



Agro-Inputs Project in Bangladesh

Quarterly Progress Report

September 17, 2012 – December 31, 2012

USAID Cooperative Agreement

AID-388-A-12-00005

Implemented by CNFA

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AIP Quarterly Progress Report structure

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Acronyms

AAPI	Accelerating Agricultural Productivity Improvement
ACI	Advance Chemical Industries
ADS	Administrative Directive System
AF	Ashroy Foundation
AIP	Agro-Inputs Project
AIQCSS	Agro-Input Quality Control and Standard Specialist
AIRN	Agro-Input Retailers' Network/ Astha Agro-Input Retailers' Network
AIS	Agricultural Information Services
AISCA	Agricultural Input Supply Chain Advisor
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
AVAS	Association of Voluntary Actions for Society
BADC	Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation
BARC	Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council
BARI	Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute
BASC	Business Advisory Services Centre
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BCPA	Bangladesh Crop protection Association
BEC	Business Ethics Committee
BFA	Bangladesh Fertilizer Association
BPRSSP	Bangladesh Policy Research and Strategy Support Program
BS	<i>Banchte Shekha</i>
BS	Baseline Survey
BSA	Bangladesh Seed Association
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CEGIS	Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services
CIP	International Potato Center
CNA	Child No Adult
COP	Chief of Party
CPP	Crop Protection Products
CPRS	Communication and Public Relation Specialist
CSISA	Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia
DAE	Department of Agriculture Extension
DAM	Department of Agricultural Marketing
DO	Development Objective
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
EDD	Environmental Due Diligence Review
EG	Economic Growth
FE	Final Evaluation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FNM	Adult Female No Adult Male
FTF	Feed the Future
FY	Fiscal Year

GIS	Geographical Information System
GIS SP	Geographical Information System Specialist
GLC	Gender Lens Committee
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GPS	Global Positioning Satellite
Grnt SP	Grants Specialist
GS	Gender Specialist
HKI	Helen Keller International
IDE	International Development Enterprises
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IR	Intermediate Result
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
LOP	Life of Project
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
M&EA	Monitoring & Evaluation Advisor
M&F	Male and Female Adults
MD	Managing Director
MEP	Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
MFI	Micro-finance Institution
MIS	Management Information System
MIS	Market Information System
MNF	Adult Male no Adult Female
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
PEEA	Policy and Enabling Environment Advisor
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan
PI	Performance Indicator
PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
PRICE	Poverty Reduction through Increasing Competitiveness of Prices
PROSHAR	Program for Strengthening Household Access to Resources
RF	Results Framework
RRF	Rural Reconstruction Foundation
SABA	Senior Agribusiness Advisor
SCA	Seed Certification Agency
SCBA	Senior Capacity Building Advisor
SHOUHARDO	Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities
SMS	Short Message Service
SO	Strategic Objective
SOW	Scope of Work
SPRING	Strengthening Partnerships, Results and Innovations in Nutrition Globally
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
STE	Senior Training Expert
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance

ToT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WFC	World Fish Center

I. Project Background

1. Table 1: Key Program Details

Title:	Agro-Inputs Project (AIP) in Bangladesh
Start Date:	September 17, 2012
Project Duration:	Five Years
Type of award:	Cooperative Agreement No. AID-388-A-12-00005
Award Amount:	\$14,028,602
Main Implementer:	CNFA
Sub Implementers:	Spatial Systems

2. Program Objectives

The overarching goal of the Agro-Inputs Project (AIP) is to improve the availability and use of safe, high-quality agricultural inputs in Bangladesh. Improved availability of agricultural inputs will be vital to increasing smallholder farmers' yields, incomes, and food security.

The primary program interventions designed to achieve this objective include the following:

1. Establishment of an Agro-Input Retailers Network (AIRN);
2. Development of a Market Information Systems;
3. Setting Quality Control Standards for Inputs and Lessening Regulatory Constraints; and
4. Strengthening Local Organizations.

For the first program intervention, the AIRN will establish a network of at least 3,000 agricultural input retailers in 20 districts, serving more than 1,000,000 farmers. The distinguishing feature of these retailers will be their certification as suppliers of quality agricultural inputs. At least 300 of these member retailers will be women-owned and eligible for grants and other technical assistance. All AIRN member retailers will be empowered to make informed business decisions for efficient, ethical, and science-based operations that are sustainable beyond the life of the AIP.

The second program intervention, developing market information systems, will consist of the creation and distribution of an Ag-Inputs Monthly Price outlook bulletin (primarily focused on seeds, fertilizers and plant protection products). The bulletin will be underpinned by a Geographic Information System (GIS), which will provide a visual representation of input distribution networks, transportation infrastructure, client concentrations, cropping patterns, product and price trends, and other important information for agricultural input retailers and consumers.

