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FINAL REPORT

**INCENTIVES DRIVING ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVES FOR THE NORTH,
EAST AND WEST (IDEA-NEW)**

MARCH 2, 2009–SEPTEMBER 30, 2015



DECEMBER 2015

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by DAI in partnership with ACDI/VOCA and Mercy Corps.



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FRONT COVER: An IDEA-NEW expert demonstrated grafting techniques during a training provided for Fruit Grower Association members at the Shesham Bagh Research Center in Jalalabad city, Nangarhar.

INSIDE COVER: IDEA-NEW sponsored farmer field days and trainings helped farmers improve their agricultural methods and techniques, resulting in increased yields and better overall farming practices. Here, an IDEA-NEW supported farmer in Behsud district, Nangarhar harvests corn from his field.

BACK COVER: A farmer in Nangarhar shows one of the text messages he received as part of IDEA-NEW's short message service (SMS) marketing program, which provided cost-share grants to input suppliers for the implementation of this innovative marketing program.

CONTENTS

- ABBREVIATIONSIII**
- FOREWORD V**
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY VII**
- CHAPTER ONE: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT 1**
- CHAPTER TWO: PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS 5**
- FOCUS ON PRODUCTION (2009-2013)..... 5**
- VALUE CHAIN INTERVENTIONS..... 5**
 - Grape Value Chain..... 5
 - Orchard Crop Value Chain 9
 - Vegetable Value Chain..... 14
 - Poultry Value Chain..... 18
 - Wheat Value Chain 23
 - Silk Value Chain..... 26
 - Honey Value Chain 29
 - Karakul and Small Ruminants Value Chain 32
- STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURE INFRASTRUCTURE 36**
- OTHER PROJECTS/INTERVENTIONS..... 43**
- IMPACT ON POPPY PRODUCTION 47**
- FOCUS ON AGRIBUSINESSES (2013-2015) 49**
- SUPPORT TO INPUT SUPPLIERS..... 50**
- SUPPORT TO FOOD PROCESSORS 59**
- SUPPORT TO DOMESTIC AGRIBUSINESSES IN EXPANDING MARKETS 62**
- CROSSCUTTING ACTIVITIES 65**
 - Gender Integration 65
 - Coordination with GIRoA and Other Donor Projects 72
 - Sustainability and Capacity Building 76
- INDICATOR PERFORMANCE NARRATIVE 83**
- CHAPTER THREE: BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED 95**
 - Best Practices 95
 - Challenges and Lessons Learned 96
 - Recommendations for Future Interventions 97
- ANNEX I: FINAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR OVERVIEW 99**
- ANNEX II: SELECTED SUCCESS STORIES 99**
- ANNEX III: IMPACT ASSESSMENTS AND SURVEYS 99**

ABBREVIATIONS

A2F	Access to Finance
AAEP	Afghanistan Agriculture Extension Program
ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
ACCI	Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries
ADF	Agricultural Development Fund
ADP-E	Alternative Development Program–East
ADP-N	Alternative Development Program–North
ADT	Agribusiness Development Team
AFN	Afghanis (currency)
AISA	Afghanistan Investment Support Agency
ANHDO	Afghanistan National Horticulture Development Organization
ANNGO	Afghanistan National Nursery Growers’ Organization
ASCDA	Afghan Social Cashmere Development Association
B2B	Business-to-Business
BLDU	Balkh Livestock Dairy Union
BVW	Basic Veterinary Workers
CBCMP	Capacity Building and Change Management Program
CCI	Community Constructed Infrastructure
CCP	Critical Control Points
CDC	Community Development Councils
CHAMP	Commercial Horticulture and Agricultural Marketing Program
CPF	Commercial Production Farm
CTV	Citrus Tristeza Virus
CU	Control Union
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
DAIL	Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
DCA	Dutch Committee for Afghanistan
DDA	District Development Assembly
DoE	Department of Economy
DoPW	Department of Public Works
DoWA	Department of Women’s Affairs
EOI	Expressions of Interest
FAIDA	Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

ha	Hectare
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
IDEA-NEW	Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives–North, East and West
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IRC	International Rescue Committee
kg	Kilogram
km	Kilometer
m ³	Cubic Meter
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MoPH	Ministry of Public Health
MoU	Memoranda of Understanding
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises
MT	Metric Ton
NCCI	Nangarhar Chamber of Commerce and Industries
NCE	No-Cost Extension
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NVDA	Nangarhar Valley Development Authority
PDC	Provincial Development Committee
PERSUAP	Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan
PGC	Prosperity Group of Companies
PHDP	Perennial Horticulture Development Program
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PVS	Participatory Varietal Selection
RADP	Regional Agricultural Development Program
RCC	Reinforced Cement Concrete
RMHC	Rabia Maryam Handicrafts Company
SMS	Short Message Service
ToT	Training of Trainers
TWG	Technical Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations’ Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VFU	Veterinary Field Unit
2WT	Two-wheel Tractor

FOREWORD

The purpose of this Final Report is not to reiterate the content of previous periodic reports submitted to USAID, but instead to provide an overview of the broad-reaching impact of the program over the past seventy-nine months. Due to the expansive length of the time this project has been operating, it is impossible to cover every area and aspect of IDEA-NEW activities—this report aims to leave the reader with a taste of the scale, scope, and impact of IDEA-NEW’s implementation over the past six and a half years. Snapshots, quotes, and successes will be highlighted throughout the report to lend the reader a more in-depth understanding of the varied and substantial impact of IDEA-NEW.

From 2009 to 2015, IDEA-NEW faced and adapted to many challenges - security threats, decreasing GIRoA presence in IDEA-NEW areas of operation, political transition, presidential elections, NATO drawdown, and a decrease in donor support. These have all played a role in the impact and scope of IDEA-NEW. While remaining true to the goals and objectives of the Cooperative Agreement, IDEA-NEW evolved from an agricultural production and rural infrastructure project to a more geographically focused approach targeting agricultural input suppliers and food processors across several key value chains.

Beginning in 2012, IDEA-NEW began shifting focus from production agriculture to facilitation of key transactions at either end of the farmer in target value chains. Interventions focused on the commercial vendors of the goods and services that farmers need to grow higher volumes of quality produce, and the processors and traders who purchase farmers’ harvests. IDEA-NEW activities targeted leverage points or transactions across the target value chain where interventions would strengthen linkages between farmers, input suppliers, processors, and the GIRoA. This report shows that by strengthening these linkages, both farm and non-farm households have become more resilient and livelihoods more diverse. With regard to licit production, IDEA-NEW cannot affect the biggest drivers of illicit crops: lack of security and GIRoA control in insecure areas. However, through training, technical support, and in-kind grants, IDEA-NEW has increased farmer resilience and strengthened the market systems that link farmers to markets and ultimately led to a more a sustainable, thriving agricultural economy in Afghanistan.

Robert Jacobi



Project Director, IDEA-NEW
Jalalabad, Afghanistan
September 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID launched the Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) program in March 2009. The goal of this five-year program was to support the stabilization and transition of Afghanistan by expanding the licit agricultural economy in the northern, eastern, and western regions of the country. IDEA-NEW has been one of the more significant USAID programs in its promotion of long-term sustainable agricultural development and alternative livelihoods for farmers that has resulted in valuable contributions towards the U.S. Government's stabilization and counternarcotics policy goals in IDEA-NEW target areas. Over the course of its implementation, the IDEA-NEW project has evolved and adapted to the changing environment in Afghanistan. Originally scheduled to end in March 2014, IDEA-NEW received two no-cost extensions extending the program through September 2015.

This report will cover the 'history' of IDEA-NEW and describe the impact the program has had in the lives of over 1,092,709 households – through creating 50,088 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs and increasing licit farm and non-farm sales by over US\$ 63,239,369.

From 2009 through most of 2013, IDEA-NEW was implemented by DAI, in alliance with Mercy Corps and ACDI-VOCA. IDEA-NEW operated in 19 provinces supporting the development and expansion of eight value chains—grapes, orchard crops, vegetables, poultry, silk, wheat, honey and karakul. The program approach during this period was to define program interventions with reference to customers, use value chain techniques to reveal customer needs, and provide tailored, customer-specific incentives to facilitate meeting those needs. Primary customers in this case were the communities where poppy was (or was likely to be) cultivated. Small-scale infrastructure rehabilitation projects were used as a point of entry to communities. By the end of 2013, IDEA-NEW had completed 295 community infrastructure projects, 179 kilometers of farm-to-market roads, and 91 kilometers of improved irrigation servicing 38,202 hectares directly benefiting over 298,520 households.

Following USAID guidance in 2012 (Modification #11 to the Cooperative Agreement), IDEA-NEW began narrowing its programmatic and geographic focus to the grape, orchard crop and vegetable value chains in seven provinces in central and eastern Afghanistan. As the sole implementer, DAI began to shift program implementation activities away from the farmer and community-level infrastructure and production activities to interventions targeting agribusinesses on either end of the farmer in each value chain—the commercial vendors of the goods and services that farmers need to grow higher volumes of quality produce, and the processors and traders who purchase farmers' harvests. The input suppliers and agro-processors served as 'leverage points' for enhancing market effectiveness and competitiveness across the target value chains.

Lessons learned since 2009, as well as from focus group discussions, program assessments and surveys conducted by IDEA-NEW in 2012-2013, indicated that many

agriculture input suppliers and processors viewed implementers of development assistance projects in Afghanistan as primary customers for the purchase of agriculture inputs, or as the primary suppliers of equipment and market access for agro-processors. Agribusinesses (suppliers and processors), farmers and even GIRA line ministry staff have come to rely on donor support for many types of agriculture-related assistance. In many cases this assistance has had profound impacts in addressing food security, increasing agricultural production, introducing new technologies, expanding market opportunities and building the capacity of various actors across several value chains. However, the downside is that implementers of donor assistance programs run the risk of distorting market systems by becoming key market actors (i.e. customers or suppliers).

The objective of IDEA-NEW since March 2013 and through the end of the project was to break this cycle and to bring to completion nascent activities already begun to facilitate key transactions at either end of the farmer in targeted value chains. This objective aimed to ensure greater and more inclusive economic growth by building on the market-oriented skills of Afghan farmers and the private sector.

Throughout its over six-year lifespan, IDEA-NEW worked in the field with farmers, in major Afghan cities with local exporters, input suppliers and traders, and in the districts with Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL) and Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (DAIL) officers to provide trainings and organize farmer field days, all to improve and expand Afghanistan's agricultural sector. IDEA-NEW boosted broad-based agricultural production by educating rural Afghans on best agricultural practices, including grape trellising and drip irrigation, and by providing the nation's farmers with high-quality inputs and services such as agrochemicals, certified seeds, medicines and vaccines. IDEA-NEW increased Afghanistan's sales and exports by building the capacity of Afghan companies so they could be more competitive in the global marketplace and by creating modern processing facilities to add value to agricultural products. IDEA-NEW connected Afghan agricultural input suppliers to over 14,000 farmers through innovative SMS marketing activities, Live Radio Programming and farmer field days. The program opened up new markets by linking local exporters and traders with international buyers in countries ranging from Pakistan to Turkey, and by facilitating business-to-business linkages between domestic and international investors.

With each farmer it trained and every business deal it assisted, IDEA-NEW laid the groundwork to improve Afghanistan's agriculture sector and contribute to the country's economic recovery. While a market-driven private sector leads the development process, IDEA-NEW understood that a healthy and supportive public sector accelerates that growth. IDEA-NEW worked hand-in-hand with MAIL and its DAIL based in the country's provinces to link (and involve) DAIL officers to farmers, input suppliers, and agro-processors for training, field demonstrations and mutual cooperation. IDEA-NEW often operated in the background, offering crucial support to MAIL in leading high-profile initiatives such as international agricultural fairs and provincial-level Farmer Field Days, thereby increasing confidence in the capabilities of the Afghan government.

CHAPTER ONE: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Agriculture is a primary driver of Afghanistan’s economic growth, providing much-needed livelihoods to the country’s rural population and bountiful agribusiness opportunities for Afghanistan’s entrepreneurs. In the 1960s and 1970s, the country emerged as a notable player in the world’s agricultural sector, with its unique varieties of pomegranates, grapes, apples, apricots, and melons, and its large assortment of dried fruit and nuts. Situated along the famous Silk Road, Afghanistan exported more than 60 percent of its agricultural products to lucrative markets such as India, Pakistan, and the former Soviet Union.

The ensuing years of war decimated cropland and infrastructure, scattered farming communities, and shut down export channels. Afghanistan lost its place in the international marketplace, and its agricultural sector operated at a fraction of its potential. Recognizing that agriculture is fundamental to sustaining Afghanistan’s recovery and development, USAID launched the Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) program in March 2009 to support the stabilization and transition of Afghanistan by providing alternatives to poppy production by expanding the licit agricultural economy in the northern, eastern and western regions of the country. In partnership with Afghanistan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL), other USAID-funded programs, the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs), the agribusiness development teams (ADTs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) throughout Afghanistan, IDEA-NEW began providing strategic support to Afghan farmers, farming communities, agricultural producers and processors with the overarching goals of improving licit agriculture production, increasing products, creating new jobs, and introducing modern agricultural technologies and practices. The \$158 million, 5-year project began in March 2009 with a focus on the country’s Northern, Eastern and Western regions, specifically the 19 provinces of Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Samangan, Sari-Pul, Takhar, Kunduz, Baghlan, Badakhshan, Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunar, Nuristan, Badghis, Herat, Kapisa, Parwan, Panjshir, and Kabul. A modification to the cooperative agreement in 2012 began a process of phasing down the number of provinces to seven (Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, Kabul, Kapisa, Panjshir and Parwan) along with the phasing out of DAI’s implementing partners - Mercy Corps and ACDI-VOCA by the end of 2013.

IDEA-NEW was built on the efforts of the Alternative Livelihoods Program North (ADP-N)¹ and Alternative Development Program - East (ADP-E)². Both of these programs were

¹ ADP-N ran from 2005 to 2009, covered the provinces of Badakhshan and Takhar and cost US\$ 51 million.

² ADP-E ran from 2005 to 2009, covered Kunar, Laghman and Nangarhar and cost US\$115.48 million.

designed to dissuade farmers from growing opium poppy by increasing access to licit, commercially viable alternative sources of income. As previously mentioned, IDEA-NEW's mission to expand the licit agricultural economy in northern, eastern and western Afghanistan was carried out by following a value chain approach to identify and address obstacles facing agriculture producers (farmers) and linking them to local and regional markets. From a development context, the major challenges to be addressed in meeting program objectives were: Changing Established Mindsets, Security and Government Uncertainty, Building Livelihood Resilience, Facilitating Linkages and Integration of MAIL/DAIL Counterparts.

Changing Established Mindsets: Over the past decade the international community has invested millions of dollars in the rehabilitation and development of Afghanistan's agriculture sector. For the most part, donor assistance has focused on the distribution of agriculture inputs (seeds, feeds, fertilizers, equipment) and training to farmers as well as support to various GIRoA line ministries. In many cases, this assistance has had profound impacts in addressing food security, increasing agricultural production, introduction of new technologies, expanding market opportunities and in building the capacity of various state and non-state actors across several value chains. However, the downside is that implementers of donor assistance programs have distorted market systems by becoming key market actors (i.e. customers and/or suppliers) in the provision of goods and services to farmers, agribusinesses and government line ministries. The end result is that in many cases, agribusinesses, farmers and even GIRoA line ministry staff have come to rely on donor support for many types of agriculture-related assistance. With the steady decrease in donor funds, one of the key challenges faced by IDEA-NEW during implementation was altering this mindset.

From the outset, IDEA-NEW viewed the role of NGOs/donors (i.e. IDEA-NEW) as facilitators, to design program interventions that bring farmers, agribusinesses and government together in a way that is mutually beneficial and sustainable. The end goal was for farmers to trust the quality and advice from agricultural input suppliers, for agro-processors to work with farmers to source the best quality produce at a fair price, for agriculture input suppliers to view farmers as valued customers as opposed to passive recipients and for the government line agencies (MAIL/DAIL) to be partners with the private sector to promote Afghanistan agriculture, provide quality advice and support. 2013-2015 saw a change of focus away from producers (farmers) and more towards agribusinesses on either end of the farmer in target value chains. IDEA-NEW assistance to agribusinesses required beneficiaries to sponsor and host farmer field days, field demonstrations and involve MAIL/DAIL extension agents in the design and implementation of these farmer trainings. Gone were the days of donor sponsored and financed trainings/demonstrations/field days. IDEA-NEW grant programs required beneficiary cost-share and demonstrated commitment to continue with the intervention once IDEA-NEW assistance ended. Depending on the type of grant (promotional, matching or SMS) cost share ranged from 25% to over 50% of total project cost.

Additionally, in program activities such as the SMS marketing project, grantees are continuing with the SMS marketing activity after IDEA-NEW assistance has ended.

Security and Government Uncertainty: Implementation issues resulting from an ever changing and volatile security environment are an inherent reality when working in Afghanistan. IDEA-NEW has done its best to mitigate such issues through interaction with local communities, adherence to strict security protocols, and hiring of local field monitors. Regardless of the security environment, IDEA-NEW has strived to maintain a field presence and continue with operations. Through relationship building with local communities and elders, IDEA-NEW was largely able to overcome this obstacle and continue implementation. However, security threats were a challenge.

Building Livelihood Resilience: One of the key findings in David Mansfield's report on poppy cultivation in Nangarhar province was that sustained reductions in poppy cultivation are possible in areas where rural communities have support in diversifying their livelihoods. The report concluded that IDEA-NEW assistance was effective in positively contributing to household resilience (diversification of livelihoods) against cultivation of the poppy crop in Nangarhar province. In addition, the report also highlighted IDEA-NEW's infrastructure program (and its role in facilitating trade and business development) as having a significant and sustained impact on non-farm employment. These findings were substantiated by the household-level "Endline Survey" conducted by RSI Consulting in late 2013/early 2014, which found that, among beneficiary households across 12 provinces, diversification of income was higher among beneficiary households than non-beneficiary households.

