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REVISED ANNUAL WORK PLAN FY2015

FEED THE FUTURE

INTEGRATING NUTRITION IN VALUE CHAINS PROJECT,
MALAWI

COVERING PERIOD 1ST OCTOBER 2014 THROUGH 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

March 2015

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ANNUAL WORKPLAN: FY2015

FEED THE FUTURE-INTEGRATING NUTRITION IN VALUE CHAINS PROJECT, MALAWI

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Table of Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
The Hybrid Implementation Approach.....	2
FY2015 Vision and Strategy.....	5
Cross-cutting themes.....	6
Key Project Technical Components.....	7
CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVES.....	9
GENDER.....	9
Introduction.....	9
INVC Approach	9
Tasks to be undertaken in FY 15	9
VILLAGE FINANCIAL PLATFORM NARRATIVE.....	17
<i>TASK 2 EXPANSION:</i>	18
KEY INVC TECHNICAL COMPONENTS	24
Component 1: ADVANCING VALUE CHAIN COMPETITIVENESS.....	24
Table 1: component 1: tasks, sub-tasks, and activities matrix	29
Component 2: Improving Agricultural Productivity	35
Vision & Strategic Approach.....	35
Summary of Tasks and Sub-Tasks.....	37
Table 2: Component 2: Tasks, Sub-Tasks, and Activities Matrix	43
Component 3: Improving Community Capacity to Prevent Under-nutrition.....	47
Introduction and Context	47
Vision and Strategic Approach	47
Component 4: Developing Local “Institutional” Capacity fy2015 annual workplan.....	62
Introduction.....	62
Vision & Strategic Approach.....	63
Summary of Tasks and Sub-Tasks.....	64
Table 3: Component 4: Tasks, Sub-Tasks, and Activities Matrix	69
Monitoring & Evaluation	73
Introduction.....	73
Interventions to be undertaken during FY15	73

CONCLUSION..... 80
ANNEX: INVC FY 15 INTEGRATION WORKPLAN 81

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Agricultural Commodity Exchange for Africa
ADC	Area Development Committee
ADMARC	Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation
AEDC	Agriculture Extension Development Coordinator
AEDO	Agriculture Extension Development Officer
AFO	Association Field Officer
AGRA	Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa
AHCX	Auction Holdings Commodity Exchange
AI	Artificial Insemination
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMC	Association Management Center
BCC	Behavior Change Communication
BDS	Business Development Services
BSP	Business Service Provider
BVO	Bid Volume Only
CADECOM	Catholic Development Commission of Malawi
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCAP	Church of Central Africa – Presbyterian
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy (USAID)
CISANET	Civil Society Agriculture Network
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer’s Representative
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
DARS	Department of Agriculture Research Services
DfID	Department for International Development (UK)
DID	Differences-in-differences
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
EPA	Extension Planning Area
ESCOM	Electricity Supply Company of Malawi

FBO	Farmer Based Organization
FISP	Fertilizer Input Subsidy Program
FMB	First Bank of Malawi
FtF (FtF)	Feed the Future
FTFMS	Feed the Future Monitoring System
FUM	Farmers Union of Malawi
FY	Fiscal Year
GAC	Group Action Committee
GHI	Global Health Initiative
GMP	Monthly Growth Monitoring
GoM	Government of Malawi
GP	Groundnut platform
GVH	Group Village Head
Ha	Hectare
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
INVC	Integrating Nutrition in Value Chains
IFRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IIF	Investing in Innovation Fund
IP	Implementing Partner
IPC	Innovation and Productivity Centre
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IR	Intermediate Results
ISF	Implementation Support Fund
IT	Information Technology
IYCF	Infant and Young Children Feeding
LUANAR	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
LPO	Local Purchase Order
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAC	Marketing Action Center
MAPAC	Malawi Program on Aflatoxin Control
MBC	Malawi Broadcasting Company

MBG	Milk Bulking Group
MDI	Malawi Dairy Industries
MIM	Malawi Institute of Management
MIP	Market Information Point
MKW	Malawi Kwacha (symbol for)
MMPA	Malawi Milk Producers Association
MoA&FS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSU	Michigan State University
mt	Metric ton
MZ	Malawi Zebu (cows)
NASFAM	National Association of Smallholder Farmers of Malawi
NFRA	National Food Reserve Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OBM	Opportunity Bank of Malawi (Also referred to as OIBM)
OCA	Organizational Capacity Assessment
OPC	Office of President and Cabinet
OVO	Offer Volume Only
PCI	Project concern International
PSA	Public Service Announcement
QR	Quick Response
RLEEP	Rural Livelihoods Enhancement program
SCU	University of South Carolina
SOYAMA	Soy Bean Association of Malawi
SSDI	Support for Service Delivery Integration
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
Sub-IR	Sub Intermediate Results
TA [T/A]	Traditional Authority
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNC	University of North Carolina
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

VAC	Village Aggregation Center
VC	Value Chain
VCC	Value Chain Competitiveness
WRS	Warehouse Receipt System
ZBS	Zodiac Broadcasting Station
ZOI	Zone of Influence

Introduction

The Feed the Future Integrating Nutrition in Value Chains (FtF-INVC) Project has two fundamental goals:

- (1) Sustainably decrease rural poverty, and;
- (2) Improve nutrition outcomes for our beneficiaries.

FY 15 bridges the third and fourth project years and should rightly be both a year of acceleration and bringing to scale initiatives which have gained traction since project inception and a moment to review, reflect and re-orient where necessary. The current work plan revision for FY 15 incorporates responses to client comments received in October 2014 on the original FtF-INVC FY 15 work plan submission from 26 August 2014 but which were never responded to. It incorporates elements from DAI's INVC extension proposal as well as new guidance received through the Contract Modification executed at the end of December 2015.

As INVC engages FY15 we are faced with six key challenges.

1. Adoption of a true value chain approach which starts with the market, ends with the market, and is defined by the market but flows from the dinner plate to the farm-gate for targeted grain legumes within our seven district Zone of Influence in Central Malawi;
2. True integration of nutrition activities within our targeted value chains;
3. Coordination of the whole of INVC activities in any one District;
4. Increasing the speed and intensity of capacitation work with our local implementing partner grantees, while respecting their institutional identities and independence, and concurrently preparing for the transition to continued technical service provision post-project with our joint beneficiaries;
5. Mainstreaming gender, elevating women's empowerment while improving their access to productive assets, revenue streams and end markets, and leadership positions in their communities; and
6. Coordinating and collaborating with other implementing partners, locally elected officials and government technical services within and across sectors having similar beneficiaries inside our seven district zone of influence.

As this FY 15 submission goes to print, INVC is undergoing a renaissance, a re-boot if you will. The project is transitioning and beta testing our version 2. A management change undertaken in early January 2015 has brought a new Chief of Party, a new Deputy Chief of Party for Agricultural Productivity and Value Chain Competitiveness, and a new Component 1 lead to our team. Because of this INVC senior staff, in close consultation with our USAID COR are reviewing how we do business and revisiting the outcomes and impact we want to achieve. Intrinsic in this process is a re-empowerment of our core staff, both Malawian and expatriate, and a reassessment of our relationship with our local implementing partner grantees, their accomplishments to date and the challenges still needing to be overcome. Since October 2014 the team has been intensifying meetings with other implementing partners throughout our project zone, actively seeking out synergies and activities to pilot together. We have been sharing lessons learned on strategy, approach, and actively listening as beneficiaries, partners, and collaborators (both representatives of government technical services and elected officials) share with us their priorities and frank assessments of what we do well and what we could be doing better. These too have been incorporated in the present document. Elements of this workplan remain indicative as our

transformation is on-going. There are still some important gaps to fill, pieces to put into place, resources to rationalize, refine and target (or re-target), and yes, some learning still needing to be accomplished which is why this workplan remains “transitional”.

One key overarching lesson learned by the Project through its first two years of implementation is that *while we must work with local partners, their constraints must not inhibit Project progress or restrain its growth.*

Based on this invaluable insight and a rippling of lessons that radiate from it, DAI initiated a **hybrid implementation approach** in FY 14, which has proven to be successful and which will be incorporated into our intervention strategy through FY2015.

The Hybrid Implementation Approach

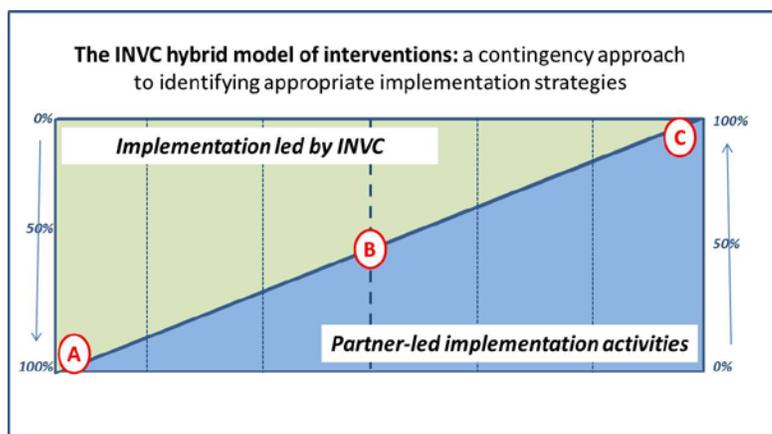
FtF-INVC is a USAID/FORWARD initiative charged with building host country capacity to directly implement and deliver technically excellent programming to targeted beneficiary populations by civil society organizations, the local private sector, and host country government units. Originally INVC envisaged that DAI as prime contractor would employ a relatively light touch, relying on local grantee implementing partners to deliver on-the-ground activities. To this end, since project inception, over seven million dollars in grants under contracts have been dedicated to local implementing partners and technical service providers. Based on lessons learned and as discussed throughout, this work plan replaces the light-touch approach with a *hybrid approach* that balances the spirit and intent of USAID/Forward with the mandate to achieve Project targets and longer-term impact.

We understand that no USAID implementer can achieve sustainable results without working with and through local partners. However, these partners must be fully prepared, ready and able to independently implement. They must be able to produce high intensity, tangible results, and be capable to report on these results in a timely fashion. Further, they must accomplish all that precedes while ensuring that administrative/financial systems exist and are operationalized to manage multiple funding streams in order to ensure that allocated funding is well spent, transparently reported upon and independently verifiable by outside resources. Additionally, the local partners must, over time, become operationally sustainable. They must have the systems in place and financial means and retain their capacity to remain in proximity and independently offer continued assistance to beneficiaries without becoming entirely beholden to, and reliant upon, donor budgets and financing cycles.

Directly accountable to USAID, FtF-INVC also cannot allow our partner’s capacities and constraints while they are building their business’, establishing and calibrating their systems, learning and capacitating to determine the pace, outcomes, and impact of the Project.

This FY2015 work plan is driven by a well-grounded understanding of the community and market dynamics within which FtF-INVC works. Experiences to date have enabled FtF-INVC to develop an in-depth knowledge of the challenges posed by, for example:

Figure 1: The Hybrid Model of Interventions



- Implementing Partners that are not yet capable of reliable and consistent delivery;
- Partners that can be relied upon to deliver some results effectively; and
- Those implementation tasks that have a high risk associated with them and so require more direct management by the Project.

This understanding has enabled Project leadership to develop and adopt a *contingencies-driven strategy* to project planning and implementation: the **hybrid approach**. It is, of design responsive to the specific circumstances and situation. The hybrid model conceptualizes a continuum of combinations of project implementation levels, represented linearly but more appropriately visualized as a sinusoidal curve with key transition points: from a direct hands-on approach by FtF-INVC, where INVC directly mobilizes the beneficiaries and establishes structures and workforce to deliver project assistance and technical services, to one where the IP takes full responsibility for all aspects of project implementation from beneficiary mobilization, design and organization of service delivery structures, assembling workforce, developing and delivering technical content and technical services, supervising roll-outs, ensuring scaling, and monitoring progress as required by the project. Multiple reflex points exist between these two ends of the continuum. In the illustration (figure 1), the upper shaded triangle represents those activities where FtF-INVC takes a strong lead or actively and directly implements. In contrast, the lower triangle represents those project activities that are progressively divested to IPs as they gain experience, capacity and confidence for direct implementation.

THE HYBRID APPROACH IN PRACTICE

Table 1 illustrates what approaches A, B, and C mean in practice: three positions on the continuum are illustrated, but in reality there is no limit to the range of combinations that can be deployed. Each scenario demonstrates the factors at play that are used to determine the correct approach in any given circumstance with a particular partner, performing a particular activity, at a particular time and place. Direct implementation by FtF-INVC staff is not usually considered to be a preferred option since it runs counter to the guiding principles of local country leadership of activities and community ownership of solutions. However, experience has shown that in certain situations the direct intervention by the project team is the more appropriate approach to adopt. Examples from the first two Project years include the direct procurement of specific materials needed for timely implementation, and the recruitment of STTA support to be deployed with specific partners. An alternative option is to encourage the Implementing Partner to assume full responsibility for the planning, implementation and evaluation of the activities. A Partner with strong capabilities and a good track record of success on specific tasks can be relied upon to deliver results with little or no direct intervention from the core INVC Team in Lilongwe. Adopting a contingent approach will enable FtF-INVC to sustain momentum in critical areas while at the same time building Partner capability to assume yet greater responsibilities.

There is no single ‘correct’ position for a local implementing partner or service provider on the continuum. They move at their own pace beginning where they are, rather than where we would like them to be and move forward at a speed consistent with their aspirations, resources and capabilities. Our partners do not need to grow big, they need to grow deep. They need to be able to do good development on a scale appropriate to their capacities. FtF-INVC will continue to prepare and encourage our Local Implementing Partners to take on progressively greater responsibilities for implementation while assisting them in tackling the tough questions of “what color is my parachute” and what size is my “right size”? It is important that FtF assist our partners in defining their vision, their strategy and their approach to development all the while assisting them in aligning these to the reality of their resources, capabilities, systems and capacities. It must be our partner’s vision of the short, medium and long term which governs, not INVC’s. However, it is incumbent that project staff, working

with our Local Implementing Partners, explains to them that while there are no “right” answers, decisions made by partners do have consequences and consequences can sometimes be painful. In the Forward context there are preferred pathways, but these are not necessarily the “right” pathways for our partners or the pathways with the “best fit” for them. Going forward FtF-INVC staff needs to revert more to a role of technical guidance, advising and oversight while respecting the independent personas of our local implementing partners.

Table 1: FtF-INVC Hybrid Implementation Approach Scenarios

Scenario A. Direct Implementation by INVC	
<p><u>Circumstances which require this approach:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low probability of partner-implementation success • Relatively high activity complexity and/or operational challenges • Implementation planning lacks strategic direction or cost realism • Weak past performance from the implementing partner in this technical area and/or region. • An activity requires a technical area skill set that presently does not exist within FtF-INVC implementing partners. 	<p><u>Description of this scenario:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INVC takes charge of implementation: e.g. direct beneficiary mobilization, field staff recruitment, procurement, • INVC staff lead implementation efforts in the field • Beneficiaries / Partners report direct to INVC regularly and at short intervals • INVC designs and implements project activities – technical , administration, monitoring, reporting
Scenario B. Co-implementation by INVC and implementing partner	
<p><u>Circumstances which require this approach:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the implementation risk / cost / complexity have been rated as average or low • Where there is a successful track record of joint working • Where greater involvement is now required from INVC than before (that is, the style has migrated from position ‘C’) • Where it is determined that LESS supervision / direction from INVC is needed (that is, a migration from Point ‘A’) 	<p><u>Description of this scenario:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INVC takes the lead where it is considered necessary / appropriate (E.g. with procurement and/or activity design and/or field level work) • IP takes on roles and tasks (as agreed) that complement and align with INVC efforts • IP takes the lead in those areas where THEY have the relevant knowledge and experience
Scenario C. Implementing partner leads activity, INVC monitors/advises	
<p><u>Circumstances which require this approach:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the impact may be high but the risks are relatively low • Where the IP has a proven track record of successes in this area <p>In situations of repetition of activities, or expansion of existing activity plan with no new risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If INVC does not add significant competency to the IP’s skill set 	<p><u>Description of this scenario:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing partner designs interventions and implements them independently of INVC (Subject to prior agreement of course) • Beneficiaries, field agents etc. report direct to IP • Weekly, monthly implementation reports document progress

MANAGING IMPLEMENTATION RISKS

Selecting the most appropriate level of implementation for a specific aspect of the project requires a good understanding of:

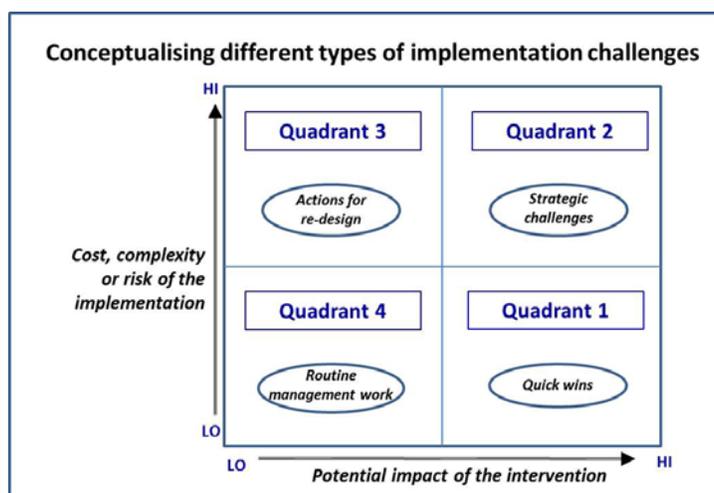
- Potential implementation risk, costs and complexity;
- Potential impact on project outcomes of successful implementation.

Assessing any potential implementation action against these two dimensions generates four possible combinations of risk/return. These quadrants help FtF-INVC to determine the most appropriate option for implementation in any specific situation.

A good working understanding of the risk/return balance also enables the project leadership to identify the appropriate balance of accountability for implementation within the hybrid model.

A reader wishing to learn more about this risk/return balance and how it affects the overall level of project engagement is invited to refer to Annex 5 in our original workplan submission for FY 15.

Figure 2: Risk-Return Analysis of Implementation



FY2015 VISION and Strategy

As FtF-INVC enters its third fiscal year, it is poised to realize a number of agricultural income and improved nutrition successes, identified areas for improvement driven by technical and programmatic lessons learned, and established ambitious yet achievable plans for action in collaboration with its eight key implementing partners, relevant USAID and other donor programs, and Malawian district government officials in the INVC zones of influence.

We are retaining our four primary technical components and crosscutting themes yet have adapted updated strategies for each. The activities performed under these components individually and collectively support the CDCS's Development Objective 2: sustainable livelihoods increased and the four intermediate results therein (resiliency to climate change; increased commodity production; improved nutrition; and expanded agriculture trade). But we have raised the visibility of gender and the importance of partnership and integration both internally and externally in order to better align with USAID/Malawi's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS 2013-2018).

FtF-INVC strongly believes that the centerpiece of the project link between agriculture and nutrition at the field level occurs within the districts and relies on a positive, productive working relationship between the Assistant Field officer (AFO)/extension agent and the Care Group Promoter. Households within the communities who are active subscribing adherents of membership organization technical service providers and who also engage in Care Group activities within their communities build on foundational competencies, service provision, best practices and harmonized messaging to save/sell and invest not only of their production, but in their families health and well-being and that of their communities. By "doubling down" they compound their benefits and this compounding increases the value of their participation with time.

In FY 15 the objective of our increased focus on integration of nutrition within value chains will be to empower the rural communities where we intervene to grow productively, process appropriately, market efficiently while investing effectively both in the preparation and purchase of diverse nutritious foods including targeted grain legumes, local fruits and vegetables and animal protein and in technology designed to improve the efficiency of productivity and profitability of the farming enterprises managed by our beneficiary populations.

In summary activities planned this fiscal year by technical component are outlined below.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

PARTNERSHIP: Key to success in FY 15 will be capitalizing upon partnerships and synergies within our Zone of Influence. While numerous first contacts have been undertaken and District Council priorities have been assessed and documented, transitioning to actual on the ground piloting of synergistic activities has been slow but steady. INVC has undertaken activities with IITA and CIP respectively for consolidation of a Tikalore Soy Foundation Seed Revolving fund and dissemination and testing of Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato varieties. As these two institutions are members of the Re-Seed consortium, we can claim on-going collaboration, though an MOU is expected to be finalized only during Q2 of this Fiscal Year. New implementing partners in our zone including PERFORM and Project Ndjira. They have not yet begun field implementation and thus pilot activities are not expected to begin before Q3. INVC has been collaborating with the STEPS program, sharing information, including the results of the past two annual OCA assessments, introducing them to our Implementing partners and discussing complementarity in terms of assistance. A concrete integration action plan for partnership pilot activities and District level interventions with elected officials and technical services is presented in the Annex of this present workplan.

IN GENDER our focus during FY 15 will be on women's empowerment, improved access to productive resources, increased voice and visibility in decision making at the household, association and community levels. Activities will be undertaken to improve rural women's literacy and numeracy, time/labor savings, augmented access to credit and improved participation in value added processing and marketing. Gender sensitivity training for INVC core and partner staff will be undertaken and special attention to equity/parity in recruitment will be undertaken. The Program will recruit a senior Malawian gender specialist who will leverage expertise from key resources within the current INVC staffing structure as well as local consultants in the environment. INVC is engaging strategic discussions on partnership with our Implementing Partners and other INGO in our geographic zone of influence in order to move this initiative forward in an accelerated fashion. DAI/Bethesda will backstop gender virtually. INVC can call on specialists within our Technical Services Division as needed and technical documentation from our library which contains documentation on approaches and other tools used by our programs worldwide. DAI's portal contains a Technical Working Group on Gender which can serve as a sounding board for Project initiatives.

VILLAGE SAVINGS PLATFORMS: are community based savings groups meeting basic standards of safety for its members and which is sufficiently stable that it may be used as a platform (entry point) for other income generating, economic empowering or socially important activities. In FY 15 INVC had planned to create a number of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) in conjunction with our CARE Group work at the village level. Initial field reconnaissance suggested that the target zone is saturated with savings groups and that many of our Care Group and Farmer Club members, concurrently participate in these activities. However, analysis of the existing groups demonstrated that many of them needed to be retro-fit in order to bring them up to minimally accepted financial security standards. In FY 15, INVC will conduct due diligence on existing groups and implementing agencies, sign grants or contracts for service

provision in order to leverage relationships and begin the process of Inventorying, Orienting, Diagnosing and Reforming savings groups in an initial two districts, before scaling up success to three other districts before the end of the project. Of INVC's current implementing partners, NASFAM currently has limited experience with Village Savings and Loan initiatives. CADECOM has experience that INVC is hoping to reinforce and leverage in the pilot phase in Mchinji.