Third, the program intervention for improving quality control standards and regulatory constraints will involve working with industry associations and the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) to develop industry standards for each of the major crop inputs, as well as building the capacities of associations to improve their effectiveness in working with the GoB. In addition, the AIRN will conduct a “Business Ethics Audits” of certified retailers for transparency and consistency in support of the objective of increasing the availability and access to quality agricultural inputs in Bangladesh.

Finally, one of AIP’s interventions will be to build the capacity of local organizations so that they may implement AIP activities through sub-awards, and also so that they become trusted, independent implementers of future USAID activities. This will be achieved through capacity building technical and financial assistance to organizations such as NGOs, microfinance institutions, and research institutes.

II. Summary of Achievements in the Quarter

The first quarter’s achievements were primarily centered around program start-up activities. Upon program award, CNFA mobilized its launch team to begin setting up the Dhaka and Khulna offices and recruiting for local staff. By the end of December 2012, a large portion of the local staff had been hired and started working on the AIP.

Throughout the quarter, frequent meetings were held with USAID to assess the progress of the program start-up phase and advancement towards meeting the initial program deliverables. The AIP team worked in consultation with USAID on the development of key project document drafts, such as the Implementation Plan, , and Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

Progress was also made in several program intervention areas. Strategies regarding the structure of the AIRN and the location of its member retailers began, and three women-led NGOs were identified to assist in the creation of women-owned agricultural input retailers. Plans for the initial Geographic Information System assessment were made, which will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Market Information Systems program intervention. In addition, the scopes of work for the upcoming gender assessment and environmental due diligence review were developed and finalized, and are ready to be implemented in the upcoming program months.

III. Detailed Progress by Intervention and Task

A. Six Month Project Infrastructure Start-Up

1. *Mobilization of CNFA Launch Team:* In the first quarter, CNFA mobilized the AIP program launch team. This included Scott Arche, Senior Capacity Building Advisor/AIP, as well as Eric Sedlacek from CNFA headquarters. Mr. Sedlacek assisted in recruiting local program staff, seeking office space, and addressed other logistical concerns for the start-up of the program.

- 1.1. CNFA Launch Team Arrival in Bangladesh: The launch team arrived as planned and immediately began start-up of the project.
- 1.2. Chief of Party and Senior Capacity Building Advisor Arrival in Bangladesh: The Senior Capacity Building Advisor arrived early as part of the launch team. Due to family matters, the Chief of Party, Rick Pierce, arrived one week following his originally-planned date. After Mr. Pierce resigned in December, a new COP was identified quickly and arrived in Bangladesh on January 21, 2013.
- 1.3. Remaining Key Bangladeshi Staff Mobilized: The Agricultural Input Supply Chain Advisor and the Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor were both mobilized on schedule during the week of November 4, 2012. The Agro-Input Quality Control and Standard Specialist started one week later.
2. *Office Space Leased in Khulna and Dhaka:* Office space was identified in both Khulna and Dhaka during the second week of start up by the program launch team. Both leases were signed on schedule with Dhaka on October 17th and Khulna four days later.
3. *Office Equipment and Supplies Procured:* Procurement of office equipment and supplies began on time and is ongoing, with an expected completion date in February 2013. Equipment and supplies were prioritized in order to get the staff functioning, such as the laptops and a wireless Internet connection, while the servers are still pending.
4. *Program and Support Staff Hired:* Recruitment for program and support staff began immediately following the arrival of the program launch team. The Operations Manager was identified, hired and brought on to the team two days after the launch team arrived. Many additional local staff members were hired in October and began working in November. This took into consideration the timing of the needs of the project, as well as those of the incoming staff members to provide the required period of notice to their previous employers. The recruitment of less-senior program staff did not begin until after their supervisors had begun working on AIP. Their involvement in the selection process was prioritized so that could take ownership for the work of their team, and also so that they could ensure the staff brought on board had the specific skill-sets desired by their supervisors. A few positions have been intentionally left unfilled until the exact scope of work can be appropriately determined. Specifically, this includes the Managing Director for AIRN, whom will instead be hired as the AIRN Coordinator, since the AIRN will begin as an informal network. The employment of an Environmental Specialist has also been delayed until the EDD is completed in the upcoming quarter, as this will determine whether this position is needed or if AIP will subcontract the position to another organization. Recruitment for the AIRN Coordinator and the field agents is slated to begin in February.

Recruiting for the Gender Specialist proved to be a challenge. The major issue was to find a qualified individual willing to be based in Khulna instead of Dhaka. While the AIP team could have quickly identified someone for this position were it to be based

in Dhaka, senior program management felt it is critical for this position to be based in Khulna in order to most effectively integrate gender as a cross-cutting theme into AIP, and also to be able to work closely with the three women-led NGOs who will be supporting the anticipated 300 women retailers. Our current expectation is to have this position properly filled by March 2013.

