business processes, the financial and administrative systems provided by the project helped them improve the way they

operate and manage their internal affairs. Many of the interviewed cooperatives told the evaluation team that they never used to take minutes of meetings before the introduction of the systems in their cooperative, but are now documenting not only meetings, but also all other activities. Two of the cooperatives have started using the electronic copy of the systems and report much efficient operations. These examples, however, are not the norm.

The experience of engaging in exhibitions and market visits, albeit proved ineffective in terms of generating sales and establishing market links, has exposed cooperatives/associations to the world of marketing. Now, these cooperatives can build on what they have learned in promoting and marketing their products.

Individually, the beneficiary women have gained knowledge and developed new skills and practices in food production that they did not know before. Many women reported paying more attention to the nutritional value of the foods they make at home, while others also reported attempts to better regiment their children's food consumption habits. Several women have also started producing the same types of food produced by their cooperatives at home, something that they were not able to do before as they lacked the technical know-how.

On this strong foundation of achievements, the way forward is to highlight some observations related to overall design and implementation of the capacity building activities. The value of doing this is twofold. First it identifies reasons for deviations from targets during project implementation, particularly in relation to impact; and, second, it helps signal areas for improvement in future programming.

a) Many women cooperatives/associations targeted by the project were still in their organizational infancy stages, and a few had not been officially registered yet. Thus, they may have not needed the level of sophistication enforced in the management and financial systems introduced by the project. Simpler and more adapted systems than the ones introduced may have encouraged some of these cooperatives to rely on them more systematically.

b) Implementation of training courses was squeezed over a relatively short period of time, and courses were not properly sequenced. This may is partly due to short lifetime of the project, but largely due to spotty planning. Training effectiveness may have been better had these issues been addressed during design and implementation.

c) Marketing training was too short and too broad for a project such as VAPCF, which seeks to establish effective markets for new products. This may have to do with the capacity of the trainer and the budget allocated for this purpose. The training conducted on marketing would have better served the objectives of the project had it been done early in the project cycle, or at least before the exhibitions had take place.

d) Significant efforts were made in preparing and sending invitations to the exhibitions, and in follow-up with invitees, to the detriment of exhibitors' preparations for the exhibit. The exhibiting cooperatives were not adequately prepared for these events and had no previous experience to fall back on when and if needed. The exhibitions would have been a more effective strategy in both developing the cooperatives marketing capacity and in helping them sell their products and close deals had they been trained on stand behavior, sales and promotion techniques and provided with information on the potential clients among the prospective visitors before the exhibitions. These exhibitions would have also been more effective had more efforts been made to organize business meetings for the cooperatives with potential buyers during the exhibitions. Arranging a follow-up program with buyers who visited cooperatives exhibition booths would have been equally important.

e) The market assessment seemed to have key methodological deficiencies which may have misguided the selection of products. The methodology used in conducting the market assessment was heavily reliant on a qualitative survey of supermarkets and their visitors in three main cities. There was no clear mechanism to ensure representative selection of respondents, and there was no analysis of competition. The basic questions in a standard market assessment (the four-Ps) were not answered by the market assessment conducted. This was hardly because of the lack of professionalism or experience of the consultant, rather due to the limited budget and time allocated for the market assessment. This is quite unfortunate as a matter of fact, especially since ACDI/VOCA's approval of the VAPCF proposal was predicated on an assumption that ESDC has the required market information to make an informed decision when selecting

the food products to be produced. The market assessment deficiencies are particularly adverse given that the products studied and selected are abundantly available in the local market, and it could be argued that they are subject to hyper competition.

f) The quality, quantity and standards of tools and equipment provided were well below what had been described in the project proposal, and in a number of cases in contravention with the hygiene standards stipulated by GMP (for example, providing plastic instead of stainless steel cutting boards). Field observations have revealed that this is a serious issue in all visited cooperatives, where sub-standard, low-quality equipment and materials were provided. In some cases, the utensils that had been delivered were found to be either rusted or unfit for the type of production in which the cooperative is engaged. Plastic chopping boards provided, whereas safe production requirements stipulate that chopping boards must be made of glass to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Ovens provided were not fit for the type of commercial use cooperatives were prepped for. Evidence suggests that this is the case in the overwhelming majority of cooperatives/associations, and is largely due to limited availability of funds earmarked for equipment. This is very unfortunate especially since much of the targeted organizations' capacity to deliver the results was contingent upon their level of capacity to produce quantitatively and qualitatively.

B.1.2. Beneficiaries Income

The effectiveness of the project in terms of its contribution to increasing the beneficiaries' incomes is mediocre at best. The reported total value of all quantities sold by the cooperatives of the produced products under the project is US$ 5,643. This translates to average revenue of US$32.1 per beneficiary, without factoring production costs. When considering that production cost from materials only for the produced crops ranges between 20-40 percent of the sale price, we conclude that the average total income that may have been generated by the beneficiaries as a result of the sale of manufactured food products ranges between US$ 19.3-24, which is almost half of the value they leveraged toward the project. Even this income was not accrued by the beneficiaries as most cooperatives opted to retain profits made from the sale of the foods produced for reinvestment in future activities or to cover operational expenses.

Both, interviews with beneficiaries and survey results confirm that the income accrued by beneficiaries has been very modest, if at all, because the cooperatives had not had enough time to market their products by the time of the evaluation. The table below shows the survey results on the self-reported income received by beneficiaries in relation to the return that sale of produced food.

Table 31: Average beneficiary self-reported income from the sale of food products through cooperatives

Cooperative Name	Mean (NIS)	Maximum (NIS)
Hebron Cooperative	0	0
Al-Usra Cooperative	0.0	0.0
Al-Shawawreh Cooperative	43.2	80.0
Ithna Cooperative	0.1	1.0
Bani Niem Cooperative	0.0	0.0
Battir Cooperative	0.9	1.0
Beit Ummar Cooperative	0.0	0.0
Taqou' Cooperative	0.2	1.0
Dura Cooperative	0.0	0.0
Husan Cooperative	25.6	63.0
Total	**9.5**	**80.0**

The effectiveness constraints to the realization of the increased income objective are more or less the same as those made in the previous section under the rubric of observations. The most salient constraint to the achievement of acceptable levels of income by beneficiaries is the weak approach to product marketing, the limited experience within cooperatives in this regard, and that marketing activities that were carried out were cramped into the last

twenty days of the project. The mediocre level of effectiveness vis-à-vis the project objective on increased income of beneficiaries is grave as it also directly undermines the achievement of the overall goal of the project.

B.2. Efficiency

B.2.1. Utilization of Financial and Human Resources

Funding: The total budget allocated the VACFP project was US$ 99,567, of which 23.4 percent was allocated to tools and equipment (material support); 11.1 percent to marketing activities; 19.4 percent to training and technical assistance; 6 percent to publications (including training materials and marketing related printed materials), and, 39 percent to project staff salaries and benefits. Actual total expenditures were US$ 96,861, with no substantial variance between line item expenditures and those budgeted, except for the line item on publications on which some cost savings were accrued. Table 32 below provides further details on the project budget as designed and as discharged.

Budget constraints were identified above as constituting a major constraint to the effective implementation of the project. It is highlighted here as a major constraint to efficiency as well. It is quite obvious that the budget required for the implementation of the project was underestimated at the time of design. Substantially more funds were needed to procure the equipment and material support needed for the effective implementation of the project as designed.

While there were no cost overruns, the expenditures were too thinly distributed on several activities. It may have been wiser for the project to reduce the scope of its activities early into the project implementation –once the problem with limited budget was detected- and reallocate cut activity budget to other line items. Given the quality of inputs provided, the project expenditures were not cost effective, even if maintaining low costs and minimizing cost overruns. This should have been detected and signaled by ESDC's Accountant and Finance and Administrative Manager very early in the project implementation. Had a budget reallocation been requested with the proper justification, ACDI/VOCA would have most likely indulged it.

Staffing: The project structure envisaged in the project proposal was well instituted and all identified staff positions were filled in accordance with procedures. The expertise of the project staff was found to be well in-line with what is needed and their qualifications and responsibilities were commensurate with each other. No material problems could be detected in relation to staff utilizations. The utilization of staff was appropriate.

