USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Food, Agriculture, and Rural Markets (FARM) Project Mid-Term Evaluation Report

December 2012

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Melissa Chiappetta, Kelly Heindel, and Dr. James Thubo of Social Impact, Inc. (SI) and Douglas Krieger of Management Systems International (MSI).

FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND RURAL MARKETS (FARM) PROJECT MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORT

This document was submitted by Social Impact, Inc., with Management Systems International, to the United States Agency for International Development under:

USAID Contract No. RAN-I-00-09-00019-00,
Task Order No. AID-668-TO-12-00007

Evaluation Services Indefinite Quantity Contract

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation team would like to express its appreciation to USAID and the FARM project for their support throughout this evaluation. David Hughes, Jeffrey Gould, and Redento Tombe, along with their staff in Juba and in the field, provided invaluable assistance, information, and interviews throughout the team's work. Paul Pleva and Erin Shutty of USAID/South Sudan, whose office commissioned this evaluation, provided consistent support and guidance. In addition, David Miller of Abt Associates provided helpful background information and documents for the team's work. Finally, the evaluation team would like to thank the farmers working with the FARM project for taking time to answer the team's questions and provide valuable insight into their experience and work.

ACRONYMS

AAH-I	Action Africa Help – International
ACDI-VOCA	Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance
AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
AO	Assistance Objective
ASARECA	Association for Agricultural Research for Eastern and Central Africa
CES	Central Equatoria State
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
COP	Chief of Party
DCA	Development Credit Authority
DFID	Department for International Development
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
EES	Eastern Equatoria State
FaaB	Farming as a Business
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FBO	Farmer-Based Organization
GAP	Good Agronomic Practices
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)
GOSS	Government of South Sudan
ha	Hectares
IFDC	International Fertilizer Development Corporation
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IR	Intermediate Result
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
kg	Kilograms
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise
mt	Metric Tons
P4P	Purchase for Progress
PMP	Performance Management Plan
RSM	Risk and Strategic Management Corp.
RSS	Republic of South Sudan
S4D	Seeds for Development
SNV	Netherlands Development Organization
SOW	Statement/Scope of Work
SSCCSE	Southern Sudan Centre for Census, Statistics and Evaluation
SSNBS	South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics
SSP	South Sudanese Pound
TOT	Training of Trainers
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
USD	U.S. Dollar
WES	Western Equatoria State
WFP	World Food Programme

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Tables

Figures

PROJECT SUMMARY

Table 1: Food, Agriculture, and Rural Markets: Project Summary

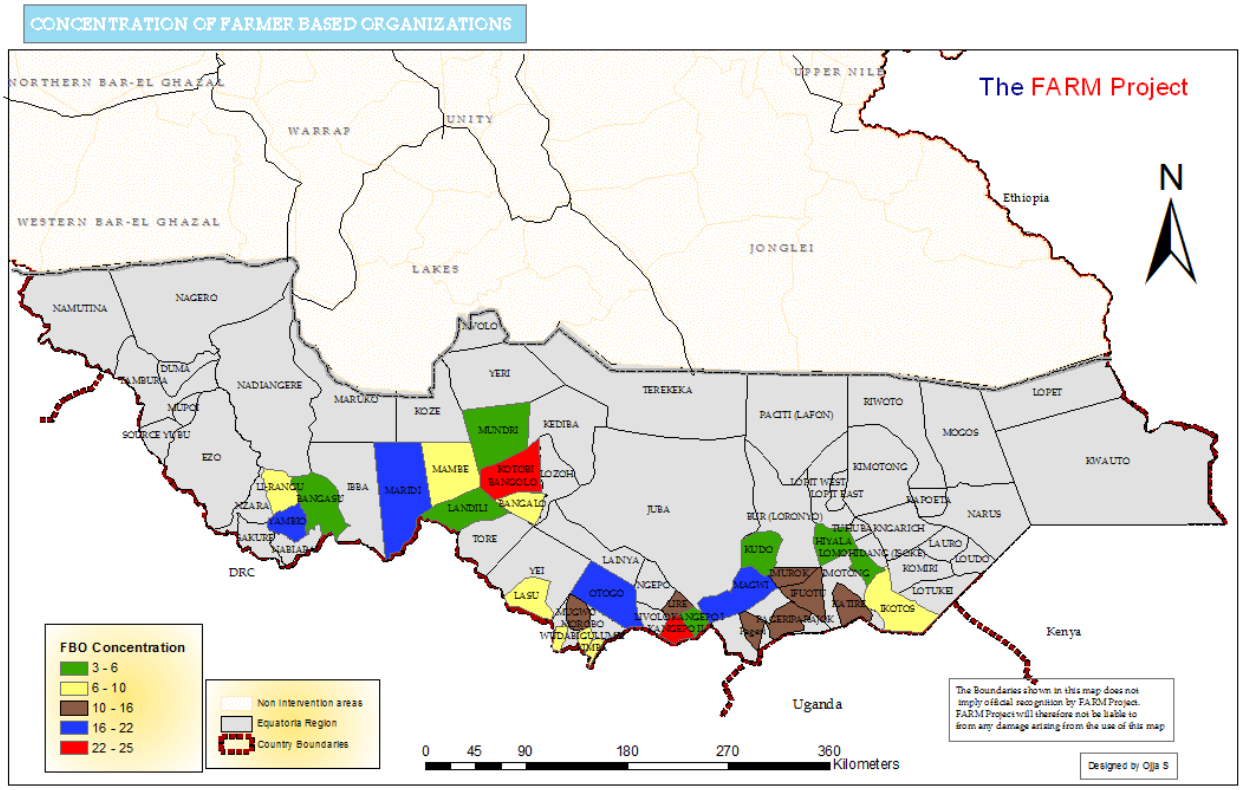
USAID objectives addressed	The project contributes to USAID's Assistance Objective (AO): Increase Food Production in Targeted Areas of Southern Sudan, and to three Program Components under the AO. These are: Component 1: Increase Agricultural Productivity in Selected Agricultural Commodities, Component 2: Increase Trade in Selected Agricultural Commodities, and Component 3: Improve Capacity to Support Market-Led Agriculture.[1]	
Implementing partners	Abt Associates with sub-contractors ACDI/VOCA, Action Africa Help International, and RSM Consulting.	
USAID contract number	EDH-I-00-05-00005-00	
Project dates	February 18, 2010 through February 17, 2015	
Project budget	USD 54,238,973	
Project location	FARM works in three *payams*[2] each, in three counties each, in three states in South Sudan: Western, Central, and Eastern Equatoria States (WES, CES, EES). The map of Figure 1 shows the FARM project area.	
	States	**Counties**
	Western Equatoria	Yambio, Maridi, Mundri West
	Central Equatoria	Yei, Morobo, Kajo Keji
	Eastern Equatoria	Torit, Ikotos, Magwi

The map of Figure 1 illustrates the regions in which the FARM Project is implementing its activities. The project works in three *payams*[2] in each of three counties in the Greenbelt regions of each of the three Equatoria states.

[1] These are the Missions results statements at the time the FARM Project began. They have changed slightly since then.
[2] *Payams* are administrative divisions within counties and can loosely be likened to "districts".

Figure 1: FARM Project Area Map

Source: The FARM Project



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Decades of civil war and the resulting disinvestment in human and physical capital have left what is now South Sudan as one of the least developed countries in the world, lacking many of the basic conditions to support development. With its high production potential, agriculture represents one possible driver of economic growth. However, a myriad of obstacles stand in the way of realizing this potential. These include limited to no use of improved agricultural production technologies and practices that keep productivity low; poor transportation infrastructure that make markets inaccessible to many farmers; low rates of literacy and numeracy that limit farmers' abilities to effectively practice farming as a business; lack of financial services available to farmers; and weak to non-existent policy, legal and regulatory framework to support agriculture.

USAID launched the Food, Agriculture and Rural Markets (FARM) project in mid-February, 2010. The Mission designed the project to deliver rapid economic benefits to smallholder farmers by increasing production, improving access to markets as surpluses increased and improving the capacities of the private and public sectors to support market-led agriculture. The project works directly and intensively with farmer-based organizations (FBOs) to disseminate inputs, knowledge and services aimed at increasing production. It concurrently works to link farmers to traders and teach both groups the business skills necessary to operate effectively. Finally, through training and support for developing agricultural policy, it builds public- and private-sector capacities to support market-led agricultural growth.

USAID commissioned the mid-term performance evaluation of the FARM Project to assess its current performance and to make programmatic recommendations for improving performance in the remaining years of the project. Specifically, the evaluation addressed seven questions focused broadly on (1) the extent to which the project had achieved targets, (2) cost-efficiency, (3) contribution to USAID intermediate results, (4) prospects for sustainability, (5) sensitivity to, and results relative to, gender, (6) coordination with other stakeholders, and (7) project management.

A four-person team from Social Impact, Inc. (SI) and Management Systems International (MSI) conducted the field work for the mid-term evaluation of the FARM Project over a four-week period from October 7 through November 1, 2012. The evaluation relied primarily on qualitative data collected through semi-structured key informant (KI) interviews and group discussions with project beneficiaries.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Key conclusions for each of the evaluation questions include:

Evaluation Question 1 (Effectiveness): To what extent has the FARM project met the deliverables of the contract, including achieving expected results based on the project's performance indicators and associated targets?

Based on the project's most recent (November, 2011) reporting on performance management plan (PMP) indicator values, the project had met its targets for disseminating improved technologies and management practices to FBOs, had made little progress increasing smallholders' access to market services or, with the exception of training, improving business, management, and service provision skills of the private sector.

Evaluation Question 2 (Cost-efficiency): How cost effectively (i.e., cost per unit of output) has the project implemented its various components (i.e., training, grants, policy work, trade fair, assessments, etc.), and what factors have most affected costs?

Cost-per-beneficiary[3] calculations are on the high end of the distribution of costs for seemingly similar projects but by no means the highest,[4] and the comparison does not account for the admittedly difficult operating environment in South Sudan. Furthermore, the project is not yet completed and a typical implementation trajectory, where growth in beneficiaries is slow relative to costs during start-up but then accelerates as implementation progresses, is likely to reduce costs per beneficiary as the project matures. In summary, it is difficult for the evaluation team to assess whether the project's cost per beneficiary is reasonable in the context of the operating environment of South Sudan, the project's implementation modalities, or the project's stage of implementation.

Evaluation Question 3 (Contribution to Intermediate Results): To what extent and how has FARM contributed to the three intermediate results (IRs): increase agricultural productivity in selected commodities in target areas; increase trade in selected commodities; and improve capacity to support market-led agriculture?

Production – The qualitative data strongly suggest that the FARM Project's seed distribution, training in crop management practices and fertilizer demonstrations have increased yields for the targeted crops—especially maize. The project's maize yield assessments, however, have not provided compelling quantitative evidence to support this finding or estimate the magnitude of yield improvements. Training in production appears to have been the most effective intervention in terms of increasing production and more effective (i.e., better recall and adoption rates of lessons) than training in post-harvest handling, storage, Farming as a Business (FaaB), etc. This may be because production training has been more intensive (repeated more often); farmers can implement the practices at little or no cost; the feedback is immediate (easier/faster weeding, observably more vigorous plants, higher yields); and production is more relevant to farmers' current level of development and market opportunities than is training in post-harvest handling and storage. The project appears to provide an effective platform for connecting the International Fertilizer Development Corporation (IFDC)—another USAID-funded project designed to build on the platform of demand created by the FARM Project—to farmers and building demand for fertilizer. However, limited financial resources, access to credit, and restrictive government policy may inhibit widespread adoption if or when IFDC reduces the level of its subsidy.

Increasing Trade – FARM's results on improving farmers' access to markets have been limited to date. According to project staff (and corroborated in the evaluation team's interviews with farmers and other stakeholders), limited surpluses, poor roads, few traders, inadequate storage and limited business skills constrain the project's opportunities to improve farmers' access to markets.

---

[3] The evaluation team was limited in its ability to assess cost per unit of output/outcome for two reasons. First, the FARM Project does not record expenditures by intended output/outcome, and it is difficult to disaggregate them in this way. Second, the evaluation team found limited recorded results on exact outputs/outcomes. For instance, while the team found that yields increased as a result of FARM, they had a difficult time quantifying this increase. There will be a second part of this evaluation, which will include an impact evaluation of the FARM project, and results from that study should allow for better responses to this question.

[4] Huisenga, Mark. *Agribusiness Projects' Matrix Excel Spreadsheet,* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Capacity Building – The FARM Project has increased the knowledge and skills of FBOs and their farmer members, especially in crop management practices. Most farmers, however, will need additional training and opportunities or incentives to put skills into practice before they fully adopt FARM-taught practices in FaaB, integrated pest management (IPM), and post-harvest handling and storage. Furthermore, the limited availability of improved inputs and lack of access to capital or credit may constrain farmers' ability to invest in FARM-taught technologies and practices (e.g., agricultural chemicals, storage facilities, fertilizers) and therefore limit FARM's impact in this area. The FARM Project's impact on the capacity of extension agents has been less positive. While many FARM extension agents have received some training, most report that the FARM Project has not increased their capacities or skills at all, or at least not to a level where they feel entirely comfortable in their professional roles.

Evaluation Question 4 (Sustainability): What are the prospects for sustainability of FARM project results and which results are most likely sustainable and why?

The FARM Project's results relative to increasing production promise to be sustainable, although a number of factors largely outside of the project's control may limit this to some extent. Sustainable results in production depend, in part, on the availability of improved inputs, profitable markets to provide the incentive to invest in production and access to the financial resources or credit—all factors over which the project has limited direct or immediate control. With regard to building Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's (MAF) capacity to provide extension services to farmers, the capacity-building findings suggest that the project has contributed very little to enhancing the capacities of public sector extension agents. Furthermore, what capacity has been, or may be, developed is unlikely to remain with the government when the project ends because it is embedded in individual extension agents who may have little incentive to return to, or remain with, government service after the FARM Project ends.

Evaluation Question 5 (Gender): To what extent and how has the project been sensitive to the differential needs of men and women engaged men and women equally in project activities?

USAID and the implementing partner envisioned a project with a strong gender dimension. To date, however, project implementation has done little to explicitly address gender issues. Consequently, implementation has been largely gender neutral, engaging men and women in the numbers and roles in which they exist in the agricultural context of South Sudan. What results may have accrued to women (reduced time weeding, increased men's participating in weeding) are not the result of any deliberate plan by the FARM Project. To put this conclusion in context, it is possible that there are few gender-specific roles in agricultural production and that more opportunities may exist in marketing and processing, areas in which the project has not been as active.

Evaluation Question 6 (Coordination): How well has the FARM project coordinated with and supported the activities and objectives of stakeholders, partners, and other projects, e.g., the GOSS, S4D, other donors? How could coordination be improved?

FARM Project activities are well aligned with the objectives of national, state and county governments. All levels of government, and especially those who work most directly with the project, believe that the FARM Project is implementing activities effectively on the ground. Although generally satisfied, representatives of the higher levels of government, i.e., the national MAF and state ministers, believe that the project could do a better job of building local human capacity and supporting government with resources and infrastructure, such as buildings, vehicles, supporting travel for government employees. Investing in infrastructure, however, is beyond the scope of the project. The FARM project's focus, and the guidance from MAF, to avoid duplicating the efforts of other donors or NGOs has limited opportunities for collaboration with other relevant projects. However, there are a number of opportunities to cooperate with stakeholders that could enhance the impact and sustainability of FARM's current efforts (see recommendations). The FARM Project has collaborated effectively with IFDC to demonstrate hybrid seed and fertilizer to project-supported farmers.

Evaluation Question (Management): Has the contractor (headquarters and field office) managed implementation of the FARM project effectively and been responsive to USAID direction, particularly on implementing cost effective approaches to identify, test, and scale activities to achieve impact and developing comprehensive coordination and communication plans? What are the team's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement with respect to managing the cooperative agreement and communications with USAID, GOSS, and other stakeholders?

Effective management is difficult to measure and may essentially amount to a lack of identified management issues. While the evaluation found that Abt Associates has successfully achieved some project results, hinting at effective management, it also identified issues with the project's PMP, internal and external turnover, the project's consortium model, its limited staffing, and its top-down structure, which have prevented management of project implementation from being as effective as possible. Although the evaluation team could not fully assess the contractor's adherence to USAID direction pertaining to cost-effective implementation of the project and development of comprehensive coordination and communication plans, the team found that FARM has been largely responsive to documented direction from USAID regarding project focus and direction. More details are available in Annex 9.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Programmatic recommendations focus on: (1) adjustments to the FARM Project that would strengthen its engagement in, or find other ways to address, "weak-link" value chain components that have the potential to limit project results and (2) finding ways to enhance results within the current project scope.

- Given the project's limited scope in addressing the myriad interdependent links in the agricultural value chain, it **should aggressively seek opportunities to collaborate with other stakeholders where the potential benefits of collaboration outweigh the costs**. Collaboration to address

weak links in the value chain has the potential to enhance project results and cost-efficiency greatly by leveraging complimentary activities of other projects or organizations.

- The project has not yet achieved substantial results in increasing farmers' access to markets and the weakness of this value-chain component presents a real and significant risk to overall project results. Poor roads are probably the greatest barrier to market access and the project scope does not, nor is it likely to, directly address this key constraint. To the extent possible, although opportunities appear limited, **the project should make every effort to coordinate with other donor and USAID activities that rehabilitate roads**, either by strategically selecting FBOs affected by road rehabilitation work or encouraging other donors or projects to support FARM-assisted FBOs with road rehabilitation.
- Traders' lack of information about the location of surpluses; the relative perishability of agricultural commodities; limited knowledge and ability to maintain quality; and farmers' and traders' expectations of price also present challenges to increasing market access. **The project's planned work to develop an agricultural information system (i.e., using its cadre of extension agents to collect and compile information about the location of surpluses and pass this information on to traders) will address one of these constraints and is well worth pursuing.** However, to promote sustainability, the project **should concurrently explore the benefits and feasibility of linking these activities to the efforts of other stakeholders (e.g., FAO, Ministry of Planning) or having umbrella FBOs (described below) oversee this information exchange to establish or strengthen agricultural information systems.**
- Staging areas or aggregation points along accessible trade routes and within reach of project-supported FBOs also have the potential to greatly enhance market access. **The project's work plan for 2013 describes a strategy of establishing such infrastructure on a pilot basis and this activity is also worth pursuing.** In addition to its own staging areas, however, **the project should aggressively explore opportunities to link to other donors' efforts to establish well managed warehousing capacity in production areas in which the project works**. Most notable among these is World Food Programme's (WFP) ongoing construction of 15 rural warehouses to facilitate aggregation and sales (to WFP or any other buyer). Working with WFP to strategically locate these warehouses within reach of project-supported FBOs has the potential to efficiently address a key constraint to market access.
- Establishing the infrastructure to aggregate commodities for sale is only a part of the equation. Farmers and traders will still need to understand how to use this infrastructure to engage with markets profitably. As market opportunities expand, **the project should continue, and perhaps intensify, its activities aimed at enhancing farmers' and traders' understanding of markets and their skills to engage profitably in markets**.
- Efficiently scaling up project reach and potential results requires developing implementation modalities to efficiently reach more farmers. **The project's plan to intensify its engagement with umbrella cooperatives (described in the draft 2013 work plan) seems a promising approach**. To disseminate project interventions cost-effectively to a large number of farmers, the project will need to focus its efforts on building the capacities of the umbrella cooperatives to become service providers (e.g., training, land clearing, plowing, marketing, storage) to smaller member FBOs. To maximize chances for success it will need to focus on developing strong business management, leadership skills and ethics within the cooperatives, as well as a cadre of effective trainers to build the capacities of member FBOs.
- Once the umbrella cooperatives are well established, the project can further enhance their capacities as effective service providers by **seeking opportunities for strategically linking them to other projects and initiatives**. For example, the project could link a cooperative to an

Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)-supported seed company as an outgrower, or even establish a high-capacity cooperative as a seed supplier. Project-supported cooperatives could also become IFDC-supported agro-dealers. **Collaborating with WFP to establish a warehouse within a project-supported umbrella cooperative, with WFP training the cooperative to manage the warehouse, could produce tremendous benefits and seems well worth pursuing** if any of the cooperatives have, or could develop, the required capacity.

- To enhance the "readiness" of project-assisted FBOs to take advantage of the upcoming Development Credit Authority (DCA) loan guarantee targeted to agribusiness, **the project should begin now to train FBOs with potential in areas such as business planning, bookkeeping and accounting**. To effectively target such training and other FARM activities to the FBOs most likely to benefit, the **project might consider employing an organizational capacity assessment tool** such as that developed recently by AGRA.
- **As the project expands to engage a greater number of FBOs in the coming years, project management and USAID need to balance the desire for more FBOs (quantity) with quality (sustainability and contribution to long-term development goals).** To increase the pace at which it engages with new FBOs, the project probably needs to hire additional payam-level[5] extension agents and, perhaps, state-level staff to supervise them. It is conceivable that **hiring the junior-level expatriate supervisors in the state offices** (as specified in FARM's current work plan) will provide more direction at the state level, streamline management, and help accelerate the pace of the project.
- The project life is probably too short to build many truly sustainable FBOs. It can improve prospects for sustainability by increasing the quality of its engagement with FBOs through better and more frequent training and more direct technical support. A feasible, and relatively efficient, approach may be to **simultaneously enhance the training provided to extension agents and increase agents' access to technical backstops who engage directly with FBOs**. Given the project's short time-frame relative to that needed to build strong FBOs, **it should be positioning local resources and organizations to carry on the work.** Its partner, Action Africa Help - International (AAH-I), would be a logical choice, since the capacity building can take place largely within the context of project implementation.

[5] Payams are administrative divisions within counties and can loosely be likened to "districts".

INTRODUCTION

The Republic of South Sudan (RSS) declared independence in June, 2011 after decades of civil war. The extended conflict drove many people into neighboring countries, created internal displacement as people sought to avoid the worst of the conflict, and reduced or eliminated investments in the human and physical capital necessary to adequately provide for the needs of the country's population and support economic growth.

The independent country that has emerged from this conflict is among the least developed in the world and lacks many of the basic conditions to support development. Poverty rates are high (51 percent), with substantial variation by state and urban versus rural location.[6] Seventy-three percent of the population 15 years of age or older is illiterate.[7] South Sudan ranks second-to-bottom among all countries for net enrollment in primary education and at the bottom for enrollment in secondary education.[8] Child (under five) mortality rates may be as high as 135 deaths per 1,000 live births[9] and maternal mortality rates as high as 2,054 per 100,000 live births (among the highest in the world).[10] Malnutrition rates are usually above emergency thresholds, particularly in areas hosting large numbers of refugees or returnees.[11]

South Sudan is largely rural and dependent on agriculture.[12] Eighty-three percent of households reside in rural areas and 78 percent depend on farming or livestock as their primary livelihood.[13] The very low productivity of the subsistence farmers who dominate the sector, however, limits the potential for agriculture to contribute to economic growth.[14]

The state of the country's infrastructure impedes development. The road network, particularly important for getting agricultural products from rural production areas to urban markets, is among the worst in the world. Less than two percent of South Sudan's road network is paved, all roads (paved and unpaved) are in poor condition, and the unpaved roads are largely impassible during the six-month rainy season. These conditions make transportation in South Sudan slower and more expensive than anywhere else in Africa.[15]

A USAID-commissioned assessment of South Sudan's agriculture sector reported high agricultural potential, with about 90 percent of total area considered suitable for agriculture and 50 percent as prime

---

[6] The World Bank. (2011, March). South Sudan's Infrastructure: A Continental Perspective (Policy Research Working Paper 5814). The World Bank, Africa Region: Rupa Ranganathan and Cecilia M Briceno-Garmendia; South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics (SSNBS), (2012, March). South Sudan poverty estimates at the county level for 2008. Juba, South Sudan.
[7] Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). (2012, September 4). The World Factbook: South Sudan.
[8] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2011, June). Building a Better Future: Education For an Independent South Sudan (Education For all Global Monitoring Report). Paris, France.
[9] The World Bank. (2011, March). A Poverty Profile for the Southern States Of Sudan.
[10] Small Arms Survey. (2012, January). Women's Security In South Sudan: Threats In the Home. Human security baseline assessment for Sudan and South Sudan. The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. Geneva, Switzerland.
[11] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2011, July). UNICEF Humanitarian Action Update, Republic of South Sudan.
[12] The World Bank. (2011, March). A Poverty Profile for the Southern States of Sudan.
[13] Southern Sudan Centre for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCSE). (2010, March). Poverty in Southern Sudan: Estimates from NBHS 2009.
[14] OXFAM. (January 10, 2012). South Sudan – a blueprint for a food secure future. <http://blogs.oxfam.org/en/blog/12-01-10-south-sudan-blueprint-food-secure-future>
[15] The World Bank. (2011, March). A Poverty Profile for the Southern States of Sudan.

farmland.[16] The report identified the Greenbelt region, which encompasses much of Eastern (EES), Central (CES), and Western Equatoria (WES) states, as the most promising region on which to focus interventions targeted to increasing agricultural production and food security. The region has high production potential, relatively high population and better-than-average access to markets. These factors single out the area as having the highest potential for "demonstrating success in market-led agricultural development."

THE DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM AND USAID'S RESPONSE

In spite of substantial potential, agricultural productivity in South Sudan remains low. High production and transportation costs make South Sudanese agricultural commodities uncompetitive in the region. The country is not able to meet its food needs. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated that South Sudan produced only 54 percent of its staple cereal needs in 2012.[17] A number of studies and assessments[18] have documented the myriad, interrelated factors that serve to impede agricultural development in South Sudan. These include:

- **Limited to no use of improved agricultural production technologies** (e.g., mechanization, animal traction). Farmers' almost complete reliance on hand tools for clearing and cultivating land limits production, in many cases, to the one to four *feddans*[19] a household can cultivate with household labor. A shortage of labor, its high cost and farmers' limited access to financial resources exacerbates the problem, as does an almost non-existent agricultural input supply network, especially in rural areas.
- **Limited use of productivity-enhancing inputs** such as seeds, planting material, fertilizers and pesticides. Weak and ineffective agricultural research and extension services, coupled with low literacy rates, limit farmers' awareness of improved inputs or how to use them. Limited market availability and financial resources constrain farmers' ability to use improved inputs, even if they are convinced of their efficacy.
- **Poor transportation infrastructure** (especially feeder roads) makes markets inaccessible to many farmers. When farmers cannot access profitable markets for their surpluses, they have little incentive to invest in increasing production beyond subsistence levels.
- **Low rates of literacy and numeracy** limit farmers' abilities to access information and understand or practice farming as a business. A lack of business and management skills among private sector agricultural service providers, e.g., plowing, input suppliers, transporters, severely limits farmers' access to these services.

---

[16] United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2011, September). Achieving agricultural growth and food security in South Sudan.

[17] Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2012, February 8). FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission to South Sudan. Rome, Italy.

[18] United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2009, June). *Expanding Agriculture and Food Security Activities in Southern Sudan: Assessment Report for USAID/Sudan Economic Growth Team*; United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (September 2011). *Achieving Agricultural Growth and Food Security in South Sudan*; The World Bank. (2012, May). *Agricultural Potential, Rural Roads, and Farm Competitiveness in South Sudan* (Report No. 68399-SS); Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2012, February 8). *FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission to South Sudan*. Rome, Italy.

[19] A *feddan* equals 1.038 acres or 0.42 hectares.

- **Lack of financial services** (access to credit). Limited access to capital or financial services inhibits farmers' abilities to invest in production or marketing and also inhibits development of a private sector, agricultural-support industry.
- **Weak to non-existent policy, legal and regulatory framework.** South Sudan's new government has not yet developed comprehensive agricultural policy regarding specific elements of agricultural activity.

Analysis by the Association for Agricultural Research for Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)[20] developed broad recommendations for agricultural development programming to reduce poverty and increase food security based on three characteristics of the agricultural sector—production, market access and population. The analysis classified South Sudan as a high productivity, low market access, low population area. The recommended, broad interventions include:

- Interventions aimed at reducing poverty and increasing food security in these environments should focus on "strengthening markets and infrastructure to connect farmers to markets, gains in productivity will be limited unless . . . investments are concurrently made in markets and infrastructure."
- "Strengthen markets and infrastructure to connect regions to high demand centers."
- "Tap into regional approaches, especially in research and development training, infrastructure development, and market opportunities."