5. *Internal Office Procedures Established:* Key office procedures, such as holidays, benefits, and per diems, have been established on schedule. Since all of the local staff members are employed as contractors until CNFA is able to hire them as staff in Bangladesh, there is less urgency to complete the remaining pieces of this task. Using the existing CNFA procedures for other projects in other countries, the team will be able to quickly complete the AIP personnel manual in the second quarter.
6. *Initial Meetings Held with USAID Staff:* The initial meetings were held with key USAID staff almost immediately upon arrival of the launch team. Additional meetings have been regularly held, typically on a weekly basis with the Agreement Officer's Technical Representative (AOR). Additional meetings have also been organized with the Agreement Officer (AO), key staff in Economic Growth, geographic information systems (GIS), and monitoring and evaluation (M&E).
7. *Initial Meetings Held with Input Associations and GOB:* The initial meetings with both the Input Associations and the GOB were put on hold at the request of the AOR. The AIP team was informed that it was critical for USAID to make the initial introductions and attend the first meetings. Due to scheduling and a number of Hartals all these meetings were frequently changed. Throughout November and December, meetings were held with all three of the key input associations (BCPA, BFA and BSA) and the meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) was scheduled for early January.
8. *Exploratory Meetings with Other Local Partners, Donors and NGOs:* Initial meetings began with other local partners in Dhaka, Khulna and Jessore during the second week of the program start-up, and continued through December. The few initial meetings which still need to take place include those with the potential partners of the largest input suppliers in Bangladesh, and with the government agencies that can potentially supply data to and support the AIP GIS platform. Meeting with private sector partners were delayed while the program builds its relationships with the associations to which they belong. The meetings with potential GIS partners have been delayed until the formal introduction to MoA, as well as the initial visit of the AIP implementing partner for GIS, Spatial Systems.
9. *Agreements Signed with Local Partners in Barisal and Jhenaidah for Office Space and Support;* This has not begun due to the pending staff locations and the remaining employment vacancies in these areas. This has been reallocated to the second quarter for completion.

10. *Annual Work Plan Drafted and Approved:* The initial draft work plan was submitted on schedule in October 2012. As it was ultimately determined that it did not meet the needs of the Mission, a few partial drafts were submitted over the next two months. Recognizing that AIP did not have the suitable staff to prepare a work plan that met the needs of USAID, a consultant was brought in at the end of December to complete the work plan as well as the M&E Plan. The current expectation is that the first year work plan will be approved in the beginning of February and the finalized M&E Plan will follow in the following weeks.
11. *Grants Manual Prepared and Submitted to USAID:* An initial Grants Manual was prepared and submitted to USAID as scheduled in October 2012. It was determined that additional work would be required to solidify the Grants Manual regarding the matching grant program for start-up agro-input retailers. Therefore the Grants Manual has been tabled until the end of the second quarter and possibly the beginning of the third.
12. *Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (MEP) Drafted and Approved:* Although it was originally planned that the MEP would be approved by the middle of December, the need for more work to produce a quality document with a results framework and appropriate indicators, the completion of the finalized document has been delayed. As mentioned above, a consultant was brought in by CNFA to work on the M&E Plan, with specific attention given to the Results Framework and the selection of indicators. The final draft of these two pieces is expected to be approved in February 2013, with the remaining pieces of the M&E Plan to follow the month after.
13. *Six Field Staff Hired:* The six field agents have not yet been hired, but will likely be hired by the of the second quarter.
14. *Program Marketing and Outreach Materials Prepared* Two types of initial communications materials were prepared ahead of schedule. This included a one-pager that fully introduces the project to stakeholders and potential collaborators. The second item included a PowerPoint presentation for a similar audience. Additional materials, such as a project brochure are still in the works due to the Results Framework not yet being finalized.
15. *Project Launch Event Planned and Executed:* The launch was planned for the end of December, but has been put on hold, with concurrence from USAID. The primary reason for the delay is that it is critical to already have successful activities as well as successful relationships with key stakeholders before holding the program launch. It is anticipated that this will take place at either the end of the second quarter or early in the third quarter.
16. *First Gender Assessment:* The scope of work for the first gender assessment was developed in consultation with USAID. The implementation of the gender assessment is scheduled to occur in Month 6.

17. *Establish Gender Lens Committee (GLC)*: The creation of the GLC has been delayed, as it is essential to have this activity be led by the Gender Specialist and after the program has begun working with some of the potential members.
18. *Branding and Marking Plan Prepared and Submitted*: The branding and marking plan was already prepared prior to the signing of the cooperative agreements and has been approved.
19. *Environmental Due Diligence (EDD) Review Prepared*: This activity was originally slated for the end of the second month. After a number of revisions, the EDD Review scope of work has yet to be finalized with USAID. It is planned that this will be completed in early 2013 and the advertising for the consultancy firm will begin immediately after.

