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List of Acronyms/Glossary

DRSP	Direction Régionale de la Santé Publique
Ecole des Maris	Approach developed by UNFPA and used by a number of NGOs in Niger
ENA	Essential Nutrition Actions
FFP	Office of Food for Peace
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
FP	Family Planning
FY	Fiscal Year
GoN	Government of Niger
HKI	Helen Keller International
INRAN	National Institute of Agronomy Research
LVCC	Livestock Value Chain Coordinators
MC	Mercy Corps
PLW	Pregnant and Lactating Women
REGIS-ER	USAID-funded Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel, Enhanced Resilience program
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
SO	Strategic Objective
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Program

A. Introduction: Annual Food Assistance Program Results

During fiscal year 2014, significant progress was made under the USAID-funded Sawki DFAP Program. Through two interconnected strategic objectives, *Sawki* is designed to respond to the food security needs of more than 92,000 beneficiaries based on criteria of social vulnerability, economic opportunities and agro-pastoral linkages. Over the course of FY2014, the second implementation year, the *Sawki* team was extended all program activities to 36 target communities, in addition to the 26 villages where activities began in year 1. 10 villages were added in the Region of Maradi all belonging to the communes of Dakoro and Sabon Machi. In the Zinder Region 26 villages were added from the communes of Dogo, Koleram, Mirriah and Zermou. With the inclusion of new communities *Sawki* conducted a rapid rural appraisal in these communities and identified the beneficiaries for all program components. PM2A beneficiaries (Pregnant and lactating women and children under 2) were first identified. This was followed by the formation of PLW care units and the selection of leader mothers and health promoters. Secondly, *Sawki* formed all community structures involved in the implementation of the program, as explained below. *Sawki* implemented all program activities in the 62 villages in year 2 targeting 92,092 beneficiaries. The 62 villages, divided between three communes in Maradi (21 communities) and five in Zinder (41 communities), were selected for their chronic food insecurity, high rates of chronic malnutrition, human and economic potential, and contiguity and strong community cohesion. These areas are also easily accessible in all seasons.

This Annual Results Report focuses on key accomplishments and results of the *Sawki* program, outlining first special topics related to the overall consortium and unanticipated events; second, results by Strategic Objective; third, accomplishments on the monitoring and evaluation plan; and finally, results on operational issues including commodities management and monetization. The Annual Results Report concludes with lessons learned from the reporting year.

Results and Accomplishments during Year 2 / FY2014: Special topics

Termination of Africare participation to the consortium – Mercy Corps terminated the sub-agreement with Africare effective September 29, 2014 after all possible attempts were made to ensure that Africare would comply with its sub agreement obligations. Africare was unable to submit mandatory reports for several quarters, which had a direct impact on program implementation that delayed activities in Zinder Region. Mercy Corps is ensuring a smooth transition to take over all activities that were under Africare’s responsibility. Mercy Corps continues to work with HKI and ensure all *Sawki*’s objectives are met. Mercy Corps has since hired all of Africare’s field agents who accepted to continue with *Sawki*.

*RISING*¹ *research initiative on adolescent girls’ safe spaces* - *Sawki* established safe spaces for adolescent girls to interact and learn safe practices regarding reproductive health and nutrition. Safe spaces provide a natural environment in which to teach about reproductive health and rights, and studies have shown clear improvements in knowledge of health issues and expanded life goals for participants². The Population Council is funding a research agenda that will help determine the impact of safe spaces on adolescent girls’ behavior change that will positively influence overall improved health, nutrition and food security outcomes. Mercy Corps in

¹ Research Initiative for Success in Girl Programming

² Creating Safe Spaces for Adolescent Girls, Population Council, 2011

particular would like to influence donors and development partners to ensure their strategy moving forward includes working on prevention rather than solely focusing on already pregnant women. The study will last 24 months with a 9 months of field work starting in FY15 and an evaluation at the end of the study. Six villages have been selected as control groups and for which the activities in safe spaces will be delayed by 9 months.

Digital Green/SPRING community-video outreach approach – REGIS-ER, Save The Children and Mercy Corps have agreed to test an approach for behavior change, involving video diffusion at the community level and monitoring of community feedback. The objective of this collaboration is to test the feasibility of leveraging the Digital Green community video approach, originally designed for the promotion of improved agricultural practices, for the promotion of key evidence-based nutrition and hygiene-related behaviors, focused on the first 1000 days “window of opportunity.” These contextually relevant videos will be screened in groups of women in the communities using facilitated dissemination techniques. With the proposed pilot project in the Maradi region of Niger, SPRING and Digital Green plan to evaluate whether or not the facilitated community video approach that was successfully tested in India can also work in the resilience context of Niger. REGIS is leading the collaboration and will be representing Mercy Corps and Save The Children. The field work is starting in October.

DIMAGI - In Year 1, a partnership was established with Dimagi³ to test the CommCare mobile application in certain *Sawki* villages, to disseminate health information to target audiences and to facilitate health promoters’ data collection on health and nutrition status of children under the age of five through Leader Mothers, starting in Year 2. Data collection has begun in all villages using conventional methods. Training was conducted in the period February 24 to March 6 2014 in Maradi by two DIMAGI staff, and two nutrition officers in charge of managing the project in Maradi and Zinder attended all the training. The Sawki team had difficulty using the platform, and observed that the tool had limited effectiveness in the context of care groups (the device is more suitable for one on one dialogue). As a result, Sawki decided to utilize the classic method for information sharing, using flipcharts and other printed materials more suitable to the situation.

Coordination with other DFAPs/programs – During the reporting period, Sawki also participated in regular meetings with other Niger DFAPs, where common issues and areas of collaboration were addressed, such as designing a scope of work for a joint gender assessment and conducting a joint PERSUAP for program activities.