Facilitating Linkages: One of IDEA-NEW's major activities has been facilitating connections between producers, traders and buyers through market information activities and sales promotion. This facilitation takes the form of business-to-business meetings between these parties to identify common issues, and encourage partnership and collaboration. In addition, IDEA-NEW provides forums for discussion between interested agribusinesses and banks/financial institutions issuing formal loans and credit to the agriculture sector in its target provinces. IDEA-NEW has hosted several Access to Finance (A2F) conferences and follow-on workshops with these loan providers, bringing in agribusinesses for interactive conversations on the loan application process, risk-sharing, collateral and guarantees. IDEA-NEW also maintains close relationships with other donor projects working in agriculture and related sectors. IDEA-NEW hosts monthly coordination meetings, inviting other USG projects including Commercial Horticulture and Agricultural Marketing Program (CHAMP), Assistance in Building Afghanistan by Development Enterprises (ABADE), Strengthening Afghan Governance and Alternative Livelihoods (SAGAL) and Financial Access for Developing in the Development of Afghanistan (FAIDA) with the goal of developing synergy across activities by avoiding duplication of efforts and promoting information sharing.

Integration of MAIL/DAIL Counterparts: Throughout the life of the project, IDEA-NEW has worked closely with provincial and district level government and local communities, especially provincial directorates of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL). To date, a total of 2,715 MAIL/DAIL extension workers have participated in a

range of IDEA-NEW supported demonstrations and trainings. Their participation/involvement is key to the sustainability of program activities.

IDEA-NEW met regularly with local, district, provincial and national-level GIROA officials in each of the target provinces to ensure that all stakeholders are abreast of IDEA-NEW's plans and can contribute to activity development, implementation and, if necessary, problem-solving. IDEA-NEW has been recognized on a number of occasions and received certificates of appreciation for its consistent participation and constant coordination with MAIL/DAIL in its target provinces.

CHAPTER TWO: PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Chapter Two is divided into two distinctive sections, in line with the change in the focus and intent of the program in 2012/2013. The first section, “Focus on Production (2009-2013)” presents an overview of the types of activities implemented during the first years of the program under the value chain intervention model. The second section, “Focus on Agribusinesses (2013-2015)” captures the more recent programming with micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), reflective of the shift in focus directed by Modification #11 to the cooperative agreement.

FOCUS ON PRODUCTION (2009-2013)

Many of the early IDEA-NEW interventions related to agricultural production were not focused on a particular value chain so that targets and results measured were done across all value chain interventions. During this period, one key project activity was input provision through subsidized vouchers. 255,933³ farmers used IDEA-NEW supported agricultural inputs (seeds and fertilizers) and this resulted in increased crop diversity and productivity by targeted farmers. The original project target of 418,858 farmers was not met due to move away from large scale input provision by the project in 2013. By comparison, IDEA-NEW achieved 162% of the original target for farmers receiving project supported agricultural productivity training.⁴ This shows a greater focus on sustainability, as these 492,931 farmers were all trained in new agricultural skills and the positive impact of farmers using improved techniques will last long after the end of the project.

VALUE CHAIN INTERVENTIONS

GRAPE VALUE CHAIN

Prior to the outbreak of violence in the 1970s, Afghanistan was a leading producer of grapes, supplying a large domestic market and exporting raisins to Russia, India and Pakistan. However, thirty years of steady conflict took a severe toll on the country’s entire agriculture sector, including grape production. Vineyards in the northern and northeastern regions, formerly Afghanistan’s primary grape growing regions, were susceptible to disease, pests and low yields. Harvests were often low and quality failed to

³ The results mentioned in this paragraph are FY 2009 through FY2013 which corresponds with the time frame that project interventions were focused on production.

⁴ The original target was 305,533, and results achieved were 492,931 farmers trained.

meet international standards, leading to a decline in exports. In 2009, IDEA-NEW developed and launched a project in Jawzjan, Faryab, Sari Pul, Balkh and Samangan provinces to increase farmers' grape yields by converting their traditional bush vineyards to a trellis system. Trellising allows for effective disease control, improves grape quality and, when combined with appropriate vineyard management, can double or triple yields in three years. This assistance consisted of partnering with the private sector and providing training to beneficiaries.

Partnering with the Private Sector. IDEA-NEW taught agricultural retailers in Sari Pul, Samangan and Faryab how to survey traditional vineyards for potential conversion and implement vineyard management best practices. Retailers then surveyed and pre-approved local vineyards for conversion to a 'T or I' trellis system and linked the owners with IDEA-NEW technical staff.⁵ Selected farmers provided 30% of the total cost of trellising while IDEA-NEW subsidized the remainder.⁶ More than 55 hectares (ha) of vineyards were converted from bush vines to a trellis system in seven districts across five northern provinces, as presented in the table below.

⁵ The ideal time for converting to a 'T or I' trellis system, which consists of installing concrete posts and steel cross bars, is two to three years after a bush vine system is planted.

⁶ Farmers' contribution rose to 50% in early 2013. The average total cost of trellising a one jerib vineyard is 100,000 AFN.

IDEA-NEW promoted the use of trellising in order to increase both the quality and quantity of grapes in the vineyard regions of Afghanistan.



TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF NORTHERN VINEYARD TRELLISING PROJECT AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2013

Province	Target (ha)	Actual ha Trellised	Number of trellising posts installed
Samangan	10	10.44	12,170
Faryab ⁷	20	17.33	9,800
Sari Pul	8	8.11	5,250
Jawzjan	6	9.12	5,510
Balkh	6	10.29	5,490
Total	50	55.29	38,220

IDEA-NEW leveraged the private agribusiness sector to supply farmers with key inputs and services crucial to the continued expansion of trellised vineyards. As a result, four new businesses were established (one each in Sangcharak district of Sari Pul), Feroz Nakhchir (Samangan and Maymana and Qaysar districts of Faryab province), and two

⁷ IDEA-NEW trellised 16.37 ha of vineyards in Maymana district, exceeding its 15 ha goal; however, it fell short of its five ha goal in Qaysar (actual was 0.95 ha) because ACTED received funding from the local Provincial Reconstruction Team and distributed free trellis posts to farmers in the area.

existing business in Balkh and Jawzjan were contracted – all to manufacture concrete posts and supervise their installation. To ensure long term sustainability, IDEA-NEW linked beneficiaries with these providers at training days so that farmers had a reliable, local source from which to procure additional posts and other inputs.

Beneficiary Trainings. IDEA-NEW established a total of 25 demonstration vineyards and organized over 400 field days attended by nearly 3,000 participants, including vineyard owners, agriculture retailers, DAIL extension agents and agriculture faculty members and students from Balkh University.⁸ Four practical trainings were held every season at each demonstration site and covered all aspects of grape production. The full benefits of trellising only became apparent two to three years after converting systems, particularly with existing vineyards. At the end of every season, IDEA-NEW held comparison field days to show farmers how trellising and using modern cultivation practices could increase their harvests. For example, a 2011 comparison of IDEA-NEW's 15 demonstration vineyards and neighboring traditional vineyards in Faryab and Samangan showed that average yields from demonstration plots (22,610 kg per hectare) were almost double those of traditional vineyards (11,521 kg/ha). Demonstration vineyard owners earned an average of 813,960 AFN (\$13,997) per hectare compared to neighboring owners' 414,756 AFN (\$7,132) per hectare. Harvest comparison data from the 2013 season showed that the average yield per hectare for demonstration vineyards was 71% higher compared to non-trellised vineyards.⁹

⁸ There were seven demonstration vineyards in Samangan province, six in Balkh (including Balkh University and Dihdadi Agriculture Farm), eight in Faryab and two sites each in Jawzjan and Sari Pul.

⁹ The average yield was 16,091 kg/ha, which resulted in an average income of 409,053 AFN (\$7,034) per hectare compared to 9,400 kg and 248,210 AFN (\$4,268) by non-trellised vineyards.



An orchard owner harvests apricots at an IDEA-NEW supported farm in Bihsud district, Nangarhar. IDEA-NEW provided training to orchard owners in pruning and other good agricultural practices.

ORCHARD CROP VALUE CHAIN

All three of IDEA-NEW's geographic zones have long traditions of orchard cultivation; however, during the many years of war from the Soviet invasion to the Taliban insurgency, essential support systems for orchards deteriorated to the point where production of these valuable crops had diminished dramatically. Poor management and irrigation practices, lack of pruning skills and ineffective control of pests and diseases only further decimated yields.

Shortly after the fall of the Taliban in 2001, many orchards were established by various groups (mostly international non-governmental organizations) using trees imported from Pakistan. These saplings were poorly adapted to conditions in Afghanistan and after 3-4 years—the normal period for a new orchard to bear fruit—production was quite low. IDEA-NEW helped address this issue through a collaborative effort with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and the Perennial Horticulture Development Program (PHDP) by introducing certified, true to type fruit trees that farmers could plant with confidence. Given MAIL's ongoing priority on fruit cultivation in the East, IDEA-NEW increased support to existing nursery enterprises as well as to individual farmers looking to improve their orchards or establish new ones. The assistance focused on establishing new orchards, promoting private sector services to support orchard owners, and protecting future generations of trees.

At the beginning, I didn't want to establish orchards on my one hectare [of land], but then I was convinced to give a part of my land for establishing gardens and also to use it as an intercrop. After one and then two years I found it very effective and later I have spread it to the entire hectare. In 2013, I sold apricots for 300,000 AFN (\$6,000).

Farmer from Pul-i-Khumri

New Orchard Establishment. IDEA-NEW established new commercial orchards across all three regions and provided farmers with targeted training, high quality saplings and access to orchard management services. In collaboration with a local nursery, the project provided 33,000 certified almond saplings and planted them on 100 hectares (ha) of land, establishing 200 new orchards in Balkh province. Training on orchard layout, planting, irrigation, intercropping, fertilizer application and pruning was provided to all new orchard owners and representatives from local nurseries and agricultural service companies. Despite a harsh winter in 2013, 90% of the 33,000 almond trees planted by IDEA-NEW survived and the average yield in 2014 and 2015 was 175 kg of almond per jerib.

In Faryab, IDEA-NEW started promoting new orchards in late 2010 in order to diversify the crop variety. Two demonstration orchards were initially established in Pashtun Kot district to introduce 80 local orchard owners to new inputs and cultivation methods. Following the successful demonstration and with the support of the Faryab DAIL, IDEA-NEW identified more than 600 landowners interested in establishing a commercial orchard. In 2011, IDEA-NEW established 10 hectares (0.2 ha per plot) of new commercial almond, apricot, cherry and apple orchards. An additional 40 ha were established in 2012 and 30 ha in 2013. IDEA-NEW planted a total of 34,740 saplings in six districts and held field day trainings to strengthen beneficiaries' knowledge of modern orchard management techniques and provided tool packages with alfalfa seeds, sprayers, wheel barrows, and shovels, a pruning saw and shears to help them apply their newly learned skills. From 2011 to 2013, IDEA-NEW trained 1,500 farmers.

The demonstration plots proved to be invaluable as orchard owners were originally resistant to the methods promoted by IDEA-NEW. According to a survey assessment of the northern orchard management project conducted in late 2011, 99% of participating farmers described IDEA-NEW's training as excellent or good, with 100% of farmers reporting that they thought the techniques and inputs helped them increase production.

In the Northeast, orchard establishment projects benefited 858 farmers in Baghlan, 616 farmers in Takhar, 834 farmers in Badakhshan, and 712 farmers in Kunduz. Farmers dedicated one jerib of irrigated land to a new orchard and contributed funds to partially cover the cost of inputs; all beneficiaries attended intensive training provided by the project on irrigation, basin digging, integrated pest management and intercropping. IDEA-NEW used a voucher incentive program to distribute saplings, pruning shears and pesticide sprayers. Voucher values were determined by farmers' willingness to pay and this in turn was determined by the results that farmers experienced with the new saplings. As confidence in the saplings and techniques increased, IDEA-NEW decreased the value of its voucher subsidy with the aim of achieving sustainability. Over the course of the intervention, farmers' contributions in Baghlan and Badakhshan increased steadily from zero in 2010 to 30% in 2011 and 50% in 2012-13. In Takhar, contributions from farmers reached 60%, and in Kunduz between 60-70%. Seventy five percent of orchard owners

purchased high quality saplings and supplies in the season following IDEA-NEW's intervention.¹⁰

In the East, IDEA-NEW's orchard value chain work started in 2009 and covered Kunar, Laghman and Nangarhar provinces. Selected beneficiaries had appropriate land, wanted to establish or improve orchards, had irrigation water, agreed to stop illicit crop plantation and accepted IDEA-NEW's cost-sharing requirements.¹¹ IDEA-NEW helped with orchard layout and design and trained DAIL staff to carry out these duties in the future. Programming in the East followed the same principles and approaches as in the North and Northeast and reached a total of 4,223 beneficiaries.

TABLE 2. SUMMARY TABLE OF EASTERN REGION ORCHARD VALUE CHAIN BENEFICIARIES

Province	# of District	# of Beneficiaries	# of Trees	Land (ha)
Nangarhar	16	2,835	153,085	447
Kunar	10	866	66,003	196
Laghman	3	522	9,757	81
Total	29	4,223	248,845	724

In early 2013, eastern region beneficiaries began covering the full costs associated with new orchard establishment while IDEA-NEW continued supporting them with land design and sourcing certified high quality saplings. The ability and willingness of farmers to establish new orchards and pay for inputs and services with their own resources are key signs of the sustainability of IDEA-NEW's orchard development efforts.

Promoting Private Services to Support Orchard Owners. IDEA-NEW implemented orchard management projects across all three regions as a complement to its orchard establishment work and to increase farmers' long-term, income-earning potential. IDEA-NEW trained orchard owners on selecting, sorting, grading and packaging their production as well as irrigation, liming, integrated pest management (IPM), flexi flume installation¹², pruning and how to properly remove dried, diseased and/or damaged trees. IDEA-NEW distributed inputs such as pruning shears, ladders, saws, fertilizer, sulfur and pesticide sprayers at field days and linked farmers to local providers that had been trained by IDEA-NEW staff in dormant oil (also known as winter oil) application and pruning. This gave farmers a sustainable, market-driven service provider for these services, both of which are critical to improving fruit quality and yield in older orchards. In the 2012-2013 season, 3,078 farmers—800 in Badakhshan, 650 in Baghlan, 578 in Kunduz, and 1,050 in Takhar—had their orchards (approximately 3,078 jeribs in total) sprayed by IDEA-NEW-trained providers and received training in the benefits of dormant oil use for pest and disease control.¹³

Before using dormant oil last year, my orchard was always facing problems with aphids and I had to buy a sprayer and pesticide and hire labor to spray the pesticide...this is why I was not able to harvest a good yield. But after using dormant oil last year provided by IDEA-NEW, I can see how easy it is to control aphids.

Demonstration plot owner from Faryab

¹⁰ Mid-Term Evaluation Study of IDEA-NEW Program for Mercy Corps Afghanistan, Springfield Centre, 2013.

¹¹ Farmers' cost share was 50% (2010), 55% (2011), 60% (2012) and 100% (2013).

¹² Flexi Flume is a lay flat hose for irrigation that prevents water evaporation and leaching.

¹³ IDEA-NEW subsidized 20-40% of the spraying services in the Northeast with the farmer covering the remaining cost. In the East, IDEA-NEW connected hundreds of farmers who requested dormant oil spraying

Farmers also quickly began seeking out the services of trained pruners after seeing the benefits firsthand on demonstration plots. Not only did the privately offered services increase orchards' yields, it also supplemented the income of the providers. In 2013, 67% percent of beneficiaries from Badakhshan, Baghlan, Kunduz and Takhar provinces indicated that they would continue to purchase services and utilize techniques without an IDEA-NEW subsidy in the future.¹⁴ In the season following their first interaction with IDEA-NEW, farmers reported an increase between 30–100% in fruit yields across all four provinces.

Introducing Simple Solutions to Reduce Losses. In 2009, IDEA-NEW received requests for assistance from farmers and DAIL personnel in the West and Northeast to help combat crop losses on melons. Melon flies were laying their eggs under the skin of young melon fruit resulting in wastage of a significant portion of production. IDEA-NEW's melon fly control project benefited 22,680 farmers in Badghis, 8,503 farmers in Baghlan, 5,000 farmers in Kunduz, 8,376 farmers in Takhar, and 10,000 in Badakhshan. Farmers were trained in how to use sprayers to combat flies and received training in the physical and biological methods of fly control as well as killing larvae. In 2009, average cultivation in the northeastern provinces was 1,741 kg/jerib; by 2010, this had risen 5% within each jerib resulting in an annual income of between 18,500–45,000 AFN (\$336–\$818) per jerib.¹⁵ In Badghis, farmers produced 354 kg of melons per jerib in 2009 compared to 166 kg/jerib the preceding year—an increase of 114%—that resulted in a net increase in sales of \$395,507.¹⁶

Another issue resulting in significant losses was the handling and storage of produce during the offseason. In response, IDEA-NEW built 13 underground storage units in the Northeast—four in Badakhshan, five in Baghlan and four in Takhar—in 2012 and 2013 to assist farmers in storing excess fruits until the crops' offseason. Each unit could hold a maximum of 20 MT and were built for apple crops, though some farmers used them to store vegetables. A second round of underground cool storage construction took place in August 2014 to build 13 additional units. Every storage unit was constructed on an existing farm and host farmers received training in reaching and maintaining proper conditions before storing excess crops. Sales data obtained from two farmers in Badakhshan who sold 8.4 MT of apples for 345,450 AFN (\$6,318) during the off season (January-March), showed that they were able to earn at least two and a half times more than if they had sold their produce during the harvest season.

Protecting Future Generations of Trees. The East has long been the center of citrus cultivation in Afghanistan and MAIL has persistently called for the re-establishment of citrus orchards in the area. The reason is that surviving orchards have been decimated by the Citrus Tristeza Virus (CTV), which further reduced already low yields.¹⁷ As part of its involvement with the Citrus Promotion Group, IDEA-NEW began

with nearby agriculture depots capable of fulfilling their requests. Farmers paid 100% of the cost of these services.

¹⁴ Mid-Term Evaluation Study of IDEA-NEW Program for Mercy Corps Afghanistan, Springfield Centre, 2013.