B. Program Interventions

1. Establish Agro Input Retail Network

1.1. Establish the Agro Input Retail Network (AIRN)

- 1.1.1. Selection of 90 of 122 Upazillas over 20 Feed the Future (FtF) Districts: Selection criteria have been developed to geographically target AIRN retailers in a way which balances program targets, accessibility, and several key characteristics of the areas with implications for specific FtF objectives. Program staff members have begun getting input from relevant stakeholders regarding the recommended upazillas. Final selection will be completed in March 2013.
- 1.1.2. Working Purpose, Objectives and Modalities of AIRN: After careful deliberation and a number of consultations with key stakeholders, it has been determined that AIRN will initially begin as an informal network. A legally-incorporated AIRN may not be necessary to achieve the project's objectives, and an early focus on incorporating AIRN as an association might diffuse project efforts in its first year. However, the AIP team will assist AIRN members to ultimately make an informed decision about its eventual incorporation by examining its benefits and drawbacks, with the commitment to AIRN's post-project sustainability and success through whatever organizational form best suits these aims.
- 1.1.3. AIRN Structure and Members: While the preliminary structure of AIRN is being established its staffing and membership drive will be initiated. Actual registration of members will not proceed until the groundwork of 1.1.2 is complete in upcoming program weeks. It was decided the "Managing Director" role will be changed to that of "AIRN Coordinator," due to the likelihood the AIRN will begin as an informal organization. Options for the AIRN logo have been developed, and are currently in the late stages of evaluation and selection.

- 1.1.4. Credit Guarantee Funds: Activities under this component are planned in upcoming months. Analyses to assess AIRN members' current use of credit and to examine opportunities for AIP-facilitated credit will be undertaken. Partner microfinance institutions, NGOs, and/or other organizations will also be sought.
- 1.1.5. Gender Lens Committee (GLC): As previously stated, the GLC will be established in the upcoming quarter once the Gender Specialist has been hired. The GLC's mandate and roles will be crafted by the Gender Specialist in consultation with the GLC's initial members.
- 1.1.6. Creation of Women Retailers through AIRN: By the end of the first quarter, three strong women-led local NGOs had already been identified in the project areas. These organizations are Ashroy Foundation, Banchte Shekha, and the Association of Voluntary Actions for Society (AVAS), which are operational in the Khulna, Jessore, and Barisal regions, respectively.
- 1.1.7. Strengthen Agricultural Input Wholesale Associations: Activities under this intervention area component will get underway as program start-up reaches completion and program implementation moves forward. This will include the following areas:
- 1.1.7.1. Directory of Input Supply Companies and Wholesalers
 - 1.1.7.2. Capacity Building of BSA, BFA, and BCPA
 - 1.1.7.3. Collaboration with IFPRI's Bangladesh Policy Research and Strategy Support Program (BPRSSP)

1.2. *Trainings and Study Tours*: Similar to many of the activities mentioned above, these interventions will take place as program start-up reaches completion and program implementation moves forward. These include the following activities:

- 1.2.1. Development of Training Modules
- 1.2.2. Master Trainers' Selection, Training of Trainers, and Trainings

Study tours are not planned until Year 2 of program implementation

1.3. *AIRN Promotion*: The development of concepts and themes of AIRN promotional materials has already begun. Several designs for the AIRN logo have been developed and evaluated, and one has been selected, pending the approval of the color scheme. Since one of the key aims of AIP is to promote viable relationships of trust between smallholders and input retailers, the word Astha (which means "trust") in AIRN's logo captures this spirit.

- 1.3.1. Branding and Marketing Campaign for AIRN: Once the AIRN logo is finalized, AIP will use it when it begins its marketing campaign.
- 1.3.2. Public Awareness Campaign for Proper Use of Seed, Fertilizer, and Pesticides: These activities will begin as the demonstration plots are established.
- 1.3.3. E-books Improvement: AIP will begin these activities once it begins working in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture.

2. Market Information Systems

- 2.1. *Ag-Inputs Monthly Price Outlook Bulletin*: While preparing for the initial GIS data assessment (to be conducted in February 2013), AIP is arranging meetings for consultations with the Department of Agricultural Marketing, Bayer Crop Science, and private companies. These consultations will assess the data currently available for integration in such a tool, and will help identify remaining areas where data need to be collected.
- 2.2. *GIS Development*: A scope of work was developed in the first quarter for AIP sub-implementer Spatial Systems Associates to visit Bangladesh to collect information which will help inform the development of the GIS. This visit will take place in the following quarter.
- 2.3. *Agricultural Exhibitions*: Due to the timing of the start of the project, the first exhibition will take place in December 2013.
- 2.4. *The Demonstration Plots*
 - 2.4.1. Identification of Collaborators and Plots: Locations for demonstration plots have been evaluated. The plots will be set up in upcoming program months.
 - 2.4.2. Field Days: Field Days will be held once the demonstration plots are up and under operation.
 - 2.4.3. Demonstrations to Promote High-Value Nutritious Crops and Technologies: Once the GLC is established, select female farmers and gardeners will be selected to conduct these demonstrations on the AIP demonstration plots.