³ *Dimagi* is a social enterprise that makes open source software to improve healthcare in developing countries and for the underserved. <http://www.dimagi.com/>

Results and Accomplishments of Year 2 / FY2014, by objective

Once communities were identified, *Sawki* proceeded with beneficiary selection in the 10 new villages in Maradi (commune of Dakaro and Sabon Machi) and 26 in Zinder (commune of Dogo, Koleram, Zermou and Mirriah). In order of priority, *Sawki* identified food recipients, including: pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and children under 2 years of age, adolescent girls, leader mothers and community health promoters. 560 participants in farmer field schools (FFS), 137 women garden coordinators were also identified and placed in activity groups in each target community. Through a thorough door to door household survey conducted in March-April for Year 1 villages and August for Year 2 villages, *Sawki* identified a total of 92,092 individuals (49% women) in 13,973 households.

SO1: Reduce chronic malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women and children under five, with an emphasis on children under two

IR 1.1: Appropriate nutrition practices during a child's first 1,000 days adopted by pregnant women, mothers and caretakers

Creation of Community Structures—During the reporting period, *Sawki* supported the formation of community structures in 36 communities, in addition to the 26 communities where the activities were launched in year 1. 37 health promoters and 461 leader mothers were identified in the 36 villages in Maradi and Zinder. 9 Water committees in 9 villages were created following the well rehabilitation in those communities. *Sawki* created also 26 hygiene committees in the 26 villages of the first batch which started the CLTS in year 2. Two other village members (1 male and 1 female) called “Natural Leaders” were identified by the community in each of the 26 villages. The main role of the “Natural Leaders” is to sensitize the population on CLTS and hygiene during public gatherings in order to promote buy-in of the approach. Husbands’ schools have been created in 59 villages that count 1062 members. The program created 2 husbands’ schools per village to segregate the young men from the elders. Adolescent girls’ safe spaces have been created in 30 new villages. However, there are 6 villages for which safe spaces setup have been delayed to respond to control group for a research initiative on adolescent girls in safe spaces funded by Population Council, as stated earlier in the report.

Disseminating ENA Practices –During the reporting period, using the Ministry of Public Health’s ENA training modules, *Sawki* trained senior technical staff from the regional health department (*the Direction Régionale de la Santé Publique (DRSP)*) and District-level health officials from Maradi and Zinder. Following that training of trainers, *Sawki* and District-level health officials trained this year 36 health center and health post agents, in two sessions, 26 in Maradi and 10 in Zinder. 12 *Sawki* nutrition field agents were also trained during the same sessions. In addition to communication techniques around ENA, these trainings addressed communication around nutrition and malnutrition, and introduced the concept of care units and care groups⁴ to be used by the *Sawki* program in the new 36 villages. 5 *Sawki* nutrition field agents and 5 health centers agents were trained also in supervision techniques.

After the training of trainers the second and ultimate goal is to build capacity of the community members. This year, *Sawki* and district-level health agents trained 68 community health

⁴ A care unit is a grouping of 10 to 15 PLW. Each care unit designates one leader mother. A care group is a grouping of 10 to 15 leader mothers. One or several care groups are supervised by one community health promoter.

promoters and 517 out of 761 leader mothers (259 in Zinder and 258 in Maradi) in ENA and Family Planning during a two-day program. 410 members of husbands' schools and 122 mentors of adolescent girls' safe spaces were also trained in both ENA and Family Planning. The Sawki gender advisor had previously trained 90 mentors and 222 members of husband schools on gender integration in all community activities and decision making process and on gender advocacy. She also trained 90 safe space mentors in communication techniques in FY14. In total 1,117 community workers composed of community health promoters, leader mothers, safe space mentors, and members of husbands' schools were also trained in the same family planning modules.

Expanding acceptance and adoption of healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies - This year, Sawki trained 36 health agents (10 in Zinder and 26 in Maradi) and 12 Sawki field agents in Maradi and Zinder in family planning. These trainees helped trained the health promoters, leader mothers in care groups and safe space mentors in all Sawki communities. Sensitization sessions were in turn conducted by leader mothers in weekly meetings in their care units and mentors in their safe spaces.

Behavior Change and Community Awareness activities - In addition to ENA training, leader mothers and health promoters have participated in monthly sessions on social behavior change and community awareness building. In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, *Sawki* developed appropriate sensitization materials that comprise 22 factsheets on ENA and 1 image box on FP. The materials have been translated in Hausa and are currently being duplicated for distribution to the health promoters and leader mothers for their use with PLW. To support and monitor leader mothers and health promoters in their activities, *Sawki* has developed a protocol with the health district officials for quarterly follow up visits. Sensitization sessions for behavior change on the 7 ENA and family planning have been conducted by leader mothers and community health promoters in all villages.

The themes on FP covered the advantages derived from planning birth, the various birth control methods, myths and solutions about reproductive health, early marriage, delaying of first pregnancy and spacing of birth. 8073 sessions have been conducted including 4187 in Zinder and 3886 in Maradi. All these sessions took place in PLW care units and leader mothers' care groups. 128,250 participants attended the sessions (83,605 in Zinder and 44,645 in Maradi). Among these, 118,879 were women and 9,427 were men. In addition to these sessions, Sawki and the mobile phone company Orange organized sensitization caravans on exclusive breastfeeding, hand washing, attendance of health centers by PLW and family planning. During that period an estimated 6,269 persons attended the event. The 27 sensitization caravans covered the 21 villages in Maradi Region and were fully funded by Orange. In addition to the caravan campaigns 116 radio broadcast sessions delivered the same messages on ENA and family planning were delivered in Zinder through ORTN and ANFANI radio companies. The same activity is being arranged for Maradi. Sawki participated in the preparation of a TV promotional film initiated by the ministry of public health, UNICEF, the Direction de la Nutrition and 5 radio broadcasting companies in two villages in Sawki intervention zone. The messages covered topics like maternal exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding for children under 2, nutrition for pregnant and lactating women, hand washing and the role of husbands schools in the fight against malnutrition.

Home visits - To reinforce the impact of the above mass awareness campaigns Sawki organized home visits conducted by community health workers (leader mothers and community health promoters) and Sawki nutrition field agents in all 62 villages. 4290 households were visited in all 62 villages. A total of 15,890 persons were met including 14,453 women and 1,437 men. Themes developed during the home visits are the standard ENA, family planning, essential hygiene actions (EHA), children and PLW complementary feeding, importance of attending health centers.