Table 32: OHPOS project budget and expenditures

		Budget Amount	% of total Budget	Cumulative Expenditures	% of Expenditures
1	**Training & Technical Assistance**				
1.1	Project Orientation				
1.1.1	Orientation Workshop	195.98	0.2%	195.98	0.2%
	Sub-Total	195.98	0.2%	195.98	0.2%
1.2	Technical Assistance Targeting Rural Women				
1.2.1	Rural Women Training	2,827.00	2.8%	1,691.31	1.7%
1.2.2	Trainer Fees	1,800.00	1.8%	2,500.00	2.6%
	Sub-Total	4,627.00	4.6%	4,191.31	4.3%
1.3	Technical Assistance Targeting Cooperatives				
1.3.1	Market Survey of Homemade Food Products	1,522.00	1.5%	1,522.27	1.6%
1.3.2	Consultants (Management & Financial)	6,495.00	6.5%	6,494.53	6.7%
1.3.3	Central Workshop - Cooperative Management	505.00	0.5%	664.00	0.7%
	Sub-Total	8,522.00	8.6%	8,680.80	9.0%
	Total Training & Technical Assistance	**$ 13,344.98**	**13.4%**	**$ 13,068.09**	**13.5%**
2	**Material Support**				
2.1	Production Supplies such as Food Processors, Kitchen Utensils, Refrigerators, Stainless Steel Tables, etc.	16,247.00	16.3%	16419.5	17.0%
2.2	Marketing Supplies such as Packaging Inputs, Labels, Wrapping Machines, etc.	5,000.00	5.0%	6,504.43	6.7%
2.3	Sample Products' Testing - Quality Control	2,100.00	2.1%	-	
	Total Material Support	**23,347.00**	**23.4%**	**22,923.93**	**23.7%**
3	**Publications**				
3.1	Printing of training manual (Standardized Food Processing)	$ 1,200.00	1.2%	**$ -**	
3.2	Cooperative Brochures & Roll-Ups	2,500.00	2.5%	2,191.00	2.3%
3.3	Project Sign Boards & Training banners	2,300.00	2.3%	937.65	1.0%
	Total Publications	**6,000.00**	**6.0%**	**3,128.65**	**3.2%**
4	**Marketing**				
4.1	Central Exhibition	9,500.00	9.5%	$8,516.55	8.8%
4.2	Product displays and tasting events (at super markets)	1,600.00	1.6%	3,450.00	3.6%
	Total Marketing Exhibition	**11,100.00**	**11.1%**	**11,966.55**	**12.4%**
5	**Direct Project Personnel**				
5.1	Project Manager (100% of Time)	$ 12,983.00	13.0%	$ 12,983.22	13.4%
5.2	Field Worker1 (100% of Time)	9,000.00	9.0%	8,497.04	8.8%
5.3	Field Worker2 (100% of Time)	8,299.00	8.3%	8,253.15	8.5%
5.4	Marketing Specialist (25% of Time)	3,039.00	3.1%	3,038.68	3.1%
5.5	Accountant (25% of Time)	1,819.00	1.8%	1,819.03	1.9%
5.6	ESDC Director (10%)	2,247.00	2.3%	2,247.03	2.3%
5.7	ESDC Finance & Admin Manager (10%)	1,482.00	1.5%	1,481.67	1.5%
	Total Direct Project Personnel	**38,869.00**	**39.0%**	**38,319.82**	**39.6%**
6	**Other Direct Administrative Costs**				
6.1	Transportation	2,250.00	2.3%	$2,328.90	2.4%
6.2	Office supplies	1,800.00	1.8%	2,271.50	2.3%
6.3	Office rent & utilities	956.00	1.0%	956.00	1.0%
6.4	Telecommunication	1,800.00	1.8%	1,871.59	1.9%
6.5	Bank Fees	100.00	0.1%	25.50	
	Total Other Direct Administrative Costs	**6,906.00**	**6.9%**	**7,453.49**	**7.7%**
	Grand Total	**99,567.00**	**100.0%**	**96,860.53**	**100.0%**

B.2.2. Targeting and Beneficiary Selection

The evaluation team could not ascertain the level of involvement of ESDC in the beneficiary selection process. However, based on anecdotal evidence suggesting that cooperative leaders had a relatively free rein in selecting applicants and replacing beneficiaries after the beneficiary list was originally drawn up, the evaluation team believes that ESDC was not effectively involved in the beneficiary selection process. This notwithstanding, there does not seem to be any serious exclusion errors as the socio-economic characteristics extracted from the project baseline survey indicate that the selected beneficiaries fit within the criteria set for beneficiary selection; i.e. low income and large households. Nevertheless, a more systematic and transparent beneficiary selection process could have been possible as it would have increased the efficiency of implementation.

B.2.5. Beneficiary Satisfaction

Surveyed beneficiaries expressed a high degree of dissatisfaction with the benefits they had accrued as a result of the project, which confirms the evaluation team's assessment of the mediocre effectiveness vis-à-vis increased income. The beneficiaries' satisfaction with the overall performance of ESDC fared better, with 56.9 percent of the beneficiaries expressing satisfaction in this regard, compared to 12.4 percent who were dissatisfied. The beneficiaries' level of satisfaction with the Project Field Coordinators was the highest, with 82.4 percent of the beneficiaries indicating satisfaction in this regard. This is not surprising as Field Coordinators were based in the same areas where the cooperatives/associations were located and maintained regular visits with them.

Noteworthy here is the proportion of beneficiaries who were relatively indecisive about their level of satisfaction with the overall benefits received and the overall performance of ESDC; i.e. those indicating and "in-between" satisfaction level. Given the overall performance of the project, the evaluation team is of the opinion that if these respondents were pressured to chose a binary answer, it is highly likely that the majority of them will indicate dissatisfaction. Naturally, this is a subjective judgment and should not be factored into the overall evaluation of efficiency. However, it is objectively deduced from several anecdotal evidences suggesting that beneficiaries often tend to be favorable than unfavorable when assessing the performance of others.

Table 33 below, which summarizes the survey results in relation to beneficiaries' satisfaction with the three aspects mentioned earlier could provide more insight into the efficiency assessment made in this section of the report.

Table 33: Beneficiaries satisfaction with various aspects of project (% of farmers indicating response)

	Are you satisfied with the overall benefit you received?			
Cooperative	**Satisfied**	**In-Between**	**Not Satisfied**	**Total**
Hebron Cooperative	50.0	16.7	33.3	100
Al-Usra Cooperative	23.5	58.8	17.6	100
Al-Shawawreh Cooperative	39.1	34.8	26.1	100
Ithna Cooperative	0.0	0.0	100.0	100
Bani Niem Cooperative	0.0	26.7	73.3	100
Battir Cooperative	0.0	0.0	100.0	100
Beit Ummar Cooperative	20.0	60.0	20.0	100
Taqou' Cooperative	17.6	47.1	35.3	100
Dura Cooperative	5.6	0.0	94.4	100
Husan Cooperative	17.6	35.3	47.1	100
Total	16.4	28.3	55.3	100

	Are satisfied with the performance of ESDC?			
Cooperative	**Satisfied**	**In-Between**	**Not Satisfied**	**Total**
Hebron Cooperative	50.0	33.3	16.7	100
Al-Usra Cooperative	47.1	52.9	0.0	100
Al-Shawawreh Cooperative	60.9	34.8	4.3	100
Ithna Cooperative	93.3	0.0	6.7	100
Bani Niem Cooperative	0.0	33.3	66.7	100
Battir Cooperative	86.7	6.7	6.7	100
Beit Ummar Cooperative	50.0	50.0	0.0	100
Taqou' Cooperative	29.4	41.2	29.4	100
Dura Cooperative	83.3	16.7	0.0	100
Husan Cooperative	58.8	41.2	0.0	100
Total	**56.9**	**30.7**	**12.4**	**100**

	Are satisfied with the performance of the ESDC Field Coordinator(s)?			
Cooperative	**Satisfied**	**In-Between**	**Not Satisfied**	**Total**
Hebron Cooperative	50.0	16.7	33.3	100
Al-Usra Cooperative	88.2	11.8	0.0	100
Al-Shawawreh Cooperative	95.7	4.3	0.0	100
Ithna Cooperative	100.0	0.0	0.0	100
Bani Niem Cooperative	26.7	13.3	60.0	100
Battir Cooperative	93.3	6.7	0.0	100
Beit Ummar Cooperative	60.0	40.0	0.0	100
Taqou' Cooperative	94.1	0.0	5.9	100
Dura Cooperative	88.9	5.6	5.6	100
Husan Cooperative	88.2	11.8	0.0	100
Total	82.4	9.2	8.5	100

B.2.6. Achievement of Target Indicators

Table 34 below sets out the project's planned performance targets against those achieved. Judging by the level of achievement of output targets (italicized for easy reference), which are used primarily here for measuring efficiency, the project's efficiency have been met or surpassed. The high level of output achievement in this case, however, is not a good judge of efficiency as the qualitative nature of outputs is highly questionable.