USAID'S RESPONSE

In this challenging environment, USAID/South Sudan based its economic growth portfolio, in part, on guidance from USAID's Economic Growth Strategy for Post-Conflict Countries, which emphasizes the need to stabilize returning populations by providing services that will produce rapid economic benefits. Since most returnees are involved in agriculture, the strategy incorporates a focus on increasing agricultural productivity, market capacity, and market access.[21] The strategy emphasizes the importance of rehabilitating infrastructure and recognizes that interventions may have to be subsidized, at least initially. To achieve these objectives rapidly, the Mission, with the agreement of the government of South Sudan (GOSS), elected to focus on the three Equatoria states (WES, CES, and EES) where the potential for increasing agricultural productivity and market access is high.

> The strategy also emphasizes the need to get principal infrastructure rebuilt to open up areas and markets to drive growth. It notes that approaches to achieve these objectives may require initially unsustainable, subsidized interventions to get the necessary momentum built for peaceful transitions. However, these must be time bound (USAID, 2009).

[20] Association for Agricultural Research for Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). (2006). *Strategic Priorities for Agricultural Development in Eastern and Central Africa* (IFPRI Report 150).
[21] United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2009, June). *Expanding Agriculture and Food Security Activities in Southern Sudan: Assessment Report for USAID/Sudan Economic Growth Team.*

To implement this strategy, USAID/South Sudan established its flagship agricultural program, the Food, Agribusiness, and Rural Markets (FARM) Project in February, 2010. The FARM Project Scope of Work (SOW) describes the overall goal of the project as follows:

> "The goal of the FARM project is to sustainably increase agricultural productivity and food production in the three Equatoria states of Southern Sudan, with an emphasis on smallholder producers. Increased productivity, combined with increased volumes of domestically-produced food in markets, is expected to reduce food prices in Sudanese markets and improve food security. As the competitiveness of the selected value chains improves, the project will contribute to increased agricultural commodity trade in the region and will lay the platform for transforming the agricultural sector, which in turn should lead to higher rural incomes, improved food security and better economic opportunities for the poor."

The FARM Project approach is closely aligned with the Mission's results framework and contributes to the Assistance Objective (AO) to Increase Food Production in Targeted Areas of Southern Sudan and to three Intermediate Results (IRs): Increase Agricultural Productivity in Selected Agricultural Commodities, Increase Trade in Selected Agricultural Commodities, and Improve Capacity to Support Market-led Agriculture.

The project task order and work plans describe the specific activities under each of the three project components (components are the three IRs). Table 2 summarizes the primary FARM Project activities.

Table 2: FARM Project Approach and Primary Activities[22]

PROJECT COMPONENT	PROJECT APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES
INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY	• **Provide small (in-kind) grants to FBOs** of improved germplasm for selected crops (maize, groundnut, sorghum and bean seeds and cassava cuttings), mechanized plowing services from private-sector-service providers. • **Train farmers in improved production technologies and agronomic practices**, i.e., seeding rates, seed spacing, timing of planting and harvest, safe seed handling, importance of weeding, post-harvest handling, storage, farming as a business. The project employs a training-of-trainers (TOT) model, which trains FARM extension agents and lead and motivational farmers, who then train individual farmers. • **Demonstrate improved seed and management practices**. On-farm and off-farm demonstrations and periodic visits by the FARM extension agents serve to illustrate and reinforce lessons and monitor practices in the field. The project will also establish Farmer Field Schools, managed by lead farmers at the *boma*[23] level to facilitate training and demonstration. • **Establish extension offices** in each of the three states in which FARM operates and place county- and payam-level extension agents in each county and payam in which it has activities. • **Establish and build the capacity of private sector input-supply enterprises** to increase access to improved inputs and technologies to farmers. This will ultimately supplant seed distribution through small grants. • **Improve the human and institutional capacity of the extension service** by training

[22] USAID asked FARM to discontinue many of these activities when the project was directed to refocus its efforts.
[23] A *boma* is essentially a village (an administrative division within payams).

PROJECT COMPONENT	PROJECT APPROACH AND ACTIVITIES
	county extension staff using a TOT approach and co-locating county staff in state and county Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) offices to facilitate exchange between FARM staff and government.
INCREASE TRADE	• **Identify key feeder roads needing improvement** and share that information with GOSS, donors and those implementing infrastructure programs to better connect high-production areas to local and regional markets. • **Conduct value chain and market analyses** to identify potential markets for each of the targeted value chains and the constraints to reaching these markets. • **Build the capacity of the private financial sector to provide credit** to farmers, transporters, and traders to facilitate growth in agricultural value chains. • **Link farmers to markets or traders** by conducting marketing forums, introducing farmers and traders; supporting market information, i.e., location of surpluses; and brokering high-volume deals between farmers and traders and institutional and other large buyers.
IMPROVE CAPACITY TO SUPPORT MARKET-LED AGRICULTURE	• **Build management capacity of cooperatives and associations**, focusing initially on the leadership, provision of technical training, and harvest and post-harvest handling all the way to assistance with accessing finance. The project works most directly with cooperatives, groups and associations as a cost-effective way to reach large numbers of farmers. • **Upgrade the skill sets of the extension agents** as a precursor to similar training themes offered to producer groups and farmers. • **Support the GOSS in developing agricultural policies** to strengthen the enablement environment for market-led agricultural growth. As an input into this process, the project will assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of civil servants.

The geographic focus of FARM Project activities in the Greenbelt reflects the priorities of USAID and GOSS. The project implements activities in three payams in each of three counties in each of the three Equatoria states (see Figure 1 on page ii). The $54 million project is implemented by Abt Associates in partnership with ACDI-VOCA, Action Africa Help International (AAH-I), and Risk and Strategic Management (RSM) Consulting.

Change in Project Focus

In 2010, GOSS established a goal of increasing national production of basic cereals to two million metric tons (mt) by 2013. Concurrently, USAID raised concerns about whether the FARM implementing partner could deliver effectively on the very broad range of activities in its scope.[24] Consequently, in 2011, in response to guidance from USAID, the project shifted its focus, de-emphasizing some activities and dropping others. A letter dated January, 2012 formally documented USAID's direction to the project regarding its activities and scope.[25] USAID and the implementing partner, however, viewed the changes as temporary and not significant enough to warrant a new SOW.[26] USAID described the change in project focus as a shift from being South Sudan's flagship agricultural program to a platform for implementation of Seeds for Development (S4D) projects implemented by International Fertilizer Development

[24] USAID personnel involved in the decision explained that they were concerned with the cost of the project relative to the number of beneficiaries. By focusing the project's efforts, the Mission hoped to rapidly increase beneficiary numbers.
[25] Bottenberg, Harry. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2012, January 12). *Guidance for Development of Amended FY2012 Work Plan for the FARM Project.* South Sudan. Juba, South Sudan.
[26] United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2009, October 1). *Scope of Work for the Food, Agribusiness And Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* Khartoum, Sudan: USAID/Sudan; and personal communication with the project's COR and author of the guidance letter.

Corporation (IFDC); developing a private sector agro-dealer network and the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA); and building public- and private-sector capacity for an indigenous seed industry.[27]

Specific changes in project activities included the following:

- Narrow focus from supporting 14 value chains to the four staple crops prioritized by GOSS, i.e., maize, sorghum, groundnuts and cassava.
- Eliminate activities involving small ruminants (goats).
- Discontinue seed distributions after FY 2012.
- Coordinate with IFDC to establish 6,000 on-farm demo trials of IFDC-promoted hybrid seed and fertilizer.
- Much of the direction focused FARM efforts at the lower end of the value chain. In particular:
    - In supporting public and private sector service provision to support agricultural production, FARM will not work with processors, agricultural input dealers, upstream consolidators or buyers of commodities, or finance institutions (but continue working with village-level traders).
    - In support of marketing, FARM will focus on increasing FBOs' access to primary village-level traders and provide a clear justification for the value added of this activity (relative to capacity building activities).
    - In terms of building private sector capacity in business, management and service provision skills, FARM will not be responsible for developing the capacity of large-scale producers and firms or individuals or entities.
- Discontinue work on prioritizing feeder roads for rehabilitation.
- Intensify focus on progressive, commercially oriented farmers within FBOs to disseminate new technologies and lead market development.
- Hire and train additional extension agents to provide adequate support to farmers.

The changes substantially restricted the FARM Project's activities in marketing and narrowed the focus from livestock and a wide variety (14) of crop value chains to four main crops. In addition, though not documented, USAID told the implementing partner to temporarily restrict expenditures to $850,000 per month while it implemented these changes.

[27] United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2009, October 1). Scope of Work for the Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) project. op cit.

PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The FARM Project operates in a difficult environment. South Sudan is emerging from decades of conflict, during which investments in infrastructure and human capacity were neglected and many people were displaced or left the country. The political landscape also changed when the RSS declared independence in June, 2011. Furthermore, the project evolved, from the Mission's flagship program in agriculture to a platform aimed at facilitating the implementation of two related projects under the S4D program, with a consequent change in project focus. The evaluation SOW and the evaluation team's personal communication with the author of the USAID guidance letter raised concerns about several aspects of the FARM Project, including a lack of focus (too broad a scope), the scale of results relative to expenditure, alignment with the objectives of the GOSS and other stakeholders, and effective communication with the MAF at the national and state levels.

The SOW for the mid-term performance evaluation frames the evaluation in the context of these concerns and specifies that the overall purpose of the evaluation is to assess the FARM Project's performance and provide information to guide decisions about the future scale and scope of the project. The SOW further describes the purpose of the evaluation as "serving as the main decision-making tool with which USAID will determine the future direction of the FARM Project."

The evaluation SOW described the main objectives and expected outcomes of the evaluation as:

1. Assess FARM progress to date in responding to USAID directions to implement cost-effective approaches to identify, test and scale activities to achieve impact; to develop comprehensive coordination and communication plans; and progress in achieving the results and meeting the deliverables of the contract at a scale commensurate with the size of expenditures to date. Develop lessons learned for future USAID South Sudan investments in the agriculture sector.
2. Make programmatic recommendations for:
    a. Scaling up or phasing out project components in order to achieve maximum results in the time remaining.
    b. Short-term adjustments in the Contract that would improve performance in the remaining period.
    c. Alignment with S4D, particularly those components that link farmers with output buyers, transporters, consolidators, and processors.
    d. Alignment with the GOSS' and other key donors' objectives.

Annex 1 contains the full evaluation SOW.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Prior to its first meeting with USAID, the evaluation team developed a set of questions to guide the evaluation inquiry. During the initial in-briefing with USAID, the team confirmed that the questions accurately reflected USAID's objectives and interests and modified the questions as necessary. The final set of questions the evaluation addresses are:

1. To what extent has the FARM project met the deliverables of the contract, including achieving expected results based on the performance indicators on which the project reports and associated targets?
2. How cost effectively, i.e., cost per unit of output, has the project implemented its various components (training, grants, policy work, trade fair, assessments) and what factors have most affected costs?
3. To what extent and how has FARM contributed to the three intermediate results (increased agricultural productivity in selected commodities in target areas; increased trade in selected commodities; and improved capacity to support market-led agriculture) and selected outcome indicators (adoption, etc.) and how can the project best enhance results in the time remaining?
4. What are the prospects for sustainability of FARM project results and which results are most likely sustainable and why?
5. To what extent and how has the project been sensitive to the differential needs of men and women, engaged men and women equally in project activities, and benefited men and women?
6. How well has the FARM project coordinated with and supported the activities and objectives of stakeholders, partners, local institutions and other projects, e.g., GOSS, AGRA, IFDC, WFP, FAO, GIZ, cooperatives, other donors? How could coordination be improved?
7. Has the contractor (headquarters and field office) managed implementation of the FARM project effectively and been responsive to USAID direction, particularly on implementing cost-effective approaches to identify, test and scale activities to achieve impact and developing comprehensive coordination and communication plans? What are the team's strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement with respect to managing the cooperative agreement and communications with USAID, GOSS and other stakeholders?

RESEARCH DESIGN AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A four-person team from SI and MSI conducted the field work for the mid-term evaluation of the FARM Project over a four-week period from October 7 through November 1, 2012.

The evaluation team began its work prior to assembling in South Sudan by reviewing project documents, developing draft evaluation questions, and creating a draft Getting-to-Answers Matrix to guide evaluation activities. The Getting-to-Answers Matrix (Annex 2) describes the types of data, data sources, data collection methods and methods of analysis for each of the evaluation questions. A complete Getting-to-Answers Matrix guides evaluation activities and development of data collection instruments.

The evaluation relied almost exclusively on qualitative data collected through interviews and document review. Interview subjects included FARM Project staff (Washington, Juba and field staff) and KIs representing MAF (national and county), other relevant stakeholders, donors, NGOs and group discussions with FARM-supported FBOs. Annex 3 documents the interviews conducted by the evaluation team.

During the first week in South Sudan, the team met with USAID to discuss the evaluation exercise and logistics, clarify evaluation objectives, and refine the evaluation questions and approach. The team then held a one-day team planning meeting to finalize the evaluation approach, develop data collection instruments (Annex 4), and plan logistics. Early in the evaluation, the team also met with the FARM Project contractor to get a briefing on project activities and approach and to discuss logistics associated with visiting project field sites. For the remainder of the first week, the team conducted interviews with Juba-based stakeholders.

In the second and third weeks of the evaluation, the team traveled through the project implementation region interviewing FARM Project field staff, government partners and project-supported FBOs and observing field activities. The project works with 310 FBOs in 27 payams spread equally across nine counties, which are spread equally across the three Equatoria states. The evaluation team visited only 17 FBOs, five percent of the total. The FBOs visited were located in all three states, eight of the counties, and seventeen of the payams. To minimize the potential for the project to "cherry pick" high-performing FBOs, the team worked with project staff to determine a feasible movement plan[28] that covered all three states in the allotted time, asked for a list of all FBOs along the selected route, and then randomly selected 19 FBOs along the route for field visits (Annex 3).[29] When all selected FBOs in a county were along the primary roads, the team asked the extension agent to substitute another FBO that was far from the road in order to capture the potentially different experiences of more remote groups. Overall, the team substituted only two selected FBOs. The team also purposively selected three groups based on the predominance of female members to make sure it captured any unique perspectives of women's groups.

It is difficult to determine how well the final set of FBOs the evaluation team visited reflected the characteristics of all FBOs because the only data the team had on FBOs was location and the sex distribution of members. The selected FBOs had virtually the same percentage of women members (32 percent) as all FBOs (34 percent). However, it was not feasible for the team to select individual members for the group discussions and women accounted for 48 percent of the individual members the team interviewed.[30]

To minimize the influence of FARM staff in discussions with FBO members, the evaluation team asked the FARM staff member not to sit in the group discussions. In many cases, one team member took the FARM staff member (usually a payam-level extension agent) aside for an interview during the group discussion.

After returning to Juba, the evaluation team spent the final week interviewing additional Juba-based stakeholders, analyzing data, and debriefing USAID.

[28] There are so few roads that the team had few options for the basic movement plan and traveled largely along primary roads from town to town. From each town (county seat), the team would often travel on secondary (feeder) roads to visit FBOs.
[29] Logistics issues associated with the Agricultural Show in Torit prevented visits to two scheduled FBOs in EES. Therefore, the team interviewed only 17 of the 19 selected FBOs.
[30] This is an approximation based on observation but individuals would often move in and out of the discussion.

DATA LIMITATIONS

The operating environment in South Sudan, characteristics of the project and the time available for the evaluation all affected the type, quantity and quality of data available for the evaluation. These limitations form part of the context within which to interpret evaluation results. The most serious limitations include:

- **Small sample of FBOs.** The sample of FBOs the evaluation team was able to visit was relatively small (just over five percent of project FBOs). The team attempted to visit a representative sample of FBOs for site visits but had to rely on the FARM project to help identify a shortlist that were feasible to visit given the available time and transportation infrastructure. The team randomly selected FBOs from the shortlist but had little data on FBOs to determine whether the shortlist was generally representative or not.
- **Limited institutional memory.** The key individuals at USAID who designed the FARM Project and the project's contracting officer's representative (COR) who initially managed the project were no longer in South Sudan. The team was able to conduct a telephone interview with the former COR at the end of the field work. The original FARM Project chief of party (COP) no longer worked on the project and was not available for an interview. These constraints made it difficult for the evaluation team to collect first-hand information about project design, the rationale for changes in project focus and the specific concerns about project performance reflected in the evaluation SOW.
- **Translation reduces data fidelity.** The evaluation team had to conduct all interviews with FBOs in local languages (there are at least eight local languages across the Equatorias). Translation impedes accurate communication and makes it difficult to collect reliable and valid data. The team probed persistently to clarify issues and improve understanding. However, translation inevitably results in a loss of data fidelity.

Small samples and unknown representativeness of the FBOs the team visited make generalizing evaluation results to the 310 FARM-supported FBOs risky. The team's inability to collect reliable yield estimates in a group discussion setting and not at harvest time limited the evaluation's ability to validate yield estimates reported by the FARM project and thus its ability to answer a key evaluation question.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents findings and conclusion for each of the seven evaluation questions. The findings presented for each question provide the evidence to support the conclusions for that question. Conclusions, however, may sometimes draw on findings from other questions.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON EVALUATION QUESTION 1

Evaluation Question: To what extent has the FARM project met the deliverables of the contract, including achieving expected results based on the project's performance indicators and associated targets?

Findings: Performance Indicators and Targets

The project reports PMP results in its annual reports; the FY 2012 report was not yet due at the time of this report. A stand-alone table covering the period from October, 2010 to November, 2011, the most recent reporting against PMP indicators received by the evaluation team, reports on 15 indicators.[31, 32] Annex 5 summarizes the project's current PMP and reports results for the period October, 2010 to November, 2011. Specific findings with respect to reported results include:

- Of the 15 indicators on which the project reported, it reported meeting or exceeding cumulative targets on 9 (60 percent) indicators and falling short of, or not reporting on, targets on 6 (40 percent) indicators. Four of the indicators for which the project did not meet targets, or did not report results, related to activities USAID temporarily suspended. The project was not able to obtain secondary data to report results for the two remaining indicators.
- The project reported meeting or exceeding targets for all five indicators related to engaging FBOs, engaging and training FBO members, disseminating improved technologies and practices to FBOs and training public sector workers (extension agents). The project fell short of targets, or could not report results, for four of the five indicators for increasing smallholders' access to market services (two because activities were on hold and two because of a lack of data) and two of five indicators for improving business, management, and service provision skills of the private sector input suppliers and MSMEs (two because activities were on hold).

Rigorously assessing the validity of the reported results was beyond the scope of the evaluation. However, a recent data quality assessment (DQA) of three of the indicators and the evaluation team's review of reported results produced the following findings for four of the project's indicators:

- The project defines the indicator, "number of individuals who have received short-term agricultural enabling environment training," to include any training the project conducts, e.g., planting, post-harvest handling, storage and FaaB. The reported results do not, therefore, correspond to USAID's definition of this standard indicator, which emphasizes training related to "formulating and implementing policies."[33] The reported results, therefore, substantially overstate results in this area.
- USAID commissioned a DQA in November, 2011. The assessment covered three indicators on which the FARM Project reports: (1) number of farmers, processors, and others who have adopted new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance; (2) number of additional hectares under improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance; and (3) number of policies, regulations, and administrative procedures analyzed as a result of USG assistance. For the first two indicators, the DQA concluded that "data was of appropriate quality, with some checks in place to maintain quality." The assessment reached no conclusions regarding the quality of the data for the third indicator. However, the evaluation team's interviews with MAF confirmed that reported results are correct.

[31] This total counts sex disaggregated indicators as one indicator.
[32] Abt Associates, Inc. (2011, October). *FARM PMP Update*, November 29, 2009.
[33] USAID describes the justification and management utility of this indicator as "Measures enhanced human capacity for policy formulation and implementation which is key to transformational development" which clearly focuses the indicator on training relevant to formulating and implementing policy. Training in improved management practices does not satisfy this definition.

While the project has met its targets to date, USAID has expressed concern about the pace at which FARM has been able to engage FBOs and build their capacities. This concern is relevant in the context of the project's planned expansion in the number of FBOs. The evaluation team queried three project staff members who are intimately involved in forming and supporting FBOs to gain an understanding of the challenges FARM faces finding viable groups with which to work, forming groups, and building their capacities and how these challenges have affected the pace at which FARM can identify FBOs with which to work and the pace at which they can build group capacities. A limited number of opportunities and low human capacities top the list of challenges FARM has faced, which follow:

- The most prevalent issues FARM faces when trying to engage with existing groups is convincing them the support FARM can provide is worth the substantial time and energy required to engage with the FARM Project. For some groups, FARM's limited intervention points, e.g., GAP training, seeds, and plowing grants, don't match well with the group's needs. Other groups may not believe that FARM can effectively address the key issues, such as transportation or market access, that limit returns from farming.
- When the FARM Project cannot find naturally occurring groups with the interest or capacity to engage with the project, it may form new groups. It takes time, however, to form groups in an environment where farmers are not accustomed to working in groups, do not perceive much benefit from working in groups, and live far apart. In these cases, FARM must engage in a great deal of advocacy work with remote and widely scattered households, to form a group. FARM staff reported that it can take as long as three months to form a group under these conditions.
- With both existing and new groups, it takes time and human resources to assess the groups' suitability to engage with the FARM Project. Furthermore, FARM staff have found that the low capacities of the groups, e.g., low literacy rates and limited experience working in groups, has limited the pace at which FARM can build production and marketing capacities. For example, it requires a great deal of effort just to register a group[34] or to help the group articulate the vision, objectives, and activities that form the foundation of group cohesion. FARM staff also reported that it is difficult to get qualified individuals to trainings and then takes more time to train them adequately than it would if they were more educated and conversant in farming practices.
- How FARM selects groups with which to work has implications for sustainability. Groups that do not come together around a common cause or receive assistance relevant to that cause are less likely to be sustainable than groups that come together of their own accord to address a defined issue and receive support targeted directly to their objectives. Some groups have dropped out of the FARM Project because the project did not meet their needs or their expectations for quick results.

[34] To legally register a group and thus make it eligible to receive government support, group members must incur the costs, time and money, to physically travel to the state capital.

Findings: Deliverables

Annex 6 documents the deliverables specified in the FARM Project task order. The evaluation team was able to verify the existence of required deliverables and, in most cases, the publication dates, but was not able to determine whether USAID had actually received the deliverables on the specified dates, in the required formats, or with the required number of copies. Given these caveats, the specific findings on deliverables include:

- The project was able to provide the evaluation team with most of the deliverables specified in the FARM task order. The only exceptions were minutes of various meetings and foreign tax reporting. [35] The table in Annex 6 indicates the status of required deliverables.
- The turnover among project staff and USAID personnel may have made it difficult to locate less formal reports, such as meeting minutes.

Conclusions

- The project appears to have met most of its contractual requirements for deliverables and most of its targets for indicators of activities that were not temporarily suspended by USAID. The project has performed well working with FBOs to increase the use of improved technologies and management practices, but has not performed as well with activities related to increasing smallholders' access to market services or, with the exception of training, improving business, management, and service provision skills of the private sector including micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)—areas in which USAID temporarily suspended or reduced many project activities. This conclusion relates only to whether the project met targets for PMP indicators. Because the indicators are largely output indicators (see M&E section on page 38 for more detail), they do not directly measure the project's performance in achieving intended development outcomes.
- Because the project has produced only one report on PMP indicators, it was also not possible to determine whether the project has improved its effectiveness since the reduction in project scope.
- Characteristics of the smallholder agricultural sector in South Sudan, e.g., low population densities, no tradition of FBOs, limited education, have made it difficult for the project to engage FBOs or build their capacities quickly. This has implications for the speed at which FARM can expand and for the sustainability of results.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON EVALUATION QUESTION 2

Evaluation Question: How cost effectively, i.e., cost per unit of output, has the project implemented its various components, i.e., training, grants, policy work, trade fair, assessments, and what factors have most affected costs?

[35] Those missing may exist but simply be misplaced by either USAID or FARM, given the extensive turnover within both institutions.

According to the previous USAID COR for the FARM Project—who directed FARM to scale back project activities and who authored the evaluation SOW—USAID's concern about the project's cost per beneficiary was a primary reason for refocusing the project. Consequently, the evaluation asked for measures of the cost per beneficiary[36] of various project activities. Many factors, e.g., implementation modality, operating environment and specific activities, may influence these measures and analyses rarely do or can adequately take these into account. Furthermore, it is often difficult to accurately allocate overhead costs to specific project activities. To illustrate the variability of such measures, a comparison of 21 agricultural development projects that included, like the FARM Project, policy, grants, farmer training and input provision components yielded estimates of cost per beneficiary ranging from $13 to $5,000.[37] The evaluation calculated cost per beneficiary measures for selected activities on which the project provided financial and output data.

Findings

Findings relative to the cost effectiveness of the FARM Project and selected component activities include:

- As of the end of March, 2012 (the most recent reported data for both expenditures and number of beneficiaries), the project had spent $17,431,126[38] and was working with 310 FBOs with 6,795[39] members. The cost per beneficiary is $2,565.
- Based on spending estimates provided by the project,[40] the cost effectiveness of selected separate project components is:
    - The project developed eight policies at a total cost of $737,174 and a cost per completed policy of $92,147. Direct costs associated with consultants accounted for a majority (64 percent) of the cost.
    - The project supported the first agricultural trade show in 2011 at a total cost of $534,352. Direct costs for administration and procurement (G&A) and subcontractors accounted for 44 percent and 26 percent of the cost, respectively.
    - The project cleared 200 feddans of land at a total cost of $274,170 or $1,371 per feddan. Direct costs associated with consultants and land clearing, preparation, and planting accounted for 68 percent of the costs.

[36] The evaluation actually called for cost per unit of output or outcome, but the evaluation team was limited in its ability to assess cost per unit of output or outcome for two reasons. First, the FARM Project does not record expenditures by intended output or outcome, and it is difficult to disaggregate them in this way. Second, the evaluation team found limited recorded results on exact outputs/outcomes. For instance, while the team found that yields increased as a result of FARM, they had a difficult time quantifying this increase. There will be a second part of this evaluation, which will include an impact evaluation of the FARM project, and results from that study should allow for better responses to this question.

[37] Huisenga, Mark. *Agribusiness Projects' Matrix Excel Spreadsheet,* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

[38] Abt Associates, Inc. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2012). USAID Sudan Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Program Quarterly Financial Report: Quarter 3, FY 2012, April 2012 through June 2012. Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

[39] Abt Associates, Inc. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2012, April). *Semi-Annual Report, September 2011-March 31, 2012: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

[40] Estimates provided by the FARM Project.

- The project provided grants to plow 989 feddans at a total cost of $127,361 or $128 per feddan—very close to the 300 SSP cost farmers reported as the cost to plow a feddan.[41] Direct costs to private sector service providers accounted for 92 percent of the cost.
- The project distributed 844 goats at a total cost of $86,590 or $134 per goat. The cost of procuring the goats accounted for 69 percent of the total cost.
- The project conducted a value chain inventory and two value chain analysis reports at a total cost of $76,252, or $25,417 per report or analysis. Direct costs associated with consultants accounted for 59 percent of the costs.

- Over all activities, administration and fees accounted for 17.2 percent and 6.5 percent of expenditure, respectively.
- The project's budget narrative points to the very high operating costs in South Sudan (i.e., transportation, fuel) and inflation as driving up costs. Other direct costs accounted for 21 percent of project expenditures in the third quarter of fiscal year 2012.
- The lack of reliable quantitative estimates of the project's impact on yields (see findings on production under Evaluation Question 3, page 16) makes it difficult to monetize project benefits and thus precludes more meaningful financial analysis, such as a comparison of costs with benefits.

Conclusions

- The lack of reliable data on FARM outcomes, i.e., yields, and thus monetary benefits attributable to the project, limit opportunities for rigorous financial analysis, e.g., cost benefit analysis. Simple cost per beneficiary calculations are on the high end of the distribution of costs for seemingly similar projects, but by no means the highest, and the comparison does not account for the admittedly difficult operating environment in South Sudan. Furthermore, the project is not yet completed and a typical implementation trajectory, where growth in beneficiaries is slow relative to costs during start-up but then accelerates as implementation progresses, is likely to reduce costs per beneficiary as the project matures. In summary, it is difficult for the evaluation team to assess whether the project's cost per beneficiary is reasonable in the context of the operating environment of South Sudan, the project's implementation modalities, or the project's stage of implementation.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON EVALUATION QUESTION 3

Evaluation Question: To what extent and how has FARM contributed to the three intermediate results (IRs): increase agricultural productivity in selected commodities in target areas; increase trade in selected commodities; and improve capacity to support market-led agriculture?

