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ACTESA / COMESA

Organizational Capacity Assessment



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAMP	Africa Agricultural Markets Program
ACTESA	Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa
AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
AU	African Union
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program
CapScan	Capacity Scanning
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COMRAP	COMESA Regional Agro-inputs Program
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
EAC	East African Community
EAGC	East African Grain Council
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
FtF	Feed the Future
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDTF	Multi-Donor Development Trust Fund
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MfDR	Managing for Development Results
MSI	Management Systems International
MSU	Michigan State University
MTSP	Medium Term Strategic Plan of COMESA
MLI	Market Linkage Initiative
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OP	Operational Plan
PfP	Purchase for Progress
SACAU	Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SG	Secretary General
SPS	Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TRG	Training Resources Group
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Program of the United Nations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents an institutional assessment of the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA). The assessment was conducted by the Africa Leadership Training and Capacity Building (Africa Lead) Program. The Africa LEAD program is being implemented by RAISE Plus IQC holder, DAI, supported by Management Systems International (MSI), Winrock International, Training Resources Group (TRG), ECIAfrica Consulting (Pty) Ltd., and Michigan State University (MSU). Africa Lead provides leadership training, capacity assessments, logistical support for training and innovative short courses and internships/twinning arrangements prioritized in consultation with missions and partner countries and institutions, and a database of training offerings on the continent that can be matched to the leadership training and capacity building needs.

Background and Methodology

The Managing for Development Results Capacity Scanning (MfDR CapScan) methodology is a product of the Organization for Economic Co-operation (OECD) / Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Joint Venture to implement results-based approaches (MfDR CapScan Manual, 2011) and has been adopted internationally as a best practice approach for assessing organizational managing for results capability. CapScan systematically examines an institution to assess how well it is structured, administered, financed and functioning to succeed in achieving those goals and objectives it has set out for itself.

This assessment report presents the results of a modified CapScan exercise applied to the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) – a specialized agency of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) - conducted by a three-person team from Africa LEAD.¹ ACTESA was established in 2009 by the COMESA Heads of State to facilitate the integration of and improved regional competitiveness of staple food markets across the region with the ultimate goal of achieving broad-based growth and decreased food insecurity. ACTESA is charged with addressing the specific needs and requirements of small farmers to access markets for their produce and to thereby support implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) at the regional level. This improved market access is to be achieved by focusing on:

- Improved policy research, outreach and advocacy
- Market facilities and trade expansion, and
- Capacity building for commercialization.

This assessment, funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), was regarded as desirable and timely as ACTESA was preparing a new five-year program strategy which would require specific institutional capacity to implement. The assessment's objective is to analyze ACTESA's organizational and management capacity in relation to its mandate and mission, identify capacity gaps, and identify priority areas for improvement.

¹ Africa LEAD is a USAID-financed project designed to identify, empower, train and support emergence of leaders in Africa involved in solving the problem of food insecurity on the continent.

The MfDR CapScan began with interviews of key ACTESA staff; the Chief Executive Officer, the Chief Financial Officer, technical specialists, and administrative and support staff. The Assessment Team also met with the Secretary General of COMESA, ACTESA's parent organization, to learn his vision for the specialized agency and to hear his opinion about how far ACTESA has come since its creation in 2009, where he hopes it will go in future, and how he sees it getting there.

ACTESA's goal of reducing regional food insecurity, its activities and many of its on-going functions imply a close working relationship in support of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP). For this reason, the Assessment Team's Terms of Reference (ToR) included examining the past and current working relationship between these two entities. CAADP staff was also interviewed as part of this assessment process.

Similarly, ACTESA's role in assisting CAADP Compact countries to attain their food security goals through intra-regional and international trade requires a close working relationship with COMESA's Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) Unit. The members of the SPS Unit were therefore also interviewed to learn and understand the history of their working relationship with ACTESA.

The Assessment Team also benefited from attending a World Bank (WB) Results Indicator Review with CAADP, to which the WB provides funding support. Attendance of the review clarified activities, key linkages, roles and responsibilities of CAADP and ACTESA in achieving their respective food security objectives.

These interviews and meetings provided the necessary background information required to customize the CapScan Assessment Matrix and to structure a workshop for ACTESA staff in which they assessed their own capacities to fulfill their roles and responsibilities in managing for their targeted development results. The intended outcome of the self-assessment workshop was to identify areas of needed capacity-building and to achieve consensus on priorities for improvement.

Principal Capacity Findings

The following are the principal findings on ACTESA's organizational capacity:

- **Technical capacity:** While ACTESA has a skilled group of professionals, their numbers are severely limited considering the regional scope and extent of their mandate. The majority of disciplinary subject areas consist of only one person and are generally self-guided (e.g. the Market Analyst is functionally under the supervision of the Director of Trade and Markets, however, the supervisory position is vacant). Conversely, there is a Director of Production and Market Development but has no staff reporting directly to him.

ACTESA's core technical capacity is currently constrained and limited to a few specific topical areas, these being linked to regional seed trade and markets. More importantly, ACTESA's existing technical capacity is under threat and at risk of being further eroded due to its project-based funding. Of the seven technical staff mentioned above, five are funded by the COMESA Regional Agro-Inputs Program (COMRAP) project which is due to close in March 2012. Consequently, unless additional funding sources are identified soon, ACTESA could lose the majority of its technical capacity. If current project staff were to be co-opted as regular "established" ACTESA staff, then most core staff positions would be filled. But this is an action yet to take place.

- **Vision and mandate:** ACTESA has a vision and a clear understanding of its medium term objectives but a roadmap setting out how it intends to achieve is necessary for the development and management of specific programs would boost confidence. It is anticipated that the Operational Plan (OP) currently under preparation will provide that the organization clarity and sense of direction.
- **Governance:** There is no ACTESA Board as directed by the COMESA Charter.

ACTESA, being a specialized agency of COMESA, was established to fulfill a particular mandate in the region in respect to small and medium scale farmers. As such, ACTESA has a management and governance linkage with COMESA in the form of an Advisory Board. The Board was established to support the functioning of ACTESA but it has not met in the past year.

To formalize the relationship between COMESA and ACTESA, the former is in the process of finalizing a Charter whose aim will be regularize the establishment of ACTESA but also specify the governance and management structure. Once the Charter is ratified the role of the existing Advisory Board will diminish.

The absence of a Charter was cited during the assessment as one of the reasons for the perceived ambiguity in the status of ACTESA and its relationship with COMESA. It was noted in some responses during the assessment that there is a lack of clarity regarding the status of ACTESA as a semi-autonomous body. In particular, what does it mean with respect to the decisions that can be made at ACTESA level and those which can only be made by COMESA? The lack of a clear and effective governance structure is a deterrent to ACTESA's effective management, and means there are gaps and a lack of clarity in regard to oversight and authority.

- **Management systems:** Project staff develop annual plans which are occasionally reviewed during the course of year, but taking into consideration that the strategic plan has only recently been adopted by ACTESA and COMESA, present projects have not been designed based on any strategic plan but on the needs identified at a particular time or in response to a donor.

With regard to management of information and data, it was noted that although files are maintained for finances and administration, management of project information and data was neither comprehensive nor systematic and was confined to particular projects and only occasionally shared with other staff members of ACTESA who were managing other projects. Projects are managed by staff who are appropriately trained and required specialists are brought in as consultants to fill gaps.

- **Financial management:** All ACTESA finance is channeled through COMESA, including specifically directed donor funding. ACTESA financial management capacity is considered to be proficient. Among technical staff, however, there is a lack of clarity regarding their role in managing their activity budgets.
- **Financial viability:** Funding adequacy, funding diversity, and vulnerability were all scored as low. There is clearly concern among ACTESA staff regarding the institution's funding base and its over-reliance on only a few donors and their projects, as well as ACTESA's ability and structure for attracting additional future funding. Particularly with the reassertion of ACTESA's financial

subordination to COMESA, staff members are unclear as to their freedom to garner funds for their activities, the modes, mechanisms and boundaries of their authorities. When asked by the Assessment Team how new funding would be marshaled, they stated that this would be left to the CEO.