Table 34: Project Performance Indicators: Planned vs. Achieved

Reference	***Indicators***	***Targeted***	***Actual***	***% of target***
	Program Level Indicators			
PI1	Total # of beneficiary HH assisted (cumulative) No of beneficiaries	**160**	242	151%
	- Men	**0**	0	0%
	- Women	**160**	242	151%
	Total Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries assisted (cumulative and disaggregated by sex)	**1,120**	1,739	155%
	- Male	**480**	784	163%
	- Female	**640**	955	149%
PI2	% of trained producers with knowledge of improved production techniques	**75%**	93%	--
	IR 1: Cooperative Agribusiness Growth Component (CoAg)			
Imp. 1.1	$ Value of Traditional Food sold by members through their cooperative	**170,000**	5,643	3%
Imp. 1.2	Metric tons of Traditional Food sold through cooperatives	**68**	1.02	2%
Imp. 1.4	Average price/kilo of Traditional Food	**$2.50**	$7.30	292%
Imp. 1.5	# of new market linkages	**13**	0	0%
	# of new brands	**4**	10	250%
Imp. 1.6	Average Organizational Assessment Rating	**70%**	N/A	N/A
Imp. 1.7	Percentage increase in household income for VAF beneficiaries	**33%**	0	0%
	In.1.1: Capacity Building			*0*
	# of Trained beneficiaries in Home Made Food processing "Theoretical"	***160***	*172*	*108%*
	# of Trained beneficiaries in Technical demonstration food processing "Practical"	***160***	*156*	*98%*
In.1.1.1	*# of trained coop leaders in coop principle*	***30***	*34*	*113%*
	In.1.3 equipments & tools			
	In. 1.4 Field workers follow up visits			
In.1.4.1	*# of project team follow up visits*	***190***	*256*	*135%*

B.4. Impact

The main impact of the project at the time of the evaluation has been related to the capacity building of women and their cooperatives, which have been highlighted in section B.2. above. A derivative of this is the positive impact it left on the women by means of assisting them to assume a certain degree of responsibility in the economic

livelihood of their households and be more actively engaged in their local communities. Evidence suggests that women have gained a higher degree of respect as result of their attempt to be economically productive household members, within socially and culturally acceptable parameters. While the impact in this regard is still small, it has a relatively good growth potential should the cooperatives succeed in mass production and marketing of processed foods. In relation to this, the project has helped strengthen women's relations with their cooperatives and local organizations, thus bringing them closer to being effectively represented.

From a food security perspective, the project has had no impact on reducing the food security of the beneficiary households as it neither succeeded in increasing their incomes nor improved their food utilization and preparation practices within their households.

That said, there are prospects for greater impact on the long run, especially if further support is provided to these cooperatives. Already, several cooperatives have plans to explore marketing opportunities within their communities and governorate, and some –like Al-Shawawreh Women Center and Battir Women Society- have succeeded, albeit on a limited scale. With time, if the momentum created by the project does not get lost, greater impacts could be achieved.

B.5. Sustainability

Overall, the likelihood of the sustainability of the project results at the time of evaluation was moderate due to the limited marketing opportunity available to most of the target cooperatives and the general loss of interest felt by the evaluation team during interviewed with project beneficiaries and cooperative leaders. Support is essentially needed to ensure that the few achievements that have been made by the cooperatives do not get lost.

Having said this, it should be noted that there is a sense of interest among some of the target cooperatives/associations to build upon what has been achieved and not lose ground. Within these cooperatives, cooperative leaders interviewed showed evidence of being active in soliciting support from various organizations to build upon what has been done through the VACFP project.

The sustainability prospects of the project would be greatly improved if ESDC follows through with its commitment to continue supporting the targeted cooperatives within the framework of its core programs and funded projects. At the time of evaluation ESDC was exploring opportunity for re-engaging with Ithna and Dura Cooperatives and trying to help them market their dairy products through local organizations and wholesalers. It was also looking into leveraging support through a Swedish-funded program it is implementing to Dura Cooperative to expand its dairy production capacity and diversifying their product line.

C. Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

VACFP has demonstrated the value of a simple capacity building approach to the development of the relatively inexperienced women cooperatives and associations. It has demonstrated how, with some capital assistance, capacity building and a marketing support much cooperative development work can be done. It has also demonstrated that women cooperatives have the potential to assume responsibility for this work.

VACFP has also demonstrated, however, that much work remains to be done before such development could continue sustainably. Progress has been made with regard to cooperative capacity building of the ten target cooperatives, but more substantial improvements are still needed.

In terms of VACFP objectives, those of cooperative development and women capacity building were met. Little progress has been made in relation to helping women increase or effectively contribute to their households' income. This is why VACFP is believed to have not been able to achieve its own full potential.

Three main lessons learned can be highlighted from the implementation experience of the project, namely:

a) Home-based food processing remains a viable means of generating additional household income and preserving foods for later use. Home-based processing activities are appealing to women because they can be performed at home where the women can attend to their children, and can provide women with the opportunity to put their skills to use and generation of additional household income. Thus, women cooperatives could be effective in bridging the gap between women's desire to generate income for their household through productive employment and the cultural expectation that she has to stay at home.

b) The operations of many of rural women cooperatives/associations are not yet sustainable because of meager capacities and resources as well as the lack of a vision to address the issues facing them. Furthermore, the majority of these cooperatives / associations are not well organized to deal efficiently with wholesalers or buyers both from the local or external markets. Rural women cooperatives have limited business and service capacity to compete as commercial organizations and effectively market products on behalf of their members.

d) Careful budgeting and implementation scheduling are critical to any project design, but particularly so for short-cycle projects. In budgeting, market prices of equipment and services should be investigated and scrutinized, and contingency reserve should be allocated. Implementation planning must assume the worst-case scenario and develop appropriate mitigation measures. If a project faces a risk of failure due to these risks, whether in design or during implementation, they should be immediately ceased.

The recommendations emerging from the evaluation of the VACFP project are the following:

a) ESDC is strongly encouraged to integrate the willing of the ten targeted cooperative under the VACFP project in its cooperative capacity development and marketing initiatives.

b) ACDI/VOCA should seek out ways to pilot a second phase of the VACFP project utilizing the lessons learned from the implementation of the first phase. Particular emphasis should be placed on physical infrastructure development and marketing.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE RURAL HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT COMPONENT

A. Overview and Performance Targets

Within the framework of the WBFS Program, ACDI/VOCA signed a grant agreement with the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem (ARIJ) to implement a project titled "Improving Livelihoods and Food Security in Southern West Bank" (ILHFS). The project, which was the main activity implemented by ACDI/VOCA to achieve the results of the Rural Household Support (RHS) component of the WBFS Program, was implemented over two consecutive phases (Phase I: 19 February- 30 September 2007; and, Phase II: 1 October 2007-30 June 2008).

The ILHFS project aimed to improve the food security and livelihood of 790 marginalized, impoverished and vulnerable rural households (420 in Phase I and 370 in Phase II) through assisting them to establish productive vegetable home gardens that provide them with a source of food and a source of supplemental income.[20] More specifically, the project identified three objectives to reach this goal, namely:

a) Improve access to food for 790 impoverished and vulnerable agricultural households in a cluster of villages in Bethlehem and Hebron Governorate through the installation of 790 home gardens to produce vegetables, herbs and fruits for household consumption. Of the total 790 home gardens to be constructed, 400 would have baby-greenhouses ($90m^2$), 280 would have rainwater collection cistern, and 110 would have grey water treatment units.

b) Provide access to water and improve water use and reuse efficiency by 3,1480 cubic meters (11880 from the treated grey water and 19600 from harvested rainwater) for domestic and agricultural purposes in the selected areas of Bethlehem and Hebron.

c) Increase capacities and skills of 790 targeted households in agricultural practices and water management especially women household members.

Before moving on to the assessment of the project as implemented, three key extraneous obstacles that were encountered during the implementation of the project –which started on schedule- should be noted here, as reference will be made to them in several places throughout the assessment. These are:

a) Below average and uneven rainfall: The winter of 2007 was characterized by below average precipitation rates and uneven distribution of rainfall. Rain fell in few consecutive heavy showers at the beginning of the season, which gradually stopped in mid January, depriving rain-fed crops from a very much needed irrigation and reduced the usual average of rainwater harvest by those who have the means to do so. The rainfall patterns combined with below average precipitation rates have classified the agricultural years 2007/2008 as a year of drought.

b) Frost: While moderate frost conditions are known to happen in the oPt, their incidence in late 2007/early 2008 was exception. Frost conditions spanned several days , with occurrence all across the West Bank, even in the Jordan Valley which has been traditionally immune to such conditions. The frost's impact was felt most by farmers who saw their crops dissipate as they stood helpless. Crops that were not affected by the frost were few and far in between, and those that were not destroyed suffered stunted growth and below average productivity. The general effect of the frost was noticeably felt in the project target areas.

[20] ARIJ's proposals for Phase I and II of the ILHFS project included different goal, purpose and objective statements. However, the statements were very similar in meaning, with some details being the main variance. To facilitate the evaluation and reduce redundancy, especially since both phases were considered as one project by ACDI/VOCA, the evaluation team opted to rely on the project's chain of results as stated under Phase I of the project. This choice was made simply because the statements of results in the Phase I proposal were slightly better crafted for the evaluation purpose than those in Phase II.

c) Delay in setting up home-gardens as a result of the delay in the approval of source of origin waivers from USAID for the procurement of non-US made irrigation systems: The delay in setting up and cultivating home gardens was reported in Q2. This two-month delay was mainly due to the delay in obtaining the geographical code waiver for the drip irrigation system. Waiver was submitted to USAID on 26 April and again in 6 May 2007, with ensuing clarifications. Another waiver was submitted on 10 May 2007. Waiver approved on June 20th but there were a couple of questions concerning the source and origin of materials shown as Israel in the approved waiver that ACDI/VOCA wished to clarify and these were not answered until early July 2007. This delay caused a loss of the 2007 winter season's cultivation (planned cultivation in May and June).

