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QUARTERLY REPORT #01 (FEBRUARY – MARCH 2011)

Capacity to Improve Agriculture and Food Security (USAID-CIAFS)



March 2011

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID's Capacity to Improve Agriculture and Food Security (CIAFS) project is a four-year effort that builds on previous and existing USAID/Ethiopia programs to address policy constraints in the agriculture sector. The program will work with key agents of change to raise awareness about international best practices in agricultural development and promote knowledge of policy alternatives, which will empower policy makers to push for reform. USAID-CIAFS will also serve as a foundational platform to support other USAID/Ethiopia Feed the Future (FtF) programs through activities such as monitoring and evaluation (M&E), analytical studies and project evaluations.

This is the first quarterly report for USAID-CIAFS, which started in February 2011. It summarizes activities from February to March 2011. The period was primarily characterized by project startup, preliminary analyses of constraints to Ethiopian agricultural success, identification of and consultation with primary stakeholders, and goal-setting for M&E in support of upcoming FTF programming in Ethiopia. Other activities include:

- Established the Addis Ababa project office, and procured basic equipment (office furniture and computers)
- Hired core staff; successfully recruited other permanent staff
- Drafted Annual Work Plan and submitted it to USAID/BEAT;
- Drafted initial recommendations for design of national agricultural best practices analyses, case studies and trainings.

2. BACKGROUND

Eighty percent of Ethiopia's 80 million plus people live in rural areas and are engaged in subsistence farming. Cereal production has increased by more than 40 percent in recent years, but humanitarian needs have not decreased. The Government of Ethiopia (GoE) has devoted substantial resources to the agriculture sector because of its importance to Ethiopia's development. Government expenditures on agriculture are now more than 10 percent of the annual budget.

USAID-CIAFS represents an important component of USAID/Ethiopia's new multi-year strategy for Feed the Future (FTF). Objectives of FTF include increasing agriculture productivity, preserving natural resources, improving agricultural marketing, increasing the purchasing power of vulnerable households, and maximizing food security. This strategy is in line with the L'Aquila Principles endorsed at the July 2009 G8 Meeting, particularly the first two principles of "adopting a comprehensive approach to food security" and "investing in country-led plans."

In USAID/Ethiopia's FTF Implementation Plan, the mission committed to train a minimum of 100 key agents of change during the early stages of the initiative. USAID-CIAFS will surpass this target by continually focusing on capacity building. To support USAID's efforts to address key agriculture constraints, the program will build off national successes including adopting land administration as a national priority, adopting national guidelines for emergency livestock interventions, establishing the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange (ECX), and supporting the voice of private sector associations.

The proposed USAID-CIAFS Work Plan for Year 1 includes:

- Conducting AgCLIR assessments throughout key value chains in Ethiopia
- Continuing revisions of analytical assessment tools
- Conducting workshops and seminars for GoE and other stakeholders
- Researching and disseminating project briefs and other policy analysis
- Sharing findings, obtaining feedback from stakeholders on assessment tools, creating reports and building databases

3. ADMINISTRATION AND STAFFING

During the quarter, the USAID-CIAFS core team was hired, fielded and began working with the Fintrac home office startup team to secure office space and equipment, arrange for the procurement of vehicles and computers, and recruit all but one staff position. The startup team also transferred Fintrac's registration in Ethiopia and finalized subcontract negotiations with the project's major local subcontractor, FirstConsult.

The core USAID-CIAFS team includes the Ethiopia-based chief of party (COP), the monitoring and evaluation specialist and senior policy analyst, and the capacity-building manager, as well as project management support by home office personnel. Several local long-term local staff members will transition from the USAID Agribusiness and Trade Expansion Program (USAID-ATEP) during the next quarter.