[41] The official exchange rate at the time of the evaluation was 3.5 SSP per USD.

Findings on Increasing Agricultural Productivity

The FARM Project's maize yield assessments[42] concluded that project interventions had substantially increased yields among project-supported farmers. Flaws in the methodology, however, call the results into question. Detailed findings include:

- The FARM Project has conducted two assessments of maize yields corresponding to the first and second cropping seasons of 2011. The assessments used a rigorous approach to assess yields for samples of project-supported (treatment) farmers and, in the case of the first assessment, a comparison sample of farmers not supported by the FARM Project.
    - The first yield assessment concluded that mean yields had increased substantially (from 800 kg/ha to 1,545 kg/ha) since the 2010 baseline. However, the project used a different, and non-comparable, methodology to estimate baseline yields, which renders conclusions about increases in yields suspect. The baseline asked farmers to recall their yields from the previous two planting seasons, while the maize yield assessments actually harvested and weighed maize from random plots in selected fields. Yield estimates based on recall over a 12-month period are often very inaccurate and are not comparable to estimates obtained through actual measurement. The assessment found no statistically significant difference between mean yields of treatment and comparison farmers.[43] Therefore, the yield assessment provided very little quantitative evidence that FARM Project activities increased maize yields. The similarity in yields of treatment and control groups is further evidence that the baseline yield estimates are not comparable to those obtained from the yield assessments. The first assessment also found that few farmers were correctly practicing the improved management practices taught by the FARM Project (13 percent were practicing the recommended row spacing and none were practicing the recommended plant spacing).
    - The second assessment concluded that mean yields for project-supported farmers had increased substantially over baseline values (from 800 kg/ha to 1,331 kg/ha), but had decreased slightly relative to the first assessment. As with the first assessment, the comparison to the baseline is suspect because of differences in methodology. The difference between the first and second assessments was not statistically significant at the five percent level.[44] The number of project-assisted farmers who were using the improved management practices taught by the project increased (from 13 to 46 percent for row spacing and from 0 to 6 percent for plant spacing) relative to the first assessment. Nevertheless, because of high variability in the data, mean planting rates—the ultimate result of spacing—were not significantly different than those in the first assessment.

[42] United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2011). Maize Yield Assessment Report, August and September 2011: Central, Eastern and Western Equatoria, South Sudan. Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan. And United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2011). *Maize Yield Assessment Report, November and December 2011: Central, Eastern and Western Equatoria, South Sudan.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

[43] The assessment reported only that difference was not statistically significant but did not report the level of significance.

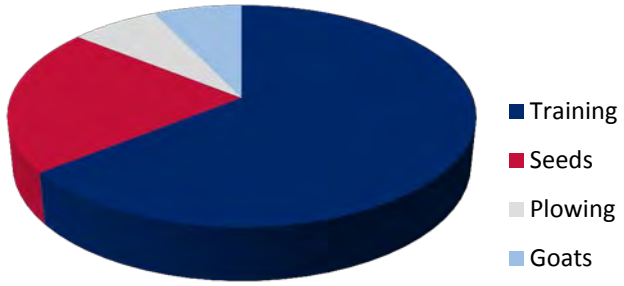
[44] In other words, there is a greater than five percent chance that the observed difference is due to chance and not a true difference between the two yield estimates.

- Neither assessment was able to adequately control for important external factors, e.g., rainfall or soil characteristics, which affect yields.

The evaluation team's discussions with project-supported farmers and its informal observations of farmers' fields suggest that FARM Project interventions have increased yields. Specific findings include:

- All 17 FBOs that the evaluation team visited reported they had either experienced actual increases in yields (12 FBOs) or they expected increased yields (5 FBOs) when they harvest their crops.[45] In most of these cases, farmers were able to provide objective indicators of better productivity, e.g., thicker stalks, stronger root systems, more ears per stalk, to support their assessment of anticipated yield improvements. It was not possible for the evaluation team to quantify yield increases in a group discussion setting.
- The evaluation team consistently asked which FARM intervention had been most effective in increasing yields (See Figure 2 for results). Of the 13 FBOs that provided data, 9 (70 percent) mentioned training first and 1 (8 percent) mentioned it second. Other responses included seeds (three FBOs), plowing (one FBO), and goats (one FBO).

Figure 2: FBO-Reported most effective farm intervention



- At least some members of each of the FBOs said they practiced at least some of the crop management techniques they learned in the FARM training—especially planting in rows with one seed per hole, seed spacing, and weeding. When the evaluation team had the opportunity, it informally observed the management practices of FARM-supported farmers.[46] These observations found that nearly all FBOs were planting maize in rows and planting one seed per hole. Far fewer seemed to be adhering to recommended plant spacing. These findings corroborate the findings of the maize yield assessments.
- Two FBOs spontaneously mentioned that they planted in rows before the FARM project. They both said, however, that the FARM training was better than what they received before. It taught different row and seed spacing and one seed per hole rather than the three to five taught in previous trainings.
- Of the 13 FBOs that provided data on seed or cutting quality, 12 (92 percent) reported receiving some poor quality seeds and cuttings. Indicators of poor quality included low germination rates (maize, groundnuts), rotten seed (groundnuts), mixed varieties (sorghum), and dry cuttings (cassava). Four FBOs spontaneously claimed that poor quality or late seed delivery adversely affected production. In spite of widespread problems with seed quality and timing of seed delivery, all 17 FBOs the evaluation team visited were happy, overall, with the seed and training package provided by the FARM Project. While this result may seem counterintuitive given the

[45] Some FBOs experience actual gains in previous seasons and anticipated gains in the current season.
[46] Distance to fields and limited time prevented the team from consistently visiting farmers' fields. In the xx instances where the team was able to visit fields, it casually (i.e., did not take measurements) observed selected management practices (i.e., planting in rows, seed and row spacing, number of plants per hole.)

reported problems with seeds, most farmers reported that most of the seeds they received were good and some adapted to poor germination by replanting in gaps left by seeds that did not germinate. Others were simply happy to be receiving seeds and hoped they would be better in the future.

- A total of 13 of 16 FBOs (81 percent) that provided data said they have observed a fertilizer demonstration plot or conducted their own on-farm demonstration established by the FARM Project in conjunction with IFDC. Members of 10 of these FBOs (77 percent) had purchased fertilizer through the IFDC voucher program.[47] One of the FBOs (in WES) that did not purchase fertilizer said that the state government prohibited distribution. Other FBO members who did not purchase fertilizer said they were convinced of the efficacy of fertilizer, but could not afford the cost.

In addition to distributing improved seeds and teaching improved management practices, the FARM Project expected to increase production by increasing the area of land that farmers cultivated—either directly by providing grants to plow land or indirectly by increasing income from farming and, thus, providing the means and the incentive for farmers to invest their own resources in opening new land. Findings with respect to FBOs increasing the land they cultivated include:

- Ten of the twelve FBOs that provided data on land areas (83 percent) reported increasing cultivated area since they started working with the FARM project. Five of these attributed the increase to the FARM Project. In four cases, the attribution was direct, i.e., FARM provided plowing grants, without which the FBOs would have struggled to prepare the land. In only one case was the attribution indirect, i.e., FARM provided seed that freed up resources the FBO used to prepare additional land. None of the 17 FBOs that the evaluation team visited reported investing in opening new land as a direct result of FARM-induced increases in production.

Conclusions on Production

- Although it was beyond the scope of the evaluation to rigorously quantify FARM impacts on yields, the qualitative data provide strong evidence that the FARM Project's seed distribution, training in crop management practices, and fertilizer demonstrations have most likely increased yields for the targeted crops—especially maize. It is unlikely, however, that the increases are as large as those reported in the project's yield assessments. Even though problems with seed distribution (seed quality and timeliness of delivery) have limited results to some extent, farmers are overwhelmingly happy with the overall results. The project's maize yield assessments, however, have not provided compelling quantitative evidence of yield increases or their magnitude.
- Training in production appears to have been more effective (i.e., better recall and adoption rates of lessons) than training in post-harvest handling, storage, FaaB, etc. This may be because production training has been more intensive (repeated more often), farmers can implement the

[47] Not all members of FBOs purchased fertilizer. Therefore, while the findings suggest a high adoption rate among FBOs, the adoption rate among individual farmers was lower. Also, it is possible that the evaluation team's sample of FBOs was somewhat skewed towards those FBOs that had received IFDC fertilizer vouchers (USAID reports that only 1/3 of FARM beneficiaries should have received vouchers).

practices at little or no cost, the feedback is immediate (easier and faster weeding, observably more vigorous plants, higher yields), and production is more relevant to farmers' current level of development and market opportunities than is training in post-harvest handling and storage.

- The FARM Project appears to provide an effective platform for connecting IFDC to farmers and building demand for fertilizer. The on-farm and county-level demonstration plots established in conjunction with IFDC have convinced farmers of the efficacy of fertilizer use. However, limited availability of fertilizers, financial resources, access to credit, restrictive government policy, and lack of political support may inhibit widespread adoption.

Findings on Increasing Trade

The FARM Project's market assessment[48] identified the major challenges facing agricultural markets in South Sudan as "the lack of availability of local produce; demand issues regarding the consumer limitations of local, rural markets; loading and offloading as a seemingly compulsory expense; a lack of adequate storage; multiple levels of unrepresentative taxation; anticompetitive behavior; inadequate vending areas to carry out trading; a lack of security for business premises as well as the supply chain; variable but inflationary operational costs, and, to a lesser extent, political uncertainty." It is within this environment that FARM seeks to increase farmers' access to and availability of market services.

Specific findings on FARM's contribution to increasing trade include:

- Two FBOs out of the seventeen (6 percent) interviewed reported that FARM had connected them to buyers (one group in CES to local traders and one group in WES to WFP).
- Although the evaluation team was not able to collect reliable and consistent data on surpluses, only 2 of the 17 (12 percent) FBOs the evaluation team visited reported producing surpluses of more than two to three metric tons.
- Twelve of the seventeen (71 percent) FBOs interviewed reported selling produce as a group, and 4 out of the 5 who had not sold as a group sold individually. Only one group had not sold any produce.
- All but 1 of the 16 (94 percent) FBOs that sold reported selling to traders and individuals in markets—5 in local markets only, 5 in county markets only, and 5 in both local and county markets. Five reported selling to traders and individuals at the farm gate. Five reported selling to NGOs, e.g., World Vision in WES; one reported selling to the government for distribution to needy families; and one reported selling at the national level, i.e., Juba. The two FBOs that sold beyond the local and county levels had both been operating for more than 10 years, and both reported that traders knew about their groups and would come to them. Traders appeared to be more active in some areas, such as Magwi, perhaps as a result of a history of producing surpluses. Limited data collected during the evaluation did not reveal any identifiable change in types of buyers since FBOs started participating in FARM.
- FARM has hosted 12 trader-farmer forums, four in each state. FARM staff described the forums as a way to bring farmers and traders together to exchange information and discuss prices/costing. The forums are not trainings per se but opportunities to "bring understanding to the trader and

[48] Abt Associates, Inc. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2012, April). *Semi-Annual Report, September 2011-March 31, 2012: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project. Annex: Market Assessment.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

farmer," according to a FARM staff member. FARM could not say whether the forums had resulted in transactions. Other than the forums, FARM has not conducted any other outreach or training of service providers. According to FARM staff, service providers are requesting training, and FARM plans to conduct trainings.

- FARM has also provided technical assistance to MAF and the three state governments for planning and implementing one national (a second is being planned now) and three state-level agricultural fairs. All but one fair (Central Equatoria State Fair) has been organized successful, bringing traders, farmers, and other private sector, donors, NGOs, and organizations together. The team was able to attend two of the state fairs and they appeared to be well attended and organized. The team does not have any data as to whether the fairs resulted in any direct connections or transactions for the traders or farmers.
- Three FBOs out of seventeen (18 percent) reported hiring a truck to transport produce to market. All FBOs explained that the cost of hiring a truck and ensuring enough surpluses to fill a vehicle made it prohibitively expensive. Six FBOs utilized motorcycles to transport to local and county markets, and four FBOs said they walk their produce to the market. All FBOs using motorized transport sold beyond their local market.
- Road conditions limited access to markets for most of the FBOs the team visited. Only 4 of the 17 (24 percent) FBOs the team visited were located directly off of a main road. The other FBOs were located off feeder roads (at distances of 1 to 12 miles), which can be impassable in the rainy season (as can many of the main roads). Every stakeholder and FARM staff member interviewed identified poor feeder roads and transportation infrastructure as either a major or the most critical constraint to market access.

The ability to achieve and maintain quality produce is important to marketing. Good post-harvest handling and storage techniques minimize loss and increase productivity. However, few of the FBOs the team visited were using effective post-harvest handling practices demonstrated by FARM and, thus, experienced high post-harvest losses when they tried to store crops for later markets. Findings include:

- FBOs that the evaluation team interviewed reported storing commodities in their homes (11 FBOs), in cribs and silos provided by FARM (3 FBOs), and in brick group stores (2 FBOs). The evaluation team casually inspected storage facilities when it had the chance and never observed proper storage techniques, e.g., bagged and stacking on pallets away from the walls. These findings corroborate those of FARM's EES Capacity Assessment, which found that "only 20 percent of the FBOs assessed have constructed permanent storage structures."
- FARM piloted storage demonstrations (improved cribs and metal silos) at nine FBOs. Farmers said that the storage has eliminated post-harvest losses. However, FARM has distributed these stores in only a limited number of FBOs, as demonstrations. In addition, farmers interviewed said that the cribs are expensive to build, and they are not sure where to buy some of the required material, like wire mesh, even if they could afford it. No farmers reported building or purchasing cribs or silos or knew of any nearby farmers or FBOs that had as a result of the demonstration (One extension agent reported that he knows of one non-FARM group that built a crib after seeing one of the demo cribs).
- Twelve out of the seventeen (70 percent) FBOs report receiving training in post-harvest handling and storage. They most often recalled lessons about proper timing of harvest, drying techniques (seeds and crops), and using pallets in storage. Most farmers reported that they were practicing

the drying techniques, and the evaluation team observed good drying techniques (drying on a tarp) in some cases and bad techniques (drying on the ground) in others.

The FARM Project also provides FaaB training to farmers to improve their capacities for engaging profitably in markets. Specific findings relative to these trainings include:

- Thirteen of the seventeen (76 percent) FBOs reported receiving FaaB training. All of the FBOs that had participated in this training had a difficult time recalling specific lessons. Farmers were most likely to recall learning the importance of understanding production costs and to store crops for market, but struggled to explain concepts like how to calculate production costs.
- Six of the seventeen (35 percent) FBOs reported they store their crops after harvest in order to sell in the lean season, when prices are higher. Three FBOs claimed to have learned this in the FaaB training. Two FBOs said they would like to hold their surpluses for a better price, but they do not have the storage capacity to do so.[49] FARM staff contend that this is not their message, as they understand that many FBOs do not have access to proper storage. However, some farmers appear to be receiving this message.
- The six FBOs that stored their crops to wait for a better price in the market had the following characteristics: they were either an established FBO, operating for at least five years prior to FARM, or were observed to be a high-functioning and high-capacity group, based on their ability to recall information and the organization of the group leadership; all but one had either a FARM demo storage facility or their own store; and four of the six were easily accessible (relative to the other FBOs) via the main road or located on the main road.
- With the exception of one FBO that had a group saving or lending scheme, none of the FBOs interviewed said that they had access to credit. They reported that this restricts their ability to hire labor, purchase equipment or other inputs for their farms and hire transportation, ultimately restricting their marketing capacity.

At present, there is one FARM staff member responsible for trade and marketing, thus limiting the project's ability to conduct marketing activities. Related findings include:

- The senior staff member position for this component, the expatriate trade and marketing specialist, remains vacant. Full responsibility rests with the Juba-based marketing specialist. There are no staff members at the state, county, or payam levels responsible for trade or marketing activities.
- The new payam extension workers are able to assist the marketing specialist by passing on information about the location of surpluses, but they have not received training, other than the FaaB training given to the farmers, on collecting market information (from farmers or at the market level), or providing follow up to the farmers on FaaB techniques and lessons like tracking costs and pricing.

[49] The groups that stored their surpluses were able to take advantage of the lean market in July and August and did seem to sell more and at a better price, but we do not have figures to back that up.

Conclusions on Increasing Trade

- FARM's results on improving farmers' access to markets have been limited to date. Many farmers do not yet seem to be producing sufficient surpluses to engage with larger buyers. Consequently, most are selling to individuals or first-level aggregators, and often having to transport commodities to buyers. Until FARM-supported FBOs are consistently producing sizeable surpluses, the project's opportunities to forge linkages between farmers and formal markets are limited. Where surpluses do exist, the poor transportation infrastructure makes getting surpluses out to markets expensive and reduces farmers' returns. Farmers' limited capacity to store commodities at the farm level also constrains access to markets. Inadequate storage facilities, and the consequent high level of loss, often encourage farmers to sell soon after harvest, when prices are low. Better storage on or near the farm could enhance farmers' abilities to aggregate surpluses for sale and improve food security by reducing losses of food retained for household consumption. The FARM demonstration storage facilities (i.e., improved cribs and metal silos) have successfully reduced losses at the FBO level, but they are available to only a few FBOs and they do not yet appear to be using them to store group surpluses for marketing.

Findings on Capacity Building

FARM's original contract required the project to provide capacity-building support to farmers, the private sector (including entrepreneurs such as agro-vet shop keepers, agricultural input suppliers, manufacturers, processors, tractor leasing businesses), the public sector (focused on human capacity building at the state and county levels, with an option to support payam-level staff and national staff in ways not being done by other projects), and financial institutions. In a letter dated January, 2012, USAID directed the FARM Project to reduce its capacity building efforts to focus on: (1) MSMEs and FBOs, by providing training in FaaB, crop management, IPM and crop storage and (2) extension agents—although it was not clear whether this meant FARM or government extension agents.[50]

The project's revised work plan (October 2011–September 2012) addressed this guidance by focusing its capacity building strategy on the following four stakeholders:

- MAF, at both the national and the state levels,
- A cadre of extension staff to serve as a link between farmers and resources or information,
- Farmers in the project area, and
- Private-sector-service providers who support the agricultural sector (e.g., tractor operators, input suppliers).

[50] Bottenberg, Harry. Guidance for development of amended FY2012 Work Plan for The FARM Project, South Sudan. 2012, pg. 3.

Capacity Building of MAF

MAF staff interviewed at the national, state and county level all reported that they need two types of capacity building support: (1) physical (infrastructure and equipment) and (2) human. While building physical capacity is largely outside the scope of the FARM Project, it has rehabilitated one county government office (and has plans to rehabilitate another) to house FARM staff and equipped them with generators, electricity and Internet connections. Findings related to building the human capacity of MAF include:

- Five of the nine (56 percent) MAF state and national officials interviewed reported that FARM had trained MAF county and payam extension staff.
- MAF officials and FARM extension agents also reported that some FARM extension agents (3 of the 13 extension agents the evaluation team interviewed) are seconded to FARM from MAF. These agents receive the same capacity-building training as other FARM extension agents. To the extent that they return to MAF after the FARM Project,[51] this builds the capacity of MAF.
- None of the MAF officials interviewed said that FARM had helped to build the human capacity of state- or national-level government officials. In fact, two state-level officials (in different states) said that they wanted FARM to provide capacity-building support to the higher levels of MAF, specifically in building skills to design and manage development projects.

In addition to physical and human capacity, FARM also contributed to MAF's capacity by developing eight policies focused on improving the enabling environment for agricultural production and business in South Sudan and supported the states and the national GOSS in organizing the first-annual national Agricultural Trade Fair (in 2011) and the first-annual WES, EES, and CES Trade Fairs (in 2012).

Capacity Building of FARM Extension Agents

To assess FARM's efforts at building the capacity of its extension agents, the evaluation team interviewed 13 FARM county and payam extension agents in seven counties and found:

- Most of the extension agents (9 out of 12, or 75 percent, asked)[52] said they did not receive any training beyond what they are expected to give to farmers. For many of the extension agents, especially the county extension agents who usually have a certificate or some background in agriculture (5 out of the 13 [38 percent] extension agents interviewed spontaneously reported having a certificate), this training serves only as a refresher and does not teach them new skills.
- Half (four out of eight, or 50 percent) of the payam extension agents reported that they lack the capacity to do their job well, noting that they do not even have a certificate in agriculture.

[51] As described in the "Sustainability" Section of this report, more than half of extension agents interviewed said that whether they go to work for MAF after the FARM project will depend on remuneration, and at least 42 percent of those said that they did not think the funding is there.
[52] The team identified the importance of this question after it started the field work and therefore did not ask it of the first extension agent interviewed.

- The project is increasingly asking the extension agents to contribute to M&E functions such as conducting yield assessments, but none of the 13 interviewed reported having received formal M&E training in how to perform these functions.[53]
- When asked what FARM could do better, nearly all (12 out of 13, or 92 percent) of the extension agents interviewed said that the training they have received from FARM is not sufficient and they need and want more.
- FARM upper management reported that the need to bring the payam extension agents on very quickly precluded in-service training, but they plan to provide this in January 2013.
- The FARM 2013 Draft Work Plan says that FARM will conduct a needs assessment of the payam extension workers and design and implement a training curriculum to address gaps. The extension workers report that this has not yet happened.

Capacity Building of Farmers

The FARM Project provides several different types of trainings to FBO members. Farmers from the 17 FBOs interviewed by the evaluation team report having received the following FARM trainings (See Table 9 in Annex 10 for details of trainings received by FBO):

- **Good Agronomic Practices (GAP) –** All 17 of the FBOs interviewed said they received GAP training. They all reported that they learned new skills and most (88 percent) were able to recall practices taught in the training.
- **Post-Harvest Handling and Storage (GAP)**[54] **–** Of the 17 FBOs interviewed, 12 (71 percent) reported receiving this training, which FARM reported is also part of the GAP curriculum. The five FBOs that did not report receiving this training may have considered it part of the GAP training that they did receive. Most of the FBOs could recall some of the lessons they learned but few (17 percent of those who reported receiving the training) implemented the practices learned. The evaluation team's casual observation also found few instance of FBOs practicing the storage practices taught in the training.
- **FaaB –** Of the 17 FBOs interviewed, 13 (76 percent) reported having received this training. Few (15 percent) could recall specific lessons they learned however and very few were able to answer evaluator's questions about production costs or profits, main components of the training according to FARM staff. FARM staff suggested that lack of repetition (extension agents reinforce lessons from the GAP training each time they visit farmers' fields) and few opportunities to put lessons into practice (because many farmers do not have large surpluses to sell) could have contributed to the poor recall.
- **Fertilizer Use –**Fifteen (88 percent) of the FBOs interviewed said they had received some training on how to apply fertilizers. All of these groups appreciated the training and were convinced of the benefits of fertilizer.

[53] FARM Project staff reported that extension agents received a one-day training on conducting yield assessments but no other formal M&E training. FARM staff also reported that the payam agents were members of a team that conducted the yield assessments. It was not clear whether any of the other team members received more extensive training than the extension agents.

[54] The post-harvest handling and storage training is actually a component of the GAP training; however, most of the FBOs the evaluation team interviewed thought of it as a separate training. As such, we have separated the results of this training throughout this report.

- **Organizational Development –** Two (12 percent) of the FBOs interviewed said they had received training on how to register as a cooperative, write bi-laws, and organize their members into a group. It was not clear whether this training had helped these groups advance their organizational development.
- **Land Clearance –** Three (18 percent) of the FBOs reported receiving training on how to clear their land. They reported being happy with this training and had cleared their land.
- **IPM –** While USAID reported that it has not yet approved FARM's Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan (PERSUAP), which is required before FARM can provide full IPM training, three (18 percent) of the FBOs said they received training on pest control processes. However, two of those FBOs reported that they were unhappy with this training, one because, despite what it learned, it still lost an entire maize crop to pests and one because they had not received pesticides to put the lessons into practice.
- **Miscellaneous –** Two (12 percent) of the FBOs reported that lead farmers in their group attended leadership training. The two FBOs interviewed by the evaluation team that received two-wheeled tractors from FARM reported that they received training on how to operate the tractors. Finally, the one group the evaluation team visited that had received goats reported receiving training in animal husbandry.

Capacity Building of Service Providers:

According to extension agents and state- and national-level FARM staff, FARM has done very little to build the capacity of traders. FARM staff reported conducting forums between farmers and traders to sensitize both groups to the others' circumstances. The evaluation team did not learn of any training that FARM provided to private sector service providers.

Conclusions on Capacity Building

- The FARM Project has increased the knowledge and skills of FBOs and their farmer members, especially in crop management practices. Most farmers, however, will need additional training, and opportunities and incentives to put skills into practice, before they fully adopt FARM-taught practices in FaaB, IPM, and post-harvest handling and storage. Furthermore, farmers' limited access to capital and credit may limit their ability to invest in FARM-taught technologies and practices (e.g., agricultural chemicals, storage facilities, fertilizers) and therefore limit FARM's impact in this area.
- The FARM Project's impact on the capacity of extension agents has been less positive. While many extension agents have received some training, most report that the FARM Project has not increased their capacities or skills at all, or at least not to a level where they feel entirely comfortable in their professional roles.
- The FARM Project has not done much to increase the capacities of state- or national-level MAF or of private sector service providers, as required in the original SOW, which will limit the sustainability of FARM after the project ends.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON EVALUATION QUESTION 4

Evaluation Question: What are the prospects for sustainability of FARM project results and which results are most likely sustainable and why?

To address this question, the evaluation relied primarily on findings from KI interviews to assess the likelihood of sustainable results and the factors that may influence prospects for sustainability. The conclusions address both the sustainability of project results and the extent to which the project approach supports sustainable results.

To put the findings and conclusions of this section in perspective, USAID's Economic Growth Strategy for Post-Conflict Countries guidance notes that approaches to building infrastructure and opening markets—both components of USAID's agricultural program—may "require initially unsustainable, subsidized interventions to get the necessary momentum built for peaceful transitions. However, these must be time bound." The 2011 assessment[55] on which the current strategy is based emphasizes the importance of using "change agents" or theories of change to ensure the programming's long-term sustainability, with a focus on engaging the private sector as change agents.

The following examination of prospects for sustainability addresses the likely sustainability of results (i.e., increased production, market access, and capacity building) and the implications of the project approach to sustainability of results.

Findings

Findings with respect to the sustainability of FARM results include:

- Government officials, stakeholders and farmers the evaluation team interviewed believed that training that produced tangible benefits, created sustainable knowledge, and changed behavior. The fact that three FBOs the evaluation team interviewed said they had learned improved crop management practices prior to FARM and were still practicing them supports this view. The fact that all project-supported FBOs the evaluation team visited could recall lessons on improved crop management practices and were putting at least some of these lessons into practice (see findings on capacity building, page 22) provides further evidence of the sustainability of training that is relevant to farmers' needs.
- FARM staff, and two other development stakeholders, stressed that the sustainability of production results will depend, in part, on improving farmers' access to markets. Without profitable markets, farmers will have less incentive to invest in production-increasing technologies and practices (e.g., fertilizer, chemicals, storage, seeds).
- Farmers were unanimously convinced of the efficacy of FARM-taught management practices, but they also uniformly said that limited financial resources and access to credit would constrain their ability to invest in production-enhancing technologies and practices (e.g., seed, chemicals, fertilizer, storage, and opening additional land). When the evaluation team asked if they would invest in these technologies and practices, farmers uniformly said they would if they had the money.

[55] USAID, 2011, September. Achieving agricultural growth and food security in South Sudan.