B. Assessment of Component Implementation

B.1. Effectiveness

B.1.1. Improved Access to Food

All planned activities under this objective were completed at the time of the evaluation. A total of 790 home gardens were established, of which 280 included the construction of cisterns, 400 included the construction of baby greenhouses, and 110 included the construction of grey water treatment units. This translated to a total of 355 dunums of open irrigated cultivation and 36 dunums of greenhouses. All 790 beneficiaries have received vegetable and herb seeds and seedlings sufficient for the cultivation of up to half a dunum of open field or 90m^2 greenhouse. The seeds cultivated included tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, green beans, zucchini, lettuce, cabbage, eggplants, spinach, cauliflower, cabbage, peas, green onions, radishes and thyme, all staple foods for the average Palestinian household. During the life span of the project 450 home gardens and greenhouses were cultivated twice (two cycles) with vegetable seeds and seedlings, and 340 home gardens and greenhouses were cultivated once.

The simple fact that these home gardens have been constructed and cultivated is sufficient to indicate that physical access of the beneficiary households to vegetables, fruits and herbs has improved substantially. Survey results confirm this by revealing that the average beneficiary household has utilized an average of 329m^2 of its developed home garden for the production of vegetables, 194m^2 for fruit trees, and 90m^2 for medicinal plants as shown in the table below.

Table 35: Nature of use of home gardens according to the average area of land used (m^2)

Nature of Home Garden Use	Cisterns	Greenhouses	GWTU	Total
Vegetables (Open field)	449	234.5	348	**329**
Fruit trees	166	256	144	**194**
Greenhouses	0	90	0	**90**
Medicinal plants	35	16.5	51	**26**

While the figures in the above table are quite high, they cannot be generalized to all 790 beneficiaries. The survey findings reveal that the percentage of beneficiaries who have received cisterns and grey water treatment units and have not cultivated their home gardens after the first harvest is relatively high is 52.1 percent and 36.2 percent, respectively. The high percentage of cisterns' beneficiaries not cultivating their home gardens is largely the result of the late completion of the cisterns and the low rainfall rates, which have prevented beneficiaries for collecting sufficient amount of rain water for irrigation purposes. Thus, this percentage will most likely drop after this winter season. The evaluation team, however, could not say the same about the high percentage of grey water treatment units' beneficiaries not cultivating their land as no explanation could be found.

This notwithstanding, drilling further into the survey results reveals that quite substantial quantities of various crops have been produced by the beneficiary households who have cultivated their home gardens over the period extending from the completion of their home gardens to the evaluation (August 2008), as shown in the table 36 below. On average, excluding fruits, each beneficiary household produced 331 kg of various agricultural crops. The implications of this level of production in terms of income transfer effect, i.e. value of income usually spent on the crops produced now spent on other food and non-food items; is quite substantial. This is most likely why 63.6 percent of the surveyed beneficiaries reported increased ability to purchase food items that were beyond their economic reach before the project. This, in the opinion of the evaluation team, is a considerable achievement,

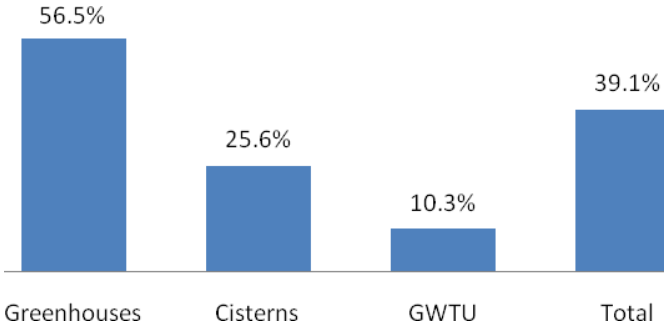
especially when considering all the effectiveness constraints associated with the drought, frost and delay in the installation of the drip irrigation networks. It is even more substantial given the exponential increases in food prices that coincided with the implementation of the project (the Palestinian Consumer Price Index (CPI) soared to a record 168.16 in February 2008, continuing a noticeable trend that began to emerge in 2007. For the tenth month in a row, the increase in the CPI was largely driven by a 4.74 percent increase in food prices in the West Bank).

Table 36: Total production from home gardens

Crop	Total Production (Kg)			Total Production (Kg)
	Cisterns	Greenhouses	GWTU	
Tomatoes	4,686	30,042	2,210	36,938
Cucumbers	565	21,200	318	22,083
Green beans	30	938	43	1,011
Squash	2,172	5,462	1,496	9,130
Pea	0	18	32	50
Cabbage	7,73	1,384	1,155	3312
Radish	87	227	26	340
Green pepper	35	611	23	669
Pepper	83	894	42	1,019
Thyme	310	279	56	645
Pumpkin	3,015	2,856	1,560	7,431
Onion	270	262	200	732
Eggplant	811	4,006	878	5,695
Others	348	2,764	744	3,856
Total	**13,185**	**70,943**	**8,783**	**9,2911**
Average Production Per Beneficiary (Kg)	**231**	**381**	**237**	**331**

The ILHFS project was also highly effective in improving beneficiaries economic access to food beyond what was mentioned above. 39.1 percent of the surveyed beneficiaries who cultivated their home gardens reported selling part of their home garden crops in the local market. Greenhouse beneficiaries account for the majority of these, as shown in the figure below, which is largely attributable to the intensive farming nature of greenhouses.

Figure 9: Percentage of beneficiaries reporting sale of home garden produced cops, by service



The total value of crops sold by the surveyed beneficiaries according to the evaluation survey was NIS 75,741, most of which (81 percent, or NIS 61,369) emanating from the sale of greenhouse crops. A simple arithmetic calculation shows that the project has been successful in increasing the seasonal income of some 309 of its 790 beneficiary households by an average of NIS 537. Due to the varying levels of production and the difference in the proportion of beneficiaries who indicated sale of their crops between the three types of home gardens, it follows that both the

number of households who were able to accrue income through the project from crop sales and the value of increase in seasonal income for these households was not equally distributed among the different types of home garden.

Table 37: Total quantity and value of home garden crops sold by surveyed beneficiaries in local market, in kilogram, by crop type

Crop	Cisterns			Greenhouses			GWTU			Total		
	Quantity (Kg)	Avg. Price	Value (NIS)	Quantity (Kg)	Avg. Price	Value (NIS)	Quantity (Kg)	Avg. Price	Value (NIS)	Quantity (Kg)	Avg. Price	Value (NIS)
Tomatoes	2145	2.1	4504.5	15675	1.4	21945	260	1.7	442	18080	1.73	26891.50
Cucumbers	260	2	520	11540	1.9	21926	50	2	100	11850	1.97	22546.00
Green bean	0	0	0	563	3.3	1857.9	0	0	0	563	1.10	1857.90
Squash	865	2.4	2076	2285	2.3	5255.5	115	1.5	172.5	3265	2.07	7504.00
Cabbage	390	1.8	702	235	2.3	540.5	0	0	0	625	1.37	1242.50
Radish	70	1.5	105	61	2.4	146.4	0	0	0	131	1.30	251.40
Green pepper	0	0	0	129	2.3	296.7	0	0	0	129	0.77	296.70
Pepper	20	1.8	36	165	2.2	363	0	0	0	185	1.33	399.00
Thyme	159	6.9	1097.1	88	6.6	580.8	0	0	0	247	4.50	1677.90
Pumpkin	1395	1.4	1953	990	1.5	1485	420	1.4	588	2805	1.43	4026.00
Onion	153	1.9	290.7	0	0	0	20	3	60	173	1.63	350.70
Eggplant	392	3.1	1215.2	1330	2.1	2793	150	2.5	375	1872	2.57	4383.20
Others	41	3.3	135.3	995	4.2	4179	0	0	0	1036	2.50	4314.30
Total	**5890**	**2.15**	**12634.8**	**34,056**	**1.8**	**61368.8**	**1015**	**1.7**	**1737.5**	**40961**	**1.88**	**75,741.10**

According to survey results, the average additional seasonal income accrued by the beneficiary households that received greenhouses from the sale of home garden crops was NIS584, whereas it was NIS 421 and NIS 289 for the beneficiary households that received cisterns and grey water treatment units, respectively. Generalizing these results to the total target population leads to the conclusion to the following conclusions:

a) 226 of the 400 beneficiary households that received greenhouse home gardens were able to increase their income by NIS 584 per season.
b) 11 of the 110 beneficiary households that received grey water treatment units were able to increase their income by NIS 289 per season.
c) 72 of the 280 beneficiary households that received cisterns were able to increase their income by NIS 584 per season.

To ascertain these findings and further understand the effect of the project on economic access, the evaluation team made a quick comparison between the reported level of monthly income by the beneficiary households at the baseline and at evaluation (Table 38). What emerged from this indicated to a considerable level of achievement, as the percentage of households in upper income groups has increased at the expense of lower income groups. This is clearly an indicator of decreased level of poverty, and by proxy, decreased food insecurity.