¹⁵ Mercy Corps Melon Fly Case Study, 2010.

¹⁶ DAI Melon Fly Training Impact Assessment: Badghis Province, 2009.

¹⁷ IDEA-NEW, Roots of Peace and Madera collected 749 samples from different orchards across the eastern region in November 2012 and sent them to PHDP in Kabul for CTV testing. Of those, 115 (15.3%) tested

working with nurseries and nursery associations to improve their capacity to provide orchard owners with high quality saplings as well as pre-planting and planting services.¹⁸ In 2013, IDEA-NEW imported 50 kg of Tristeza-resistant citrus root stock seed from the United States. In March 2013, the program signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) with and distributed Tristeza-resistant citrus root stock seeds to the Nangarhar Valley Development Authority (NVDA), the Afghanistan National Nursery Growers' Organization (ANNGO) and the Kunar and Laghman Fruit Growers Associations for distribution to their members. Technical staff visited the nurseries regularly throughout the germination stage and provided technical assistance as needed. By producing and disseminating saplings to nurseries and individual orchard owners across the region, IDEA-NEW and its Citrus Working Group members were able to effectively prevent the economic devastation caused by CTV in previous seasons.

positive for CTV. The CTV virus spreads primarily through the sharing of infected bud wood and is one of the most damaging citrus diseases in the world.

¹⁸ Criteria for nursery selection included security of location, proximity to orchard zones, quality of infrastructure and water supply, and staff/owner experience and knowledge. Nursery operators paid 50% (2010) and then 60% (2012) of the cost for all material inputs, such as saplings, fertilizer, tools, etc.



IDEA-NEW's greenhouse projects in the Northeast targeted women and home-based greenhouses using medium-sized greenhouses.

VEGETABLE VALUE CHAIN

During its initial years, the project focused on Community Constructed Infrastructure (CCI) activities, which benefited the vegetable value chain. Besides constructing infrastructure enabling greater agricultural productivity, CCI projects quickly injected cash into local economies helping to reduce community reliance on illicit activities. Concurrently, IDEA-NEW began farm production assistance initiatives with a focus on vegetable production. IDEA-NEW also addressed commercial, non-production aspects of agricultural productivity from the program's inception—marketing, distribution, exporting, information dissemination, management of agricultural business enterprises, etc.—in the vegetable value chains. Value-chain integration was always a priority and became more so as the program increasingly adopted a value-chain and private-sector orientation. Over time, and particularly in the eastern region, greater attention was given to downstream, value-adding agro-industrial activities, such as food processing, of which there had been little development in Afghanistan. By building domestic agro-enterprises whose products could be substitutes for imports, IDEA-NEW also helped Afghans reduce heavy reliance on imported food products. IDEA-NEW's vegetable value chain interventions focused on Commercial Production and Small Production Farms, protected agriculture projects, voucher programs and private sector development.

Commercial Production Farms (CPFs) and Small Production Farms. Vegetable crops are often unproductive due to poor quality seed coupled with a lack of knowledge of appropriate cultivation techniques. IDEA-NEW focused on increasing the demand of Afghan commercial farmers for improved crop quality and building linkages between these farmers and input suppliers and buyers.

Working at the community level, IDEA-NEW introduced high-yield, locally adapted vegetable varieties and trained farmers in input cultivation practices, vegetable collecting, sorting, grading, and packaging, marketing, irrigation, fertilizer application, weeding, disease control, and techniques for extending the growing season on their land. In the Northeast, multi-year commercial vegetable production projects were implemented in all four of the region's provinces. In the East, IDEA-NEW established 72 CPFs and supported them through the provision of improved seeds and chemical fertilizer and fencing.

IDEA-NEW also included CPFs that reached 266 women in order to increase their involvement in the commercial production of vegetable crops in collaboration with provincial DAILs and the Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA). Initially, IDEA-NEW led a kitchen garden project to teach women how to grow vegetables on small household plots for consumption and then later focused on encouraging commercial farming by women. Two hundred participants received training in land preparation, irrigation, fertilizer usage, weed control, IPM, and post-harvest handling and received seeds and fertilizer. In addition to these larger CPFs (three jeribs in area), small production farms (0.5 to one jeribs in area) were established in every region. IDEA-NEW frequently conducted farmer field days bringing beneficiaries together for training and enabling them to compare demonstrated modern techniques to their current practices. IDEA-NEW also established demonstration plots for individual vegetable crops.

Protected Agriculture Projects. IDEA-NEW introduced farmers to different protected agriculture technologies to enable farmers to grow early or off-season produce that would fetch higher prices in markets. Vegetable production in low plastic tunnels, for example, was introduced in all four provinces in the Northeast. Participating farmers (more than 400) were trained in collecting, sorting, grading, and packaging products as well as in appropriate irrigation systems, fertilizer application, weeding and disease control. IDEA-NEW provided seed, fertilizer and plastic inputs on a cost-share basis through vouchers. High plastic tunnels for offseason vegetable cultivation were introduced in the Northeast in 2013, targeting 22 agricultural cooperatives with 550 individual members. Each tunnel was 40 meters long and six meters wide, large enough to include crops (tomatoes, sweet pepper, cucumber, summer squash, muskmelon and eggplant) grown by multiple cooperative members.

Other projects focused on greenhouse farming. The greenhouse projects in the Northeast targeted women to establish 89 medium-sized home-based greenhouses . IDEA-NEW provided the beneficiaries with offseason vegetable cultivation training and improved input materials (seeds and plastic sheeting). Technical staff regularly monitored farmers' progress and provided them with assistance regarding construction, layout, proper fertilizer application, pest and disease control, weeding, and irrigation and soil management. Beneficiaries also received thermometers and training on how to regulate

the temperature in their greenhouses. IDEA-NEW organized field days and site visits for neighboring female farmers to share experiences in greenhouse management.

Cost-Share Voucher System. As with its orchard crop programming, IDEA-NEW used a cost-share voucher system to connect farmers with local suppliers of quality inputs. To avoid the dependency created when inputs are provided for free, IDEA-NEW asked farmers to contribute a substantial amount of the cost. Initially, farmers were reluctant to share input costs due to a lack of knowledge of vouchers as well as a lack of confidence in their potential benefits. The contribution rose from zero in 2010 to 30% in 2011 in all four provinces. In 2012, farmer contributions rose to 40% in Baghlan, 80% in Badakhshan, 85% in Takhar, and 90% in Kunduz. Beneficiaries contributed 45% in 2009, 55% in 2010 and 60% in 2011 in every eastern province. In 2012-2013, IDEA-NEW linked farmers with local input dealers and beneficiaries at farmer field days and encouraged them to view retailers not only as suppliers of better inputs but also as sources of information on best practices.

The benefits of providing farmers with improved seed varieties with marketable attributes, along with fertilizer and other inputs, combined with technical assistance were quickly evident. In the East, for example, vegetable production increased to the point where, in program year 2011 alone, produce imported from abroad was reduced by 60-80% (during local seasons).

Private Sector Development and Value Chain Integration. With its 2013 reorganization, IDEA-NEW intensified its focus on actively seeking opportunities to increase the extent of downstream value-addition in Afghanistan's agriculture sector by assisting food processing companies—most of whom were operating in the vegetable value chain—to expand and increase profitability. These projects were conducted mainly in the East, which had inherent competitive advantages in terms of infrastructure, demographics, and proximity to export markets for further development of the country's agro-industry. The groundwork for IDEA-NEW's interventions to increase value-addition was laid during IDEA-NEW's 2009-2013 production-level activities, particularly in addressing the challenges to further improvements such as the shortage of high quality packaging and processing wholesalers and suppliers. See 'Focus on Agribusinesses (2013-2015)' for more detailed information.



Farmers learn how to establish a vegetable nursery during an IDEA-NEW field day in Qala-e-naw district, Badghis



A day-old chick at an IDEA-NEW supported hatchery in Nangarhar. By 2013, IDEA-NEW had helped reduce the import of day-old chicks by 30%.

POULTRY VALUE CHAIN

Poultry products are in constant demand in Afghanistan. Illustrative data from 2011 indicates that Afghans imported 50,000 MT of frozen poultry meat, 2 million live spent hens and 50 million eggs annually—and, most importantly, that local production of these items amounted to only 17 percent of consumption. Several factors have impeded greater poultry production in Afghanistan. One is the long-standing dependence on Pakistan, not only for poultry products but also for the key inputs to poultry production, notably day-old chicks, breeders, pullets and feed. Importing product and inputs is easy and inexpensive (especially in the East). Pakistani production of inputs such as day-old chicks is adapted to the growing cycle in neighboring Afghanistan, which helps to reduce mortality. Other key impediments are the relatively low productivity of the breeds, the level of know-how in farm management, bio-security, medication and health care, and feeding as well as cold weather.

The poultry value chain presented a tremendous opportunity for job-generating economic growth simply through import substitution. IDEA-NEW's work in the poultry value chain focused on the East and Northeast from 2011 through 2013. The general approach to programming in the value chain evolved over time, however, as did the types of interventions conducted. Below we describe the most widely implemented interventions including breeder farming, training and monitoring, and women's home-based poultry farming.

Breeder Farm Projects. To provide a domestic alternative to importing day-old chicks, pullets, and adult birds from Pakistan, IDEA-NEW helped establish breeder farms for

broilers and layers¹⁹ through in-kind grants comprised of inputs (day-old chicks, equipment, and feed) with farmers contributing up to 60% of the cost.²⁰ Some grants for small-scale hatchery machines were also provided. In the East, IDEA-NEW helped to establish 87 commercial and small broiler farms, five combination broiler/layer farms and 15 poultry farms, reducing imports of day-old chicks by 30% by 2013.²¹ IDEA-NEW's work with poultry farmers increased the number of commercial broiler operations in the East from 10 in 2009 to over 2,000 in 2013 while layer farms increased from approximately 100 to 300 during the same time period. A total of 1,718,500 broiler chicks were produced which generated an average of 513,177 AFN (\$9,868) net profit per beneficiary. The program also helped establish 124 layer farms, 100 of which were run by female poultry women farmers. Beneficiaries earned an average net profit of 204,578 AFN (\$3,934) from selling table eggs and layers at local markets. For adult birds, imports were reduced by 70%.

Follow-Up Training and Monitoring. IDEA-NEW supported its input grants with in-field training, technical assistance and regular monitoring. Trainings addressed a wide variety of topics including coop construction, temperature and humidity control, feeding and drinking systems, hygiene, basic veterinary care and farm management. Training was also provided in poultry processing and product marketing. Technical teams vaccinated more than 160,000 chicks against common poultry diseases, such as newcastle disease, hepatitis, infectious bronchitis, feed toxicity, enteritis, and omphalitis.

Women's Home-Based Poultry Farm Projects. IDEA-NEW committed focused attention to household poultry farming by women in the Northeast, working with 690 women in Baghlan, 385 women in Kunduz, 640 women in Takhar and 680 women in Badakhshan, all of whom were identified in coordination with local community leaders. The project introduced professional farming methods and replaced local and domestic pullet breeds with hybrid breeds known to have higher egg productivity. IDEA-NEW distributed 40 pullets (five-month old hens) and 100 kg of balanced feed to each beneficiary, provided capacity building trainings, and linked the women to local providers such as veterinary field units (VFUs) to ensure adequate future access to veterinary care for their flocks.

Pilot projects were introduced in all four northeastern provinces to bring 166 woman-run household poultry farms to the semi-commercial level.²² In many cases, it was also necessary to convince male members of the household to allow female beneficiaries to participate in the program. The income generated by raising layers and selling the eggs—

At first when I established my poultry farm and IDEA-NEW provided me day-old chicks and farm equipment, I wondered whether it would make money for me. But I sold my first flock of broiler chicks in the local market and earned 11,695 AFN (\$225) net profit, which is a high income for supporting my family.

Female broiler farmer from Rodat district, Nangarhar province

¹⁹ The recipients of IDEA-NEW grants were typically selected in consultation with local shura and line departments, particularly the province's DAILs.

²⁰ All Eastern region layer farms were located in Shinwari, Khas Kunar, Behsud, Momandara, Rodat (Nangarhar), Noorgal district (Kunar), Sarobi district (Kabul), Hisa2 and Mahmood Raqi in Kapisa province and Jabal Saraj, Bagram and Charikar districts of Parwan province. IDEA-NEW-supported broiler farms were in Achin, Shinwari, Behsud, Rodat and Chaparhar districts of Nangarhar province and Qarghaee district in Laghman.

²¹ This figure was a lower result than wished, the consequence of continuing competition from Pakistan.

²² Project beneficiaries were 37 women in Kunduz (March 2012–October 2013), 35 women in Baghlan (June 2012–October 2013), 48 in Takhar (May 2012–October 2013), 46 in Badakhshan (May 2012–October 2013). Locations included Qala-e-Zal, Imam Sahib, Aliabad, and Kunduz Center (Kunduz); Baghlan Jaded, Puli Khumri and Doshi districts (Baghlan); Kalafgan, Taloqan, Baharak districts (Takhar); and Faizabad and Argo districts (Badakhshan).

at a premium over the price of eggs from Pakistan or India—reached the range of \$250 monthly. In the East, 30 women raising layer hens in their backyards received in-kind grants for key inputs, including 110 pullets, wire mesh, feeders, drinkers and five bags of feed. IDEA-NEW introduced hybrid pullet breeds known to have higher egg productivity than the domestic breeds the women had previously raised. Beneficiaries were also assisted in designing and constructing sound backyard coops.

IDEA-NEW followed up input grants to all women poultry farmers with regular in-field training and technical assistance. Women poultry farmers were also linked directly with local buyers, input suppliers, and VFUs for pullet vaccination. In addition, IDEA-NEW provided vouchers enabling women to obtain high-quality feed with a cost-contribution of 30-60%.

Linkage of Value Chain Components. To foster sustainability and prevent dependence on the program for commercial viability, IDEA-NEW increasingly emphasized linking components of the value chain. The program linked poultry farmers and local input providers—Afghan suppliers of high-quality feed, for example—to one another through voucher arrangements. A voucher enabled a farmer to pay as little as 30% of the total cost to obtain high-quality feed from a local supplier. The voucher arrangements

provided financial support to farmers, encouraged them to use higher-quality feed, and ensured a customer base for local suppliers of high-quality feed and other essential inputs. Linkages were also established with poultry packagers and processors, fresh meat markets, other buyers of poultry products and financial institutions.

IDEA-NEW's programming included interventions to improve Afghan poultry farmer associations so they could pass on improved managerial and technical skills to member farmers. The program also strengthened input providers—suppliers of high-quality feed and poultry rearing equipment—not only by helping to create demand among farmers but also by providing direct assistance. For example, the program provided a direct in-kind grant to the Omaid Khalid Poultry Equipment Production Company in Nangarhar to facilitate the expansion of the company. The owner also participated in IDEA-NEW training in marketing and accounting.



From 2009-2013, IDEA-NEW helped over 10,000 farmers in the North improve their wheat cultivation methods.

WHEAT VALUE CHAIN

Afghanistan's northern region produces approximately 30 percent of the country's national wheat production; however, 75% of the land under wheat cultivation is rain-fed and therefore highly susceptible to drought, insects, weeds and fungal disease. This reality, coupled with farmers' over-seeding and ensuing overcrowding, results in extremely low yields. To address this situation, IDEA-NEW developed a demonstration and improved agronomy training activity that ran from 2009–2013 and introduced 10,344 northern farmers to improved wheat cultivation methods.

Wheat Demonstration Plots and Field Days. IDEA-NEW managed 165 training sites in Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Samangan and Sari Pul provinces that offered farmers training—during field days—in improved methods of wheat and oilseed cultivation. The training cycle lasted a full season (October through September) and was completed in stages covering planting, weed control, harvesting and post-harvest practices. Every May marked the beginning of the wheat harvesting season in northern Afghanistan and IDEA-NEW organized harvesting field days so farmers could witness a two-wheel tractor (2WT)-powered reaper and thresher harvest the wheat. Comparison data consistently showed that IDEA-NEW's demonstration plots produced over 50% more than traditionally run wheat farms. In 2013, when northern wheat harvests were particularly high, IDEA-NEW's demonstration plots still produced 67% higher yields than traditional farmers across all five provinces.²³

In total, over the course of four years IDEA-NEW established 118 demonstration plots and supported a total of 90 DAIL workers at 16 DAIL-run participatory varietal sites (PVS). Altogether, a total of 18,640 farmers were trained during 536 field days.

Small Scale Mechanization. IDEA-NEW highlighted the advantages of harvesting wheat with a 2WT rather than using traditional hand sickles. After explaining the benefits and demonstrating the ease of 2WT harvesting, IDEA-NEW offered 2WTs for sale to 284 training participants at a subsidized rate.²⁴ In addition to plowing their own land, over 70% of new owners rented their machines to other farmers. Each beneficiary underwent five days of operation, maintenance and safety training prior to taking possession of the equipment and was linked with one of 25 maintenance and repair shops capable of providing any necessary future maintenance. Small group follow-up trainings were offered on an ad-hoc basis for over 100 farmers from all five northern provinces and were also provided to DAIL extension agents.

Despite farmers' clear enthusiasm for using 2WT, IDEA-NEW did not sell as many tractors as initially planned because another development project distributed tractors at a lower price with minimal training requirements. However, farmers' interest remained high and IDEA-NEW helped establish a solid base of individuals in the North that continue to promote the use of 2WTs and can be utilized to support similar USAID programming efforts in the future.

²³ The average yield of demonstration plots was 12,432 kg of wheat compared to 7,423 from neighboring farms.

²⁴ Farmers contributed 63% of the tractor's cost.

