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KNOWLEDGE-BASED INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION (KISAN) PROJECT

MONTHLY REPORT — JUNE 2013
CONTRACT NUMBER AID-367-C-13-00004

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A. INTRODUCTION/SUMMARY

Winrock International was awarded a contract from the United States Agency for International Development in Nepal (USAID/Nepal) for the Knowledge-Based Integrated Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition (KISAN) Project. KISAN is the flagship food security project of USAID/Nepal's Feed the Future (FTF) initiative. The Project's overall goal is to sustainably reduce poverty and hunger in Nepal by achieving inclusive growth in the agriculture sector, increasing the incomes of farm families, and improving nutritional status, especially of women and children. The project is implemented in collaboration with five Nepali organizations as subcontractors: Antenna Foundation Nepal (AFN); Development Project Service Center (DEPROSC); Center for Environmental and Agricultural Policy, Research, Extension and Development (CEAPRED); Nutrition Promotion and Consultancy Services (NPCS); and Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH). During the first year, the project will work in ten districts in the Bheri and Rapti Zones of the Mid-Western Development Region. This multifaceted project will integrate agriculture and nutrition in order to increase agricultural production and improve the nutritional status of women, and children under the age of five. As per the contract (Section C.4.8.8.c.), Winrock is required to submit monthly reports. This monthly report covers activities in June 2013.

B. SUMMARY OF COUNTRY CONTEXT

This has been a quiet month with no disruptions on the political front. The floods in the far west of the country in late June have however wreaked havoc in communities in the districts there. KISAN is yet to initiate activities there so this has not impacted the project.

C. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Start Up Tasks

Staff and Offices

In June Winrock submitted approvals for, and hired an additional seven KISAN staff for central and regional positions. The Agriculture Component Expert, Dr Purushottam Mainali has been hired and will join office on July 1. District coordinators and other regional staff have assumed positions in their respective districts and have initiated dialogue with district and village development committees (VDC) GON authorities.

KISAN has identified and has signed contracts for an additional 10 staff, primarily field staff who will join in July. A number of other field staff have been identified and we expect that contract finalization will take place in July.

Administrative

Winrock is developing a single KISAN Project Policy (including standardized per diem) based on the Contract and USAID policies and is continuing to finalize details with partners.

Contract Deliverables

In May and June, 2013 Winrock has finalized and submitted the Life of Project Implementation (LOPIM), Procurement, Outreach and Communications, and Monitoring and Evaluation Plans as per the scheduled submission deadlines as indicated in Table I.

Winrock received USAID's comments to the LOPIM on June 27, and will integrate those suggestions once agreement is reached between USAID and Winrock on the modifications.

WINROCK and KISAN are awaiting comments on the other submitted documents. The Annual Work Plan (AWP) was also ready for submission on June 10.

However, Winrock received an amendment document from USAID in the evening of 5 June suggesting modifications to KISAN's baseline, its approach to Component B, a revised cost estimate, and a changed reporting calendar among other items. Winrock has since deferred the submission of the AWP, as requested by USAID, to allow discussions and development of a baseline and new Component B proposal. Please see the next section for details.

TABLE I. Contract Deliverables

Deliverable Documentation	Due Dates	Status
Life of Project Implementation Plan	May 17, 2013	Submitted Received comments from USAID on June 27
Procurement Plan	May 30, 2013	Submitted
Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	June 5, 2013	Submitted
Annual Work Plan	June 10, 2013	New submission date scheduled for August as per modification timeline
Outreach and Communications Plan	June 10, 2013	Submitted June 27
Environment Mitigation and Management Plan	June 10, 2013	Ready; will be submitted with AWP
Grants Under Contracts	August 14, 2013	In progress
Security Report	August 14, 2013	In progress

Field Activities

District coordinators and other regional staff have assumed positions in Dang, Bardiya, Rolpa, Salyan, Rukum, and Banke districts and have initiated dialogue with agriculture, nutrition and sanitation GON authorities at district and village development committee (VDC) levels. Staff will begin activities in all remaining mid-west districts from July 1 once the remaining staff are hired. Agriculture field interventions are being planned in close coordination with other FtF projects, CSISA and IL, as appropriate. The KISAN teams have begun on-site visits in a number of districts through June.

Together with Ajaya Bajracharya (Sustainable Agriculture Production/Senior Regional Manager), Virendra Upreti (Agriculture Production/Regional Manager), and Evan Meyer (Agricultural Office, USAID) the team visited several sites in Surkhet, Bardiya, and Banke:

- Khajura MPC with IPM/IL/IDE Officers.
- Betahani Seed Cooperative to interact with the Cooperative Management committee members in Hari Krishna Agri Cooperative in Sorahawa-7 Simara and Shivachok Bardiya.