To this end, but also as a matter of establishing a solid financial foundation for ACTESA, the Assessment Team would see justification for COMESA to provide some core funding for those key positions fundamental to the achievement of ACTESA's goals, objectives and COMESA's own Mission. While providing some security for ACTESA staff, such core support would further establish the binding relationship between the two institutions, with financial support being provided in exchange for on-going technical services. Regardless of the mechanisms selected, it is apparent to the Assessment Team that some assurance of long-term funding is essential for stabilizing ACTESA, which is in turn a precursor for its sustained growth.

- **Monitoring and evaluation:** The absence of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer was widely recognized by staff as adversely affecting performance of ACTESA to monitor and evaluate its projects (the M&E Officer left employment some months before this assessment). Although each project has a logical framework that can be used for M&E, there is no systematic approach used by the organization to come up with a comprehensive M&E framework. The result is that it is difficult for ACTESA – or its partners - to determine if it is achieving its overall mission.
- **Partnerships and external relations:** ACTESA has made substantial inroads in building a broad-based, functionally diverse and geographically far-reaching network of partners through which agricultural policy, production, trade, and information may be impacted. Its unique access to regional leaders and policy-makers through COMESA provides it a comparative advantage to influence positive change in the region, and theoretically be in a position to analyze, identify and share best practices.

ACTESA has designed a website, but it is not currently on-line or operational.

Principal Recommendations

Once an assessment of various ACTESA capacities was completed (as per previous section), the assessment team worked with ACTESA staff to identify priority areas for institutional strengthening. These priorities include the following:

- **Establish the ACTESA Board of Directors.** COMESA should finalize ACTESA's Charter setting out the process for forming a Board of Directors, and providing guidance, procedures, terms and conditions, roles and responsibilities for its members so that it may be constituted and begin guiding ACTESA in terms of focus and strategic direction.
- **Increase and broaden ACTESA's financial base.** Together with the COMESA Secretary General's Office, develop a medium-term financial strategy for ACTESA that manages risk through a portfolio of funding mechanisms including COMESA core funding for "established" positions, cost-sharing with other international or regional organizations through seconded staff, project funding and direct contributions, channeled through COMESA, from supportive donors.

- **Establish an Information Resource Center for gathering statistics and to provide the public with information and access to results.** This will require recruitment of a Knowledge Management Officer as a matter of priority and, in collaboration with COMESA and other regional and international organizations, design and implement a system for capturing data and information relevant to ACTESA's mission. A formal policy should be developed for populating this database and knowledge management system and for exchanging information with external parties.
- **Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation system.** A system should be developed that clearly identifies objectives and performance measures and puts into place a system to define, collect, store and analyze performance data. In addition, a customer satisfaction/quality assurance system should be developed and implemented that will provide on-going feedback to ACTESA from its client governments and partner organizations regarding its choice of priority activities and performance in delivering targeted results. Measurements of client satisfaction and results delivered should be regularly gathered, reviewed and reported as an element of ACTESA's M&E system.
- **Improve ACTESA's ability to work with and provide services to client governments / implement client satisfaction systems.** Discussions with the CAADP Office and SPS Service Unit also indicated that they and ACTESA would all benefit from closer coordination in planning and implementing their activities, beginning with work plan development and continuing through activity reporting.

Based on this consensus, the Assessment Team designed a proposed Institutional Improvement Plan with the intention that it form a basis for planning activities to address the issues identified by ACTESA itself, COMESA, and other concerned parties and stakeholders. ACTESA, at the level of the Division Directors, should share work plans, as relevant, with their colleagues in CAADP and SPS, with the aim of mutually supporting one another's activities, to capture synergies and to possibly leverage resources.

ACTESA BACKGROUND

The Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (**ACTESA**) is a Public International Organization designated as a Specialized Agency of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (**COMESA**). ACTESA was formally established on 9th June 2009 at Victoria Falls Town, Zimbabwe, by COMESA Heads of State and Government in accordance with Chapter 182 of the COMESA Treaty. On the one hand, the establishment of ACTESA was in response to the region's need to put in place a mechanism that would address the specific needs and requirements of small farmers to access markets for their produce through a participatory approach involving all the major stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, farmers' organizations and other non-governmental organizations, as well as development partners and regional and international institutions. On the other hand, ACTESA's establishment was aimed at ensuring practical implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), at the regional level. CAADP is particularly important in as far as attaining the Millennium Development Goal Number One (MDG1) which seeks to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

In addition to assistance from other donors, ACTESA has benefited significantly from financial support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Since ACTESA's inception, USAID has

funded as many as 26 staff positions either directly or indirectly through various projects. The core positions of the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer and well as the Markets Specialist and supporting Analyst positions, the Biotechnology Advisor and a Livestock Advisor have to date been funded by USAID, and in total, US Government contributions to ACTESA's operations since 2008 amount to more than \$4 million. This initial funding was provided with the hope – and expectation – that during this period ACTESA would evolve as a strong regional institution capable of and influencing policy reform and forging institutional networks, and attracting multi-donor support.

ACTESA Vision, Mission and Goal and its Relationship to COMESA

Vision

“To realize a robust, modern and prosperous regional agricultural sector within which all stakeholders have a high standard of living.”

Mission

“To integrate smallholder farmers into domestic, regional and international markets through an improved policy environment and expanded market facilities and services.”

Goal

“Increased integration and improved regional competitiveness of staple food markets across the COMESA region leading to broad-based growth and decreased food insecurity.”

ACTESA Strategic Results Framework

By creating ACTESA, the African member states identified the need to put in place a mechanism that would address the specific needs and requirements of small farmers to access markets for their produce through a participatory approach involving all major stakeholders thus ensuring practical implementation of CAADP goals at the regional level.

ACTESA's three approved focus areas are:

- Improved policy research, outreach and advocacy
- Market facilities and trade expansion, and
- Capacity building for commercialization.

Specifically, ACTESA was created to fast-track and catalyze activities and program aimed at:

- Improving competitiveness and integration of staple foods markets through improved micro and macroeconomic policies as the drivers of staple food markets;
- Improving and expanding market facilities and services for staple foods; and
- Increasing commercial integration of staple food producers into national, regional and international markets.

ACTESA's Relationship in Support of CAADP

At its inception, it was envisaged that ACTESA's interventions would be fully responsive to CAADP at national and regional levels. ACTESA's role is to facilitate the implementation of regional investment plans from the CAADP processes, particularly Pillar 2 "Improving Trade and Market Infrastructure," as well as Pillar 3 "Food and Nutrition Security and Responses to Food Crises."

In this process, ACTESA was also expected to support the identification and implementation of priority areas of the tripartite regional CAADP Compact to strengthen its partnership with the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Its work was also expected to contribute positively to the implementation of national and regional investment plans that would serve to streamline the interventions of the Alliance.

The current ACTESA development strategy is aligned to both the COMESA Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) and CAADP. One of the key objectives of the MTSP is to build a strong and competitive productive base by strengthening key economic sectors - agriculture, industry and services - with a specific focus on innovation and value-addition. The ACTESA Development Strategy directly contributes towards the attainment of the given objective of MTSP and to COMESA's vision for creating "a fully integrated, internationally competitive regional economic community with high standards of living for its entire people."

In discussions with ACTESA staff, it was underscored that its interests in harmonizing regional agricultural policy extend beyond seed and SPS issues to other aspects of integration impacting trade and customs, as well as climate change and gender inequality. Staff members offered the opinion that structural linkages pertaining to these issues between ACTESA and COMESA, particularly its Trade and Customs Division, should be institutionalized at a high level.