Table 38: Household monthly income (NIS), by income groups at baseline and at evaluation

Monthly Income	Reference	Cisterns	Greenhouses	GWTU	Total
Less than 1000 NIS	Baseline	58.1	47.5	34.3	47.4
	At evaluation	16.5	20.7	7.1	16.4
1000-1500	Baseline	27.9	11.9	20.0	19.0
	At evaluation	37	41.4	33.3	37.8
1501-2000	Baseline	9.3	25.4	22.9	19.7
	At evaluation	10.2	21.8	26.2	16.8
2000+	Baseline	4.7	15.3	22.9	13.9
	At evaluation	36.2	16.1	33.3	29

Other survey findings confirming that the project has been successful highly effective in meeting its objective related to increasing access to food among the beneficiaries are the following:

a) 73 percent of the surveyed households indicated reduced expenditure on food (without having to lower quality of consumed foods and/or frequency of intake);
b) 44.1 percent of the surveyed households indicated feeling more food secure than before;
c) 20.1 percent of the surveyed households (all GWTU beneficiaries) indicated decreased expenditures on vacuuming cesspits; and,
d) 13.5 percent of the surveyed households reported decreased water bills.

B.1.2. Access to Water, Water Use and Reuse Efficiency

As noted earlier, ILHFS project envisaged providing access to water and improving water use and reuse efficiency by 3,1480 cubic meters (11880 from the treated grey water and 19600 from harvested rainwater) for domestic and agricultural purposes in the selected areas of Bethlehem and Hebron. The key activities to achieve this were the construction of 110 grey water treatment units, the construction of 280 rainwater harvesting cisterns (capacity of at least $70m^3$) for supplementary irrigation, and the installation of drip irrigation systems in all constructed home gardens through the project.

All of these activities were commendably completed as planned at the time of the evaluation. 280 household cisterns (70 cubic meters in water storage capacity) constructed for families with no stable water source to increase the amount of water available for supplementary agricultural use at the household level. Survey results show that the majority of these cisterns are used for domestic and irrigation purposes, whereas some 52 percent of them are being primarily used for domestic purposes. Project efficiency aside, this demonstrates that the constructed cisterns came to respond to a real need, and quite effectively so.

In line with targets, 110 gray water treatment units were constructed to collect and treat gray waste water. These units have made it possible for households to use –for the first time in many cases- grey water that otherwise went to waste for irrigation purposes. The design of the constructed units is highly efficient not only from a cost perspective, but also in terms of treatment capacity. ARIJ estimates that the constructed grey water treatment units have a treating capacity of 1 cubic meter daily (11880 cubic meters annually). Thus, the units can serve a household of 14 members and can treat up to 75-80% of the grey water discharged by them on a daily basis. Undoubtedly, treatment and recycling of household gray water has environmental as well as positive health impact. It is also an effective way of reducing household expenditure on cesspit vacuuming.

According to ARIJ, 60 samples from the treated grey water were collected and tested for their chemical and biological characteristics to ensure that the units are working properly and that treated water characteristics meet the Palestinian standards for the treated waste water. These tests confirmed that eh units are working properly and that treated water discharged by them is fit for irrigation purposes.

Supplemental irrigation systems were installed for each home garden constructed by the project. The drip systems are effective means of plant irrigation as well as efficient solution to the limited water availability. Field observations confirmed that the supplementary irrigation networks constructed were properly installed, covered anywhere between $300m^2$-$600m^2$ home gardens, and were used by beneficiaries for irrigation purposes. According to ARIJ's Final Project Report, the total established irrigation networks reached 790 units, forming 100% of the total planned networks. The irrigation system contains one cubic meter tank to preserve the pumped water from the cisterns by the provided one horse power pump then, water flows by gravity into main irrigation pipes then into lateral pipes and finally to the drip pipes, which contain the dripping nozzles. Additionally, there is a pipe connecting the roof with the cistern to harvest the rainwater with a filter to insure the quality of harvested water.

Evidence gathered through interviews with beneficiaries suggests quite clearly that access to water as a result of the grey water treatment units and the cisterns has been increased. Beneficiaries of cisterns were particularly vocal in stressing that the cisterns they received improved their livelihoods in several ways. One of these beneficiaries told the evaluation team that his worry about water availability and constant nagging to his wife and children about water completely disappeared after the cistern was completed and charged with water. "I used to refuse to let the kids bathe except once a week, but now they bathe when they want" he told the evaluation team. Grey water treatment units were an effective solution for all beneficiary households' interviews to the problem of costly cesspit vacuuming. These households were extremely happy with the performance of their treatment units, and many of them highlighted that it has saved them as much as NIS 200 every month.

Based on the quantitative and qualitative output target achievement, the evaluation team concludes that the project's objective related to access to water and improvement of water use and efficiency has been achieved. The team has no further comments on either the objective itself or the way it was pursued.

B.1.3. Capacity Building of Beneficiaries in Agricultural Knowledge and Practices

The capacity building objective was at the heart of the ILHFS project design and central to its success. It importance stemmed from its heavy focus on practical training and extension. Its envisaged contribution to the success and sustainability of the other project objectives made it particularly important, and highly commendable. The training strategy was tapped with the purpose of augmenting beneficiaries' knowledge in agriculture and agriculture management, as well as encouraging their use of environmentally-friendly and effective agricultural practices. This objective was also particularly important because it primarily targeted women.

During the lifetime of the project, 50 different training workshops were conducted with the attendance of 1,609 individual participants, of whom 63.7% were women. Training was both theoretical and practical and covered such topics as grey water utilization for irrigation, operation and maintenance of grey water treatment units, water quality, home garden management, and food processing management. Table contains the distribution of conducted training workshops by type of training. The women contribution was clear as the agreements were signed with women and the participation of more than one person per households was encouraged.

Table 39: Training courses conducted within the framework of the ILHFS project

Course Theme	of Training Workshops	Men	Women	Total	% Women
Food Processing	6	10	121	131	92.4
Gray Water Management and Water Quality	14	129	198	327	60.4
Greenhouses Management	13	231	351	582	60.3
Home garden management	15	193	342	535	63.9
Key Farmers	2	20	13	33	39.4
Total	**50**	**583**	**1025**	**1609**	**63.7**

The training workshops conducted were both focused and well targeted. The workshops on food processing primarily targeted women and covered the topics food preservation, food hygiene and food processing of home garden production. The workshops on grey waste water treatment and water quality focused on both technical matters related to the units' operation and maintenance, and theoretical matters related to, inter alia, safety methods to avoid water contamination, optimization of water use and environmental impacts and recommended uses of the treated grey wastewater for irrigation. The primary target group for this workshop was the beneficiaries who would be most likely responsible for operating and maintaining the units. The workshop on greenhouses focused on the imparting knowledge and skills to farmers on the appropriate cultivation techniques under protected systems. In addition to introducing crops suitable for greenhouse agriculture and their cultivation periods, the training focused on imparting knowledge to farmers on how to reduce the utilization of chemicals and mechanisms for the introduction of IPM techniques and organic agriculture as means to increase productivity, product safety and fight pests and diseases. The workshop on home gardens management focused on imparting knowledge to farmers on the importance of and how to IPM techniques and organic agriculture as means to increase productivity, product safety and fight pests and diseases. Key farmer training workshops were special workshops organized with the participation of farmer leaders from the target communities and project beneficiaries to discuss issues related to crop management, crop rotations, IPM techniques, organic products, farming as a business, Gray waste water management and water management, food hygiene and food processing for home gardens products, farmers to farmers networking and cooperation.

Training materials covering all the above training topics were coalesced into a six-chapter booklet entitled "Practical Guide for the Palestinian Agricultural", which was produced in two editions (one in phase I and one in phase two) and distributed to all beneficiary.

The project's Agricultural Specialists and extension agents provided the beneficiary farmers with required extension services to assist them in improving their agricultural practices and resolve any issues or obstacles related to the implementation of the project. Farmer Field School (FFS) sessions were also conducted within the framework of the project's extension activities. These probably were the most innovative of all training and extension activities.. FSS sessions were conducted by ARIJ staff in close collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and well-experienced farmers and farmer community leaders. Sessions began with a meeting in which farmers discussed difficulties and problems they faced in their home gardens and receive feedback on ways to overcome them. Participants are then divided into small groups and lead in field visit to a participant's home garden for practical training in implementing the recommendations provided earlier. During these visits, extension agents asked participants to diagnose any problems encountered in the home garden and to propose solutions, which were usually tried or discussed on the spot.