- Sano Shri Cooperative chairperson in Bardiya to discuss the seed production program.
- Sahare Bagh Khor in Surkhet with the CSISA team to learn about the maize trial demos being conducted by CSISA.

Similarly, another team of senior project staff including KISAN COP Bill Collis and Agriculture Marketing Manager Ajaya Bajracharya have made a number of visits at sites in the far-west and mid-west districts in preparation for field activities. The team visited:

- Saund agrovets at Amargadhi, Dadheldhura to assess the demand supply situation of cereal and vegetables seeds.
- Vegetable traders and key agrovets in Dhangadi for information on the marketing situation of major vegetables and the demand and supply situation of agri inputs.
- Vegetable whole market at Attariya and discussed the supply of vegetables and fruits in different seasons with the wholesalers.
- The NARC Research center in Khajura to discuss source seed production and demand supply situation with the NARC RD Dr. Yuba Raj Pandey.
- Private sector seed production and marketing Company GATE at Banktawa, Khajura discuss current cereal seeds demand and supply status, and to learn about the company operation system from the company MD. GATE has indicated willingness to cooperate with KISAN.
- Kohalpur MPC to observe market operation. The team held interactions with the MPC Manager Mrs. Chitra Patahak and the Chairperson Mr. Chabi Bhattarai, learning about post-harvest losses during transportation and storage, as well as the lease system of the rented warehouses.
- CSISA-NP sites in Bardiya and Banke together with the CSISA-NP team.
- KISAN COP also interacted with the CSISA team leader Dr. DP Sherchan in Nepalganj, and discussed possibilities of strengthening infrastructure in the Kohalpur Agri. Market.

Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan

As part of KISAN's Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), the project will develop an evaluation of programs through a Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safe Use Action Plan (PERSUAP) that outlines currently used agrochemicals, or those that may be used in the future. In June, Winrock fielded pesticide expert Dr James Litsinger to produce a PERSUAP that serves as an action plan to ensure safe and economic agrochemical use for activities supported by KISAN for cereal crop production (rice, maize, pulses) and high value agriculture including but not limited to, sweet peppers, cauliflower, tomatoes, green beans, apples, goats, poultry.

In the course of the three week assignment, Dr Litsinger will meet various GON departments of agriculture and livestock including Plant Protection Directorate/IPM Manager in Kathmandu and Nepalgunj, and also visit some field sites. He has also met the IL/IDE project representative, as well as agrovets, scientists, subject matter specialists, and private sector wholesalers to understand the current pesticides available in the market. Dr Litsinger discussed the key issues identified with representatives at USAID on June 28. Upon completion of the assignment, KISAN will present his

findings and action plans to USAID as well as important public (such as the Pesticide Regulatory Body of the Government) and private stakeholders related to pesticide usage in Nepal.

KISAN PROJECT AMENDMENT

Winrock received USAID's amendment document suggesting modifications in KISAN's baseline, Component B approach and reporting calendar among other items on June 5. This modification requested that Winrock submit a proposal for the baseline and for two potential approaches for Component B that vary significantly from Winrock's project design and the existing KISAN Contract.

Winrock requested that a discussion take place with USAID. Winrock Home Office and Field Staff have had several meetings with USAID colleagues seeking clarification on the proposal requests and staff priority and on communications on this contract. Winrock submitted official questions regarding the request for modifications on June 14.

The KISAN M&E team including the COP met with USAID indicator and baseline team (Navin Hada, Amy Prevatt, Evan Meyer) on June 10.

On June 12, this discussion was extended and involved Senior Winrock personnel including the VP Ron Hubbard, KISAN CO Kimberly Dixon, KISAN Program Officer Erin Hughes and the Kathmandu based KISAN COP and Contract Manager. They spoke with the USAID acting CO and a number of senior USAID SEED personnel (Martha Aponte, John Stamm, Tahalia Barret, Navin Hada and Ram Gurung). A major suggestion of this meeting was that Winrock submit a formal list of questions in response USAID's modification request. Those questions were submitted on 14 June, and Winrock received USAID's responses to the modification questions on 28 June.

On June 14 the KISAN Nutrition team including senior NPCCS personnel, the COP and others met with USAID health and nutrition team that included Tahalia Baret, Navin Hada, Debendra Adhikari and Hari Koirala.