KEY PROJECT TECHNICAL COMPONENTS

COMPONENT 1: ADVANCING VALUE CHAIN COMPETITIVENESS. In FY 2015, this component will start with the end market to better determine both domestic and regional end market requirements, key constraints and opportunities. This effort will be matched at the producer and processor level with increased knowledge and technology transfer to improve quality and meet safety and standards requirements of end markets. Concurrently, the component will explore potential linkages with financial mechanisms and institutions to assist our beneficiaries in accessing needed capital, appropriate to their needs and timing. Efforts will also be undertaken to improve opportunities for both farm gate value added processing and links to higher volume processors.

COMPONENT 2: IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY. The main objective in FY 15 is to improve productivity (production per unit of land area) this fiscal year will be by increasing plant population and better overall crop management, including provision of high-quality soybean inoculum. Plant populations will be increased by spacing ridges at 75 cm rather than the conventional 90 cm and planting double rows on ridges rather than single rows. Better timed harvesting and improved drying and threshing techniques, are expected to significantly raise productivity and farm income levels. Cross-cutting themes this year include risk mitigation to build resilience to environmental shocks like flooding and drought and incorporating gender-sensitive approaches to ensure that women benefit equally from technology transfer. Additionally, INVC will coordinate with other development partners including the CGIAR that have been tasked by USAID to scale up availability of, access to, and adoption of improved legumes as well as Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP) in our Zone of Influence.

COMPONENT 3: IMPROVING COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO PREVENT UNDER-NUTRITION. Initiatives for FY2015 are designed to deliver the nutrition component's vision and strategies in an integrated manner to agriculture value chains. This will include training more care group members so that they have requisite knowledge and skills in nutrition and agriculture value chains, working with agricultural membership service provider organizations to improve upon their value proposition, motivating Care Group members to join, and disseminating key messages to the target beneficiaries on nutrition and agriculture value chains through mass media, theatre for development, print and care group activities. In FY 15, INVC will continue to utilize a multi-tiered nutritional outcomes approach: (1) the care group model which includes a strong inter-personal communication at the household level through promoters and lead mothers; (2) community theater which is interactive and participatory; and (3) mass media through radio and print. These multiple channels are aligned and harmonized, intended to reach caregivers at each of the following stages of change: awareness; beliefs; practices; and overcoming behavioral constraints. Overall, we believe INVC's strategy under this component, positions communities to create and maintain care groups on their own and ensures those care groups reach the households in need of their guidance and support.

COMPONENT 4 BUILDING LOCAL INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY. In FY2015 FtF-INVC envisions significant capacity development progress at the national, district, local and household levels to assist Local Institutions in the prioritizing, planning, coordination, implementation and oversight of technical initiatives undertaken in the context of our Program. FtF-INVC will facilitate the implementation of the capacity building action plans based initially on results derived from the OCA assessment at the end of FY 14, then towards the

end of this FY incorporating elements of the OPI assessment through a step-wise cascaded approach targeting all levels of the organization. Capacity reinforcement of IP will focus on their administrative, financial, procurement and technical oversight systems development. In FY 15 INVC will progressively apply the adapted voucher re-imbusement system in its grants approach with IP to ensure that grantees are being graduated to independent status that would allow them to receive USAID funds directly at the end of the project. By the end of FY 15, implementing partner field staff at the district level will be conversant in and effectively using field-based financial documentation procedures, as well as M&E systems for data collection and reporting. During FY 15 FtF-INVC will strengthen the capacity of local systems of local District government to coordinate, plan and deliver agriculture and nutrition services. Through FY15, there will be a sustained engagement of FtF-INVC staff in collaborating and mentoring partner IP's in the planning and execution of their institutional and organizational capacity development.

MONITORING & EVALUATION: The M&E function in FY2015 will extend its reach and consistency, for INVC activities and for the activities of each INVC implementing partner. In FY15, INVC's M&E team will continue to systematize data collection and reporting through an improved M&E system with an intensified focus on data quality and robust feedback loops to program activities so that these activities may be strengthened to guide the project toward its intended results. Data quality, data integrity, data validation, and data control systems will be front and center this year as will building our and our implementing partners' internal capacity to collect, manage, analyze, and interpret data. Outcome and Spot surveys will be regularly implemented to capture project outcomes and impacts and we will be collaborating with external impact evaluation teams during this fiscal year. INVC will continue to roll out unique individual beneficiary IDs and will upgrade our GIS capability to integrate this with our M&E system.

This FY all FtF-INVC activities are aligned with and anticipate Malawi's seasons: cropping preparations; planting when the rains come; production and selling cycles; and the nutritional realities of the hungry season. Presented next are detailed action plans, thematically divided which detail activities to be undertaken during FY 15.

A caveat, any workplan is a living document and a strategic decision was made to use the building of this FY15 transitional plan as part of a team building exercise. As such, there are many changes underway which could push or pull activities chronologically. We also chose not to cut and paste from the first draft and to focus primarily on the technical execution of activities. This workplan is not a sales document. Neither is it a Program Management Plan. Many program management/budgetary adjustments were included in the project extension proposal and are, thus, not repeated here. With the extension occurring during FY15 we are in the process of looking at our resource use and needs and, as decision points are reached, these will be communicated with the Mission outside of this document.

Cross-cutting Initiatives

GENDER

INTRODUCTION

Improving gender parity in FtF-INVC programming cannot be overstated as a goal for FtF-INVC. With limited access to credit, inputs and price information, both men and women face significant constraints to improving agricultural productivity, but women face these constraints more acutely. They have less access to credit and are less able to secure labor, relying more on their own labor and that of their children. In addition, fewer women than men use productivity-enhancing technologies. This low adoption may be the result of the additional labor, time and resources needed for field operations. For example, though the cost benefit of new high yield seeds increase production, women may lack the time, resources or access to knowledge to adopt these technologies. These differences lead to a gap in productivity between men and women.

Furthermore, levels of under-nutrition, particularly stunting among children remain unacceptably high with long-term consequences for Malawi. The high rates of malnutrition are estimated to be the result of poor nutritional behaviors, low diversity of nutritious foods in their diet and impacts of a high disease burden.

Agricultural productivity and improved nutrition depend upon the contributions and additional gains to be made by Malawian women. Some of these advances include increased decision making in use of household income, increased education, access to credit, and admission to leadership positions.

With these factors in mind, FtF is sharpening its focus on gender equality and women's empowerment. The Gender Assessment conducted in June 2014 has been a pivotal guide for stimulating a series of new strategies to ensure that both men and women will have equal access to FtF resources and opportunities.

INVC APPROACH

FY 15 INVC will focus on women's empowerment and increased access to productive resources, as well as their increased voice and visibility in decision making instances within their households and communities.

Of special note are tasks that include activities to combat illiteracy among women. The Gender Assessment highlighted this constraint for women and FtF is elevating literacy skills training, both reading/writing and numeracy, as crucial elements for women's empowerment. High illiteracy is an underlying barrier for women to engage in income generating value addition activities, leadership positions and it marginalizes them from marketing opportunities.

TASKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN FY 15

TASK 1: ENCOURAGE MALE PARTICIPATION IN CARE GROUPS

FtF will undertake a positive deviance inquiry to identify key men who are fathers who affirm positive behaviors integral to better nutrition for children and the well-being of pregnant and lactating mothers. This approach to behavioral and social change takes advantage of the community's existing assets and strengths, working closely with M&E to ensure dissemination.

Following the inquiry, FtF will conduct pilot Father-to-Father group discussions in Mchinji and Mangochi in approximately two traditional authorities in each district. By using the positive deviant men as facilitators and agents of change, FtF will increase the participation of men in nutrition and encourage men to champion women's empowerment. A thorough review will be conducted to assess the merit of rolling this approach out to other districts in the next fiscal year.

TASK 2: IMPROVING GENDER PARITY IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AND DECISION MAKING IN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Subtask 2.1 Leadership, Literacy and Gender Sensitivity Training: Gender Assessment interviews have revealed that women have access to fewer resources and bargaining power in the household to overcome constraints. Most men and women agreed that men made the decisions on spending money earned from growing groundnuts. As for soya, most men indicated that they were the primary decision makers and decided what to grow on family land.

The dual objectives of increasing agricultural productivity and improving nutrition require that the project consider the intra-household dynamics of how decisions are made surrounding income, consumption and sale of production.

It is necessary for field staff to learn gender sensitivity skills. That training will cascade to farm club members as well as care groups and encourage all members to negotiate their needs and interests and find solutions that are gender equitable and provide a greater voice for women in household decision making. Some issues that extension staff should be attuned to and adept at discouraging include:

- cultural or traditional beliefs that women are not competent enough or not interested in technical topics,
- time constraints due to multiple roles,
- social and cultural restrictions that bar women from decision making and voicing their opinions in the public sphere.

The Gender team, including the Senior Gender Specialist, gender assistant and key interested parties from our technical components and M&E will assess gender parity for INVC project-wide and conduct a review of external gender sensitivity and leadership training tools in order to select models best suited for the needs of FtF-INVC.

Parallel to this, female beneficiaries, as well as men, will also benefit from leadership training. The pilot for the training will take place in Lilongwe, where FtF can leverage partnership relationships with Nasfam, FUM and Nkhoma. Some training elements will include:

- public speaking,
- leadership roles,
- decision making, and accountability,
- negotiation and conflict management,
- advocacy and lobbying, as well as,
- communication skills and exchange visits to expose women at the grass-roots level to new role models.

Special attention will be given to those who have never received this training before, as well as those beneficiaries who are participating in care groups. This will serve a dual purpose: first to prepare women as prospects to serve as farm association leaders and lead farmers and second, it will improve women's ability to negotiate with their husbands for equal participation in decision making in the use of household income as well as land allocation for crop production.

Finally, it is clear that low literacy and numeracy levels among women is one of the root causes and challenges to women equally benefitting as well as participating in FtF programming. In order to rectify this INVC through its productivity enhancing activities under Component 2 proposes to:

- include more use of graphics in training material instead of text to compensate for lower literacy levels among women;
- adjust pesticide training messages to address issues like the importance of proper protective clothing and footwear, the increased risk for lactating and pregnant women from pesticides;
- increase the number of female extension workers (to reach parity with male staff – currently there are 197 males extension staff and 81 female, INVC and Government combined) in order to better connect with female farmers in outreach and training; and
- provide access to finance for women farmers through village savings and loans associations to facilitate their purchase of agronomic inputs.

It should be noted that controlling weeds with herbicides (particularly pre-emergent treatment) can be extremely effective during the critical initial 30 day post-planting period. It is a potential game-changer with direct implications for legume productivity as well serving as a time saving initiative for women (to whom the onerous task of weeding principally falls) freeing them to attend to other important tasks, for example, child caring and learning.

According to the 2010 Malawi Demographic and Household Survey, 20 % of rural women have no education at all. Further, the overall proportion of women that have never attended school is higher for females than for males across all age groups except for those under 14 years of age.

Illiteracy, lack of empowerment, low self-esteem and lack of transparency in organizational management has impeded FtF efforts to address gender inequality in the selection of lead and assistant farmers.

Field staff will identify existing adult literacy programs and review curriculum for appropriateness and adaptability to INVC thematic priorities. Identification and piloting of facilitated adult literacy will take place in Mchinji. FtF-INVC will identify women resource facilitators in the target communities of our zone of influence. We will provide them with training, facilitation skills and pedagogical materials necessary to facilitate adult literacy skills training at centers in their communities. The effort will target women from either farmer clubs associated with IP membership organizations or Care Groups. Timing of activities at the literacy centers and intensity of coursework being offered will be negotiated between the resource facilitator and interested participants. Sessions will be scheduled taking into consideration participant's self-identified hours and days of maximum availability.

Women's lack of mobility and lower literacy and numeracy reduce their ability to access markets for soybeans and groundnuts. Women's lower literacy and numeracy levels could also reduce their ability to understand how the commodity exchange works, even with the existing trainings (as they use printed materials as references). FtF also will adapt its collective marketing training curriculum for illiteracy constraints.

Subtask 2.2 Monitoring, Analysis, and Dissemination: The Gender team will coordinate with M&E to conduct a spot survey to monitor changes in control of income and decision making in relation to INVC value chains. The team will generate discussion around this data to identify strengths, weaknesses and areas for further investigation. These discussions will not only include the M&E team, but also the staff responsible for implementing activities. The results of this process will be shared with INVC project wide and with USAID.

TASK 3: IMPROVE WOMEN'S ACCESS TO CREDIT

Subtask 3.1 Financial Literacy: According to the Third Integrated Household Survey (2010/2011), only about 14 percent of households attempted to get a loan and interact with the credit market (NSO 2012). With so few households active in the credit market, there are likely constraints that both men and women face in using credit to invest or expand agricultural enterprises.

Rural Malawian women are more likely to be credit constrained than men due to their poor access to information and marketing structures and lack of viable collateral. Women's relative lack of access to credit compared to men reduces opportunities for improving household-level outcomes, especially those associated with nutrition. Studies from Malawi and elsewhere demonstrate that women's access to credit, more so than men's, improves girls' nutrition.

FtF-INVC will continue to coordinate with FHI360 and Opportunity International Bank of Malawi to develop/modify/adapt their financial literacy programs so that they are gender sensitive and gender attentive. FtF Value Chain Competiveness team will include the gender team members in this activity to ensure the needs of both women and men will be identified and addressed. FtF will conduct a financial literacy training program among smallholders and Association leaders, with attention to challenges of illiteracy, particularly for women.

Given the number and breadth of previous community level savings and loan initiatives, FtF has chosen to facilitate the strengthening of village savings groups via Village Finance Platform (VFP) activities, rather than create new VSLA groups. This is discussed at length in its own section. To INVC, the VFP serves as a mechanism to improve access to a culture of savings, acts as an entry point for leveraging small amounts of credit and strengthens the knowledge base and abilities of saving group members to engage in profitable small-scale income generating activities, as well as improving the overall resiliency of the member's households. The VFP also is a nexus for integrating the nutrition and agriculture component.

TASK 4 IMPROVE WOMEN'S ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN MARKETING & VALUE CHAIN ACTIVITIES

The Gender Assessment has revealed that women indicate a defined and segregated division of labor in their households, with their participation concentrated in production and processing activities and men's concentrated mostly in marketing. This disaggregation of duties tends to carry over to women's participation and the roles devolving to them in the farmer clubs, associations and cooperatives throughout our ZOI. FtF activities to improve marketing (e.g., establishing warehouses, aggregation points, and commodity exchanges) are meant to offer opportunities for all farmers to participate in a more transparent and equitable marketplace. However, there is evidence that women are being pushed out of the marketing activities.

As soya and groundnuts rise in importance as cash crops, more men are entering the space and supplanting women's production. In the Gender Assessment interviews, women revealed men were now appropriating the marketing activities and not divulging the amount received from the sale of the grain legume production. FtF will ensure there are specific activities that improve women's access and participation in marketing activities. Certification and branding of women produced legumes, reservation of space for female farmer products at aggregation centers, tailored discussion groups explaining markets, how they operate, price and quality trending specific for women farmers and care group participants, linking to female traders and processors are all actions which will be piloted this fiscal year.

Subtask 4.1 Identification and Training: The upgrading plans state that FtF will support "mini" factories including small oil extraction plants or "mini" mills for processing groundnuts and soybeans. This is an

opportunity for men and women to be provided with processing equipment. FtF will place special emphasis on identifying women's groups or clubs who are currently successfully processing at a micro level who would benefit from skills and knowledge transfer in commercial processing as well as mentorship for future ownership of commercial assets.

FtF will also identify and strengthen existing community based organizations and women's community organizations that can be a resources to FtF beneficiaries. The executive committees of these organizations will receive leadership training simultaneous to care group members and women in farm clubs. This will enable networking between groups. The strengthened CBOs will also become an alternative and formal pathway to disseminate market price information to FtF beneficiaries, particularly women. In addition, these groups will be encouraged to register their mobile phones with ACE mobile market pricing tool.

FtF will identify women's empowerment organization that are able to form a coalition to facilitate dialog with mobile phone service providers to urge their design of packages that make phone ownership achievable. Mobile phones ownership is a key opportunity to advance social and commercial opportunity. This is with the end goal of encouraging ownership of mobile phones among women. There is precedence for this initiative. In 2013, Airtel Africa partnered with UN Women to package and deliver mobile phone solutions that support the livelihoods of women.

FtF also will facilitate marketing training as a module within women's adult literacy courses. Women with low literacy will still capture the gains of marketing skills and knowledge when they attend literacy courses that will be designed to build from their level of understanding.

Subtask 4.2 Identify and Reduce Barriers to Entry: The Gender Assessment findings revealed that women are not participating as actively in the marketing aspects of INVC's value chains as much as they are in the production aspects. There are some indications this lack of participation is reducing their access to benefits (e.g. income). Spouses who are transporting and marketing women's produce are not always including women in the decisions around the income gained from the sale of the produce.

To assess women's participation in aggregation points the gender team will obtain data from M&E team, using information collected during the GIS Pilot in Lilongwe South. If the pilot reveals that the number of women is lower than men (at aggregation points), the Gender team will conduct focus group discussions to identify barriers, particularly for women's access to aggregation centers.

To address these barriers that women face entering the commercial marketplace, FtF also will identify both community and commercial transport operators and facilitate dialog and the design of agreements between transporters and farm clubs that consist primarily of women in order facilitate the carrying of crops to aggregation centers. By emphasizing the economies of scale introduced through bulking, grouped negotiations and procurement of goods and services, INVC will effectively reduce the farm gate transaction and opportunity costs for women. Women will no longer need to act as lone wolves in the market but will be encouraged to adopt a teamed approach where affinity group members contribute to the success of the whole by contributing, in a daisy chain fashion to marketing. As the women take on specialized roles associated with marketing actions instead of working the entire continuum by themselves, they decrease their labor investment and transactional costs, freeing time for other productive activities.

TASK 5 IMPROVE PARTNER'S ABILITY TO DELIVER GENDER EQUITABLE PROGRAMMING

Subtask 5.1 Increase network of technical assistance: FtF recognizes that effective institutional reform must build on local practices and is best designed by domestic actors. Thus, FtF will review the

landscape of local institutions and individuals in Malawi to identify those with specialized gender and agriculture skills. A database will be developed and disseminated. INVC will link actors with resources. This will create a pool of experts to provide in-country technical assistance to implementing partners.

Subtask 5.2 Maximize learning from gender disaggregated data: FtF will produce annual project reviews of gender relevant indicator performance. FtF will also assess gender parity aspirational goals. Many of the implementing partners vocalized a target of 50 percent men and 50 percent women in activities. FtF will track and share partner progress toward these aspirations as well as gender parity in leadership positions within partner organizations and among beneficiaries.

Subtask 5.3 Gender sensitivity training of INVC and Partner Management Staff: There is need for a deeper understanding of what it means to be gender-sensitive, the importance of considering the constraints of men and women and how beneficiaries may be affected by programming decisions. There also needs to be awareness of the difference between gender equality and women's empowerment. Thus FtF will conduct gender sensitivity training for all implementing staff. Specialized or thematic training that responds to priority needs of implementing staff will also be addressed. These could include themes related to:

- women and property rights;
- gender equality and extension service provision;
- community sensitization approaches to improving gender disparity in house hold income
- decision making; and
- climate-smart agricultural practices from a gender perspective.

Subtask 5.4 Recruitment: To increase the number of women in leadership positions, the gender team will integrate messages into trainings and before employment selections occur that urge staff, field officers and others to encourage the selection of women during hiring and association elections. FtF will also develop a recruitment policy for partners regarding gender parity in the employment of FtF extension officers. This will mandate the hiring of women when applicants skills/experiences are comparable.

VILLAGE FINANCIAL PLATFORM NARRATIVE

The Village Financial Platforms component (initially a pilot in two districts, and then rolled out to an additional three districts) will work in project areas where there are substantial numbers of Savings Groups (SGs) created by other institutions in prior projects. It will create systems and identify and train personnel to Inventory, Orient, Diagnose, and Reform these SGs to increase their usefulness to members as Village Financial Platforms (VFPs).

A Village Financial Platform is defined as a Savings Group that meets basic standards of safety for its savers, and is sufficiently stable that it can be used as a platform for other activities.

Initial field assessments suggest that although there are a large number of SGs in project areas, many will need capacity building to bring them up to minimum standards. The VFPs will increase household financial security through savings and investment in economic activities and through use as platforms for dissemination of FtF messages in Agriculture, Gender and Nutrition.

The Village Financial Platforms component will have two phases: Capacity Building and Institutionalization.

TASK 1: CAPACITY BUILDING

The Capacity Building phase will stress the principle of co-location, coordination, and collaboration by working with partners to improve and use existing SGs.

Subtask 1.1. Assess and Identify VFP methodology and training manual: The VSL Officer will conduct a review other stakeholders in the VSL landscape and present findings and recommend the way forward for methodology and training tools.

Subtask 1.2 Identify potential VFP pilot areas: FtF-INVC will solicit recommendations from INVC implementing partners to identify areas within FtF Zone of Influence. They will generate criteria in order to select high performing GACs in Lilongwe and Machinji. After which, mapping overlap areas will narrow the selection process.

Subtask 1.3 VSL Technical Advisor review: FtF-INVC will carry out a STTA to design and test the selected VFP methodology and training tools which will be recommended from VSL Officer initial assessment report.

Subtask 1.4 Technical Advisor activity design: the STTA will review FtF recommendations and carry out an assessment of sector stakeholder implementation as well as an assessment of FtF beneficiaries and component structures in order to ensure appropriate designing of tools, manual, management structure as well as performance indicators, which will be in consultation with M&E. These assessments will identify the constraints of FtF beneficiaries, with special attention to women and care group members.

Subtask 1.5 Training and Partnerships: FtF will negotiate, conduct due diligence, and sign grants or contracts with former SG implementers in order to leverage relationships with organizations that already have extensive experience implementing SGs and also have wide coverage of VSLs in FtF ZOI. Backstopping of the local partner will be provided initially by the VFP assistant in close collaboration with INVC's M&E team, COP and with virtual support provided through Skype conversations with experts from DAI's Technical Services Division and the VFP consultant .

The STTA will develop SG quality-indicators and terms of reference for the New Partners outlining how they will Inventory (capture basic information on location, meeting schedule, membership, and contact information); Orient (present the opportunities and expectations of working with FtF to members, and garner their agreement); Diagnose (conduct a rapid assessment of the safety and performance of the

SG); and Reform (following on the diagnosis, agree with the groups on the steps they must take to regain their health as necessary, and provide the needed assistance).

Partner Field Officers (FOs) will be trained in the Inventory, Orient, Diagnose, Reform approach, and on their role in training and supervising former Village Agents to carry out the program.