3. Quality Control and Regulatory Standards

- 3.1. *Adherence to Industry Standards*: Activities under this component will get underway in upcoming quarters, particularly as relationships are established with the relevant government departments and areas of the Ministry of Agriculture.

- 3.2. *AIRN Certification*: Activities under this component are scheduled to occur later in the program year
- 3.3. *AIRN Business Ethics Committee*: Activities under this component will occur after the AIRN is established in upcoming quarters.
- 3.4. *Monitoring*: Activities under this component will get underway in upcoming quarters once the AIRN member retailers are trained and committed to the code of ethics. Planning for monitoring adherence to quality control and regulatory standards has been integrated in to the preparation.
- 3.5. *Policy and Legal Analyses*: Activities under this task will take place simultaneously with 3.1 (above) later in the program year for the seed sector, with an emphasis on GoB laws and policies governing the seed sector.
4. **Strengthening Local Organizations**: In the first quarter, several drafts of the Grants Manual were produced, but not yet finalized. While the Grants Manual is directed towards awards which will assist women-owned start-up agricultural retailers, significant attention to a document outlining the process regarding awards made to strengthen local organizations in order to build their capacity as USAID implementers was also made. The Grants Manual will be finalized once the Gender Assessment is completed we obtain input from the three women NGOs.
- 4.1. *Organizational Capacity Assessment*: Organizational capacity assessments of at least three local partners are planned for the end of the program year.
- 4.2. *Training Design*: Development of the content for organizational capacity building will begin later in the program year following the organizational capacity assessments.

IV. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

The first draft of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (MEP) was submitted to USAID in December 2012. A Results Framework (RF) was also developed and included in the document to guide the whole MEP. The results framework was used in order to identify the recommended performance indicators (PIs) to be tracked throughout the life of the program. In addition, the AIP team worked on the creation of reference sheets, which specify the source, method, tools and frequency of data collection, specific to each of the PIs. AIP continued to incorporate USAID's feedback on the draft document through the end of the quarter.

Detailed output tracking information according to program intervention areas, including projections for upcoming program years, are included in Annex 4 of this report.

V. Project Management, Mobilization, and Cross-Cutting Themes

1. Logistics

The first quarter of AIP required considerable attention to a great deal of logistical items. Offices were established in Dhaka and Khulna, both of which needed to be furnished and set up with Internet connections. Procurement of some office equipment remains to be completed, but both offices are operational and nearly completely staffed by this point.

Housing arrangements for the Chief of Party and the Senior Capacity Building Specialist were arranged, and rent agreements have been signed for both.

There has been some delay in obtaining the from the GOB for exclusion from VAT, which has made some logistics-related activities difficult to arrange for our expatriate staff, and has tied up considerable resources that would have been best allocated elsewhere.

2. Staffing

In the first quarter, all Key Personnel and most of the local staff were brought onto the AIP team. In addition to the substantial amount of hiring that took place during this period, the Chief of Party resigned at the end of the quarter. The Senior Capacity Building Advisor immediately stepped in as Acting Chief of Party, and CNFA deployed Mark Treacy as a consultant to Bangladesh to assist in pushing forward many of the pending deliverables that were left unfinished by the departing Chief of Party. A new Chief of Party, Martin West, was immediately recruited, and arrived in Dhaka shortly after the commencement of the second quarter in January 2013.

Designation	Name	Joining Date	Expected Joining Date
Chief of Party*#	Martin West	20.Jan.13	19.Jan.13
Senior Capacity Building Advisor*	Scott Arche	23.Sept.12	
Agricultural Input Supply Chain Advisor*	Md.Mehedi Hasan	4.Nov.12	
Agro-Input Quality Control and Standard Specialist*	Sardar Md.Salahuddin	12.Nov.12	
M&E Advisor*	M.Zakaria	5.Nov.12	
Senior Agribusiness Advisor	Md.Maksudur Rahman	18.Nov.12	
Senior Training Specialist	Syed Mahmudul Huq		10.Feb.13
Policy and Enabling Environmental Advisor	Nizamuddin Al Hussainy	27.Jan.13	27.Jan.13
Communications and Public Relations Specialist	Jannatul Ferdous	4.Nov.12	
Finance and Administration Manager	M. Kamruzzaman	9.Dec.12	
M&E Specialist	Md.Sarwar	21.Jan.13	21.Jan.13
M&E Specialist	Shahena Parvin Munni		10.Feb.13
Operations Director	Faiz Ahmed	29.Sep.12	
Office Manager-Khulna	Syed Ashraf Hussain	1.Nov.12	
GIS Specialist	M. Hamidur Rashid	29.Jan.13	29.Jan.13
Grants Specialist	Arifa Chowdhury	23.Jan.13	23.Jan.13
IT Specialist	Hasan Zahir	17.Dec.12	
* = Key Personnel			
# = Replacing first COP			

3. Sub-awards

In the first quarter, no sub-awards were made. However, several drafts of the Grants Manual were developed and submitted to USAID for review and comments. It was decided there would need to be separate documents to guide the award and management of sub-awards to local organizations for capacity building, and for the award and management of matching grants to local start-up retailers. It is expected these documents will be approved by USAID later this program year, especially once the Gender Assessment is completed we obtain input from the three women NGOs.