The suggested modifications and the issues raised in it have caused a recess in project planning and project implementation particularly as it applies to Component B.

According to the proposed modification, the First Annual Work Plan is now to cover the period 15 July 2013 through 14 July, 2014. Once understanding and agreement are reached on the details of the proposed modification, work on the AWP, particularly as it applies to Component B, will recommence.

PROJECT INTEGRATION

GON

KISAN continues to liaise closely with GON Ministries and departments at national as well as at field levels. The Ministry of Agriculture Development and Ministry of Health and Population have both designated respective points of contact for the KISAN project. The project has met more than several with those concerned.

MOAD – Dr Hari Adhikari, Joint Secretary. MOAD

DOA- Mr. B.B. Hamal, DDG Planning

MOHP – Mr Raj Kumar Pokharel, Chief of Childhood Nutrition Section of the MOHP

GAFSP

- As instructed by the MOAD and USAID, KISAN will be carried out in close cooperation with the World Bank funded Agriculture and Food Security Project (AFSP) for the life of both projects as both programs share goals (agriculture and nutrition targets) and share 11 districts. KISAN continues frequent interactions with WB, GON/AFSP, and USAID to discuss project approaches, potential areas for synergy, and most importantly VDC selection.
- As previously agreed, AFSP invited KISAN to take part in its first ASFP inception workshop in Dadeldura District on 20 and 21 June. The COP provided an overview of the project to the DADOs and CDO of the Far-Western Districts. This included a discussion of how VDC selection was to occur.
- AFSP-KISAN and are scheduled to hold a joint project launch event in Kathmandu on July 23rd.
- Final VDC selection and demarcation between the projects will hopefully take place in July-August. Details including potential synergies for agriculture and nutrition await clarification. Of particular importance is our lack of clarity in regards to the AFSP Nutrition component coverage which may conflict with USAID's modification suggestions.

USAID's FTF and GHI Projects

KISAN continues to work in close collaboration with USAID's other Feed the Future (FtF) and its Global Health Initiative projects and Climate Change programs.

KISAN has established close coordination with the other USAID funded programs operating in the FTF region that include Sajhedaari Bikaas, Health for Life, Hariyo Ban and others through monthly program coordination meetings. KISAN was invited to attend Sajhedaari's Inception workshop and present KISAN approaches and programs in Nepalgunj on June 11.

KISAN has established close coordination with the other FTF programs; IPM-CRSP, Horticulture-CRSP and the CSISA projects, and has conducted joint visits to field sites with these programs. This partnership will be further strengthened through a joint Inception Workshop with the IPM CRSP to launch both projects regionally. The event is scheduled for July 30 in Nepalgunj.

As per the Contract, KISAN is to base nutrition and sanitation messages on existing behavior change communication material developed by the Suaahara project. Suaahara materials have been collected.

Public-Private Partnerships

KISAN continues to explore opportunities to leverage Component A and B outputs through collaborations with public and private organizations in the KISAN districts. Discussions for possible collaboration with a range of stakeholders continues. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF) is being finalized. The process has been delayed due to the impending end of the Nepali fiscal year, and PAF's current involvement with World Bank missions.

E. SUMMARY OF GRANT IMPLEMENTATION AND APPRAISAL

The grants program has not started. The Grants under Contract Manual will be provided to USAID 180 days after signing the contract as per section F.4 of the contract. The due date is August 13, 2013, this also may be delayed due to the ongoing changes to be bought about by the suggested modification.

F. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND PROPOSED REMEDIAL ACTIONS

KISAN received the Modification document, which suggests significant changes to certain aspects of the KISAN Contract, particularly pertaining to Component A activities. This has necessitated

revisions in overall project planning. Winrock is concerned that this will further delay project implementation.

While modifications clarifying the baseline requirements and Component B approach were anticipated, the intensity and systemic changes to Component B activities through FCHVs in all wards of all VDCs in all districts was not. Winrock requests clearer communication on these issues.

KISAN seeks to clarify the final project modality for both Component A and B, as well as details of coordination with AFSP as soon as possible so that activities can begin at field level.

Winrock received USAID's response to questions about the modifications on the afternoon of 28 June. Winrock anticipates that USAID's response document will establish clarity about the project approach and deliverables among KISAN partners and staff, enabling all activities to begin at field level.

G. STATUS OF PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

The Amendment document has raised multiple previously identified implementation issues, but does not finalize any of them. Winrock will continue to attempt to coordinate and work closely with USAID to resolve these issues.