- Government officials, farmers and project staff also noted that the inputs and services necessary to support production increases were not readily available. Officials in 5 of the 10 (50 percent) interviews with government agencies raised the issue of the scarcity of tractors (either public or private sector) to clear and plow land. Eight of the seventeen FBOs the evaluation team interviewed spontaneously corroborated this finding. Of the seven that reported hiring tractor service providers to plow land, three reported problems with the service (i.e., arrived late or not at all). FARM project staff also recounted that finding reliable tractor service providers to clear and plow land under the FARM grant facility has been extremely challenging. GOSS has approved fertilizer on a trial basis only; it is currently available in South Sudan, in limited quantities, only through the USAID-funded S4D project. Also, while most FBOs said that the Longe 5 maize variety distributed by the FARM project was widely available (either in the market or from saved seed), other knowledgeable stakeholders said that certified seed was available only in limited quantities (by advance order only) and only in the larger towns (e.g., state, or perhaps county, seats).
- Limited access to financial resources and access to credit also constrains farmers' investment in enhancing their marketing capacity (see findings on increasing trade under Evaluation Question 3, page 15).
- Of the 13 extension agents interviewed, 12 (3 of whom FARM seconded from the government) said that they may consider going to work for MAF after the FARM Project ends. However, seven of these said that this decision will depend on the remuneration package offered by MAF. Five of these seven said that it was very unlikely that they would work for MAF, since MAF either does not pay extension agents or offers them a small stipend.

Conclusions

- The FARM Project's results relative to increasing production are likely to be sustainable, although a number of factors largely outside of the control of the project may limit sustainability to some extent. Sustainable results in production depend on retaining knowledge about improved practices, access to the inputs and services required to implement the practices, and the incentives (i.e., income or food security) and financial resources and access to credit to invest in production. The project's training in crop management practices has changed farmers' behavior and strong evidence suggests that farmers will continue these practices since they produce tangible results (i.e., increase yields and save time) and require little outlay of capital. However, the project has limited direct or immediate control over farmers' access to markets, inputs, services, or credit.[56] While it is working on all of these areas to some extent, it has achieved limited progress to date (see findings and conclusions on Evaluation Question 3, page 15) and the adjustment of project scope scaled back or eliminated some activities in these areas. Furthermore, USAID requested that the project scale back activities in marketing, building the capacity of private sector input suppliers and service providers, and access to credit. To the extent that some of these activities now fall largely under the purview of other projects (e.g., IFDC and AGRA), the sustainability of FARM's results is tied to the performance of these projects.

[56] This may be partly due to USAID's reduction of the FARM SOW.

- The findings under capacity building suggest that the project has done little to build the capacities of state and county extension staff—a component of public sector capacity building specified in the FARM task order. Furthermore, what capacity has been, or may be, developed is unlikely to remain with government when the FARM Project ends.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON EVALUATION QUESTION 5

Evaluation Question: To what extent and how has the project been sensitive to the differential needs of men and women, engaged men and women equally in project activities, and benefited men and women?

Findings

Project documents from both USAID and the contractor contain a strong gender dimension. The FARM Project task order requires the contractor to implement activities in a way that identifies and addresses the differential needs and opportunities of men and women. Specifically, the task order contains the following requirements:

- Increase access to and use of appropriate technology, agricultural services, inputs and improved practices, for both men and women equally.
- Foster the provision of agricultural supporting services by the private sector, so that private service providers ensure equal access to services, for both men and women.
- Value chain analysis must clarify the key roles of men and women and their respective resource constraints to advancing value chain competitiveness.
- Judicious use of grants and soft loans provided in a way that, among other objectives, increases opportunities for women farmers.
- Contractors are directed to identify constraints, opportunities and methodologies or approaches that will ensure that women, equally with men, benefit from project interventions.
- Identify gender-based roles and responsibilities in analyzing value chain opportunities and constraints.
- For interventions under its work plan, analyze any specific gender issues to consider and outline appropriate actions that will be undertaken during implementation that are important to improved productivity and access to marketing services.
- Once the data is tracked by gender, the contractor will determine what is causing any gender disparity in terms of accessing services and achieving results, and make adjustments in the program in order to achieve the desired gender equity outcomes.
- The contractor will report gender-disaggregated data whenever possible and appropriate.

The project's 2011 (year two) work plan[57] described planned activities to address some of these requirements. It stated that the project would:

- Design methodologies and implement activities and data collection instruments that are gender sensitive and inclusive;
- Conduct ex-ante and ex-post assessments of major project initiatives to provide information on their gender effects and to allow for the proactive generation of alternatives and adjustments to mitigate or enhance such effects as appropriate;
- Review other survey instruments to ensure they reflect project-data needs relating to critical gender issues;
- Engage in capacity assessment and building capacity of staff in gender. Specifically, gender training will be organized for the field staff;
- The gender specialist will engage in networking activities with representatives from other development projects, government agencies and NGOs that have gender activities; and
- Conduct a gender analysis and three gender trainings to state-level FARM staff.

However, the FARM Project has committed few resources to addressing gender issues and has implemented few of the gender elements included in the project design. In particular:

- FARM Project staff members confirmed that the project had not conducted any gender training.
- The project has revised data collection instruments and developed methodologies to collect gender-specific data, but has not conducted any of the other gender-specific activities described in the 2011 (Year 2) work plan.
- Some project documents (i.e., the value chain analysis and market assessment report) identify gender issues, but offer no suggestions for addressing issues unique to men or women, or designing interventions to specifically address the resource constraints of men and women or their respective opportunities in value chains. The Trade Fair Manual developed by the FARM Project suggests that women pay one-half the price of a standard booth, that women make up at least 40 percent of those hired to work at the trade fair, and that there are an equal number of men and women speakers. However, FARM staff who organized the WES and EES trade fairs said that they had not adhered to this guidance. They said that, because men outnumber women among the government officials invited to speak, it was difficult to balance the number of men and women speakers.
- Prior to October, 2012, when FARM hired a dedicated monitoring and evaluation officer, one person performed the duties of the gender specialist and monitoring and evaluation officer. It is not clear, however, whether the gender specialist will now work full-time on gender issues or continue to commit time to monitoring and evaluation.
- Project personnel (managers in Juba and state and county-- field staff) uniformly agree that the project has not intentionally implemented any activities in a gender-specific manner.

[57] Abt Associates, Inc. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2011, November). *Annual Report, October 1 2010-September 30, 2011: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

In spite of the poor record on implementing planned gender activities, the project has engaged a substantial number of women:

- The 321 FBOs included in the database the FARM Project provided to the evaluation team have a total of 6,685 members, 2,331 (35 percent) of whom are women.
- The project's latest annual report (FARM Project, November, 2011) reports that 1,592 women have received short-term agricultural productivity training. Women account for 34 percent of all trainees.
- Project reports disaggregate indicators by sex, but provide no more information about how the project does, or could, identify constraints and address the opportunities unique to men and women, or the differences in how the project is affecting men and women.
- The project has engaged men and women farmers in the ratios in which they were found in project-assisted FBOs. Since the FARM Project did not use the number or percentage of women in an FBO as a selection criterion, the project did not make a deliberate attempt to engage women or men.
- Most project staff and the FBOs interviewed by the team said that the project gave no advice about selecting men or women to participate in training, although some of the extension agents said that they encourage the FBOs to send both men and women to trainings, as possible. The evaluation team collected detailed information about training from 10 of the 17 (59 percent) FBOs it met. A total of 49 members of these FBOs had been trained as trainers (i.e., trained outside the group and then expected to train other FBO members.) Of the 49 trainees, 17 (35 percent) were women—almost exactly the share of women among the FBO members.
- FARM project staff told the team that literacy was a requirement of the FaaB training, which could lead to differential impacts of trainings based on differences in literacy rates between men and women (male literacy rate in South Sudan is 40 percent, and the female literacy rate is 16 percent).[58] However, the evaluation team found little direct evidence of this. One FBO specifically said that they selected members for TOT events based on their ability to absorb lessons and teach them to other members. Payam extension agents explained that other types of training are designed for illiterate audiences, e.g., using body parts, in addition to centimeter measures, for determining plant and row spacing.
- Project staff records indicate that of the 29 project employees in Juba, 7 (24 percent) are women. Women hold none of the 18 project positions at the state level, 1 of 9 positions (11 percent) of the county-level positions, and 1 of the 27 positions (4 percent) of the payam-level positions.

In spite of its gender neutral implementation, weak anecdotal evidence from discussions with FBOs suggests that the project may have achieved some limited, gender-specific results. In six of the 17 FBOs with which the evaluation team met, members spontaneously related that planting in rows (a technique taught by the FARM Project) made weeding "so much faster and easier." This relieved women (and men)[59] of a tedious task and made time available for other pursuits. Furthermore, three of the FBOs

[58] CIA World Fact Book, Accessed September 4, 2012.

[59] The evaluation did not find strong evidence that women were more likely than men to weed. Three FBOs said that men helped more with weeding after they started planting in rows.

specifically mentioned that men were more likely than before to assist women with weeding, since planning in rows made using hoes (as opposed to bending over and pulling weeds by hand) feasible.

In addition to gender neutral implementation, limited gender-specific roles in agricultural production may also have contributed to the lack of gender-specific results. The evaluation team tried in every discussion with FBOs to determine the specific roles of men and women in agricultural production. In every case, FBOs reported that "men and women work together." A few groups said that men were more likely than women were to do heavy tasks (i.e., cutting large trees when clearing land or removing heavy grass.)

Conclusions

- USAID and the implementing partner envisioned a project with a strong gender dimension. To date, however, project implementation has not explicitly addressed gender issues. Consequently, implementation has been largely gender neutral, engaging men and women in the numbers and roles in which they exist in the agricultural context of South Sudan. What results may have accrued to women (reduced time weeding, increased men's participating in weeding) are not the result of any deliberate plan by the FARM Project. To put this conclusion in context, it is possible that there are few gender-specific roles in agricultural production and that more opportunities may exist in marketing and processing, areas in which the project has not been as active.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON EVALUATION QUESTION 6

Evaluation Question: How well has the FARM project coordinated with and supported the activities and objectives of stakeholders, partners, and other projects, e.g., the GOSS, S4D, other donors? How could coordination be improved?

Findings

The FARM Project's task order emphasizes coordination with government counterparts and other donors and NGOs. With respect to coordination with government, it states that FARM "will build ownership and collaborative working relationships with all levels of government – GOSS, State and County - and keep government partners involved during all phases of project planning and implementation."[60] Specific findings with respect to FARM's coordination with government include:

- Table 3 summarizes national, state, and county government agricultural development priorities articulated by the government officials that the evaluation team interviewed. The FARM Project addresses all of these to some extent.

[60] Abt Associates, Inc. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2011, November). *Annual Report, October 1 2010-September 30, 2011: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* op cit.

Table 3: Government Agricultural Development Priorities

LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT	STATED AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES
NATIONAL	• Increase cereals production to be self-sufficient (i.e., support the national goal of increasing production to 2 million mt by 2013.) • Improve the competitiveness of South Sudan's agricultural sector, primarily by improving transportation infrastructure.
STATE	• Increase agricultural productivity and production. • Improve farmers' access to credit. • Building government capacity to support agricultural development.
COUNTY	• Opening land for agricultural production (by improving access to tractor services.) • Improving access to markets, primarily by improving transportation infrastructure.

- The FARM Project narrowed its focus from 14 to 4 key agricultural value chains in direct response to MAF's request for support in achieving its goals of increasing production of staple crops to 2 million mt by 2013.[61]
- FARM Project staff and the three state government officials that the evaluation team interviewed reported that the project began engaging national and state-level government officials (Ministers and Directors) in the work planning process in 2012. The state government officials appreciated their inclusion in the process.
- FARM Project staff participates in the monthly donor coordination meetings, monthly food security meetings, and humanitarian aid coordination meetings at the national and state levels and in monthly donor coordination meetings at the county level. All FARM, stakeholders, donors or NGOs, and government officials the evaluation team interviewed described these meetings as forums to share information, results and lessons. They described "coordination" as focused on "distributing" assistance activities to avoid overlapping or duplicating services rather than seeking ways in which donors could cooperate or coordinate on programming.
- The three state-level FARM offices do not have a senior staff member or main point of contact for GOSS state officials. Two of the three state-level government staff interviewed expressed frustration that they do not have a state-level counterpart in FARM or anyone for them to direct their communication to at state FARM offices.

The FARM project staff coordinates most closely with county-level governments on implementation. All of the county government officials the evaluation team interviewed complained that they did not have the resources to carry out their duties. For example, offices were dilapidated and they did not have vehicles or operating budgets to send their staff to the field to work with farmers. Findings with regard to the FARM Project's coordination with county government on implementation include:

- All FARM and government staff the evaluation team interviewed at these levels reported collaborating on activities, such as seed distribution and observing and training farmers. However, of 13 FARM county and payam extension agents the evaluation team interviewed, only 7 reported that their government counterparts traveled with them to visit FBOs—3 always and 4 sometimes.
- When feasible, FARM has co-located its county offices in the county government's offices, and, in the case of the office in Yei County, are paying for office rehabilitation and upgrades, such as electricity and Internet access.

The FARM Project's SOW also requires that the project coordinate with other relevant stakeholders. It specifies, "The Contractor will keep other donors informed about its activities, and disseminate relevant reports and findings to other donors. The Contractor must also remain informed about other donor programs to avoid duplication and take advantage of opportunities to work together."[62] Findings with respect to FARM's coordination with other stakeholders include:

- Donor coordination and cooperation in the agricultural sector in South Sudan is limited. All eight stakeholders and donors or NGOs the evaluation team interviewed, including FARM, described coordination as minimal to nonexistent.
- A state government official said that there are many donors working in South Sudan and the government has limited capacity to coordinate activities. Two of the donor agencies interviewed added that a lack of a national agriculture strategy ultimately inhibits donor coordination amongst one another and with MAF.
- All donors or NGOs the evaluation team interviewed said that they do not coordinate or communicate with FARM on a formal level beyond the monthly donor meetings. One informant explained that the COP turnover made it difficult to establish a working relationship early on, but that the new COP is a valued advisor.
- The evaluation team found two instances of coordination between FARM and other donor projects. FARM coordinated with WFP on quality control and warehouse management training in Magwi. It also coordinates with the USAID-funded and IFDC-implemented work under Seeds for Development (S4D) on establishing fertilizer demonstration plots and distributing fertilizer to farmers.

IFDC, a grantee under USAID's Greenbelt Transformation Initiative along with FARM, is intended to provide a comprehensive agricultural program. IFDC is working to develop the agricultural sector by increasing the capacity of agro-dealers to provide products and services, specifically fertilizer and its use. There is not a contractual obligation to work together, but both projects say that USAID has encouraged them to do so. IFDC sees FARM as supporting the demand side of their project: farmers who want and can purchase and use fertilizer from the agro-dealers. IFDC used FARM's FBO network, county, and payam extension staff, and relationship with the government to get their project started last year. FARM's farmers were given demonstration packets and trainings on the fertilizer and hybrid seed and were then able to participate in IFDC's voucher program to purchase fertilizer and seed at a subsidized rate. FARM's staff conducted the demonstrations and are monitoring the activities. Both projects

[62] United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2009, October 1). *Scope of Work for the Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) project.* op cit.

acknowledged some "rough patches" early on in their relationship, but have since discussed their collaboration process and feel that many of their earlier issues can be prevented with better communication. One example given is the common training format that the projects have decided on to ensure consistent messaging. Specifically, they have agreed upon a pictograph that adds IFDC's fertilizer message onto FARM's GAP message. Staff from both organizations said that they are committed to continued collaboration.

In spite of government efforts to distribute donor or NGO activities, other donors are operating in many of the FARM operational areas; their activities sometimes complement FARM activities and thus provide opportunities for coordination and collaboration. Examples include the World Food Programmes (WFP) Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative, the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) support of extension services, AAH-I support for FBOs, the Netherlands Development Organization's (SNV) work to rehabilitate farmer training centers, and the German Agency for International Cooperation's (GIZ) support for warehousing. Annex 7 summarizes selected complementary donor activities the evaluation team learned of during interviews and document review.

Conclusions

- FARM Project activities are well aligned with the objectives of national, state and county governments. All levels of government, and especially those who work most directly with the project, believe that the FARM Project is implementing activities effectively on the ground. Although they are generally satisfied with how the FARM Project is implementing activities, representatives of the higher levels of government, i.e., the national MAF and state ministers, believe that the project could do a better job of building local human capacity and supporting government with resources and infrastructure, e.g., buildings, vehicles, supporting travel for government employees. Government officials' expectations with regard to resources and infrastructure, however, are beyond the scope of the FARM Project.
- The FARM project's intention (which aligns with guidance from MAF) to avoid duplication of efforts with other donors or NGOs has resulted in a lack of collaboration with other relevant projects. There are a number of opportunities to cooperate with stakeholders that could enhance the impact and sustainability of FARM's current efforts (see recommendations).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON EVALUATION QUESTION 7

Evaluation Question: Has the contractor (headquarters and field office) managed implementation of the FARM project effectively and been responsive to USAID direction, particularly on implementing cost effective approaches to identify, test, and scale activities to achieve impact and developing comprehensive coordination and communication plans? What are the team's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement with respect to managing the cooperative agreement and communications with USAID, GOSS, and other stakeholders?

The project operates at the national- (Juba headquarters), state-, and county- or payam- (combined in one office) levels, with each level largely responsible for managing the activities of the level beneath it. The

majority of the staff members are split between the Juba and county offices. Three staff members, all at the same managerial level, sit in each state office. Annex 8 contains the project's organizational chart.

One added dimension to the management structure is the consortium of four partners (Abt Associates, Agricultural Cooperative Development International and Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance [ACDI-VOCA], AAH-I, and RSM) implementing the FARM Project. Each of the partners manages separate project functions.

- **Abt Associates** is the prime contractor and is largely responsible for overall management and capacity building.
- **ACDI-VOCA** is responsible for most of the project's technical activities (staffing positions related to productivity, trade and marketing, and business development).
- **AAH-I** is responsible for the community outreach and extension functions and hires the community outreach coordinator and state-, county-, and payam-level extension agents.
- **RSM** is responsible for transportation and logistics.

This section presents findings on several aspects of management including issues related to the turnover of personnel, the consortium, the management structure, staff responsibilities and workload, grant administration and monitoring and evaluation. A separate section examines the project's responsiveness to USAID's direction.

Findings

Effective management is difficult to measure and may essentially amount to a lack of identified management issues. While the evaluation team did identify some management issues, it also found that Abt Associates has successfully achieved some project results, particularly in the area of improving agricultural production, which may hint at effective project management. Further, several KIs interviewed by the evaluation team also noted FARM's effective implementation of its contract with USAID. Specific findings include:

- As mentioned in the section dealing with Evaluation Question 6 on coordination, officials interviewed by the evaluation team from all levels of government, and especially those who work most directly with the project, believe that the FARM Project is implementing activities effectively.
- Several of the donors and NGOs interviewed also reported that FARM's current COP is great to work with and very competent.

Nonetheless, the evaluation team did identify deficiencies in project management, as presented below.

Personnel Turnover

- Over its first two-and-a-half years, the FARM Project has had two COPs and two interim COPs. The initial COP served for thirteen-and-a-half months. Two interim COPs then filled the position

for four-and-a-half months before the current COP started work on August 15, 2011.[63] FARM staff reported that each new COP needed time to learn his role and adapt the project approach and this slowed implementation.

In addition to the turnover among COPs, the evaluation team found that turnover within MAF and USAID has also affected the project. Specifically:

- Abt headquarters and FARM staff reported that three different MAF ministers have contributed to the changes in the project's focus (e.g., from 14 to 4 value chains).[64]
- FARM staff also reported that three different USAID CORs during the project's tenure (the USAID FSO/South Sudan post is a one-year post) placed an additional burden on FARM to continually explain the project and shift focus to accommodate new COR preferences.

The Consortium

FARM Project staff mentioned several aspects of the consortium structure that presented management challenges. In particular:

- Staff reported unequal compensation and benefits packages across the consortium members. For instance, three different FARM staff members reported that Abt paid bonuses this year. AAH-I and ACDI-VOCA did not. They said that differences like these affect staff morale, especially because two staff at the same level may receive different benefits.
- Partly because the project has not yet appointed the planned state-level coordinators, the state offices have a completely flat structure. State-level staff members work for different consortium members and each staff member reports to his or her respective consortium manager in the Juba office. Staff at two out of the three FARM state offices spontaneously reported that this lack of hierarchy within their office makes it difficult to coordinate state-level activities. Project managers appear to have recognized this deficiency and the most recent organogram includes expatriate State Coordinator positions (as yet unfilled) in each of the state field offices.
- As one example of management issues caused by the consortium structure, a few FARM staff members from each of the national, state and county offices spontaneously reported that they sometimes find it difficult to arrange vehicles for work travel. RSM has to approve all vehicle travel in advance through the Juba office, and this structure cannot easily accommodate last minute schedule or destination changes. An RSM driver was shot and killed during the course of the FARM Project, according to FARM staff, and this protocol has been implemented to ensure staff safety. Nonetheless, there could be ways to streamline this process. One FARM staff member gave several examples of times when he was left stranded and had to hire public transportation or walk back to the office.

[63] Abt Associates, Inc. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2011, November). *Semi-Annual Report, April 1, 2011-September 30, 2011: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

[64] The evaluation team was unable to confirm this belief with MAF.

Management Structure

The FARM Project management structure is largely centralized. The evaluation team found that:

- With regards to planning, Juba-based staff draft the annual work plan in consultation with national and state MAF officials and some state-level FARM staff, but very little, if any, input from county or payam extension agents (8 of 13 [62 percent] interviewed reported having no input into the work plan. Three others reported some input, and the final two seem to have been confused between the annual work plan and their individual plans).
- With regards to implementation (outside of the work planning process), six out of eight extension agents who spontaneously reported on their level of influence believed they have more influence now than in the past, few (2 of the 13 [15 percent]) county and payam extension agents interviewed felt that project managers always addressed their suggestions for improving project implementation.
- A few of the extension agents interviewed mentioned their lack of involvement in the planning process resulted in seeds being distributed to farmers late or in the wrong season. They said that they were familiar with farmer planting preferences in their regions and that they had tried to communicate timing preferences to FARM's upper management, but seeds were still distributed late. Although part of this was due to procurement difficulties, not all of it was. FARM upper management always attempt to deliver first-season seeds to all FBOs in March. However, two extension agents reported that farmers in their regions plant their first-season crops in February.

Workload

State-, county- and payam-level FARM staff reported that the workload is often highly uneven and sometimes unrealistic. Specifically, the evaluation team found:

- Payam extension workers interviewed by the evaluation team reported being responsible for between 3 and 22 FBOs.
- Of the 12 county and payam extension agents the evaluation team asked, 6 said that their workload is too high right now, 2 said that their workload is satisfactory right now, but anticipate that it will be difficult to manage if the project adds the 175 new FBOs specified in the draft 2013 work plan,[65] and 4 said their workload is fine as is.
- There is no evidence that the FARM Project plans to increase the number of payam extension workers to address the project's expanded reach.

Grants Administration

The FARM Project provides seeds, goats and land reclamation and plowing services to FBOs through its Innovative Grants Facility, though not every FBO receives every type of grant. All of the 17 FBOs the evaluation team interviewed had received seeds through a FARM seed grant; one received goats; and 7

[65] Abt Associates, Inc. (2012, October). Draft Annual Work Plan Year Three, October 2012- September 2013: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project. Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

(35 percent) reported receiving grants for plowing or land reclamation. Findings with respect to the performance of the grants include:

- Seven of the eleven (64 percent) FBOs that provided data reported receiving seeds late (See Table 8 in Annex 9 for more details on seed quality and timeliness).
- Three of the seven (43 percent) FBOs that received assistance with land reclamation or plowing reported that the service providers arrived later than they would have liked, or not at all. These issues have implications for project performance. Five FBOs spontaneously told the evaluation team that late delivery of seed and tractor services reduced yields (three FBOs) or reduced the amount of land they cultivated (two FBOs).
- A few FARM staff members attributed the problems with the late seeds and tractors to the lengthy procurement approval processes at both Abt Associate Headquarters and USAID as well as problems with service providers. One staff member close to these processes said: "It takes three to four months to get approval for the seed grants through Abt Associates' headquarters and USAID, partly because of extensive bureaucracy and partly because of the large number of grants that need to be approved (310 in 2012)."

Monitoring and Evaluation

A Performance Management Plan (PMP) is a key, and required, element of project management. A well designed PMP allows the project to track performance at output and outcome levels, holds the project formally accountable for achieving outputs and outcomes, and facilitates USAID's reporting. Findings related to the FARM Project PMP include:

- The FARM Project's PMP is based almost verbatim on USAID's results framework and corresponding development hypothesis as documented in the task order. The project did not tailor it to meet project management needs and, according to upper management, it has no internal management utility. Managers said they have no plans to update the PMP.
- The project's PMP[66] contains 15 indicators, 6 (40 percent) of which can be interpreted as outcome indicators, but none of which are impact-level indicators (Annex 3). None of the indicators relate directly to the 18 project outcomes documented in the project's semi-annual and annual reports. The project's two (the third is almost complete) maize yield assessments constitute the project's only reported attempts to measure key project outcomes (yields and adoption of improved practices.)

Responsiveness to USAID Direction

[66] Abt Associates, Inc. United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2011, November). *Annual Report, October 1 2010-September 30, 2011: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* op cit.

The only documented USAID direction the evaluation team received are summary notes from a meeting between the USAID COR and the FARM Project titled "Guidance for development of amended 2012 Work Plan for The FARM Project, South Sudan" dated January 12, 2012. The team found it difficult to assess FARM's adherence to this guidance because much of it asked that FARM stop or start certain activities and these are unobservable. With that in mind, the team reviewed each of the sixteen points of direction from the USAID guidance letter and commented on the evidence that FARM has complied. Table 8 in Annex 9 documents detailed findings. In summary, the team found:

- It was not possible to assess whether FARM had adhered to USAID direction in five of the eighteen cases documented in the guidance note. For the remaining 13 cases:
    - FARM appears to have fully adhered to USAID direction in three cases. Specifically, FARM has continued to train target beneficiaries, focused its work on the four cereal value chains and beans, and eliminated activities with small ruminants.
    - FARM has largely adhered to USAID direction in eight cases (see Table 8, Annex 9 for details).
    - FARM does not appear to have adhered to USAID direction in 2 of the 13 cases, specifically in regards to providing a detailed M&E plan and adjusting PMP targets.

Conclusions

- Effective management is difficult to measure and may essentially amount to a lack of identified management issues. While the evaluation team did identify some management issues, it also found that Abt Associates has successfully achieved some project results, particularly in the area of improving agricultural production, despite both the difficult working environment in South Sudan and the USAID and GoSS staff turnover (and resulting pressures to shift project focus). This finding may hint at effective project management. However, the project's PMP, an important management tool, is not well designed to facilitate reporting to USAID or adjusting activities to maximize impact. Additionally, issues with internal and external turnover, the project's consortium model, its limited staffing, and its top-down structure have meant that management of project implementation has not been as effective as possible. Given the difficulty in measuring effective management, the evaluation team concludes that there is room to improve management.
- While the FARM Project has been largely responsive to the USAID direction documented in the January, 2012 guidance document, there remain areas for improvement, specifically in regards to building a system for efficient and sustainable land clearing processes, training extension agents, linking FBOs with village-based traders, and developing a coordination plan for to work with IFDC and AGRA (work has been coordinated, but no formal coordination plan exists).
- The evaluation team was unable to assess how effectively FARM has adhered to USAID direction on "implementing cost effective approaches to identify, test, and scale activities to achieve impact" because the team was unable to uncover any documented evidence of USAID direction in this area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluation SOW calls for programmatic recommendations for:

- Scaling up or phasing out project components in order to achieve maximum results in the time remaining.
- Short-term adjustments in the contract that would improve performance in the remaining period.
- Alignment with S4D, particularly those components that link farmers with output buyers, transporters, consolidators and processors.
- Alignment with the government of South Sudan's and other key donors' objectives.

In addition to programmatic recommendations, the evaluation team also developed several process recommendations that will enhance project management and results.

PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The FARM Project SOW, two USAID-commissioned assessments of South Sudan's agriculture sector, and numerous reports and analyses commissioned by other donors and development stakeholders recognize the myriad weaknesses of agricultural value chains in South Sudan. They all emphasize the interdependence of value chain components and acknowledge that failing to address constraints along the entire value chain risks compromising the potential for achieving results associated with particular value chain elements.

While the original FARM SOW engaged the project to a greater or lesser degree in most of the key parts of the value chain, USAID's guidance and budget revision scaled back activities in some areas (e.g., building private-sector capacity to support marketing and input supply, enhancing access to credit, addressing transportation infrastructure). USAID has initiated other projects and activities in some of these areas (e.g., IFDC and AGRA to enhance access to inputs and the upcoming Development Credit Authority (DCA) guarantee[67] to enhance access to credit for agribusiness). However, whether these initiatives will yield results in time to support FARM Project activities remains an open question.