Cooking demonstrations – In year 2, Sawki field staff continued to work with Leader Mothers to plan and carry out cooking demonstrations focused on the use of CSB+ and locally available nutritious foods. When care units met to collect their rations, participating women first were invited to attend the cooking demonstrations. A cooking demonstration was organized for each care unit in every community. During the reporting period Sawki organized 3,947 cooking demonstrations to train villagers on how to use CSB+ for different recipes during food distribution to PLW and children under 2 in all villages. 70,049 women and 4,563 men attended these demonstrations. Cooking demonstrations were also performed during care unit sessions to show to PLW how to use locally available food (millet, cowpea, orange flesh sweet potato and groundnut) to prepare healthy and nutritious recipes.

Increasing access to potable water and improving drinking water quality – Access to potable water is a major challenge in the program intervention zone. Most of drinking water comes from wells that do not guarantee the minimum environment safety for the population, creating health hazards for the population and mainly for the children. In year 2, Sawki rehabilitated 9 wells for population drinking water in 5 villages in Maradi and 3 villages in Zinder to cover the water consumption need of 12,561 persons. The rehabilitation of the wells applied all the mitigation measures described in the EMMP. The program helped also in the creation of a water management committee in each village. Each committee is comprised of 5 persons (2 women and three men) who are responsible of the management, maintenance and any problem related to the wells functioning. Sawki partnered with Anima Sutura (a local NGO) for the provisioning of Aquatab to purify household drinking water. In 6 villages the wells are also used for irrigation purposes for women vegetable gardening to boost the consumption of nutritious food mainly for PLW and children under 5.

Implementing community-led total sanitation (CLTS) – Sawki contracted Demi-E, a local NGO, to conduct its Community-Led Total Sanitation component (CLTS). Open-air defecation and its related consequences on community health is common in the Sawki area of intervention. In April/May 2014, Demi-E started the community sensitization through practical mapping of the path from the defecation to the human daily consumption leading to diseases. The community sensitization was followed by the training of 30 masons in latrine construction in Zinder, and 22 are currently being trained in Maradi for the first 11 villages of that region. Sawki is providing one-time support to masons for the construction of latrine caps to be purchased by community members. Sawki field team and WASH officer are monitoring the creation and maintenance of latrines in all communities.

Food distribution - Sawki continued food distribution to PLW and children under 2 in year 2. Each beneficiary received a two-month ration at each distribution. All 62 villages have been receiving their two-month rations. In total 5,914 PLW and 8,473 children under 2 have received

rations to date. 763 Leader mothers and 66 health promoters received receive their food rations in Y2 of the program.

IR 1.2: Appropriate nutrition practices and healthy timing of first pregnancy adopted by adolescent girls and their partners

Sawki has setup the community structures essential to conveying social behavioral change for targeted populations in its intervention area. Early marriage and no birth control count among the major factors in explaining young women's health vulnerability and infant mortality but also long term population growth which hampers the economic recovery and growth of the country. Through adolescent girls' safe spaces, husbands' schools, care units and care groups, Sawki communicates the modus operandi for a long term change.

Sensitization Campaign – Discussions on family planning and reproductive health started in care units of pregnant and lactating women through their weekly meetings and in care groups for leader mothers. The same discussions occurred in adolescent safe spaces as well. The themes discussed during these meetings ranged from contraceptive methods, advantages of family planning, early marriage and early pregnancy consequences and birth spacing.

“Safe Spaces” Discussions for Girls – In year 2, Sawki created additional safe spaces in 30 new villages in Maradi and Zinder, and the total number of active safe spaces is now 56. Only 6 villages do not yet have functioning groups, to provide a control group to the RISING research initiative described above. 168 mentors in 56 villages conducted 177 information exchange sessions on ENA, family planning and reproductive health attended by 6,922 adolescent girls. Sawki has also involved adolescent girls in livelihood activities (poultry, livestock value chain activities) and is also working with REGIS-ER on a joint literacy and numeracy training for girls in safe spaces.

Family Planning and On-Demand Contraception for Young Couples - Sawki is setting up Contraceptive input Community-based Distributors (CBD) sites in villages which do not have a health center (CSI). Each CBD is comprised of 1 woman and 1 man. 10 villages (5 in Maradi and 5 in Zinder) are already equipped with the CBD and contraceptive inputs provided by Anima Sutura (a local NGO). Meetings with UNFPA and Anima Sutura have been organized by Sawki in Maradi and Zinder to discuss the conceptive supply issue. The Health Districts have been involved in the choice of a supply strategy. One main recommendation was only villages which do not have a CSI would benefit from a CBD. Activities in these CBD will start in FY15 after all CBD members have been trained.

IR 1.3: Counseling and care appropriately provided by health centers and other community actors

Health facility staff delivery high quality service and messages for ENA, family planning and Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) – A sustainable behavior change at the community level will require the involvement of health agents at both the commune and region levels. The coordination between Sawki and the public health system at the commune and district levels included joint supervision and monthly outreach visits by Sawki agents and ministry of health regional agents. Sawki did not offer IMCI training for health agents. They have been trained many times by various NGO in development programs.

Increasing outreach services in nutrition and family planning – 50 outreach visits have been organized during the reporting period (22 in Maradi and 28 in Zinder). This involved 18 CSI (11 in Maradi and 7 in Zinder). Each CSI in Maradi did 2 visits and each CSI in Zinder did 4 visits. 3 CSI in Zinder were not involved in the outreach visits because they do not have far away villages to visit. During the outreach visits the public health agents worked on extended immunization program, family planning, pre and post natal medical consultations, screening of malnutrition and IEC sessions. Joint supervision missions were organized in the Department of Mirriah between Sawki and the health district agents to monitor the activity implementation. The joint visits planned for Maradi were not done because of conflicting schedules.

Establishing an active screening and referral system for malnutrition at the community level – Monthly malnutrition screening using MUAC are done in all Sawki communities. During the reporting period, 24,300 children under 5 have been screened (5401 in Maradi and 18,899 in Zinder). The screening started late in Maradi which explains the lower number of screened children in that region. Among them, 3052 have been referred to recuperation centers (517 in Maradi and 2535 in Zinder). Among the total number of children referred, 953 were severe acute malnutrition and 2369 for moderate acute malnutrition. Sawki is putting in place a monitoring system for post referral activities for reporting purposes.