Promoting Best Practices for Maximizing Moisture. In the North, fields' unevenness causes a wasteful distribution of irrigation water and lower yields. Laser land leveling solves this problem by evening out the field, which can increase water efficiency by up to 30%. To address this issue, IDEA-NEW granted four laser land levelers (on a 'use and return' basis) in 2010 to four cooperatives—Sabz Baba Yadgar and Samerqandyan in Balkh, Sanawi Almar in Faryab and Asiabad in Sari Pul—to allow each group to offer land leveling to local farmers on a commercial basis. Between 2010 and 2013, over 300 farmers utilized the cooperatives' services. Individual members of the cooperative were responsible for providing the cost of fuel for the tractors while non-members were charged 1,000 AFN (\$19) an hour for leveling. Cooperatives leveled a total of 122.7 ha of land using their machines.²⁵ IDEA-NEW provided four, one-week trainings to eight tractor drivers selected by the cooperatives. IDEA-NEW and JDA also hosted 14 demonstrations on the use and efficiency of land laser leveling technology on their demonstration plots in all five provinces; a total of 1,168 farmers attended these events. Promoting the use of laser land levelers complemented IDEA-NEW's other work in the wheat value chain, where the program introduced the use of 2WTs for plowing and harvesting, which operate best on level land. This also provided cooperatives an opportunity to connect with farmers who may be interested in leveling their land. Cooperatives were completely self-sufficient in generating business and the growing interest from farmers every year—60 in 2010, 70 in 2011 to over 100 in 2013—clearly demonstrated that offering land leveling services is a viable way to increase the groups' incomes while also continuing to promote mechanization in the North.

²⁵ Balkh: 96.6 ha; Faryab: 12.6 ha; Sari Pul: 12.2 ha; Jawzjan: 1.3 ha.



An IDEA-NEW field technician demonstrates usage of a two wheel tractor for field preparation in Mihterlam district, Laghman.

Introducing Zero-Tillage Model. Annual crop yields on rain-fed land, particularly wheat, are severely limited by lack of water. In order to make the best use of available soil moisture, farmers in arid regions around the world have developed the zero-tillage method, in which seed is sown directly into the soil without plowing. In late 2011, IDEA-NEW selected seven one-hectare demonstration plots to be planted with wheat (0.6 ha) and other crops to assess the suitability of zero-tillage equipment in northern Afghanistan. IDEA-NEW imported a zero-tillage seed drill from Pakistan and, over a period of 24 months, demonstrated its capabilities at 40 land preparation and planting field days attended by 400 farmers.²⁶ Participants learned about the reduction in water waste when using zero-tillage methods instead of hand seeding and that zero-tillage farms used only 22 kgs of reformed seeds during the planting season as opposed to 42 kgs on traditional farms. In 2013, demonstration plots had 25% higher yields than traditional farms. Over a two year period, IDEA-NEW sold five zero-tillage seeders to providers in Balkh, Samangan and Faryab provinces and these companies have rented their machines to many local farmers who have seen the benefits of using this equipment.

²⁶ In December 2012, IDEA-NEW staff decided to establish three additional one ha, zero-tillage plots in Balkh, Samangan and Faryab provinces. Three more (one per province) were created in October 2013.

SILK VALUE CHAIN

Afghanistan's silk industry is a powerful generator of employment, especially for poor households. Silk spinning, dyeing and weaving provides employment primarily to women and the final product is a high value export commodity with considerable domestic demand. The northern and northeastern regions have a famous tradition for the production of silk textiles; however, years of fighting and drought have nearly destroyed the art of silkworm rearing in both areas. As a result, the silk carpet weaving industry either imports silk at significantly higher prices from Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and other neighboring countries or uses factory-made synthetic materials that are slowly replacing the demand for silk products. This situation has affected the income generating opportunities for hundreds of Afghan women.

Technical Training. IDEA-NEW focused its efforts on assisting women in Baghlan and Kunduz provinces that had prior experience in silk production but were unable to capitalize on their skills because of a lack of connections with the wider value chain.²⁷ The program delivered technical training in silkworm rearing and management, silkworm

²⁷ The female silk production activity ran in Baghlan from March 2010–July 2013 and in Kunduz from March 2011–June 2013. Project locations included Aliabad, Khan Abad, Chardara, Imam Sahib and Kunduz Center districts (Kunduz) and Baghlan Jaded district (Baghlan).

incubation, ventilation, collecting, carrying and drying cocoons to 1,415 women in Kunduz, and 220 women in Baghlan. Beneficiaries received vital inputs, such as a box of silkworm eggs, wooden beds for the cocoons, woven mats to keep the worms contained, plastic sheeting to provide insulation, gas cylinders to help reach and maintain the proper temperature and humidity for worm growth as well as scissors, bamboo mats and wooden beams.²⁸ In both provinces, silk-related inputs were initially fully funded by IDEA-NEW but by 2012 farmers' cost shares had risen to 30% and by 2013 beneficiaries' paid 100% of inputs' cost.

Connecting the beneficiaries with local suppliers. IDEA-NEW connected silkworm farmers with local suppliers with the aim of creating long-term business relationships between providers and producers in both provinces to ensure the quality of inputs. During trainings, the project introduced high quality silkworm feed to beneficiaries. Subsequent monitoring visits found that beneficiaries in both provinces continued to use the improved feed and, consequently, outbreaks of diseases like *Nosema bombycis* dropped significantly. Prior to IDEA-NEW's intervention, northeastern silkworm farmers produced an average of 4 kgs of relatively low quality silk from one box of silkworm eggs. Post intervention, beneficiaries produced eight kgs and, because of the improved quality, sold their silk for approximately 500 AFN (\$9) per kg as opposed to the 300 AFN (\$5) they earned per kg prior to IDEA-NEW's intervention.

In the North, IDEA-NEW started working with the Rabia Maryam Handicraft Company (RMHC) in 2009. Founded by a businesswoman who, with IDEA-NEW support turned a small home-based enterprise into a sustainable manufacturing business, RMHC operates throughout IDEA-NEW's Northern provinces. The project provided training to 400 women during the 2010 season to strengthen their knowledge of modern silkworm rearing techniques and provided them with a box of quality silkworm eggs.²⁹ Prior to this training, beneficiaries typically harvested six to eight kgs of cocoons per box of domestic silkworm eggs. After the training, participants were able to harvest 12-14 kgs of cocoons per box, producing an average of 19 kgs of raw silk and generating 11,873 AFN (\$204) in sales per beneficiary.³⁰

The following years, RMHC identified an additional 2,000 women from all target provinces to participate in the modern silkworm rearing training course. IDEA-NEW staff also monitored farmers' progress during training and the silkworms' growing phase. This two-year activity ended in late July 2012 and produced over 4,500,000 AFN (\$86,638.40) in revenue for beneficiaries. To complement its extensive training activities, IDEA-NEW provided 11,560 mulberry saplings to over 1,000 women in Balkh, Faryab, Samangan, Jawzjan and Sari Pul provinces. IDEA-NEW partnered with RMHC to distribute the trees, which solidified the company's linkages with more than 1,000 silkworm producers. Rabia Maryam noted that by the following year these trees would

I have been weaving different handicrafts from silk yarn for the last thirty years. I used to buy silk cocoons and yarn from other places, but this year with the help of IDEA-NEW there are one hundred women in this village who produced silk cocoons and we will be able to use it for creating handicrafts in our village.

53-year old woman from Faryab province and an IDEA-NEW trainee

²⁸ Program staff worked closely with MAIL representatives to procure silkworm eggs, which must be kept cool during transport.

²⁹ Each box contained approximately 30,000 eggs. IDEA-NEW also distributed an additional 678 boxes to experienced silkworm rearers in three other communities in Samangan, Jawzjan and Balkh (226 boxes per province).

³⁰ Farmers sold their raw silk for an average price of 625.64 AFN (\$10.75) per kg.

have enough leaves to allow each silkworm colony to produce 15-20 kgs of silk, worth approximately 10,000 AFN (\$184).

Results from 980 silkworm farmers in Faryab, Sari Pul, Jawzjan, Balkh and Samangan provinces who participated in the training and/or received hybrid silk eggs showed that beneficiaries harvested a total of 12,333 kg of silkworm cocoons, which were sold for a total of 7,009,250 AFN (\$124,079). This means each beneficiary earned 7,152 AFN (\$126) which is almost 80% more than what women typically earn when using domestic silkworms.

Chawki Rearing Training. In 2013, IDEA-NEW organized a training of trainers (ToT) session by an international sericulture expert for 20 Afghan women that focused on chawki rearing.³¹ The training contained both theoretical and practical components that covered best practices regarding silkworm hatching, feeding, and molting and highlighted the importance of temperature and humidity control. After completing the ToT, trainees replicated the 12-day training at one of 10 chawki rearing centers that reached 500 women across five Northern provinces. Beneficiaries' feedback from these sessions was overwhelmingly positive.

Also in 2013, IDEA-NEW brought in two international consultants to train ten of RMHC's master trainers in how to produce higher quality products and diversify the company's designs in order to increase its appeal to international consumers. This 30-day, in-depth 'Development for Silk Textiles' training focused on the potential export of silk scarves to the U.S. An export manual was created for Rabia Maryam containing information on the entire process—from product development to the business of exporting. The training provided Rabia Maryam and her staff with a complete picture of the process, requirements, risks and challenges that come with working in a highly competitive market. As of December 2013, which marked the end of IDEA-NEW northern programming, Rabia Maryam was prioritizing the domestic market (as suggested by the consultants) and assessing the possibility of exporting.

The chawki rearing training was one of the best trainings I have ever participated in...before, there was a lot of pressure on my husband. My children went to local schools because we did not have money for the bus fare. Now, my daughter is in college in the city. My son is learning how to fix cell phones. I have started saving.

—A silk producer in Dihdadi district, Balkh

³¹ Chawki rearing refers to the process of raising silkworms from eggs to the second molting stage, when the eggs turn into pupa.



IDEA-NEW trained over 1,300 beekeepers in how to improve the health of their bees.

HONEY VALUE CHAIN

Although Afghanistan has a long tradition of honey production and domestic demand remains high, a considerable amount of honey is imported from neighboring countries. While the Northeast has a suitable climate and terrain for beekeeping, few beekeepers that exist in the region fail to meet local demand, mainly due to a lack of adequate honey production techniques and processing knowledge. Beekeeping is typically a small-scale activity that can provide a useful supplemental income for households and provides employment opportunities for women. IDEA-NEW's activities in the honey value chain focused on increasing the production and sales of locally-produced honey by mobilizing local beekeeping cooperatives to improve their production and marketing techniques and assisting farmers in the establishment of their own small-scale beekeeping businesses. Beekeeping and honey production also played a critical support role in IDEA-NEW's orchard crop value chain; namely, bees' pollination of fruit trees.

Through its honey production project, IDEA-NEW worked with a total of 1,367 beekeepers (including 123 women), who were all members of local beekeeping cooperatives to improve the health of their bees and, consequently, the quality and quantity of their honey. This was done via a comprehensive training curriculum that strengthened farmers' knowledge of general beekeeping best practices as well as advanced skills, including identifying and controlling diseases, feeding, hatching, honey

After joining the IDEA-NEW program, my production increased and I can now compete in the local market because I have 1,600 kgs of high quality honey to sell.

—A beekeeper from Kalafgan district, Takhar province

extraction, packaging and marketing. Technical teams also advised beekeepers on how to rear bees during winter and guided them in combining, splitting, and creating new bee colonies. Once beneficiaries completed their capacity building training, IDEA-NEW distributed inputs, such as bees and hives, beekeeping kits, safety equipment and honey extracting and sealer machines and provided technical assistance as needed.

During the first year of implementation, IDEA-NEW provided fully subsidized inputs in order to encourage farmers' participation. In the second year, as beneficiaries began to see tangible benefits, the program required farmers to provide a cost share of 20%. This increased to 30% in the third year and 70% in the fourth. IDEA-NEW worked with local DAIL representatives to link beekeepers with providers capable of fulfilling farmers' future input requirements. Farmers were more than willing to contribute an increasing percentage of input costs because most beneficiaries saw a substantial increase in their annual income after IDEA-NEW's intervention. In many cases, farmers that started with a few beehives at the beginning of the project had more than ten times that in 2013. Farmers reported an average income of 88,000 AFN (\$1,514) for the year after they first participated in IDEA-NEW's project—over 50% more than what they earned the preceding year.

Building off the success of its production efforts, IDEA-NEW launched a honey business development project that targeted 11 beekeeping cooperatives with a combined membership of 476 farmers.³² Technical teams for each province teams conducted a ToT for cooperative directors in marketing techniques, purifying honey, packing, labeling, sealing, as well as business skills. The directors then replicated trainings for other cooperative members. Beneficiaries received high quality inputs via IDEA-NEW's cost-share voucher system, with cooperatives covering 50% of the total cost.

Prior to this activity, one kg of cooperatives' honey retailed at 250 AFN (\$4). Post-intervention, this had increased to 550 AFN (\$9). Interestingly, producers who did not participate in the business development project continued to sell their honey locally at the original prices, suggesting that the increase is wholly attributable to IDEA-NEW's intervention.

³² This activity ran in Baghlan Jaded, and Puli Khumri districts (Baghlan) from October 2012–September 2013; Baharak district (Badakhshan) between October 2012 and April 2013; Kalafgan, Farkhar and Taloqan districts (Takhar) from December 2012–April 2013; and Kunduz Center and Chardara districts (Kunduz) from September 2013–June 2013.



The Jawzjan DAIL recognizes an IDEA-NEW supported farmer for the quality of his pelts.

In November 2012, IDEA-NEW approached the Finest Supermarket in Kabul about carrying honey produced by the three cooperatives in Badakhshan in its stores.³³ A formal agreement between the cooperatives and Finest was finalized in January 2013 and during the following month, Finest purchased a sample stock of 300 kg, which sold out within the first two weeks of its arrival and accounted for 30% of the store's total honey sales during that period. Consequently, Finest ordered an additional 863 kg of honey from the cooperatives in late February and a third order of 600 kg in June. As of October 31, 2013, the cooperatives' honey, branded 'Our Product, Our Pride,' generated 720,000 AFN (\$12,515) in sales for IDEA-NEW's beneficiaries. The Finest group has stated that it is delighted with the results and will continue to buy from the cooperatives.

³³ The cooperatives were Raihan Cooperative, Baharistan Cooperative and Wahdat Cooperative.

KARAKUL AND SMALL RUMINANTS VALUE CHAIN

The majority of Afghanistan's rural population in the North relies on livestock such as goats, cows, sheep and karakul (Astrakhan or Persian lamb) for some or all of their subsistence. Most of these individuals are herders in remote mountain districts where the productivity of livestock is very low due to disease, inadequate winter nutrition, poor flock management and inefficient harvesting of wool and cashmere. IDEA-NEW's activities in this value chain focused on increasing the export value of Afghan karakul pelts. As such, the program provided regular veterinary care to two DAIL-run, pure-bred karakul farms in Balkh and Jawzjan provinces. IDEA-NEW activities improved herd health by increasing access to winter feed and veterinary care through the establishment of feed banks and training of VFUs and basic field units. The program also provided training to herders to improve the quality of products such as karakul pelts and cashmere.

IDEA-NEW's overall impact in the livestock sector between 2009 and 2013 is significant. 9,450,193 livestock came under increased technology and improved management due to project assistance.³⁴ The program increased rural farmer's access to animal health services through trainings and the provision of veterinary services, which led to improved herd health and increased livestock production across all five target provinces. IDEA-NEW also increased the income of karakul sheep and cashmere goat herders by introducing improvements to the methods of harvesting cashmere and drying karakul pelts. The program promoted a solid network of VFUs and Basic Veterinary Workers (BVWs) whose services are utilized by local farmers and supported by community development councils (CDCs), ensuring the accomplishments in the sector during the past five years will continue beyond the life of the program.

Support to DAIL-managed Karakul Farms. Karakul pelts are a major and valuable export commodity used to make fur coats, hats and other luxury items. They are marketed internationally at auctions in Copenhagen and Helsinki; however, Afghan pelts attract lower prices than those from other countries (such as Namibia) mostly because of poor handling and grading. As a first step towards increasing the export value of Afghanistan's karakul pelts, IDEA-NEW began providing regular veterinary care to two pure-bred karakul farms maintained by DAIL in Balkh and Jawzjan provinces followed by training to farm staff on how to properly ear tag karakul. After training and providing feed to the farms, IDEA-NEW conducted regular monthly and ad-hoc visits to these farms. Monitoring reports from 2013 showed that the karakul sheep were much healthier compared to their condition before IDEA-NEW's intervention.

Veterinary Field Units (VFUs). Access to veterinary services is an essential prerequisite for raising livestock productivity. IDEA-NEW supported the development of privatized veterinary services through a network of veterinary clinics, known as VFUs, which greatly increased farmers' access to vaccinations and other veterinary drugs not available in the local market. They also provided a vehicle whereby extension training in

³⁴ This is the Life of Project total. The original project target was only 2,707,865 which was revised upwards in later years. The final approved target was 9 million.

improved animal husbandry was made available to livestock owners in remote areas. Farmers paid 100% for the services they received.

In 2010, 15 new VFUs, including three women-run VFUs, were established across the region. IDEA-NEW selected VFU sites in collaboration with the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA), DAIL and Community Development Council (CDC) members. Each VFU was staffed by an IDEA-NEW trained paravet (including three women) who completed six months of veterinary training focused on bacteriology, pharmacology, animal hygiene, basic surgery, breeding and artificial insemination, vaccinations, and deworming. Once their training was completed, paravets received all the necessary tools and equipment to deliver effective veterinary services: a solar powered fridge, a motorcycle, and over fifty small veterinary instruments such as vaccinators, burdazos and drenchers.

Paravets were also tasked with training local farmers in 12 topics related to small and large ruminant herd health, such as diseases, feeding, animal hygiene, cowshed management, vaccinations, and deworming. Each month one topic was covered during a day-long training session. Participating farmers were then tasked with sharing what they had learned with their family members and neighboring farmers.

Paravets attended 12 refresher training courses throughout the remainder of the project and were regularly monitored by the program. By 2013, there were 111 active VFUs in 51 districts that provided services to a total of 8,718,926 animals in all five target provinces.³⁵

In the most remote areas of the North, where full VFUs were not feasible, IDEA-NEW trained 67 local female and male community members to become BVWs.³⁶ Upon the completion of the training, each BVW received a kit containing 15 veterinary instruments including automatic vaccinator machines, automatic drenchers, cold boxes and thermometers. The BVWs were linked to VFUs and worked under them to provide vaccines and veterinary coverage to farmers in remote areas that paravets could not reach.