The program discussed several operational and policy issues with the USAID/BEAT COTR, who is working with USAID-CIAFS to optimize project performance and turnaround. The issues are summarized below:

- CIAFS team access to prior reports on constraints to agriculture and food security, including but not limited to recent McKinsey studies
- Agreement on processes for timely approvals (of work & procurement plans, short term consultants, reports, etc.)
- The need to hire a skilled and experienced communications specialist to manage both detailed technical analysis publications, internal communications, and public messaging

4. TECHNICAL STARTUP

On March 17, 2011 USAID formally introduced the program to the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), the principal Ethiopian counterpart of the project. State Minister Ato Wondirad Mandefro welcomed the USAID-CIAFS team, USAID BEAT Office Chief Daniel Moore, and the acting USAID-CIAFS COTR, Semachew Kassahun, at his office. USAID-CIAFS invited the Minister to an upcoming leadership training event for the MoA, regional bureaus of agriculture and other stakeholders, which will be implemented in collaboration with USAID and LEAD Africa, an Africa-wide project funded by USAID.

The program also invited the Minister to attend the first USAID-CIAFS workshop for key stakeholders in the third week of April. As the program designs training and capacity-building activities, the minister and his technical team will provide input on their needs, prioritizing leadership capacity and management skills. This close consultation will allow the program to tailor their support to the Ministry's needs.

After this vital meeting, USAID-CIAFS launched a comprehensive consultative process involving a wide range of food security stakeholders, including Feed the Future partners, other USAID projects, the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), the Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA), and other agencies working in the agriculture sector. During the second quarter, USAID-CIAFS will continue to introduce the project to these stakeholders and explore priority areas and opportunities for capacity building of targeted private, civil society and government leaders. Meetings with the World Bank and the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) are scheduled for early April.

In late March, the program met with Professor Tekalign Mamo, a state minister of agriculture and technical advisor on the five-year Ethiopian Government Agriculture Transformation Plan. USAID-CIAFS will address structural constraints limiting production through training and tours to impart best practices, technologies and policies. Professor Mamo recommended a number of "model change agents" from the public and private sectors who could talk about their experiences and inspire participants of the leadership training.

The program started planning a workshop to be held in the third week of April for the major stakeholders from the government, the private sector and NGOs. The purpose of the workshop is to share and validate the proposed implementation strategy, review the work plan, and solicit stakeholder input on planned USAID-CIAFS activities. This consultation will not only empower stakeholders, it will also ensure that the work plan is realistic, focused and targeted.

USAID-CIAFS will be a flexible program that will work to respond effectively to the evolving needs of USAID/Ethiopia and stakeholders across the agriculture sector. Accordingly, the activities and timeline in the work plan are subject to modification following the consultative process.

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM SUPPORT

The USAID-CIAFS monitoring system will be backed by a customized web-based database to track progress on outputs and impact, inform success stories and provide critical information for strategy, activities and decision making. The database will also be used to generate periodic reports (monthly, quarterly and annual) for tracking progress and decision making.

This quarter, the USAID-CIAFS M&E team started designing the database, designing protocols for data collection and input, and customizing analysis tools. Kidist Desta, CIAFS M&E Specialist and Senior Policy Analyst, met with incoming M&E Analyst Asmare Melese to review Fintrac's Client Impact & Results Information System (CIRIS), Fintrac's proprietary, state-of-the-art software that consolidates the data collection, storage, and reporting processes, developed specifically for use on agriculture and rural development programs. The M&E team is working with Fintrac M&E Manager Mike Reiter to customize CIRIS so that it thoroughly captures and tracks project indicators.

The USAID-CIAFS M&E team is working to ensure that data collected will conform to ADS 203 guidance and meet the following criteria:

- **Validity:** Data must clearly, directly and adequately represent the result that it intends to measure.
- **Reliability:** Information must reflect stable, consistent data collection and analysis processes over time.
- **Timeliness:** Data must be available with enough frequency and must be sufficiently current to inform management for decision making.
- **Precision:** Data must be accurate enough to present a fair picture of performance.
- **Integrity:** Mechanisms should be in place to reduce the possibility that data will be manipulated for political or personal reasons.