Strategies for addressing "weak-link" value chain components are presented below in priority order. One strategy for addressing weak value chain components, and potentially enhancing project outcomes, is to **seek out opportunities to collaborate with complimentary activities of other stakeholders where the potential benefits of collaboration outweigh the costs**.

Limited access to markets is perhaps the greatest near-term risk to building on the project's success in increasing production. If farmers are successful in increasing surpluses but cannot reach remunerative market outlets, they will have little incentive to continue investing in production and project efforts will have been squandered. Potential areas and opportunities for collaboration in enhancing market access include:

- **Storage and aggregation**: staging areas or aggregation points along accessible trade routes and within reach of project-supported FBOs have the potential to enhance market access greatly. The

[67] USAID has just initiated a 5-year, $8 million DCA loan guarantee facility targeting agribusiness.

project's work plan for 2013 describes a strategy of establishing such infrastructure on a pilot basis and this activity holds real promise. In addition to its own staging areas, however, **the project should aggressively explore opportunities to link to other donors' efforts to establish well managed warehousing capacity in production areas in which the project works**. Most notable among these is WFP's ongoing construction of 15 rural warehouses to facilitate aggregation and sales (to WFP or any other buyer). Working with WFP to strategically locate these warehouses within reach of project-supported FBOs has the potential to cost-effectively address a key constraint to market access. This avenue has the potential to aggregate much larger volumes than would be possible for a single FBO, thus potentially attracting larger-volume buyers than the village aggregators on which the project now focuses. **Collaborating with WFP to establish such a warehouse within a project-supported umbrella cooperative, with WFP training the cooperative to manage the warehouse, could produce tremendous benefits and seems well worth pursuing** if any of the cooperatives have, or could develop, the required capacity.

- **Transportation infrastructure**: Poor roads may be the greatest barrier to cost-effective market access, [68] and the project scope does not, nor is it likely to, directly address this key constraint. To the extent possible, although current opportunities appear limited, **the project should make every effort to coordinate[69] with other donor activities that rehabilitate roads**. Coordination could mean actively seeking out partners to work in FARM-supported payams or strategically targeting FBOs in the expansion phase that are working to improve roads, or are supported by projects focused on improving roads.
- **Marketing information**: Traders often play an important role as first-level aggregators of commodities. However, a lack of information about the location of surpluses, especially in an environment of high transportation costs, can prevent traders from providing this service. **The project's planned work to develop an agricultural information system (i.e., using its cadre of extension agents to collect and compile information about the location of surpluses and pass this information on to traders) has the potential to address this problem and is well worth pursuing**. Other donors are also working on establishing or strengthening agricultural information systems (e.g., FAO, Ministry of Planning) and the FARM Project **should at least explore the benefits and feasibility of collaborating on and supporting these efforts.**

Identifying opportunities to engage with other stakeholders, exploring and negotiating the parameters of the collaboration, and managing implementation will require substantial effort and attention to detail. Many donors and projects perceive collaboration as having a poor ratio of risks to rewards. So, successfully establishing collaborative activities requires dedicated attention. If the project elects to pursue some of these options aggressively, and there are enough opportunities to warrant the expense, **it would be wise to hire dedicated staff to manage collaborations**.

The previous recommendations focused the potential to enhance project outcomes by collaborating with other stakeholders to strengthen weak links in the agricultural value chain. There are also steps directly within its scope that the project can take to improve performance:

---

[68] While some FBOs have better access to roads than other FBOs, all roads the evaluation team encountered were in poor shape and in need of significant repairs. Therefore, it is not possible to simply target FBOs with "good road access".

[69] By coordinate, the evaluation team means communicate with donors that have targeted funds toward road rehabilitation or construction to try to prioritize those roads that will impact the greatest number of market-ready FBOs and farmers (thus targeting roads with the greatest possible potential impact).

- Efficiently scaling up project reach and potential results requires developing implementation modalities to reach more farmers in a cost-effective manner. **The project's plan to intensify its engagement with umbrella cooperatives (described in the draft 2013 work plan) appears to be a promising approach**. To cost-effectively disseminate project interventions to a large number of farmers, the project will need to focus its efforts on building the capacities of the umbrella cooperatives to become service providers (e.g., training, land clearing, plowing, marketing, storage) to smaller member FBOs. To maximize chances for success, it will need to focus on developing strong business management, leadership skills and ethics within the cooperatives, as well as a cadre of effective trainers to build the capacities of member FBOs. **Project management might also consider developing ways to quickly assess the organizational capacities of FBOs.** The assessment could serve as a tool for identifying potential umbrella FBOs and for monitoring capacity improvements. AGRA has developed such a tool that the project may be able to apply in South Sudan.
- Once the umbrella cooperatives are well established, the project can further enhance their capacities as effective service providers by **seeking opportunities for strategically linking them to other projects and initiatives**. For example, the project could link a cooperative to an AGRA-supported seed company as an outgrower, or even establish a high capacity cooperative as a seed supplier. Project-supported cooperatives could also become IFDC-supported agro-dealers.
- Farmers and traders will also need additional support to understand how to engage with markets profitably. As market opportunities expand, **the project should continue, and perhaps intensify, its activities aimed at enhancing farmers' and traders' understanding of markets and their skills to engage profitably in markets**. Expanded marketing opportunities will make training in FaaB more relevant, with greater tangible benefits, and may enhance results associated with this training.
- In anticipation of the DCA loan guarantees and other opportunities for obtaining credit the **project should begin now to build the financial readiness of FBOs and, especially, umbrella cooperatives**. Banks and other financial institutions administer DCA-guaranteed loans and they do not generally lend to organizations without good business plans, records and prospects for servicing the loan. To enhance prospects for obtaining credit, the project will first have to strategically identify FBOs with the potential to develop these capacities, the desire to access loans and the ability to generate funds to service the loan. The project will then have to intensively train and follow-up with selected key members of these groups to develop the skills and capacities necessary to obtain credit. This will probably require a training model that utilizes experts in financial management rather than relying on FARM extension staff.

USAID would like to see the FARM Project "do more, and faster." It is important in this context to explicitly recognize the tradeoffs between quantity and quality. It is relatively easy to engage with FBOs and provide basic training in crop-management practices, post-harvest handling, and storage. As the findings of this evaluation suggest, these activities can produce quick results in terms of increased production. The FARM-supported FBOs have also served as effective platforms for IFDC to demonstrate the efficacy of improved inputs and AGRA anticipates that FARM-supported FBOs will provide a foundation of demand for improved seeds. Most of these outcomes are for naught, however, if the FBOs fail to survive as effective organizations beyond the life of the FARM Project.

FBOs that fail to develop the capacities to effectively serve the needs of their members (e.g., improve market access/terms of market engagement, facilitate access to credit, improve knowledge, enhance access to inputs) are less likely to sustain production increases, generate much demand for improved inputs, or deliver meaningful and lasting improvements in members' quality of life.

Building sustainable FBOs requires consistent engagement over time that provides FBOs with the materials and skills appropriate to their individual level of development. Because it takes time and resources, there is a direct tradeoff between the number of FBOs with which a project can engage and the quality/intensity of the engagement—and thus the likelihood that an FBO will be sustainable. **The FARM Project and USAID should take this into account when balancing the desire for more FBOs in the near term against long-term development objectives in South Sudan.** The following recommendations address ways the FARM Project could enhance the quantity and quality of its engagement with FBOs and farmers.

- Considering only quantity, FARM could accelerate its engagement with FBOs and farmers by using resources more efficiently or by committing more resources. Because implementation costs are context specific, it is difficult to assess whether the project's cost for engaging FBOs is reasonable or not. The evaluation findings do suggest, however, that FARM could increase the pace at which it engages FBOs by **hiring more payam-level extension agents and, perhaps, state-level staff to supervise them**. It is also conceivable that **hiring the junior-level expatriate supervisors in the state offices** (as specified in FARM's current work plan) will provide more direction at the state level, streamline management and help accelerate the pace of the project.
- The project's plan to form additional umbrella cooperatives and build their capacities to provide services to member FBOs may be a feasible approach to engaging FBOs more efficiently. This approach, however, will require that FARM **enhance the level of technical support to the umbrella cooperatives (see next recommendation) and a long-term commitment, either directly through the project or by linking the umbrella cooperatives to sources of assistance that will survive the FARM Project.**
- To maximize chances for sustainability, the project needs to **increase the quality of its engagement with FBOs**. FARM extension agents receive little more training than the farmers themselves and often do not feel competent to do much more than monitor farmers' adoption of FARM-taught practices. To develop into sustainable organizations, FBOs need access to specialized expertise and training. A feasible, and relatively efficient, approach may be to **simultaneously enhance the training provided to extension agents and increase agents' access to technical backstops who engage directly with FBOs**. Technical backstops could help agents address issues beyond their training and expertise (e.g., the appropriate chemicals to control specific pests) and also work with FBOs to develop specific skills (e.g., bookkeeping, accounting, and storage) essential to sustainability that agents are not well suited to provide.
- The FARM Project's time frame is probably too short build the capacities of many of the project-supported FBOs to be truly sustainable organizations, capable of effectively addressing members' needs in agricultural production and marketing. This is not a criticism of the project's management or implementation approach. It simply takes time to build sustainable FBOs—even more so in the context of South Sudan. Given the project's short time-frame, **it should be positioning local resources and organizations to carry on the work.** Its partner, AAH-I, would be a logical choice, since the capacity building can take place largely within the context of project implementation.

- If the FARM Project has difficulty finding a sufficient number of FBOs with which to engage that have the capacity to become sustainable FBOs, it might **consider expanding the geographic coverage of the project**. To do so with the minimum impact on project costs probably implies expanding to additional payams within the nine counties in which the project already works or to additional counties in the three Equatoria states.

PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Correct weaknesses in the project's approach to assessing changes in yields.** Increasing production is one of the FARM Project's key objectives. However, the project's current approach to measuring this important outcome is not adequate, either to determine conclusively that yields have changed or to attribute observed changes to project activities. The greatest deficiency of the current approach is the lack of adequate baseline yield estimates. The project's baseline survey estimated yields by asking farmers how much they harvested in the previous two planting seasons. Estimates based on farmers' recall when most do not keep records, own scales, store commodities in a consistent form (e.g., shelled or unshelled), and store or sell commodities in many different sizes of containers are notoriously unreliable. They are certainly not comparable to the rigorously measured yield estimates the project obtained in the first and second maize yield assessments. These deficiencies raise serious doubts about the validity of the project's claims to have almost doubled yields. Another serious methodological deficiency is that it has not consistently collected data from a comparison group of farmers who are not participating in the project. This severely limits the ability to attribute any observed increases in yields to project activities.

  Fortunately, the project still has an opportunity to estimate impacts on yields attributable to the project. As it adds new FBOs, the project can use the same methodology it uses for the yield assessments to establish baseline yields for these new groups. Follow-up yield assessments, with corresponding data from comparable control groups and sufficiently large samples to account for the observed variability in the data, will provide reliable estimates of project impacts. The upcoming impact assessment of the Greenbelt Transformation Initiative also expects to collect baseline data on yields. To the extent that the sample corresponds to FARM beneficiaries, the assessment might also produce useable baseline for the FARM Project.

  Collecting the data to rigorously assess yields and conclusively to project activities is expensive, time consuming, and may divert project resources from implementation. Project management will have to determine whether the benefits outweigh the costs.

- **Revise the project PMP to incorporate meaningful and feasible indicators of key project outcomes.** The project should develop a PMP more outcome than output driven. The current PMP does not hold the project accountable, or provide the incentives to focus resources on, achieving the project's anticipated development outcomes (e.g., productivity, market access, capacity building). Although there is no evidence to suggest that the FARM Project has succumbed to potentially adverse incentives of an output-oriented PMP (e.g., focusing resources on increasing the number of FBOs rather than on increasing production for existing FBOs), those incentives do exist. Furthermore, the current PMP does not serve the management needs of the project or provide the information necessary for USAID to effectively manage the contract.

To implement a PMP that contains more outcome indicators, the project will have to **enhance its capacity to monitor project activities**. By closely monitoring and evaluating training activities, for example, FARM can learn what messages farmers are getting from training and the extent to which they implement lessons. By collecting consistent data from farmers about if and how they implement lessons from training, how and why they chose whether to adopt practices, and the results, project managers can develop a better understanding of how project activities are changing behavior and use this information to fine-tune the project approach to training.

- **Provide additional training to field-level staff.** Monitoring is a resource-intensive activity. The project can enhance its capacity to monitor activities and collect information (e.g., location of surpluses) in the field by training field-level staff. Furthermore, field staff, especially county and payam extension agents, need better skills to adequately serve FBOs. Further training in FaaB, marketing, crop management, and gender issues will increase the agents' effectiveness, enhance the quality of training and advice they deliver to farmers, make them better able to support project initiatives in marketing, information systems, and monitoring, and enhance their capacities to contribute to South Sudan's growth in the future.
- **Fill the state-level coordinator positions as soon as possible** to streamline (i.e., decentralize) project administration, improve administrative and management efficiency, and provide a single point of contact for government at the state level.
- **Seeks ways to manage the workload of extension agents as the project expands the number of FBOs**. An excessive workload already limits the effectiveness of some agents and the level of service they are able to provide to FBOs. Consider redistributing FBOs among agents, if feasible, or hiring additional agents.
- **Commit resources to addressing gender issues.** The project has not yet made any real effort to address this important, overarching issue. Failure to commit the resources to identifying gender-related roles, constraints and opportunities risks missing opportunities to engage and empower men and women equally in agricultural development and project benefits. If the conventional development wisdom that putting money into women's pockets contributes more to household welfare than the same money in men's pockets does, then failing to find ways to economically empower women may be limiting project benefits. At a minimum, the project needs to conduct the gender analysis that has been in all of its work plans, use the results of the analysis in activity design, and conduct gender training for project staff.[70]
- **Explore cost-effective ways to build the capacity of government officials and institutions.** For defensible reasons, FARM has chosen to work alongside, rather than within, government institutions (e.g., establishing its own extension structure rather than working within the existing government extension structure.). Nevertheless, the project should explore cost-effective ways to contribute to building the capacities of government officials to design, implement, and monitor development programs. Filling the planned expatriate coordinator positions at the state level and specifically including capacity building in their terms of reference could serve a capacity-building objective. However, FARM would have to carefully manage the relationship and expectations (i.e., restricted to capacity building rather than soliciting broad input into project activities and strategy) in order to avoid the potential for conflicting direction from the national and state governments.

[70] USAID reports that it has already asked FARM to prioritize its gender assessment in the coming project year.

REFERENCES

Abt Associates, Inc. (2012, March). *Amended FARM Annual Work Plan Year Two, October 2011-September 2012: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2011, November). *Annual Report, October 1 2010-September 30, 2011: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2010, April). *Annual Work Plan Year One, April 2010-March 2011: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2011, July). *Annual Work Plan Year Two, April 2011-March 2012: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2012, October). *Draft Annual Work Plan Year Three, October 2012- September 2013: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2011, October). *FARM PMP Update*, November 29, 2009.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2011, November 29). *FARM PMP.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2011, July). *The Farm Project Smallholder FARM Value Chain Analysis for the Greenbelt Areas of Equatoria.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2012). *Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Program: South Sudan Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan (PERSUAP).* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. *Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project: Message on Groundnuts Production.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. *Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project: Message on Maize Production.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. *Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project: Message on Sorghum Production.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2011). *Maize Yield Assessment Report, August and September 2011: Central, Eastern and Western Equatoria, South Sudan.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2011). *Maize Yield Assessment Report, November and December 2011: Central, Eastern and Western Equatoria, South Sudan.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2010, June). *FARM Program Performance Management Plan: FY 2010-FY 2015.* Khartoum, Sudan: USAID/Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. *Project Flier for the Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2011, April). *Semi-Annual Report, October 1 2010-March 31, 2011: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2011, November). *Semi-Annual Report, April 1, 2011-September 30, 2011: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2012, April). *Semi-Annual Report, September 2011-March 31, 2012: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2012). *USAID Sudan Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Program Quarterly Financial Report: Quarter 1, Year 3.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2012). *USAID Sudan Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Program Quarterly Financial Report: Quarter 2, FY 2012, January 2012 through March 2012.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Abt Associates, Inc. (2012). *USAID Sudan Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Program Quarterly Financial Report: Quarter 3, FY 2012, April 2012 through June 2012.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Ambayo, Charles; Okeyn, German Edward; Taban, Louro Stephen; and Tombe, Redento. The FARM Project. (2012, September 14). *FBO Capacity Assessment in Eastern Equatoria State.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Association for Agricultural Research for Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). (2006). *Strategic priorities for agricultural development in eastern and central africa* (IFPRI Report 150). Retrieved from http://www.asareca.org/docs/main-report-text.pdf

Awarte, E., and Mainville, Denise. (2011, July 27). Message from Denise Mainville and Elizabeth Awarte to Jeff Gould and Mike Dockery about the First Cropping Season—Maize Yield Assessments.

Bottenberg, Harry. (2012, January 12). Guidance for development of amended FY2012 Work Plan for The FARM Project, South Sudan. Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Briceno-Garmendia, Cecilia M and Ranganathan, Rupa. The World Bank. (2011, September). *South Sudan's Infrastructure: A Continental Perspective* (Policy Research Working Paper No. 5814). Washington, DC: Africa Region, World Bank.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). (2012, September 4). The World Factbook: South Sudan. Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/od.html

Epstein, Andrew and Opolot, Simon P. Management Systems International. (2012, June). *Gender Equity through Education (GEE): End of Project Performance Evaluation Report.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Food Programme. (2008, January 21). *Special Report: FAO/WFP and Food Security Assessment Mission to Southern Sudan.* Rome, Italy: FAO/WFP.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Food Programme. (2009, February 6). *Special Report: FAO/WFP and Food Security Assessment Mission to Southern Sudan.* Rome, Italy: FAO/WFP.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Food Programe. (2010, February 17). *Special Report: FAO/WFP and Food Security Assessment Mission to Southern Sudan.* Rome, Italy: FAO/WFP.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Food Programme. (2011, January 12). *Special Report: FAO/WFP and Food Security Assessment Mission to Southern Sudan.* Rome, Italy: FAO/WFP.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and World Food Programme. (2012, February 8). *Special Report: FAO/WFP and Food Security Assessment Mission to Southern Sudan.* Rome, Italy. Retrieved from http://www.fao.org/giews/english/alert/index.htm.

Huisenga, Mark. (2011, April 29). *Agribusiness Projects' Matrix Excel Spreadsheet,* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Masters, Eliot. Abt Associates. (2011, November 16). *DRAFT Guidelines and Procedures for 'Good Stewardship' Practices in the Rehabilitation of Agricultural Land of the Equatoria Region of South Sudan.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Masters, Eliot. Abt Associates. (2011, December 16). *Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) Project: DRAFT Sustainable Agricultural Landscapes: A Reference Manual of Technical Procedures.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

McKinsey and Company. (2011, September 2). *Final Draft: Achieving Agricultural Growth and Food Security in South Sudan.* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of South Sudan. (2011, July). *Training and Capacity Development Policy: 2012-2017.* Juba, South Sudan.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of South Sudan. (2012, June). *Agriculture Sector Policy Framework (ASPF): 2012-2017.* Juba, South Sudan.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of South Sudan. (2012, July). *Agricultural Mechanization Policy: 2012-2017*. Juba, South Sudan.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of South Sudan. (2012, July). *Agricultural Research Policy*. Juba, South Sudan.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of South Sudan. (2012, July). *Draft Plant Protection Policy: 2012-2017*. Juba, South Sudan.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of South Sudan. (2012, July). *Forestry Strategic Policy: 2012-2017*. Juba, South Sudan.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of South Sudan. (2012, July). *Horticulture Development Policy: 2012-2017*. Juba, South Sudan.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of South Sudan. (2012, July). *Seed Policy: 2012-2017*. Juba, South Sudan: Republic of South Sudan.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of South Sudan. (2012, July). *Soil Health and Conservation Policy: 2012-2015*. Juba, South Sudan: Republic of South Sudan.

OXFAM. (2012, January 10). *South Sudan – a blueprint for a food secure future*. Retrieved from http://blogs.oxfam.org/en/blog/12-01-10-south-sudan-blueprint-food-secure-future.

Small Arms Survey. (2012, January). *Women's security in South Sudan: Threats in the home.* Human security baseline assessment for Sudan and South Sudan. The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. Geneva, Switzerland. Retrieved from http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/facts-figures/HSBA-threats-in-the-Home.pdf

Southern Sudan Centre for Census, Statistics and Evaluation (SSCCSE). (2010, March). Poverty in southern Sudan: Estimates from NBHS 2009. Retrieved from http://www.goss-online.org/magnoliaPublic/en/Independant-Commissions-and-Chambers/Center-for-Census--Statistics-and-Evaluation/mainColumnParagraphs/0/content_files/file/Poverty_Southern_Sudan.pdf

South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics (SSNBS), (2012, March). South Sudan poverty estimates at the county level for 2008. Juba, South Sudan. Retrieved from http://ssnbs.org/storage/County%20Level%20Poverty%20Estimates.pdf

The World Bank. (2011, March). *A Poverty Profile for the Southern States of Sudan* (Report No. 69251). Washington, DC: Africa Region, World Bank.

The World Bank. (2012, May 23). *Agricultural Potential, Rural Roads, and Farm Competitiveness in South Sudan* (Report No. 68399-SS). Washington, DC: Africa Region, World Bank.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2011, July). UNICEF humanitarian action update, Republic of South Sudan. Retrieved from

http://www.unicef.org/spanish/emerg/files/UNICEF_Humanitarian_Action_Update_The_Republic_of_South_Sudan_14_July_2011.pdf

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2011, June). *Building a better future: Education for an independent South Sudan* (Education For all Global Monitoring Report). Paris, France. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001930/193052E.pdf

United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2009, June). *Assessment Report for USAID/Sudan, Economic Growth Team: Expanding Agriculture and Food Security Activities in Southern Sudan.* Khartoum, Sudan: USAID/Sudan.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2009, October 1). *Scope of Work for the Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM) project.* Khartoum, Sudan: USAID/Sudan.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID). (2010, January 11). *Initial Environmental Examination and/or Categorical Exclusion: Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets (FARM).* Juba, South Sudan: USAID/South Sudan.

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: EVALUATION STATEMENT OF WORK

SOL-668-12-000007

ATTACHMENT I: STATEMENT OF WORK

Mid-term Performance Evaluation of USAID/South Sudan FARM Project; and Baseline Impact Evaluation for USAID/South Sudan Greenbelt Transformation (Estimated start date: September 3, 2012)

Introduction

USAID South Sudan requires an evaluation contractor to design and implement two evaluations: a mid-term performance evaluation of one agriculture project (Evaluation 1), and also a baseline survey for an impact evaluation of USAID's broad agriculture program in South Sudan (Evaluation 2).

I. EVALUATION 1: MIDTERM EVALUATION OF THE "FARM" PROJECT

1.0 Background—Project Identification, Context and Development Hypothesis

Name:	Food, Agribusiness and Rural Markets
Contracting Instrument:	Contract (RAISE Plus IQC)
Program Funding:	$54.2 million over 5 years
Program Beginning/End Dates:	2/17/2010 to 2/16/2015
Key Agreement/Contract Modifications:	None
Implementing Partner:	Abt Associates
USAID/South Sudan Technical Office:	Economic Growth
Contracting Officer's Representative (COR):	Erin Shutty
Contracting Officer:	Andrew Holland

Context

Agricultural development in South Sudan is considered to be the engine to drive economic diversification, and to reduce poverty and food insecurity. Major constraints to economic growth in this sector are the high price of transportation within South Sudan, which render South Sudanese crops too expensive to compete with food imports, a lack of government capacity to provide extension services to farmers, lack of an input/output private sector, lack of access to finance, limited availability and high cost of farm labor, lack of mechanization, poor market access, and insecurity.

To assist the Government of South Sudan in overcoming these challenges, USAID supports sustained and inclusive agriculture-led growth to improve economic opportunities in South Sudan. Increasing household productivity, linking communities to markets, and building strategic partnerships will better enable South Sudanese to capture market opportunities, and thereby raise household incomes and reduce poverty. USAID works with core government institutions on policies and systems to improve agricultural productivity and investment. Investments in infrastructure, such as feeder roads, are expanding economic activity. To secure a

foundation for sustainable agricultural development, small-scale farmers and businesses will need to identify and capture market opportunities. This entails expanded business capacities at

both the household and firm level, such as understanding how to meet market standards and demand, forming functional businesses units, and building relationships with input suppliers, processors, consolidators, and wholesalers. Lack of infrastructure also remains a significant constraint to market development in South Sudan.

On February 17, 2010, USAID awarded a 5-year, Farm, Agribusiness, and Rural Markets (FARM) project to Abt Associates, a U.S. based for-profit company. Total funding budgeted is $54.2 million. Sub-contractors under Abt Associates are ACDI-VOCA, Action Africa Help International (AAHI) and RSM Consulting. The FARM project was officially launched in May, 2010. The FARM project is focused on the Greenbelt, an area with favorable rainfall and high agriculture potential that lies across the three Equatoria States (Western, Central, and Eastern Equatoria). FARM operates in three counties per state and three payams per county, which were determined by consultation with State and local authorities.

Given FARM Project's large scope and the extremely challenging development environment in South Sudan, in July 2010 USAID encouraged the project to initially concentrate on identifying core interventions and approaches could be scaled for real impact as opposed to delivering numerous 'micro-successes'. USAID also communicated to Abt Associates the critical importance of communication and coordination of any development activities in South Sudan, particularly agriculture, and encouraged the project to manage staffing expertise and utilization accordingly. However, success at meeting USAID expectations regarding focus, impact, value, coordination, and communication during the first two years of activates has been mixed.

One of FARM's main accomplishments to date has been the distribution of improved seeds of maize and sorghum as well as virus-free cuttings of cassava stalks, all imported from Uganda. In 2011, the maize and sorghum were planted by over 3,000 farmers organized in 152 farmer based organizations which have received training in proper planting and crop management techniques. A yield assessment done in September of maize planted in March 2011 showed yields of around 1,500 kg/ha, which is double historical yields. FARM is repeating the distribution of improved planting material of key staple crops to additional Farmer-Based Organizations (FBOs) in 2012.

FARM has also drafted a total of 8 agriculture policies covering: seeds, crop protection, agriculture research, mechanization, extension, horticulture, forestry and training that are in various stages of adoption. These polices provide an important regulatory and policy base for development of the agricultural sector. FARM worked closely with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to implement a successful agriculture fair in mid-November, 2011.

FARM has faced a number of challenges, including high staff turnover, difficult working environment that constrains logistics and coordination, and a lack of project focus and alignment with the Government of South Sudan objectives. There have also been communication challenges with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry at the National as well as the State level. FARM has also operated during two years of rapid change in the Government of South Sudan (such as gaining independence in June, 2011) and the political landscape of the country.

USAID/South Sudan issued awards in October 2011 to Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and International Fertilizer Development Company (IFDC) under the Seed for Development (S4D) program to build local seed development capacity and facilitate the growth of private sector networks for the provision of high quality seeds and fertilizer. These new activities complement the ongoing FARM project implemented by Abt Associates. Further, the FARM activity has been significantly revised to better complement the AGRA and IFDC activities and to focus on targeted crops. In particular:

- The project's scope has been reduced from working on more than 15 value chains to investing in four primary crops (maize, sorghum, cassava, and groundnuts).
- The project's field efforts are now focused on linking large numbers of farmers to the private sector.

The FARM project now serves as the platform for the commercialization of farm enterprises through:

1) its support to the consolidation, registration, and capacity development of Farmer Based Organizations and cooperatives which will be utilized as conduits for information and inputs from the seed companies and agro-dealers being established with IFDC and AGRA support;

2) coordination with the States' government officials; and 3) identifying lead farmers and other agro-businesses to participate in the Development Credit Authority (DCA) to be launched in Spring 2012.

However, throughout 2011, USAID continued to have concerns about the focus, impact and value of the project's activities. In January 2012, USAID instructed Abt Associates to have the FARM project focus on programmatic integration with IFDC to link FARM beneficiaries with local agro dealers and markets, and to participate in a planned pilot voucher program. USAID also instructed Abt to slow down spending to $850,000 a month, concomitant with a more focused scope. An amendment to the contract was not deemed necessary by the Contract Officer in Juba because no change was made in the Results Framework. Rather, Abt Associates was instructed to focus on a number of core activities in order to show results.