4. Communications and Public Relations

Communication materials are being developed to promote AIP in order to encourage program participation and disseminate key accomplishments and announcements. The Agro-Inputs Project will use the following mediums for project promotion: frequent press releases to announce project launch, activities and results; success stories; and public relations materials including project brochures and newsletters.

- **Program Brochures** – a brochure that explains clearly and concisely the aim of the project, its approach and the expected results is being developed. The brochure will include project objectives, developments, collaboration with key partners, and contact information. The first draft was sent out to CNFA HQ for review. Due to the changes in the project goal there has been a delay in writing a final draft of the brochure. A final draft is expected by the middle of the second quarter..
- **One-page Program Summary** – A brief, one-page program summary has been produced. This document will be suitable for email circulation or hand-out at events to anyone interested in an overview of the project.
- **Geographical Map**- A map of the project areas is depicted in color. This map will be updated as AIP establishes main offices and satellite offices in each of the target districts.
- **PowerPoint Presentation**- A general presentation has been developed and is being used in meetings with different associations and stakeholders.
- **Website**- Accessing the web for project information is a great way to disseminate information. AIP will soon develop a website to promote the project by reaching out to larger audiences. Currently the team is developing a call for proposals and scope of work to create a website. AIP will seek proposals from at least three vendors and will choose the best one from the three. AIP intends to launch the project website in April.

The website shall include the following:

- The website to be developed shall take into account design elements of CNFA website (<http://www.cnfa.org>)
 - The website will contain information about AIP, resource centre, opportunities, and different sectors of the project
 - The website will be dynamic and should allow easy information to update
 - The website will have photo gallery which will allow the AIP to post project photos along with captions and additional information
 - The website will also include an email campaign manager to help AIP compose and send out newsletters, success stories, and market information to stakeholders who opt for them
- **Project Launch**: AIP initially planned to prepare for the launch in the first quarter and to hold it by February 2013, but due to the change in Chief of Party, the event has not yet taken place as planned. To make the launch more

effective and collaborative, AIP will involve all the associations, partners, USAID, and the GoB. In the meantime, AIP has made a checklist of preparations to be made in the upcoming quarter in advance of the launch.

5. Gender

During the first quarter, the Scope of Work for the first gender assessment, along with an initial desk study of gender issues related to the agricultural inputs sector in Bangladesh, were developed by CNFA headquarters in consultation with field staff and USAID. Recruitment for a local Gender Specialist was ongoing throughout the first quarter, but finding a suitable candidate willing to be based in Khulna proved to be a challenge. The implementation of the first gender assessment has been delayed until a local Gender Specialist has been hired by AIP, which is expected to occur in February 2013.

The first gender assessment in Year 1 will identify how AIRN can enable the successful establishment and running of women-owned input retailers, and address gender-based challenges to increasing women's access to and safe use of quality agricultural inputs. This will take in the current degree of participation of women in the agricultural input sector, as retailers and consumers. Outputs will aid AIRN and sub-awarded female-operated NGOs to integrate appropriate approaches into strategic program direction and activities. The assessment will help determine the following:

- major limitations and challenges to women farmers to acquire inputs,
- major limitations and challenges to women selling inputs,
- the role AIRN, and AIP, can play in addressing these limitations and challenges,
- recommendations on adjusting modalities of matching grants, and
- a strategic plan with specific actions to integrate findings into the AIP.

6. Matching Grants

Matching grants activities were not scheduled to begin in the first quarter. As indicated previously, the Grants Manual was developed and drafts were submitted to USAID for review and comment. This Manual will ultimately be used to guide the award and management process for matching grants for start-up agricultural input retailers, focusing on women, in target districts of Bangladesh. The Grants Manual will be finalized once the Gender Assessment is completed we obtain input from the three women NGOs.

7. Environment

A Scope of Work for an initial Environmental Assessment was developed during the first quarter. Initially, this scope of work called for the creation of the following documents:

- ✓ **Environmental Due Diligence Review** (for proposed AIP activities not previously determined by the IEE to cause no environmental effects)

- ✓ **Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan**, including planned reporting
- ✓ **Environmental Manual** (to guide the implementation of AIP activities and ensure compliance with environmental standards and requirements)

Consultations with USAID regarding the Scope of Work, however, resulted in the decision to have the initial assessment be solely the Environmental Due Diligence Review, which should be conducted by a local Environmental Specialist. The implementation of this Review was delayed, as it took considerable time to recruit for a suitable person to hold the Environmental Specialist position. This Review will now take place in the second quarter.