Early CAADP Action Plans

Some programs, referred to as 'Early Action Plans,' were initiated in COMESA to quickly start the CAADP implementation process in member countries. However, the mandate of the CAADP unit in COMESA is not direct implementation of programs but mainly to facilitate member countries to develop and implement the CAADP agenda in their own countries. Individual countries develop "National Agricultural investment Plans" based on the CAADP framework to address their country agriculture and food security initiatives. One of the major programs was the COMESA Regional Agricultural Inputs Program (COMRAP) project. The Early Action Plans programs and their support staff formed the nucleus of ACTESA as an implementing agency.

ACTESA implements its activities through its alliance partners who include smallholder farmers, private sector entrepreneurs, public institutions, academia and other related associations working to stimulate staple food production and trade so as to stabilize food prices and foster food security in the ESA region.

Through its programs ACTESA has to date been involved the following:

- Development of an alliance of partners who have been active in in-country implementation of programs
- Initiated efforts focused on development and harmonization of regional agricultural policies,
- Promotion of trade in agricultural commodities
- Through training support, building capacity of smallholder producers, and
- Facilitating dialogues that support the establishment of public-private partnerships.

As a specialized agency of COMESA, ACTESA has an advantageous seat within COMESA decision making bodies such as the COMESA Trade and Customs Committee, and the Joint Committee of Ministers of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources which report to the COMESA Council of Ministers. This makes it possible for ACTESA to receive support and commitment from the highest decision making body of COMESA member countries.

Planned and Current Structure of ACTESA

In its initial years, ACTESA had four technical positions: Trade and Markets, Production and Market Development, Communications and Advocacy, as well as Monitoring and Evaluation. The current structure indicates how ACTESA should relate to the COMESA secretariat, development partners and its implementing partners. A draft proposed ACTESA organizational chart is included as Annex I of this report.

In its proposed strategic and operational plan, ACTESA has defined an expanded secretarial and staffing structure. Besides the four main technical posts, there are new position for Policy Analyst, Biotechnology, Seed Harmonization, Financial Analyst, and Markets Outreach.

ACTESA Strategic Plan

In October 2011, ACTESA released its Five-Year Development Strategy for 2012-2016. Its vision is “to realize a robust, modern, and prosperous regional agricultural sector within which all stakeholders have high standards of living.” The strategy is based on three focus areas which were endorsed by the COMESA Joint Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources, July 2011, at Ezulwini, Swaziland. Already mentioned above, the three focus areas remain:

- i. Improved policy research, outreach and advocacy
- ii. Market facilities and trade expansion; and
- iii. Capacity building for commercialization.

The strategy identifies key challenges facing the region in terms of overcoming its chronic food insecurity, such as limited access to market information, limited use of new production technologies, low use of improved seeds and fertilizer, high costs of inputs, lack of agricultural finance, domestic policies unfavorable to market development, low implementation of regional agreements, unfavorable ecological and climatic conditions, and inadequate infrastructure. The strategy sets out its objectives and expected results, summarizes its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), and allocates tasks according to the competencies of its potential partner organizations; COMESA, national governments, regional farmers organizations, regional trade organizations and regional research institutions.

ACTESA staff observed that the Focus Areas set out in the new strategy have been approved by their stakeholders and COMESA, and denote a paradigm shift from project mode to program approach. While adhering to stakeholder’s priorities, such an approach “guides” development partners in selecting and funding those components of the program of interest to them.

Although the strategy speaks to the key issues within the region, it does so at a fairly high level, and leaves vague the specific details as to how it will accomplish the expected results. According to the CEO, donors wished to be presented with a road map for how ACTESA would achieve the results set out in its Strategic Plan. Hence, ACTESA has drafted an OP which provides those details in hopes of reassuring external parties and, presumably, instilling the confidence necessary to attract financial support for its programs.

However, because it was not a component of the Assessment Team’s ToRs, the decision was made in consultation with the CEO not to include the Operational Plan in the CapScan. Nonetheless, it was agreed that since successful implementation of the OP will be critical for accomplishing ACTESA’s objectives, goal, and mission, a second capacity assessment would be undertaken following stakeholder approval of the draft OP to further develop and refine the submitted Improvement Plans.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Purpose and Output of the Assessment

The Africa LEAD team’s assignment was to assess ACTESA’s capacity to undertake the activities it has identified as required in fulfilling its mission in support of COMESA. It was not the Team’s objective to evaluate ACTESA’s performance against selected targets and indicators, and it has attempted to refrain from conveying that impression.

Purpose: To conduct a participatory assessment of the institutional and programmatic capacity needs of ACTESA, the COMESA/SPS Office and the COMESA CAADP function.

Outputs/Products: The outputs of this assessment included:

- An organizational diagnosis of strengths and challenges of ACTESA and related programs in COMESA, including the SPS Office and the CAADP Function, and
- Development of an institutional strengthening plan that prioritizes areas for improvement and identifies specific institutional improvement actions. Recommended institutional strengthening actions include skills training, systems improvement, staffing needs and operational and management processes.

The assessment principally focused on an institutional assessment of ACTESA, but also included an analysis of the SPS Office and a review of the COMESA CAADP function in relation to ACTESA mandate in CAADP.

A capacity assessment such as this goes well beyond a sheer technical assessment: organizational structure, lines of reporting, financial support, budgeting resources, administration, communication and outreach, all must function well together in order for an organization such as ACTESA to fulfill its role and achieve its goals. The absence or failure of any one of these components to function well can undermine the organization in achieving its goals.

The assessment process consisted of four phases:

- I. The team held meetings with CAADP and ACTESA to clarify the purpose of the assessment and discuss logistics;
- II. Key informant interviews were held with individuals in the CAADP and SPS Units as well as ACTESA staff. The main purpose of the interviews was to assist the team in understanding program details in order to adjust and customize the capacity assessment matrix to be used during the training;
- III. A capacity self-assessment workshop was conducted with key members of ACTESA staff representatives from all key technical departments of COMESA, including the CEO, and some support staff. This participatory self-assessment process was used to rate ACTESA's current capabilities against their organizational mandate. An institutional improvement plan was developed as an outcome of this process indicating priority areas for future development based on an analysis of current capabilities and organizational priorities.
- IV. Lastly, the team held a follow up review of capacity assessment with ACTESA Management.

World Bank Review Meeting with COMESA CAADP

The Assessment Team participated in the last day of the mid-term review conducted by the World Bank's Multi-donor Development Trust Fund (MDTF) support to the CAADP Program. MDTF was established in 2008 to support the adoption of CAADP and capacity building of African institutions to implement CAADP. The overall objective of the review was to assess progress made on implementation

of the strategic and operational plans associated with the Child Trust Fund support provided to CAADP.

It was important for the team to attend the review meeting because of ACTESA's relationship with CAADP, which is to provide support to its mission in alleviating food insecurity. The review of the results framework during the meeting provided an opportunity for the team to understand the capacity issues of the CAADP Unit. The Unit is expected to facilitate the development and implementation of the CAADP programs in nineteen COMESA member countries. A staff of only two technical staff is insufficient to facilitate the CAADP process in all these countries. So far only 11 countries have signed compacts and are in the process of implementing their country agricultural investment plans.

Key Informant CAADP Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the two technical staff of CAADP; the Head of the COMESA CAADP Program and the Country Process Facilitator. The overall objective of the discussions was to determine the CAADP Office's ability to engage with CAADP and to meet CAADP process and product requirements, including; managing a stocktaking consultation process and developing a regional agricultural/food security investment plan; review office plans and proposed activity vis-à-vis CAADP requirements; identify and review the skills, systems and resources that will be needed to complete required tasks; review reporting and management structures for efficiency, clarity and redundancy; and, identify capacity and resource needs.