USAID-CIAFS is expected to play a role in ensuring the integrity and coherence of data collection across FTF projects, the Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative (GHFSI), the Government of Ethiopia, and the multi-donor M&E systems set up for the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) and the Agricultural Growth Project (AGP). The program will also track capacity-building activities across FTF projects and will organize periodic trainings for FTF project staff in standardizing indicators, data collection, and reporting. This quarter, the project planned integration with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Tufts University to set appropriate indicators for data collection under the baseline surveys for FTF projects. USAID-CIAFS will work to integrate data quality assessment into ongoing activities to minimize costs.

6. STRATEGIC CAPACITY BUILDING

During the quarter, USAID-CIAFS started to plan activities to assess the capacity needs of public, civil society, and private sector institutions. As a preliminary step, the program's core team met with MoA officials to discuss key capacity-building goals. This marked the beginning of in-depth assessments of existing capacity-building programs within the Ministry of Agriculture and donor-funded, private sector, and civil society groups to identify gaps for the program to address.

The process was also a first step toward establishing long-term relationships that will serve as the basis for future collaborative work. USAID-CIAFS held consultation meetings in February and March with the following groups:

Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA): The program and senior ATA officials explored policy impediments to agricultural change that could realistically be addressed by USAID-CIAFS. To limit redundancy and build on one another's efforts, USAID-CIAFS will target training to high-level government officials, while ATA will offer complementary leadership trainings to the lower levels of government. At a follow-up meeting the program discussed the relevance of the modular training program delivered by LEAD Africa to the Ethiopian context.

Institute for International Education (IIE): IIE is an independent and international training organization focusing on fellowship and scholarship management, higher education institutional development, and leadership development. CIAFS and IIE agreed to collaborate to organize and facilitate workshops, leadership trainings, and forums.

Ministry of Agriculture's Rural Capacity Building Project: The team strategized with the project's manager, Dr. Taye, on ways that USAID-CIAFS could strengthen the network between the federal and woreda jurisdictions to support agricultural extension capacity in the country.

Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association: Ato Eyesuswork, president of the Chamber of Commerce, agreed to deliver the keynote speech in the USAID-CIAFS April workshop. The Chamber of Commerce has identified more than 40 key leaders from sector associations affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce to participate in the USAID-CIAFS/LEAD Africa training in May.

Nebil Kellow: The Managing Director of CIAFS subcontractor, FirstConsult, helped identify key stakeholders in the agriculture sector and facilitated USAID-CIAFS membership in specialized working groups. As a result, USAID-CIAFS is now member of RED-FS, a food security consortium, which will provide an important network for identifying agents of change and will offer insight into structural constraints to Ethiopian agriculture.

Regional Bureaus of Agriculture: (Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, and Tigray regions) Identified potential agents of change for USAID-CIAFS capacity-building programs. All the regional bureaus have expressed strong interest in the training, and some have already identified participants. For example, the SNNP Regional Bureau of Agriculture has identified 15 key candidates for training.

6.1 IDENTIFYING KEY AGENTS OF CHANGE

USAID-CIAFS is working to develop criteria for identifying key agents of change for training. The CIAFS team is forming relationships with the following Ethiopian institutions to further this objective:

- **Government bodies:** Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Industry, Agricultural Transformation Agency, Seed industry, Agriculture Input Supply Enterprise, Research Institutes, Public Universities, Standard and Quality Authority
- **Private businesses:** Agro-dealers, service/BDS providers, commercial farms, processors, millers, Chamber of Commerce, sector associations, professional associations entrepreneurship groups
- **Other Civil Society Organizations:** Women's associations, cooperatives and federation managers and leaders; pastoral community leaders

6.2 CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING

USAID-CIAFS plans to conduct two trainings during Year 1 for 150 leaders. Leaders from the regional bureaus of agriculture will be selected from the 83 high-potential districts of the four priority regions – Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, and SNNPR.