Supporting the National and Regional Governmental Health Services' Organization and Communication Efforts – During the reporting period, Sawki supported the Regional Governmental Health Services through trainings in ENA, family planning and communication techniques. The Program supported also the CSI in their outreach effort by organizing the monthly outreach visits of the CSI agents by providing fuel for their motorbikes and per diem to touch villages out of their operational area. 22 health agents were involved in the visits. Sawki organized 4 outreach visits per month in 2 districts in Maradi and 1 district in Zinder. The screening for malnutrition at the village level is another form of support to the CSI because the CSI screens only children brought to the health center.

SO2: Local availability and households' access to nutritious food increased

In FY14 Sawki completed the majority of its planned activities related to the second strategic objective. A joint Mission wide PERSUAP was completed by the three DFAPs to cover pesticide use issues in the implementation zones of the programs. Sawki also amended its EMMP to be approved for local procurement of fertilizer. A complete ESR has been submitted with the FY15 PREP.

IR 2.1: Household consumption of diversified nutritious food increased from agricultural and pastoral production

Enhanced Household Food Production – In terms of household food diversification, Sawki conducted several activities during the reporting period. Women vegetable gardening activities took place in several communities in Sawki intervention area. The sites were selected based on water source availability, women's access to land, and the interest and commitment of women in

the community. On the basis of these criteria, Sawki conducted a joint mission with agents of the ministries of agriculture and rural development to select 31 communities (5 in Maradi and 26 in Zinder) for this vegetable gardening activity. 2,476 women were involved in vegetable gardening in the 31 sites. 137 garden coordinators were selected among them (112 in Zinder and 25 in Maradi). The garden coordinators were trained as trainers and are responsible for training the other women and monitor the gardening activities in their respective communities. Sawki provided vegetable seeds and vouchers worth 10,000 CFA (about \$20) for hand tools to the 137 garden coordinators to assist them in vegetable nurseries. Sawki provided cuttings of orange flesh sweet potatoes, seeds of lettuce, cabbage, tomato, carrot, Irish potato and onion. The gardening tools included rakes, shovels, watering can and hoes. Sawki provided to the other women engaged in vegetable gardening with vouchers worth 1,000 CFA each (\$2) for the procurement of vegetable seedlings from the garden coordinators' nurseries. Women producers benefited also from training and supervision from the ministry of agriculture local agents and Sawki field agents. Sawki provided to all women of reproductive age seedlings of Moringa (6,262 in total) to be planted in their personal plots to enhance the nutrition value of the household diet.

A post-harvest assessment of vegetable gardening activity by INRAN revealed that almost all the vegetables grown by the women were consumed by the family with the exception of a total of 100 kg of potatoes that were sold to pay debts. All the women who participated in the activity were very satisfied of the outcome from this activity despite a few constraints they listed, such as the lack of sufficient water for irrigation, access to enough land to all women, pest problems, livestock destroying plants and low soil fertility.

To respond to these constraints, during the reporting year Sawki rehabilitated 6 garden wells, created 7 new garden wells, developed several plots for vegetable gardening in selected villages for a total of 5 ha (500 gardening plots), provided hand tools to women gardeners, fenced six parcel plots against animals, and trained women in vegetable gardening and pest management. All environmental mitigation measures were followed during the rehabilitation and construction of wells.

There is still a lot to be done and Sawki and its partners are working on more sustainable ways for gardening participants to acquire all necessary inputs and equipment through village savings and loan system and for more community participation. For each garden wells Sawki helped the community set up a wells management committee. 519 Women engaged in vegetable garden for several groups and were trained in community life. Among them 137 garden coordinators were selected to lead the operations. After the training and with the assistance of ACPOR⁵ the different women groups created formal cooperatives with legal registration. This constitutes a good start toward a more formal structure that can benefit microfinance institutions like ASUSU.

Micronutrient-Rich Product Processing and Conservation – During the reporting year, INRAN trained 8 agents from the regional office of the ministry of agriculture and 12 Sawki field agents on storage and conservation techniques of agricultural products. One conservation technique that has proven to be effective is the triple bagging of the product. The technology was invented by

⁵Actions et Coopératives pour la Promotion des Organismes Ruraux

INRAN and the triple bags are currently being sold by selected retailers under INRAN monitoring. The major products that are candidate for this type of conservation are cash crops such as cowpeas, voandzou (Bambara peas), oseille (hibiscus), groundnut, etc. All 22 trained agents disseminated the information in the different communities.

With regards to vegetables produced in women's gardens, the low production associated with the small land holding per woman beneficiary did not yield a surplus to be conserved for future consumption or stored for future sale. In Zinder only 14,655 kg of cabbage, 5,208 kg of lettuce, 841 kg of carrot, 4,434 kg of onion, 3,001 kg of tomato and 4,945 kg Irish potato were harvested in the 24 sites. These low numbers come primarily from low plot size, but also pest attacks, the new experience in gardening, low land access in certain communities and not enough water for irrigation in other communities. Almost all the production was consumed. In year three, we are encouraging increased plot size so that women are able to gain income as well as household nutrition from this activity.

With the scale up planned for year 3, additional training in vegetable produce conservation and storage is planned in areas where this was not done in year 2. The value chain study currently ongoing is looking at the conservation and storage aspects of major cash crops and vegetable products to be considered for conservation and storage.

IR 2.2: Land and livestock productivity increased at household and community levels

During the reporting period Sawki conducted a series of activities to help increase agricultural and pastoral productions in Maradi and Zinder Regions. This assistance was done through capacity building of farmers and agro-pastoral farmers during farmer field school sessions, awareness campaigns, farmers organization structuring. The activities below have been conducted during year 2 implementation.

Efficiently Managing Soil & Water Resources – Sawki and INRAN continue their collaboration for both crop and animal production enhancement. During the period 2012-2013 Sawki and INRAN conducted 25 farmer field schools (FFS) for which 275 farmers participated in Zinder including 132 women and 325 farmers in Maradi including 179 women. The overall results of the FFS showed interesting varieties for cowpea and millet. The cowpea variety IT90K372-1-2 exhibited higher performance in all sites with an average yield of 643 kg/ha. The millet variety HKP showed higher performance with a yield varying between 600 kg and 1600 kg/ha. When these varieties are combined with adequate soil fertility management yield is doubled in millet-cowpea crop association.