The major capacity issue with the CAADP Unit is the limited number of staff to fulfill the facilitator mandate of the CAADP process in the nineteen member countries. The unit's mandate is to facilitate and support member countries to develop and implement their country investment plans, conduct joint M&E on a regular basis, and to coordinate interaction with development partners supporting the process. The task is more than two people can handle. However, there are advanced plans to hire a M&E Officer and an Assistant Country Process Facilitator.

The Unit utilizes CAADP Pillar Institutions personnel in some of the country processes. However, this support is available only when resources are available. ACTESA's role was identified as important in Pillar 2 -Market Access - and 3 - Food Policy and Food Distribution.

Discussions were also held to determine the level of collaboration of the CAADP office with ACTESA, SPS and other relevant COMESA units in facilitating member countries develop the CAADP program. It was evident that involvement of other units like ACTESA is very ad hoc for a number of reasons stated. There is no funding to facilitate a structured involvement of ACTESA for example. The Pillar institutions are involved as and when funding is available. There is a need to have a formal and deliberate structured mechanism to actively involve ACTESA, Climate Change, gender and other relevant units in providing technical services to the country CAADP process.

Interviews with SPS Staff

Interviews were conducted with the technical staff in the SPS Unit of COMESA. The discussions were intended to assist the team in understanding the office's mandate and plans, its role within COMESA and its relationship to other COMESA programs; its management and reporting structures; and an identification of the capacity and resource requirements necessary to carry out the office's mandate.

Again, this Unit consists of only two staff members. Hence, the difficulty they face in addressing the needs of COMESA's 19 member states is easily understood. Formerly a member of the CAADP Facilitation team, the SPS Officer continues to interact with her past colleagues. She does not have a formal relationship with ACTESA but liaises with the Seed Certification Officer on an ad hoc basis. They do not formulate work plans together nor share reports on a regular basis. The SPS Officer has offered comment on a listing of restricted plant pests and pathogens, and on import/export protocols but has had limited interaction with ACTESA beyond this.

Interviews with ACTESA CEO and Staff

It was important to conduct pre-workshop interviews with staff of ACTESA in order to understand in detail the overall program, individual roles in various departments, achievements in relation to set objectives, and their perception of current capacities and perceived areas of improvement.

All technical staff members in the four departments and program support departments of Finance and Administration, M&E and Communication were interviewed. Their comments and concerns are captured in the assessment score sheets and this report.

CAPScan Workshop

The assessment workshop began with an overview of the MfDR CAP-Scan assessment process. Each participant was given a Capacity Assessment Matrix which had been adjusted based on the results of the various interviews conducted two days before the workshop. The assessment focused on the following broad areas: Governance, Management Systems and Resources, Human Resources, Financial Management including Financial Viability, systems for Managing for Development Results, Policy Analysis and Implementation External Relations and Consultation.

The facilitator led the process of assessing each component in the assessment matrix. The results of the consensus ranking of each component were recorded and all comments noted in the scoring sheet. Finally, the results of the assessment were presented to the group in a graphic "profile" form.

Identification of priority areas for improvement was done. This was based on the ranking that was done using the three gradations ranging from low, medium and high priority. The group then selected among the highest priority areas of improvement as indicated in Table I, located in the Tables and Annexes section of this report.

CAPACITY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Technical Capacity

Currently, ACTESA's technical capacity is largely limited to addressing only those specific topics relevant to the projects either delegated to it by COMESA, this being COMRAP, or residual topics from other projects, such as Africa Agricultural Markets Project (AAMP). Primarily focused on improved and harmonized seed trade in the region, technical staff include a Seed Pathologist (Dr. Mukuka), a Biotechnology Specialist (Dr. Belay), a Regional Agricultural Trade Specialist (Dr. Mathende), and an Agricultural Finance Specialist (Mr. Shongwe)². In addition to these staff members, ACTESA also employs a Markets Analyst (Mr. Lutango) who provides overall support to Dr. Daka, the Director for Production and Market Development. Formerly, ACTESA had a Director of Trade and Markets but this position has been vacant for several months. Dr. Dradri, an Agricultural Economist, is seconded to ACTESA from the World Food Program (WFP) and supplies policy analysis. He also assists Mr. Lutango in his market analyses.

While a skilled group of professionals, their numbers are severely limited considering the regional scope and extent of their mandate. Indeed, the majority of the disciplinary subject areas consist of only one person and generally self-guided, e.g. the Market Analyst is functionally under the supervision of the Director of Trade and Markets, however, that supervisory post is vacant. Conversely, there is a Director of Production and Market Development but has no staff reporting directly to him.

This limited technical capacity is somewhat augmented by the capacity provided by national "pillar" institutions (i.e. national collaborating institutions, such as COMESA Member state Agricultural faculties, and implementing partners), but the Team did not find much evidence indicating that such arrangements were widely used or in place. It is also difficult to know the level and scope of technical expertise available through implementing partners, such as the East African Grain Council (EAGC).

The Team was particularly interested in learning the extent to which ACTESA has collaborated with its COMESA colleagues, a contingent which the Secretary General pointed out consists of almost 300 professional staff. Again, there was little evidence of such collaboration, sourcing of expertise or sharing experience. Even where compelled to do so, such as with the CAADP, interaction is limited and was described by one interviewee as "ad hoc." Information gathered did, however, reveal that there was some assistance provided by the SPS Technical Advisor to the ACTESA Seed Pathologist on trade harmonization regulations, but this interaction was also characterized as informal rather than collaboration underpinned by organizational structure.

Consequently, core technical capacity is currently constrained and limited to a few specific topical areas, these being linked to regional seed trade and markets. More importantly, ACTESA's existing technical capacity is under threat and at risk of being further eroded due to its project-based funding. Of the seven technical staff mentioned above, five are funded by the COMRAP project which is due to close in

² Since close out of these projects, funding for these positions – as well as those of the CEO and CFO - has been provided by USAID.

March 2012. Hence, unless additional funding sources are identified soon, ACTESA could lose the majority of its technical capacity. More will be said about this situation and possible solutions to it under the Finance section of this report.

Governance

A Board of any organization is essential not only for providing checks and balances but also governance and policy guidance. ACTESA, being a specialized agency of COMESA, was established to fulfill a particular mandate of the mother body in the agricultural sector in the region in respect to small and small scale farmers. As such, ACTESA has a management and governance linkage with COMESA. An Advisory Board was established to support the functioning of ACTESA in the absence of a Board supported by the ACTESA Charter but it has not met in the past year.

To formalize the relationship between COMESA and ACTESA, the former is in the process of finalizing a Charter whose aim will be regularize the establishment of ACTESA but also specify the governance and management structure. Despite the process of developing the Charter being on-going, the Advisory Board has not been dissolved and there are indications that they could be meeting soon. But it is obvious that once the Charter is ratified the role of the Advisory Board will diminish.

The absence of a Charter was cited during the assessment as one of the reasons for the perceived ambiguity in the status of ACTESA and its relationship with COMESA. It was noted in some responses during the assessment that there is a lack of clarity regarding the status of ACTESA as a semi-autonomous body. In particular, what does it mean with respect to the decisions that can be made at ACTEAS level and those which can only be made by COMESA?

In order to ensure an ACTESA Charter that will adequately consider the needs of COMESA member countries and the beneficiaries, it is important that the process of formulating the Charter is participatory and inclusive. The Advisory Board could still be used in the establishment of the Charter and thereafter support the ACTESA Board.

Management Systems

Administration: Assessment of the management systems mainly focused on two main areas; planning and functioning of existing administrative systems.