The core activities of FARM in the first planting season of 2012 will be:

1) Planting of 6,000 on-farm demo trails for fertilizers and hybrid maize in collaboration with IFDC and AGRA;
2) Distribution of high quality seed of Maize (65 MT), Sorghum (8 MT), Groundnuts (100 MT), Beans (10 MT) and cassava (140 MT stalks) to over 300 Farmer Based Organizations. Beans were added as a fifth crop because of its nutritional importance in the Equatoria States;
3) Testing and utilization of on-farm and small-scale storage facilities to enhance household resiliency (measured by percentage grain lost to storage pests);

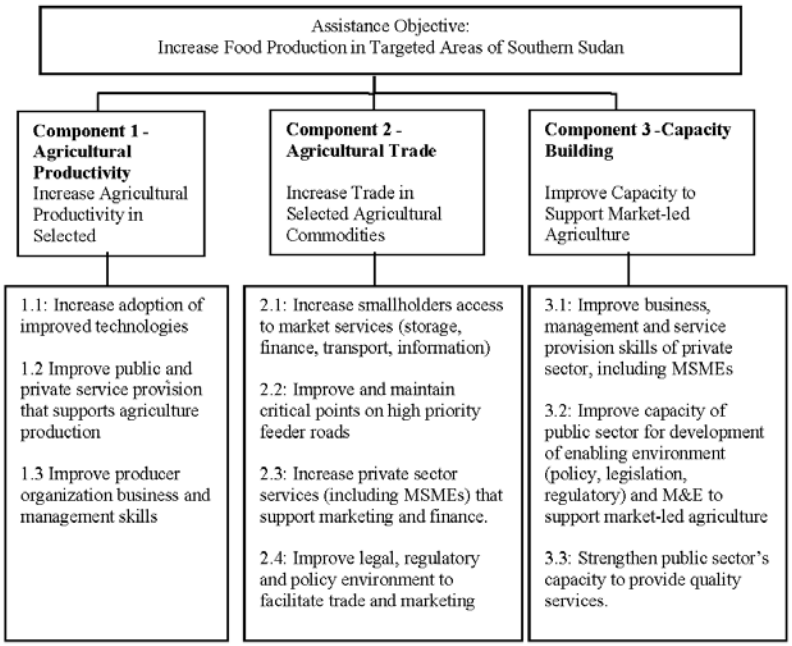
4) Development of sustainable land reclamation guidelines using selective tree removal and two-wheel tractors to increase the area under cultivation without harming the resource base, the soil.

If the project can demonstrate results, it was agreed that USAID will allow Abt Associates to undertake additional elements within its Scope of Work and increase its burn rate accordingly. If achieved results are limited, USAID may decide to modify or de-scope the SOW or terminate the contract.

Development Hypothesis

The scope of FARM is primarily to improve agricultural sector productivity and marketing in the Greenbelt and to support the Government of South Sudan's goal of increasing food supply and reaching food self-sufficiency. The program addresses food production and food security through three intermediate results and associated goals:

Results Framework



1.1. Evaluation Purpose and Use

After a slow start-up and implementation challenges, FARM has established a solid footprint in the three Equatorias, with field staff at the County and Payam level. The project has evolved from the Mission's main flagship program in agriculture to a platform aimed at facilitating the implementation of two related projects under the S4D program. The purpose of this midterm performance evaluation is to gather and synthesize needed information regarding the FARM project performance to date and success in achieving expected results. If the project can demonstrate results towards its objective of increasing food production in the three Equatoria States it was agreed that USAID will allow Abt to undertake additional elements within its Scope of Work and increase its burn rate accordingly. If meaningful results cannot be demonstrated, USAID may decide to modify, de-scope the SOW or terminate the contract. This evaluation will serve as the main decision-making tool with which USAID will determine the future direction of the FARM project. Other stakeholder, including the MAF and other donors with agriculture program, will also benefit from the outcome of the evaluation.

Specific Objectives and Outcomes

In addition to the above, the key objectives for the evaluation include:

1. Assess FARM progress to date in responding to USAID directions to implement cost effective approaches to identify, test, and scale activities to achieve impact; to develop compressive coordination and communication plans; and progress in achieving the results and meeting the deliverables of the Contract at a scale commensurate with the size of expenditures to date. Develop lessons learned for future USAID South Sudan investments in the agriculture sector.
2. Make programmatic recommendations for:
    a. Scaling up or phasing out project components in order to achieve maximum results in the time remaining.
    b. Short-term adjustments in the Contract that would improve performance in the remaining period.
    c. Alignment with S4D, particularly those components that link farmers with output buyers, transporters, consolidators and processors.
    d. Alignment with the Government of South Sudan's and other key donors' objectives.

1.2. Evaluation Questions

1. Has the FARM project successfully met the deliverables of the contract, including achievement of expected results based on the project's performance indicators and associated targets?
    (i) Assess the FARM project's success in achieving the three intermediate results (IRs): increase agricultural productivity in selected commodities in target areas; increase trade in selected commodities in target areas; and improve capacity to support market-led agriculture.

2. Has Abt Associate (headquarters and field office) met the expected level of quality and performance in managing the implementation of FARM? What are the team's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement with respect to management of the cooperative agreement and communications with USAID, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, and other stakeholders?
3. Methods used to collect and analyze data pertinent to the questions above, and the manner in which the evaluation presents its findings, should make it clear whether and how men and women differed in their participation in project activities, ability to access services, and benefits received from the project. Information about differential participation in and benefits to men and women is important for designing future projects in ways that produce equitable results.

1.3. Evaluation Design and Methods

a) Evaluation Design

In line with the USAID Evaluation Policy (2011), increased rigor of methodologies will be required to achieve the intended objective of this exercise. In particular, the evaluators will have to use empirical evidence to support and qualify their findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The FARM projects claims to have conducted a baseline assessment in 2010, however, baseline data have not been presented and if available will be sketchy at best. Therefore, the evaluation approach should be a post only or one time snapshot design which consists of analyzing project accomplishments results without comparing these results to any baseline situation. What may be possible though is to compare the results with the FAO/WFP crop assessment data of 2010 – however these data are not disaggregated by crop.

b) Data Collection methods

Prior to their arrival in South Sudan, evaluation team members are expected to review and be familiar with information contained in the documents listed in Section 1.5 below which will be provided to them by the prime contractor as soon as the evaluation team is formed. Key documents to be consulted include project performance documents to assess the achievement of project results/indicator targets. FARM has the following three key indicators that are being tracked by USAID and reported upon in its annual performance reviews: 1) Number of policies/regulations/administrative procedures analyzed as a result of USG Assistance; 2) Number of farmers, processors, and others who have adopted new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance.; 3) Number of additional hectares under improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG Assistance. A DQA has been conducted for these indicators in November 2011. FARM also collects data on 15 additional indicators. The evaluation team will select a representative number of indicators among the 18 indicators used by FARM that best characterize the performance of the project and focus the evaluation on those indicators.

The Evaluation team will also be expected to create a draft methodology and a draft report outline. These will be discussed and finalized on arrival in Juba during the Team Planning Meeting.

The data collection activities may include a focus group discussion with some key respondent from the MAF. In addition, site observation visits and key informant interview meetings are expected to be held with key stakeholders at the state and county levels, such as State Ministries of Agriculture, County Commissioners and extension workers, Farmer-Based Organizations and beneficiary members, FARM field offices, and agribusinesses. It is anticipated that site observation visits will involve field trips to Central, Eastern, and Western Equatoria States, where FARM operates. Fieldwork is envisioned to include meetings in Juba and visits to the National Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and other key donors. Sites will be chosen based on length of project implementation, level of project activity that can be seen and ability to move around/access sites. The exact location of the field trips will be determined prior to the team's arrival and will be handled by the prime contractor in conjunction with USAID and FARM.

Methods recommended for data collection include, but are not limited to:

- Desk review of key documents (project, background, other secondary data)
- Key informant interviews (see examples of informants above)
- Field observation visits (as described above) with specific observation protocols developed, if possible.
- Beneficiary surveys
- Analysis of project data (including yield surveys and PMP data)

A list of required meetings is provided below:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (National level): Minister, Undersecretary, key DG staff.
- Minister of Agriculture of CES, EES and WES.
- Representatives of a selection of Farmer Based Organizations.
- Representatives of USAID South Sudan agriculture programs: FARM, S4D-IFDC and S4D-AGRA.
- Key staff of Donor agencies active in agriculture: DFIC, JICA, WFP, FAO, GIZ, SNV, CIDA, and others, as appropriate.

c) Data Analysis Plan

Given the qualitative nature of the document review, key informant interviews, and field visits suggested above, the evaluation team will need one or several qualitative data analysis techniques, including content analysis, to transform raw field notes into useful information from which conclusions can be drawn. For each question the evaluation team will address, the team's evaluation work plan should explain how evaluation data will be analyzed.

This evaluation will be primarily qualitative in nature. As there is limited baseline information about the project, evaluators will be collecting primarily subjective information about successes and challenges. Thus, some of the limitations of this evaluation include:

- Heavy reliance on qualitative data and memory of past experiences (potentially leading to recall bias)

- Limited institutional knowledge among USAID and NGO staff (the majority of staff at all levels have not been involved since the inception of the project)
- Small number of sites visited, meaning that generalizations may not be valid
- Heavy reliance on key informants
- Gender Considerations: USAID expects that in answering each of the questions above the evaluation team will disaggregate data by gender on all questions involving people

1.4) Deliverables

Task 1: Background Review and Outreach

The following documents will be made available electronically and as hard copies (one each):

- Contract, work plans for years 1 and 2, Performance Monitoring Plan, database of performance indicators, and important emails and meeting notes
- Public documents such as success stories by quarter, semi-annual and annual reports, quarterly newsletters, and weekly updates reports for Ministries and other stakeholders,
- FAO/WFP annual crop production assessments for 2010 and 2011.
- Land Rehabilitation Guidelines (draft)
- Agricultural Policy drafts
- Other relevant reports, e.g. Value Chain Analyses, Agriculture Fair November 2011, Pest Assessment
- Other background documents, including Initial Environmental Evaluation, Environmental Monitoring and Mitigation Plan and Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan.

Task 2: Team Planning

- DELIVERABLE #1: *Evaluation Design and Work Plan*
    - Draft work plan for evaluation, including site observation visit and interview protocols;
    - Evaluation methodology (data collection tools/plan and analysis plan);
    - Preliminary evaluation report outline

The team will present for approval by USAID a draft outline of the final Evaluation Report and plans for producing related evaluation documentation during its first week in country.

Task 3: Field Work

- DELIVERABLE #2: Interim progress briefings to prime contractor and the USAID Mission, as determined during the Team Planning Meeting

Task 4: Present Findings (at conclusion of field work and prior to departure):

- DELIVERABLE #3: Out-briefing, with supporting documents, conducted with USAID prior to completing the draft report.
    - Presentation to MAF and other stakeholders.
    - Draft report on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations presented to prime contractor to be shared with USAID/South Sudan EG Team.
    - All data/documents will be left with prime contractor for filing

Task 5: Final Report

- DELIVERABLE #4: Final report submitted to prime contractor 10 work days after the consultants' receipt of USAID's final written comments.
    - Final report submitted to the DEC after approval is given by USAID

1.5) Team Composition

The Evaluation 1 team will consist of five team members: two consultants and one USAID EG staff member, one staff from the national- level Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and one locally-hired logistician. The logistician will organize all logistics, coordinate meetings and provide translation service as needed. The team may require some assistance from FARM and State-level Ministry of Agriculture staff in setting up and facilitating field visits and meetings. FARM staff will not participate in the evaluation team's internal discussions. USAID strongly prefers that part of the team selected will conduct both the performance and the baseline impact evaluations, as there will be significant overlap between both evaluations. The team will be supported by other staff from these agencies as required to meet the needs of the evaluation.

The consultant's team will take the lead in conducting the review and providing two external evaluators who are responsible for drafting the Mid-Term Evaluation report. The external evaluators will include a Team Leader and one other technical specialist. The Team Leader will take full responsibility for managing the evaluation team, organizing its work, and ensuring quality control and delivery of a final report acceptable to USAID. The Team Leader, with support from the prime contractor and the locally-hired logistics specialist, will also ensure that meetings and travel schedules for field visits are arranged, presentations are scheduled as needed, and the logistics of the review are well managed. The Technical Specialist will assist the Team Leader in data collection and analysis, designing and conducting interviews, reviewing and analyzing technical reports etc.

The following skills, work experience and expertise are required in: (i) conducting and writing evaluation reports, preferably for USAID and (ii) assessing and analyzing USAID support for agriculture or economic growth programs, particularly those focused on gender equity. Prior experience working in Africa or a post-conflict environment similar to South Sudan is also a requirement. Candidates with experience in the design or evaluation of programs that improve farming practices or economic opportunities for underserved populations and build the institutional capacity of ministries to address technical and equity issues will be given preference.

As noted above, other core team members will include USAID, Abt, and MAF. Their participation is intended to provide historical, contextual and programmatic background information that will inform the assessment. For USAID, the representative may be a person from the EG Team and/or a USAID Financial Analyst with expertise in assessing program budgets and expenditures. Abt may choose representatives as they see fit, but persons selected should have experience with similar agriculture programs in South Sudan or elsewhere in Africa. A USAID EG staff will participate fully in the review and will, where feasible, accompany the consultants on field visits.

1.6) Schedule and Logistics

All core team members must begin at the same time in Juba, South Sudan. All must be present for initial briefings and discussions with USAID's EG Officer and other Mission officers, as well as Abt staff (and Government officials as requested by USAID). At these initial meetings the Team will develop a Work Plan and travel program for the in-country visit as well as the subsequent report writing period. The Work Plan also may include a schedule for periodic USAID meetings/progress reports and possible submissions of specific work products, as determined by the two parties.

Required Tasks and Timeframe

The overall evaluation tasks and timeframe are as follows. The specifics of the timeframe, schedule of visits and deliverables, as well responsibilities of individual team members, will be finalized at the Team Planning Meeting.

Tasks (Evaluation 1 only) (All Team members unless otherwise noted)	**Work Days** (6-day weeks)	**Estimated Timeline**
Initial Preparation (Consultants) Review advance background documents, make travel preparations, provide feedback on SOW and SUPPORT Project's Evaluation Quality Management Guide; Conduct other meetings as needed.	5	September 3-11
Travel to South Sudan (Consultants)	2	September 12-13
Team Planning Meeting	3	September 14 - 17
Evaluation Data Collection and Analysis Meetings, field visits, and initial synthesis of findings.	23	September 13 – October 13
Writing/Presentation Preparation	6	October 15-20
Out briefing to USAID, Prime Contractor, Abt, and MAF	1	October 22
Draft Report Preparation (In-country) Incorporate feedback, complete draft report, and submit to USAID EG Team Leader	3	October 23
Travel from South Sudan (Consultants)	2	October 24-25
Final Report Preparation after receiving USAID comments and Submission to USAID EG Officer	5	October 31
Total for Consultant (Team Leader)	50	
Total for Consultant (Technical Specialist)	50	

1.7) Reporting Requirements

Initial findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation Team will be presented to USAID and other stakeholders as deemed appropriate by USAID before the external evaluators depart from South Sudan.

One copy of the draft report with the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Review Team will be presented to Abt/FARM (one copy) and the USAID/South Sudan Mission (four copies) prior to the departure of the Team Leader.

The document, in MS Word, will not exceed 30 pages (excluding Executive Summary, fact sheets, data charts, graphs and annexes). The draft report should include:

- Executive Summary (two pages)
- Table of Contents
- List of Acronyms
- Introduction
- Background
- Evaluation Design and Methodology
- Findings
- Conclusions and Lessons Learned
- Recommendations
- Annexes (SOW, lists of documents/sources used, lists of individuals interviewed, and other key information)

The final report will be submitted 5 work days after the Team Leader's receipt of Abt's and USAID's written comments. The Mission will receive ten paper copies of the final report as well as an electronic version.

Compliance with USAID Regulations

The Evaluation Team will ensure that the Mid-Term evaluation report is fully compliant with the terms for Project Evaluations contained in the USAID Evaluation Policy, Automated Directives System (ADS) Series 203 and other relevant regulatory requirements, as may be determined by USAID. More specifically, the evaluation team should make itself familiar with USAID standards against which its evaluation will be reviewed, including Appendix 1 of the USAID evaluation policy provided below and USAID ADS 203.3.2.8 on documenting evaluations. The review may also include USAID's published checklist for reviewing evaluation reports which is available at: http://www.usaid.gov/policy/evalweb/evaluation_resources.html.

ANNEX 2: EVALUATION GETTING TO ANSWERS MATRIX

Table 4: Getting to Answers Matrix

		DATA COLLECTION			
EVALUATION QUESTION	**TYPE OF ANSWER/ EVIDENCE**	**METHODS**	**SOURCE**	**SAMPLING/ SELECTION**	**DATA ANALYSIS METHODS**
To what extent has the FARM project met the deliverables of the contract, including achieving expected results based on the performance indicators on which the project reports and associated targets?	Comparative	Document review	• Project progress reports • Data quality assessment report	n.a.	Compare reported achievement with targets. DQA report to assess validity of reported results. Interviews to understand challenges in meeting targets and revisions to targets.
		Semi-structured interviews	• FARM (and sub-contractor's) project staff, Contractor HQ staff, USAID personnel	Purposive	
How cost effectively (i.e., cost per unit of output) has the project implemented its various components (i.e., training, grants, policy work, trade fair, assessments, etc.) and what factors have most affected costs?	Analytical	Document review	• Project financial and progress reports • USAID cost effectiveness study	n.a.	Calculate cost per unit of output for selected project activities. Benchmark against similar projects if possible.
To what extent and how has FARM contributed to the three intermediate results (increase agricultural productivity in selected commodities in target areas; increase trade in selected commodities; and improve capacity to support market-led agriculture) and selected outcome indicators (adoption, etc.) and how can the project best enhance results in the time remaining?	Analytical	Document review	• Project progress and activity reports and special reports and assessments (e.g., market assessment reports, yield assessment reports, etc.)	n.a.	Determine quantifiable contributions from reports and assessments (e.g., yield). Content analysis of interviews to uncover themes in contributions of the FARM project.
		Semi-structured interviews	• Beneficiaries/participants (FBOs, farmers, traders) • State and county officials, service providers, FARM project staff, USAID • Non-beneficiaries for spillover effects	Purposive for KIs, randomize from shortlist for FBOs	
What are the prospects for sustainability of FARM project results and which results are most likely sustainable and why?	Analytical	Semi-structured interviews	• State and county officials, FARM project staff, USAID, donors, other stakeholders	Purposive	

		DATA COLLECTION			
EVALUATION QUESTION	**TYPE OF ANSWER/ EVIDENCE**	**METHODS**	**SOURCE**	**SAMPLING/ SELECTION**	**DATA ANALYSIS METHODS**
To what extent and how has the project been sensitive to the differential needs of men and women, engaged men and women equally in project activities, and benefited men and women?	Analytical	Document review	• Project progress and activity reports • Documents on gender aspects of agricultural production and marketing in South Sudan	n.a.	Document project adherence to documented gender requirements. Content analysis of interview data to determine gender issues and the extent to which the project has addressed.
		Semi-structured interviews	• Beneficiaries/participants (FBOs, farmers, trainees), FARM staff, USAID personnel, government (national, state, county)	Purposive for KIs, randomize from shortlist for FBOs	
How well has the FARM project coordinated with and supported the activities and objectives of stakeholders, partners, local institutions, and other projects, e.g., MAF/GOSS, AGRA, IFDC, WFP, FAO, GIZ, JICA, DIFD, cooperatives, other donors? How could coordination be improved?	Analytical	Document review	• Project documents (annual reports, work plans, coordination meeting minute)		Document opportunities for and evidence of coordination. Assess constraints to coordination.
		Semi-structured interviews	• Representatives of stakeholders, partners, and other projects (MAF, Government (national, state, county), USAID, FAO, WFP, AGRA, IFDC, FARM, Other donors?)	Purposive	
Has the contractor (headquarters and field office) managed implementation of the FARM project effectively and been responsive to USAID direction,	Analytical	Semi-structured interviews	• USAID personnel • Project staff (Juba and field) • Other donor organizations and NGOs	Purposive	

		DATA COLLECTION			
EVALUATION QUESTION	**TYPE OF ANSWER/ EVIDENCE**	**METHODS**	**SOURCE**	**SAMPLING/ SELECTION**	**DATA ANALYSIS METHODS**
particularly on implementing cost effective approaches to identify, test, and scale activities to achieve impact and developing comprehensive coordination and communication plans? What are the team's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement with respect to managing the cooperative agreement and communications with USAID, GOSSS, and other stakeholders?		Document review	• Guidance letter from USAID (compare with findings from other questions)	n.a.	

ANNEX 3: LIST OF EVALUATION INTERVIEWS

Table 5: List of evaluation Interviews

DATE	ORGANIZATION	INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED
October 1, 2012	Abt Associates' Headquarters, Washington, DC	David Miller, Portfolio Manager for the FARM Project
		Carol Adoum, Vice President of Division Operations
		Constantin Abarbiertei, Division Vice President ,International Economic Growth
		John Lamb, Principal Associate, Agribusiness and Food Security
		Wasser [name not known], Finance and Contracts Representative, FARM Project
October 10, 2012	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)	Joseph Akim Gordon, Director for Extension Services
		Mikiya Kamunde, Director of M&E in Planning and Programming
	The FARM Project, Juba	David Hughes, Chief of Party
		Redento Tombe, Community Outreach Expert
October 11, 2012	Farmers' Union (under the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture)	Yousif Abdel-Hai F. Wani, Chairperson
		Sultan Angok, Treasurer
		Abraham Wol, Public Relations Officer
	Action Africa Help-International (AAH-I)	Filiberto Gabresi, Country Director
		Asiimwe Innocent, Senior Program Manager
October 12, 2012	World Food Programme (WFP)	Marc Sauveur, Country Coordinator, Purchase for Progress
	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	Jurgen Koch, Project Manager Food Security and Agricultural Development
October 15, 2012	Kajo Keji County	Thomas Duku, Assistance Commissioner for Agriculture, Kajo Keji County
		Ben Yengy, Commissioner, Kajo Keji County
	The FARM Project	AlexMurye, FARM County Extension Officer, Kajo Keji County
	Kodiji FBO, Kajo Keji County	11 members attending (8 women, 3 men)
	Abongonkin Women's Group, Kajo Keji County	11 members attending (7 women, 4 men)
October 17, 2012	Yei County	Edmund Gag, Assistant Commissioner for Agriculture, Yei County
	Indokori FBO, Yei County	John Waja, Chairman. 5 members attending, all men.
	Issaanga Muli-Purpose Cooperative Society, Yei County	Julius Daada Rubin, Chief. 11 members attending, all men.
	The FARM Project, Yei County	Esther Kiden, FARM County Extension Officer
October 18, 2012	Morobo County	Ms. Pita Biatrous, Acting Assistant Commissioner for Agriculture

DATE	ORGANIZATION	INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED
	The FARM Project, Morobo County	Isaac Batali, FARM County Extension Officer
	Iralo Farmer's Group, Morobo County	8 members attending (4 women, 4 men)
	Nyei Women's Group, Morobo County	11 members attending (8 women, 3 men)
October 19, 2012	The FARM Project, WES	Simon Wani, Ag Production Coordinator, WES
		Bullen Augustine, Senior Extension Officer, WES
	Otto Cooperative Society, Maridi County	8 members attending (1 woman, 7 men)
October 20, 2012	Maridi County	Nixon Paulo, Director of Agriculture
	Lalama 2 FBO, Maridi County	
	Bimongo Women's Group, Maridi County	6 members attending, all women
	The FARM Project, Maridi County	Wilson Aziti, FARM County Extension Officer, Maridi County
		Charles Nyoso, FARM Payam Extension Agent, Mambe Payam, Maridi County
		James, Mawa, Payam Extension Agent, Maridi Payam, Maridi County
October 21, 2012	Kati FBO, Mundri West County	4 members attending (2 women, 2 men)
	Lubani FBO, Mundri West County	3 member attending, all men
	The FARM Project, Mundri West County	Nimaya Christopher, FARM Payam Extension Agent, Kotobi Payam
		Nicholas Wayne, FARM Payam Extension Agent, Bangalo Payam
October 22, 2012	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, WES	Hon. West Yugulle Kayuku Labadiah, Minister of Agriculture
		Marcello Constantino Director General of Agriculture
October 23, 2012	The FARM Project, WES	Jackson Simo, FARM Capacity Building Coordinator
		Eliaba Habakuk, FARM Senior Extension Officer
		Henry Muganga, FARM Ag Production Coordinator
	The FARM Project, Yambio County	Benty Kango, FARM County Extension Officer
		Beeyo Simon, Payam Extension Agent, Rirangu Payam
	Baguga FBO, Yambio County	5 members attending (2 women, 3 men)
	Tampuahe Cooperative Society, Yambio County	3 members attending (2 women, 1 man)
October 24, 2012	The FARM Project	David Hughes, Chief of Party
October 25, 2012	Mturi Farmer Group, Torit County	7 members attending (3 women, 4 men)
	The FARM Project, Torit County	[name not known], FARM Volunteer Payam Extension Agent
October 26, 2012	The FARM Project, EES	Puro Cham Nygomi, FARM Capacity Building Coordinator
		Alfred Tako, FARM Ag Production Coordinator
	The FARM Project, Torit County	Loboka Alex, FARM County Extension Officer

DATE	ORGANIZATION	INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED
	Ministry of Agriculture, EES	[name not known], Director for Agriculture
		[name not known], Director of Extension
	Niran FBO, Torit County	18 attending (8 women, 10 men)
October 27, 2012	The FARM Project, Magwi County	Jermain Edward, Payam Extension Agent, Magwi Payam
	Kenya #2 Farmer Group, Magwi County	13 member attending (4 women, 9 men)
	Ijaulla Ayepit FBO, Magwi County	6 members attending (1 woman, 5 men)
October 30, 2012	International Fertilizer Development Corporation (IFDC)	Denis Tiren, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
		Larry Tweed, Chief of Party
	The FARM Project, Juba	Costa Mwale, Ag Productivity Director
		Redento Tombe, Community Outreach Expert
		Louro Steven Taban, Business Development Coordinator
		Elizabeth Awater, M&E and Gender Specialist
		Timothy Amule Yobuta, Technical Program Coordinator
		Ojja Silvestro, M&E Officer
		Ester Titia, Marketing Coordinator
October 31, 2012	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)	Etienne Peterschmitt, [title not known]
	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)	Hai Makanda, Program Officer, Field Services
	Central Equatoria State	[name not known], Assistant Director for Agriculture
	Netherlands Development Organization (SNV)	Mizane Yohannes, Country Director and Engorok Obin, Sr. Advisor Econ Development and Conflict Transformation

ANNEX 4: EVALUATION INTERVIEW AND DISCUSSION GUIDES

Interview Guide for Abt Associates (Washington)

October 10, 2012

Interviewee: **David Miller – Abt Associates**

Background:

1. Can you describe your role at Abt and with the FARM project?
2. Can you give a brief overview of the FARM project, its goals, and how it came about, from your perspective?

FARM activities:

3. How would you rate the effectiveness of the main project activities? And why were they effective/not effective? What limited effectiveness (if applicable)?

    a. Increasing Agricultural Production/productivity

    b. Increasing trade

    c. Improving capacity to support commercial agriculture

    (Ask him to rate on a Likert scale 1-5 for each and then ask for further comments/details) I'm not sure the Likert scale is useful at this stage. We may decide to ask particular questions in this way but we may not. As you say, it's too early to coordinate this interview with what we eventually develop as interview guides so we may have to come back to him. Use the Likert scale if you're comfortable with it but I see no compelling reason to do so.

    Probing questions: What features/elements of each main project activity are most effective? Which are least?

4. What impact, if any, have you seen so far under each main project activity? (e.g.,: What impact, if any, have your trade related activities had on agricultural trade in the project areas?)
5. Has the program evolved in response to what has worked, and what has not? If so, how?
6. What are the main challenges Abt has faced implementing the FARM project? How did you resolve these challenges?
7. Have there been any unintended impacts (either positive or negative) to the FARM project? If so, how has Abt Associates adjusted its activities to either take advantage of these or address them?