Improving Production and Quality. Building on its work with VFUs, in 2011 IDEA-NEW began to work with karakul sheep and goat farmers to improve how they cleaned karakul pelts and harvested cashmere from their goats in order to increase the value of both products. This work also provided an opportunity for IDEA-NEW to increase its extension outreach to women livestock owners as women are traditionally involved in cleaning and processing karakul pelts.

From July 2012 to September 2013, the project focused more on the small ruminant value chain (cashmere and karakul) for which IDEA-NEW recruited eight extension workers including four male and four female workers from Balkh, Samangan, Jawzjan and Faryab. These extension workers were provided with a week of practical training on livestock extension. Also in Balkh province, an extra 20 female extension workers were

³⁵ Faryab: 32 VFUs, 3,592,742 animals; Balkh: 39 VFUs, 2,163,852 animals; Jawzjan: 12 VFUs, 891,932 animals; Samangan: 18 VFUs, 1,570,756 animals; Sari Pul: 10 VFUs, 499,644 animals.

³⁶ BVWs were local residents from remote areas that were nominated by CDCs to serve as assistants to paravets. BVWs regularly visited VFUs to pick up vaccinations and to discuss difficult cases with paravets.

recruited with the help of female VFUs (in Alichopan in Mazar and Chimtāl District) to establish female farmers groups with 15 members in each group. Following their establishment, each farmer group was provided with small ruminant herd health training. A total of 570 female farmers were trained with the help of these female extension worker groups and female VFUs. Paravets held monthly extension sessions for karakul and other livestock owners on topics such as controlling endoparasites, newborn animal care, the importance of vaccination and de-worming, proper feeding and nutrition, hygienic milking and cashmere collection. As a result of this intervention, mortality decreased and the size and the health of flocks in the region improved considerably by delivering basic health services.

In early 2013, IDEA-NEW also introduced the Namibian method for drying karakul pelts. This method uses a metal frame and burlap cloth with no salt, resulting in a cleaner and more lustrous pelt than those dried using the traditional Afghan method. IDEA-NEW began by training 22 female extension workers from Balkh, Jawzjan and Faryab on the Namibian drying method. This training was replicated with 2,200 karakul farmers, 650 of whom were women. Trainings continued throughout 2013 with a total of 1,934 karakul farmers, paravets and IDEA-NEW staff in Balkh, Faryab, and Jawzjan provinces trained. 1,500 metallic frames with hessian cloth were provided to Karakul producers in the same three provinces. The improved quality of pelts dried using the Namibian method has resulted in higher income for karakul sheep herders.

Historically, Afghan goat herders have rarely collected cashmere hair, though it could be a valuable source of income. There was also no effort to raise awareness of the demand for this product in Afghanistan. To promote the potential economic benefits of working in the cashmere sector, IDEA-NEW provided training on rearing and combing cashmere goats and the post-harvest storage of cashmere as well as facilitated relationships between national cashmere buyers and paravets, who then introduced buyers to relevant farmers.

In 2011, IDEA-NEW began by training paravets, local buyer associations, and the director of the Afghan Social Cashmere Development Association (ASCDA) on the potential of cashmere, encouraging these individuals to promote cashmere collection among farmers and act as intermediary collection points for buyers. In 2012, IDEA-NEW conducted trainings in Balkh and Samangan on the use of improved combs for collecting high quality cashmere. A total of 36 individuals, including paravets, local extension workers, IDEA-NEW staff and others participated in these trainings, which were replicated by VFUs and local extension workers for 931 farmers, including 75 women.

In addition to training, IDEA-NEW facilitated relationships between producers and cashmere buyers. In April 2013, the program introduced beneficiaries from Balkh to a cashmere trader from Herat, who agreed to buy combed cashmere for \$1/kg higher than the price in the local market. This provided an incentive for livestock owners to harvest cashmere by combing rather than using the traditional approach of cutting the fiber with scissors, which yielded less product. In June 2013, a cashmere trader from the U.S. purchased 11 kg of combed cashmere from VFUs in Balkh at \$18/kg. VFUs had collected the cashmere from farmers who had received IDEA-NEW supplied cashmere combs from paravets.

IDEA-NEW's approach resulted in increasing the participation of women in its karakul sheep value chain from zero to 650 out of a total of 2,200 beneficiaries.



Laborers working on the Salar canal in Asadabad district, Kunar province. IDEA-NEW provided employment for over 50,000 day laborers during the construction of this canal.

STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURE INFRASTRUCTURE

IDEA-NEW used community constructed infrastructure (CCI) activities as the point of entry to communities in all three regions because farmers typically required immediate assistance building or repairing basic infrastructure. The program chose this approach for two reasons: to restore and build productive infrastructure and to inject cash into local economies, thereby helping to reduce communities' reliance on illicit activities. Having their immediate needs taken care of quickly and earning incomes from construction labor also provided communities with a powerful incentive for ongoing cooperation with the program, GIROA and other district entities. In mid-2012, USAID directed IDEA-NEW to focus on agriculture production, access to finance and rural enterprise development, which effectively led to a steep reduction and eventual end to the program's CCI activities. Between March 2009 and December 2013, IDEA-NEW successfully completed 295 infrastructure projects, each of which were implemented as a result of direct requests from communities. 38,202 hectares are under improved irrigation due to IDEA NEW project work, allowing farmers to expand their production of licit crops. Highlights from this work are presented below.

Flood Protection Initiatives. Every year, Afghan farmers suffer tremendous losses from annual flooding. In order to help producers protect their crops, IDEA-NEW worked closely with MAIL, DAILs and local communities to identify and implement high priority infrastructure projects that ranged from repair and rehabilitation work to new construction. In each of these instances, the immediate purpose of the project was to improve irrigation of farmland thereby increasing farm output. It was also expected that the improvements to irrigation would lead to a reduction in water disputes between affected villages, which, combined with the salaries paid to local workers, was expected to contribute to stability. Additional income was put into the community by the local sourcing of construction materials to the extent feasible. Program staff also attempted to coordinate its infrastructure investments with its orchard and annual horticultural crop development in all three regions.

In the East, these projects were all initiated at the request of local communities to their District Governor whose office then relayed it to IDEA-NEW via DAIL. Prior to initiation of work, meetings were conducted with area inhabitants to explain the purpose of the project and to recruit labor. Obtaining community buy-in contributed to timely achievement of the project. The engineering team provided training in relevant construction skills to local laborers. This was the process followed on the vast majority of the canal improvement projects in this region, including the Salar canal in Asadabad district (Kunar)—IDEA-NEW’s largest canal rehabilitation.

Work on the Salar canal started on November 5, 2009 and completed on September 26, 2010 and aimed to improve the existing canal structure and increase the discharge of water from 640 liters per second to 800 liter/second to better serve the farms of 8,500 families (over 3,500 ha of land). This activity was a huge undertaking that resulted in the rebuilding of the intake, constructing 3,441 meters of retaining walls and two 52 meter long super passages. A total of 51,533 day laborers worked 412,264 hours during this project, which injected a total of \$381,508 into the local economy via wages and locally sourced materials.



Before (L) and after (R) views of the Salar Canal project in Asadabad district (Kunar)

At the closing ceremony, which was attended by community members, shura leaders, various GIRoA representatives and the media, the Provincial Governor of Kunar, Mr. Fazlullah Wahidi, stated: “People were involved from beginning to end and this is what is

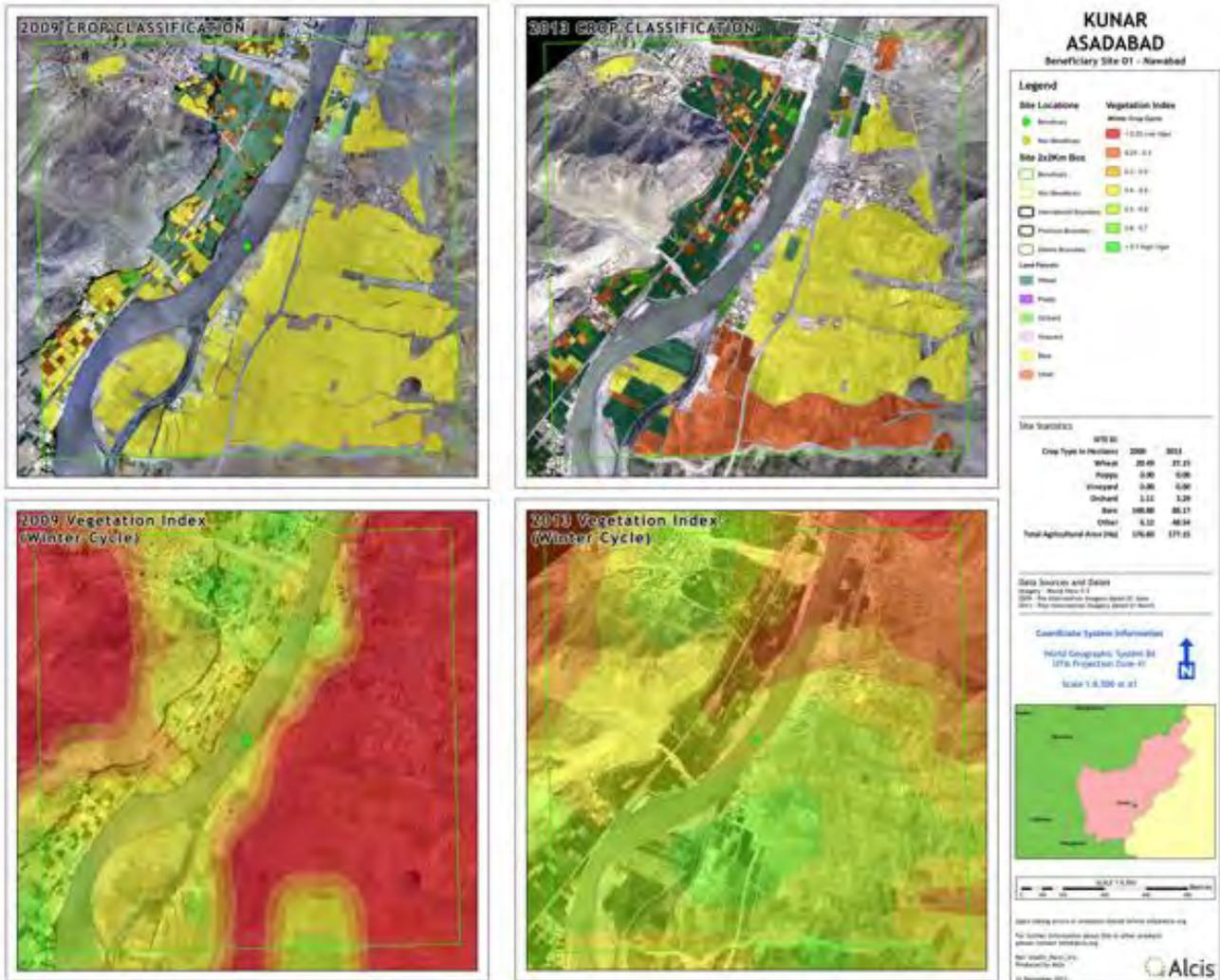
called real transparency in work. The intake was the most important structure of this canal and IDEA-NEW constructed it very well. The recent floods didn't damage even one small piece of the system, which demonstrates the quality of work carried out."

During its 2013 endline survey, IDEA-NEW compared beneficiary and non-beneficiary's access to irrigation to the Eastern region's 2009 baseline information. The comparison showed that access to irrigation water increased overall for the region, but more so for beneficiary households than non-beneficiary households. Remote geospatial imagery of beneficiary and non-beneficiary sites taken in late 2013 by a third party firm corroborated this trend. The image on the following page shows strong irrigation outcomes—both satellite photos were taken in the same months during 2009 and 2013. The first image for 2013 clearly shows a great deal more irrigated cropland than in 2009. The second image shows increased area planted to cropland (another result of irrigation) as well as crop diversification, which is a result of IDEA-NEW's orchard and vegetable interventions in the area.

FIGURE 1. SALAR CANAL REPAIR BY IDEA-NEW



FIGURE 2. IMPROVED IRRIGATION AROUND SALAR CANAL



Before rehabilitation of the Kushkak canal, there was not enough water and we needed to take turns. We frequently disputed over the water. Now that there is plenty of water, we can irrigate our land anytime we need. With this abundance of water, I see more cultivated land around me. We expect to have a huge increase in production this year.

—A farmer and resident of Kushkak village

Infrastructure projects ranged in size and often changed in scope once residents saw the benefits they would receive from completed CCI activities. For example, the Khulm river gabion project, located in Teli, Oymahoot and Qala Arab Bik villages of Khulm district (Balkh), was requested by residents in 2010 and selected in coordination with the local DAIL to protect over 500 hectares of agricultural land from seasonal flood damage. This was later doubled to 1,000 ha per requests from community leaders. The project called for the construction of 975 meters of the gabion protection wall along two sides of the Khulm River basin and included 4,000 m³ of excavation, 3,900 m³ of gabion filling, weaving 2,000 gabion boxes and backfilling the walls after the gabions were placed on the sites and filled with stones. This project was completed under a cash for work scheme, which meant that IDEA-NEW hired laborers from within the local community and provided engineering design, oversaw implementation and provided building materials. The wall prevented flooding in the villages of approximately 12,000 families and, in the end, saved over 1,000 ha of vegetable crops and orchards. A total of \$178,645 was injected into beneficiary communities via material procurements and wages for skilled and unskilled laborers. Residents' farmland has not flooded once since 2010.



Before (left) and after (right) views of the Khulm River gabion project in Balkh

In the Northeast, IDEA-NEW implemented 88 community construction projects geared towards improving the irrigation networks in its target provinces. The largest of these was the Gawargan Spillway project in Baghlan province, which began in October 2009. The spillway was severely damaged by flash flooding and cut off the supply of water to approximately 60 km of canal on the outskirts of Puli Khumri in Clop-e Nasaji. The nearby PRT had constructed rudimentary repairs, which restored water flow as a stop-gap measure, but more robust and permanent repairs were needed so IDEA-NEW undertook additional rehabilitation to restore the canal connected to this spillway to optimal water flow. A cash for work project was undertaken that employed 33 full-time equivalent (FTE) people for four months with labor costs of \$47,874 as well as volunteer labor contributed by the community. When work was completed in January 2010, the spillway repairs and canal rehabilitation restored irrigation coverage to 9,542 ha of land that benefited 12,500 agrarian-dependent families (87,500 individuals). After construction

was finished, IDEA-NEW's agriculture team provided technical guidance to farmers in on-farm water management and irrigation techniques to help ensure that they could maximize their newly restored water access.

Expanding Access to Markets. Targeted infrastructure projects also allowed IDEA-NEW to support and expand critical market-linkages for farmers. For example, the Maymana–Bilchiragh road links major parts of Pashtun Kot and Bilchiragh districts (Faryab) to the provincial capital, Maymana city. According to a survey conducted in September 2009, there are 406 villages located along a 52 km stretch of road in these two districts.³⁷ Prior to IDEA-NEW's intervention, the lack of culverts resulted in frequent flooding that prevented farmers from transporting their agricultural products to market on time. To resolve this, IDEA-NEW constructed 39 stone masonry culverts with reinforced cement concrete (RCC) slabs and a 76 meter long gabion protection wall—a retaining wall filled with stone. Culverts not only improved the drainage system of the road, but also helped improve the irrigation system passing water through the road to nearby farm land. The Faryab Department of Public Works (DoPW) provided machinery, including an excavator, grader, roller and dump trucks for the implementation of this project. Despite heavy seasonal floods that caused some delays, the construction of 39 culverts and work on the road improvement went ahead, creating 12,753 work days. Wages and procurement injected \$126,843 into the local economy.

The Maymana–Bilchiragh Road Improvement Project was successfully completed in December 2010. The Faryab DoPW, which assumed responsibility for the future maintenance of the road, hosted the project completion ceremony, which was covered by local and national media. At the event, Faryab's Provincial Governor and deputy police chief, Pashtun Kot's District Governor, directors of the DAIL, DoPW, Department of the Economy (DoE) and the Department of Power joined the community in cutting the ribbon at one of the culverts in Gandab village of Pashtun Kot District. Directors' presence helped legitimize GIROA's role in coordinating with IDEA-NEW on CCI projects and their role in maintenance. The improvement of this stretch of road impacted over 50,000 families and approximately 8,000 hectares of farmland. After this activity was completed, IDEA-NEW's agriculture teams began working with farmers to improve the quality and quantity of their wheat and orchard crops.