VI. Financial and Expenditure Summary

Cooperative Agreement No.:	AID-388-A-12-00005
Date of Issuance:	September 17, 2012
Total Potential Amount:	\$14,028,602
Amount Obligated to date:	\$2,000,000
Total Project Funds Expended To Date:	\$390,046
Project Funds Expended During the Reporting Quarter:	\$390,046

VII. Key Constraints

1. Meetings with MoA and the three key input associations delayed: this has resulted in the delay of several activities which depend on collaboration with these institutions.
2. Hartals: a significant amount of hartals (strikes/protests) have disrupted program operations in the first quarter in Dhaka and in other project sites. These hartals often result in business closures and severe difficulty for program staff to travel.
3. Delay in arrival of initial Chief of Party and the Senior Capacity Building Advisor due to unforeseen family issues.
4. Change in Chiefs of Party: Rick Pierce's resignation disrupted program implementation and resulted in further delay of several project deliverables.
5. Lack of sufficient staff for start-up: not having enough staff to share the burden of start-up tasks slowed down initial progress of taking care of the AIP start-up logistics
6. Relocation of staff to Khulna: it was challenging to attract suitable staff to fill key roles based out of the Khulna office.

VIII. Summary of Next Quarter's Main Activities

1. AIRN will be established with an initial registration of retailers
2. Demonstration plots will be established.

3. Gender Lens Committee will be formed and the selection process of the first female retailers will begin.
4. Initial Capacity Building Assessments of implementing partners will be carried out.
5. Strategic coordination will be established with at least three Feed-the-Future projects and one additional non-USAID funded project.
6. Gender assessment will be completed.
7. Initial GIS assessment will be completed.
8. Remaining staff will be hired.

Annexes

1. Performance Data Table

In subsequent quarterly progress reports, this section will contain a detailed table of the quarter's and cumulative progress against the MEP. The MEP is not yet completed/approved, so this section is currently blank.

2. Publications Produced in the Quarter

Below are the following publications which were produced this quarter:

- Power Point Presentation: this is the general power point presentation used to inform stakeholders about AIP's objectives and intervention areas.
- Program Summary: this is a promotional hand-out to communicate AIP's objectives to stakeholders.
- Project Map

These documents are included as separate attachments to this quarterly progress report.

3. Activity Performance Tracker

This is a table that uses the same GANT as the Six-Month Stat Up Plan from the Annual Work Plan, and colors in the months boxes:

- Activity has begun (say, green)
- Activity is delayed and hasn't begun (say, yellow)
- Activities completed (say red)

Activities in the plan not scheduled for the months pertaining this quarter remain blank

Six-Month Start-Up Plan- Quarter 1

Activities	Month 1				Month 2				Month 3				Month 4			
	9.16	9.23	9.30	10.7	10.14	10.21	10.28	11.4	11.11	11.18	11.25	12.2	12.9	12.16	12.23	12.30
Mobilize CNFA launch team	█															
CNFA launch team arrival in Bangladesh		█														
Chief of Party and Senior Capacity Building Advisor arrival in Bangladesh		█	█	█	█											
Remaining key Bangladeshi staff mobilized				█	█	█	█									
Office space leased in Khulna and Dhaka					█	█										
Office equipment and supplies procured					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Program and support staff hired					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Internal office procedures established					█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Initial meetings held with USAID staff		█	█	█	█											
Initial meetings held with Input Associations and GOB			█	█	█	█	█									
Exploratory meetings with other local partners, donors and NGOs			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Agreements signed with local partners in Barisal and Jhenaidah for office space and support																
Annual work plan drafted and approved									█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Grants manual prepared and submitted to USAID												█	█	█	█	█
Performance monitoring and evaluation plan (PMEP) drafted and approved												█	█	█	█	█
Six field staff hired																
Program marketing and outreach materials prepared							█	█	█	█	█					

Project launch event planned and executed																
1st Gender Assessment																
Establish gender lens committee																
Branding and marking prepared and submitted																
Environmental due diligence review prepared																

4. Numerical Output Tracker

This is a table which tracks the progress of quantitative deliverables, and shows illustrative targets for years 2, 3, 4, and 5. As program intervention gets underway, these outputs will be closely tracked as indicated in Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and in the Implementer's Handbook.