LEAD Africa, a regional, Nairobi-based training project also funded by USAID, is the latest USAID-CIAFS partner. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been drafted for LEAD Africa to train experienced policy advocates and competent technical persons who can affect change to structural constraints. The MoU is finalized and pending the approval of Fintrac and Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), LEAD Africa's contract implementer.

In preparation for the joint training, USAID-CIAFS Capacity Building Manager, Dr. Gezahegn, participated in the LEAD Africa training in Nairobi with four other Ethiopian participants. Dr. Gezahegn identified several opportunities to customize the design and delivery of the training to make it more relevant to Ethiopia. The suggested modifications will be made for the upcoming training.

USAID-CIAFS has accumulated a comprehensive collection of training modules for review, which were developed by the LEAD Africa project, the Institute of International Education-Ethiopia, and other projects and institutions involved in training leaders in the region. USAID-CIAFS will adapt modules and draw on the expertise of the organizations to implement targeted training to key agents of change in Ethiopia.

This quarter, USAID-CIAFS agreed to provide logistical support for an ACDI/VOCA training for MoA specialists in value chain development. The training, originally set to begin April 4 in Adama, has been postponed.

7. ANALYTICAL STUDIES AND PROJECT EVALUATIONS

7.1 AGCLIR

As a prelude to implementing capacity-building training, USAID-CIAFS plans to conduct an AgCLIR study – an in-depth assessment of the constraints to agriculture and agribusiness development in Ethiopia.

The AgCLIR diagnostic provides an in-depth analysis of the agribusiness-enabling environment by looking at the various constraints to profitability in starting and running an agribusiness, such as a farm, processing plant, or export company. The diagnostic will recommend concrete, practical actions that can be implemented to improve agribusiness. The AgCLIR analysis focuses on the systemic limitations that inhibit productivity improvement and limit profitability such as export delays, input monopolies, overregulation, and inappropriate taxation.

We have identified several consultants to augment in-house technical expertise and have started discussing strategic fielding, local contacts, and possible timing for the assessment. Building on traditional agriculture sector assessment tools, AgCLIR will diagnose the root causes and inefficiencies of underperforming agriculture and agribusinesses in the Ethiopian context.

The AgCLIR will provide the most up-to-date snapshot of the constraints facing the agriculture sector in Ethiopia, and the data collected will serve as a baseline for measuring the impact of this and other capacity building and policy change projects.

7.2 POLICY ANALYSIS IN SUPPORT SECTORAL ASSOCIATIONS

USAID-CIAFS has identified experts in policy analysis who can communicate findings to senior decision-makers and stakeholders. The program will utilize these experts and internal expertise to help private agribusinesses in subsectors including oilseeds and pulses, apiculture, and dairy to identify gaps and impediments to their influencing public policy.

7.3 ANALYTICAL STUDIES IN SUPPORT TO MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

USAID-CIAFS is working with the MoA to identify topics for short-term analytic studies and evaluations to improve policy areas that support agricultural growth and poverty reduction.

8. CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

8.1 GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The USAID-CIAFS M&E team is working to finalize indicators that will disaggregate data by gender and deliver an accurate picture of the integration of women into capacity-building activities. The indicators will measure the effectiveness of messages directed at women, and track their engagement in the agriculture policy process. Fintrac's data collection, storage and reporting processes, consolidated through the proprietary, state-of-the-art software CIRIS, have been utilized to develop an M&E system for USAID-CIAFS that will ensure that the activities benefit both men and women. The information will be disaggregated by gender. Long-term plans for impact evaluations have also been developed to assess the difference in impact of activities on men and women.

8.2 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

USAID-CIAFS has identified key topics in pastoralist rangeland management, as well as watershed and landscape management, to discuss with stakeholders. By integrating sustainability interests with economic and food security concerns, the program hopes to also integrate the decision-making process among stakeholders with different specializations, creating a more collaborative and sustainable structural environment.

9. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

The focus of next quarter's work plan is to finalize a methodology to identify agents of change, to use this methodology to target change agents, and start the USAID-CIAFS training program.