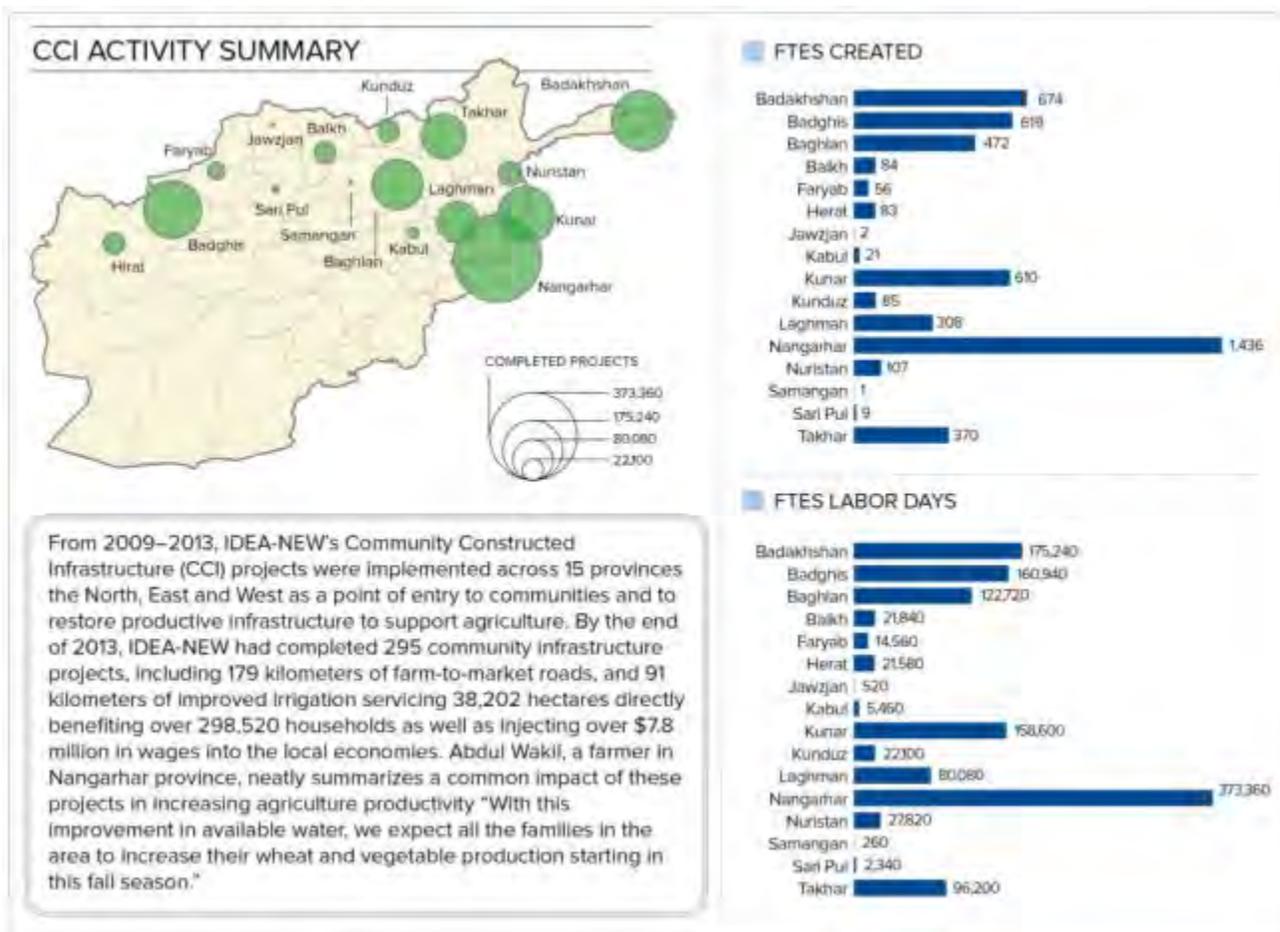
This result was replicated in the Northeast where IDEA-NEW implemented the Qazaq Baghak Road and Bridges Project in Takhar province. Completed in late 2011, this project linked 2,030 families on 126 ha of land with markets in Taloqan village. This area is known for its fertile agricultural land and strong wheat crops and is also home to a stream-fed grain mill. The trip to the market routinely took local farmers more than two hours using donkeys because the road was too narrow for vehicles and the bridges were little more than dirt-covered tree trunks. The community was eager for an improved road and took down compound walls to provide extra land so that the road could accommodate passing vehicles. IDEA-NEW hired local workers, who resurfaced 1.7 km of road and also constructed 11 culverts and two bridges. With the new road and bridges, both of

³⁷ IDEA-NEW conducted the technical road survey while statistics about the demographics were provided by the MRRD and MoPW.

which were built for heavy vehicular traffic, farmers can now reach the mill and Taloqan markets in just 15 minutes, with less damage to produce.

In the West, the Badghis Provincial Governor and City Mayor requested IDEA-NEW's support in building a market that could serve as a provincial sales hub for residents. The construction of the Badghis wholesale market finished on December 16, 2012 after nearly two years of work. Before the project's launch in July 2010, wholesalers operated in an undeveloped area of downtown Qala-e-Naw district. Fruit and vegetables were exposed to damage from sunlight and changing weather conditions. During rains and snowing seasons, the previous location flooded and would be impassible due to excessive mud. In addition to environmental threats, there was no space for farmers to store, stack or sort their products. IDEA-NEW facilitated the building of 74 covered stalls, a fully furnished office for the wholesalers association, and a large open space in the middle of the market for the loading and unloading of trucks. Other facilities included public toilet and a water supply system composed of a well, water pump, elevated water reservoir and improved surface water drainage outside the market building. IDEA-NEW hired local laborers and trained them in basic carpentry, masonry, electrical and plumbing work in order to ensure a high quality of construction. Workers earned \$178,383 in wages over 754 days. Once completed, the new market covered 6,050 square meters of land and can operate year round. As of March 2013, 95% of stalls in the market were occupied.

Promoting Project Sustainability. IDEA-NEW strove to build off its previous successes wherever possible and often developed CCI projects to sustain previous value chain programming. One of the most successful examples of this was a series of small infrastructure activities implemented in Faryab provinces that supported IDEA-NEW's vegetable interventions. Potatoes are the primary commercial vegetable crops in both of those Northern provinces as there is strong local demand. A common problem facing farmers though is adequate storage to keep harvested crops and also seed onions and potatoes for the upcoming season's cultivation. To address this issue, IDEA-NEW piloted an underground root cellar activity in August 2012 that built two cellars, one each in two villages in Faryab province. Each cellar had the capacity to store ten MT and could be used by up to 100 farmers. This simple and low-cost technology supported the preservation of improved potato varieties distributed by IDEA-NEW in 2012 and provided an alternative to traditional storage methods (burying them in soil or keeping them in a darkened room), which resulted in high losses. Using the storage units allowed farmers to save part of their harvest for the offseason when market prices would be higher. Both sites were fully maximized by local potato producers after IDEA-NEW's support ended and subsequent site visits showed that community leaders were closely following the maintenance instructions left by program staff. At the request of residents in two additional villages, IDEA-NEW built two more underground cellars in July 2013 and handover ceremonies took place in October of the same year. Word of the potato cellars spread to Balkh province that resulted in farmers and elders from Kar Malik village (Dihdadi) approaching IDEA-NEW to request a ten MT cellar for farmers to store excess onions. Using the same system it established in Faryab, handed over the underground unit to a local agriculture cooperative, who took on full responsibility for the ongoing management and maintenance of the cellar. Each of these sites was fully utilized well after IDEA-NEW's work in both provinces ended in December 2013.



From 2009–2013, IDEA-NEW's CCI projects in the North, East and West directly benefitted 298,520 individuals and injected over \$7.8 million in FTE wages into the local economies.

OTHER PROJECTS/INTERVENTIONS³⁸

Balkh Livestock Dairy Union (BLDU). Livestock is a major component of the agricultural sector and an important source of food and income for Afghan farmers. Most dairy production in Afghanistan is done by households owning one or two cows and is traditionally managed by women. Due to poor nutrition and access to veterinary care, milk production levels are low so the majority of milk is often consumed by the household and what surplus exists is usually sold locally. In the North, the lack of opportunity to sell the surplus milk provided little incentive for household dairy farmers to invest in improving production. To this end, IDEA-NEW developed an activity in May

³⁸ IDEA-NEW's work in non-target value chains either continued long-running projects or addressed significant opportunities to develop value-adding processing and marketing.

2010 that aimed to create a sustainable income generating opportunity for rural farming families through the sale of their raw milk and processed dairy products.

IDEA-NEW worked with the BLDU as its implementing partner. The BLDU had developed a network of household dairy producers across northern Afghanistan who sold their surplus milk to the Balkh Dairy Plant in Dihdadi district, where it was processed into various pasteurized dairy products for sale in Mazar-e-Sharif. However, the network was severely limited by the distances that farmers had to travel to make daily deliveries to the dairy. To extend these benefits, IDEA-NEW proposed to set up village processing centers where hand-operated equipment could process fresh milk into cheese, butter and yoghurt, which could then more easily be transported to the main dairy for sale.

Establishing Local Milk Processing Centers. In collaboration with DAILs and CDCs, IDEA-NEW's technical teams conducted a detailed survey of 20 villages to determine the number of home-based dairy farmers in each area. Out of these 20 villages, ten villages in ten different districts (two per province) were selected. Each of the locations had at least 50 farmers in the area and a milk processing center. Over the next 30 months, IDEA-NEW created a sustainable income generation opportunity for 500 rural farming families through the sale of their surplus milk.³⁹

Local farmers and village leaders in each location selected staff for the new centers. IDEA-NEW's technical team then provided employees training in milk collection, processing and marketing best practices at the BLDU Training Center in Mazar-e-Sharif and the Balkh Dairy Plant in Shirabad. All managers received additional training in finance and business administration. All new milk processing centers were fully functional by Spring 2011.

A year after they opened, eight centers began purchasing additional equipment, such as batch pasteurizers, cream separators, butter churners, soft cheese molds, raw milk testing kit, etc. with their profits in order to expand their operations.⁴⁰ By the end of this activity, each of the processing centers was self-sufficient, having earned a total of 11,513,198AFN (\$230,264) from the sale of various dairy products.

³⁹ Every beneficiary recorded their daily milk production and sales information in log sheets, which showed steady increases in their milk production throughout the life of this activity.

⁴⁰ These eight centers were located in Balkh, Sholgara, Pashtun Kot, Aqcha, Faizabad, Shibirghan, Aybak and Sari Pul.

TABLE 3. PRODUCTION AND SALES FIGURES FOR MILK PROCESSING CENTERS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2012

Center	District	Province	Total # of Members who Sold Milk to the Center	Milk Collected (in liters)	Total Income (AFN)	Total Income (\$)
1	Aybak	Samangan	50	153,062	2,142,868	42857.36
2	Sholgara	Balkh	45	87,266	1,047,192	20943.84
3	Balkh	Balkh	61	181,580	2,542,120	50842.4
4	Aqcha	Jawzjan	50	53,972	755,608	15112.16
5	Faizabad	Jawzjan	45	35,903	466,739	9334.78
6	Pashtun Kot	Faryab	74	110,833	2,105,827	42116.54
7	Sari Pul	Sari Pul	48	45,232	768,944	15378.88
8	Shibirghan	Jawzjan	57	73,950	1,683,900	33678
Total			430	741,798	11,513,198	230,264

Beneficiary Training and Follow-on Support. Shortly after the processing centers were established, an extension training program in animal breeding, feeding and health care was launched to improve the quality of milk produced by dairy farmers. In July 2010, BLDU's Women's Master Trainer conducted ToT sessions for ten women (one per target village) in cattle management, milking techniques and hygiene, all of which play a key role in improving the health of animals and, consequently, the quality of their milk. These women then replicated the training for 50 other women in their respective villages (500 trainees total) between July and December 2010.

BLDU and IDEA-NEW technical staff made individual follow-up visits to each beneficiary and gave targeted advice on improving farmers' milking hygiene and remodeling their cowsheds.⁴¹ IDEA-NEW also linked beneficiaries to local VFUs to ensure farmers' had access to veterinary services. Paravets vaccinated 2,688 cows against foot and mouth disease and treated 233 animals for infertility. Program staff, VFU paravets and the BLDU mobile veterinary services also connected beneficiaries to artificial insemination centers in various target districts, which resulted in an additional 726 dairy being inseminated.

IDEA-NEW's sub-grant with the BLDU ended in December 2012. Since then, female dairy farmers across the North have continued to deliver their excess milk to their local processing center, all eight of which were still operating successfully on their own a year after IDEA-NEW's assistance ended.⁴²

⁴¹ Each beneficiary covered 70% of the remodeling costs for their sheds.

⁴² IDEA-NEW's work in the North ended in December 2013.

When the IDEA-NEW team first came to me, I did not believe growing timber was a good investment. But later on, when I saw the amazing growth and the sale of the cuttings, I expanded my nursery from 0.5 jerib to 1.5 jeribs.

—A farmer from Faizabad (Badakhshan)

We used to spend more than 30 minutes to manually weave a shall. Now, it takes only five minutes. The machines have helped us expand our services by 80%.

—Owner of a textile factory in Rodat district (Nangarhar)

Increasing Crop Variety to Meet Market Needs. Forestry is not a major industry in Afghanistan but is a commodity in high demand due to construction industry requirements, and as a result, pressure on native timber supplies from the need for fuel requirements and construction materials is immense. Timber provides a relatively high income for farmers compared to other crops thanks to the high market demand; however, the existing varieties of wood (particularly poplar) are slow-growing and pest infested. This, coupled with farmers' lack of knowledge, limited timber as a viable option for many farmers. In order to encourage farmers to grow timber beyond their household needs, IDEA-NEW developed a commercial poplar cultivation project that aimed to introduce hybrid tree varieties that are inexpensive to purchase as saplings and grow straighter, faster (maturing in just three years) and are more disease resistant than local varieties. The activity ran in three Northeast provinces—Baghlan (January 2011–October 2012), Takhar (February 2011–September 2012), and Badakhshan (April 2010–November 2012)—and targeted a total of 500 farmers.⁴³

Farmers were trained in land preparation, timber planting, cutting and managing, fertilizer application, and weeding. IDEA-NEW introduced hybrid clones imported from the United States and modern cultivation practices including planting distances, fertilizer regimes and thinning protocols to encourage farmers to grow timber beyond their household needs in order to meet high market demand for saplings and wood. IDEA-NEW distributed 4,000 timber saplings and one bag of fertilizer to each beneficiary.⁴⁴ Farmers then planted either a half-jerib (20 meters x 100 meters) of open space or a quarter-jerib of closed space of poplars on good quality, well irrigated land. IDEA-NEW's agriculture team made regular site visits to farmers throughout the life of the project to ensure that farmers abided by the best practices taught in field days.

Prior to this activity, very few farmers grew timber as a commercial enterprise (beyond basic family needs). During focus group discussions, farmers acknowledged their initial disinterest in timber cultivation but admitted that this changed as IDEA-NEW staff outlined the relevance and value of this very simple cash crop.

On average, farmers sold 14,000 cuttings each for 2-3 AFN per cutting resulting in an average annual income of approximately 40,000 AFN (\$698) per farmer.

Reinvigorating Traditionally Strong Industries. Afghanistan's eastern region has long been famous for its textile production; however, this once vibrant industry has struggled in the past decade. Numerous local businesses have reopened their doors since 2002 but the lack of textile factories in Nangarhar severely hampered their ability to be competitive in local markets. For three years, from 2009–2012, IDEA-NEW supported the revival of textile production by providing in-kind grants to 15 factories in Batikot, Bihsud, Dara-i-Noor, Kama and Rodat districts of Nangarhar province.⁴⁵ Previously, factories were weaving products manually and introducing machinery—such as power

⁴³ Project locations were Puli Khumri, Baghlan Jaded, Nahrin, Bano, and Deh Salah districts (Baghlan); Bangi, Farkhar, Kalafgan, Baharak, Chal, and Taloqan districts (Takhar); Tagab, Kishem, Teshkan, Argo, Darayem, Faizabad, Baharak, Khash, Jurm, Wardoj and Shohada districts (Badakhshan).

⁴⁴ At project initiation, farmers provided 30% towards saplings, fertilizer and land preparation; this later increased to 100%.

⁴⁵ Fourteen textile weaving factories and one washing and pressing facility.

looms, electronic wheels, bobbin and pressing machines—allowed factory owners to significantly increase their production capacity and expand their business by beginning to dye, wash and press the scarves, shawls, caps and other goods produced by local weavers and small companies. Having their goods professionally finished at the factories increased the competitiveness of locally produced goods over imported products at eastern markets while also creating job opportunities.

IMPACT ON POPPY PRODUCTION

IDEA-NEW's development challenge was to provide farmers a licit alternative to poppy production. The various project activities focused on agriculture production and rural infrastructure have all contributed to increasing licit, commercially viable, agricultural-based alternatives for rural Afghans. A key result in this area is the 14,522 hectares⁴⁶ of alternative crops that are under cultivation due to IDEA-NEW interventions. This demonstrates the expanding coverage of a licit economy and serves as a proxy measure of the shrinking importance of poppy cultivation. The impact of alternative development programs like IDEA-NEW is more mixed when looking only at overall levels of poppy production in Afghanistan. In 2009, 12 of the 19 provinces IDEA-NEW worked in were poppy free; while in 2015 only seven of the 19 provinces have been reported as poppy free. There are positive signs as well, overall cultivation in Afghanistan decreased by 19% in 2015 from 2014 levels.⁴⁷

An illustrative province that shows the successes and challenges in reducing opium production is Nangarhar in Eastern Afghanistan where poppy cultivation increased overall during the IDEA-NEW implementation time period. Poppy cultivation was estimated by UNODC at 294 ha in 2009 and grew to 10,016 in 2015.⁴⁸ Most of the poppy in Nangarhar is grown in the more remote and security challenged southern districts of Achin, Chapahar, Khogiani, Sherzad and Pachir wa Agam and Kot. IDEA-NEW pulled back from most direct work in those districts as security worsened after 2011. Instead the project focused resources on interventions in the low-lying areas with direct access to irrigation. These areas, where IDEA-NEW was particularly active and focused its resources, still remain poppy free. IDEA-NEW's interventions were instrumental in maintaining rural resilience and keeping farmers from choosing to grow poppy.⁴⁹ The uptake of high value horticulture is particularly impressive in these low lying areas, but without the corresponding security and governance improvements, IDEA-NEW would have been less likely to be as successful.

⁴⁶ This is out of final life of project target of 14,000ha.

⁴⁷ All numbers cited here are from the UNODC annual opium surveys (<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/crop-monitoring/index.html?tag=Afghanistan>)

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ see Mansfield report "Examining the Impact of IDEA-NEW on Opium Production" and which reported that "Farmers stated that IDEA-NEW assistance played a role in farmers' decisions to switch from poppy cultivation to vegetable cultivation. "Focus Group Report: Vegetables" produced by RSI consulting.



A man weaves cloth at the Rodat Textile Company, which was started with technical and financial support from IDEA-NEW in Rodat district, Nangarhar province.