Subtask 1.6 BCC Message Plan: FtF will use new partners as passive BCC agents, putting in place a 1 Trainer One Phone (1TOP) program, under which each Village Agent serving at least 100 members successfully, would be lent a phone with video capabilities, to use to show local language videos to groups under her or his tutelage. The phone would revert to them at the end of the project.

FtF implementing staff will identify and develop nutrition, gender and agriculture messages as well as short local language videos to explain the role of lead farmers and Care groups, and present nutrition, gender and agriculture messages which will be cascaded to VFPs. These messages will be produced by Packachere into the appropriate format to disseminate and test by field staff. After testing, a full roll out of BCC message will penetrate the VFP. FtF will also provide care groups and farmers groups with enhanced training and support materials, including stickers to place on VFP boxes as certification of the entire group having mastered messages.

Subtask 1.7 Promotion of VFP model: FtF will conduct sensitization of key partners, community leaders, care group volunteers and clusters on the benefits of VFP. FtF-INVC invited CARE, SOS, CADECOM and Project Ndjira to our initial training session on methodology for the reinforcement of VSLA and their transition to VFP. CARE, SOS and CADECOM responded favorably, while PCI Njira's WE staff were unable to participate due to a scheduling conflict. NASFAM's experience with VSLA/VFP is less consolidated than the

Subtask 1.8 Management and monitoring plan: FtF will monitor growth and health of VFPs through periodic information gathering in consultation with M&E team. FtF VSL Officer will conduct regular monitoring of new partner field officer staff to ensure quality of service delivery.

Subtask 1.9 Assessment of VFP model: The Village Financial Platforms pilot will initially target Mchinji, Lilongwe or Balaka. Before expanding, FtF will conduct a mid-cycle assessment by STTA in consultation with M&E team to evaluate and analyze performance.

TASK 2 EXPANSION:

Task 2.1 Filling Gaps: In response to demand, FtF will form new VFPs in project areas where there are gaps in coverage. Also, identify and include other SGs which have either been formed spontaneously, or through other NGOs or projects in the project Areas of Influence.

Subtask 2.2 Institutionalization phase: As specific plans for the institutionalization and sustainability of the Agriculture and Nutrition outreach efforts become clear, and as the New Partners wind down their support to the Village Agents, the VFP will work to help the Village Agents become formal or informal extensions of the activities of Nkhoma, NASFAM, FUM, and Cadecom.

	Key Partners	Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	March 2015	April 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015
Task 2: Expansion												
→ Train New Partners in two districts	FTF											
→ Expand to two additional districts	FTF											
→ Expand to one additional district	FTF											
Subtask 2.1: Institutionalization phase												
Assist Village Agents to become formal or informal extensions of the activities												

Key INVC Technical Components

COMPONENT 1: ADVANCING VALUE CHAIN COMPETITIVENESS

Component 1 will be considered a success once farm households gain higher total incomes from improved agricultural volumes with stronger gross margins from legume sales, allowing them to retain more plant protein from this production or to purchase more nutritious foods. The INVC goal is to utilize the value chain approach to increase gross margins by 15% through broadening and deepening smallholder access to more remunerative national and regional markets through collective marketing, warehouse receipts, forward purchase contracts, and more transparent price signals from end markets. In FY 2015, this component will start with the end market to better determine both domestic and regional end market requirements, key constraints and opportunities. This effort will be matched at the producer and processor level with increased knowledge and technology transfer to improve quality and meet safety and standards requirements of end markets. Further activities during this Fiscal Year will create the financial access linkages needed to help farmers, farmer associations/cooperatives, processors and exporters boost their business growth and enhance overall value chain competitiveness. In addition, INVC understands the importance of gender as a cross cutting issue and as such, different mitigation measures are integrated in all value chain interventions to make sure women's participation continues to increase in FY2015.

TASK 1: DEVELOP MARKET OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROCESSORS AND EXPORTERS

Sub-Task 1. Determine End Market Requirements and Identify Key Constraints. In FY 2015, INVC will be looking to obtain some key wins in connecting producer organizations directly to end markets in different parts of the soybean and groundnut value chain. In March, we will travel to Blantyre, Limbe and Kanengo to meet with various processors such as: Afrinut Ltd, Capital Foods, Capital Oil Refinery Industry (CORI), Ex Agris Ltd, Export Trading, Project Peanut Butter, Rab Processors, Tafika Milling Company, Transglobe Ltd, Valid Nutrition, Sunseed Oil Ltd, Mother's Holdings, Universal Farming, Universal Industries, Seba Foods, and Rice Milling (CSB). Meetings will be held with various actors along the value chain and in the value chain ecosystem, including, but not limited to: Malawi Confederation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI), Malawi Investment and Trade Centre (MITC), Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS), Malawian Program for Aflatoxin Control (MAPAC), Malawi Oil Seed Products Technical Group (MOST), Soybean Association of Malawi (SOYAMA), Groundnut Platform, Legumes Development Trust (LDT), Malawian One Village One Product Program (OVOP), World Food Programme (WFP) Home-Grown School Feeding Programme and Purchase for Progress (P4P) in order to triangulate information and determine action steps. INVC will collaborate with Strengthening Agriculture Input and Output Markets in Africa (SAIOMA) on the domestic end markets requirements. The goal will be to determine specific buyer requirements and to identify key constraints in order to develop opportunities for producer groups to participate further up in the value chain. INVC will select at least 5 of our best producer groups to ship test volumes to buyers from end markets in FY 2015 in order to strengthen producer group connection to the upper end of the value chain.

Sub-Task 2. Assess Regional End Market Requirements and Identify Opportunities. In FY 2015, INVC will communicate and coordinate with the Southern Africa Trade Hub (SATH) to investigate the demand of soybeans, groundnuts and their related products in the regional market. Meetings will be held with SATH to understand where the products from Malawi are flowing and in what volume, where there might be an unrealized potential for exports; how these markets are structured and who the key players are; and based on the buyers' broad preferences in those markets, how are the target countries positioned. INVC will conduct a desk study and trade data analysis with the help of SATH. INVC will conduct interviews with importers, retailers, agents and buyers in order to deepen understanding of regional buyer requirements. INVC will also conduct interviews with industry experts such as Malawi Investment and Trade Centre, Malawi Confederation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ICRISAT, IITA, SAIOMA, SATH to assist in identifying trends and those market segments that provide the greatest potential for success relative to competitor countries. INVC will inventory importers of soybeans, groundnuts and their related products for demand (volume and standards).

The goal is to double the linkages of Malawian exporters to regional importers by providing exporters with end market requirements to sale more in line with market requirements, and for processors to identify opportunities for capturing more value-added exports.

Sub-Task 3. Bi-Lateral Trade Missions and Linkages: In FY 2014, the bi-lateral commodity marketing mission to Zimbabwe Commodity Exchange and related trading networks resulted in the establishment of an ACE certified warehouse in Zimbabwe to clear and settle trades, sales of legumes to Zimbabwe, trader interest in participating in ACE BVO and OVO auctions, and identification of lower cost satellite access for market information points. IN FY 2015, INVC will undertake soybean and poultry trade missions to Tete and Nampula in Mozambique, and Chipata/Eastern Region in Zambia in last quarter. These bi-lateral industry trade missions will be used to communicate current Malawi supply capacity and to increase regional demand and sales for soybean and soybean-related products from Malawi. INVC will work with the South African Trade Hub (SATH) to plan and execute the trade missions.

TASK 2: INCREASE KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER TO PROCESSORS AND MARKETERS

Sub-Task 1. Review Quality Management Systems, Food Safety, and Food Standards on Soybeans, Groundnuts, and their Related Products. In FY 2015, INVC will conduct a desk study on existing quality management systems, food safety requirements and food standards (national, regional and international). The review will include Malawi food standards, regional trade standards, Codex standards and ISO standards. During the review, meetings will be held with the Southern Africa Trade Hub, the Malawi Bureau of Standards (MB), and Malawian Program of Aflatoxin Control (MAPAC) and industry experts. The goal will be to gather and analyze information to be used in developing and delivering an effective training program.

Sub-Task 2. Prepare Training Materials and Handouts on Quality Management, Food Safety and Food Standards. INVC will prepare the training materials covering hazard analysis critical control points (HACCP), good manufacturing practices (GMP), good hygienic practices (GHP), food standards and aflatoxin control and management. There are already generic training materials on HACCP, GMP, GHP and aflatoxin control measures and management. INVC will adapt and/or adopt into three modules of the training: quality management, food safety and food standards. The goal is to address issues pertaining to compliance and certification of soybeans, groundnuts and their related products to quality and regulatory requirements.

Sub-Task 3. Train more than 500 Processors, Farmer Associations/Cooperatives and Exporters. In FY 2015, INVC will train more than 500 processors, farmer associations/cooperatives and exporters in quality management systems, understanding and adherence to national, regional and international food standards, food processing technology, and food safety including aflatoxin control and management. We will work with the Southern Africa Trade Hub and the Malawi Bureau of Standards to achieve this sub-task. We will outsource services of local facilitators to deliver the training.

Sub-Task 4. Provide Customized Support to at least Five Processors, to Adopt Improved Technologies and Practices, meet Standards and Expand Investment. In support of the mission of FtF, INVC will focus on processing opportunities in the legume industry to improve quality and develop low-cost, locally sourced, nutritious products, especially those targeting children. INVC will identify and prioritize processor needs, and provide technical assistance and knowledge transfer to address those needs. Individual processor support will include assisting at least one hospital based corn and soy blend processor (St. Gabriel Namitete Hospital), soy milk small plant at Nkhoma Hospital and three processing units of implementing partners. St. Gabriel Namitete Hospital already processes corn and soy blend (Likuni Phala) for feeding malnourished children in surrounding areas. We will assist to upgrade the plant to process CSB for feeding malnourished children in the focus districts of Central Region. Nkhoma Hospital is already processing soy milk on a small scale. We intend to support the hospital to upgrade its plant. We will also explore possibilities of extending support to Domasi CSB

unit to focus districts in the Southern Region. At the same time, we will select three business plans of submitted by the implementing partner for technical support.

Sub-Task 5. Examine the Feasibility of Processing for School and Community Feeding Programs. Current legume processing focuses on centralized or household level processing. Decentralized processing through incremental investment to existing small-scale food service kitchens in schools and hospitals is an unexplored option. FY2015 will examine the feasibility of decentralized processing for school, hospital and community feeding programs that incorporates sites where raw material supply is available. This will be carried out through a feasibility study for a value adding options for quality assured food processing for school and community feeding programs at selected district councils, larger trading centers and peri-urban zone.

TASK 3: PROMOTE COLLECTIVE MARKETING AND IMPROVE MARKET INFORMATION AT THE PRODUCER LEVEL

Sub-Task 1. Installation of Market Information Points (MIPs): INVC will collaborate with ACE to expand the current installation of 5 Market Information Points. It is expected that these MIPs will provide market information to link cooperatives, farmer-owned marketing SMEs or their brokers to auction markets. To address the problem of timely farmer access to market information and crop information, INVC will evaluate current MIPs to determine what is working well and what is not, then put a plan in place to increase the utilization of the existing MIPs and look to install up to 3 additional MIPs in FY 2015 for key bulking points in additional EPAs. Furthermore, INVC in collaboration with IPs, will facilitate focus group discussions with female beneficiaries to ascertain challenges preventing women from seeking MIPs as a source of information. According to INVC Gender Evaluation, a major hurdle to increasing income for farmers (in particular women farmers) remained access to “good prices and reliable markets”. Although, MIPs are not a panacea for limited market information access, in areas where they are available, MIPs represent an important source for accurate and free price information which contributes to increasing all farmers (including women) bargaining power. In collaboration with ACE, INVC will strive to gain additional insight for appropriate entry points to deliver messages that specifically target women about the availability of this service and how they can benefit as users. Finally, INVC in collaboration with ACE will provide appropriate training and materials that are accessible to all farmers, particularly for those low literacy levels, such as women.

Sub-Task 2. Expand Market Information System (MIS) database and development: to expand the MIS database design and development, INVC will work with ACE to redesign its database to integrate FUM, NASFAM and CADECOM. Currently, only ACE members have access to this information, but the goal is to reach an additional 50,000 farmers (ACE members and non-members) by SMS with current price information that will contribute to their bargaining power when negotiating their products market price. INVC will collaborate with IPs and ACE to sensitize beneficiaries on the importance of including more women and women’s groups in this database. In addition, INVC in collaboration with IPs will ensure that at least 30 percent of SMS recipients in FY 2015 are women.

Sub-Task 3. Expand market opportunities and options for all beneficiaries regardless of their production capacity and market access capabilities. The scale and scope of INVC makes possible to reach to different types of beneficiaries. For some farmers, forward contracts represent a viable and profitable alternative. INVC will continue to support ACE in their effort to increase the number of forward contracts during FY 2015. The goal is to expand forward contracts to 50 percent from previous year. To ensure that other farmers access more structured trade platforms, INVC will work with FUM, CADECOM, NASFAM, and ACE, to sensitize village associations and cooperatives in the opportunities to exploring and using Offer Volume Only (OVO) and Bid Volume Only (BVO) auctions, currently offered by ACE. The goal is to increase participation from previous year by at least 50 percent.

In addition to these two important ACE marketing platforms; INVC will also work with IPs to explore direct linkages to processors willing to negotiate contracts and agreements with farmers and farmer's associations. For example, Charles Stewart, a commercial poultry farmer, expressed their intention to contract 1,500 farmers from our ZOI to grow soybeans for their new factory. Ex Agris Limited, a commercial groundnut grower wants to extend their outreach program to farmers in our ZOI on contract farming agreement. Finally, INVC will maintain conversations with Rumark to link small scale producers to village agro-dealers who are willing to buy from small scale producers on regular basis. The main advantage of working with these agro-dealers is that they are certified by the Government and they represent a more stable market in local communities, as compared to occasional traders who might or might not continue to source from farmers each season. For all the activities mentioned above, INVC will closely monitor and guide IPs to make sure they address gender disparities in market access and more importantly, that they find viable remediation measures to actively include women in different market structures.

Sub-Task 4. Promote Collective Marketing and Sales Options. In March 2015, INVC staff, IPs, and Technical Service Providers (TSP) will review and revise collective marketing training materials, theater performances, radio messages, and handouts on collective marketing to incorporate the planned marketing, loan, and cash settlement tools to be extended in FY 2015. TSPs will be engaged through IPs' Technical Assistance (TA) line items to provide the promotion, campaigns and training.

In FY 2014 Activity, INVC promoted the first OVO auction at ACE in July 2014. Farmers and farmer organizations were able to see for the first time the influence that regional buyers can have on price discovery for their non-GMO soybeans for contract delivery to Lilongwe. In FY 2015, ACE will work across three IPs using TSPs to develop informational material on OVO auctions and train brokers, marketing associations/cooperatives along with farmer organization staff on the auction and contract completion requirements in March and April 2015. INVC will work with FUM, CADECOM and NASFAM to increase the number of OVO from one during last year's marketing season to 20 OVOs in FY 2015.

Sub-Task 5: Bringing Markets Closer to Smallholders (Village Aggregation Centers (VAC) and Bulking Centers). The INVC team will examine past and projected volumes of product flow through the VAC and Bulking Centers. The team will also estimate associated transport, handling, transaction, and service costs in order to design a Smallholder Grain Aggregation and Marketing Activity Setup with the IPs. In FY 2015, the goal is to set up a Smallholder Grain Aggregation and Marketing Activity comprising of 600 VACs covering all 65 extension planning areas (EPAs) in the ZOI. Key clusters and associations will be identified and will be connected with transport MSMEs for improved flow from fields to VACs, VACs to bulking centers to certified warehouses. INVC will work with IPs to ensure that women's needs for transportation to VAC and bulking centers are properly addressed and that women can have access to similar services than men. INVC will use 2014 marketing clerk data to simulate 2015 transport needs for maize, soybeans, groundnuts, pigeon peas and miscellaneous commodities. INVC will also conduct crop estimate exercises that will be made available in a timely way for the private sector, including transporters, to access supply base. The aim is to assist IPs to forecast volumes by commercial grade and location and work out transport coordination with SMEs (locally) and transporters (RTOA) and freight forwarders. This should result in doubling collective marketing volumes. AS mentioned above, in FY 2015, INVC will explicitly target women's participation in VACs and Bulking Centers. Currently, NASFAM and FUM both have a policy that at least 30 percent of committee members should be women. INVC will work with them to continue the sensitization and affirmative support towards more women in leading positions particularly at the marketing level. In addition, INVC will work with them to ensure that they keep track of the sex composition of these committees so they achieve their goals. Finally, INVC in collaboration with IPs will map entry points for women along the value chains to better address issues of access to markets and transportation, which are currently cited as big barriers for women's participations in value chains.

Sub-Task 6. Strengthen Backward Integration (ACE) In FY 2015, INVC will continue working with ACE to increase certification of rural storage with a primary focus on renting warehouses from ADMARC. The rented ADMARC warehouses will be identified by INVC and IPs for certification by ACE. Experience with certified warehouses in Dedza and Balaka under ACE show that when secure and verifiable, stocks can be held in distributed locations around the country, banks will lend on warehouse receipts and that buyers will hold some portion of their purchase over extended periods until final destination of use are decided. The goal is to increase certified rural storage by 50 percent from previous year in order to advance smallholder commercial integration, and that both men and women farmers benefit from storage opportunities. INVC will work with ACE through its rural agents in ZOI to sensitize female farmers and women's groups to store their legumes in the certified rural warehouses available in their areas, and to increase the number of female farmers accessing these warehouses.

TASK 4: IMPROVE SMALLHOLDER ACCESS TO CREDIT AND FINANCE

Sub-Task 1. Improve Linkages between Farmer Association/Cooperatives and Banks. Access to credit continues to be a constraint for farmers. In the 2014 marketing season, many smallholders offloaded their soybean crop to the vendors for ready cash. INVC will work with banks like FMB, OIBM and NBS on individualized group member bridging finance that can be liquidated by warehouse receipts, at forward purchase completion, or auction contract settlement points (requires design work on loan product structure, costs, risk management, etc). OIBM already works with CADECOM to provide bridging trade finance used by CADECOM to pay farmers vendor prices plus a small margin to aggregate crops for brokered sale. INVC will scale up OIBM/CADECOM bridging trade finance to FUM and NASFAM. In addition, INVC will target women access to bridging trade finance by training female farmers on financial literacy tools and promoting their participation in warehouse receipt system. INVC will work with FMB to potentially leverage opportunities with the USAID/Malawi's Development Credit Authority loan guarantee facility, given its interest in supporting farmers, farmer associations/cooperatives and processors.

Sub-Task 2. Increase Financial Literacy. Smallholders, associations, and their SMEs have low financial literacy. Among INVC beneficiaries, women struggle the most with low literacy levels. To address this issue, INVC will coordinate with FHI 360, ActionAid, OIBM and NBS to develop/modify financial literacy programs. INVC in collaboration with IPs and other components will conduct financial literacy trainings targeting in particular women. The main objective of this training is to make financial concepts accessible and understandable to those with low literacy levels, enabling their participation and access to credit that will help improve their incomes. In order to increase the number of women participating of these trainings, INVC and IPs will target Care Groups and Village Savings and Loans (VSL) associations which are usually groups in which the large number of women beneficiaries participate. Financial literacy trainings will be conducted in pilot areas to strengthen financial literacy and increase knowledge of finance, time value of money and structured trade instruments. The goal is to hold financial literacy training for an initial five associations/ clusters of farmers to calibrate the approach and then increase this to 14 associations/clusters (approximately 2 per District) by the end of the fiscal year.

COMPONENT 2: IMPROVING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

The FY2015 work plan will build on the achievements of the previous fiscal year. INVC is able to roll out improved technologies to 58,000 farmer beneficiaries (and 270 extension staff) through the extension systems developed by its Implementing Partners (IP) CADECOM, FUM and NASFAM. The main thrust for improving productivity (production per unit of land area) this fiscal year will be by increasing plant population and better overall crop management. Plant population is increased by spacing ridges at 75 cm rather than the conventional 90 cm and planting double rows on ridges rather than single rows. Coupled with better crop management, including provision of high-quality soybean inoculum (spearheaded by NASFAM for over 30,000 farmers), better timed harvesting and improved drying and threshing techniques, this is expected to significantly raise productivity and farm income levels. INVC will introduce, through training and demonstrations, the environmentally sound use of pesticides following the principles of Integrated Pest Management and guided by the USAID Malawi 2013 Mission-wide Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP). This will pave the way for broader roll-out of safe pesticide interventions in the following season, 2015/16, and will link farmers with agro-input suppliers and service providers.

Cross-cutting themes throughout implementation of Component 2 activities include risk mitigation to build resilience to environmental shocks such as flooding and drought (that are predicted to occur with greater frequency with continuing climate change), and incorporating gender-sensitive approaches to ensure that women benefit equally from technology transfer.

Bottlenecks still remain. The seed recovery system used by NASFAM and CADECOM to support its membership expansion has shown significant issues with the quantity and quality of returned seed. In the previous season, not only were the rates of return low (28 and 37% for soybean and groundnut, respectively, for NASFAM and 29% for groundnut for CADECOM), the purity and cleanliness of the seed was also poor, as reported by NASFAM. NASFAM had to embark on a massive cleaning exercise to sort and discard impurities, broken and discolored seed. Grade out ranged from 2 to 21% for groundnut and 1 to 41% for soybean in different districts with an average of 10 and 15% for ground nut and soybean, respectively. INVC will seek collaboration with USAID partner ReSeed to explore how this system can be improved or morphed into a more sustainable one. This will most likely involve a greater degree of supervision and use of trained, 'certified' village-based seed producers. Participation of private sector partners will also be explored.

VISION & STRATEGIC APPROACH

This component's vision of success involves greater production of legumes with a 15% or higher increase in yields producing more food and income opportunities at the household level. This will result from facilitation of smallholder's access to inputs and services, including training and technical assistance. INVC will coordinate with other development partners including the CGIAR that have been tasked by USAID to scale up availability of, access to, and adoption of improved legumes as well as Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP) and drought tolerant maize in INVC Zone of Influence.

Our approach under this component will include the following elements:

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER.