The following observations could be made about in relation to the capacity building and training objective:

a) Training and extension were carried in concert, reaching all project beneficiaries. Training records show that training was implemented in all target communities and with the participation of all beneficiaries. The same is true with regard to extension. The extension activities covered all 790 project beneficiaries. Extension agents from the Ministry of Agriculture were invited to join the project team in providing extension service to the project beneficiaries to build a relationship among them, and to link them with the beneficiaries to follow up with them after the project end which enhances the sustainability of project implemented activities and assist in improving farmers' productivity. A total of 11970 household extension

visits were conducted. On average, each of beneficiary household received anywhere between 15-16 extension visits throughout the project's lifetime. In interviews, most beneficiaries confirmed that extension visits were extensive and were in excess of ten visits. The effort made by the project team in extension is worthy of particular praise.

b) Training was highly effective in increasing the level of knowledge of beneficiaries of key agricultural issues on which they were trained: Training pre- and post-tests conducted by ARIJ show that training was highly effective in raising the knowledge levels among trainees of key agricultural issue. While the evaluation team could not verify the accuracy of these test results, interviews with farmers indicated that beneficiaries levels of knowledge of agricultural practices included in the training courses was very high. For example, all interviewed beneficiaries could properly identify what soil solarization is and could explain how it is done. Similarly, all beneficiaries who received grey water treatment units could explain how their units function and how they could be maintained. Greenhouse beneficiaries were also able to explain what IPM techniques are, although many of them did not refer to it them as such. The combination of training and extension, thus, seem to have been highly effective in raising the capacity of the beneficiaries in line with what was planned. This is quite a commendable achievement given that many of the targeted beneficiaries did not have prior experience in agriculture.

c) Training materials were well developed and made easily accessible to farmers: The booklet "Practical Guide for the Palestinian Agricultural" developed through the project struck the evaluation team as comprehensive and accessible to the average farmer. It is a very valuable legacy to be left behind by the project. The efforts made in its development are thus highly applauded, especially when considering that all beneficiaries have received a copy of it and all of those interviewed confirmed that they often refer to it for technical matters. This, based on the experience of the evaluation team, is highly unusual, which speaks highly of the practicality of the booklet.

d) Overall, the objective of capacity building activities has been met, and commendably so given the minimal financial resources allocated to training. The project staff and the ACDI/VOCA ILHFS Project Coordinator are particularly applauded for this achievement.

B.2. Efficiency

B.2.1. Utilization of Financial and Human Resources

Funding: The total budget allocated the ILHFS project was US$ 1,633,522, of which 86.3 percent was allocated to home garden interventions; 0.9 percent to training and technical assistance; and, 9 percent to project staff salaries and benefits. Indirect costs accounted for 3.8 percent of the total budget. Actual total expenditures were US$ 1,633,452, with no substantial variance between line item expenditures and those budgeted, except for the line item on project staff salaries and fringe benefits. Table 32 below provides further details on the project budget as designed and as discharged.

The fact that a very high proportion of the budget was earmarked and actually spent on direct services and infrastructure to the beneficiaries, and that so much capacity had been built with so little resources is astounding. In fact, unusual for development projects having similar level of funding to ILHFS. The evaluation team believes very strongly the both the way the budget was structured and the way in which it was discharged guaranteed the highest degrees of cost efficiency, and maximized resource utilization. Both ACDI/VOCA and ARIJ are commended for this achievement.

Staffing: The project structure envisaged in the project proposal was well instituted and all identified staff positions were filled in accordance with ARIJ's internal procedures. The expertise of the project staff was found to be well in-line with what is needed and their qualifications and responsibilities were commensurate with each other. The workload of staff was adequate, and administrative records show that staff time was dedicated fully to the project. Staff deployment took place when needed, and staff pay levels are believed to have been set at the same level as ARIJ's pay scale. The utilization of human resources is thus believed to have been highly efficient.

Table 40: ILHFS Project budget vs. actual expenditures

		Total Program			
		Budget Amount	**% of total Budget**	**Cumulative Expenditures**	**% of Expenditures**
1	**Home Garden Interventions**				
1.1	Rainwater harvesting cisterns	581,724.12	35.6%	581,592.12	36%
1.2	Small green houses	411,439.81	25.2%	411,439.81	25%
1.3	Gray wastewater treatment units	168,635.89	10.3%	169,305.42	10%
1.4	Drip irrigation networks	248,367.55	15.2%	247,969.26	15%
1.5	Vegetable & herbs seed and seedlings	-		-	
	Total Home Garden Interventions	**1,410,167.37**	**86 3%**	**1,410,306.61**	**86%**
2	**Training & Technical Assistance**				
2.1	Training workshops	7,322.15	0.4%	6,979.85	0%
2.2	Final review workshop	1,840.00	0.1%	437.55	
2.3	Testing of treated gray water	3,750.00	0.2%	3,470.00	0%
2.4	Publications	2,300.00	0.1%	2,305.00	0%
	Total Training & Technical Assistance	**15,212.15**	**0.9%**	**13,192.40**	**1%**
3	**Direct Project Personnel**				
3.1	Director (30%) - (25% from Jan.08 to Jun. 08)	26,335.18	1.6%	26,335.18	2%
3.2	Project Coordinator (50%)	18,899.70	1.2%	19,477.96	1%
3.3	Senior Extension Agent1 (70%)	16,912.66	1.0%	16,912.66	1%
3.4	Senior Extension Agent2 (70%) - (50% from Jan.08 to Jun. 08) - (100% from April. 15, 08 to Jun.08)	14,755.24	0.9%	14,755.24	1%
3.5	Junior Extension Agent1 (100%)	15,068.60	0.9%	15,068.60	1%
3.6	Junior Extension Agent2 (100%)	13,538.06	0.8%	13,538.06	1%
3.7	Jan.08 to Jun. 08)	13,252.07	0.8%	13,252.07	1%
3.8	Procurement Officer (20%) - (70% from Jan.08 to Jun. 08)	5,603.83	0.3%	5,603.83	0%
3.9	Secretary (100%)	11,745.36	0.7%	11,745.36	1%
3.1	Field Worker1 - (100%)	3,000.19	0.2%	3,269.03	0%
3.11	Field Worker2 - (100%)	2,881.91	0.2%	3,150.75	0%
3.12	Junior Extension Agent3 (100%) from April 15, 08	1,678.01	0.1%	2,011.85	0%
3.13	Junior Extension Agent4 (100%) from April 15, 08	1,407.18	0.1%	1,686.85	0%
3.14	Procurement Assistant (100%) from April 15, 08	1,407.18	0.1%	1,686.85	0%
	Total Direct Project Personnel	**146,485.17**	**9.0%**	**148,494.29**	**9%**
4	**Other Direct Administrative Costs**				
4.1	Transportation	31,616.47	1.9%	31,414.95	2%
4.2	Office supplies	5,103.45	0.3%	5,490.98	0%
4.3	Office rent	6,658.31	0.4%	6,658.31	0%
4.4	Telecommunication	6,370.16	0.4%	5,913.95	0%
4.5	Utilities	4,034.69	0.2%	4,409.95	0%
4.6	Audit Fees	7,700.00	0.5%	7,396.00	0%
4.7	Bank Fees	174.23		174.23	
	Total Other Direct Administrative Costs	**61,657.31**	**3.8%**	**61,458.37**	**4%**
	Grand Total	**1,633,522.00**	**100.0%**	**1,633,451.67**	**100%**

B.2.2. Targeting and Beneficiary Selection

The process of targeting conducted by ARIJ at project design was highly attentive to efficiency; i.e. utilizing project funds to target the communities most in need for the type of proposed interventions. This process was grounded by the WBFS Program set criteria, available statistical data (rainfall, land availability, proximity to city, population size) and availability of water and sewage networks. The selection was also based on satellite land-use and agriculture cover satellite maps as well as ARIJ's assessment of these communities and its extensive knowledge and experience in the targeted areas through previous work and research on poor and disadvantaged households. While a preliminary list of target communities was included in ARIJ's proposal to ACDI/VOCA, actual targeting did not take place until further community visits and surveys were conducted after the launch of the project.

In selecting beneficiaries, the process used was highly participatory and included several layers of eligibility verification. Community leaders in the selected villages were approached to assist in providing project-related information. Community leaders on the committees included agricultural cooperatives representatives, active farmers, women's clubs, and other community leaders. In most cases, representative of all community based organizations and local authorities were contacted. Following this initial contact, which also included an introduction to the project, the project team commenced with establishing village-based Community Committees (CC), which include various stakeholders. Sixteen CCs were formed in the project target (the community committee of Yatta was selected to cover two targeted communities), with a total membership of 118 persons (representing 61 local organizations operating in the target communities), of whom 31 were women.

These CCs were tasked with advertising the project, its objectives and interventions through posting at main buildings and public sites in their villages to familiarize local beneficiaries with the project. Through these advertisements, interested households were instructed to apply for participation with the CC. Multiple eligibility criteria specified by the project were included in the advertisement (as a first layer for self-exclusion).

Table 41: Socio-economic Indicators for Project Beneficiary Selection

Income	Households with limited income sources; households that have lost their main source of income due to the Intifada; households with a monthly income of NIS 1,800 or lower.
Head of Household	Ideally female-headed households.
Assets	Households with limited ownership over land, minimum savings, and very limited assets (poor households).
Size and composition of household	Families with a high dependency ratio, and/or families with higher proportion of young children.
Agricultural land	Families who have limited land ownership, with unutilized gardens and close to the household site with an area of at least 500 m^2.
Water resource	Families with no, or limited, water resources in areas where water prices are high.
Waste water	For gray water construction: Families living in houses not connected to public sewerage networks but is connected to the public water supply network. Capability of separating gray water from black waste water.
Political situation	Families living in areas most affected by the current political situation.