FOCUS ON AGRIBUSINESSES (2013- 2015)

Following USAID guidance in 2012 (Modification #11 to the Cooperative Agreement), IDEA-NEW began narrowing its programmatic and geographic focus to the grape, orchard crop and vegetable value chains in seven provinces in central and eastern Afghanistan. As the sole implementer, DAI began to shift program implementation activities away from the farmer and community-level infrastructure and production activities to interventions targeting agribusinesses on either end of the farmer in each value chain. Modifications #17 and #18 provided no-cost extensions (NCE) to the project extending the project from March 01, 2014 to September 30, 2015. This NCE narrowed IDEA-NEW's geographic focus to the eastern region (Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, Kabul, Kapisa, Panjshir, and Parwan provinces) and concentrated its activities on supporting input suppliers and food processors operating in the grape, orchard crop, and vegetable value chains. As a result of IDEA-NEW activities, \$15,351,559 in sales by supported agribusinesses was achieved in FY2015, which exceeds the NCE target of \$10 million in sales. This achievement reflects the impact of project support to agribusinesses.

This section focuses solely on activities conducted in the eastern region from 2013-2015, specifically highlighting IDEA-NEW's work with agribusinesses conducted during the NCE periods to the original cooperative agreement.

EOI Issuance and Grantee Selection. In preparation for activities under the extension period, IDEA-NEW released an expression of interest (EOI) to 500 agricultural input suppliers and food processors operating in target provinces. These firms were registered with the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) and were involved in one of the program's three remaining value chains. A total of 278 agribusinesses responded to the EOI, out of which IDEA-NEW shortlisted 98 prospective grantees, comprised of agriculture input suppliers and food processors in its seven target provinces. Four pre-application conferences were conducted in April and May 2014 (two in Kabul, two in Jalalabad) for these shortlisted agribusinesses interested in matching, promotional, and/or SMS marketing activity grants. Applications were reviewed by an evaluation committee consisting of members of the Contracts, Grants and Procurement, M&E and the Agribusiness teams. During the reviews, the committee members determined whether each application met the minimum standard criteria necessary for receiving financial assistance. Once provisionally approved by the committee, the application was sent to the Agribusiness team for clarification. During this clarification process, IDEA-NEW staff visited the applicant to determine the economic feasibility of the grant activity, as well as to assess the degree of innovation, shared risk and sustainability of the proposed grant activity. In addition, the team clarified the costs and negotiated the cost-share arrangement, with a minimum requirement of 25%. To ensure transparency during the

grant application process, IDEA-NEW's M&E team also visited each applicant to verify the information in both the application and clarification documents.

Typically, promotional grants involved the shared provision of a variety of marketing materials, such as posters, signboards, billboards, scripted radio advertisements, pens, caps, keychains and business cards, which were aimed at helping each business promote its products/services, increase brand awareness, and attract new customers. Matching grants typically included the procurement and delivery of capital equipment aimed specifically at increasing the business' production capabilities. Additionally and in an effort to further build the capacity of participating input suppliers, grantees agreed to participate in IPM and pesticide safety, food safety and hygiene, and accounting and marketing trainings as a condition of the grant agreement. IDEA-NEW contracted Afghan training service providers to conduct all of these trainings.

The section below provides key information and highlights from IDEA-NEW's implementation of the activities proposed by IDEA-NEW and approved by USAID under Activity Plans #5 and #6.

SUPPORT TO INPUT SUPPLIERS

IDEA-NEW's support to input suppliers during the NCE period was characterized by the award of matching, promotional, SMS marketing, and live radio show activity grants. In total, 48 grants were awarded to 35 input suppliers in the eastern and central provinces of Afghanistan.

Matching and Promotional Grants. IDEA-NEW's matching and promotional activity grants aimed to provide input suppliers with the opportunity to increase production and the visibility of their businesses. Specifically, matching grants were used to fund innovative activities with the potential for generating broader systemic change within IDEA-NEW value chains. Promotional grants aimed to increase beneficiaries' name recognition among consumers and broaden demand for their products.

One of IDEA-NEW's grantees based in Kabul, *Prosperity Group of Companies (PGC)*, enjoyed a significant amount of success during the implementation of its matching grant. Under its matching grant agreement with IDEA-NEW, PGC distributed 90 drip kits to farmers during field days held in Kabul, Parwan, Nangarhar and Laghman. Approximately 400 farmers were trained during these field days on the benefits, installation and use of these drip kits. These lead farmers will go on to use their drip irrigation kits to train and demonstrate to other farmers the benefits of drip irrigation for water conservation. In sponsoring these training events, PGC has strengthened its ties with district DAIL extension officers and fostered good business relations with area farmers which will lead to additional sales for the company in the years to come. PGC also established soil and water analysis labs in its Kabul offices, from which farmers are directly benefitting. In the past, farmers could go to MAIL for testing, which would often take several weeks and was not always available. Now, for a fee farmers can visit PGC to test their soil for pH balance and soil fertility. After testing, PGC helps farmers determine the proper fertilizer application and use as well as the best methods for incorporating drip irrigation systems based upon soil types and land use. PGC also reported a significant



increase in exposure as a result of the matching grant—while they previously were not active in Nangarhar or Laghman provinces, through field days and drip kit demonstrations, communities in these provinces learned about PGC and its products/services. PGC also signed a contract (worth \$15,500) with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations for provision of conservational irrigation equipment for the Badam Bagh Research Station. This deal came to fruition as a result of FAO’s attendance at PGC drip kit demonstrations. As part of the deal, PGC also trained FAO staff in soil and water analysis and installed a drip irrigation system on one jerib of research land for FAO at the Badam Bagh research station in Kabul..

SMS Marketing Activity. IDEA-NEW’s SMS initiative was an innovative way to ensure that commercially sustainable agricultural information was delivered to farmers in a timely, cost-effective and efficient manner. The program helped farmers gain access to reliable sources of information and inputs, and strengthened the linkages between farmers and input suppliers. The system benefitted the input suppliers by providing easy and effective marketing and advertising to increase sales and profitability. As part of the sustainable cost-share arrangements in SMS grant agreements, ag-input suppliers gradually took financial ownership of the activity and committed to covering the entire cost of SMS messaging once IDEA-NEW assistance ends. As of the end of the project, five input suppliers had signed contracts with a messaging platform provider to continue the SMS marketing program at their own cost for at least one year. The remaining input suppliers were still negotiating contracts with the platform provider as of publication.

When we were informed about the SMS marketing program, I thought it wouldn't work since most Afghan farmers are illiterate. However, I learned during the conference that farmers can show the SMS to his family members or neighbors who are educated. From now on, I plan to add an SMS strategy to my marketing plan.

—*Mohammad Naseem Salarzai, Al-Roheed Agriculture Services Co.*

IDEA-NEW signed SMS grant agreements with six input suppliers (two based in Kabul and four based in Jalalabad) for the initial six-month pilot program in 2014. In response to its success and in an effort to better examine and measure its impact, IDEA-NEW extended the period of assistance for five of the original grantees (one in Kabul and four in Jalalabad). IDEA-NEW also awarded five new SMS grants during the month of April 2015 bringing the total of awards to 11. In total, IDEA-NEW's SMS grantees sent more than 479 messages containing information on inputs and their use to over 16,497 recipients, comprised of farmers, retailers, nursery growers, and government line staff. In fulfillment of their grant obligations, these grantees held over 57 field days, training more than 4,628 farmers, retailers, and government line staff in improved agricultural techniques and methods. As a direct result of the SMS activity, SMS grantees have increased revenues by between 8-15% and have created 12 full-time jobs and have made vital linkages with small holder farmers to provide quality goods and services. Additionally, a phone survey conducted in March 2015 with farmers listed on input supplier SMS databases indicated that 73.4% of farmers felt that the SMS messages and attendance at farmer field days are helping them become a more successful farmer. And that 60% would recommend SMS messaging to a friend.

SMS Marketing Conference. IDEA-NEW hosted an SMS Marketing Conference on February 03, 2015 to share the results and lessons learned from its 2014 SMS marketing pilot program with other ag-input wholesalers and development projects. The purpose of the conference was for participants to 1) learn how SMS marketing works; 2) hear from wholesalers—their experiences, lessons learned, and the impacts of SMS marketing; and 3) get answers to questions on how they [the participants] could introduce SMS marketing into their respective businesses. The conference was held in Kabul on February 03, 2015 and featured presentations from four SMS grantees and a panel discussion with an interactive Q&A session. IDEA-NEW welcomed a total of 105 participants, including 26 participants from 21 input suppliers located in the eastern region, 42 participants from 32 input suppliers in the central region, representatives of 15 input suppliers from the Regional Agricultural Development Program-North (RADP-North) coverage area, 13 representatives from other development projects and companies (RADP-North, RADP-South, RADP-West, Capacity Building and Change Management Program (CBCMP), Afghanistan Agriculture Extension Program (AAEP), CHAMP and Equal Access) and nine representatives from MAIL/DAIL. Two follow-on SMS grant workshops were held in Kabul (February 8) and Jalalabad (February 9) to explain SMS grant activities, grantee cost and risk-share responsibilities and grantee selection criteria.

Bakhtar Afghan Azizi Agriculture Services Company was one of IDEA-NEW's SMS marketing grant participants during the pilot activity and in 2015. As a result of its SMS marketing grant and participation in IDEA-NEW supported training, Bakhtar Afghan grew from a provincial input supplier to a nation-wide agriculture service provider, reaching farmers in remote districts via the SMS marketing system. Prior to IDEA-NEW assistance, the company sold limited amounts of agrichemicals. By the end of the grant period, agrochemical types had been expanded and the business had added fertilizer, seed and agricultural tools (spray pumps and garden tools) to its recorded sales. The substantial increase in inventory and sales was directly attributed by the owner to its growing client base resulting from the SMS program and promotional outreach. Also

through IDEA-NEW assistance, the company signed a contract with Agricore Pesticide and Liquid Fertilizer Producer Company. During the grant period, Bakhtar Afghan increased the number of farmers to whom it was selling inputs from 310 to 2,500 and expanded linkages with 160 retailers in 10 provinces. It expanded its market from the eastern region to Kabul, Parwan, Kunduz, Mazar-i-Sharif and Takhar provinces. Aziz, the owner of Bakhtar Afghan, shared that “When I sent my first SMS, I received many calls from farmers who thanked me and asked for its continuation. By sending SMS messages, our products become more recognized and subsequently, our sales will increase...it also helps farmers take on-time action to prevent and treat diseases and apply modern agriculture practices for high quality yields.”



TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 03

SMS MARKETING

CONFERENCE

Results and Lessons Learned

Please join us as we share the results and lessons learned from our 2014 SMS Marketing Pilot Program, targeting ag-input suppliers in central and eastern Afghanistan. Attend presentations by current participants in the program and learn how SMS marketing can improve the effectiveness of your business.

Please present this flyer to gain entry. Registration begins at 8:30 am.



**Learn how to
introduce mobile
marketing into
your business.**

**Presentations by:
Bakhtar Afghan
Agro Services Co,
Hussain Zada Ltd.,
Wajid Zaman
Agriculture Co, and
Prosperity Group of
Companies**

**Lunch will be
provided. Prayer
room available on
premises.**

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8:30 am – 3:00 pm
Kabul Star Hotel, opposite
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Live Radio Show Grants. During the months of April and May 2015, IDEA-NEW awarded eight Live Radio Show grants to eight agricultural input suppliers (four in the central region, four in the eastern region). The purpose of these grants was to promote ag-input products to farmers in central and eastern provinces through the dissemination of useful information using entertaining presentation methods. This activity aimed to decrease donor reliance by strengthening the linkage between private radio stations and agribusinesses to work directly with radio stations, design and fund the shows, and continue the radio programs beyond the end of the grant period.

Each of these cost-share grants included the development and broadcasting of 10 shows over the course of the grant period, with at least one topic for each grantee dedicated to a gender-related subject. With the support of an IDEA-NEW Radio Program Advisor, grantees were linked with radio stations, where they learned to draft scripts, hire topic-related experts, negotiate and sign contracts with radio stations, and design and implement their own outreach and marketing strategies. Grantee cost-share was a minimum of 25%. In addition, each grantee was tasked with conducting four farmer field days and creating one FTE by hiring an agriculture expert. The grantees also developed posters to advertise the radio shows, with details on the times and dates of airing, as well as the radio station's channel information (see above).

I realize now that I have missed out on the largest outreach and marketing medium in Afghanistan...the Live Radio Show program funded by USAID/IDEA-NEW has provided the platform for me to expand my business and explore new horizons."

—Engineer Shafeeq Sikandari, Vice President of Tamadon Agricultural Seeds Services Company

TABLE 4. SAMPLE LIVE RADIO SHOW TOPICS

Grantee Name	Radio Station	Air Date	Topic of Radio Show	Number of Live Call-Ins
Aslamzada Agricultural Services	Radio Dunya Naweem (87.9 FM)	17-May	Composting and the Effective Use, Storage, and Application of Pesticides	3
		24-May	Budding and Grafting	7
		31-May	Cicada Control Methods in Grapes	4
		7-Jun	Propagation of Ornamental Plants	3
		14-Jun	Integrated Pest Management	5
		21-Jun	Grape Anthracnose (Common Disease in Grapes)	4
		28-Jun	Cydia Pomonella (Common Pest)	3
		5-Jul	Diseases that Cause Fruit to Prematurely Drop from Trees	4
		12-Jul	Control of Weeds in Fruit gardens, Post-Harvesting Techniques	4
		26-Jul	Role of Women in Agriculture	4

During the grant period, Live Radio Show grantees aired a total of 79 live shows on various topics via different radio stations based in Nangarhar, Parwan and Kabul provinces. There were a total of 491 live call-ins during these 79 shows. In addition, grantees conducted a total of 32 field days in which 747 farmers, six retailers and 18 government line staff participated.

One of IDEA-NEW's grantees has already enjoyed some very profitable outcomes as a result of participating in the Live Radio Show program. After airing a live radio show on dried fruit production, *Tamadon Agricultural Seeds Services Company* signed a contract to provide seven metric tons of processed walnuts to a Turkish company. This deal was made after the Turkish company listened to the live radio show and contacted Tamadon directly. The value of this contract is AFN 4,550,000. Tamadon received AFN 1,000,000 in advance and has exported one metric ton of processed walnuts to Turkey with a value of AFN 650,000. Tamadon plans to import fertilizer and livestock feeds from this Turkish company and has already taken some initial planning steps.

Realizing the positive impact of live radio show marketing, Tamadon plans to start airing live radio shows at its own cost in Baghlan and Mazar provinces. The company believes that the radio show is an effective way to introduce its products to a large number of farmer communities. Tamadon signed an agreement with Radio Adeeb (FM 87.9) in Baghlan province to promote their products through radio commercials. The company also signed another six-month agreement with Baghlan-based Radio Chon Ghar (FM 90.3) to air live radio shows on different agriculture topics, which started airing in August 2015.

In order to evaluate the impact of all live radio show grants, IDEA-NEW conducted focus groups on August 18, 2015 in Jalalabad and Kabul. Twelve farmers and four input suppliers participated in the Jalalabad focus group, and 16 farmers participated in Kabul. Below are some of the key takeaways from these focus groups:

- As a whole, the participating farmers found the live radio show programs useful for increasing their skills and knowledge, which has helped them adopt improved agriculture techniques, thereby increasing their production;
- The farmers suggested that the duration of the program be increased from 30 minutes to at least 45 minutes, that all experts be fluent in Dari and Pashto, and that all programs be re-aired twice during the week, in case farmers miss the program during the first or second airing. The farmers also suggested that commercial ads be carefully placed as not to disrupt the continuity of the program;
- The farmers reinforced their support for gender-related topics, and requested more gender-related programming. They suggested that female experts be invited so that more women call into the program and ask questions.

Input Supplier-Led Field Days and Training. For the majority of grants issued to input suppliers, part of the grantees’ cost-share included the conducting of farmer field days and trainings, aimed at both promoting the businesses’ products/services and sharing their knowledge and expertise on various agricultural techniques with the local farming community and local MAIL/DAIL representatives. This transition from the IDEA-NEW led training characteristic of the ‘Focus on Production (2009-2013)’ period to input supplier-led training is one of the project’s most significant achievements. This private sector-led extension exemplifies the goal of IDEA-NEW during its last two years—to help input suppliers become less reliant on donor support and to encourage them to view farmers and retailers as their main customers for inputs and services. In addition, by including MAIL/DAIL, the linkage between the government, input suppliers and farmers was strengthened.

PERSUAP Training. In May 2015, IDEA-NEW conducted Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP) training for its input supplier beneficiaries and DAIL representatives in Kabul and Jalalabad. The purpose of the training was to train input suppliers dealing in pesticides who will then transfer this knowledge to retailers and farmers. The training consisted of a presentation on pesticide safe handling, a practical session with demonstration models, group work and discussion. Printed posters and information cards were distributed to participants for display at their shops and distribution to retailers and farmers.

SMS grantees replicated this training in May, June, and July 2015, sharing the information they had learned with nearly 1,000 agriculture input retailers and DAIL participants in their provinces of operation. The objective of this training was to spread awareness and provide information to retailers on the effective storage and use of pesticides for further dissemination to buyers of agro-chemicals.



Farmers review pesticide safety cards developed by IDEA-NEW and distributed by an input supplier during a Live Radio Show field day.



One of Mahan Ferdows' employees proudly displays the company's products during the annual Agriculture Fair held in Badam Bahh. Kabul in March 2015.

SUPPORT TO FOOD PROCESSORS

IDEA-NEW's support to food processors during the NCE period was informed by lessons learned over the past five years working with food processors, wholesalers, and retailers on the processing side of the target value chains. Outside of infrastructure-related constraints (power, transport, and roads), three of the constraints most often cited by agro-processors dealt primarily with 1) the consistent supply and quality of agricultural raw materials; 2) out-dated equipment and the adoption and use of new and appropriate technology; and 3) lack of financing and/or knowledge and skills in business management and marketing.

To address these constraints, IDEA-NEW facilitated linkages between producers, processors, and wholesalers/retailers through targeted interventions that improved the ability of private commercial processors to source quality materials from growers, improved the ability of private commercial processors to produce quality product that could compete domestically, and improved the business management, administration, and marketing capacities of processors.

This was achieved mainly through the award of matching, promotional, and Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) grants to qualified food processors, in addition to accounting and marketing training, food safety and hygiene training, and the facilitation of business-to-business meetings aimed at establishing new linkages with

growers and providers of loan products. In total, 31 grants were awarded to 22 food processors in the eastern and central provinces of Afghanistan.