The use of mineral fertilizers and green manure in micro-doses has shown two immediate benefits 1) a significant increase in both millet and cowpea; and 2) a lesser environmental impact with the use of micro-doses. The increase in yield should translate into higher income that will encourage farmers to invest in both improved seeds and fertilizers. Sawki is working with community members farmers associations engaged in crop and livestock production on ways to sustain long term improvement of production and market insertion.

Participants to FFS have been evaluated by INRAN to measure their knowledge acquisition for technology duplication. INRAN found that around 90% of the participants understood the training and are capable to duplicate the technologies in their own parcels plots.

In order to assist farmers use on their own parcels the improved technologies they learned during FFS, Sawki provided subsidized inputs to 231 FFS performant participants (85 in Zinder and 146 in Maradi). The 231 farmers in turn supervised 869 other farmers (593 in Maradi and 276 in Zinder) to assist them apply the same improved technologies in their parcel plots. All farmers scaling up the new technologies received improved varieties (3 kg of millet and 2 kg of cowpea to sow 0.5 ha each). Farmers in Maradi engaged in scaling up the new technologies received in addition mineral fertilizers (25 kg of NKP and 25 kg of urea) for micro doses application. All mitigation measures for the use of mineral fertilizers combined with organic manure) listed in the EMMP were applied.

Regarding the current 2014-2015 cropping season, Sawki put in place 48 FFS in 43 villages (27 in Zinder and 21 in Maradi). In Zinder 7 FFS provide demonstration and teaching on best practices for producing cowpea and 20 are focused on millet. In Maradi 6 FFS are in cowpea and 15 on millet. 1138 farmers are participating in the 48 FFS. This includes 494 in Maradi (243 men and 251 women) and 644 in Zinder (287 men and 257 women). There are 25 villages engaged in FFS in Zinder and 18 in Maradi. Sawki assisted the FFS in bio-pesticides (neem extract) and biological control agents against millet stem borers. 28 villages received each 1 liter of neem extract and 36 villages received each 15 bags of predators against the stem borers. The cowpea seed multipliers received each 5 liters of neem extract. Sawki field agents and the ministry of agriculture regional office agents received training from INRAN on FFS management, integrated pest management (IPM) and agricultural product conservation techniques.

Enhancing Animal Fertility and Milk Production – Sawki's objective to improve animal productivity through enhanced animal health and animal feeding, started with training of trainers and training of community beneficiaries. The training for trainers included 12 Sawki field agents and 9 ministry of livestock agents based in the regions. Training topics covered poultry production at the village level, herd management, fodder production, harvest and conservation of fodder and the making of multi-nutrition bricks for animal feed. The trainees in turn trained livestock value chain coordinators (LVCC) selected in the communities. 152 LVCC were trained in village level poultry production, 222 trained in herd management, fodder harvest and post-harvest activities. 144 LVCCs were trained in fodder production. During the reporting period Sawki selected 22 para-veterinarian agents who were trained in para-veterinarian modules, poultry production and herd management. All 22 were equipped with startup kits. The para-vet sensitized community members in animal health issues including animal immunizations.

Sawki piloted fodder production at the community level. 18 pilot sites (3 in Maradi and 15 in Zinder) were selected to try three fodder species – burgu millet (*Echinochloa Stagnina*), cowpea fodder (*Vigna Unguiculata*) and alfalfa (*Luzerne* or *Medicago Sativa*). Each site was managed by a volunteer producer who supervised several potential fodder producers. A total of 222 potential adopters were supervised by the 18 first volunteers. The 222 volunteers included 42 women. The pilot fodder production showed very promising results at harvest for all three species with 16.93 MT/ of dry matter for burgu, 4.5 MT/ha of dry matter for cowpea fodder and 3.04 MT/ha of dry matter for Luzerne from just one cut.

A standard production comprises 3 cuttings. Planting on 163 ha would yield 2382 MT which can feed 1401 LTU⁶ during 9 months, equaling 1751 cows or 9341 small ruminants. Due to the very interesting results observed by volunteers and pilot farmers, 917 producers asked to be considered for scale up. Among them 592 want to grow rainfed cowpea fodder on 174.5 ha and 325 farmers chose to grow burgu on 7.89 ha on irrigated parcels. To assist the farmers Sawki provided 1807 kg of seeds of cowpea fodder (1067 kg in Maradi and 740 kg in Zinder). Fodder growers in Maradi received also mineral fertilizers. Sawki provided also cuttings of burgu to the 325 farmers who volunteers to grow burgu on irrigated plots.

In order to improve the genetic breed of livestock, Sawki provided reddish goats, laying hens and their male genitors in Maradi and Zinder. Sawki provided 884 reddish female goats to 442 vulnerable households in the 21 communities in Maradi and 4 male genitors per village for breeding. In Zinder 1586 reddish female goats and 158 male genitors were distributed. Each family received 2 female goats. The male goats are managed by the community for reproductive purposes. Sawki also distributed 62 rams for genetic breed improvement of local sheep. Sawki provided also 84 laying hens and 21 roosters for the 21 villages in Maradi communities. Zinder will be receiving 164 laying hens and 41 roosters. All male animals and the hens are managed by selected livestock value chain coordinators in villages. The para-vet agents treated and dewormed 5,981 animals and poultries for 2838 persons.

Contributing to Improved Input Supply Chains – In order to make improved varieties available in Sawki intervention area, the program put in place a community-based seed system for the production of improved varieties. Sawki and partners identified, trained and assisted 21 community seed multipliers (15 for millet 6 in cowpea). Each seed multiplier received a starter subsidy including improved variety and fertilizers. After being trained by the Regional Seed Center each of 15 millet variety multipliers received each 50 kg of improved millet and 250 kg of urea and 250 kg of NPK. The cowpea seed multipliers received 100 kg of improved cowpea variety and 50 kg of NPK. Sawki and ministry of agriculture agents provided supervision and monitoring of the activity.