Major planned activities for the next quarter in line with the Year 1 work plan are stated by objective as follows.

(Detailed quantitative targets for the next quarter are indicated in the work plan in Annex II).

9.1 STRATEGIC CAPACITY BUILDING

- Conduct needs assessment to determine capacity gaps by consulting key players including the MoA, the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), and the ATA
- Finalize methodology to identify change agents
- Continue to identify key change agents through primary stakeholder (MoA) and other stakeholders
- Conduct in-country USAID-CIAFS/LEAD Africa training for key change agents
- Train change agents from the federal and regional bureaus on the linkages between agriculture and nutrition

9.2 ANALYTICAL STUDIES AND PROJECT EVALUATION

- AgCLIR assessment to complement CAADP documents
- Conduct two in-depth analytical studies on subjects requested by the Ministry of Agriculture

9.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM SUPPORT

- Collaborate with IFPRI and Tufts University on the design of a baseline data collection effort targeting indicators for new FTF projects

ANNEX II: WORK PLAN

Activity #		2011					2012					2013	2014	Deliverable/Result	Verification of Milestone Achievements	Remark			
		F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J						
1	Start-Up & Program Administrative Activities	TARGET																	
1.1	Home office rapid start-up team fielded	X														Key personnel/senior team in place	Timesheets		
1.2	Key Personnel/Senior Team In-Place	X														Key personnel/senior team in place	Timesheets		
1.3	Remaining LTTA local positions recruited and hired	X	X													All field technicians in zones w/in 3 months	Timesheets		
1.4	Procurement of Vehicles	X	X													Vehicles procured by March	Copies of vehicle titles; inventory list		
1.5	Procurement of computers, software, and other office equipment	X	X													All initial procurement activities completed by March	Inventory list		
1.6	Project Intranet/Internet Sites Designed and Launched		X													Intranet/Internet sites installed; maintained	Websites		
1.7	Main office set-up in Addis Ababa	X														Main office established and occupied Mid February	Regular project reporting		
2	Communications																		
2.1	Introduction of project to MoA through USAID		X													1	Meeting	Project launched	
2.2	First discussion with FTF implementers and other appropriate USAID projects such as Health/Nutrition projects			X												6	Meeting	Feedback	
2.3	First discussion with other stakeholders such as ATA, SNV, UNDP, WB and others as appropriate		X	X												6	Meeting	Feedback	
2.4	Socialize the project with key stakeholders in a workshop			X												1	Workshop	Feedback	
3	Monitoring and Evaluation																		
3.1	Fintrac web-based M&E system customized and installed for CIAFS			X	X											1	Database customized & operational	Functioning database and reports	
3.2	Organize training for FTF staff in reporting standardized indicators							X	X							2	Staff trained	Project reports	Pending FTF project start
3.3	Provide demand-driven technical support to build the M&E capacity of regional bureau of agriculture					X		X	X							4	Databases developed	Reports	Initiate activities upon demand; timeline provisional
3.4	Track output indicators on CIAFS and prepare periodic reports		X			X		X			X					4	Up-to-date database	Periodic reports generated	Pending FTF project start
3.5	Aggregate output indicators and produce reports.					X		X			X					3	Quarterly reports	Progress reports generated	Pending FTF project start
3.6	Design M&E system to track capacity building for FTF projects																		Pending FTF project start
3.7	Conduct impact evaluations of FTF as required by USAID												X			1	Number and type of evaluations conducted	Technical reports generated	Initiate activities upon demand; timeline provisional
3.8	Collaborate with IFPRI and Tufts Univ. in baseline studies to ensure indicators are appropriately identified for FTF Projects				X											1	Baseline surveys for FTF	Baseline indicators for FTF collected	Pending FTF project start
3.9	Quarterly workshops for FTF Implementors						X				X					2	Workshops	Reports	
3.10	Integrate GHFSI M&E system with GoE and multi-donor systems				X	X	X												