Improved land preparation and crop management will emphasize increasing plant populations through conditioning and the testing of seed before planting to ensure that what is planted is of high quality, planting double rows on ridges 75 cm apart, and protecting the crop from weeds, insects and diseases through adoption of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach. To help alleviate the perceived high labor requirements in breaking down old ridges and constructing new ones at 75 cm distance, INVC will include practical demonstrations in its farmer training programs on how to change ridge spacing with the least amount of labor. Labor costs will also be included in gross margin analysis to better understand how ridging affects bottom line profits. Pesticides INVC promotes will follow the USAID Malawi 2013 PERSUAP. Our IPM initiative will require training of farmers, including women, in the safe use of pesticides. INVC will involve operators of local agro-input shops in this training as they are the proximity suppliers of pesticides, sprayers

and safety equipment and often provide information as well. The safe use of herbicides, especially the class of pre-emergent herbicides, can have important benefits to women and youth, who often bear the brunt of manual weeding in the field, not only for legumes but also for maize, the main staple crop across Malawi. INVC will investigate how carefully-targeted herbicide use on maize could free more female labor to produce food legume crops resulting in greater dietary diversity due to higher volumes being produced more competitively. Likewise, planting in double rows initially increases labor demand on a per unit area basis but weeding requirements will be reduced as the crop canopy closes quicker and competes better with weed growth which benefits women in particular.

INCREASED ACCESS TO IMPROVED SEEDS AND INPUTS.

FY 2015 will see an improvement in the seed supply strategy through a revamped seed recovery system that ensures high quality recovered seed and a greater supply of new certified seed into the hands of new members. Seed will be recovered for not more than one generation to avoid decreased agronomic vigor. With critical inputs such as pesticides and soybean inoculum and the knowledge to use these technologies safely, the full potential of the improved seed will be realized. The USAID Malawi 2013 PERSUAP provides a sufficient range of fungicides and insecticides for promotion of seed treatment, and insect and disease control in the field as long as farmers are trained to use these products. INVC has developed a list of allowable pesticides for use in its training programs. Currently, the range and availability of pre-emergent herbicides is limited, but INVC will work with the private sector to ensure that sufficient stocks are available for the 2015/16 season. Building linkages between agro-dealers and farmers and demonstrations to promote safe pesticide use will also be a strategic next-step for FY2015, possibly in collaboration with SOIAMA and ReSeed.

IMPROVED ADVISORY SERVICES AND EXTENSION DELIVERY SYSTEM.

Intensification of the Lead Farmer (LF) system will continue to incorporate Assistant Lead Farmers (ALF) to build a denser core of technology and management qualified trainers, demonstrators, and mentors for other farmers. INVC will continue to work with its key IPs CADECOM, FUM and NASFAM to improve the Trainer of Trainers system by shifting more resources to provide high-quality training to the key drivers of the farm school system, the Lead Farmer and Assistant Lead Farmer and to assist them with setting up demonstrations of improved technologies for their fellow farmers in their communities. INVC will evaluate the effectiveness of the current demonstrations and devise ways, possibly with in-kind support such as signs and inputs, to improve them, where needed. The knowledge base and practical experience of lead farmers and assistant lead farmers with key technologies will be strengthened. The demonstrations are important because this is where seasonally keyed training just ahead of principal crop operations (such as land preparation, planting, gap filling, weeding, etc.) will be conducted for groups of farmers by the Lead Farmers and Assistant Lead Farmers. Training materials, supplies, and equipment will be made available to the LF and ALFS through CADECOM, FUM and NASFAM. Progressively, over the next 18 months the Assistant Field Officers (AFO) and other salaried extension personnel will take responsibility for monitoring, mentoring and coaching the LF and ALF, thus providing in-situ, proximity quality control overseen by INVC technical staff embedded with the partners backstopped by INVC core technicians. Training material will be adapted to be better accessible to female farmers who make up the majority of our farmer beneficiaries and who tend to have lower educational levels than their male counterparts.

ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION.

Malawi's soils are depleted from many years of continuous cultivation and are prone to erosion. With the effects of climate change becoming more evident, it is essential that climate smart interventions are considered at every stage of implementation of project activities. INVC will promote, along with its crop production and productivity enhancing technologies, the sustainable use of the natural resource base in order to build resilience to climate-based risks, including droughts and floods. INVC will, in coordination and collaboration with other development partners such as PERFORM, disseminate practical messages regarding conservation agriculture practices such as Vetiver grass along field bunds, leguminous trees such as *Tephrosia* and *Faidherbia* in and around fields, river bank watershed protection, mulching and manuring, etc.

Maintaining fruit trees such as mango or multi-purpose trees such as Moringa in the farming landscape and educating our farmer beneficiaries on their contribution to healthy nutrition will also be emphasized. INVC has already supported the purchase of beneficial trees with at least one IP (FUM) but will explore the production of these trees through farmer clubs and care groups as an income generating activity which would benefit from INVC's its extension network to distribute tree seedlings (and Vetiver grass stolons) to farmers. INVC's promotion of doubled-up legume production with pigeon pea to improve soil fertility is an important mitigation measure that will continue and will be more effective with erosion mitigating measures such as trees and Vetiver grass.

GENDER SENSITIVE APPROACHES TO TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AND FARM INCOME IMPROVEMENT.

While women do most of the manual labor on the farm, they do not participate equally in wealth distribution. Some of this may be attributed to extension services that are male dominated, and extension messages are tailored towards men. To better understand why women are under-represented in extension roles and how to address it, INVC will do an assessment of the current number of men and women at different levels in the INVC and corresponding Ministry of Agriculture extension hierarchy at CADECOM, FUM and NASFAM. INVC will also analyze how women farmers can better benefit economically from the improved technologies and adjust its training programs where needed.

GEOGRAPHIC DIFFERENTIATION.

INVC works in seven Districts. These Districts are not all equally suitable for legume production and in some, soybean does better than groundnut and/or pigeon pea, and vice-versa; there are also differences between varieties within these crops. These differences between crops and varieties can be related to differences in local climate and soil conditions. During FY2015, INVC will tailor its training program and crop production interventions according to the potential and suitability of different legumes and legume varieties in the different mandate Districts. This may mean that in some areas, certain legumes may be dropped from the program and that technology packages and phased in interventions will be differentially introduced, based on micro-climatic and soil differences.

SUMMARY OF TASKS AND SUB-TASKS

TASK 1. INCREASED ACCESS TO IMPROVED SEEDS AND INPUTS.

FY2015 incorporates both continued support for certified seed procurement and improving the seed revolving fund to address systemic short-falls experienced in previous seasons.

Sub-Task 1.1: Procure Quality Certified Seed (Soybeans, Groundnuts and Pigeon Pea) as well as Soybean Inoculum. To increase the standards for seed procurement and reduce the likelihood of 'fake' certified seed entering the value chain, INVC will refine the checklist for seed procurement verification for use by IPs and perform joint verification on the quality of purchased certified seed with the IPs. INVC will also verify the IPs plans for and their implementation of seed distribution to farmer members in order to ensure its timeliness. Seed procurement and distribution plans for the 2015/16 season will be in place and approved by the end of August 2015 well in time before the planting season is expected to start, around the end of November through the end of December, Starting early in the season will take into account any waiver of restrictions (such as ADS 312¹ for purchase of legume seed from USAID/BFS that may be required.

The checklist currently has the following elements:

1. Company registration
2. Source of the Foundation seed used to produce Certified Seed
3. Certification by Seed Traders Association of Malawi

¹ For more information see See <http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/312>

4. Tax clearance certificate from the Malawi Revenue Authority
5. Germination Certificates Ministry of Agriculture
6. Field Inspection reports

INVC will also work with ReSeed to make more pigeon pea seed of the appropriate varieties available to farmers for use in double-up legume systems which will benefit soil fertility.

Sub-Task 1.2. Strengthen the seed recovery (revolving seed fund) system. There are two issues with the current seed recovery system: 1) poor recovery - caused mainly by side selling, and 2) poor quality of recovered seed – caused by inclusion of poor quality grain from other sources to make up for the reimbursement shortfall caused by side-selling. INVC will work with its partners NASFAM and CADECOM to come up with an improved system that will keep recovered seed within the community, which is expected to motivate farmers to return greater amounts of high-quality seed. Also, there will be better control of the production fields at the farmer level, e.g. by working only with pre-selected, dedicated farmers who have been trained and whose fields will be inspected before harvesting, and where the harvest is carefully monitored so that there is no inclusion of grain from other fields. Also, well-tailored messaging, grouped harvesting and weighing and the purchase at market rates of supplemental seed that needing to be reimbursed, will be explored. This improved system will be developed in collaboration with ReSeed.

Sub-Task 1.3: Farmer Organization Facilitation to Agriculture Input and Service Suppliers “SMEs”: INVC farmers (“the poor with assets”) have the potential to be important collective suppliers of good quality raw materials to processors but have difficulty accessing high return inputs and services because they do not qualify for FISP subsidies. In cooperation with IPs, we will identify sites and business cases for agro-dealers and/or top-of-supply chain processors for input and service sales that enhance crop management and marketing (soy inoculum, weed control, pest and disease control, postharvest services, aggregation, etc.). These may be organization subunits of some of the farmer organizations themselves or integrated units within food processing companies. INVC will collaborate with SOIAMA to strengthen these input dealers in terms of technical capacity so that they can better serve their, male and female, farmer clients.

TASK 2. TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Sub-Task 2.1: Training of extension staff in seed quality assessment and seed germination testing: Technical staff in the IPs have had little or no training in legume seed quality assessment, legume seed germination methods, and no exposure to International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) standards for randomized seed sampling, sample evaluation, and germination testing. These gaps have previously prevented agriculture productivity and extension personnel from doing basic due diligence on procured or recovered seed lots. During FY15, the Agricultural Productivity Specialist will lead development of training modules on randomized lot sampling, sample physical evaluation, and germination testing following ISTA standards for soybeans and for groundnuts using the experience of the September 2013 exercise as a methods and data source. The INVC Ag Productivity staff or locally/regionally contracted STTA will carry out training of 75 IP agricultural staff and 200 government extension staff in sampling, physical evaluation, and germination of certified and commercial grade (standard to be applied to seed recovered from farmers) soybean seed and certified and commercial grade groundnut seed. INVC will further ensure that the IP agriculture staff will train Lead Farmers and Assistant Lead Farmers in carrying out simple germination tests.

Farmer fields and demonstration plots from which seed recoveries are sought, and seed plots are harvested, dried, threshed and shelled apply the same handling method as common grain. Immature seed from too early harvest is compounded by poorly managed drying and mechanical damage through very rough threshing, mold stimulating shelling methods, poorly protected storage between growing season, and rough handling during transport. During FY15, INVC will continue to modify the soy and groundnut seed conditioning and storage modules and intensify training of IP staff.

Sub-Task 2.2: Training in Improved Land Preparation, Crop Management, Harvest and Post-harvest techniques tied to Crop Calendar: INVC will train 58,000 farmers (of which 3,800 Lead Farmers and Assistant Lead Farmers) and 275 extension staff (of whom 75 are INVC-supported staff with IPs and 200 are EPA level governmental extension staff) in these areas. During FY15 we will work with IPs to ensure that trainings are timed and broken into seasonally keyed modules and that Lead farmers and Assistant Lead Farmers have sufficient time to train their constituent farmers before the onset of activities in the field. This means that land preparation training is given no later than July or August, planting and early season crop management training no later than October, and late season crop management and harvest/post-harvest training no later than March. This will also require detailed attention is paid to ensuring that tools, equipment and logistics are in place for hands-on work at demonstration plots or on farmer volunteered fields for every session where experiential work is indicated and practicable. Radio messages to help promote behavior change (BCC) will need to be developed and vetted with IPs on time so that they can be aired according to the crop calendar activities. Key topics include timely land preparation, proper ridging, crop rotation, timely planting, pesticide safety, soybean rust prevention with fungicides, proper time to harvest using maturity index, and drying, threshing, cleaning, drying, and for postharvest storage. Drama performances on best agricultural practices will also be developed, e.g. on pesticide safety. These will be carried out across the INVC Zone if Influence at the village level by teams of trained village actors, initially in Lilongwe and Mchinje but later on, (from ca. July 2015) also in other Districts.

Farmers continue to harvest soybeans and groundnuts before the crops have reached optimum seed maturity and weight. While some early harvesting of groundnuts responds to the market demand for fresh boiling groundnuts, most farmers and field extension staff also do not appear to appropriately assess crop maturity to determine harvesting time. The use of the Mandela Cork (also spelled as Mandela Cock) is heavily promoted in the region, but it is still not clear if this method improves or slows drying. Despite mounting concern about postharvest losses, there are no generally applied methods or standards for the measurement of postharvest loss at different points in the value chain and almost no measurement of postharvest loss or even measurement of basic drying curves for groundnuts or soybeans using recommended technologies in Malawi (racks, in sacks, Mandela Cork², etc.). In FY15, with the now fully staffed structures within implementing partners, INVC will ensure that visual aids on soybean (pod color and moisture content) and groundnut (mesocarp color scrape test) maturity indices are developed and widely disseminated. We will use maturity indices to schedule harvest and do standardized moisture content comparison of harvested amounts. Efforts will be made to measure drying curves of groundnuts in windrow, drying floor, drying rack/roof, and Mandela Cork drying protocols.

Another very important topic is Aflatoxin management for farmers, processors and traders. For the last two categories, INVC will collaborate with the Trade Hub to set up specialized training that would enable the export of groundnut to international markets which requires stringent adherence to aflatoxin standards. Modules targeted to farmers have been developed already and will be improved as needed with input from IPs and other stakeholder at Technical Working Group meetings, and these trainings will be covered during the late season training that will be completed no later than March. INVC will continue to participate in the Malawi Programme for Aflatoxin Control (MAPAC) to help advance technologies to reduce aflatoxin contamination.

Training modules will be refined in coordination with ReSeed and other key stakeholder and will be developed into a booklet for use in the 2015/16 season.

² The Mandela Cork (or Cock as it is also spelled) is a circular stack of groundnut plants about 1-1.5 m high and 1-2 m wide, placed with the pods pointing inwards. The top of the stack is covered with a banana leaf or other vegetation. Drying takes 2-4 weeks.

Sub-Task 2.3: Promote Aflasafe Use: Aflatoxin levels can vary tremendously in one field or plot, reducing the effectiveness of the current drive to use more in-shell marketing to reduce aflatoxin levels to those below Codex Alimentarius levels or the more stringent EU maximum allowable levels. We will begin to address the reduction of toxin producing molds by pursuing cooperative links to the USDA or PACA programs to implement tests of Aflasafe or similar non-toxigenic race crowding out of toxigenic *Aspergillus* mold in field settings. While INVC is not sure about when the Malawian government will approve this process, INVC has started discussions with ReSeed in March 2015 to collaborate conducting field testing and demos in shared areas. By March 2015, INVC and ReSeed identified four potential sites.

Sub-Task 2.4: Crop Emergence Monitoring: Farmers regularly report poor crop emergence of soybeans and groundnuts, usually blaming seed quality, and seek replacement seed or other support to offset emergence problems, regardless of cause. Identifying the cause of the emergence problems is important to maintaining the working relationships between seed suppliers, usually member organizations, and farmers. INVC will conduct surveys in the seven Districts to ascertain emergence rates and where problems are encountered conduct detailed sampling to investigate causes, including soil fertility testing and soil pest/disease sampling.

Sub-Task 2.5: Monitoring of Adoption of Improved Management Practices (Spot Surveys): INVC will continue to promote improved land preparation and crop management technologies (aimed at increasing plant populations and improving seed quality, soil fertility and crop protection), taking into account the outcome of the barrier-to-adoption survey from MSU.

Preliminary analysis of the field surveys have shown that double rows are widely adopted but the narrower 75 cm ridge spacing is less common, which could be related to gender-related labor constraints or crop rotation choices such as tobacco that require ridges at 90 cm. This will be further investigated.

The INVC productivity and M&E teams will also conduct field monitoring at regular intervals and linked with the land preparation and crop management training to measure the success of training and adoption of technologies. This will be done just before planting to determine how well the ridging has been done, about 6-8 weeks after planting to see if planting recommendations have been followed, and shortly after harvesting to evaluate drying techniques. There will also be intermittent assessments throughout the season by the Component 2 Lead and his staff to monitor pests and diseases and other constraints for use in training material in the next season. These intermittent assessments will be reported to USAID in the Quarterly Reports.

Sub-Task 2.6: Promote Crop Protection compliant with USAID Malawi PERSUAP: Soybean and groundnut productivity is suppressed because of what INVC staff believe to be the combined effect of late planting and weeding of legumes relative to maize, tobacco, and, in some areas, cotton. Early season disease (seed mold and rots) and insect attacks also reduce legume crop establishment. Late season rust on soybeans is a constant source of concern. To demonstrate these dynamics and the ability of crop protection products to control them, INVC will set up a one demonstration field per District in collaboration with NASFAM, FUM and CADECOM and Farmer Organization, Limited (FOL). FOL is a major importer of agrochemicals and is uniquely qualified to provide training to AFOs, AEDOs and Lead Farmers on the identification of pests and diseases and the safe use of pesticides based on IPM principles and focusing on the pesticide active ingredients listed in the USAID Malawi 2013 PERSUAP and available in Malawi. Once ReSeed has mobilized, INVC will seek collaboration with them as well to enable a broader roll out of pesticide and IPM training for legume growers. The purpose of this effort will not be to test pesticides (because they have already been approved by the Malawian pesticide authorities and are known to work effectively) but rather to build capacity among farmers to use these products in the most effective, economical and environmentally sound manner. Pesticide safety will be paramount and the training will instruct farmers how to minimize exposure by using protective equipment such as gloves, facemask, boots, cap, etc. and possible alternatives, when such items are not

available. Women who are breast feeding or pregnant should not be involved in any stage of pesticide treatments, whether mixing, application or cleaning of spray equipment. Training will also include building awareness of the importance of natural enemies such as ladybugs, lacewings, parasitoids etc., scouting for pests and diseases and proper use, storage and disposal of pesticides. Key pesticide based strategies include the use of seed dressing, targeted insecticide treatment against leaf feeding insects and aphids, and targeted applications of fungicides against rust.

Sub-Task 2.7. Agronomic evaluation of nutrition-enhancing OFSP and vegetables for kitchen gardens: INVC will assist the International Potato Center (CIP) in the distribution of several OFSP varieties to INVC farmer beneficiaries for production and inclusion in household diet. This will be an integrated effort with INVC's nutrition team. Under Component 2, INVC will participate in evaluating agronomic performance including yield and quality assessments in different Districts. For kitchen gardens, which are promoted through the Nutrition component, INVC will develop training materials for Care groups which will focus on improved management of kitchen gardens and the most appropriate vegetables (a range of leafy indigenous varieties) to grow from an agronomic and nutritional view point. This training material will be developed and piloted during FY2015. In addition, INVC will collaborate with care groups to emphasize year-round cultivation of kitchen garden vegetables and OFSP in low-lying areas with enough access to water. INVC will collaborate with CIP/ReSeed in this effort.

Sub-Task 2.8: Financial Analysis (Cost-Benefit, Gross Margin, Opportunity Cost) of Improved Technologies by Value Chain: To evaluate the profitability of key intervention packages, INVC will work with IPs to do spot surveys on groundnuts, soybeans, and pigeon peas: Cost and benefit data will be collected for land preparation, planting, crop protection, harvesting, post-harvest handling, and postharvest storage technologies and management practices.

Since Postharvest drying and storage technologies are also among the least well studied from a farm management perspective in Malawi, a financial analysis (cost-benefit, gross margin, and opportunity cost) of alternative drying practices and innovative storage will also be tested. Alternative drying practices and storages such as hermetic storage bags (Purdue Improved Crop or PIC bags, Grainpro bags) at both HH level, VAC level, and Processor Level will be pilot tested during the FY2015 harvest season with IPs or through direct tests. Financial analysis of groundnut drying alternatives in-field windrow vs at-home drying floor or rack vs Mandela Cork groundnut drying will also be analyzed.

TASK 3: IMPROVED ADVISORY SERVICES AND EXTENSION DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Sub-Task 3.1: Increasing direct reach to farmers by reducing ratio of beneficiary farmers to lead farmers: The ratio of 1 lead farmer to 75 to 80 farmers is too high to permit adequate training and demonstration. INVC will continue to increase the number of lead farmer and assistant/associate lead farmers so that one assistant lead farmer is not directly working with more than 10 to 15 farmers each to cascade the seasonally aligned training modules. Training of AFOs will continue so that they can better train, advise and mentor the Lead Farmers and Assistant Lead Farmers in their intervention zones.

Sub-Task 3.2: Increasing the number of women in training roles. Attempts will be made to replace male AFOs who resign from their IP positions with female AFOs to address the imbalance between males and females among AFOs. INVC will work with IPs to ensure that the ratio among male and female Lead Farmers and Assistant Lead farmers reflects the male-female ratios among constituent farmers. Since there are significant numbers of female farmers and INVC beneficiaries, this means that there will be emphasis on increasing the number of qualified female Lead Farmers and Assistant Lead Farmers. We will continue to track these numbers with our IPs .

Sub-Task 3.3: Strengthen knowledge and skills of Extension Staff, Lead Farmers and Assistant Lead Farmers: Training of Lead Farmers and Assistant Lead Farmers will focus on technical areas but also on skills in transferring information to fellow farmers (adult education/facilitation). Knowledge and skills of extension staff (AFOs etc.) will be assessed before the start of the 2015/16 season so that they can be prepared (through refresher training by INVC staff) to independently train Lead farmers and Assistant Lead Farmers during the 2015/16 season (rather than hiring local consulting firms to do the training).

Sub-Task 3.4: Increase quality and access to demonstration plots for improved technology: Too few demonstration plots are used for farmer visits to discuss the pros and cons of demonstrated practices. INVC will assist with deepening the demonstration density to one per assistant/associate lead farmer with adjustment of IP programs and budgets.

Sub-Task 3.5: Improving quality of training material. For the 2015/16 season, INVC will develop a booklet of training material based on the hand-outs developed for the 2014/15 season. Input from extension staff and stakeholder such as ReSeed will be collected and reviewed in order to address any possible errors, inconsistencies, and matters that require clarifications, or topics that could be deleted or need to be added. High quality images of pests and diseases will also be added to help in identification of the most critical pest and disease problems and their control. In coordination with IP's gender specialists and other USAID funded projects specializing on gender issues, we will develop training booklets which will be adapted to farmers to make agronomic information better understandable to women farmers, which according to INVC Gender Evaluation struggle with low literacy level. This may include using more graphics, pictures and making sure they are all translated in local language. We will collaborate with other USAID partners with a strong basic education mandate such as Action Aid.

TASK 4. ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION

Sub-Task 4.1. Strengthen climate smart agriculture messages in training modules crop management. INVC will, in coordination and collaboration with other development partners like PERFORM, disseminate practical messages regarding climate smart agriculture practices such as the planting of Vetiver grass along field bunds, leguminous trees such as *Tephrosia* and *Faidherbia* in and around fields, river bank watershed protection, mulching, composting and green manuring, etc. Doubled-up legume production with pigeon pea planted between the soybean or groundnut rows can also be considered as a climate smart agriculture practice because of deep taproots pull up much need Phosphorus from deeper soil layers and the leaf litter adds Nitrogen and organic matter to the soil.