Annual work plans are prepared by each project personnel and implementation is based on a detailed quarterly work plan. The planning function includes determination of financial planning. Involvement of project staff and stakeholders in planning was rated at 3. However, it was recommended that planning of activities has not been synchronized well with other relevant units of COMESA like CAADP and SPS which ACTESA is supposed to work with. Planning activities with these departments was therefore considered a high priority. ACTESA has in many ways failed to explain their role and involvement in the in the CAADP process.

ACTESA personnel as well as other administrative policies and procedures follow the well-developed COMESA personnel policies and procedures. ACTESA hopes to define their systems after the draft charter is approved. The filing system in ACTESA was found to be most wanting. While individual personnel files and information exist in the personnel unit, the filing system combining all project information does not exist. Development of a filing system was therefore recommended as high priority.

Staff also expressed a strong desire for supplemental management training to enhance their professional management skills. Seminars, short courses or mentorship in Project Cycle Management are of interest to ACTESA technical staff. Technical staff also agreed that training in new business development and proposal-writing would be welcomed, particularly if going forward, ACTESA's financial sustainability plan would entail responding to project tenders or identifying and soliciting funding based on an unsolicited proposal.

Training in Financial Management was also identified as an area for capacity improvement, particularly for junior level staff. ACTESA staff requested that such training be extended as well to some of their implementing partners.

Project Management: At present, ACTESA uses the project approach. In the project approach, staffing levels are tied to the specific period of each project and this causes uncertainty and limited motivation among staff. At present, COMRAP as a project has the largest number of staff and since it officially came to an end in December, 2011, it has led to a loss of morale in the organization.

As noted, projects are currently the main mode of activity planning and implementation. Project staff develop annual plans which are occasionally reviewed during the course of year, but taking into consideration that the strategic plan has only recently been adopted by ACTESA and COMESA, present projects have not been designed based on any strategic plan but on the needs identified at a particular time or in response to a donor. The project planning and implementation for ACTESA has been compartmentalised in a manner that each project plan executes its own activities and thus there is limited communication between projects.

Project managers have delegated authority to manage their projects and this improves their efficiency and effectiveness somewhat, however, there were concerns that the project managers are not provided with sufficient and timely financial information to effectively plan and implement project activities.

With regard to management of information and data, it was noted that although files are maintained for finances and administration, management of project information and data was neither comprehensive nor systematic and was confined to particular projects and only occasionally shared with other staff members of ACTESA who were managing other projects.

Projects are managed by staff who are appropriately trained and when required, specialists are brought in as consultants to fill gaps. In respect to staff development, this appears to have been short-term and project-based and mainly for technical people. This means that support staff have inadequate staff development especially when they are not attached to a project. There does not appear to be a formal induction or training program for new staff. Neither is there an operations manual or policy guidelines to serve as reference for both professional and administrative support staff.

In its operational plan, ACTESA proposes to adopt a program approach. Under this program, ACTESA will have long term activities with staff of longer duration. In future, any proposed project activities will be considered carefully according to their fit with planned ACTESA activities.

Financial Reporting: All ACTESA finance is channeled through COMESA, including specifically directed donor funding. Earlier, the previous CEO attempted to receive funding for a new project activity with the ACTESA Finance Officer signing the grant agreement, but this action was rescinded by COMESA Management and the agreement is now being re-signed by COMESA's Chief Financial Officer. This incident has clearly reasserted the nature of the relationship between ACTESA and COMESA and clarified the limits of its "semi-autonomy."

ACTESA has a Director of Finance, Mrs. Takavarasha, who oversees management of the institutions funds, interfaces with counterparts within COMESA and monitors project activity budgets. In the case of USAID funding, COMESA has established a dedicated office with staff to manage those funds.

ACTESA staff ranked Financial Management capacity of the institution as High and of Medium priority for capacity-building. The Assessment Team observed the Finance Officer to be quite competent in her capacity, although interviews with junior Finance staff indicated there was a work load issue associated with audit and reporting demands.

Among technical staff, there was a lack of clarity regarding their role in managing their activity budgets. Interviewees consistently stated that they did not have timely budget information with which to monitor available funds, and to the Assessment Team it was apparent that budgets were not being used as a management tool. It was stated that each activity manager receives a budget update on a quarterly basis. Group discussion also revealed differing views regarding the dominance of financial over technical considerations, with technical staff stating that often times what they deemed technically desirable was over-ruled on budgetary grounds, while the Finance Office stated that it often felt pressured by technical staff into acquiescing to certain activities for which there may not be adequate funding. Obviously there is scope for improving transparency surrounding activity budgets and using budgets as a management tool.

Financial Viability

There is clearly concern among ACTESA staff regarding the institution's funding base and its over-reliance on only a few donors and their projects, as well as ACTESA's ability and structure for attracting additional future funding. Particularly with the reassertion of ACTESA's financial subordination to COMESA, staff members are unclear as to their freedom to garner funds for their activities, the modes, mechanisms and boundaries of their authorities. When asked by the Assessment Team how new funding would be marshaled, they stated that this would be left to the CEO.

As mentioned in the section on Technical Capacity, uncertainty surrounding ACTESA's funding status and the impending closure of COMRAP has created considerable anxiety amongst staff, many of whom are marketable in the region as well as internationally. Neither in conversations with the CEO nor the Secretary General were there any indications of immediate interventions to provide additional financial support to ACTESA. A number of options, however, come to mind which might be explored.

Of particular interest to the Team was the ‘cost-shared’ position of the Policy Analyst, Dr. Dradri. Not only does such an arrangement avail key experience and capacity to ACTESA, but it does so while reducing their direct costs. An additional perceived benefit is that this particular arrangement helps to establish and solidify an important relationship between ACTESA and another regional institution which it needs in order to carry out its mandate. In this instance, ACTESA’s mandate to reduce food insecurity through increased regional trade and use of improved technology, and its activity to create regional Food Balance Sheets, benefits greatly from the WFP’s knowledge and experience with its Purchase-for-Progress (PFP) program, as well as through its established regional office network. As long as objectives and reporting lines are clear and issues of ‘divided loyalties’ do not arise, such partnerships offer benefits to both parties on multiple levels and could be regarded as one model to be replicated with other institutions operating in the region.

The Team would also suggest exploring or defining the financial and administrative mechanisms for COMESA offices and CAADP to obtain the specialized expertise of ACTESA staff. Such services would be ‘purchased’ by the COMESA office in question and funds to pay for them internal transferred to ACTESA. Examples of such services might include markets and competitiveness studies, policy analysis, technical assistance on CAADP member agricultural investment plans, institutional capacity assessments and others.

To this end, but also as a matter of establishing a solid financial foundation for ACTESA, the Assessment Team would see justification for COMESA to provide some core funding for those key positions fundamental to the achievement of ACTESA’s goal, objectives and COMESA’s own Mission. It is not suggested that COMESA cover all of ACTESA’s budgetary requirements, nor even fully fund those identified key positions, but only a percentage of their costs. While providing some security for ACTESA staff, such core support would further establish the binding relationship between the two institutions, with financial support being provided in exchange for on-going technical services. COMESA and ACTESA could then determine the terms, conditions, and arrangements whereby ACTESA would be allowed to pursue filling its funding gap (e.g. through project management, service provision to partners, unsolicited proposals, etc.).

Regardless of the mechanisms selected, it is apparent to the Assessment Team that some assurance of long-term funding is essential for stabilizing ACTESA, which is in turn a precursor for its sustained growth.