IR 2.3: Household incomes increased

Community productive assets development – Sawki has identified two key value chains that show competitive advantages and a strong contribution to nutrition and food security: cowpeas and small ruminants. These value chains were identified based on analysis of interviews with producer communities, government technical services and other food security programs in the intervention area. In year 2 Sawki contracted with CESAO⁷ (a private consulting company) to conduct a value chain study for cowpea and small ruminants. CESAO already conducted four workshops (2 in Maradi and 2 in Zinder). In each region CESAO conducted one diagnostic workshop per product. The main activities were to identify the stakeholders involved in each value chain and to analyze the weaknesses and strengths of each link of the value chain.

⁶ Tropical Livestock Unit provides a convenient method for quantifying a wide range of different livestock types and sizes in a standardized manner.

⁷ Centre d'Etudes Economiques et Sociales d'Afrique de l'Ouest

Women's involvement in the value chain was also assessed. In addition to Sawki staff, the following stakeholders attended the value chain workshops of their interest: ministries of agriculture and livestock agents - farmers' representatives - chambers of agriculture representatives – representatives of cowpea sellers groups - representatives of small ruminants sector – representatives of cowpea seed multipliers – local political authorities. Persons and institutions that attended the workshops came from both the department and regional levels. The final report is due in November.

Increasing Producers' Commercial Capacity – Sawki began assessing training needs in financial management and business development and mapping small businesses' linkages with financial institutions and farmers' access to financial services. Trainings and other elements of this activity started during the reporting period with the women engaged in vegetable gardening. 537 women were trained (425 in Maradi and 112 in Zinder) in savings and loans. The objective of this training was to build their capacity to better manage the revenues gained from the gardening activities and also to link them the formal microfinance sector. Developing their business skill and linking them to the microfinance institutions will lead them to more sustainable funding sources for their future investment. The other communities members involved in the program implementation (livestock value chain coordinators and adopters, members of farmers field schools, seed multipliers) will all be trained.

Cross-Cutting Theme: Household and community resilience to shocks improved through community development and good governance

Reinforcing Community-Based Early Warning Systems (EWS) - Sawki started by an inventory of villages which have an early warning structure (SCAP/RU) set up in its intervention area. The inventory showed that the departments of Mirriah and Guidan Roudji do not have functional SCAP/RU in any of the villages where Sawki is implementing its program. However, there are other villages with functioning SCAP/RU. Instead of creating SCAP/RU from scratch the Program chose to use the village development committees to host the early warning system. This new approach differs from the cluster approach in which in a group of villages one will be hosting the SCAP/RU and would represent the other villages included in the cluster.

By creating an early warning system in the Program intervention area alone using the classic approach, Sawki would cover less than 10% of the geographic coverage of a viable early warning as defined by the GON. As a result Sawki is concentrating in developing a light village-based alert system hosted by the VDC coupled with a community-based response system in which all village members are contributors and beneficiaries. This approach started late and the alert component is being explained to villagers to have their endorsement. The second part will be piloted in the coming 2 month in a sample of villages in Maradi and Zinder before a scale up to the entire program area.

Building the capacity of local government and community structures to mitigate the impacts of drought – Sawki conducted an important activity of pastoral land recuperation during the reporting period. Arable land is a major constraint to increasing agricultural production. Agricultural land is becoming smaller as children grow and get married claiming a portion of land for their own household.

Sawki and agricultural staff in the Regions conducted site identification missions in both Maradi and Zinder to select appropriate sites for land rehabilitation. 7 pastoral lands (3 in Maradi and 4 in Zinder) were selected for rehabilitation. The program organized meetings with the surrounding villages who benefit from the rehabilitated parcels to discuss the procedures of the rehabilitation. Among the measures one can cite the community participation in the field activities by providing labor force from each household of the villages. 2,478 community members representing all households participated in the rehabilitation and building of half-moons. This included 1387 in Zinder and 1091 in Maradi. 794 women participated in the activities. To supervise the work Sawki hired 71 specialized laborers in charge of the supervision, parcel delimitation. Sawki provided also the hand tools for the construction of the half-moons. 151,980 half-moons have been constructed in 485.56 hectares (203.4 in Maradi and 282.16 in Zinder).

The half-moons were sown with seeds of *Cenchrus Biflorus* (Cram-cram). This plant is believed to have potential to improve nutrition and prevent land degradation. Community members who participated in the food for asset (FFA) received food rations for the construction of 2 half-moons. Each ration was composed of 1,67 kg of bulgur, 0,416 kg of lentils and 0.18 kg of vegetable oil.

Cross-Cutting Theme: Gender

Gender analysis and Gender Action Plan – Sawki and the two other DFAPs submitted the first draft of the gender analysis to FFP in August 29 for review as requested by the AOR during her last visit in Niger. Comments were channeled to the consultant for a final draft before the translation into English. Following the gender analysis each DFAP organized a two-day workshop with the consultant to derive a gender action plan for the program that covers the life of the program. Sawki gender action plan is available in French version. Once the document is finalized it will be translated into English for submission to FFP.

Adolescent Girls' Safe Spaces – During this year Sawki created safe spaces in the new 36 villages that joined the program to complete the intervention to 62 villages in Maradi and Zinder. Sawki organized meetings with local authorities (religious leaders, village chiefs, women's group representatives and the elderly) to discuss the objectives of the Program about the safe spaces and request their support.

Then Sawki selected volunteer adolescent girls who want to participate in safe spaces activities and selected also the mentors to run the safe spaces. 60 safe spaces have been created, 1550 girls enrolled and 95 mentors selected in 30 villages. Six villages where the activity was delayed (for the purpose of the RISING research as stated above) will have their safe spaces in September 2015. Mentors have been trained in facilitation techniques and group management. At this time Sawki has 112 safe spaces that comprise 3,050 adolescent girls and 168 mentors in total. Themes developed in the safe spaces embrace ENA, delaying marriage and the importance of education for girls. They are also trained in agriculture and livestock management and budget management. Certain safe spaces have already created their saving and loan associations. Sawki will monitor the activity and provide support to all safe space groups with continued training, including literacy training, in the coming year.