4955 applications were received by the CCs. A participatory screening and selection process was instituted to govern the beneficiary selection process in accordance with the above listed criteria. ARIJ in close collaboration with the CCs classified applicants into three categories based on information presented in the application:

- Category A: applicants deemed most in need and suitable applicants (based on matching application information and eligibility criteria);
- Category B: applicants deemed as likely suitable but their economic situation is better than those belong to category A.
- Category C: applicants deemed ineligible (e.g. rich people, have no home gardens, do not have required infrastructure).

Based on this categorization, all applications were studied and analyzed by the project team with a full participation of the CCs. Preliminary list of approved applications was coalesced on the basis of this review. These applicants were then visited by the project team and the CCs to verify accuracy of information provided in the application. Applicants found to be eligible as a result of the verification done through these field visits were confirmed as beneficiaries with the CCs, and those who were not were immediately excluded.

Based on the final selection made through field visits, agreements were signed between ARIJ and each beneficiary household, in which the respective responsibilities of each were identified. Forty two beneficiaries decided to withdraw after contract signature, however, as they were not able to secure the in-cash contribution required of them. These were quickly replaced from the applicants who were put on a waiting list.

While the beneficiary selection process was quite time consuming, it was very effective in identifying those who are most in need. Thus, it facilitated the efficient use of resources for realization of the project objective. Baseline survey results confirm this (refer to table 38 above). The main shortcoming in the selection process is related to the criteria on in-cash contribution. As it was, this has prevented 42 highly eligible and needy beneficiary households (possibly more given the first layer of self-exclusion) from effectively benefiting from the project. This number would have been more had ARIJ not leveraged funds from its own resources to cover beneficiary contribution. This is unfortunate from the stand point of the objective of the project, which identified targeting the most impoverished and most marginalized.

B.2.5. Beneficiary Satisfaction

Surveyed beneficiaries expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the benefits they had accrued as a result of the project, which confirms the evaluation team's assessment of, both, the project efficacy and efficiency. Table 33 below, which summarizes the survey results in relation to beneficiaries' satisfaction with the overall benefit they received as a result of the project, the performance of ARIJ, and the performance of the extension agents.

Table 42: Beneficiaries satisfaction with various aspects of project (% of farmers indicating response)

Satisfaction indicator	Service	Satisfied	In Between	Not Satisfied	Total
Are you satisfied with the overall benefit you received from the project?	Cisterns	89	11	0	100
	Greenhouses	84.2	13.9	2	100
	GWTU	80.6	19.4	0	100
	Total	85.7	13.3	1	100
Are you satisfied with the overall performance of ARIJ?	Cisterns	96.3	3.7	0	100
	Greenhouses	85.1	12.9	2	100
	GWTU	94.4	5.6	0	100
	Total	90.5	8.5	1	100
Are you satisfied with the services of the agricultural extension agents?	Cisterns	87.8	4.9	7.3	100
	Greenhouses	72.3	12.9	14.9	100
	GWTU	75	11.1	13.9	100
	Total	78.2	9.3	12.5	100

B.2.6. Achievement of Planned Performance Targets

Table 43 below sets out the project's planned performance targets against those achieved. The table shows quite clearly that all output targets (italicized in the table below) were commendably achieved or surpassed. This is yet another evidence of efficiency, facilitated by careful planning and high level of organizational commitment to implementation follow-up. ARIJ is applauded on this achievement. The impact of this level of performance on the WBFS Program is quite substantial, as it means that the overall objectives of the Program's RHS component have been fully achieved.

Table 43: Project Performance Indicators: Planned vs. Achieved

		PHASE I			Phase II			PHASE I & II		
	Program Indicators	Target	Achieved	% of Target	Target	Achieved	% of Target	Target	Achieved	% of Target
P.1	Total # of beneficiary HH assisted (cumulative) No of beneficiaries	450	450	100%	340	340	100%	790	790	100%
	- Male	90	0	0%	50	0	0%	140	140	100%
	- Female	360	450	125%	290	340	117%	650	650	100%
	Total Number of direct and indirect beneficiaries assisted (cumulative and disaggregated by sex)	3150	3435	109%	2380	2613	110%	5530	5530	100%
	- Male	1440	1714	119%	1070	1358	127%	2510	2510	100%
	- Female	1710	1721	101%	1310	1217	93%	3020	3020	100%
P.2	% of trained producers with knowledge of improved production techniques	75%		0%	0	0	0%	0	1	0%
	IR.1 Rural Household Support									
Ind2.1	Rainwater Harvesting Cisterns									
2.1.a.	Number of cisterns completed & handed over	140	140	100%	140	140	100 %	280	280	100%
2.1.b.	Cubic meters of water storage capacity	9800	9800	100%	9800	9800	100 %	19600	19600	100%
Ind2.2	Small Green Houses									
2.2.a.	Number of greenhouses completed and handed over	260	260	100%	140	140	100 %	400	400	100%
2.2. b	Dunums of plantation under green houses	23.4	23.4	100%	12.6	12.6	100 %	36	36	100%
Ind2.3	0									
2.3.a.	Number of GWTU units completed and handed over	50	50	100%	60	60	100 %	110	110	100%
2.3.b.	Cubic meters of treated water capacity	450	450	100%	540	540	100 %	990	990	100%
2.3.c.	Number of established and planted home gardens	50	50	100%	60	60	100 %	110	110	100%
2.3.d.	Number of tests conducted on treated water	30	0	0%	60	30	50%	90	90	100%
2.4.e	Dunums of home gardens planted	25	25	100%	30	30	100 %	55	55	100%
	Number of established and planted home gardens	450	450	100%	340	340	100 %	790	790	100%
	Dunums of home gardens planted	199	199	100%	156	156	100 %	355	355	100%
	CB 3: Capacity Building Indicator									
Ind3.1	Greenhouses, water/ wastewater and home gardens management and plant production Workshop									
3.1.a.	Number of workshops	14	20	143%	13	30	231 %	27	27	100%
3.1.b.	Number of trained persons in the workshops	460	755	164%	435	839	193 %	895	895	100%
Ind4	Number of monitoring & evaluation visits and extension visits	3860	4989	129%	5050	6981	138 %	8910	8910	100%

B.3. Impact

The impact of the project has been largely discussed in the section on effectiveness above as there is no attribution gap between the goal of the program (improving food security and livelihood of the target population) and the objectives (increasing access to food, water, and human capital development). Thus, to avoid redundancy, it suffices concluding here that the project has been aptly successful in improving the food security and livelihood conditions of its target beneficiaries by increasing their physical and economic access to food, providing them with productive assets on which they could depend to produce food and generate income if and when they opt to, and equipping them with the technical knowledge and skills to do just that.

"I cannot be thankful for them (ARIJ) for giving us this garden, which has enabled us to fulfill a dream we had. We have been eating tomatoes every day… Even when the price of one kilogram of tomatoes was more than NIS20, we had tomato in our house. Had we not had the green house, I am sure we would have not bought tomatoes for more than a month… It certainly provided us with a sense of food security…

We produced and consumed many other things. For example, we cultivated thyme last year and processed more than 20 kilograms. We still more than 2 kilograms left stored. We also produced more than fifty kilograms of squash and cucumbers… We have not had to buy any of these crops for more than five months now… We probably saved more than NIS500. This is why I am thankful for them."

Other impact areas and results reported by ARIJ that were deemed appropriate for use here, although are the following:

- 790 home garden providing 5942 family members with basic, safe and nutritious vegetables and fruits.
- Enhanced skills and knowledge of cropping practices, cultivation, pest management, water optimization and drip irrigation, water quality, food hygiene and food processing for 1609 persons.
- 280 household cisterns (70 cubic meters) constructed with a total 19600 cubic meters of water harvesting and storage capacity.
- 400 baby greenhouses (90 meter square) constructed with a total area reached to 36 dunum.
- 110 Gray waste water treatment units (1 cubic meter daily treatment capacity) contracted with collection and treatment capacity of 11800 cubic meters annually for agriculture.
- 391 dunums of home garden were cultivated as open irrigated field (90.8%) and under greenhouses (9.2%).
- Increasing income generation through creating 43,810 formal and informal work days.
- 1,260 m^3 of rainwater harvested and stored in the constructed cistern for supplementary irrigation.
- 18,500 cubic meters of grey wastewater treated and used for irrigating home gardens plants.
- Up to 34,700 informal working days performed by the household members.
- 9,110 paid working days created for the workers in the targeted localities.

B.4. Sustainability

Overall, the likelihood of the sustainability of the project results is highly likely. This, despite some evaluation findings of under utilization of cisterns and grey water treatment units (see B.2.1 above). The rationale behind the overall sustainability rating is the strong sense of ownership of the physical infrastructures established through the project among beneficiaries, which was possible largely because the infrastructures provided to them were –and still are- highly relevant to their needs, but also because they took part in and contributed to their implementation. The project results are also believed to be sustainable due to the high level of knowledge built among the beneficiaries, and the simplicity of technologies introduced and low cost of maintenance and operation of the infrastructure established.

C. Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

The overall conclusion of emerging from this evaluation is that the ILHFS has been unquestionably successful in improving the food security and livelihood conditions of its 790 beneficiaries. This was largely due to its solid design, high degree of relevance to the needs of the target population, and high degree of implementation efficiency. As a result of the ILHFS project, some 309 beneficiary households have managed to increase their incomes from the sale of agricultural products produced in their home gardens by an average of NIS 537 per agricultural season, possibly more if we factor in expenditure cost savings on agricultural crops produced in the home garden and savings on cesspit vacuuming.

The main lessons learned emerging from the evaluation are the following:

a) Proper targeting and careful beneficiary selection is crucial to development success.

b) Planning for implementation of any development project must anticipate risks associated with project implementation and their impact on the project performance, and build well-though out risk mitigation measures to prevent these risks from materializing. Special emphasis in agricultural development projects should be on anticipating seasonality factors and how they may affect implementation and effectiveness.

c) Commercial home gardens involving intensive protected agriculture and inter-cropping could be both an effective and efficient strategy for the alleviation of poverty and food security.

d) In development programming, and particularly in food security programs, beneficiary selection criteria should be carefully crafted to ensure congruence between the programming objectives and the beneficiary selection criteria. If the objective of a food security program is being pursued through interventions at the household level, then households most in need should be targeted and selection criteria to enshrine this approach should be established. It follows that beneficiary contributions –if required by a donor- should be set at a level that does not prevent those most in need from benefiting from the intervention.

The main recommendations resulting from the evaluation are the following:

a) ARIJ is strongly encouraged to revisit all cistern and grey water treatment unit beneficiaries to follow-up with them on the status of their structures and encourage them to start preparing their home gardens for the winter season cultivation.

b) ACDI/VOCA is strongly encouraged to publicize the success of its RHS component to encourage other donors to replicate the experience, particularly the baby-greenhouses and Farmer Field Schools interventions.

c) In conjunction with the above, ACDI/VOCA should ensure the wide circulation of the “Practical Guide for the Palestinian Agricultural” to development organizations, cooperatives and agricultural associations.

d) ACDI/VOCA and ARIJ are strongly encouraged to jointly seek funding for replicating the ILHFS project in other target areas.

APPENDIX: LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

Name	
Mr. Abdel Fatah Abed Rabbo	OHPOS Beneficiary
Mr. Abdel Rahim Khaled	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Abdel Samad Marzouq	PLCU
Mr. Abdelrahman Hamadneh	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Adeeb Abu Al-Rub	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Adel Dweikat	ACDI/VOCA
Mr. Adnan Younis	ACDI/VOCA
Mr. Ahde Abdel Rahim Ahmad	SRDP Beneficiary
Mr. Ahmad Musbah Abu Ali	SRDP Beneficiary
Mr. Ahmad Odeh Musallam	OHPOS Beneficiary
Mr. Ali Ahmad Hreizat	SRDP Beneficiary
Mr. Ali Mekdad Mohammad Asaad	Azzoun Cooperative
Mr. Amjad Qasas	PalTrade
Mr. Aref Ahmad Al-Azzeh	OHPOS Beneficiary
Mr. Azam Abdel Rahman	Baqa Al Sharqeya Cooperative
Mr. Azam Suliman Kalef	Azzoun Cooperative
Mr. Azzam Suleiman Khleif	OHPOS Beneficiary
Mr. Esmaeel Karesha	Thinnaba Cooperative
Mr. Hani Amin Radwan	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Hasan Atyani	ESDC
Mr. Ibrahim Jamil	Organic Olive Oil Marketing Cooperative Saida Cooperative
Mr. Imad Huwatat	ACDI/VOCA
Mr. Isam Abdel Rahman Kitaneh	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Issam Khaled Hanaysheh	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Jaber Tamem Mansor Salem	Bazarya Cooperative
Mr. Jamal Burnat	ACDI/VOCA
Mr. Jamil Musa Abu Qubeita	SRDP Beneficiary
Mr. Khaled Ahmad Abu Ali	SRDP Beneficiary
Mr. Lutfee Tarek Mahmmod	Bazarya Cooperative
Mr. Mahde Ahmed Saud	Bazarya Cooperative
Mr. Mahmmod Fawzi Kazemea	Qabatya Cooperative
Mr. Mahmoud Abed Al-Hales	SRDP Beneficiary
Mr. Mahmoud Ali Nawaj'a	SRDP Beneficiary
Mr. Ma'moun Dawoud Rabi	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Moayad Jaber Metwase	Beit Jala Cooperative
Mr. Mohammad Abdel Ghani Jaber	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Mohammad Hanaysheh	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Mohammad Husaan	Bazarya Cooperative
Mr. Mohammad Khaled	ACDI/VOCA
Mr. Mohammad Sa'id Shbeita	OHPOS Beneficiary
Mr. Mohammad Sleimieh	ARIJ
Mr. Mujahed Mana'a	SRDP Beneficiary
Mr. Mustafa Musbah Uwais	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Nabhan Odeh	Thinnaba Cooperative

Mr. Nader Hreimat	ARIJ
Mr. Nasser Amro	ILHFS Beneficiary
Mr. Nasser Kadous	ANERA
Mr. Nemer Nazal	Qabatya Cooperative
Mr. Nizar Fares Radwan	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Osama Abu Rub	Qabatya Cooperative
Mr. Osama Abu Zeid	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Rami Al Jada	Tulkarem Cooperative
Mr. Said Jaber	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Salim Abdel Aziz Hussien	SRDP Beneficiary
Mr. Salim Salameh Radwan	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Shehada Hamareh	SRDP Beneficiary
Mr. Shehada Mahmmod Dahajna	Al-Mintar Cooperative
Mr. So'ud Habbas	ACDI/VOCA
Mr. Tayseer Mohammad Yosef	Baqa Al Sharqeya Cooperative
Mr. Tayseer Sedke Suliman	Qalqilya Cooperative
Mr. Wisam Abu Zahra	Al-Mintar Cooperative
Mr. Wisam Rasmi Jaber	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Wisam Salah Bakeer	OHPOS Beneficiary
Mr. Yosef Ali Jabar	Baqa Al Sharqeya Cooperative
Mr. Yosef Saleem Yosef	Beit Jala Cooperative
Mr. Zaki Awad Al-Najar	SRDP Beneficiary
Mr. Zeyad Abdallah Radwan	HPM Project Beneficiary
Mr. Zeyad Al Yones	Tulkarem Cooperative
Mr. Zeyad Othman Bakeer	OHPOS Beneficiary
Ms. Affaf Hasan	Husan Women Cooperative
Ms. Amal Manasra	ILHFS Beneficiary
Ms. Amal Mosa	Al Shawawra Women Center
Ms. Amneh Mahmoud Al-Rawashdeh	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Amneh Mohammad Salah	ILHFS Beneficiary
Ms. Baqa Al Sharkeya	Baqa Al Sharqeya Cooperative
Ms. Dina Amro	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Enaya Uwaineh	Battir Women Center
Ms. Farida Hussein Zeidan	ILHFS Beneficiary
Ms. Fatima Abdelfatah Awad	ILHFS Beneficiary
Ms. Fatima Jadallah Al-Jubour	ILHFS Beneficiary
Ms. Fatima Za'aqeeq	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Fayzeh Amro	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Ibtisam A'di	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Ibtixam Ali Abu Murrar	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Itaf Musa Husheyeh	ILHFS Beneficiary
Ms. Jamal Awad	Beit Ummar Women Cooperative
Ms. Jihad Abu Hartheya	Battir Women Center
Ms. Karima Sa'id Awad	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Khadra Awad Al-Amouri	ILHFS Beneficiary
Ms. Maryam Abdelaziz Awad	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Maryam Harbouq	Battir Women Center
Ms. Maryam Tarayra	ILHFS Beneficiary
Ms. Maryam Uwaineh	Battir Women Center
Ms. Mas'ada Al-Iswed	VACFP Beneficiary

Ms. Mays Shak'aa	ESDC
Ms. Nada Mohammad Hasan	Husan Women Cooperative
Ms. Najah Hamad	Al Shawawra Women Center
Ms. Najla Zeidan	ILHFS Beneficiary
Ms. Nawal Awni Hashem Amro	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Rima Sa'id Awad	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Rozana Salim	ACDI/VOCA
Ms. Sa'deya Tmeizi	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Salma Thabet	ILHFS Beneficiary
Ms. Samira Issa	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Sara Al-Jundi	ILHFS Beneficiary
Ms. Siham Abu Arqoub	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Suhair Amro	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Wadha Hasan Abu Zahra	SRDP Beneficiary
Ms. Wafa Judeh	Azzoun Cooperative
Ms. Yusra Tmeizi	VACFP Beneficiary
Ms. Zainab Ahmad Ibrahim	ILHFS Beneficiary
Ms. Zainab Omar Zeidan	ILHFS Beneficiary
Ms.Fatheya Atta Jaber	Husan Women Cooperative