Based on remarks made by the Secretary General (SG) during our visit, COMESA is firmly committed to ACTESA as an institution. Funding, however, is obviously critical to long term institutional sustainability. The Secretary General’s vision is of an ACTESA which is “on the ground”, “de-mining data” to identify opportunities for building and linking value chains across borders, thereby “monetizing” this information for their stakeholders³. The SG stated that he hoped in future to see lines items in national budgets supporting regional integration activities, rather than leaving them “as a residual.” The implications of the SG’s comments were that ACTESA would be a beneficiary of such funding in its role as regional integrator of value chains and convener of trade partners. How soon this bilateral support was

³ When related to ACTESA staff, the SG’s vision left a number of them uncertain as to their role and responsibility in attaining it. This would suggest a communication gap between ACTESA and its ‘parent’ body which will need to be rectified if a unified sense of mission is to be created.

expected to materialize, however, was not specified. Thus, while future financial support is anticipated to come – at least in part – from external contributions, for the time being ACTESA must rely on its traditional funding sources, such as COMESA and projects.

Unfortunately, the short-term ‘kick start’ approach of allocating the early action programs (COMRAP and AAMP) to ACTESA was not followed by implementation of a strategy for the agency’s long-term support. Staff expressed the hope that the new OP would aid in mobilizing sorely needed long-term funding while issues surrounding ACTESA’s governance would be resolved by the soon-to-be adopted Charter.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The absence of an M&E Officer was widely recognized by staff as adversely affecting performance of ACTESA when considering monitoring and evaluation of its projects. The M&E Officer left employment some months before this assessment and this had created a capacity gap. Although each project has a logical framework that can be used for M&E, there is no systematic approach used by the organization to come up with a comprehensive M&E framework. The result is that it is difficult for ACTESA – or its partners - to determine if it is achieving its overall mission. Staff members noted that a Results Logical Framework is specifically included in the new OP to guide design and development of the agency’s future M&E system.

Staff capacity-strengthening in M&E is essential, if not a requirement, should ACTESA develop a system and practice where Managers are able to obtain data on inputs, outputs, outcomes, and service quality, and to ensure that overall program measurements and reports are available in a timely and useful format. As a lead institution in the region, ACTESA needs to be able to derive trend data to support decision-making. Furthermore, as a core function of ACTESA, the M&E position needs to be adequately funded to ensure uninterrupted capacity so that this vital function is performed.

External Relations:

ACTESA mainly works with national and regional partners to implement its activities. It has worked through alliance members in the COMESA region. The members have formed public and private sector partnerships with various competencies to implement projects.

Donors: During the assessment, it was evident that ACTESA mainly relies on donor agencies that fund specific projects. The COMRAP project funded by the European Union terminates in March 2012. Although major funding currently is from USAID, there is a plan to diversify funding from other donors. Prospective donor funding will hopefully buy into their strategic and operational plans currently being finalized.

National and Regional Public and Private Sector Partners: ACTESA has developed national and regional organizations in the public and private sector as implementing partners of its programs. Alliance members are the main implementing partners of ACTESA in the COMESA member countries. Some of

these include, East African Farmers Federation, East Africa Grain Council (EAGC) , Grain Growers Association, Southern African Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU), International Fertilizer Development Consortium, research institutions like the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) among others. The aim of working through alliance members is to harness and coordinate the available technical resources for efficient and greater impact of programs.

At the national level, the original plan was to have an ACTESA focal person working within the CAADP framework in each member country with a role of coordinating ACTESA activities at the country level. This had not been achieved by the time of this assessment.

In an ACTESA consultative Meeting of September 2011, it was agreed that COMESA Secretariat provides the policy environment and ensures implementation of activities according to policy, national governments will facilitate implementation of projects at the national level, regional farmers organizations will spearhead capacity building activities among the farmers communities; regional trade organizations spearhead markets and trade activities, and regional research institutions will collaborate in policy research.

Communications and Information Sharing (Dissemination Strategy): With assistance provided through the USAID-funded Market Linkages Initiative (MLI), ACTESA developed a communication strategy which included a number of recommendations for promoting the Alliance’s development. It was important, therefore, to assess progress in implementing the communication strategy of ACTESA since its operations are focused towards improvement of livelihoods in the region from agricultural commodity trade. The establishment of ACTESA and its involvement in the region has created a significant need and systematic, proactive communication with a diverse set of stakeholders on regional policy issues. The communication system will be a repository as well as a reference center to promote regional integration.

During the assessment, the communication strategy was rated as well-developed and medium priority. While there is a communication department, it requires resources for development to meet the aspirations of ACTESA. A media strategy is planned for as indicated in the operational plan under the activity of objective of ‘Public Awareness and Education for Policy Advocacy.’ ACTESA plans to: conduct analysis and disseminate evidence and knowledge of the impacts of policy decisions on staple food markets to key stakeholders, develop audience-focused materials and messages for public awareness on current policy issues and benefits of policy reforms, implementation and harmonization and provide critically needed training for journalists, editors and media owners on issues of commodity marketing, trade and food security.

The overall aim of the communication strategy is to documenting and disseminating Regional Competitive Analyses, best practices and research findings. This information is in line with CAADP principles of peer review mechanisms. ACTESA will provide information in that line.

Currently, the communication department has one person. ACTESA will require additional staff and resources to meet the expected targets unless ACTESA engages consultants to perform some of the activities.

ACTESA needs to have an active website where a lot of information can be accessed by its constituency in the region. The web site is not actively working to fulfill this purpose. Public access to ACTESA information was rated as low. Staff members considered a functional website a high priority and recommended allocation of resources for improved development.

ACTESA as an agency does not have a database. Currently there is only project specific data. This was rated as low with high priority action recommended for development of a database unique to ACTESA activities.

Funding aside, there is substantial evidence that ACTESA has begun to make inroads in the region in terms of building coalitions with significant stakeholders and have stimulated demand for its support services. Furthermore, it was clearly articulated by ACTESA staff during the self-assessment that they recognize the need and have a desire to provide services of value to their clients. As one staff member noted: “to a great extent, the ability of ACTESA to generate funds will depend on its capacity to formulate good programmes/projects.”

At the review workshop⁴ for its proposed Operational Plan, it was evident from those stakeholders in attendance – who represented producers, commodity traders, agribusiness, women’s enterprise development and agricultural research networks from East and Southern Africa – ACTESA is fulfilling a much needed role in supporting the development and capacity- building of small and medium scale actors in staple food markets to increase their competitiveness. And, indeed, ACTESA would seem to have a number of attributes which bestow upon it a comparative advantage in fulfilling this role.

ACTESA’s ‘Comparative Advantage’

There is a significant number of government, non-governmental, regional and international initiatives dedicated to eliminating food insecurity in Eastern and Southern Africa. What, therefore, is ACTESA’s “Comparative Advantage” in contributing to this cause? In considering this question, one could first consider ACTESA’s geographical coverage: as a specialized agency of COMESA, ACTESA’s mandate extends to 19 countries in the region. This is more than any other regional economic coalitions, such as SADC or the East African Community (EAC).

Again, because of its relationship with COMESA, ACTESA has access to the region’s decision-makers at the highest level, and the opportunity to influence policy across the region. At the same time, because of its semi-autonomous status, ACTESA has the independence to conduct, analyze and formulate solutions as it deemed necessary without undue influence from COMESA for the benefit of its partners and small and medium scale farmers. No other regional agricultural development body has ACTESA’s reach and authority.

This unique set of clientele, partners and geographic reach places ACTESA in a prime position to become a valuable repository for lessons learned and best practices across a range of agricultural and

⁴ ACTESA organized a workshop on 17 February 2012 in Chisamba, Zambia, for the purpose of vetting its proposed Operational Plan (2012-2016) with key stakeholders. The Africa LEAD Capacity Assessment Team attended.

trade issues. For example, ACTESA's Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)-funded work on regional food balance sheets, in collaboration with WFP and FEWSNET, is linked to a similar effort within the EAC and the EAGC. This represents a substantial information base from which to discern important lessons of value to a host of agricultural actors, governments, and donor programs across the Southern and East African region.