Sub-Task 4.2. Distribute beneficial trees and grass species to plant along and within crop fields. INVC will also look into the possibility of supporting the purchase of beneficial trees and Vetiver grass (that add Nitrogen and organic matter to the soil, provide fodder to livestock, and other useful products) and/or using its extension network to distribute tree seedlings and Vetiver grass stolons to farmers. Soil stabilizing trees, including fruit trees, can Vetiver grass, can also be planted along river banks and water sheds to stabilize soils and reduce erosion. Maintaining fruit trees such as mango or multi-purpose trees such as Moringa in the farming landscape and their contribution to healthy nutrition will also be emphasized. INVC has already supported the purchase of beneficial trees with at least one IP but will explore the production of these trees through farmer clubs and care groups as an income generating activity which would benefit from INVC's its extension network to distribute tree seedlings (and Vetiver grass stolons) to farmers.

COMPONENT 3: IMPROVING COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO PREVENT UNDER-NUTRITION

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Component 3 of the FtF-INVC project is a behavior driven component that seeks to promote household practices and individual behaviors that contribute to improved nutrition among pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under 5. This component complements Components 1 and 2. In FY13, FtF-INVC produced a Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) Strategy whose primary aim was to guide messaging on how to increase people's knowledge on integrating nutrition in value chains (soy beans and groundnuts) in terms of production, storage, processing and consumption. The SBCC strategy guides messaging on the production of soy bean and groundnut value added products (e.g. soy milk, soy sausage, and groundnut and soy flour) so that they are accessible and consumed at household level. The strategy is being implemented through theatre for development and mass media (radio programs, jingles and public service announcements).

In addition to mass media and theatre for development, FtF-INVC also promotes nutrition behaviors using the Care Group Model. The Care Group Model is a health and nutrition strategy that involves a group of 12 lead mothers/fathers who regularly meet with promoters and project staff for training, supervision and support. The model builds teams of volunteer women/men who later conduct trainings at each household individually basing on peer to peer education model. The purpose of using the Care Group Model is to promote behavior change through improved coverage of mothers/fathers and care givers reached with health and nutrition messages. FtF-INVC adopted the Care Group Model from the I-Life and WALA Projects, where the model proved to be cost effective, reaching more beneficiaries within a short period of time, and is impactful, inducing improved behaviors on nutrition at household level. In the modified Care Group Model, FtF-INVC recruits a team of promoters from NASFAM and FUM structures known as group action committees (GACs) to manage and facilitate the health and nutrition education at household level targeting pregnant women, lactating mothers and under 5 children. On average, each promoter works with 12 lead mothers/fathers who conduct visits to the households at least twice a month. Each session lasts about 2-3 hours. Under FtF-INVC, care groups take a whole-of-community approach, meaning that participation is not limited to those who are members of farmer clubs/groups (through NASFAM or FUM). All community members who are either pregnant, lactating, or have under 5 children have the opportunity to be reached by lead mothers/fathers. The lead mothers/fathers are trained by the promoters using training manuals such as counseling cards and recipe book derived from the Government of Malawi Scaling-Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative. The intention is to promote the 15-key prioritized behaviors; and to disseminate information on nutrition and health including HIV and AIDS. In turn lead mothers/fathers train the 12 registered cluster members (including theirs) at household level. By the end of FY14, FtF-INVC had reached about 99,000 households and 112, 000 under 5 children.

VISION AND STRATEGIC APPROACH

Integration between agriculture and nutrition began with the relationship between existing agriculture clubs and nutrition service providers where GACs (under NASFAM) and clusters (under FUM) were the contact points to identify and recruit promoters for care group activities. Most of the promoters which FtF-INVC has recruited come directly from these agriculture structures (GACs and clusters). Through the guidance of these promoters (who are active in both agriculture and nutrition), care group members are encouraged to produce and save some of the commodities, sell some, and invest some back into the value chains. Currently, around 38% of care group members are also NASFAM/FUM members growing either soy or groundnuts. Membership in these clubs ensures training on improved technologies for growing soy and groundnuts, and in some cases to access seed. Understanding this important linkage, by the end of FY15, FtF-INVC intends to increase membership in NASFAM/FUM to about 60%.

Through the care group model, households are encouraged to save some of the commodities for home consumption due to their high nutritive value, especially when they have been properly processed. FtF-INVC promotes household processing of soy and groundnuts to produce soy and groundnut flour, soy sausage and

milk, peanut butter, cooking oil, and a number of other nutrient dense foods. Households are also encouraged to save some as seed to plant in the following season, as an investment in both household income and nutrition. FtF-INVC encourages farmers to collectively sell their soy and groundnuts, thus raising the value and eventually increasing household income. Project messaging (in both farmer groups and care groups) encourages households to invest this increased income in their own families by purchasing nutrient dense foods. In addition to messaging, INVC is building skills of care group members so that they add value to the soy and groundnut chains.

FtF-INVC is delivering messages on ‘save some, sell some, and invest some’ through a number of channels, including mass media (through radio programs), participatory drama, care groups, and farm clubs. Messages are tailored to suit their intended audience and also to drive home the link between production of these cash crops that are also highly nutritious.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2015

Initiatives for FY2015 are designed to deliver the nutrition component’s vision and strategies in an integrated manner to agriculture value chains. This will include mobilizing more care group members to become NASFAM/FUM members, and training more care group members so that they have requisite knowledge and skills in nutrition and agriculture value chains which they can use beyond the project. In order to further promote positive nutrition behaviours, FtF-INVC will in FY15 continue to disseminate messages to the target beneficiaries on nutrition and agriculture value chains through mass media, theatre for development, print and care group activities. The focus will still remain on the 15 prioritized behaviors which were prioritized in FY14. Greater detail of Component 3 Tasks, Sub-tasks and Activities can be found in Table 6.

TASK 1: IMPROVE KEY NUTRITION-RELATED BEHAVIORS WITHIN COMMUNITIES AND HOUSEHOLDS (SBCC THROUGH CARE GROUPS AND MASS MEDIA & COMMUNITY DRAMA)

Sub-Task 1.1: Investigate and select behavior determinants to improve implementation of SBCC. Under this sub-task, the main focus is to explore factors at various levels that constrain adoption of positive nutrition behavior at community and household level. This is accomplished through spot surveys, formative research and positive deviance inquiries (PDIs).

Early in FY15, the first activity will be to conduct formative research in Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi to explore knowledge levels, behaviors and practices that affect consumption of nutritious foods among community members, especially pregnant mothers, lactating women and under 5 children. The information (regarding barriers to behavior adoption) gathered will facilitate necessary changes in the messaging of the 15 key behaviors.

At least one audience reception survey will be conducted to assess effectiveness of SBCC approaches namely: radio programs, jingles, Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and theatre. Those communication channels and formats most frequently cited/liked by most beneficiaries will be maintained as effective means of communication. Communication channels will also be revised according to these findings, for example, engaging men in nutrition may not be best accomplished through care group meetings, rather it may require engaging traditional leaders or other men who are role models to facilitate community meetings.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The 15 Prioritized Nutrition Behaviors</u> • Maternal antenatal care and diet • Women seek antenatal care as soon as they suspect that they may be pregnant • Pregnant women attend ANC at least 4 times during the duration of pregnancy • Pregnant women eat more nutritious food • Lactating women eat more nutritious food • Breastfeeding • Mothers give only breast milk for the first 6 months (exclusive breastfeeding) • Mothers breastfeed for longer duration • Mother hold the baby in a correct/comfortable position during breastfeeding • Mothers attach young babies properly • Mothers breastfeed as much or more during illness and recuperation • Complementary feeding • Caregivers encourage children to eat extra food during recovery from illness • Caregivers prepare and feed children 6-9 months old soft and thick meals • Caregivers feed children 6-24 months fruits, vegetables, legumes, animal foods and fats for nutrient density • Caregivers prepare and feed their children the recommended amount of food • Hygiene • Caregivers will wash their hands with soap or ash at the 4 critical times • Children's hands will get washed with soap or ash after stool and before food |
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Pakachere will conduct two formal Positive Deviance Inquiries (PDIs) in Lilongwe and Mchinji. The objective of these PDIs will be to track some noticeable behavior outcomes e.g. whether some mothers are exclusively breastfeeding their children, whether households have backyard gardens, whether households have indeed constructed sanitary facilities and use them, observance on hand-washing during critical periods, and whether some households are consuming at least four different food groups. Reasons/factors for adopting these behaviors will be explored in detail from those practicing them (positive deviants) and use results to educate others. Methodology for doing PDIs will remain simple and not very scientific in nature (randomization). It will be done using focus group discussions (FGD) or key informant interviews (KII) with some selected community members. The results of both PDIs and formative research will be presented in message development workshops (one in Lilongwe and Mchinji and one for the expansion districts of Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi). The results will be used to guide nutrition interventions that will be implemented through radio programs, community theatre productions and care group activities.

Sub-Task 1.2: Revise SBCC Strategy

In FY15, the SBCC strategy will be revised according to the results of outcome surveys, spot surveys, PDIs, field activities, internal reviews, and best practices learned from other similar projects. One workshop to review and revise the strategy will be held involving the FtF-INVC technical team, representatives from government (Ministry of Information, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Ministry of Health), partner organizations (SSDI, PCI, CIP, Baylor, Save the Children International), and other technical advisors including academia e.g. LUANAR. The revision will also be in line with the 15 prioritized behaviors presented in the text box. The revised strategy will be printed and disseminated to partners.

Sub-Task 1.3: Implement mass media and community theatre approaches to nutrition SBCC

Since the inception of the project, FtF-INVC has used mass media and community theatre approaches as channels of communication on nutrition and agriculture value chains. These approaches complement and strengthen care group activities which are mainly interpersonal in nature (one-to-one).

In FY15, the project will continue to produce and air radio programs, jingles and PSAs related to both health and nutrition and legume value chain. For consistency, one partner (Pakachere) will continue to produce and air radio programs across all the five districts. About 8 new radio programs (nutrition-related) will be developed and aired, as well as 4 jingles and 4 PSAs. In the context of enhancing integration, Pakachere will also develop and air 8 PSAs related to agriculture practices. Pakachere will develop one short video documentary promoting FtF-INVC as a whole, while focusing on the integration of agriculture, nutrition, and a newly added village saving and loans (VSL) component. This video will be screened using smart phones during VSL meetings. The project will procure some smart cellular phones and distribute them to VSL change agents which they can use to air the video clips. This will be one of the effective means of communication as the intended audiences will be so localized in terms of intervention (i.e. VSL) with a well-defined period of intervening thus during VSL meetings thereby making the interaction with the participants more direct.

Pakachere will continue to offer theatre for development activities in Lilongwe and Mchinji, while INVC will identify another partner in the the expansion districts. Pakachere will conduct at least six different integrated theatre performances in all of the 17 EPAs, with a goal of conducting 400 performances. Upon identification of a new SBCC partner for the expansion districts, FtF-INVC plans to conduct similar theatre for development performances. FtF-INVC plans to establish 22 drama groups (one per EPA) and train 110 theatre group members (5 per EPA). Specific targets for deliverables will be set with the new partner with guidance from the SBCC specialist.

Print materials are also an important part of the SBCC strategy, as they form a reference material for communities as a whole. Pakachere, in collaboration with the new partner to be identified, will produce at least 3,000 copies of one poster for distribution in all five districts. These posters will include integrated information related to nutrition and agriculture value chains.

In the FY15, FtF-INVC intends to train HSAs, AEDOs and promoters in SBCC. Feedback loops and periodic assessments between the care group aspect, the mass media and community drama will ensure messages are reinforcing one another to induce individual behavior change. Routine monitoring data through quarterly nutrition spot surveys and the PDIs will describe the rate of behavior adoption as well as some outcomes. All SBCC messaging related to “sell some, save some and invest some” will continue to be promoted as a way of encouraging households to sell the surplus to gain household income which they can use to buy items that will diversify diets, thus enhancing the integration of agriculture into nutrition.

TASK 2: INCREASE ACCESS TO DIVERSE AND QUALITY FOODS AMONG TARGET POPULATIONS

Sub-Task 2.1: Facilitate and Promote Cultivation of high Nutritive value Crops (Backyard Gardens):

A critical contribution to improved maternal and child diet is dietary diversification. A diversified diet (i.e. made from Malawi 6 different food groups) is of higher nutritive value. Key food categories are fruits, vegetables, legumes, animal foods, fats and oil and staples. Mothers and children may get enough dietary energy from the maize and other starches they consume, except perhaps for the lean season, but they often do not consume a diversified diet. Through promotion of soy beans and groundnuts, access to dietary diversity will therefore be addressed.

In FY15, one spot survey will be conducted by the INVC M&E team to assess effectiveness of backyard gardens as an intervention promoting uptake of nutritious foods to gauge the degree to which backyard gardens are filling a gap of supplying vegetables in the lean season, and their usefulness at community level.

And as part of integration, in FY15 FtF-INVC will partner with International Potato Centre (CIP) to promote production of orange fleshed sweet potatoes, (OFSP) which are rich in Vitamin A. The promotion of cultivation of green leafy indigenous vegetables and OFSP through backyard gardens will ensure year-round access to highly nutritious vegetables. Over 1,400 care group member will receive bundles of OFSP vines, 756 in Balaka and 744 in Lilongwe. Care group messaging in these areas will emphasize not only consumption, but also that excess OFSP can be sold to generate income and invest the vines as seed for the next growing season. As was done in Lilongwe and Mchinji, a food availability calendar will be developed for Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi showing the nutritious foods locally available throughout the year in these three (3) districts).

Sub-Task 2.2: Facilitate Household Food Processing and Storage:

FtF-INVC will continue to mobilize care group members to grow and consume soy bean and groundnuts (promoted under Components 1 and 2). FtF-INVC will take a step further and train care group members on food processing, utilization and storage; introducing ways to reduce post-harvest loss and retain nutrient composition. In care groups, women are being trained to reserve some dried leaf vegetables in traditional storage containers made from locally available materials for use during the lean period.

In FY15, FtF-INVC will start with the training of all 36 nutrition team (FtF-INVC secretariat, Nkhoma project team and all officers from the expansion districts). After the project team, the training will later be cascaded to the 200 promoters in the expansion districts, who in turn will cascade to all 60,000 households. In addition, three (3) refresher trainings on food processing, utilization and storage will also be conducted in the existing districts of Lilongwe and Mchinji. Food processing addresses issues of food safety and reinforces the messages from the agriculture component in relation to aflatoxin reduction. The negative effects of aflatoxin on child health are well documented and will be emphasized during these training sessions.

The processing of soybeans is time (and heat) intensive, and creates a need for construction of ‘energy saving’ cook stoves that use less firewood. It is expected that in FY15 15,000 fuel efficient stoves will be constructed and used. It has been proven (through a WALA project study) that the use of these stoves reduces the need for firewood (thus eliminating the cost of purchasing large quantities) and in turn frees up resources (both time and money) for households to focus on nutrition.

In FY15, FtF-INVC will ensure that all relevant government extension workers (AEDOs and HSAs) from the 5 districts are trained in food processing, utilization and storage so that they are able to monitor the implementation of the activities in their areas.

TASK 3: INCREASE ACCESS TO AND UTILIZATION OF KEY NUTRITION-RELATED HEALTH SERVICES

Sub-Task 3.1: Conduct community-based Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP): Growth Monitoring is a routine activity in communities; children are measured and their growth charted relative to standard healthy growth on World Health Organization (WHO) Growth Charts. Children typically “fall off” their growth curve at 6-24 months of age, i.e., they grow along the 50th percentile of standard healthy growth during the first 6 months when they are exclusively breastfed, then grow more slowly, falling to the 5th percentile or less (equivalent to the 2 standard deviation mark that is the cut-off for stunting).

In FY14, Nkhoma identified model villages to conduct community-based growth monitoring sessions in Lilongwe and Mchinji. The initiative will continue in FY15 in the selected communities. The selection criteria for communities that will benefit the most, or model villages, is related to a number of factors, including proximity to a static health center. However, hard to reach areas are being targeted for this activity also. Promoter-led community based growth monitoring tracks all of the children in the community on one large chart and is complimentary to the individual level growth monitoring that is conducted by HSAs. Children’s weights are aggregated and shared with communities to make malnutrition visible (using the child’s health passport). The results of the community-based growth monitoring are explained to the communities that this is being done for them to understand and appreciate the magnitude of the problem so that together they can work at finding solutions. Community growth monitoring encourages families to use existing MoH structures while also creating demand in areas where MoH may not be. Promoters and lead mothers/fathers actively encourage household members to attend both individual growth monitoring and promoter-led community-based growth monitoring sessions.

In FY15, community growth monitoring sessions will occur every month in the established sites (54 in Lilongwe and Mchinji and 100 in Balaka, Machinga, and Mangochi). In addition, through household visits, mothers will be encouraged to attend individual growth monitoring (health facilities by HSAs). Children needing special care will be referred to appropriate nutrition and health services.

To support the growth monitoring interventions, community complementary feeding and learning sessions (CCFLS) also known as *Thanzi* sessions will be conducted at GAC/cluster level by lead mothers/fathers every quarter to rehabilitate mild to moderately malnourished children and prevent malnutrition in health children. CCFLS is also intended to teach care givers on optimal complementary feeding including food processing, preparation and preservation techniques. Prior to the roll-out of CCFLS sessions, both promoters and lead parents will be trained. FtF-INVC plans to conduct two (2) training sessions in Lilongwe and Mchinji (one in each district); and four (4) trainings in the expansion districts (one in Balaka, one in Machinga and two in Mangochi) in the third quarter. After the trainings, lead mothers/fathers will hold CCFLS sessions in the 5 districts.

Sub-Task 3.2: Promote Vitamin A Supplementation and De-worming through Child Health Days: Nutrition is a multi-sectoral issue, requiring coordination and inputs from both health and agriculture. The ties with the agriculture sector need explicit development, as described in Task 3, whereas ties with the health sector tend to be well-established. The health sector features interventions like treatment of common illnesses, hygiene practices, and promotion of breastfeeding and complementary feeding. FtF-INVC’s nutrition component will maintain contact with the health facilities so as to increase access to and utilization of key nutrition-related services through the scale-up of community-based growth monitoring and promotion. FtF-INVC will continue to support Child Health Days for the promotion of vitamin A supplementation and de-worming, and the strengthening of the referral system.

FtF-INVC’s support of the MoH’s Child Health Days will continue in FY2015, giving children who attend Vitamin A supplementation, de-worming medicine and other mobile services such as distribution of chlorine for

cholera prevention, and also conducting health education talks with mothers. This initiative allows us to contribute to one of the USAID's Health, Population and Nutrition (HPN) objectives of increasing coverage of micronutrient supplementation. In addition, FtF-INVC will take advantage of the CHD to disseminate different health and nutrition education messages through drama and health promotion materials, e.g. posters that will be developed by FtF-INVC or sourced from other partners. Dramas will be developed in conjunction with Pakachere (for Lilongwe and Mchinji) and a partner to be identified for the expansion districts. A total five (5) dramas at each EPA will be performed during May 2015 CHD campaign. This is equivalent to one performance per day for each of the five days (at least 39 EPAs in total). Messages will include sanitation and hygiene, optimal infant and young child feeding practices, HIV and AIDS, the link between family planning and nutrition; and also promotion of growing and utilizing nutrition rich foods.

Sub-Task 3.3: Support and strengthen community system for referring sick and malnourished children to health facilities: FtF-INVC will ensure that a referral system consistent with MoH procedures is functioning well so that lead mother/fathers can identify and refer sick and malnourished children to health facilities. The MoH referral system includes identification of sick and malnourished children, completion of a referral form (by an HSA), treatment at a health facility, and release back to the community (with documentation on the original referral form). Additionally, the number of referrals will be closely tracked by month to identify both positive and negative nutrition trends within the GACs/clusters.

One meeting will be held with national and district health officials, SSDI and other USAID funded partners to review various referral forms and adapt them for use in all FtF-INVC impact areas. The outcome of this meeting will be mass printing of the potentially revised forms for use at community level. Additionally, promoters will be trained in the use of this form, working hand-in-hand with government HSAs. These trainings will be done in the form of mentoring sessions, where Nutrition Assistants will explain the use of the forms one-on-one or with small groups of promoters. FtF-INVC will ensure that lead mothers/fathers refer the children to the promoter (working together with the HSA), who in turn would fill out the referral form and get them to the appropriate services. After release back to the community (by the health facility), lead mothers/fathers will follow-up and report on their progress back to Care Group meetings. The referral form (that was sent back to the household after release from the health facility) will be followed-up by the lead mother/father, for presentation to the HSA.

TASK 4: ENHANCE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR EXECUTION OF NUTRITION ACTIVITIES

All of the nutrition efforts being done under FtF-INVC are consistent with GoM draft National Nutrition Policy and Strategic Plan (2013-2018) under the Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS (DNHA). The promoted behaviors are also consistent with the GoM's commitment to the Global SUN Movement and Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) tools. The efforts are also in line with WALA and Save the Children Care Group Model which has been implemented in some districts in Malawi and proved to be effective in promoting nutrition behaviours. All care group sessions under the project also utilize the adapted GoM counseling cards on optimal nutrition behaviors. All these efforts ensure that FtF-INVC efforts are in line with GoM initiatives.

Sub-Task 4.1: Create demand, village ownership of improved maternal/child nutrition (VHC/VDC):

In FY15, FtF-INVC will increase the focus on creating community demand for health services. The village health committee (VHC), a government structure which meets at group village headman level has been identified as an ideal counterpart to the FtF-INVC care groups. In FY14, FtF-INVC (through Nkhoma Hospital) learned that the functionality of the VHCs is variable, and in some cases they may not exist at all. In FY15, the project plans to mentor VHCs on how to facilitate a care group session, how to monitor lead mother/father activities, how to supervise data collection and reporting. In communities without functioning VHCs, the project will work with village development committee (VDCs) to build ownership of the nutrition efforts. Quarterly meetings will be conducted (depending on the functionality of each VHC) in each GAC/cluster (meaning one meeting per quarter per promoter). Additionally, FtF-INVC intends to train functional VHCs in the basics of the care group concept, governance using the program participatory monitoring and evaluation (PPME) technique. The

governance training using the PPME technique acts to create community demand for health resources. The project will develop a simple tool to evaluate the functionality of the VHCs and from there, Nutrition Assistants (in collaboration with HSAs and promoters) will use this tool to assess FtF-INVC's role in working with the VHCs. All these efforts will be directed at engaging VHCs to oversee and hold accountable the care groups in their villages for improved maternal and child nutrition.