Husband's schools - The concept of husband schools was introduced in Niger by UNFPA with the objective to obtain men's support on gender equity and women access to resources and the decision making process. Sawki also want to use this special group to advocate for social behavior change on topics related to early marriage, young girls' education, birth spacing, and family planning. During the reporting period Sawki created 124 husbands' schools (HS) that count 1116 members including 558 young husbands and 558 elders. In past year 216 members attended 6 workshops on gender and advocacy organized by the program. 3 health centers and 3 ministry of agriculture agents and all Sawki field agents attended the workshops.

After the workshops members of the HS assured to advocate on three major areas: a) sensitize other men in their respective villages to help women to reduce their household workload; b) help women practice income generating activities; and c) sensitize the population on the importance of having young women go to school.

Women workload reduction – Nigerien women are overworked with household activities, and this situation prevents them from getting fully engaged in income generating activities (IGAs). Sawki understood that the best way to help women be financially independent is to provide them with time and business opportunities. During the reporting period, the program provided several types of equipment to help reduce women household workload. The program installed 5 grain millers to replace grain pounding, 2 millet threshers to free considerable time, 2 grain dehuskers, 2 oil presses for groundnut oil extraction activity, 2 grounders for groundnut and 100 rickshaws for water transportation. All these equipment are managed and maintained by a management committee within the garden coordinators cooperative of respective villages.

Results and Accomplishments during Year 2 / FY2014: Monitoring & Evaluation Plan

The M&E team accomplished all planned activities this year.

Annual Survey - Sawki conducted its annual survey to collect data from a sample of households to determine levels of a group of annual indicators. 602 households were surveyed and 832 persons responded to the questionnaires including 416 women and 416 men.

The survey methodology included questionnaires directed to households and to the community. Each household surveyed was assigned a unique identifying number and responded to questions applicable to their situation (male and female household members). At the community level, focus groups were conducted. During the reporting year, a review of the indicators (IPTT) was completed by the interim M&E manager with the M&E team, and this review led to the reassessment of FY13 annual survey data to address concerns raised about the reference level of annual indicators. The indicators reference levels were recalculated and future targets redefined. To illustrate this issue the indicator “*Percent of community members who can state a least one benefit of delaying first pregnancy until after 18 years old.*” was estimated first to reach 99% of respondents. A recalculation of the indicator gave 22.9% which makes more sense. Another example is the indicator “*Percentage of households using at least one saving technology labor or energy promoted by the project*” which was 92% but ended up being 68.8%. A lesson learned here is the method of calculation needs to be well thought to make sure we provide the right information and also are on the right track when proposing future target to achieve.

Development of data collection forms - Sawki M&E team organized in January 2014 training for the development of data collection forms for monitoring of program activities. With the participation of health and agriculture technical teams, six data collection tools for the systematic monitoring of program implementation activities were produced. These forms are currently used to track the program's progress in implementing activities at the community level. These activities include: food distribution, cooking demonstration activities, awareness-raising events, training activities; establishing community based organizations etc. These tools generate monthly progress data of the program.

Classification of households by vulnerability status - Sawki M&E team classified 14,942 households in the 62 target villages according to their vulnerability status, based on the Household Economic Assessment (HEA) approach. The overall results show that the majority of households are very poor (51%) or poor (30%), with a total of 81% of households revealing below average income. Households classified as well-off or average income were 19% in total, specifically with 4% of households classified as well-off and 15% as average. Female-headed households are nearly three times more likely to be "very poor" than those headed by men. All well off households and almost all average income households are headed by men. Of those households headed by women, 75% are classified as very poor and 25% as poor. This classification helped prioritize the targeting of female-headed households for activities such as Food for Asset (FFA), vegetable market gardening, and investment in technologies that decrease women's workload as well as reddish goats' recipient selection.

Post distribution monitoring - In order to evaluate and further improve food distribution activities, the M&E team carried out a post distribution monitoring in February and March 2014. The M&E team developed the scope of work, designed the data collection tools and supervised the data collection process. A team of four surveyors per region were trained and assisted over five days to collect data related to the efficiency, effectiveness and community experience of the food distributions. 156 individual beneficiaries have been interviewed and 8 focus group discussions conducted. Many operational recommendations derived from data analysis which led the program take many decisions. Among the PDM recommendations we can list the following items: a) food distribution should always be attended by one nutrition agent in addition to commodity management team; b) village authorities should always remind food beneficiaries to be and stay transparent and not try to fraud; c) the complaint committees should always be trained on how to play their role; and d) updating the list of beneficiaries is crucial.

Capacity building - Three internal training were conducted to strengthen the capacity of the program staff in the following areas:

Introduction to Access: 6 weekly training sessions were conducted by the M&E team for the benefit of program staff from April to May 2014. This training is to meet the need expressed by Sawki staff to learn the basics of Microsoft Access to facilitate their work. 10 staff including 2 women ranging from managers to field staff attended these sessions which will continue in FY15.

Training on CSPro for data entry: This training took place in April and involved M&E staff only. It was a practical training for 3 staff that had to create step by step a data entry template using the post distribution questionnaire conducted by Sawki. This allowed the team to learn how to install the software and how to develop a user-friendly data entry template.

Training of field agents on the use of GPS hardware: The Sawki ITC Database Officer led two training sessions for program’s agriculture field agents on the use of a GPS. One session was held in Karazomé in Maradi Region and the other session in Droum in Zinder Region. A total of eleven agents (7 in Zinder and 4 in Maradi) benefited from this training. Their new knowledge will allow them to participate in data collection for the geo-referencing of program activities. In addition to the training, the M&E team collected additional data to update the Program intervention maps.

DFAP M&E task force meeting - Under the leadership of Sawki M&E Manager, the three DFAPs M&E teams (Sawki; LAHIA and PSAM-TAI) held four task force meetings. During these meetings, experiences have been shared on issues relating to indicators specially the four agricultural indicators. The task force helped the M&E team strengthen their understanding of these indicators.