FARM Management:

8. Describe the management system for the FARM project. What are the main management challenges for the FARM project?

    a. Probing questions as needed: How does Abt headquarters versus the field office manage the project? What role does each play?

9. How effective has the coordination of FARM project activities been?

    Likert Scale of 1-5 and then further details/comments.

    Probing question: What challenges does FARM face relative to effective coordination?

10. Please describe the role of each of the partner organizations.

11. How does the FARM project communicate with relevant stakeholders and partners within the project? Outside the project? You might also ask what role national, state, and county government officials played in the project.

12. How would you rate the effectiveness of communication within the FARM project? And with other projects and outside stakeholders?

- Likert Scale of 1-5 and then further details/Comments

11. Please describe the relationship been between the FARM project and USAID? Successes and Challenges?

Other:

12. How has the FARM project attempted to implement cost effective approaches to project activities and/or management?

13. What does the FARM project do to address gender issues or concerns as they relate to project activities? I'd ask whether the project specifically tried to engage/benefit women and men and how?

14. What differential impacts has the project had on men vs. women, if any?

15. Recommendations for next steps for the FARM project?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

1. What are the most important agricultural development priorities for South Sudan?
2. To what extent does the FARM project support the government in addressing these priorities?
    a. What aspects of the project are most relevant and why?
    b. How could relevance be improved?
3. Coordination
    a. Did the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry have any input into the design of the FARM project? Explain.
    b. Tell me about how you interact with the FARM project now (e.g., participate in meetings, informal communications, etc.)?
    c. Do you ever seek advice from the FARM project? Explain.
    d. How responsive is FARM to your suggestions and guidance?
    e. How well informed does the FARM project keep you about project activities and results?
    f. How could communication/coordination be improved?
4. To what extent has FARM contributed to increasing agricultural productivity in the Greenbelt? What elements of FARM have been particularly effective?
5. To what extent has FARM contributed to improving market access in the Greenbelt? What elements of FARM have been particularly effective?
6. To what extent has FARM contributed to building the capacity of extension agents and government officials to support farmers? What elements of FARM have been particularly effective?
7. How did the FARM project contribute to developing agriculture policy for South Sudan?
    a. In your opinion, are the policies well designed?
    b. How likely is it that these policies will be approved?
8. Has project been responsive to the needs of both women and men? Explain.
9. How well does the FARM project coordinate with other donor projects in the agricultural sector?
    a. How could coordination be improved?
10. In your opinion, how well has the FARM project been managed? Explain?
    a. Does the FARM project have the appropriate staff and personnel? Explain.
11. In your opinion, how likely is it that the FARM project will have a lasting and sustainable impact on agriculture in South Sudan?
    a. Which results are most likely to be sustainable (e.g., production capacity, market access, policy, extension capacity) and why?

b. Could the project have been implemented in a way to create more sustainable results? Explain.

12. In your opinion, are there things that the FARM project could do to improve its performance in the time remaining? Explain?
13. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the FARM project or your interaction with the project?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FARM PROJECT STAFF

1. Start with an introduction to the project.
    a. What are project objectives?
    b. How do you work?
    c. What are the specific roles of your partners?
2. How, if at all, does implementation differ in different states, counties, payams.
3. How has the project evolved since its inception and what was the rationale for changes in the project?
4. Based on your annual reports, you appear to have met or exceeded most of the targets in your PMP, with the exception of the number of training events and work with the private sector (MSMEs). Is this correct?
    a. Have you had particular challenges with conducting training events? Explain.
    b. How do you work with the private sector (MSMEs) and what challenges have you faced doing so?
    c. The project does not appear to have developed a PMP at the beginning of the project. Have you faced any particular challenges implementing an M&E plan?
5. One thing USAID has asked us to address is the cost-effectiveness of the project. We'd like to be able to calculate the cost per unit of output for different project components, e.g., cost per person trained, cost per kg of seed distributed, cost per policy drafted. Do you have financial records that would support this type of analysis?
    a. Are there characteristics of the South Sudan environment that have affected the costs and speed at which you've been able to implement FARM?
6. To what measurable extent and how has the FARM project contributed to increased productivity for farmers? What elements of the project have been most effective?
    a. MAF told us that land clearing is the major constraint to increasing productivity. But they also told us that FARM has had difficulty clearing land. Can you explain.
7. To what measurable extent and how has the FARM project contributed to improving market access? What elements of the project have been most effective?

8. To what measurable extent and how has the FARM project increased the capacity of the public and private sector to support market-led agriculture? What elements of the project have been most effective?
9. The project lists a number of outcomes in the annual report but reports no results. Have you collected data on these indicators? Do you expect to collect data on these indicators?
10. Can you explain how the project addresses the differential needs of men and women in agriculture?
    a. How did the project identify gender needs/issues? The annual report mentions a gender analysis. Has the project conducted a gender analysis?
    b. Have you observed any differential impacts of the project on men and women?
11. How, if at all, do you coordinate with other stakeholders in the agricultural sector (MAF (national, state), county commissioners, other donors, AGRA/IFDC)?
    a. Are there formal forums for coordination among stakeholders (ICC, PCC)? Explain.
    b. Are there benefits to the FARM project in coordinating with other stakeholders? Explain.
    c. How do you work with MAF, e.g., communicate about project activities, receive feedback, incorporate suggestions.
        i. Do you offer advice to MAF?
    d. How do you work with USAID, e.g., communicate about project activities, receive feedback, incorporate suggestions?
        i. How, specifically, has the FARM project responded to USAID guidance for refocusing project activities and scaling back on project scope?
    e. How could coordination be enhanced?
12. Do you feel that you have a management structure and system in place to effectively manage the FARM project?
    a. What are the main management challenges you face?
    b. What roles do the state field offices play in managing activities within the states and do their roles vary across states? Is management more effective in some states than others? Explain.
13. How has the FARM project planned for sustainability of results?
    a. What results are likely to be sustainable/unsustainable and why?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAKEHOLDERS

1. Please describe your organization's activities in agriculture in South Sudan.
2. In your opinion, what are the primary challenges agricultural projects face operating in South Sudan?
3. Are you familiar with the FARM project?
4. Do you work directly with the FARM project?
5. To your knowledge, to what extent and how has the FARM project coordinated its activities with those of the national and state governments and other donors?
6. To what extent and how has the FARM project contributed to increased productivity for farmers? What elements of the project have been most effective?
    a. Has the FARM project contributed to increased food security for participating farmers?
7. To what extent and how has the FARM project contributed to improving market access? What elements of the project have been most effective?
8. To what extent and how has the FARM project increased the capacity of the public and private sector to support market-led agriculture? What elements of the project have been most effective?
9. *What are the primary challenges you've faced buying from FOs?*
10. *How effective has FARM been as a partner for P4P in building the capacities of FOs? Explain.*
    a. *In what ways has FARM been most effective in addressing these challenges?*
    b. *How, if at all, could FARM better address the challenges you face?*
11. Are you aware of any spillover effects or unintended consequences of the FARM project?
12. Do you have any impression of MAF perceptions of the FARM project?
13. How well do you think the FARM project addresses differential challenges of men and women farmers?
    a. How does your project address these challenges?
    b. What, if anything, might the FARM project do to better address challenges?
14. To what extent do you think that the FARM project results are sustainable?
    a. What challenges do you think the FARM project faces in trying to ensure its results are sustainable?
    b. How might the FARM project improve its level of sustainability?
    c. How does your program/project work to ensure sustainability of its results?
15. What additional advice or recommendations do you have for FARM or agricultural programs operating in this environment?

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR FBOS

Introduction: We're associated with the FARM Project. We are trying to find out what works and what does not work about the FARM Project so the organization that is funding the FARM Project can decide if it should support similar projects in other communities.

Observation checklist

1. Feasible to calculate farm size?
2. Checklist of activities (prefilled from FARM records).
3. Planting practices (rows)
4. Storage facilities
5. Mechanization
6. Housing materials (roof, walls, floors)
7. Who is in the field?

Questions for leaders of the FBO

1. When was this organization formed?
2. For what purpose was the organization formed?
3. How many members are in this FBO? men/women?
4. Do members farm collectively or individually?
5. Do members market collectively or individually?
6. What are criteria for membership? Dues/fees?
7. What types of support does this FBO provide to members and who provides it?
8. When did the FARM Project start working with this FBO?
9. What are the major challenges the organization faces in increasing production or selling products?
10. In the past two years, has a government extension agent visited this community?
11. In the past year, how many times has the FARM extension agent visited the FBO?
12. How satisfied are you with the FARM Project and why?
13. Are farmers cultivating more land, why?
14. Are farmers planting more/less different crops, why?

Questions for members

Characteristics of the farm (as a group, not individually)

1. About how many feddans did your household cultivate this year?

2. What crops did you grow this year?
3. How many farms does your household have?
4. Do you grow different crops on different farms? Explain.

Marketing (only if selling)

1. Did you sell/barter any of the crops you harvested last season?
    a. Pick a few who said yes and ask: Tell me about the last time you sold something? Where did you sell it, to whom, did you have to travel, how did you travel, how long did it take, what were your options, etc.?
    b. Pick a few who didn't sell and ask: why not?

Improved seed varieties (by seeds)

1. During the past year did you plant improved/certified varieties of maize, sorghum, cassava, or groundnuts?
2. If yes, where did you get the improved/certified varieties? (pay particular attention to other sources of seed)
3. About the seeds you got from the FARM Project…
    a. Did you get more, less, or about the same yield from the improved/certified variety compared to what you usually planted?
    b. How much more/less?
        i. The last time you planted your usual variety, how much did you plant, how much did you harvest?
        ii. The last time you planted the improved/certified variety, how much did you plant, how much did you harvest?
    c. Were you happy with the seed you got from the FARM Project? If not, why not?
4. After the FARM Project will you continue to use improved/certified seed?
    a. If yes, where will you get it?
    b. If no, why not?

Agricultural practices

1. Have you received any training in how to plant crops to get better yields?
2. Who provided the training (FARM extension agents, government extension agent, lead farmer/FBO, other donor/NGO, demo plots). Keep probing, anyone else?
3. About the training you received from the FARM Project…
    a. What did you learn? (checklist)
    b. Did you use any of these practices on your farm?
    c. Did the practices affect your yields? How.

Demo plots

1. Do you know of any plots established in your area to demonstrate agricultural practices to improve yields?
2. If yes, where (in your community, in a neighboring community) and by whom?
3. About demo plots established by the FARM Project…
    a. What, if anything, did you learn from the demo plot?
        i. Are these plots a useful way to learn about better agricultural practices? If not, why not/what is a better way?
    b. Did the demo plots make you want to use fertilizer?
        i. If yes, have you used fertilizer? Where did you get it? Did it improve your yields? Was the increased yield worth the cost?
        ii. If no, why not?

Plowing (mechanized)

1. In the past two years, how have you prepared your land?
2. If they used machines: where did you get access to machines (i.e., hired, external assistance)
3. What were the benefits of using a plow and why? Keep asking, "anything else?"

Land clearing

1. In the past two years, did you clear any new land for farming?
2. If yes, how much land did you clear?
3. did you use machines or other means to clear the land?
4. If yes, where did you get access to machines (i.e., hired, external assistance)
5. What were the benefits of clearing land? Keep asking, "anything else?"

Goats (WES only)

1. In the past two years did you receive any goats for breeding from an outside organization?
2. Who provided them?
3. Did the goats benefit you in any way? How? Why not?

Post-Harvest Practices

1. How do you store your products for future use (food, seed)?
2. Have you received any training on how to store to minimize loss?
3. Who provided this training?
4. What did you learn?
5. In the past two years, which of these practices have you used? Why not?

Men and Women

1. Do men and women play different roles in agricultural production? Explain.
2. Do men and women need different types of support…?
3. Has the FARM project provided any different types of inputs or training to men and women? Explain
4. Have men and women had different benefits from the FARM project? Explain.
5. Have benefits you received from the FARM project changed the roles of men and women in the household or on the farm?

FaaB Training

1. During the past two seasons, have you received any training on business management of your farm or on how to sell your products?
2. Who provided the training?
3. What did you learn?
4. How, if at all, have you benefitted from the training? Probe.

Additional Challenges

1. What are the greatest constraints you face in increasing production?
2. What are the greatest constraints you face selling your products?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FARM PARTNERS

1. Please describe your organization's activities in agriculture in South Sudan.
2. In your opinion, what are the primary challenges agricultural projects face operating in South Sudan?
3. Can you describe your role in the FARM project.
4. How well has Abt Associates managed its relationship with your organization on the FARM project? Explain.
    a. Have you faced any particular management challenges? If so, have they been resolved?
5. How well has the FARM project's local office managed its relationship with your organization? Explain.
    a. Have you faced any particular management challenges? If so, have they been resolved?
6. How does the FARM project communicate with you about project activities?
    a. Is this communication adequate? If not, why not?
7. What is your impression of the relationship the FARM project has with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry?
    a. Has this relationship changed over the course of the project?

8. What is your impression of the relationship the FARM project has with USAID?
    a. Has this relationship changed over the course of the project?
9. To what extent and how has the FARM project coordinated its activities with those of the national and state governments and other donors?
10. To what measurable extent and how has the FARM project contributed to increased productivity for farmers? What elements of the project have been most effective?
11. To what measurable extent and how has the FARM project contributed to improving market access? What elements of the project have been most effective?
12. To what measurable extent and how has the FARM project increased the capacity of the public and private sector to support market-led agriculture? What elements of the project have been most effective?
13. How well do you think the FARM project addresses differential challenges of men and women farmers?
    a. How does your project address these challenges?
    b. What, if anything, might the FARM project do to better address challenges?
14. To what extent do you think that the FARM project is sustainable?
    a. What challenges do you think the FARM project faces in trying to ensure its results are sustainable?
    b. How might the FARM project improve its level of sustainability?
    c. How does your program/project work to ensure sustainability of its results?
15. What additional advice or recommendations do you have for FARM or agricultural programs operating in this environment?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FARMER'S UNION

1. Please tell us a little about your organization and what you do.
2. What are the major constraints you feel that smallholder farmers face in the Greenbelt area?
3. Do women and men farmers face similar constraints? If not, what are the differences?
4. What do farmers need to be able to increase crop yields?
5. What do farmers need to be able to better market and trade their crops?
6. What type of support would you like to see provided to farmers?
7. What donor programs are you familiar with that provide some kind of support to farmers in the Greenbelt area? Can you describe what these programs do?
8. How familiar are you with the FARM project?
9. How well do you think the FARM project meets the needs of farmers in the Greenbelt area?
10. What additional activities would you like to see the FARM project take on?
11. Are there any FARM activities that you do not believe are effective? Please describe.
12. How well do you think the FARM project meets the needs of the neediest farmers?
13. How well do you think the FARM project addresses differential challenges of men and women farmers?
    a. How does your project address these challenges?
    b. What, if anything, might the FARM project do to better address challenges?
14. To what extent do you think that the FARM project is sustainable?
    a. What challenges do you think the FARM project faces in trying to ensure its results are sustainable?
    b. How might the FARM project improve its level of sustainability?
    c. How does your program/project work to ensure sustainability of its results?
15. Has the FARM project made any attempt to coordinate its activities with yours?
16. Has the FARM project had any negative or unexpected impacts on farmers in the Greenbelt area?
17. How well do you think the FARM project is managed?
18. How might management of the FARM project be improved?
19. Does the Farmers' Unions have any statistical data on farmers' organizations in South Sudan?

ANNEX 5: FARM PROJECT INDICATORS AND REPORTED RESULTS

Table 1 summarizes FARM project performance relative to the indicators on which the project reports. It also documents the evolution of project indicators between the start of the project (June, 2010) and the end of the first fiscal year reporting cycle (November, 2011). Red text in the table indicates changes in the indicators with strikethrough indicating deletions and plain text indicating insertions. Numeric results reflect those reported by the project as of November, 2011.

Table 6: List of evaluation Interviews

PROGRAM COMPONENT/INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASUREMENT, DISAGGREGATION	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE VALUE	OCT. 2010 – SEPT. 2011		COMMENTS
				Target	Actual	
1.1: INCREASE ADOPTION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES						
Number of farmers, processors, and others who have adopted new technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	Number	Farmer, processor, trader surveys	0	4,200	4,235	Outcome indicator if measured correctly
Hectares under improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance (yield of commodities)	Number	Farmer surveys	0	4,556	5,796	Outcome indicator if measured correctly
Number of individuals that have received USG-supported short-term agricultural sector productivity training (disaggregated by sex)	Number, sex of recipient of training	Project records	0	3,330	4,706	Output indicator.
Men			0	2,594	3,114	
Women			0	736	1,592	
1.3: IMPROVE PRODUCER ORGANIZATION BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS						
Number of producers' organizations, water users associations, trade and business associations, and community-based organizations receiving USG assistance	Number, organization type	Project records	30	186	225	Output indicator.
Number of women farmers, organizations/ associations assisted as a result of USG-supported interventions	Number, sex of individuals assisted	Project records	0	210	1,439	Output indicator.

PROGRAM COMPONENT/INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASUREMENT, DISAGGREGATION	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE VALUE	OCT. 2010 – SEPT. 2011		COMMENTS
				Target	Actual	
2.1: INCREASE SMALLHOLDERS' ACCESS TO MARKET SERVICES						
Number of agriculture-related firms accessing critical agricultural services (such as credit, veterinary services, agricultural inputs, machinery services and business development services) as a result of USG interventions/assistance	Number	Farmer, processor, trader surveys	0	15	0	Outcome indicator. Activities on hold.
Volume and value of purchases from smallholders of agricultural commodities targeted by USG assistance (disaggregated by sex of smallholder)	Not specified, sex	Farmer surveys	0	15%	0%	Outcome indicator. Activities on hold.
Men			no data	no data	no data	
Women			no data	no data	no data	
Usage of price and market information systems as a result of USG assistance (disaggregated by sex of information user)	Number, sex	Farmer surveys	0	4,200	0	Outcome indicator. No data available to measure this indicator.
Men				1,050	0	
Women						
2.3: INCREASE PRIVATE SECTOR SERVICES (INCLUDING MSMES) THAT SUPPORT MARKETING AND FINANCE (DISAGGREGATED BY TYPE OF ORGANIZATION)						
Value of private sector services provided that support marketing and finance	Number, type of organization	Service provider survey	0	0	0	Outcome indicator. No data available to measure this indicator.
2.4: IMPROVE THE LEGAL, REGULATORY, AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT TO FACILITATE MARKETING AND TRADE						
Number of policies/regulations/administrative procedures drafted, analyzed, approved, implemented and enforced as a result of USG assistance.	Number	Policy specialist	0	7	8 drafted	Output indicator.

PROGRAM COMPONENT/INDICATOR	UNIT OF MEASUREMENT, DISAGGREGATION	DATA SOURCE	BASELINE VALUE	OCT. 2010 – SEPT. 2011		COMMENTS
				Target	Actual	
3.1: IMPROVE BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT, AND SERVICE PROVISION SKILLS OF PRIVATE SECTOR INCLUDING MSMES						
Number of USG-supported training events held that are related to improving the trade and investment environment, and public sector capacity to provide quality services	Number	Project records	0	30	12	Output indicator. Activities on hold.
Number of individuals who have received short-term agricultural enabling environment training	Number	Project records	0	600	4,706	Output indicator.
Number of MSMEs undergoing organizational capacity/competency assessment and capacity strengthening as a result of USG assistance	Number	Project records	0	15	0	Output indicator. Activities on hold.
Number of public sector agents sufficiently trained to be qualified to support market-led agriculture as a result of USG assistance	Number	Trainer records	0	105	170	Output indicator.
3.3: STRENGTHEN THE PUBLIC SECTOR'S CAPACITY TO PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICES						
Number of public sector agents qualified to provide services	Number	Trainer records	0	105	170	Output indicator.

ANNEX 6: FARM DELIVERABLES

Table 7: FARM Project Deliverables

DELIVERABLE	SCHEDULE	STATUS
Startup mobilization plan	Within 30 days of award	Dated March 18, 2010
Annual Work Plan and Budget	60 days after signing of the award and a month before the ending of the current work plan, during the life of the project.	• Annual Work Plan Year One – April 2010 – March 2011 • Annual Work Plan Year Two – April 2011-March 2012 • Amended Annual Work Plan – October 2011-September 2012
Performance Monitoring Plan	Baseline survey and final PMP within 120 days after the award.	• PMP dated June, 2010 (all baseline values are zero and targets are TBD) • Updated PMP (reports actual results through September, 2011)
Semi-Annual Performance Reports	Every 6 months, according to USAID"s reporting cycle. Dates and format TBD within the first 30 days of the award. Will include workshop/conference/ training reports.	• February, 2010 – September, 2010 • April, 2011 • November, 2011 • April, 2012
Annual Performance Report	Within 2 weeks after the end of the year, date to correspond to USAID"s reporting cycle. Dates and format TBD within the first 30 days of the award	• April, 2011 • April, 2011 • November, 2011
Final Performance Report	90 days after completion of the contract; first draft is due 30 days after completion of the contract	Not yet due
Quarterly Financial Reports	30 days after end of the reporting period	• Quarter 1, FY 2010 • Quarter 2, FY 2010 • Quarter 3, FY 2010 • Quarter 4, FY 2010 • Quarter 1, FY 2011 • Quarter 2, FY 2011 • Quarter 1, FY 2012[71] • Quarter 2, FY 2012 • Quarter 3, FY 2012

[71] The discontinuity in quarters reflects a change in fiscal year definitions and not a gap in reports.

DELIVERABLE	SCHEDULE	STATUS	
Grants under Contracts Manual	90 days after signing the award	January 10, 2011	
Monthly Meeting with minutes	During the first week of the month. Report not to exceed 5 pages.	The evaluation team did not receive these documents.	
Quarterly GOSS/USAID/ Contractor Core Group Meeting	Minutes with Action Points to be circulated back to group within 5 days after the meeting	The evaluation team did not receive these documents.	
Equipment Inventory Plan	Annually (as part of the work plan)	The project's work plans document "Equipment and Government Property.".	
Foreign Tax Reporting	Annual/April for the preceding year as per the Basic IQC	The evaluation team did not receive these documents.	
Final Financial Report	90 days after completion of contract	Not yet due	
Success Stories (format will be provided)	Minimum of one per quarter with photographs	Quarter 3, FY 2010	1 stories
		Quarter 4, FY 2010	1 stories
		Quarter 1, FY 2011	1 stories
		Quarter 2, FY 2011	2 stories
		Quarter 3, FY 2011	2 stories
		Quarter 4, FY 2011	3 stories
		Quarter 1, FY 2012	3 stories
		Quarter 2, FY 2012	3 stories
		Quarter 3, FY 2012	2 stories
Monthly Contractor meetings with COTR	3 days after meeting. Summarized implementation and financial reports (NTE 5 pages)	The evaluation team did not receive these documents.	
Ad-hoc analyses, evaluations, studies, operational research and other reports, as requested.	TBD by COTR	See list below.	

REPORTS

1. The Farm Project Smallholder Farm Value Chain Analysis for The Greenbelt Areas of Equatoria, July, 2011
2. South Sudan Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan (PERSUAP)
3. Market Assessment Report (Appendix 11 of April, 2012 Semi-Annual Report)
4. Grants for Agricultural Rehabilitation (Appendix 9 of April, 2012 Semi-Annual Report)
5. IPM Report (Appendix 7 of April, 2012 Semi-Annual Report)
6. Maize Yield Assessment Report, August and September, 2011, Central, Eastern, and Western Equatoria, South Sudan (Appendix 5 of April, 2012 Semi-Annual Report)
7. Maize Yield Assessment Report, August and September, 2012 Central, Eastern, and Western Equatoria, South Sudan
8. Torit Feasibility Study Assessment, 12th – 15th October, 2011, Torit County, Eastern Equatoria State (Appendix 3 of April, 2012 Semi-Annual Report)
9. Guidelines and Procedures for "Good Stewardship" Practices in Rehabilitation of Agricultural Land of the Equatoria Region of South Sudan, (Draft), November 16, 2011
10. Sustainable Agricultural Landscapes: A Reference Manual of Technical Procedures (Draft)
11. Baseline Report, August, 2010
12. Training Manual for Bean Production (Appendix 3 of April, 2012 Semi-Annual Report)
13. Agricultural Trade Fair Manual (Appendix 12 of April, 2012 Semi-Annual Report)
14. Post-Harvest Handling Training Manuals: Field Manual for the Construction of a Locally Improved Drying/Storage Crib (Appendix 10 of April, 2012 Semi-Annual Report)

SUCCESS STORIES

1. A Beehive of Activity (Quarter 3, FY 2010)
2. USAID Trains Tractor Operators (Quarter 4, FY 2010)
3. USAID Revitalizes Goat Industry (Quarter 1, FY 2011)
4. Better Seeds Bring Better Yields (Quarter 2, FY 2011)
5. Equipping Farmers to Increase Yields (Quarter 2, FY 2011)
6. Change Behavior, Improve Results (Quarter 3, FY 2011)
7. Policies for Progress (Quarter 3, FY 2011)
8. Cultivating Confidence, Building Business (Quarter 4, FY 2011)
9. Feeding a Family (Quarter 4, FY 2011)
10. Stocking for the Future (Quarter 4, FY 2011)
11. Collaborating with the County (Quarter 1, FY 2012)
12. First Agricultural Trade Fair – South Sudan (Quarter 1, FY 2012)
13. Reaping the Benefits (Quarter 1, FY 2012)
14. Farmer-to-Farmer Field Visits (Quarter 2, FY 2012)
15. Introducing Improved Inputs (Quarter 2, FY 2012)
16. Plowing for Progress (Quarter 2, FY 2012)
17. Expanding Seed Distribution Activities (Quarter 3, FY 2012)
18. Reclaiming Agricultural Land (Quarter 3, FY 2012)

ANNEX 7: ACTIVITIES OF OTHER DONORS THAT COMPLIMENT FARM

The German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) works on capacity building projects with MAF and two "tiny" value chain pilot projects in Magwi and Morobo counties. GIZ explained that the agency has chosen to work on warehouse management and "everything after production" on their value chain projects because USAID is focusing on production. However, they added that they have not actually linked up with FARM on any of these activities. They have good informal communication with the COP, but no collaborations have occurred. The 2011 Annual Work plan[72] indicate that when the FARM project shifted toward staple crop production, FARM provided GIZ with a copy of its honey value chain analysis and discussed lessons learned as GIZ was beginning to work in the honey sector and the findings could be passed on and utilized.[73]

The SNV agricultural work in the Greenbelt includes, capacity building of farmers and farmer organizations on value chains such as, livestock, some staple crops, horticulture, and non-timber forest products like honey and shea. Their primary work is in Eastern Equatoria. In addition, they are assisting with farmer capacity building through rehabilitating government farmer training centers. In Eastern Equatoria they are working on the Akil Center; a farmer training center where adult illiterate training on farming techniques takes place. During these trainings with farmers SNV found that ox plowing is critical to increasing production, so they are moving Akil to become an ox plow propagation center. The center is for the state so it is open to all and they hope to replicate it as well.

As part of its Purchase for Progress (P4P) initiative, the World Food Programme (WFP) Purchase for Progress (P4P) is establishing 15 warehouses in surplus-producing areas in the Greenbelt. WFP intends to turn the warehouses over to trained private sector actors. The warehouses will available to all farmers and FBOs within the catchment areas and will provide places to aggregate and store commodities for sale or future consumption. WFP anticipates being able to purchase from these warehouses to support its local procurement program but, because they are private sector businesses, stocks in the warehouses will be available to any other buyer as well. WFP is actively seeking input from donors/project in finding suitable locations for the warehouses and partners to operate them.

The UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) is working on a variety of small scale agricultural projects throughout South Sudan. They said they have no direct collaboration with FARM, but have consulted the project on their scoping mission for a new cash transfer program, supported the National Agricultural Fair led by FARM and MAF, and participate on the food security council with FARM. FAO also works on extension services with an ongoing project to train extension staff in Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and their latest initiative is to work on introducing Farmer Field Schools based on the success of this model elsewhere in East Africa. The FARM project's revised year two work plan indicated upcoming work to develop a market information system (MIS) targeted at farmers and traders that would build on the current system (CLIMIS) based in the Ministry of Planning which is supported by FAO. This evaluation found no indication that work has begun on this activity.