In FY14, FtF-INVC worked with Village Development Committees (VDCs). The project engaged VDCs as they are a community development platform, and in addition, they provide oversight to the VHCs. VDCs were oriented on project activities in all intervention areas. In FY15, the project will continue to work (through training and engaging them in supervision) with VDCs so that they become effective monitoring mechanism for VHC for the care group activities at village and group village headman level. The engagement of the VHCs and VDCs will ensure sustainability of FtF-INVC activities.

Currently, FtF-INVC has a total of 173 promoters (153 in the expanded districts of Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi; and 120 in Lilongwe and Mchinji). These promoters are working on voluntary basis, they only incentives like bicycles, a piece of two (2) *zitenje* (wrapper) and a golf shirt each. In order to further motivate them and strengthen their performance and realize quality results, in FY15, FtF-INVC will start paying its promoters a monthly stipend of approximately MK20, 000 each, based on the number of Care Groups being assisted.. This proposed remuneration is meant to assist promoters have some money which they can use for communication and bicycle maintenance, two items which they struggle with. The funds for promoters' stipend shall be managed by the respective District Nutrition Coordinators and Human Resources and Administration Section of FtF-INVC. Each promoter will still be responsible for a minimum of 3 care groups. FtF-INVC does not intend to substantially increase the number of care groups per promoters as it does not want to compromise with quality work as demand for each promoters in terms of reporting and supervision is already huge in our case. The payment will be made to the promoter upon submission of monthly consolidated report and future plan of activities. Promoters will dully sign acknowledging receipt of the cash/stipend. The implementation of this initiative will commence in the third quarter (May 2015) to allow enough time for consultation with USAID; as well as thorough sensitization with promoters in terms of paying modalities and possible implications and how such implication could be addressed. Any future revision of the stipend will be done in consultation with USAID.

Sub-Task 4.2: Conduct Supportive Supervision, Mentoring and Coaching of Partners:

FtF-INVC will continue to conduct supportive supervision, mentoring and coaching of implementing partners. Partners are the key to the sustainability of skills and results, and it is necessary to continue mentoring them to strengthen their technical structures for continued implementation. Nkhoma will continue to be supported with skills on nutrition issues including care group management. Pakachere will continue to be supported with skills in SBCC, theatre for development, and message development so that they apply the knowledge and skills gained when implementing the project at community level. Through a mentorship approach, all partner management will be continually trained in effective management, procurement, expense reports including liquidation, effective supervision and monitoring of field staff. These efforts will happen as often as necessary, at a minimum of one per month.

In turn, Nkhoma Hospital and Pakachere (including FtF-INVC field staff in the expansion districts) are expected to continue to supervise, mentor and coach promoters and lead mothers. The coaching and mentoring in this sense will involve planning, implementing and monitoring together with promoters and lead mothers/father through practical sessions to ensure hands-on knowledge and skills transfer. For example, Pakachere will continue to mentor drama members in theatre for development (script development, messaging, casting, interactive theatre, video documentaries and how to get feedback after performance).

Sub-Task 4.3: Improve coordination between agriculture and nutrition

As part of facilitating effective integration of nutrition in value chains, FtF-INVC plans to address integration at various levels (project, field and care group level).

At project level, FtF-INVC will facilitate the formation of a Nutrition Integration Working Group (TWG) as a platform to advocate for and support agriculture agents in the field to include nutrition-related information in agriculture activities. e.g. during agriculture trainings and extension services for farmers associations, GACs, and clusters/clubs. The TWG will be composed of agriculture and nutrition technical staff, partner organization staff, government workers from both nutrition and agriculture, and other USAID implementing partners. It is expected that this will enable consistent source of agriculture information and linkage in the nutrition-oriented care groups, and vice versa. The group will be meeting quarterly, and is planned to start early April 2015.

To facilitate integration at field level, FtF-INVC Nutrition Specialists will develop a plan for regular contact between Nutrition Assistants, implementing partners' extension staff (AFOs and FOFs), government agents (HSAs and AEDOs), promoters and lead mothers/fathers. A plan for meetings between promoters and lead farmers (and/or senior promoters and senior lead farmers) will also be developed, initially mapping out the most likely pairs according to the geographic and catchment overlap, then encouraging them to meet regularly to share information. These meetings are to occur monthly after the development of the plan, and will commence in March of FY15.

Another level of integration will occur at the Care Group level. FtF-INVC strongly believes that the centerpiece of the project link between agriculture and nutrition at field level has been, and will continue to be the promoters. In 2014, a majority of promoters in all five districts were registered members of NASFAM and FUM. While FtF-INVC is actively promoting membership in these clubs, it has also been noted that some members are taking the initiative to join on their own, a natural strengthening of the integration between value chains and nutrition. These two mechanisms will markedly improve integration, and members will be linked to training on value addition, and business skills on value added products. Joint cooking demonstrations and agriculture fairs (known as FtF-INVC fairs) will be organized to showcase the link between value chains promoted under the project and associated groundnut and soy bean products as part of value addition. The objective of the increased focus on integration is to empower communities to grow, prepare, and purchase nutritious foods such as legumes, fruits, vegetables, and animal proteins (fish, meat, and milk).

A further element designed to strengthen coordination between agriculture and nutrition will be implementation of backyard gardens. FtF-INVC promoters will rely on AEDOs, lead farmers, partner field extension workers for technical assistance in backyard garden establishment and management. In FY 15, AEDOs will be invited by promoters to instruct lead mothers/fathers on backyard garden establishment and management (in all five districts). Building on best practices learned under the WALA project, FtF-INVC has noted that the presence of backyard gardens has increased household income through sale of the vegetables. This in turn has helped households to save money which they can use to buy other nutritious foods, particularly in the dry season. FtF-INVC will source existing agriculture and nutrition related manuals and guidelines from other partner organizations and adapt them for use. These initiatives will impart knowledge and skills to both care group members and farmers on food production, value addition and consumption.

Sub-task 4.4: Enhance Collaboration with Government and Other USAID Implementing Partners

As stated above, FtF-INVC activities are conducted in line with existing GoM policies, strategies, procedures, and guidelines. FtF-INVC makes every effort to collaborate with government at all levels. In FY15, FtF-INVC will continue to participate in the National Nutrition Committee and various Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings that fall under this committee. Additionally, FtF-INVC will participate in all relevant Government national Nutritional Task Force meetings e.g. Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) and Micronutrient. FtF-INVC will also be participating in the quarterly National SBCC TWG meetings to share and learn more about SBCC issues that could be applied in the project. FtF-INVC utilizes these meetings as a

platform for sharing, and learning about new government guidelines, and how best to coordinate with other government sectors for effective implementation of the planned interventions.

FtF-INVC will also coordinate district level meetings, with district councils and district counterparts from MoH, DNHA, MoAFS, District Executive Committee (DEC), the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Gender and Community Development, and the Ministry of Information and Civic Education (MoICE) to ensure that FtF-INVC activities are in line with District Development Plans. In FY15, FtF-INVC district teams (District Nutrition Coordinators and Nutrition Assistants) intend to meet with government counterparts on a monthly basis to share field experiences on what is working or not and find solutions. In FY15, FtF-INVC will support and work with District Nutrition Coordination Committee (DNCC) as one of the key entry points for the project collaboration with GoM on nutrition issues. On this point, FtF-INVC will train and give refresher trainings (at least once annually) to various government extension workers, including HSAs and AEDOs on the care group concept, SUN and ENA, and food processing and utilization. To facilitate sharing of experiences and at the same time ensure quality of nutrition interventions on integration, FtF-INVC will conduct joint supervision in the communities with DHMT, DADO, Assistant Environmental Health Officers (AEHOs), AEDO and HSAs during Child Health Days, Growth Monitoring Day, World Food Day, World Breast Feeding Week, Global Hand Washing Day and other field activities to care groups.

Sub-Task 4.5: Collaborate with USAID funded partners and other key stakeholders implementing nutrition interventions

FtF-INVC is actively involved in the USAID's promoted co-location, collaboration and coordination ('3-C') efforts with a special emphasis on the surge districts of Balaka, Machinga, and Lilongwe rural.

Following series of the meetings held with various partners in FY14, coordination will intensify in FY2015. FtF-INVC will initiate joint stakeholder meetings, especially with USAID funded partners working in the same zone of influence (Lilongwe, Mchinji, Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi districts) with deliberate focus in the surge districts of Lilongwe rural, Balaka and Machinga.

FtF-INVC will work closely with the Project Concern International (PCI) implemented Njira project and hold quarterly meetings to share information regarding geographic coverage of nutrition interventions, to gain information on their VSL approach, and to learn about their unique approach to the care group model. PCI is interested in our integration approach, as they are involved in similar value chain work. The meetings will eliminate any overlap, maximize opportunities for collaboration, and address specific issues related to the lead mother/father structure.

A 2015 Work plan has been developed with Baylor-International Pediatrics AIDS Initiative (BIPAI) to utilize their 'expert clients' (under the Tingathe Project) to deliver community health talks on HIV and AIDS using care group structures (promoters and lead mothers/fathers). BIPAI will in turn utilize care group (promoters and lead mothers/fathers) to delivery nutrition education e.g. nutrition dense diet as a therapy to people living with HIV (PLHIV).

FtF-INVC will collaborate with CIP, where CIP will distribute their improved OFSP vines utilizing the Care Group Model. FtF-INVC field staff in conjunction with the CIP team will identify around 700 beneficiaries in each district of Lilongwe and Balaka; and care groups will promote the consumption of OFSP as a part of messaging on improved dietary diversity.

Meetings with SSDI will be held early FY15 focusing on geographic coverage of care group activities especially in Balaka, Machinga, and Mangochi where is high potential for overlap. Areas of overlap will be identified and an agreement be made to determine where each organization will work, and to identify areas for collaborative work. Beneficiary lists will be shared to facilitate this process.

Although the Malawi Bridge II Project has come to an end, in FY14 FtF-INVC identified materials (Hope Kits and HIV prevention manuals) that will be used to improve delivery of HIV prevention messaging to care groups. In FY15, FtF-INVC will source and print these materials for distribution to care groups (promoter level). Additionally, FtF-INVC will continue to apply lessons learnt from the recently closed WALA Project.

TABLE : COMPONENT 3: TASKS, SUB-TASKS AND ACTIVITIES MATRIX

Component 3 Activities	Key partner(s)						
		Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan-Mar 2015	Apr-Jun 2015	Jul-Sep 2015
→Activity 1.1.1 Conduct spot survey to determine adoption of nutrition behaviors	FtF-INVC						
→ Activity 1.1.2: Conduct formative research on key nutrition behaviors in the expanded districts of, Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi	Pakachere, The Story Workshop						
→ Activity 1.1.3: Conduct positive deviance inquires (PDIs) on nutrition surveillance to detect change in the 15 nutrition behaviors							
→Activity 1.1.4: Conduct PDIs specifically to spot men who participate in care group activities and use them as role models in group discussions (father to father)							
→ Activity 1.1.5 : Conduct audience reception assessments on communication channels used under the project to assess their effectiveness							
→Activity 1.1.6 Hold workshop to develop tailor made messages and materials to address issues identified in spot surveys, PDIs, and formative research							
→ Activity 1.1.7: Hold quarterly meetings with nutrition and agriculture value chain partners to inform SBCC strategy and guide intervention design							
Sub-task 1.2 Revise SBCC strategy							
→ Activity 1.2.1 Hold workshop with all partners to revised the strategy							
Sub-task 1.3: Implement mass media, community theatre approaches to nutrition SBCC							
→ Activity 1.3.1: Develop creative briefs to support mass media, justifying any new media options, e.g. print	Pakachere, The Story Workshop						
→ Activity1.3.2: Produce radio programs (up to 30 minutes duration), including theme of engaging men to improve child nutrition whether possible							
Activity 1.2.3 Produce radio programs on integrating nutrition in agriculture value chains.							
→ Activity1.3.4: Air radio programs							
→ Activity 1.3.5: Produce nutrition radio jingles and PSAs including theme of engaging men to improve child nutrition whether possible							
→ Activity 1.3.6: Air nutrition radio jingles/PSAs							
→ Activity 1.3.7: Conduct community mobilization sessions to establish community-based Theatre groups in the expanded districts of Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi							

Component 3 Activities	Key partner(s)						
		Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan-Mar 2015	Apr-Jun 2015	Jul-Sep 2015
→ 1.3.8: Activity: Train community-based theatre groups in the expanded districts of Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi on Theatre for Development and nutrition, including theme of engaging men to improve child nutrition whether possible							
→ Activity 1.3.9: Conduct refresher training for community-based theatre groups in 5 districts							
→ Activity 1.3.10: Conduct Theatre performances in all the 5 districts							
→ Activity 1.3.11: Produce short video clip/documentary on FtF-INVC while focusing on integration and VLS	Pakachere						
→ Activity 1.3.12: Produce/ print materials (e.g. posters) based on the results of PDIs to reinforce messages disseminated through mass media and care groups							
→ Activity 1.1.13: Distribute printed materials	Pakachere						
Sub-task 2.1: Facilitate and Promote Cultivation of high nutritive value crops (Backyard Gardens)							
→ Activity 2.1.1: Promote establishment of backyard gardens for production of indigenous vegetables	Nkhoma, Pakachere, MoH						
→ Activity 2.1.2: Conduct spot survey to assess effectiveness of backyard gardens	FtF-INVC, Nkhoma						
→ Activity 2.1.2: Conduct review meeting on the results of an assessment of backyard gardens to determine their effect on diversifying diets from production and on improved livelihood through lower vegetable expenditures, including seasonality, and decide on future garden support	Nkhoma, Pakachere						
Sub-task 2.2: Facilitate Household Food Processing and Storage							
→ Activity 2.2.1: Train FtF-INVC and Nkhoma staff on food processing, utilization and storage	FtF-INVC, Nkhoma						
→ Activity 2.2.1: Orient AEDOs in household food processing, including soya beans and groundnuts	Nkhoma, FtF-INVC						
→ Activity 2.2.2: Orient HSAs in household food processing, including soya beans and groundnuts							
→ Activity 2.2.3: Train community HIV and AIDS support groups in food processing and utilization (SUN and ENA) in all 5 districts.							
→ Activity 2.2.4: Train and do refresher training of district coordinators, nutrition assistants and community promoters in household food processing, including soya beans and groundnuts to ensure the reduction of aflatoxin in value chain products							
→ Activity 2.2.5: Conduct community household food processing and storage demonstrations (monthly by promoter to CGVs, quarterly by CGVs to care group clusters)							

Component 3 Activities	Key partner(s)						
		Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan-Mar 2015	Apr-Jun 2015	Jul-Sep 2015
→ Activity 2.2.6: Promote energy saving cooking technologies necessary for use in food processing							
Sub-task 3.1: Conduct community-based Growth Monitoring and Promotion							
→ Activity 3.1.1: Train district coordinators, nutrition assistants, promoters, AEDOs, AEDCs, CDAs, lead farmers, GAC chairs and CGVs in Essential Nutrition Actions (ENA) and Scaling up Nutrition (SUN)	Nkhoma, FtF-INVC						
→Activity 3.1.2: Review and adapt referral forms for growth monitoring	Nkhoma, FtF-INVC						
→Activity 3.1.3: Train promoters, CGVs, AEDOs, growth monitoring volunteers and HSAs in CMAM areas in growth monitoring							
→ Activity 3.1.4: Conduct community-based growth monitoring sessions							
→ Activity 3.1.5 Conduct community complementary feeding and learning sessions (Thanzi) sessions							
→Activity 3.1.6: Procure and distribute salter (B48+B49 baby weighing) scales, height boards and community growth monitoring charts for growth monitoring							
→ Activity 3.1.7: Distribute salter (baby weighing) scales, height boards and community growth monitoring charts							
à Activity 3.1.8:Adapt community growth monitoring chart from Feed the Children							
→ Activity 3.1.10: Refer malnourished children for higher level management, and conduct follow-up in care groups							
Sub-task 3.2: Promote vitamin A supplementation and de-worming							
→ Activity 3.2.1: Support child health days campaigns in all 5 districts							
→Activity 3.2.2 Conduct theatre performances at sites where Child Health Day campaigns is done							
→Activity 3.2.3: Distribute nutrition and health education materials at sites where child health day campaigns are conducted							
Activity 3.2.2 Promoters refer all Care Group members to participate in CHD							
Sub-task 3.3: Support and strengthen community system for referring sick and malnourished children to health facilities							
→ Activity 3.3.1: Review and adapt referral form from MoH and other nutrition stakeholders							
→ Activity 3.3.2: Conduct monthly meetings with support groups and refer any nutrition related cases by nutrition assistants in Tingathe areas.							

Component 3 Activities	Key partner(s)						
		Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan-Mar 2015	Apr-Jun 2015	Jul-Sep 2015
Sub-task 4.1: Create demand for and village ownership of improved maternal and child nutrition (VHC and VDC) through care group activities							
→ Activity 4.1.1: Meet community leaders/VDC to introduce and explain the role of the Care Group Model and to understand the role of the VHC	Nkhoma, IPs, FtF-INV						
→ Activity 4.1.2: Develop tool to assess the functionality of VHCs							
Activity 4.1.3 Assess the VHCs (NA, HSA and promoter)							
Activity 4.1.4 Train functional VHC in care group concepts and governance							
→ Activity 4.1.4: Conduct quarterly review meetings to report care group progress and discuss continued community support and coordination							
→ Activity 4.1.5: Continue to register care group cluster members and identify CGVs in Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi as well as in the impact evaluation areas in Lilongwe and Mchinji and manage drop outs in all 5 districts	Nkhoma, NASAFAM, FUM						
→ Activity 4.1.6 Procure materials (bicycles, bags, t-shirts, branded materials, raincoats, cell phones and airtime) to support CG activities in the expanded districts of Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi and impact evaluation areas of Lilongwe and Mchinji	Nkhoma						
→Activity 4.1.7: Review, adapt, translate and print training materials for SUN/ENA, Food Processing, CMAM and Recipe Book							
→ Activity 4.1.8: Train and give refresher training to HSAs, AEDOs , CDAs and promoters on the care group concept and SBCC approaches (dialogue, negotiation, inter-personal communication and motivational interviews with CGVs)	Pakachere						
→Train VDC and VHC committee members on care group activities and lobby for the support for promoters and lead mothers							
Sub-task 4.2: Conduct Supportive Supervision, Mentoring and Coaching of Partners							
→ Activity 4.2.1: Nutrition Specialist conduct monthly mentorship meetings with partners	Nkhoma, The Story Workshop, Pakachere						
Activity 4.2.2 Nutrition Partners conduct quarterly joint supervisions visits at community theatre							
Activity 4.2.3 Conduct quarterly review meetings with all nutrition staff (DNCs, NAs, promoters and lead mothers/fathers)							
→ Activity 4.2.4: Create mentoring and supportive supervision tools							

Component 3 Activities	Key partner(s)						
		Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan-Mar 2015	Apr-Jun 2015	Jul-Sep 2015
Sub-task 4.3: Improve coordination between agriculture and nutrition							
→ Activity 4.3.1: Establish INVC Nutrition Integration working group to direct and guide nutrition integration with agriculture							
→ Activity 4.3.2: Develop nutrition-related agriculture messages and implementation plans across FTF-INVC components with calendar and deliverables	Pakachere, Story Workshop						
→ Activity 4.3.3: Hold quarterly joint cooking demonstration and agriculture fair (known as INVC fair)	NASAFAM, FUM						
→ Activity 4.3.4: Map out activities and meetings to facilitate regular points of contact between lead farmers and promoters and other points along the agriculture and nutrition hierarchies	INVC Nutrition Integration Working Group						
→ Activity 4.3.5 Hold quarterly meetings between Nutrition Assistants and Agriculture field staff							
→ Activity 4.3.6 Conduct monthly meetings between promoters and lead farmers (Supervised by NAs and AFOs)							
→ Source and share existing relevant manuals and guidelines on nutrition, agriculture							
Sub-task 4.4 Collaborate with Government							
Activity 4.4.1 Hold technical working group meetings with partners	FtF-INVC and partners						
Activity 4.4.2 Train government extensions workers (HSAs and AEDOs) Care Groups concept, SUN/ENA and Food Processing							
Activity 4.4.3 Attend monthly district level nutrition meetings hosted by GoM							
Sub-task 4.5: Collaborate with other USAID implementing partners on integration of nutrition in agriculture value chains							
→ Activity 4.5.1: Mapping USAID funded partners and any other working on HIV and AIDS	Other USAID IPs, FtF-INVC						
→ Activity 4.5.2: Conduct health talks to care groups with support from Baylor (Tingathe Project)	Other USAID IPs, FtF-INVC						
Activity 4.5.3 Distribute OSP vines with assistance of CIP							
Activity 4.5.4 Source and print HIV education materials originally produced by Malawi Bridge II Project							
Activity 4.5.5 Meet with SSDI to agree upon designated areas for nutrition interventions							
→ Activity 1.2.1: Register care group cluster members and identify CGVs in Balaka, Machinga and Mangochi as well as in the impact evaluation areas in Lilongwe and Balaka and manage drop outs in all 5 districts	Nkhoma, NASAFAM, FUM						

Component 3 Activities	Key partner(s)						
		Oct 2014	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Jan-Mar 2015	Apr-Jun 2015	Jul-Sep 2015
→ Activity 1.2.2 Procure materials (bicycles, bags, t-shirts, branded materials, raincoats, cell phones and airtime) to support CG activities in the expanded districts and impact evaluation areas	Nkhoma						
→Activity 1.2.3: Review, adapt, translate and print training materials for SUN/ENA, Food Processing, CMAM and Recipe Book.							
→ Activity1.2.4: Train and give refresher training to HSAs, AEDOs , CDAs and promoters on the care group concept and SBCC approaches (dialogue, negotiation, inter-personal communication and motivational interviews with CGVs)	Pakachere						

COMPONENT 4: DEVELOPING LOCAL “INSTITUTIONAL” CAPACITY FY2015 ANNUAL WORKPLAN

INTRODUCTION

FtF-INVC envisions significant capacity development progress in FY2015 at the national, district, local and household levels. Based on lessons learned over the two previous fiscal years, this work plan builds on adjustments made in FY2014 that increased INVC staff engagement, oversight, and monitoring of capacity building efforts of its partners. FtF-INVC has realized that a systematic approach to address systemic capacity gaps of partners is the most valuable way to attain sustainable organizational capacity development of partners. This approach requires INVC involvement in process facilitations like training, coaching and mentoring until partners have fully embraced change in their organizations’ governance, strategic and operational systems. These efforts are beginning to pay off as most partners have “turned a corner” in that they understand, and more importantly, feel a sense of ownership of the need to build targeted organizational capacity in order to improve in performance. This willingness to learn and grow, combined with more intensive engagement and oversight from INVC, will result in real progress building our partners’ governance, financial, and programmatic capabilities as they learn to demand staff accountability and to deliver meaningful results in a consistent and sustainable manner.