Activity	LOP Target	Year 1 Target	Projected Targets			
			Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
1 Establish Agro Input Retail Network						
1.1. Establish the Agro Input Retailers Network						
Improved capacity of leading input industry associations (BSA, BFA, BCPA, and AIRN) (# org.)	4	1	2	1		
Develop new member services (# services)	12	2	3	4	3	
Develop new strategic partnerships with multi-national companies (# company)	12	2	4	4	2	
Conduct policy dialogue events by assisted associations with government officials (# policy dialogues)	32	4	6	6	8	8
Provide matching grants (\$1,000) to women retailers (# women retailer)	300	20	200	80		
1.2 Trainings/seminars/national and international study tours						
Conduct AIRN business and technical training sessions (# session)	160	24	96	40		
AIRN retailers attend business and technical training (# retailer)	3,000	432	1728	840		
Conduct regional and local study tours (5 regional + 5 local) (# of tour)	10		3	3	3	1
Retailers and other stakeholders participate in the study tours (at least 20% are women) (# participant)	125		35	42	40	8
New business models introduced and adopted by input retailers (# module)	8		2	2	2	2
New business models introduced and adopted by input wholesalers (# module)	3				2	1
Provide ToT on Business Management Training to master trainers (Male 5, Female 2) (# person)	7	7				
Conduct training of trainer sessions for commercial trainer (# person)	20	5	15			
Commercial trainers conduct training to AIRN, BSA, BFA and BCPA members (# participant)	3,015	515	2,000	500		
Conduct CropLife Asia designed 'safe use' training to AIRN retailers (# participant)	3,000		1,000	1,000	1,000	
Conduct village sessions on garnering support from families and neighbours for women retailers (# sessions)	300	20	200	80		
1.3 Prepare and distribute brochures						
Enhancement of existing best practice materials and develop guides for key crops (# crops)	14	2	4	4	4	
Distribute print materials on key crops (# copy)	10,000	1,450	2,850	2,850	2,850	
Develop new educational publications (# publication)	23	3	5	5	5	5
Develop new materials by the private sector companies (# material)	9		2	3	4	
Create AIRN logo	1	1				
Develop project brochure	1	1				

Activity	LOP Target	Year 1 Target	Projected Targets			
			Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
2 Market Information Systems						
2.1 Analysis and distribution of Ag-Inputs Monthly Price Outlook						
Publish Ag-Input Monthly Price Outlooks (# Outlook)	48		12	12	12	12
Distribute print version through retailers and advisory centres across (# copy)	200,000		50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Utilize GPS to plot retailers assigning unique identification numbers (# retailer)	3,000	500	2,000	500		
Develop a directory of retailers (# retailer)	3,000	500	2,000	500		
2.2 Agricultural exhibitions						
Facilitate annual exhibitions (# exhibition)	5		2	1	2	
National companies participating in the exhibition (# company)	80		25	18	37	
Multinational input supply companies participate the exhibition (# company)	20		6	4	10	
Exhibition of new products (# product)	100		25	15	60	
2.3 Collaborative demonstration plots with other FTF programs						
Organize demonstration plots (# demonstration plot) make consistent with WP int. 2	500	65	150	150	85	50
Farmers participate in the demonstration plots (# of farmer)	50,000	5,000	15,000	15,000	10,000	5,000
Test and adopt new input products (# of product)	30	3	7	8	8	4
Results of demonstration trials' results disseminated through radio and other media outlets (# event)	15	2	5	5	2	1

Activity	LOP Target	Year 1 Target	Projected Targets			
			Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
3 Quality control and standards and regulatory constraints						
3.1 Adherence to industry standards						
Develop, adopt, and monitor new input quality standards (# standard)	6	1	2	1	1	1
3.2 Certification and business ethics						
Create quality standards and business ethics monitoring committee (# committee)	1		1			
Certification of retailers (# retailer)	3,000		2,000	500	500	
Smallholders served by certified retailers (# smallholder)	1,000,000		700,000	175,000	125,000	
3.3 Monitoring						
Input companies participate in the Business ethics committee (# of company)	3		3			
Conduct audit annually by independent auditors on business ethics (# audits)	4		1	1	1	1
Retailers audited renewing certification each year (80% of the retailers) (# of retailer)	2,400		1,600	400	400	
3.4 Coordination of policy, legal and regulatory constraints						
Identify policy constraints and present to the policy dialogue group (# policy constraint)	8		2	2	2	2
Conduct gender assessment and follow-up assessment (# assessment)	2	1			1	
Form Program Advisory Committee consisting of public and private stakeholders (# committee)	1		1			
Organize semi-annually meetings of AIP Advisory Committee (# meeting)	8		2	2	2	2

Activity	LOP Target	Year 1 Target	Projected Targets			
			Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
4 Strengthening local organizations						
Provide subawards to local implementing partners (# awards)	30		10	15	5	
Develop specific technical assistance package for all local organizations (# package)	1	1				
Value of subawards provided to local implementing partners	\$750,000		to be determined			
Local organizations and businesses developed to deliver improved input service provision (# organization)	20			10	10	
Provide TA to develop pre-award survey by local accounting firm (# tech assistance)	1		1			
Local organizations qualify to implement USG-funded programming (# organization)	3				2	1

5. Training Log

In upcoming quarterly progress reports, this log will track the quarter's and cumulative person-days of training in table form: type of training, person-days disaggregated by gender, and percentage by gender. There has been no training at this point in the program, so this portion of the report has been omitted.