ACTESA's focus on both middle and small scale agriculture could also be construed as conveying a comparative advantage versus other institutions, which oftentimes limit themselves to one or the other class of operators. Together, these two classes of producers encompass 90% of those involved in agriculture in the region.

ACTESA has technically qualified staff members who are experienced in working in multi-cultural environments. Moreover, the fact that ACTESA staff are from different countries in the COMESA region results in a comparative advantage as staff members have first-hand knowledge of the different farming and marketing systems within the member countries, the resources available, technologies used, production objectives, and constraints faced.

Although ACTESA has adopted advocacy and lobbying for improved support to the agricultural sector as its role in promoting food security in the region, it also supports intermediary organizations to implement initiatives aimed at improving productivity and marketing of agricultural products. Through these support activities, it accumulates lessons and knowledge about service delivery and project implementation that allow it to distinguish those features and characteristics of successful strategies and which provide it with evidence for advocacy. This amounts to a substantial comparative advantage compared to those organizations which focus only on the technology or market itself. It is the difference between the tool and simply its use: ACTESA is also learning how to get the right tools into the hands of those who need them.

ACTESA INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This basis for developing an institutional improvement plan was to determine which capacity areas were most in need of improvement and, among those, which seemed the most critical to address over the coming year. Having reached consensus on the priority areas of improvement, participants then identified activities to be undertaken in order to get on a more robust MfDR track. The main activities focused on a medium to long-term strategic path and away from a project-based organization. Foci will be; i) development of the governance structure ii) diversifying funding sources iii) developing a data collection and information management, monitoring and evaluation systems that facilitate managing for results, and iv) establishing formal systems of communication with clients to improve ACTESA's response to their needs. It was acknowledged that ACTESA staff themselves would benefit from advanced management and leadership training, such as that offered through Africa LEAD, as well as targeted technical skills training to keep them abreast of latest developments in their respective fields.

Table I in the following section provides an overview of the strength of ACTESA’s various organizational and management capacities as well as the capacities which require priority strengthening assistance. A detailed capacity improvement plan which presents activities, resources available and required, individuals responsible and suggested time frames – is presented as Annex II.

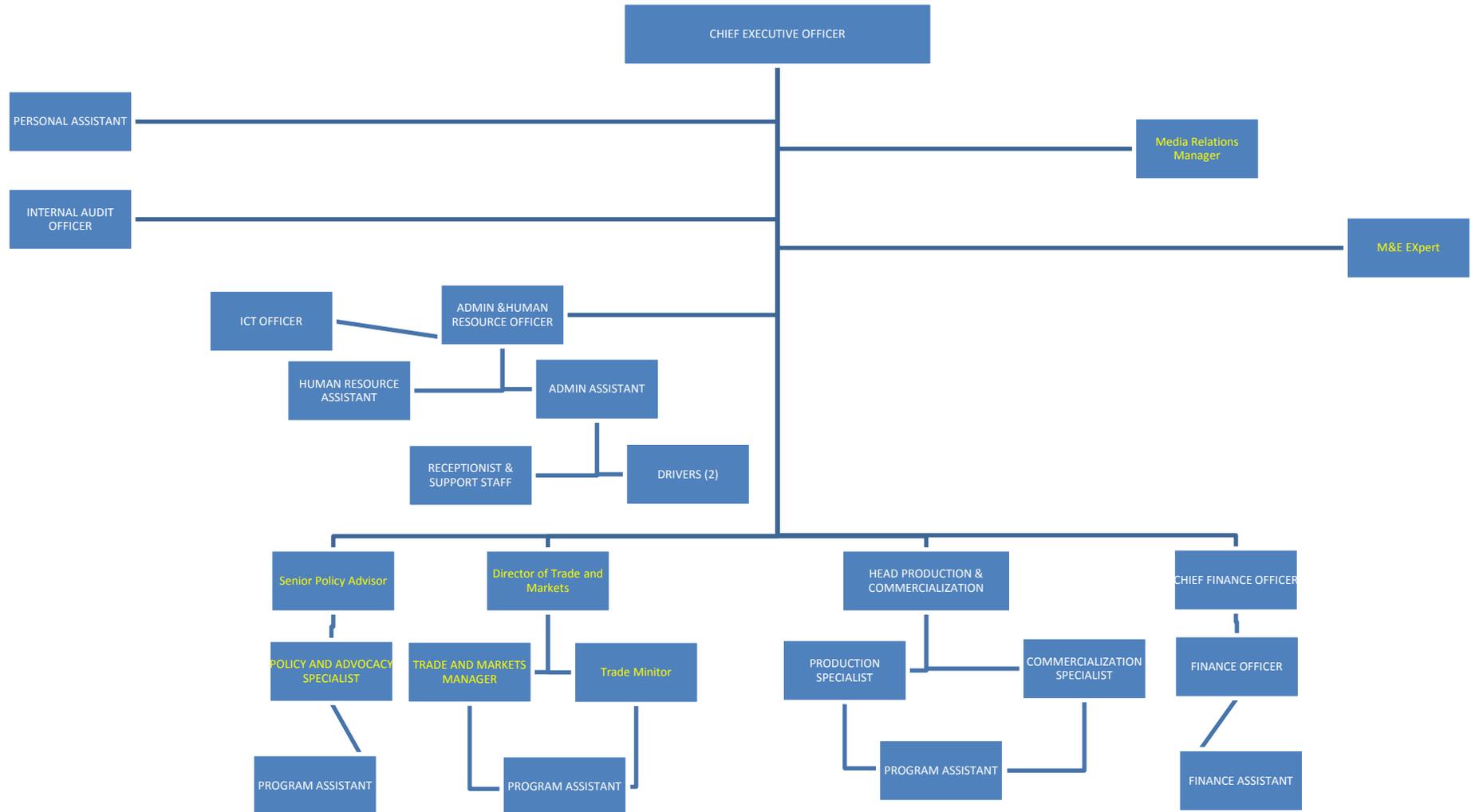
TABLES AND ANNEXES

Table I. Matrix of Organizational Capacity Scores and Organizational Priorities

IDF Capacity Score	Organizational Priority		
	High	Medium	Low
Low: <2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Board establishment - Financial adequacy -Statistics strategy/information pool information center/public access to results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budgeting - Motivation/incentives - Human resource development/training - Data quality assessment 	

<p>Medium: 2-3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding diversity/vulnerability - M&E system developed and used - Client satisfaction systems/ Ability to work with and provide services to client governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Results management framework - Planning - Mission - Administrative systems - Reporting harmonization - Media Strategy Policy analysis and development - Donor Coordination - Public access to results 	
<p>High: >3</p>		<p>Financial Management</p>	

Annex I. Planned and Current Structure of ACTESA



Annex II. ACTESA Institutional Capacity Improvement Plans

Individual Improvement Plans

Institutional Development Improvement Plan					
ASPECT/OBJECTIVE: To establish a Board for ACTESA which will provide effective and efficient policy and governance support					
Performance Indicator(s)					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of stakeholders consulted in the formulation of the Charter, 2. The ACTESA Charter is approved, 3. The ACTESA Board is instituted, 4. An inclusive representation of Board members are selected, 5. Orientation of the selected Board members, 6. Number of Board meeting held. 					
Activities	Resources Needed	Available Resources	Sources	Person Responsible	Activity Completion Date
1. Consultation of various stakeholders on the ACTESA Charter,	Legal framework / counsel; funding for stakeholders consultations; training for new Board members	Legal framework / counsel	Regional stakeholders, COMESA Organs, Donor Community.	CEO	End April 2012
2. Presentation and adoption of the ACTESA Charter by the Council of Ministers.	Draft Charter	Draft Charter	CEO, Legal counsel	CEO	June 2012
3. Nomination and appointment of members of the Board of ACTESA	Charter guidelines for appointment of Board members; willing members to serve.	Guidelines for appointment of Board members	Approved Charter, COMESA, Regional Partners, Donor Community	CEO	July 2012
4. Holding an orientation workshop for the members of the Board of ACTESA.	Approved Charter; Training Logistics	Approved Charter	CEO, Training and Logistics Officer	Training and Logistics Officer	August 2012

	Officer; funding for workshop.				
5. Holding of quarterly Board meeting	Venue identified; budget.	None currently	CEO, CFO, Training and Logistics Officer	CEO/CFO	Quarterly

Institutional Development Improvement Plan

ASPECT/OBJECTIVE: To build the capacity of ACTESA to raise sufficient financial resources to undertake its program.