Date base development - The M&E team through a contract with “Global Services” a consultancy agency on September 9 has equipped the program with a database for the management of all program data. The database is currently being tested and data entry preparation is ongoing. The management of the database is under the responsibility of Sawki ICT officer and he is backed up by the M&E Manager.

Results and Accomplishments during Year 2 / FY2014: Commodities and Operations

Commodities received and distributed - During the reporting period, Sawki received a total of 975 MT. All commodities called forward by the Program arrive in Niger on “Through Bill of Lading” status leaving the burden of inland transportation on the vessel. The Program is in charge of the custom clearance in Niger. Sawki did not receive monetization commodities - this was replaced by CDF. Overall the Program distributed 713.2 MT for nutrition and agriculture program elements during the fiscal year. The pipeline at the end of September shows the following quantities:

Commodity Type	CSB+	Bulgur	Lentils	Vegetable Oil	Green Peas	Yellow Peas	Sorghum
FY14 Opening balances (kgs)	227,445	224,999	98,300	29,941	50	50	600
Quantity received during the year (kgs)	736,576	79,950	158,450	-	-	-	-
Quantity distributed during the year (kgs)	401,562	195,472	101,454	14,684	-	-	-
Commodity loans out (kgs)	260,650	-	-	-	-	-	-
Commodity repayments (kgs)	11,650	-	-	5,489	-	-	-
Losses reported during FY15	2,248	219	355	5,483	-	-	-
Other Dispatches	155	-	-	-	-	-	-
Book closing balances (kgs)	311,057	109,258	154,941	15,262	50	50	600
Physical closing balances (kgs)							

	311,012	109,351	154,933	15,283	50	50	600
Excess/Loss commodity reported (kgs)	(45)	93	(8)	20	-	-	-

The large quantity of CSB+ at the end of the fiscal year can be explained by a provision of 3 distributions to bridge to year 3 until the first call forward arrived in Sawki's warehouses.

In order to absorb the large quantity of CSB+ the program did not include CSB+ in its first call forward. The green peas, yellow peas and sorghum came mistakenly with one of the shipments. FFP authorized the use of these extra commodities by the program. The health and nutrition has plan to use them in cooking demonstrations.

Other Operational Issues – Sawki rented a guest house in Zinder to respond to the problem of lack of suitable hotel accommodation and high prices. With the guest house Sawki plan to save up to \$50,000 in hotel fees while solving the acute problem of finding accommodation in Zinder.

Budget analysis

Items	Monetization \$	202(e) \$	ITSH \$	CDF \$
Resources as per CA	11,316,400	3,886,600	4,109,200	-
Resources obligated	1,324,555	2,344,911	640,985	8,000,000
Resources spent	986,960	1,857,019	333,222	1,054,004
Burn rate (%)	75%	79%	52%	13%

Expenses showed an under expenditure mainly due to many factors including Africare's delay in submitting financial reports that negatively impacted program implementation. Africare's participation in the consortium has been terminated and Mercy Corps took the necessary measures to smoothly takeover activities that were previously executed by the partner. During FY14, FFP obligated 8 million in CDF to replace monetization proceeds for both FY14 and FY15. Sawki received an extra \$299,869 for water infrastructure in the program intervention area. A request for a budget modification is being prepared and will be sent shortly to the AOR for review.

B. Challenges and Lessons Learned

Commodities Management

Sawki has faced challenges with calling forward quantities of commodities that are aligned with the quantities needed for program activities, notably vegetable oil. Specifically, vegetable oil is only distributed in Food for Work activities, which only occur once per year at a time when

farmers are not occupied in their own fields. The activity requires much less than the minimum of 30 MT required to be called forward – for example, in FY14, only 15 MT were distributed. This means that the balance of oil needs to be stocked in Sawki warehouses until the following year, when the commodities near their best if used by dates. Sawki has tried to mitigate this by exchanging the oil with other DFAPs (Save the Children) or with WFP for another commodity, but this is not a long term solution. The program would benefit from the possibility to call forward smaller quantities of vegetable oil each year.

Staff Turnover

The program continues to face problems with staff turnover, which can lead to delays in some program activities. The GoN labor laws do not allow a quick hiring process, as all recruitments have to be announced in newspapers for 15 days before starting the interviews and other related processes. Sawki has worked with other DFAP partners on this issue, and all have agreed to not hire a staff from another program without first discussing with the leadership of that program, but it is difficult to prevent staff leaving for positions with other institutions.

Setting appropriate targets for indicators

In the first two years of the program, Sawki has learned more about local realities in Maradi and Zinder and this has led to challenging many assumptions made at the beginning of the program. Thus, the program is revising its targets for many indicators. For example, the hypothesis was that each farmer field school participant would train up to 7 other farmers. But the evaluation conducted by the research institute INRAN showed that each performant farmer trained only 4 farmers instead of 7. There were also certain errors made in targeting, such as for the number of people trained in health and nutrition. The target was set too high because Sawki initially included the total number of people sensitized, instead of only those receiving more targeted training. Revised targets will be included in the PREP for year 3.

Implementing Early Warning Systems

The standard procedure for establishing an early warning system requires building a hierarchical structure, bottom-up, from the village to the national level. But this has shown its limits because many of these community structures are not working effectively and disappear when the development project backing it up closes. Sawki choose to build a village alert system coupled with a community-based response system at the village level. A clustering of neighboring villages can be done by another entity like REGIS-ER with which Sawki intends to discuss the issue. Now Sawki is currently putting in place a village early warning system and working on an emergency community-based response scheme which seems more sustainable than the typical scheme. All village development committees will include a village early warning system and community structures created or being built in Sawki intervention area will be involved in the community-based response system. For illustration, the farmer field school members, vegetable production coordinators and other village structures like the care units, care groups and safe spaces involved in livelihood activities will meet to discuss how individual farmers contribution to a village loan association or granary after harvest can be used as a guarantee in case of disaster with repayment system, etc. A warehouse receipt system at the village level can be envisioned as an additional mechanism to respond to sudden needs. This will necessitate a lot of work but this is doable and seems more sustainable than the classic SCAP/RU system.

C. List of Attachments

1. Expenditure Report
2. Success Stories
3. Detailed Implementation Plan
4. Indicator Performance Tracking Table