Partner capabilities remain below what was initially projected, especially in administration, project and financial management and procurement. USAID compliance regulations are more stringent than most other donor requirements that support same partners which has resulted in many IP’s needing to adapt and adjust their systems, policies. Procedures, control mechanisms and staffing to improve operational compliance and technical excellence. Key lessons learned explain that situation and inform the FY2015 plan.

- First, guidelines for working with USAID projects need to be clearly and specifically documented for partners for all aspects of doing business (vehicle use, reconciliations, per-diem, human resources, etc.). A single training is not enough. There needs to be more OJT (on the job) oriented.
- Second, processes need to be developed with milestones for handling reconciliations so that we are working with partners in a more transparent way. This way partners know what the status is of a given set of paperwork.
- Third, frequent feedback needs to be provided to partners in the form of periodic evaluations to set partner specific guidelines and expectations. Where are they on a continuum of development and qualification for USAID direct financing?
- Fourth, partner employees need clear job descriptions and duties so that expectations of them are set up front and not after they go astray. They need to have a sense of "ownership" or responsibility
- Fifth, many partners are not familiar with Monitoring and Evaluation, especially the rigorous M&E systems required by Feed the Future projects. More up front work is needed at the beginning of the project to be sure that systems are set up so that data is correctly captured and reported
- Sixth, partner systems need to be evaluated and improved so that performance is not dependent upon a certain individual
- Seventh, frequent staff turn-over at partner organizations diluted the capacity building efforts as trained staff members often left for other organizations after being trained.

Beginning in FY2014 and based on these lessons learned, INVC adjusted its capacity building approach to more directly engage in Partner systemic capacity gaps rather than individual staff capacity gaps. This was guided by the results of the Organizational Capacity Assessment, using OCAT methodology, which INVC conducted. Recognizing that organizational development is a process and not an event, the Organizational Capacity Assessment tool (OCAT) was deployed and resulted in the creation of concrete action plans that provide organizations with a clear organizational development road map. After a second OCAT Assessment was completed in September 2014, INVC has been collaborating with each partner on the implementation of OCAT

Action Plans by means of providing targeted capacity building support for identified gaps within the specific partners.

In certain instances, INVC provides STTA with specific expertise to assist in strengthening partners' capacity. A strategic change management process deals with behavior and culture change within an organization and hence takes time to become fully operationalized and, eventually "mainstreamed."

The use of OCAT will be repeated on an annual basis as a capacity building monitoring and evaluation tool. This FY2015 Work Plan extends INVC's direct engagement in conducting OCA to monitor level of capacity development over time and determine necessary adjustments where necessary. INVC will, in FY2015, complement the OCAT methodology with the Organizational Performance Index (OPI) tool during the 3rd OCA planned for August/September 2015 in order to further understand the capacity building outcomes like partners' efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability as a result of INVC support. FtF-INVC will, in FY2015, devise and implement a system for strengthening and graduating local partners to status that would allow them to receive USAID direct awards before the end of the programme and also, importantly, assist them improve their capacity to deliver quality services to their customer base. This will, among others, include strengthening governance, financial and programmatic accountability systems of the partners. FtF-INVC will facilitate the implementation of the capacity building action plans through a step-wise cascaded approach targeting all levels of the organization. INVC will, in FY15, progressively, apply the adapted voucher reimbursement system in its grants approach to ensure that grantees are being graduated to independent status that would allow them to receive USAID funds directly at the end of the project.

VISION & STRATEGIC APPROACH

FtF-INVC local capacity development vision and strategy is to strengthen partners' systems to improve organizational performance, guided by our IP's priorities, organizational needs and performance assessments. FtF-INVC will continue using the OCAT to identify partner organization's strengths and weaknesses. However, in FY2015, OCAT assessment determinations will be complemented using the Organizational Performance Index (OPI) methodology in order to capture both the output as well as outcome of partner capacity development investments.

By the end of FY 15, implementing partner field staff at the district level will be conversant in and effectively using field-based financial documentation procedures, as well as M&E systems for data collection and reporting. To achieve this, FtF-INVC will provide training to field-level staff (financial and technical respectively) together with the national staff so that there is harmonization of expected compliance messages.

Local farmer associations and cooperatives will be registered with the Ministry of Trade, allowing them to operate as businesses (SMEs). This official registration will allow them to enter into contracts (e.g. forward selling contracts or warehouse receipts) with the Agricultural Commodity Exchange (ACE) for Africa and Auction Holdings Commodity Exchange (AHCX). The registrations will be facilitated by the IPs with FtF-INVC providing oversight support. This activity will be coordinated by the INVC Value Chain Competitiveness team as a way of improving institutional capacity development for increased sustainable agricultural sector productivity. Local Farmer Associations will have Business Plans that will include growing their organization and collectively marketing their member's products. They will be engaging business development service (BDS) providers to assist in developing services prioritized by their membership, in improving governance and business management capabilities and in collective aggregation and marketing of their members' products.

FtF-INVC will facilitate linkage of CISANET to FUM's MAPS programme to enable collaboration and coordination of the two partners in delivery of policy and advocacy programmes. FtF-INVC will also collaborate with the USAID-STEPS project on policy and advocacy capacity building needs of implementing partners we hold in common (NASFAM and FUM).

FtF-INVC will strengthen the capacity of local systems of local District government to coordinate, plan and deliver agriculture and nutrition services. INVC will, on a quarterly basis, share with local district councils' updates on agriculture and nutrition programs and plans for activities taking place in the districts during the next quarter. FtF-INVC will coordinate its efforts through the development of joint intervention/ work plans of the District Agriculture Development office and the District Health Office, especially focusing on the ASWAP activities to leverage resources and provide needed capacity support to district agriculture and health field staff.

Finally, as a direct result of this work plan, households and farmers will have developed more effective production, marketing and business skills and be practicing more effective nutritional behaviors. As part of enhancing collaboration, the INVC Capacity Building, Agricultural Productivity and Nutrition teams will assist Care Group Promoters to collaborate with Lead Farmers in their communities to integrate healthy behavior and better child nutrition messages in agricultural training, such as “sell some/save some/invest some” messages. In general, beneficiary households will be better enabled for decision-making in agriculture production, marketing and nutrition.

Two strategic pillars of this work plan approach have been mentioned: creating leverage and building on our partners' willingness to take ownership and engage in their own capacity building. Through FY15, there will be a sustained engagement of FtF-INVC staff in collaborating and mentoring partner IP's in the planning and execution of their institutional and organizational capacity development. Another pillar of the approach is to ensure that partners embrace and expand their use of locally available capacity building resources from within and outside of their organizations. This work plan details how the Project is committed to facilitating, supporting, and in some cases directing the use of STTA and private sector service providers (eg. business and technical service providers) in supporting partner capacity building initiatives.

SUMMARY OF TASKS AND SUB-TASKS

In FY2015, INVC will carry out four major tasks in achieving its capacity building outcomes. These tasks address all categories of partners and beneficiaries who are critical for development of the value chain: IPs, local government, farmer associations, private sector technical/business service providers, and beneficiary households.

TASK 1 DEVELOPING MALAWI'S CAPACITY GOING FORWARD

Sub-Task 1.1: Build organizational capacity of INVC Grantees:

This task will continue to focus on strengthening the overall capacity and structure of the FtF-INVC implementing partners in governance, strategic and operational systems. The main emphasis will be placed on organizational development systems to address systemic capacity gaps and structures rather than just training individual staff from partner organizations. FtF-INVC will in FY2015:

- Ensure that all the seven partners have M&E Officers in their organizations by fostering partners' linkages to other potential donor agencies
- Work with partner M&E staff to develop partner M&E plans and data improvement management plans
- Continue assisting partners in terms of methodologies and best practices in data collection and reporting
- Regularly conduct data quality checks and provide assistance to ensure quality data are being collected and reported quarterly. Data reporting will be tied to reimbursement/disbursements to ensure that implementing partners pay attention to importance of data collection and reporting.
- Improve IP planning, budgeting, and materials/logistics management
- Augment IP human resource management to ensure that procedures, capacitation and mentoring systems are operational and effective

- Advance IPs ability to manage resources in order to effectively and efficiently implement quality technical interventions responding to the priority needs of INVC project beneficiaries
- Delegate increased management and implementation responsibility to its local partners by implementing partner self-internal DQAs, and staff salaries and operational cost-sharing arrangements.

Some organizations (such as CISANET and Nkhoma Hospital) required their strategic plans reviewed as per their organizational requirements. FtF-INVC will offer technical and financial support to ensure that partners requiring assistance will have their strategic plans reviewed to reflect the organizations' overall direction and plans for attaining organizational efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.

Sub-Task 1.2: Improve Organizational Capacity to Manage Grants:

FtF-INVC partners still have capacity gaps in compliance with USAID regulations on financial management (following proper procurement procedures and the expense justification, accounting, record keeping, receipting, petty cash and bank account management and reconciliations, financial management and control systems) and reporting particularly with administrative and procurement systems that appear to differ and be more rigorous than Malawian and most other external donor requirements. INVC will continue with the strengthening of the implementing partners on the administrative aspects of grants/program management including: time management, vehicle use policies, inventory and property management, segregation of duties, internal control measures . This subtask will also, in addition to addressing the systems, in some cases, tackle the individual staff capacity within key departments of the IPs through coaching and mentoring to ensure smooth flow of administrative requirements and responsibilities.

The following table details key action items planned by INVC IP as a result of the FY 2014 OCA assessment.

Table 1: Indicative OCA-based Partner capacity building plans – FY15

Partner Organization	Capacity dimension	Capacity Gaps	Planned Actions	Target Date
CISANET	HR; Financial Management; Project Performance Management	Staffing levels leading to poor financial reporting & quality assurance in implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit Director of Finance & Administration • Recruit M&E Officer 	March 2015
	Organizational Management	No business Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Mid-term strategic plan review • Develop Business Plan 	March 2015
NKHOMA Hospital	Organizational Management	Strategic plan expired in 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new Strategic Plan 	March. 2015
	Human Resources Management; Project Performance Management	Most nutrition Coordinators and Assistants positions vacation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit NAs and Coordinators 	Dec. 2014
	Project Performance Management	No M&E Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill the position 	Feb. 2015
ACE	Governance	Inactive Board of Directors – irregular meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO to present OCA findings to the Board for attention 	Feb. 2014.
	Financial Management	Financial procedures between ACE Ltd and ACE Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate ACE Ltd & Trust in SAGE Guideline 	March 2015
	Administration	No guidelines/policy for Branding and fixed assets control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines/policy drafted 	Feb. 2015
Dedza CADECOM	Project Performance Management	Project implementation and data quality control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire M&E Officer 	Dec. 2014
	Administration	No policies on cost-share, branding and Volunteers/Interns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policies/guidelines and incorporate into Human Resources/administration. Manual 	Feb. 2015
NASFAM	Organizational Management & Governance;	Redirecting NASFAM towards its core identity – which is to be more business oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with the Transformation Change Process of NASFAM • Identify guiding coalition sub- 	December 2015

			teams	
PAKACHERE	Project Performance Management	Project implementation and data quality control	• Hire M&E Officer	March 2015
	Financial Management	Inconsistency in adherence to financial reporting	• Tighten compliance procedures	March 2015
FUM	Human Resource Management	Annual staff salary increments not based on annual appraisals	• Adopt a performance based systems for annual increments	Jan. 2015
	Project Performance Management	Weak M&E system	• Develop and institutionalize feedback mechanisms for client satisfaction	March. 2014
	Financial Management	No cost share policy	• Develop cost-share policy	April. 2015

General OCA-related INVC supported Capacity Building Plans for FY15

Capacity Gap	Partner(s)	Planned activity	Month(s)
Expired Strategic Plan	Nkhoma	Support development of Strategic Plan	Feb. – March' 15
Strategic Plan reached mid-term; No Business Plan	CISANET	Support mid-term review of Strategic Plan and development of Business Plan	Dec.' 14-Feb.' 15
Inadequate skill in procurement compliance of USAID	All	Organize training in Procurement	March' 15
Inadequate skills in field level financial documentation and reporting	All	Conduct training for field technical and finance staff	April/May' 15
Poor technical reporting	All	Orient M&E Officers and Field staff in Work planning, M&E and Technical Reporting	March-April' 15
Lack of Business Plan to support the organization's strategies and core identity	NASFAM	Support NASFAM to develop its business plan	April/May' 15
Weak change management systems	NASFAM	Support NASFAM Transformation Change Process	March-August' 15
Weak administrative systems e.g. timesheets, vehicle use, branding/marketing policies, cost-sharing policies etc.	All	Follow-up and mentor in developing the policies	May 2015

TASK 2 ADVANCE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WITHIN VALUE CHAINS

Sub-Task 2.1: Deliver new technologies and management practices to district level partner staff:

This subtask is designed to ensure that national level implementing partners are, delivering INVC-promoted appropriate technologies and management practices to district level staff such as IPC coordinators, ABMs, DFOs, and AFOs who serve as field staff to IPs. Past experience has demonstrated that IPs need to improve their understanding of value chains, the value chain approach, and integrating nutrition with value chains. They are not systematically transferring knowledge garnered to their field staff. Further, if an IP has attempted to do so, the uptake of the information and the quality of transfer is often not monitored. Follow-up visits and verification that cascaded training has reached smallholders also remain weak within IPs. During FY 15, FtF-INVC will therefore include IP staff, government field staff and lead farmers in the same training events so that the same messages are delivered to all at the same time. FtF-INVC will carry out field monitoring visits together with IP field staff to lead farmers to ensure that the messages reach down to the intended farmer beneficiaries. This sub-task is designed to reinforce the implementation of the delivery and strengthening of the cascading training Lead Farmer/Assistant Lead Farmer extension mechanism.

Sub-Task 2. 2: Build governance and business management capacity of Farmer associations and cooperatives:

This sub-task will target decentralized stakeholders such as farmer associations, cooperatives, district level traders, and agro-dealers. The approach will involve enhancing technical (agriculture and nutrition), organizational and business skills development in support of their priorities, which is to become better providers of member-services, businesses and enterprises (MSMEs/SMEs). This sub-task is intended to focus on the district level players to help them build their organization or business to better serve their membership base and/or clients. INVC will collaborate with Business Development Services Providers in delivering training to these target groups. Indicative training modules include cooperative principles and governance, prioritization of member services, business management tools development, record keeping, inventory control, cash flow and budgeting, contracts and negotiations, decision making, leadership, and cost controls, understanding fixed vs variable costs and their impact on profitability, etc. FtF-INVC will monitor progress in terms of impact of these initiatives through ensuring that the associations that are ready, registered as businesses with Ministry of Trade; are entering into sales contacts with high-level buyers and securing financing from the Financial Institutions for implementing some of the business entities contained in the business plans.

TASK 3 STRENGTHEN INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WITHIN DISTRICT COUNCILS

The development of the FY2015 work plan process included active dialogue with representatives from Balaka, Lilongwe, Machinga (focus districts) and Mangochi (partial focus district) District Councils. The dialogue provided an opportunity for the district council officials (Agriculture and Health) to share their current challenges, explore their immediate priorities, and discuss possible collaboration on their longer term plans in the domains of Agriculture and Health, on both program and policy fronts.

Sub-Task 3.1: Deliver information related to new technologies and management practices to District Councils

In FY2015, the focus will also be placed on strengthening the capacity of district councils for the coordination, planning and implementation of agriculture and nutrition interventions. To ensure that coordination, collaboration and communication remain open and strong with District Councils, FtF-INVC will be inviting district council representatives and other implementing partners to participate in the various technical working groups (TWGs) that are being held with the grantees. Currently, the TWGs that hold regular meetings to discuss operational and capacity issues include: the Agricultural productivity TWG, the Marketing TWG; and the Monitoring & Evaluation TWG. Further, FtF-INVC will also participate in the district council's DEC meetings to share updates on INVC sponsored agriculture and nutrition activities within the districts as well as to coordinate with the district councils' stakeholders to facilitate dialogue on the execution of activities. Additionally, INVC participation in these meetings will engender dialog and help examine any issues constraining the soybean and groundnut value chains as well as nutrition interventions within these value chains, within the communities or at the household level.. FtF-INVC will organize exchange visits for district technical staff and officials to INVC impact sites within the districts to orient them on integration of agriculture and nutrition. FtF-INVC will initiate bi-annual consultative review meetings involving local government, civil society organizations and all important actors from the seven impact districts in order to strengthen collaboration and co-ordination; including targeting the flow of resources to district identified priority interventions.

TASK 4 STRENGTHEN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT WITHIN SERVICE PROVIDERS

Sub-Task 4.1: Facilitate policy review and advocacy support of the value chains:

Early in FY2015, INVC will continue to support CISANET as a channel to focus on policy advocacy and policy issues, identification especially as these relate to soy and groundnut trade associations. However, by Q2, we will begin divesting ourselves of actual work in the policy arena while transitioning needed assistance in these areas either to the MAPS program, principally through collaboration with our IP the Farmer's Union of Malawi (FUM), or with the newly financed STEPS program, whose stated goal is to expand local implementing partner capacity to perform outreach and advocacy. For other, more technical gaps identified along our targeted value

chains INVC will lobby for these issues to be included in more specialized policy platforms championed by structures like IFPRI (the International Food Policy Research Institute) or Michigan State University (MSU).

Sub-Task 4.1a Collaboration with STEPS Project

INVC will work closely with STEPS in strengthening the institutional capacity of local partners. This collaboration will ensure the capacity building efforts of the two projects are complementary and supportive of each other, especially with the four local institutions (NASFAM, FUM, CISANET and Pakachere) that are targeted by both projects. INVC will share OCA reports of the four institutions with STEPS with the view that STEPS customizes its PODA tool accordingly to explore other issues of interest to its programme. In addition, INVC will communicate and share with STEPS any relevant information related to the utilization of local systems in capacity building. INVC and STEPS will, on regular basis, schedule coordination meetings to discuss planned capacity activities and approaches towards partners. INVC will also invite STEPS to the planned OCA activities to be done with the four partners. INVC and STEPS will regularly hold joint capacity strengthening meetings with the local partners to agree on areas for synergy and complementarity. INVC will seek to learn from and share with STEPS regarding capacity development efforts of local organizations in Malawi, especially on issues related to policy, outreach and advocacy.

Sub-Task 4.2: Strengthen and facilitate use of Business Development Service Providers:

Implementing partners such as NASFAM, FUM and CADECOM have tended to veer off their core competencies as they respond to donor needs. In FY2015, INVC will continue to advise IPs to differentiate between core and corollary activities. We will advise them to focus on their core services and to outsource non-core businesses, in such a way that their delivery structure is improved as they become more efficient and effective. Implementing partner staff have been slow to embrace the approach, given their fears of being made redundant as they adopt the use of service providers. FY2015 will continue to demonstrate that outsourcing non key services to external assets will eventually strengthen them as managers and not displace them. INVC will assist IP in performing needs assessments, in developing appropriately tailored Scopes of Work, in developing databases of local and regional firms detailing their technical area specialties and in developing technical procurement solicitations. Additionally, we will advise and mentor our IP on selection, negotiation, contracting and monitoring the accomplishment of the BSP against clearly defined technical deliverables and in defining the necessary follow-on steps to respond to recommendations. INVC M&E staff will assist M&E personnel from our partner IP in evaluating and documenting impact from these interventions. This approach creates linkages, supports and strengthens Malawi's private sector based technical and business service providers.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

INTRODUCTION

The INVC project falls under the Feed the Future Initiative with Malawi being one of Feed the Future's (FtF) 19 priority countries. This ambitious, interagency global initiative's goal is to accelerate inclusive economic growth and improve nutritional status for its beneficiaries. One dynamic of FtF is its increased focus on consistent Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), through which FtF hopes to deliver sustained and accountable commitments for achieving results. This level of accountability and measuring of results requires a robust M&E system and a focus at all levels of project implementation. All the required indicators identified for INVC come from the Feed the Future Handbook of Indicators. In FY15, INVC's M&E team will continue to systematize data collection and reporting through an improved M&E system with an intensified focus on data quality and robust feedback loops to program activities so that these activities may be strengthened to guide the project toward its intended results.

The Data Quality Assessment (DQA), which took place in October 2013 for INVC and its implementing partners, pointed out areas where INVC needed to strengthen its overall M&E system. Since this DQA took place, the project has taken multiple steps to strengthen M&E at all levels of the project, which will continue through 2015. The plan for 2015 starts with the following tasks:

INTERVENTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN DURING FY15

TASK 1: DEVELOP THE PROJECT M&E PLAN

Previously referred to as the PMP, the project intends to revisit its Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan shortly after this work plan is submitted to USAID for approval. This plan was revised last April 2014 and with the new contract modification and extension to October 31, 2016, the INVC project management and M&E teams intend to revisit the project's causal model for all project components. For FY15 each Intermediate Result will be evaluated and interpreted based on the project's intensified focus on gender and on capacity building. New indicators will be added and many will be redefined with a new level of specificity. New indicators and their targets will be documented in the indicator tracking table. The M&E plan will utilize a "learning approach" to facilitate adaptive management as the M&E team disseminates information to various project components. This learning approach to implementation means that the INVC team will mentor whenever possible while implementing M&E activities. It also means that we will ensure that project learnings (lessons learned, success stories and best practices) are disseminated internally within INVC and its partners and externally with USAID partners both in and outside our zone of influence. This plan will be submitted to USAID on February 28, 2015.

TASK 2: IMPROVE DATA QUALITY

Sub-Task 2.1: Improve Data Quality beginning at Field Level: Following the October 2013 USAID DQA's the project M&E team in 2014 implemented several initiatives to improve data quality in the field; starting with the filing system in the EPA/IPC's, templates for electronic data entry, and written guidance utilizing the data gathering and data reporting protocols. In 2015, INVC will revisit these protocols and add additional material such as simplified versions of every PIR that the partner is responsible for. Clear guidance will be given at each level of responsibility so this is clear from the field all the way to the IP headquarters. One task that the project was weak on last year was internal data quality checks. Last year, we put in place the foundation for a good M&E system and this year we will implement a system of mentoring and shadowing to work with field staff so that they know what exactly needs to be done when checking for data quality including transcription errors and beneficiary validation. The M&E team will work with field staff to perform the first two data quality checks and then will supervise the field staff performing a third data quality check. After this, the staff will be expected to do this with minimal supervision. The M&E team will closely follow the completion of action steps that result from these data quality exercises.