4 Training and Capacity Building																	
4.1	AgCtir Assessment to complement CADDP documents			X	X									1	AgCtir report	Reports produced	Gain understanding of Mission's analytical needs, future program needs
4.2	Conduct need assessment to determine capacity gaps by consulting key players like MoA, BoA, SNV, etc			X	X									1	Need assessments conducted	Documents	Establish priorities
4.3	Develop methodology to identify change agents		X	X										1	Methodology for assessment and filter	Reports produced	
4.4	Identify key change agents through primary stakeholder (MoA, BoA, private sector) and other stakeholders			X	X		X							100	List of change agents	Reports produced	At least 20% are women
4.5	Develop and deliver a comprehensive leadership training for Federal level officials		X	X	X		X		X					2	IIE consulted to develop structured training modules	Training modules	At least 20% are women
4.6	Develop and deliver a comprehensive leadership training for Regional level officials (organized by region)			X	X				X	X				2	IIE consulted to develop structured training modules	Training modules	Training may be held separately in each region
4.7	Conduct in-country Africa LEAD training for key change agents to build capacity				X									2	Number of trainings held	Reports produced	Depending on the number of each group
4.8	Organize study tours for key change agents to adopt best practices, technologies and policies								X	X				4	Number of tours facilitated	Best practice workshops conducted ex-post	Overseas and local
4.9	Training of change agents from the Federal and Regional Bureaus on the linkages between agriculture and nutrition						X			X		X		4	Number of trainings held	Training modules and reports	Demand driven; timeline provisional
4.10	Collaborate with WB/AGP and identify areas of collaboration							X				X		2	Number trained	Training reports	Timeline and number pending consultation; demand driven
4.11	Collaborate with universities, professional associations such as EAAP and ESSA for training, workshops, and policy support to stakeholders			X	X		X			X				3	Number trained	Training reports	Timeline and number pending consultation; demand driven
4.12	Collaborate with SNV, Technoserve, ACDI/VOCA and others to identify for capacity building			X			X			X				2	Number trained	Training reports	Timeline and number pending consultation; demand driven
4.13	Provide capacity building support to GFHSI programs that link agriculture and nutrition activities								X			X		2	Technical support	Feedback	Demand driven; timeline provisional
4.14	Participate in quarterly coordination meetings with FTF projects to discuss capacity development needs				X		X			X				4	Meetings attended	Reports	Timeline tentative; pending FTF start date
5 Sub-Grants to Support New Ideas and Innovations																	
5.1	Provide grants to change agents to apply new ideas or broaden knowledge and induce policy changes							X			X			2	Projects supported	Reports produced	
5.2	Conduct short-term analytical studies and project evaluations upon demand									X		X		2	Projects supported	Reports produced	
6 Best Practices, Technologies and Policies																	
6.1	Organize in-country study tours for key changes to adopt best practices, technologies and policies						X			X				3	Tours conducted	Number participated	Number to be decided
6.2	Organize study tours for regional government officials from pastoral areas to observe land administration procedures in pastoral West Africa										X			1	Tours conducted	Number participated	Number to be decided
6.3	Organize study tours for regional government officials from pastoral areas to observe land administration procedures in highland Ethiopia											X		1	Tours conducted	Number participated	Number to be decided
7 Demand-Driven Analysis																	
7.1	Support sectoral associations with policy analysis						X	X						4	Number of policy issues identified	Reports	Upon demand by associations, MoT and the Chamber of Commerce
7.2	Conduct analytical studies on demand from MoA								X	X				2	Number of technical studies conducted	Reports	Demand driven
7.3	Analyze best practices in agricultural development to contribute to USAID mission's knowledge of agriculture and food security							X	X	X				2	Number of technical studies conducted	Reports	Demand driven
7.4	Collaborate with FTF Policy and Learning Program and conduct analytical studies									X	X	X		2	Number of technical studies conducted	Reports	Demand driven

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