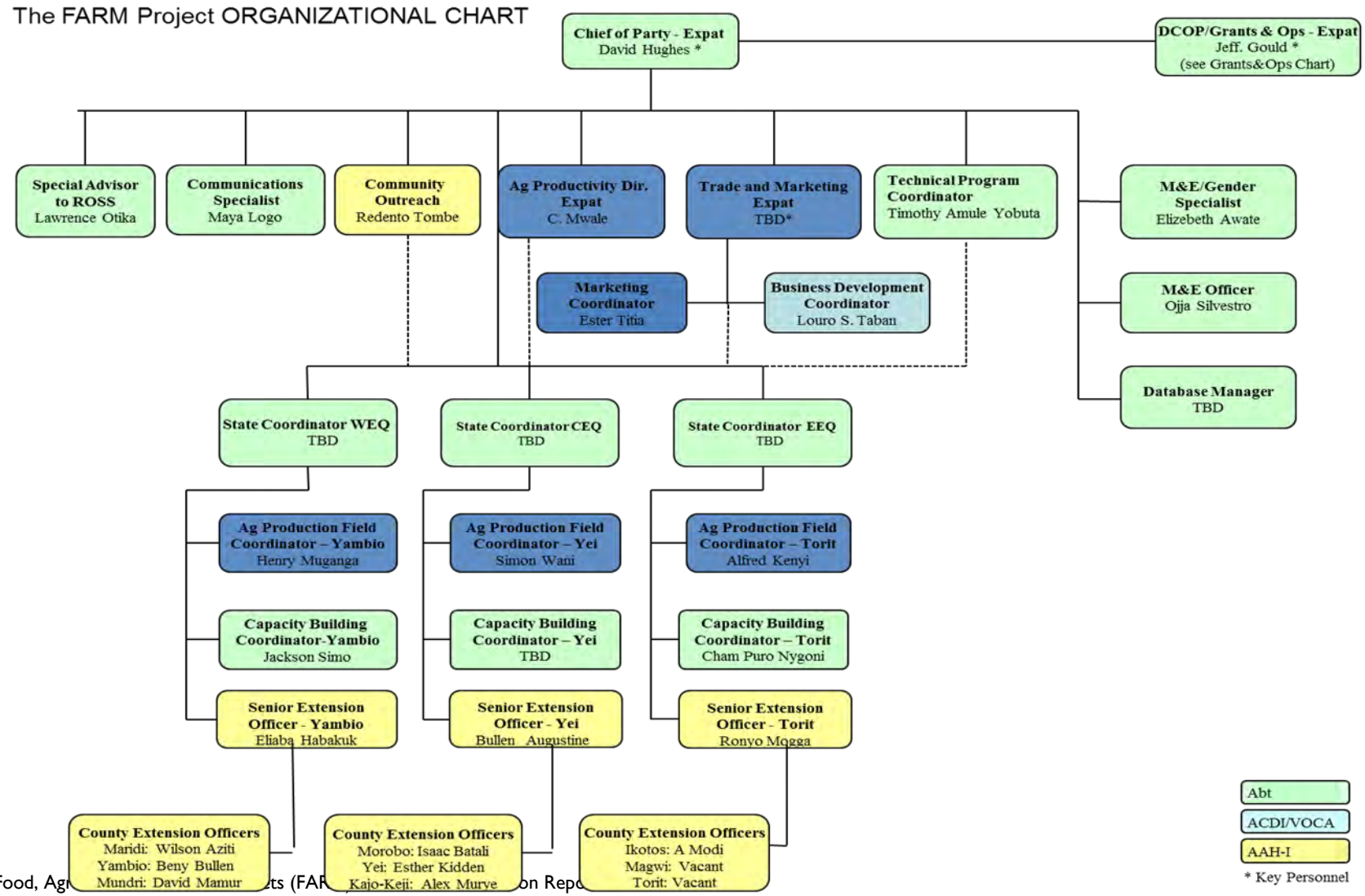
[72] FARM 2011 Annual Report, p. 13

[73] FARM 2011 Annual Report, p 22.

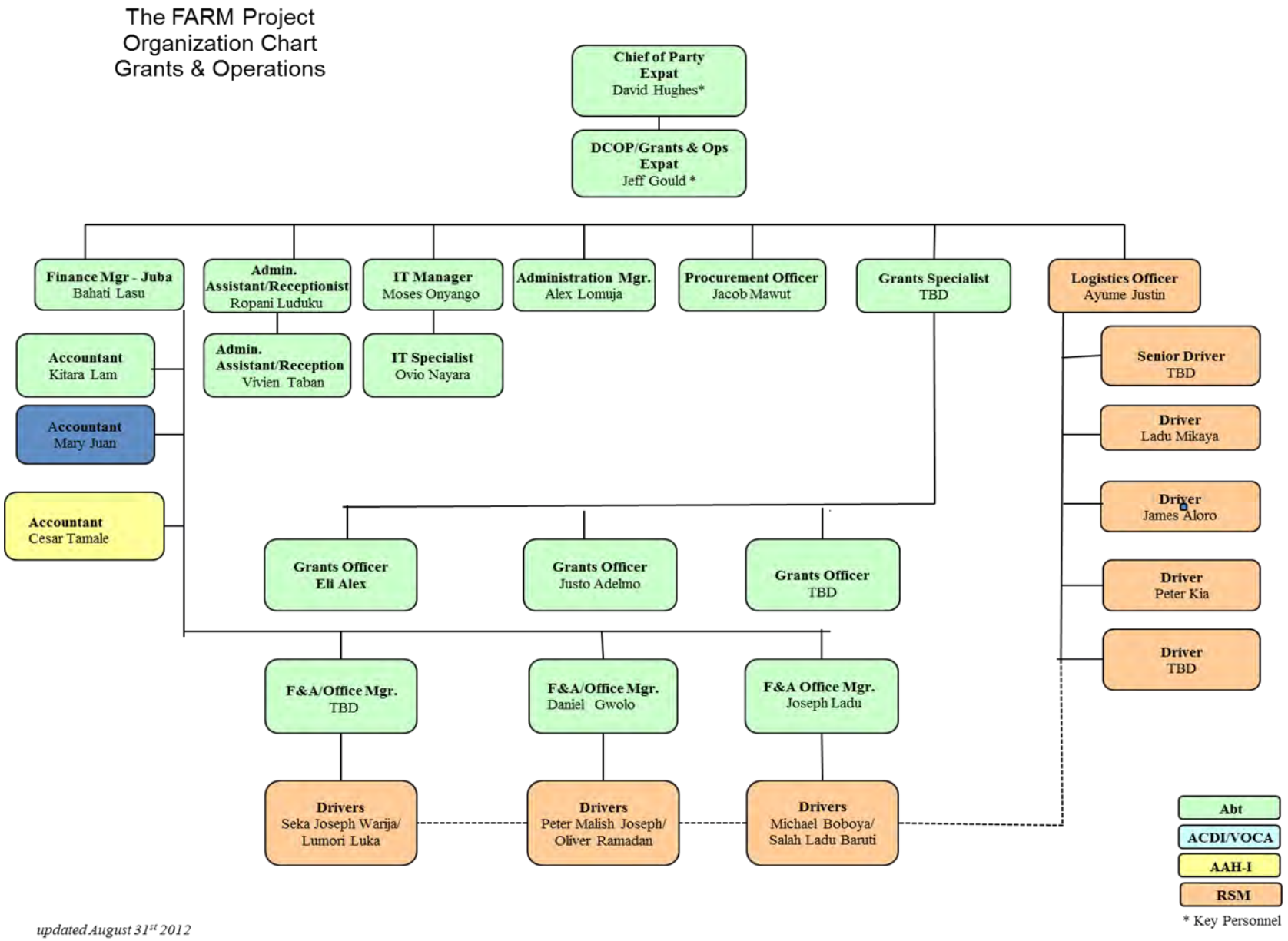
AAH-I is a subcontractor to Abt Associates for the FARM project acting as the capacity building lead, but is also conducting separate agricultural work in the Greenbelt. In Yambio and Morobo counties they are working with farmers on planting improved seeds, taking surpluses to markets, food safety nets (cash for work) grants for food insecure households, post-harvest handling trainings, improving feeder roads, and supporting farmers' co-ops with equipment such as a grinding mill in Morobo. AAH-I says that they have no duplication with FARM as they operate in different payams within the county.

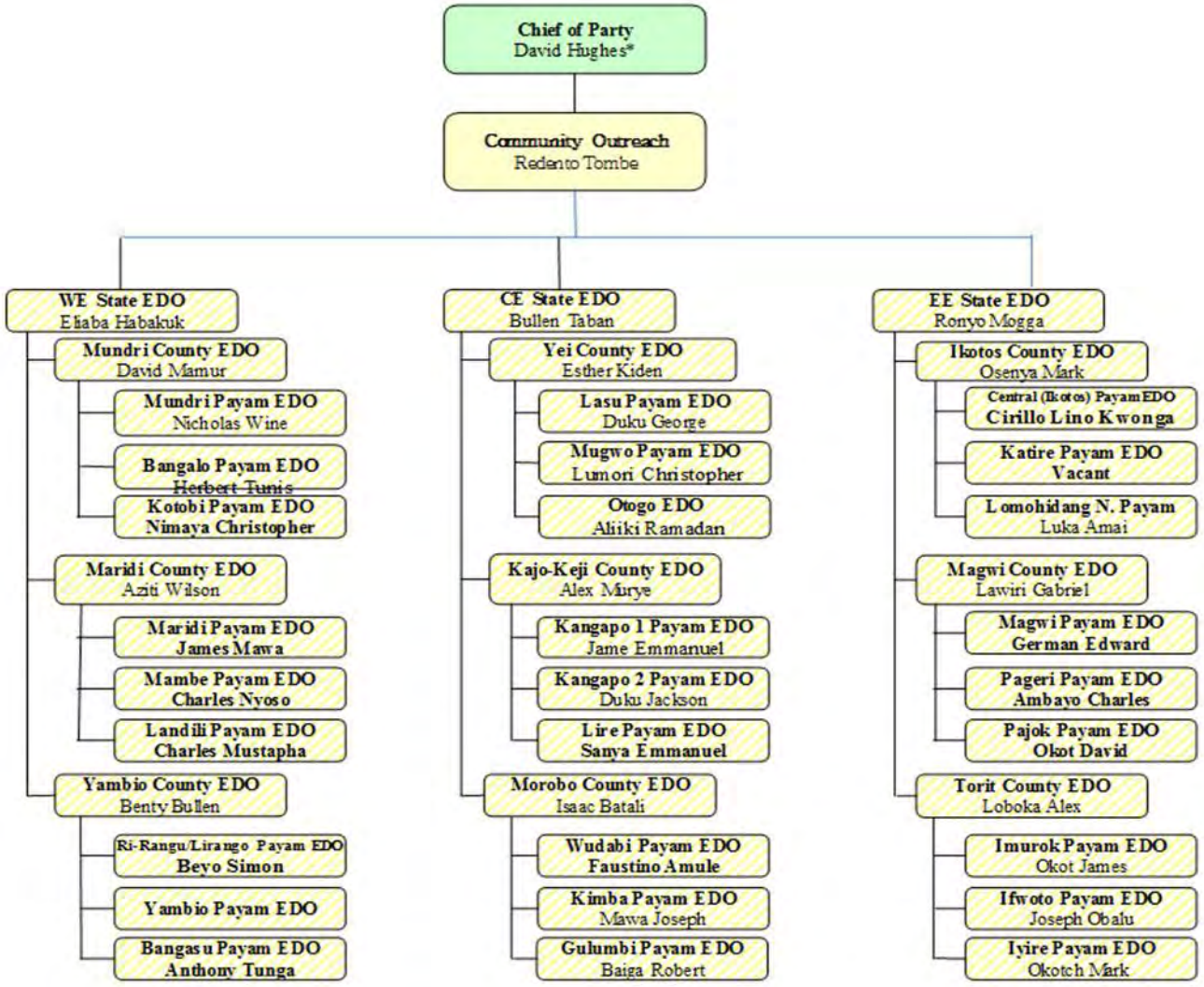
ANNEX 8: FARM PROJECT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Figure 3:



updated August 31, 2012


The FARM Project
Organization Chart
Grants & Operations
Chief of Party
Expat
David Hughes*
DCOP/Grants & Ops
Expat
Jeff Gould *
Finance Mgr - Juba
Bahati Lasu
Admin.
Assistant/Receptionist
Ropani Luduku
IT Manager
Moses Onyango
Administration Mgr.
Alex Lomuja
Procurement Officer
Jacob Mawut
Grants Specialist
TBD
Logistics Officer
Ayume Justin
Accountant
Kitara Lam
Accountant
Mary Juan
Accountant
Cesar Tamale
Admin.
Assistant/Reception
Vivien Taban
IT Specialist
Ovio Nayara
Senior Driver
TBD
Driver
Ladu Mikaya
Driver
James Aloro
Driver
Peter Kia
Driver
TBD
Grants Officer
Eli Alex
Grants Officer
Justo Adelmo
Grants Officer
TBD
F&A/Office Mgr.
TBD
F&A/Office Mgr.
Daniel Gwolo
F&A Office Mgr.
Joseph Ladu
Drivers
Seka Joseph Warija/
Lumori Luka
Drivers
Peter Malish Joseph/
Oliver Ramadan
Drivers
Michael Boboya/
Salah Ladu Baruti
Abt
ACDI/VOCA
AAH-I
RSM
* Key Personnel
updated August 31st 2012


Chief of Party
David Hughes*
Community Outreach
Redento Tombe
WE State EDO
Eliaba Habakuk
Mundri County EDO
David Mamur
Mundri Payam EDO
Nicholas Wine
Bangalo Payam EDO
Herbert Tunis
Kotobi Payam EDO
Nimaya Christopher
Maridi County EDO
Aziti Wilson
Maridi Payam EDO
James Mawa
Mambe Payam EDO
Charles Nyoso
Landili Payam EDO
Charles Mustapha
Yambio County EDO
Benty Bullen
Ri-Rangu/Lirango Payam EDO
Beyo Simon
Yambio Payam EDO
Bangasu Payam EDO
Anthony Tunga
CE State EDO
Bullen Taban
Yei County EDO
Esther Kiden
Lasu Payam EDO
Duku George
Mugwo Payam EDO
Lumori Christopher
Otogo EDO
Aliiki Ramadan
Kajo-Keji County EDO
Alex Murye
Kangapo 1 Payam EDO
Jame Emmanuel
Kangapo 2 Payam EDO
Duku Jackson
Lire Payam EDO
Sanya Emmanuel
Morobo County EDO
Isaac Batali
Wudabi Payam EDO
Faustino Amule
Kimba Payam EDO
Mawa Joseph
Gulumbi Payam EDO
Baiga Robert
EE State EDO
Ronyo Mogga
Ikotos County EDO
Osenya Mark
Central (Ikotos) Payam EDO
Cirillo Lino Kwonga
Katire Payam EDO
Vacant
Lomohidang N. Payam
Luka Amai
Magwi County EDO
Lawiri Gabriel
Magwi Payam EDO
German Edward
Pageri Payam EDO
Ambayo Charles
Pajok Payam EDO
Okot David
Torit County EDO
Loboka Alex
Imurok Payam EDO
Okot James
Ifwoto Payam EDO
Joseph Obalu
Iyire Payam EDO
Okotch Mark

ANNEX 9: FARM RESPONSIVENESS TO USAID DIRECTION

Table 8: FARM Project Responsiveness to USAID Direction

USAID DIRECTION	FARM PROJECT RESPONSE	EVALUATION TEAM ASSESSMENT
Continue work in groundnuts, sorghum, cassava, and maize, and consider expansion into beans and oil crops. Put on hold activities with value chains for cash crops, pulses, and horticulture; they may be considered after the mid-term assessment.	FARM Project staff report that they distribute groundnut, sorghum, maize, and bean seeds and cassava cuttings to FBOs. The 17 FBOs interviewed by the evaluation team corroborated this information. Based on evidence from the 2013 Draft Evaluation Report, FARM does not have any plans to expand its work into value chains for cash crops, pulses, or horticulture.	Met Direction
Eliminating activities with small ruminants	FARM Project staff (in the Juba headquarters office and WES) told the evaluation team that the project is no longer distributing goats. The evaluation team interviewed one FBO that had received goats in 2010, and they were very happy with the goats, citing them as the most important contribution of the FARM project. This group was not aware that FARM plans to eliminate the goat grant program.	Met Direction
Continue to provide seed to FBOs through FY 2012 but not beyond	All 17 of the FBOs the evaluation team interviewed reported that they had received seeds from FARM in 2012. Also despite this guidance from USAID, FARM reports in its 2013 Draft Work Plan that it will continue to provide seeds to new FBOs in 2013 (175 new FARM FBOs) (USAID reported that this was because FARM's COR approved seed grants due to the lack of ability of AGRA to distribute seeds in 2013). The evaluation team cannot assess whether or not this will take place, as it is scheduled to happen in the future. The work plan does say, however, that those FBOs that have already received seeds through the FARM project will not receive new seeds in 2013 but will, instead, receive training on how to select and store seeds from their produce. FARM staff verified this.	Partially Met Direction
Collaborate with AGRA to support seed development through project demonstration and training activities and, where appropriate, multiplication through contract growers who are FBOs participating in the project.	The evaluation team was unable to assess whether FARM met this guidance, as these activities are scheduled to occur in the future, according to FARM's 2013 Draft Work Plan.	Unable to Determine
Coordinate 6,000 demonstration trial on improved seed and fertilizer in collaboration with IFDC	Three of the 17 FBOs the evaluation team interviewed reported having participated in an on-farm demonstration trial. These FBOs include a total of 83 farmers, representing 1.4 percent of the total 5,876 farmers FARM reports having reached through on-farm demonstrations (2013 Draft FARM Work Plan). These were conducted in collaboration with IFDC. Further, 12 of the 17 FBOs the evaluation team interviewed reported that one or more lead/motivational farmers from their FBO attended a farmer field day to learn about seeds and fertilizers. These were separate from the on-farm demonstrations but were also conducted in collaboration with IFDC. The evaluation team could not confirm these numbers due to limited time and resources, which prevented the team from visiting all the FBOs.	Partially Met Direction

USAID DIRECTION	FARM PROJECT RESPONSE	EVALUATION TEAM ASSESSMENT
In supporting public and private sector service provision to support agricultural production, FARM will not work with processors, agricultural input dealers, upstream consolidators/buyers of commodities, or finance institutions	FARM Project staff told the evaluation team that the project is no longer working on these activities, and these activities do not appear in FARM's 2013 Draft Work Plan. However, it was not possible for the evaluation team to verify the FARM Project's response to this direction beyond this evidence.	Unable to Determine
The FARM Project will not work on prioritizing feeder roads for rehabilitation	FARM Project staff told the evaluation team that the project is no longer working on this component, and feeder road prioritization does not appear in FARM's 2013 Draft Work Plan. However, it was not possible for the evaluation team to verify the FARM Project's response to this direction beyond this evidence.	Unable to Determine
In support of marketing, FARM will focus on primary traders who buy at the village level	FARM Project staff told the evaluation team that the project has narrowed its focus appropriately. It was not possible for the evaluation team to verify FARM Project response to this direction beyond this evidence.	Unable to Determine
In terms of building private sector capacity in business, management, and service provision skills, FARM will not be responsible for developing the capacity of large-scale producers and firms or individuals or entities	The evaluation team could not address this direction, as its scope was not clear, and there was no way of ensuring nothing had been done in this area beyond recording what FARM Project staff report. However, there is no evidence that FARM has completed any activities to build the capacity of large-scale organizations.	Unable to Determine
Continue to work on sustainable land clearing procedures and cost effectively increase the availability of plowing and harrowing services	The evaluation team observed 3 instances where FBO members reported the FARM Project had trained them on land clearing practices and 5 instances where FBO members reported the project provided plowing grants to their FBO. Further, 7 out of the 11 FBOs that had increased their communal farm land since working with FARM attributed the increase in their total land to the FARM project. FARM often inspired these FBOs to clear their land in preparation for plowing by a FARM-provided tractor. In general, the evaluation team found that FBOs want to and have the ability to clear their own land, but when FARM provides them with a plowing grant, they are often inspired and able to do so more quickly (sometimes a season or several seasons before they report they would have been able to without FARM's assistance). Several beneficiary FBOs, MAF staff, and FARM staff members noted problems with FARM's provision of plowing and harrowing services, saying the issues were largely due to the limited number of service providers in the region and limited access to parts and maintenance workers. This limited the number of plowing grants that FARM could give within its budget, according to FARM staff. While the evaluation team found no evidence to date that FARM has worked with service providers to eliminate bottlenecks to service provision or provided grants for more cost-effective plowing services (such as the use of oxen plows), the Project's 2013 Draft Work Plan says that the Project will begin to do both of these things in 2013. The evaluation team could not confirm that this will happen since it is planned for the future.	Partially Met Direction

USAID DIRECTION	FARM PROJECT RESPONSE	EVALUATION TEAM ASSESSMENT
Continue to engage smallholder FBOs but work more directly with progressive, commercially oriented farmers within the FBOs to disseminate new technologies and lead market development	The evaluation team found no evidence that FARM was beginning to work more directly with individual farmers within FBOs. However, its 2013 Draft Work Plan says, "A major shift in focus in 2013 will be support to FBOs that are deemed market ready and are able to form themselves into cooperatives that will be able to serve not only as a marketing outlet for their members but also to develop into agro-dealers with support from IFDC." The report goes on to mention that the FARM project has already started working on registration of these groups, and one staff member close to this activity reported that the project has already registered four FBOs as cooperatives. The evaluation team could not verify this information.	Partially Met Direction
Continue working with FBOs to increase access to primary-level village based buyers/traders and provide a clear justification for the value added of this activity (relative to capacity building activities)	The evaluation team concluded that the FARM Project's activity related to increasing FBO's access to traders has been minimal to date. Two FBOs interviewed by the evaluation team reported they have received assistance with linking to traders, and FARM staff report that they have also held 12 farmer-trader forums (See the Increasing Trade Section for more information). FARM staff acknowledge that efforts in this area have been limited due to one staff member in the Juba office. There is also no evidence that the project provided USAID with a justification for the value added of this activity relative to capacity building activities.	Partially Met Direction
Continue training target beneficiaries	The evaluation team observed continued training in all of the 17 FBOs it interviewed, and FARM reports that it will continue to train all of its beneficiary FBOs in 2013 (FARM Draft Work Plan, 2013).	Met Direction
Continue training FARM extension agents and hire and train additional agents to provide adequate support to farmers	The evaluation team's interviews with county and payam FARM staff revealed concerns about the adequacy of training provided to FARM extension agents (A total of 9 out of 12 FARM county and payam extension agents who were asked about training said that they did not receive any extension-agent specific training. Instead, they reported that they were trained along with farmers or simply before farmers, but only to the same level as the farmers. All but one of the extension agents interviewed specifically requested additional training from FARM). The project has recently hired 25 payam-level extension workers (it was been recruiting for 27, but there are two vacancies, according to FARM's 2012 organogram, dated September 9, 2012)[74] to enhance its ability to reach FBOs but most (10 out of 12) of the county and payam-level FARM staff the evaluation team interviewed believe that additional extension agents are necessary, particularly in light of FARM Project plans to continue adding FBOs (FARM's 2013 Draft Work Plan says that FARM will add 175 new FBOs in 2013).	Partially Met Direction

[74] One FARM staff member we spoke with said that rather than having 3 payams in one county, there are actually 4 payams, and 4 payam extension agents, which would make the total number of current payam extension workers 26, with two vacancies, for a total of 28 positions. However, this could not be confirmed from a review of FARM's organogram.

USAID DIRECTION	FARM PROJECT RESPONSE	EVALUATION TEAM ASSESSMENT
FARM COP should review staffing and its organization to maximize efficiency and efficacy. This could mean termination, re-assignment and hiring of staff where necessary. Staffing organization must be addressed in the work plan with clear justifications and roles for each staff.	The project's amended work plan (developed in response to USAID direction and submitted in March, 2012) eliminated eight staff positions and added four. Justification was provided for some of the changes in staff but not for all of the changes. Further, while the work plan also includes an organizational chart, there is no attempt to justify each of the staff members and their roles.	Partially Met Direction
The amended work plan must include a budget justification. Given the contraction and elimination of the activities above, as well as a focus on other activities, the budget should reflect the reduced scale of intervention in the various sectors.	The amended work plan did include a budget that met the requirement listed within that work plan to reduce the project budget to $850,000/month (FARM Amended Work Plan, 2012). The work plan also includes a brief explanation of the costs. The evaluation team was unable to assess whether or not the inclusion of these elements met with USAID's guidance related to budget, as no actual numbers were included in the guidance letter provided by USAID.	Partially Met Direction
FARM will review and amend targets of indicators previously submitted to USAID. Clear and realistic targets with dates for meeting the targets should be provided.	FARM has not updated its PMP since it received this guidance letter from USAID.	Direction Not Met
Given the extent of the challenges of monitoring and evaluation in South Sudan, FARM will provide a detailed M&E plan and if hiring of additional staff is being proposed, a justification should be provided with clear roles	The evaluation team found no evidence that the FARM Project has provided a detailed M&E plan since the date of this guidance letter from USAID. The staff did, however, request the addition of two M&E positions in its Revised Work Plan, dated March, 2012. Since that time, FARM staff report that they sent an additional request to USAID for one full-time M&E staff person (to-date, the project has only had a half-time M&E Officer). It is not clear whether USAID has approved either of these requests, but the FARM Project has hired one full-time M&E person, who started in October.	Direction Not Met

ANNEX 10: FBO TRAININGS RECEIVED

Table 9: FARM Project Trainings Received by Visited FBOs

FBO ID NUMBER	STATE	COUNTY	YEAR FOUNDED	YEAR STARTED WITH FARM (IF KNOWN)	TYPE OF TRAINING (YES IF RECEIVED/NO IF NOT RECEIVED)					
					PLANTING PROCESSES (GAP)	POST HARVEST/STORAGE (GAP)	FARMING AS A BUSINESS (FAAB)	FERTILIZER USE	ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	OTHER PRACTICES (TYPE OF TRAINING LISTED)
1	CES	Kajo Keji	Unknown	2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Land Clearance; Pest Control
2	CES	Kajo Keji	2005	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Land Clearance; Pest Control
3	CES	Yei	1962; 2005	Unknown	Yes	Unclear	Yes	Yes	No	None
4	CES	Yei	2005	2012	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Land Clearance
5	CES	Morobo	2011	Unknown	Yes	Yes	Yes		No	None
6	CES	Morobo	2009	2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	None
7	WES	Maridi	2006	2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	None
8	WES	Maridi	1984	2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Pest Control; Leadership
9	WES	Maridi	2009	2012	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	None
10	WES	Mundri	2002	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	None
11	WES	Mundri	2004	2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Leadership (supervision)
12	WES	Yambio	2010	2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	None
13	WES	Yambio	Unknown	Unknown	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Animal Husbandry
14	EES	Torit	2011	2011	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	None

15	EES	Torit	2009	2012	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	None
16	EES	Magwi	2010	2011	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Record Keeping
17	EES	Magwi	2010	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	None
Total FBOs that received training					17	12	13	15	2	7

ANNEX 11: FBOS PER EXTENSION AGENT

Table 10: Number of FARM FBOs Per Extension Agent

EXTENSION WORKER GROUP INTERVIEW ID	# OF EXTENSION WORKERS INTERVIEWED	NAMES OF THOSE INTERVIEWED		COUNTY	NUMBER OF FBOS PER AGENT				
		COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICER PRESENT?	NUMBER OF PAYAM EXTENSION WORKERS INTERVIEWED		PAYAM 1	PAYAM 2	PAYAM 3	PAYAM 4	TOTAL
1	1	Yes	0	Yei	11	19	8	N/A	38
2	2	Yes	1	Morobo	10	10	10	N/A	30
3	3	Yes	2	Maridi	22	8	4	N/A	34
4	2	No	2	Mundri	21	11	9	N/A	41
5	2	Yes	1	Yambio	18	16	Unknown	N/A	34
6	1	No	1	Torit	13	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	13
7	1	Yes	0	Torit	13	3	11	3	30
8	1	No	1	Magwi	21	8	Unknown	Unknown	29
Average FBOs Per County Officer (from evidence collected)									31
Average FBOs Per Payam Worker (from evidence collected)									12