Sub-Task 2.2: Internal Data Quality Assessments (DQAs): The INVC M&E team began conducting quarterly internal DQAs in 2014. In 2015 the process will be modified to include a capacity building component whereby the partner M&E officer is accompanied by the INVC M&E Coordinator for the first two internal DQAs (similar to the QC process). The next DQA they participate in will be for a different INVC partner where they take an active role in the DQA. Once this step is completed, they will be expected to begin conducting their own DQAs with supervision from the INVC M&E Coordinator. Completed DQA checklists will be shared with USAID. DQA's will be conducted for each partner every quarter.

The INVC M&E team also plans to cross check or review each other's data so that for example, the NASFAM team looks at samples from Nutrition who then looks at FUM/CADECOM. This will be woven into the DQA process so that periodically one team performs a DQA for another team/implementing partner. This will help facilitate disciplined data gathering and will introduce an element of independence as each team cross checks each other's data.

Sub-task 2.3: Develop Partner Specific Data Quality Improvement Plans: Good data starts at the point of collection, most often at field activity or household-level locations. In 2014, the M&E team uncovered many data quality issues for the partner data. Issues identified during the 2013 USAID DQA and the subsequent internal DQAs will be highlighted in data quality improvement plans for each partner which will spell out the outstanding issue, how it will be solved, who will be responsible and by when. The plans will also show any issues that have been resolved since the 2013 USAID DQA. The plans will be completed by March 2015 and will increase accountability and clarify responsibilities for data collection especially for field staff.

Sub-task 2.4: Unique ID Roll Out: In 2014 the unique ID roll out to partners was hampered by lack of quality beneficiary lists. These lists have been updated and validation continues. Part of this validation process is listing all farmer beneficiaries by IDs under the lead or assistant lead farmer and validating this list with the lead farmer. On the nutrition side, this is done by lead mother in the care groups with duplicates identified for nutrition and agriculture overlap. INVC M&E team will complete the roll out of all IDs in the surge districts of Lilongwe, Balaka and Machinga by March of 2015 with all IDs being rolled out by May 2015 to all of our partner beneficiaries both nutrition and agriculture. This fourteen digit geocode (expanded from thirteen due to the numerous GVHs in Lilongwe) incorporates District, EPA, GVH, Village, household, and individual. The roll out process helps the project to validate its existing list of beneficiaries for what is essentially 100% beneficiary validation and thus eliminating the issue of double counting with the agricultural short term training indicator. An important task on the INVC beneficiary ID is to share this ID with partners in the surge districts to harmonize and identify overlap between partners.

TASK 3: BENEFICIARY SURVEYS

Sub-task 3.1: Conduct Outcome Surveys: In 2014 INVC completed a nutrition baseline survey for the expansion districts of Balaka Machinga and Mangochi. Also, an agricultural outcomes survey began in the last quarter of 2014 with the draft report delivered in January 2015. The 2014 agricultural outcome survey was held off to allow farmers to harvest and sell their groundnuts and soybeans. The project has plans for outcome surveys for both nutrition and agriculture indicators along with any new outcome indicators identified when the M&E plan is completed. The nutrition outcome survey will begin in the May June timeframe and will be for all five of the nutrition districts and the agriculture outcome survey will begin in early September with the goal of completing it in time for FTFMS reporting.

Sub-task 3.2: Conduct Spot Surveys on Outcome indicators: Since outcome surveys are conducted annually, it is our intention to conduct small spot surveys and assessments to assess progress toward project goals and to provide this feedback to the relevant component. The intention of these surveys is not to be statistically

significant but rather to be small enough to be administered rapidly for fast turnaround and therefore rapid feedback to the projects relevant components. This timely information will allow for midcourse adjustments in project activities to take place without having to rely on large annual surveys to be conducted, compiled and reported on by a third party. An agricultural spot survey was conducted in the first quarter of 2015 that focused on seed germination testing, seed conditioning and land preparation .A follow up in the second quarter of 2015 is taking place to look at crop management and planting with the goal of determining what is and is not working, and why. There will be two more follow up spot surveys for agriculture to look at harvest postharvest and gross margins. The GPS coordinates for the selected beneficiaries have been recorded so the project may follow these farmers all the way to harvest and thus make comparisons of yield based on levels of technology adopted.

Currently the project is early in its nutrition implementation in the expansion districts but has been implementing for over a year in Lilongwe and Mchinji. Beneficiary validation surveys are planned for the end of second quarter to check data quality. Spot surveys are planned for the third and fourth quarter to look at behavior change issues identified by the nutrition team but also to study the connection between kitchen gardens and diet. By the 3rd quarter the M&E team will monitor service delivery utilizing various tools such as the Quality Improvement and Verification Checklist (QIVC). A small QIVC assessment will be conducted in the 3rd quarter for the Nkhoma implementation districts on Mchinji and Lilongwe.

TASK 4: EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS

INVC is scheduled for an external performance evaluation in FY2015. The M&E team will fully cooperate with the evaluation team providing information as requested. The team will also comply with all requests from the Impact Evaluation team led by UNC. Any third party working with the USAID Mission in Malawi will be fully cooperated with by the INVC M&E team. The INVC team will collaborate with the CDCS evaluation team throughout the design and execution of the evaluation and will provide them with information on cost, activity implementation and integration efforts as needed. Finally INVC will be cooperating with the SPRING project to assist in field testing the new FtF indicator “Total quantity of targeted nutrient rich value chain commodities set aside for home consumption by direct beneficiary producer households.”

TASK 5: GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM – SPATIAL DATA

INVC will be reporting on spatial data in 2015. Incorporating GIS into our M&E system will allow us to quickly visualize project interventions and coordinate with other USAID projects operating in our zone of influence to facilitate communication, coordination and collaboration. It will facilitate communication with local government so that they can quickly see where in their district the project is implementing. Presenting data in a visual manner helps project management to identify barriers, bottlenecks and opportunities in developing value chains and connecting farmer organizations to markets.

Information will be gathered utilizing digital devices for the locations (GPS coordinates) of all lead farmers and nutrition promoters. GPS coordinates will also be gathered on the locations of demo farms, village aggregation centers and market centers in order to be able to report on project interventions geographically. The first task the project intends to carry out is a pilot in south Lilongwe with 100 lead farmers. This pilot will be outsourced to a local firm who has the capacity to implement quickly so that we may capture learnings and incorporate these in to our internal GIS initiatives moving forward. In the meantime, we will purchase the ArcGIS software and hire a GIS assistant to maintain a database of GIS data for INVC. We have met with the USAID program office to insure harmonization between what we will report on and what is required in USAIDs database.

TASK6: THE LEARNING PLAN

Training, capacity building and learning are all a big part of M&E, primarily because many partners have not had internal M&E capacity prior to INVC. Many INVC M&E trainings will take place on the job whereby the

M&E team works as a guide by the side in helping field staff understand their responsibilities for data gathering and data quality. As mentioned above under data quality, staff will learn how to perform Q/C, DQAs and develop and author clearly written reports. In the field with farmers and care group mothers (or care group volunteers) the M&E team will make the trainings “hands on” while doing the task. The team will also be sure to provide opportunities for interactions between partners and team members located in different locations by conducting meetings where feedback is obtained and issues are shared among participants such as in the TWGs.

Dissemination of success stories, best practices and lessons learned will be an important part of the M&E activities both internally at INVC and externally with fellow USAID partners. Internally at INVC, learnings will be shared in a number of different ways starting with the projects Monday morning meetings where all project components share progress on activities. The team will also share learnings in the Technical Working Groups (TWGs) at the M&E TWG and across the board for relevant technical components including partner quarterly review meetings. The team will interact with the project technical writer to identify success stories for dissemination both internally and externally. The goal is to avoid ad hoc decisions but to facilitate decision making utilizing knowledge that comes from good data to avoid repeating mistakes.

Externally the team will coordinate with USAID Malawi’s outreach activities, such as the USAID Facebook page, sending monthly updates of success stories and learnings. Each district coordinator and relevant IP staff will have a monthly summary sheet to update them on project learnings. At the district level, learnings from the summary sheet will be shared at District Council Meetings by District Coordinators with all interested parties in attendance at the meetings. These summary sheets will detail lessons learned, best practices and success stories. Since INVC will play a leading role in USAID project integration and 3C efforts the M&E team will share data on impacts and outcomes within and outside of the project. INVC will also explore alternative communication channels for the dissemination of newsletters, leaflets, Facebook status updates, ICT, wall charts and maps. One way to communicate may be through a new vehicle such as an INVC Quarterly Digest.

Conclusion

Feed the Future-Integrating Nutrition with Value Chains is pleased to present this FY15 revised workplan which has attempted to be responsive to USAID comments on our original submission of August 2014 and to the contract extension modification signed in late December. This plan is a product of our entire staff and is the result of many hours of internal and external consultation. It attempts to integrate guidance, perspective and participation of our virtual team members within the Sustainable Economic Growth Team and Program Office at USAID/Malawi. FY15 is a year for re-focusing, re-tooling, and for scaling up the intensity and quality of our programmatic interventions throughout the project's zone of influence. As we address the key challenges that we have outlined in this workplan, adjustments will necessarily be made, lessons will be learned and documented, and we will continue to engage and communicate with our client, collaborators, beneficiaries, and partners on the best way forward. We appreciate the confidence USAID has shown in financing INVC's extension and look forward to a successful, collaborative, highly productive relationship over the coming months.

Annex: INVC FY 15 Integration Workplan

Integration Component Annex

INVC strongly believes that any success achieved in stimulating agricultural growth and improvement in community-wide nutritional status will require collaboration, coordination, and clear actions by all that are co-located and active in communities across the Zone of Influence (ZOI). This is particularly important since no organization or donor has all the resources to help the GoM do everything that is required, especially at the district level, where management is decentralized but without adequate or commensurate resources required for successful implementation.

INVC also believes that any collaboration must start with small, discrete, tangible, pilot activities with clear roles, responsibilities and expectations for the activity discussed a priori to the collaboration. This approach is necessary to calibrate the partnership before bringing it to scale. Further at set points throughout the collaboration joint lessons learned sessions must be held to assess progress, reorient if required, and bring the activity to successful fruition for all sides. Further, open and frequent communication, dialog, consultation and concertation are required if the activities are to succeed.

To foster synergy and rapidly scale development impact, FtF-INVC will, where and when possible, align its programs with those of not only other complementary USAID investments, but also other donors and district governments. As may be seen below, FtF-INVC has already started working with other stakeholders in the ZOI.

Colocation with Implementing partners (Integration)

ReSeed – Joint Farmer field day Demos

Proposed demonstration sites earmarked for joint field days (all in NASFAM area)									
District	EPA	GAC/MAC	Village	Crop(s) grown	GPS Coordinates of the demo site		Date of planting	Potential Partners	Proposed date for joint field day
					Latitude (decimal degrees)	Longitude (decimal degrees)			
Mchinji	Msitu		Nyongani	Groundnuts				INVC/ICRISAT	3/26/2015
Dedza	Kabwazi		Chimamba	Groundnuts/Pigeon peas					
	Linthipe	Chitowo B	Nyankhwi	Soybean	-14.22186	34.03272	12/31/2014	IITA/ICRISAT	4/21/2015
Ntcheu	Nsipe	Mulanda	Fulatira	Soybean; Pigeon peas	-14.84209	34.77602	1/17/2015	IITA/INVC	4/9/2015
Machinga	Chikweo (Ngokwe)	Ngokwe	Mutungwi	Soybean; Pigeon peas	-14.65447	35.82607	12/30/2014	IITA/INVC/Chikweo EPA	4/10/2015

INVC and ReSeed are working together on selected farmer field day demonstrations. The first one listed above took place March 27th in Mchinji. There are two more scheduled the second week of April in Ntcheu and Mchinga. The last one will take place in Dedza on April 21st.

The joint demos are sites where ReSeed has a demo right next to or within close vicinity of a NASFAM - INVC demo. This offers a unique opportunity to showcase both ReSeed's improved legume varieties in

combination with INVC's improved technologies, such as increased plant populations and the use of soybean inoculum (as well as better crop management such as early planting and weeding on time, and doubled-up legumes with pigeon pea). All ReSeed demo plots are planted at the INVC recommend plant spacing, so ridges at 75 cm, double rows, and 15 cm between groundnut and 5 cm between soybean plants (although these distances may vary depending on type of varieties used with spreading varieties planted somewhat wider than upright varieties). Thus activity is estimated to reach 500 beneficiaries.

CIP – Distribution of OFSP Vines to project beneficiaries

FtF-INVC has been collaborating with CIP, where CIP has distributed their improved OFSP vines through the INVC Care Group structure to beneficiaries in mostly in Lilongwe but also in Balaka and Machinga. Vines were distributed last January and February to approximately 610 households with the goal of establishing “mother plots” that will produce more vines that will be distributed in the various communities. The goal is to promote the consumption of OFSP as a part of messaging on improved dietary diversity.

During the rest of FY 15, particularly during the “dambo” season INVC and CIP have agreed to work together to facilitate the successful development and implementation of raising awareness of OFSP production and marketing, and its benefit to increasing consumption to deal with malnutrition. We will support different IPs during the “dambo” season (from April to September), in areas where OFSP have previously been distributed and in new areas in Dedza and Ntcheu. Finally, we will manage joint farmer field days and training on the identification of diseased sweet potato vines. Data will be shared between the two institutions, M&E will be jointly undertaken, and we will work to promote value added processing and marketing channels for OFSP

Njira/PCI – Sharing of geographical coverage and beneficiary data

FtF-INVC plans to work closely with the Project Concern International (PCI) implemented Njira project and hold regular (quarterly) meetings to share information regarding geographic coverage of nutrition interventions, to gain information on their VSL approach, and to learn about their unique approach to the care group model. PCI is interested in our integration approach, as they are involved in similar value chain work. Last quarter the leadership of each project met and we will continue to hold these meetings especially as Njira gets closer to implementation. Next quarter the M&E teams plan to meet again to share information. The goal of the meetings is to eliminate overlap, maximize opportunities for collaboration, and address specific issues related to the lead mother/father structure

SSDI – Collaborating on Messaging and Beneficiary Overlap

FtF-INVC has been planning Meetings with SSDI for FY15 to focus on geographic coverage of care group activities especially in Balaka, Machinga, and Mangochi where there is high potential for overlap. Areas of overlap will be identified and an agreement be made to determine where each organization will work, and to identify areas for collaborative work. Beneficiary lists will be shared to facilitate this process.

Coordination with Development Partners (coordination to synergize)

FHI360 – Supporting the unbanked

Integration work has already begun with FHI 360 and INVC with NASFAM beneficiaries in Malingunde EPA located in Lilongwe District. Beneficiaries have received training on financial literacy and mobile money. It is estimated that 1,900 individuals have benefitted from this training.

INVC is making further plans for financial literacy training for value chain actors with our Competitiveness and Gender Components. Preliminary meetings occurred in March 2015 and further meetings are planned to set up a series of training workshops to address gender equity access to financial information, market information and market opportunities. Goals for the number of beneficiaries and timeframes will soon be established.

Bridge II Malawi Project – Hope kits and HIV prevention manuals

Although the Malawi Bridge II Project has come to an end, in FY14 FtF-INVC identified materials (Hope Kits and HIV prevention manuals) that will be used to improve delivery of HIV messaging to care groups. This information will be included in the overall SBCC strategy to be revised. In FY15, FtF-INVC will source and print these materials for distribution to care groups (promoter level). Additionally, FtF-INVC will continue to apply lessons learnt from the recently closed WALA Project. This activity is scheduled for the May/June timeframe beginning with promoters who will cascade the information to reach all of the care groups (approximately 150,000 beneficiaries).

Baylor Project – HIV education messaging

A 2015 Work plan has been developed with Baylor-International Pediatrics AIDS Initiative (BIPAI) to utilize their 'expert clients' (under the Tingathe Project) to deliver community health talks on HIV and AIDS using care group structures (promoters and lead mothers/fathers). BIPAI will in turn utilize care group (promoters and lead mothers/fathers) to delivery nutrition education e.g. nutrition dense diet as a therapy to people living with HIV (PLHIV). The activity will begin with sensitization to identify people living with HIV openly. They will then be used to sensitize Care Group members in FtF-INV entire Zone of Influence.

PERFORM – Conservation Agriculture Messages

FtF-INVC has been planning with PERFORM to disseminate practical messages to our beneficiary farmers on conservation agricultural practices such as utilization of Vetiver grass, leguminous trees, mulching and manuring along with the planting of fruit trees, especially in zones prone to erosion and along riverbanks in watersheds where we jointly intervene. Plans are in process, with the timing to be determined once PERFORM begins true implementation.

STEPS – Partner Capacity Building

Collaboration work as begun with STEPS with both projects sharing information such as INVC providing STEPS with the results from the last two OCA assessments, introducing STEPS to implementing partners (NASFAM

and FUM) and discussing complementary approaches to assistance. Follow up meetings are planned with STEPS when OCAs are conducted this coming September.

South African Trade Hub (SATH) – Explore Regional Markets

INVC staff have attended an aflatoxin workshop hosted by SATH and they are organizing a similar workshop for INVC beneficiaries later in April. Plans are being made to coordinate with SATH to investigate demand information for soybeans and groundnuts. INVC will also be looking at product flows in and out of Malawi and regional countries to understand where there may be unmet demand. SATH will assist INVC to look at this information to increase the demand for Malawi Soybeans and Groundnuts in the regional market.

Action Aid – Adult Literacy

INVC is collaborating with Action Aid to provide a literacy program to women in the Care Groups and in the Village Financial Platforms. The approach involves developing literacy around themes that the woman are already familiar with in order to provide them with context and thus increase the retention of the information. Discussions have already occurred and plans are in place to deliver training in the May timeframe with the goal of reaching 2,000 beneficiaries.

Early Grade Reading Activity (EGRA) – Adult Literacy

INVC is also looking to collaborate with the EGRA program managed by RCI to conduct a similar activity as with Action Aid for women in the Care Groups and in the Village Financial Platforms. The approach involves developing literacy around themes that the woman are already familiar with in order to provide them with context and thus increase the retention of the information. Discussions are planned for April with a roll out in June.

SAIOMA – Strengthen input and output Markets

We will be working with SAIOMA to identify domestic end market requirements. The goal will be to determine specific buyer requirements and to identify key constraints in order to develop opportunities for producer groups to participate further up in the value chain. INVC will select at least 5 of our best producer groups to ship test volumes to buyers from end markets in FY 2015

MAPAC/MBS/SATH – Increase Knowledge on Food Safety Standards

Preliminary discussions have occurred with MAPAC, MBS and SATH to develop educational materials on food safety standards.

Collaboration with District Government (to demonstrate relevance and support to local systems via the District Implementation Plans (DIP))

Work with District Councils

This fiscal year FtF-INVC is continuing to work to strengthen the capacity of district councils for the coordination, planning and implementation of agriculture and nutrition interventions. To ensure that coordination, collaboration and communication remain open and strong with District Councils, FtF-INVC will be inviting district council representatives and other implementing partners to participate in the various technical working groups (TWGs) that are being held with the grantees. Currently, the TWGs that hold regular meetings to discuss operational and capacity issues include: the Agricultural productivity TWG, the Marketing TWG; and the Monitoring & Evaluation TWG. Further, FtF-INVC field staff (District Coordinators) have been participating in the district council’s DEC meetings to share updates on INVC sponsored agriculture and nutrition activities within the districts as well as to coordinate with the district councils’ stakeholders to facilitate dialogue on the execution of activities. This has already started to engender dialog and help examine issues constraining the soybean and groundnut value chains as well as nutrition interventions within these value chains, within the communities or at the household level.

The next step is to have the FtF-INVC staff organize exchange visits for district technical staff and officials to INVC impact sites within the districts to orient them on integration of agriculture and nutrition. FtF-INVC is also planning to initiate bi-annual consultative review meetings involving local government, civil society organizations and all important actors from the seven impact districts in order to strengthen collaboration and co-ordination; including targeting the flow of resources to district identified priority interventions.

INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 1 with ReSeed														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Joint Field Day demonstrations													Educate INVC beneficiaries to ReSeed’s improved varieties	INVC farmers in NASFAMs implementation areas. Approximately 500 beneficiaries
INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 1 with CIP														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Distribute OFSP vines for multiplication in mother plots for further distribution													Multiply and distribute OFSP to help improved dietary diversity of INVC beneficiaries	INVC Care Groups, Lead Mothers/Fathers and participants. 610 vines distributed for multiplication and distribution
INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 1 with Njiera														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Distribute OFSP vines for multiplication and further distribution													Eliminate double counting, refer beneficiaries to each other look for synergies	INVC Care Groups and NASFAM members

INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 1 with STEPS														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Partner Capacity Building													Coordinate and Collaborate on Partner Capacity Building	NASFAM and FUM
INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 1 with SATH														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Alfatoxin Training													Educate INVC beneficiaries further on aflatoxin mitigation	NASFAM FUM and CADECOM members
INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 2 with SATH														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Increase Market Opportunities for INVC farmers													Examine regional product flows and link FUM and NASFAM with market opportunities	NASFAM FUM and CADECOM members
INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 1 with FHI360														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Teach financial literacy and mobile money to farmers													Improved financial literacy and reduced transaction costs thru use of mobile money	NASFAM members in Malingunde EPA, approximately 1,900 beneficiaries
INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 2 with FHI360														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Teach financial literacy to NASFAM members in the soya and groundnut value chains													Provide literacy training to women in order to increase their participation in markets	INVC Care Group Members in Lilongwe 2,000 beneficiaries
													Teach financial literacy and mobile money to improve gender access to markets	FUM, CADECOM and NASFAM, geography not yet determined
INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 1 with Bridge II Malawi														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Distribution of Hope kits and HIV training materials													Assist HIV patients with knowledge on how to live with HIV	FtF-INVC Care Groups in the ZOI

INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 1 with Baylor														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
HIV Education prevention and treatment													Contribute to reduction in HIV in Malawi	FtF-INVC Care Groups in the ZOI
INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 1 with SAIOMA														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Improve Input and Output Markets													Improve Market Opportunities to Producer Groups	NASFAM FUM and CADECOM members
INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 1 with MAPAC and MBS														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Alfatoxin Mitigation													Obtain Expert Opinions on food safety standards	NASFAM FUM and CADECOM members
INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 1 with FMB and OIBM														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Financial Literacy Training													Improve Financial literacy of members	NASFAM FUM and CADECOM members
INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 2 with FMB and OIBM														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Bridge Financing Opportunities													Pilot Bridge Financing for Producers	NASFAM FUM and CADECOM members
INTEGRATION ACTIVITY 1 with District Councils														
KEY ACTIVITIES	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	KEY OUTPUTS/Expected Results	Target Beneficiaries
Joint Planning and Coordination through participation in Technical Working Groups													Share knowledge and build capacity	District Government, Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health officials