Performance Indicator(s)

1. A resource mobilization strategy developed,
2. Number of people trained in project proposal writing,
3. Number of project proposals formulated,
4. Number of project proposals funded,

Activities	Resources Needed	Available Resources	Sources	Person Responsible	Activity Completion Date
1. Hiring of a consultant to formulate the resource mobilization strategy	Identification and recruitment of consultant; Terms of Reference; funding.	None currently	TBD	CEO/CFO	May 2012
2. Formulation of a resource mobilization strategy document	Consultant; participation of key ACTESA staff; funding	Key ACTESA staff	TBD	CEO/CFO/Consultant	July 2012
3. Conducting a capacity needs assessment of staff in relation to fund raising	Capacity Assessment Facilitator(s); staff participation; budget	Africa LEAD	Africa LEAD; USAID REDSO	Consultant	August 2012

4. Development of capacity of ACTESA staff in resource mobilization	Capacity Assessment Facilitator(s); ACTESA staff participation; budget	Africa LEAD	Africa LEAD; USAID REDSO	Consultant	August 2012
5. Identification of the possible donor organizations and agencies and their requirements/conditionalities.	Capacity Assessment Facilitator; consultant	Africa LEAD	USAID REDSO, AusAID, DFID, DANIDA	CEO/CFO/SG	November 2012
6. Formulation of concept notes	Consultant	TBD	TBD	CEO/Consultant/CFO	November 2012
7. Formulation of project proposals.	Consultant; Division Managers, Technical Managers.	ACTESA staff	ACTESA	Consultant/Division Heads	December 2012

Institutional Development Improvement Plan

ASPECT/OBJECTIVE: To develop systems and practices of data collection, storage and dissemination.

Performance Indicator(s)

1. Number of staff trained in data/information management
2. A statistics strategy document
3. Availability of quality assessment procedures protocols,
4. A system of data capture, storage and dissemination in place,
5. Number of organizations/individuals who access data.

Activities	Resources Needed	Available Resources	Sources	Person Responsible	Activity Completion Date
1. Development of capacity of ACTESA staff in data and information management.	Consultant in M&E, database design and	TBD	COMESA	M&E Officer	May 2012

	management; COMESA M&E Officer, funding				
2. Formulation of a statistics strategy	Consultant in M&E, database design and management; COMESA M&E Officer, funding	TBD	COMESA; donor assistance.	M&E Officer/Consultant	May 2012
3. Development of quality assessment procedures protocols	Consultant in M&E; COMESA M&E Officer, funding	TBD	COMESA; donor assistance.	Consultant	June 2012
4. Development of a policy to provide member countries/partners access results data	ACTESA M&E Officer; COMESA Legal Advisor	COMESA	ACTESA, COMESA Legal Advisor	M&E Officer, CEO, SG, COMESA Legal Advisor	July/August 2012
5. Development of formal procedures to provide access to results data.	ACTESA M&E Officer; COMESA Legal Advisor	COMESA	ACTESA, COMESA Legal Advisor	M&E Officer, CEO, SG, COMESA Legal Advisor	July/August 2012

Institutional Development Improvement Plan

ASPECT/OBJECTIVE: To develop a portfolio of funding sources to ensure diversity and reduce vulnerability.

Performance Indicator(s)

1. A funding portfolio is developed,
2. The number of donors per portfolio identified,
3. Development of capacity of ACTESA in developing a portfolio of funding sources.

Activities	Resources Needed	Available Resources	Sources	Person Responsible	Activity Completion Date
1. Development of capacity of ACTESA staff in funding portfolio management	Consultant for training	TBD	TBD	Consultant/CFO	July 2012
2. Conduct a donor scoping study	Consultant; information on donor interests	TBD	USAID, AusAID, DFID	Consultant/CEO	July/August 2012
3. Identification of the different funding modalities	Consultant	TBD		Consultant/CFO/CEO	July/August 2012
4. Identification of the funding portfolio for ACTESA	Consultant, consultations with CEO and Board	ACTESA	COMESA	CEO/CFO/Consultant	August 2012
5. Formulation of funding proposals to donors	Guidelines on different funding proposal formats, procedures; agreement on target work areas/priorities	Division Managers; CFO, CEO	ACTESA	Division Heads/CEO/CFO/SG	November/December 2012

Institutional Development Improvement Plan

ASPECT/OBJECTIVE: To develop a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework for ACTESA.

Performance Indicator(s)

1. ACTESA has employed and M&E Officer,
2. Staff in ACTESA trained in M&E,
3. A comprehensive M&E framework in place.

Activities	Resources Needed	Available Resources	Sources	Person Responsible	Activity Completion Date
1. Employment of an M&E Officer	Scope of Work; allocated position with budget; identified candidates.	SoW; allocated position with budget	ACTESA, COMESA	CEO	April 2012
2. Conducting a workshop on M&E for ACTESA staff	M&E Officer; training curriculum, Training Logistics Officer, budget.	TBD	External recruitment; ACTESA, COMESA, donor funding	M&E Officer/Training Logistics Officer	April 2012
4. Engaging a consultant to support ACTESA in developing a comprehensive M&E framework.	Terms of reference; budget	ACTESA, COMESA M&E Officer	COMESA, ACTESA, External aid	CEO/M&E Officer	May 2012
5. Validation meeting on the comprehensive M&E framework within ACTESA	Workshop facilitator; M&E Officer; resource persons; budget	TBD	COMESA, ACTESA, External aid	Training Logistics Officer / M&E Officer	June 2012

Institutional Development Improvement Plan

ASPECT/OBJECTIVE: To develop systems and practices of obtaining feed-back of its services,

Performance Indicator(s)

1. A feed-back system is in place,
2. A network is developed with partner organizations

Activities	Resources Needed	Available Resources	Sources	Person Responsible	Activity Completion Date
1. ACTESA staff develops formal customer satisfaction measurement systems.	Communications strategy, Communications Officer, results framework, understanding of client priorities.	Communications strategy, Communications Officer, results framework,	TBD	Communications Officer / Division Heads	
2. ACTESA staff use customer satisfaction measurement systems.	Client satisfaction feedback system in place; ACTESA staff trained; policy on gathering client information in place.	Currently, only informal system in place.	TBD	Division Heads / Communications Officer / M&E Officer	
3. ACTESA works actively with member governments/customers, and participates in networks and coalitions	Communications strategy; Communications Officer, client information system in place and used.	Communications strategy	Alliance partners	Division Heads / Communications Officer	

REFERENCES

1. ACTESA Draft Operational Plan 2012-2016. February 2012.
2. Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) – Design Plan. June 6th, 2008.
3. ACTESA Five-Year Development Strategy 2012-2016. October 2011.
4. ACTESA Strategic Results Logical Framework for Monitoring and Evaluation. 2011.
5. Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). COMESA Secretariat Agricultural Strategic Framework 2010-2014.
6. MfDR CapScan Manual, Management Sciences International 2011.
7. USAID Market Linkages Initiative Evaluation Report. September 2011.