Matching and Promotional Grants. Matching and promotional grants to food processors were designed to achieve the same goals as those for input suppliers described above—increase production and the visibility of their businesses.

Mahan Ferdows Food Production Company is a good example of a food processor that first received a promotional grant, then, due to its increased success as a result of the grant and associated training provided by IDEA-NEW, became eligible for additional, more advanced assistance in the form of a matching grant. Mahan Ferdows is a Kabul-based food processing company that produces lemon juice and concentrate. Through distribution of the promotional materials developed under its grant agreement, Mahan Ferdows was contacted by new lemon suppliers in the Kabul fruit market. The company was also contacted by several farmers after the Ag-Fair in Kabul (September 2014) who were interested in supplying lemons. As a result of the Ag-Fair, Mahan Ferdows established a relationship with the Masoomi Supermarket in Mandawi, Kabul for 3,000 bottles of lemon juice. The company has since signed a formal contract with this supermarket. Before the grant, Mahan Ferdows' coverage area was limited to Kabul city. The company's market has since expanded to the rest of Kabul province, Parwan province, Mazar and Kandahar with 10 new wholesalers.

Upon the successful completion of its promotional grant, Mahan Ferdows applied for additional assistance, submitting a request for a matching equipment grant. Under this matching grant, IDEA-NEW provided a temperature controlled conex for stocking lemons and a large freezer for storing finished products before distribution to markets. As part of its contribution, Mahan Ferdows organized business-to-business meetings with lemon growers from the eastern part of the country and signed contracts for the purchase of six metric tons of lemons during the season from eastern region lemon producers. These supply contracts will ensure the availability of sufficient raw material for Mahan Ferdows' production, enabling the company to meet the market demand for lemon juice and concentrate. Mahan Ferdows also trained 10 lemon producers from the eastern region on how to harvest, collect and pack lemons before transportation. This training enhanced the capacity of these farmers—leading to reduced costs and improved product quality.

HACCP Pre-Audits and Training. One of IDEA-NEW's main activities in support of food processors during the last seven months of the project was the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) training program.

The HACCP certification program is an internationally accepted certification system that helps food business operators examine how they handle food and introduces procedures to make sure the food produced is safe for consumption. It establishes confidence in the quality of finished products and provides an assurance to export markets. HACCP certification has the potential to open international markets for locally-produced food products.

To assist Afghan agro-processors to better understand the importance and use of HACCP systems, in 2015 IDEA-NEW implemented a HACCP program with the following components:

Stage I: HACCP Workshop for Selected Food Processors

IDEA-NEW invited food processors to two one-day workshops in Kabul and Jalalabad on January 28, 2015 to explain HACCP, the benefits to be derived from its implementation and the assistance provided by IDEA-NEW.

Following the workshops, a total of 20 food processors from the central region and 12 from the eastern region submitted EOIs. All 32 food processors were subsequently visited by IDEA-NEW staff to determine if they met the minimum criteria for a HACCP site assessment/pre-audit.

Stage II: Site Inspections and Pre-Audits

Out of the 32 EOIs submitted, 13 food processors from the central region and seven from the eastern region were recommended for site inspections/pre-audits and laboratory testing of each company's products.

As part of IDEA-NEW's activities for the second NCE period, a fixed obligation grant (FOG) was awarded on February 17 to Control Union (CU) to conduct these pre-audits for 20 food processors. IDEA-NEW provided the list of pre-selected food processors and held several meetings with CU to finalize the work plan and schedule for site visits. IDEA-NEW also collected requested samples from the food processors for delivery to CU for testing.

CU's representative conducted site visits to these 20 food processing companies in Nangarhar, Kabul and Kapisa provinces for the HACCP pre-audit. Each company's operations, production, inventory and waste management, food safety and hygiene, and office management were observed.

Stage III: HACCP Training

Another FOG was awarded to CU on April 16 to conduct a one-day HACCP workshop and a 10-day HACCP training. On May 10, CU conducted the one-day HACCP workshop in Kabul for the 20 Stage II food processing companies and two DAIL employees. The focus of the workshop was a review of the results of pre-assessments conducted by CU for each of the 20 companies. From this group, the seven most promising companies were invited to submit EOIs to continue with the intensive 10-day HACCP training.

The 10-day training started on May 11 and completed on May 21. Two representatives from each of the seven selected companies (five from the central region and two from the eastern region) and six IDEA-NEW agribusiness team officers participated in the training. The training incorporated the results of the previous site inspections/pre-audits into the training approach.

During the training, participants learned how to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs), identify Critical Control Points (CCPs) and implement control measures for

critical issues. They also learned from the results of lab tests that further investment is required in order to eliminate all of the critical points in their production and processing areas. At the end of the training, each of the seven companies expressed a firm commitment to develop a formal HACCP program.

Stage IV: Implementation of HACCP Food Safety and Management Control Systems

Seven matching grants were awarded in June 2015 to the food processing companies that participated in the Stage III HACCP training. The purpose of these grants was to assist the companies in creating hygienic work areas, monitoring and documenting CCPs, implementing management control and documentation systems, providing operator instructions and CCP signage, and separating processing areas from sources of contamination from raw materials, product testing and finished goods storage areas.

Overall, the activities under these seven grants targeted a range of improvements in the facilities and monitoring and control capabilities of these food processing companies so that they are capable of becoming HACCP certified. Each company worked with IDEA-NEW staff to list the requirements arising from the HACCP pre-audits and subsequent training and compiled a list of items required to establish control of CCPs in their processing.

Stage V: HACCP Audit

As at the end of the project, three of the HACCP grantees are in consultation with an internationally recognized certifying body to conduct a final audit prior to applying for HACCP certification. In addition, some of the grantees are exploring the possibility of a group certification, which may be a more cost-effective option.

SUPPORT TO DOMESTIC AGRIBUSINESSES IN EXPANDING MARKETS

In addition to the grant activities described above, IDEA-NEW actively pursued various avenues to provide additional support to its participating agribusinesses—from promoting partnerships between domestic input suppliers, processors, distributors and retailers to identifying financing options and bodies for issuance of Shariah-compliant loans and products. The majority of IDEA-NEW's work in this area centered on the organization and facilitation of formal business-to-business (B2B) meetings and the hosting of Access to Finance conferences and workshops.

Business-to-Business Meetings (B2Bs). Between March 2014 and September 2015, IDEA-NEW facilitated a total of 85 B2B meetings between its beneficiaries and potential partners. These meetings were organized by IDEA-NEW and took place at the IDEA-NEW offices in Kabul, Jalalabad, and during the Agriculture Fairs held in Kabul during the months of September 2014 and March 2015. Some of the most significant achievements from these meetings are highlighted below:

- On August 25, 2014, IDEA-NEW organized and facilitated a B2B meeting between five processing companies and a bottles and lids manufacturing company at the

IDEA-NEW office in Jalalabad. [REDACTED]

- On September 10, 2014, IDEA-NEW conducted a B2B meeting between eight processing companies and **Zarin Shinwari**, a distributor of Afghan processed foods at the IDEA-NEW office in Jalalabad. Zarin has operated as a wholesaler for eight years, and sold imported products before specializing in Afghan processed foods. The companies participating in the B2B meeting introduced their businesses and discussed potential terms and conditions including delivery schedules, sales targets, prices, and payment terms. As a result of this meeting, Zarin now distributes the products from each of these eight companies.
- On November 20, 2014, IDEA-NEW facilitated a B2B meeting between agricultural input wholesalers and a local agro-sprayer pump producer, **Najib Habib Charkhi Ltd.**, in order to introduce Najib Habib Charkhi and their spray pump products to wholesalers/dealers and to gauge interest in establishing sales/marketing contracts for these products. This product was a potential import substitution and an export opportunity for Najib Habib Charkhi. During a follow-up meeting held on November 30, 2014, **Sadat Ghafari** signed an agreement to represent Najib Habib Charkhi in Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunar and Nuristan provinces. The deal agreement is a sole distributorship, in which Sadat Ghafari will be the distributor of Najib Habib Charkhi in these provinces for one year.
- During the Agriculture Fair in September 2014, **Zarin Shinwari** met with Mr. Sirajuddin, a wholesaler in Kabul and the sole distributor for Baghlan Tomato Paste Company. In November, both businesses visited each other and exchanged product samples. Following this exchange, both parties entered into a contractual agreement. Zarin is now a distributor of Baghlan Tomato Paste Company in Nangarhar, and Sirajuddin is a distributor of Zarin's processed foods to wholesalers and retailers in Kabul and nearby provinces.
- On March 24, 2015, during the Agriculture Fair in Kabul, a representative from IDEA-NEW grantee **Gulrez Bahar** met with a wholesaler from Surobi district in Kabul province and a wholesale distributor from Kunduz province during a meeting facilitated by IDEA-NEW. Both wholesalers were interested in distributing Gulrez Bahar's products in their respective locations. [REDACTED]



A panel consisting of representatives from local banks and financial institutions answers questions from participants during the A2F conference. in Kabul

Access to Finance (A2F). During numerous surveys and interviews conducted with agribusinesses throughout the project’s target provinces, a consistent and major constraint to business growth and expansion cited by agribusinesses was access to finance for working capital and investment. More than 90% of IDEA-NEW grant applicants maintained that formal loans requiring interest payments were either incompatible with their seasonal cash flows and/or not Sharia-compliant. While IDEA-NEW has trained agribusinesses in accounting and cash flow management, its agribusiness clients continue to rely primarily on informal credit.

In December 2014, IDEA-NEW conducted a survey of loan providers. Of the fourteen loan providers in eastern provinces, 21% offer Islamic loans only and 50% offer conventional loans only, or both Islamic and conventional loans. Repayment terms are made flexible to accommodate well-managed seasonal cash flows. It appeared that some viable options were available, but that IDEA-NEW grantees were unaware of their existence.

To address this communications gap between loan providers and agribusinesses, IDEA-NEW hosted two A2F conferences—one on February 18, 2015 in Kabul and one on February 23, 2015 in Jalalabad. These events also provided a forum for discussion on loan terms, risk-sharing, collateral and guarantees.

Following the conferences, IDEA-NEW helped to facilitate a number of smaller workshops with individual financial providers. These were held during the months of March, April and June 2015. [REDACTED]

We participated in several Access to Finance conferences. IDEA-NEW’s event was far different in that it provided an opportunity for SMEs to meet with banks in person, and it has a follow-up plan that involves micro-workshops for SMEs to learn from a bank or financial institution of their own choice.

—*Sher Mohammad, President of the Gift Food Production Company*

CROSSCUTTING ACTIVITIES

GENDER INTEGRATION

IDEA-NEW's gender work focused on increasing women's participation in Afghanistan's agriculture sector by supporting women-led and owned agricultural production and businesses across its target regions. This was accomplished through capacity-building trainings and supporting home-based, income-generating livelihoods for women wherever possible in its value chain interventions, and later, in targeting women owned/operated businesses for participation in IDEA-NEW's 2014/2015 grant activities. For example, in the North, IDEA-NEW's silk value chain activities exclusively targeted women. The program also incorporated a gender component into its livestock management activities and consulted with community leadership (CDCs and shuras) before recruiting women to participate in activities and, in some instances, also engaged male relatives in order to ensure women's participation. The latter was particularly effective for those activities—such as female paravets and extension workers—that required travel. These strategies proved successful in the northern region where, in 2009, IDEA-NEW assisted more than 85,000 individuals, none of which were women; by 2013, that figure had risen to 17%.⁵⁰

In the Northeast, gender efforts to promote vegetable cultivation proved highly successful. Introducing backyard greenhouses in Baghlan, Takhar and Badakhshan provinces in mid-2012 resulted in beneficiaries' average monthly income rising from 1,500 AFN (\$27) to 4,500 AFN (\$81). This increase came from women (185 total) producing 300 kg of produce per month.⁵¹ In an attempt to build on the significant amount of work done in the vegetable and honey value chains in the Northeast, discussions with communities and DAIL staff suggested that an extension of these production and processing techniques, specific to female beneficiaries, would be appropriate. This then developed into a project that taught women to process fresh produce into marketable jams and pickles. This project was implemented for six months in Takhar, Baghlan and Kunduz.⁵² IDEA-NEW trained 15 women per province in pickle and jam making as well as hygiene and basic health and safety rules. This was particularly important to reduce or avoid natural wastage from the raw materials. IDEA-NEW distributed inputs (bottles, gas canisters, labels, sealer machines, and uniforms) while participants provided 100% of the raw materials (fruits and vegetables) which were generally grown in local kitchen and market gardens. A total of 2,874 kg of pickled goods were processed and sold at an average sales value of 55 AFN (\$1). The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) in Kabul tested Takhar producers' pickles to verify product quality, which further boosted demand in their local market. Demand in all three

⁵⁰ IDEA-NEW assisted 3,802 women in 2013 out of a total 21,987 beneficiaries, including four women-run agribusinesses.

⁵¹ The backyard greenhouse project was implemented in Puli Khumri, and Baghlan Jaded districts of Baghlan province from August 2012–April 2013; Kunduz Center, Khan Abad, Qala-e-Zal, Aliabad, Imam Sahib districts in Kunduz from August 2012–October 2013; Bangi and Taloqan districts in Takhar from July 2012–October 2013; and Baharak and Faizabad districts in Badakhshan from July 2012 through October 2013.

⁵² The project was implemented in the last half of 2013. Locations were Puli Khumri district (Baghlan); Taloqan district (Takhar) and Kunduz Center (Kunduz). It is worth noting that there were 400 indirect female beneficiaries in Takhar who were trained by the original 15 beneficiaries.



Women working at an IDEA-NEW supported demonstration farm in Samar Khail, Nangarhar

provinces proved to be seasonal with much higher sales levels prior to major religious festivals (50,000 AFN or approximately \$900 per week); however, even outside of these times, sales remained consistent, which implied that this was a sustainable income stream for beneficiaries.

Women in Agriculture Advancement Initiative. In addition to its value chain-related gender activities, IDEA-NEW announced its Women in Agriculture Advancement Initiative in mid-2012.⁵³ Partnering with PARSA, a Kabul-based international NGO that works with networks of women’s training centers throughout the Eastern region, IDEA-NEW aimed to expand women’s participation in Afghanistan’s agricultural economy. This yearlong initiative engaged women in a multi-pronged value chain approach that focused on three specific types of activities:

⁵³ USAID approved IDEA-NEW’s 12 month purchase order with PARSA in late November and programming began the following month.

- Pre-value chain capacity building via literacy, business training, health and food safety training;
- Value chain capacity building by introducing beneficiaries to various agricultural production, processing and marketing-related activities; and
- Facilitating women’s access to markets by establishing Trade Afghan, a wholesale and retail outlet to help women sell their goods in various domestic markets under a national brand name.

In December 2012, PARSA began its initial assessments of 30 women-run and focused NGOs, cooperatives, associations and businesses in Nangarhar, Panjshir, Kapisa and Parwan provinces. Their staff measured organizations’ potential for participating in IDEA-NEW’s initiative while also gathering information on the various commercially viable products that could be marketed under Trade Afghan. After the initial assessments were completed in February 2013, 20 organizations from Kapisa, Parwan, and Nangarhar provinces were selected as participants.

Once selected, PARSA conducted a gap analysis for each beneficiary that resulted in a list of technical competencies and skills needed to support competitive entry into local markets.⁵⁴ PARSA, with IDEA-NEW’s assistance, used these analyses to develop a series of practical trainings as part of its capacity building support to Trade Afghan agribusinesses. Each session lasted two days and covered topics such as business expansion and marketing, agricultural planning, hygiene and food safety, and finance training.

Pre- and post-tests showed an increase of 43-60% in participants’ knowledge after completing trainings.⁵⁵ The final component of Trade Afghan’s training program, in which the senior management from all 20 participating businesses were tasked with holding an exhibition in their provincial capital, began in November 2013. Training participants were responsible for organizing all aspects of their respective exhibition. PARSA trainers attended the initial meetings for every exhibition—one each in Nangarhar, Parwan and Kapisa—and provided guidance when requested.⁵⁶ The purpose of the exhibitions was to have leaders work with their producers, cooperative members and associates to market their products, which included all Trade Afghan certified products as well as others made by local women. The significance of these efforts was that women, with minimal external support, successfully generated their own events and attracted local attention and support. The trainees were particularly successful in attracting the support and attendance of local GIROA officials and other businessmen and women.

The Nangarhar exhibition took place on December 11, 2013, and was advertised on local TV and radio. Approximately 150 visitors came to see the products of 110 beneficiaries.

⁵⁴ PARSA also began product development evaluations of all 20 beneficiaries’ products that resulted in 105 different goods being certified as Trade Afghan products.

⁵⁵ Based on 336 beneficiaries who completed pre- and post-tests at Level 1 & 2 trainings that took place between June-September 2013.

⁵⁶ The Panjshir Trade Afghan beneficiaries (who are primarily from informal cooperatives) decided to join the Parwan exhibition because they did not have the support of the Panjshir Department of Women’s Affairs early in the project.

Special guests included the Directors of the Nangarhar DoWA, Chamber of Commerce and AISA. Products exhibited included pickles, jam, corn flour, shoes, handicrafts and baby bed sheets. Ninety-five visitors, including the Deputy Provincial Governor, Directors of DAIL, DoWA, Department of Law, DoE and the Chamber of Commerce came to the Parwan event on December 17 to see the goods displayed by Trade Afghan participants from Parwan. In Kapisa, 102 beneficiaries displayed their products for nearly 200 guests on December 18. Once again, GIROA was well represented at the event. As of December 31, 2013, PARSA held 38 training sessions for 1,921 Trade Afghan beneficiaries.

Concurrent to its training schedule, PARSA performed product development evaluations of all 20 beneficiaries' manufactured goods that resulted in 105 being certified as Trade Afghan products. Once certified, PARSA worked closely with companies to develop marketing plans to improve their labeling and marketing efforts.⁵⁷ Throughout this process, PARSA and IDEA-NEW used its existing networks to spread the word of Trade Afghan and promote sales. This combination of marketing and linking beneficiaries to new retail markets proved successful and served as a potent motivator. For example, PARSA set up an international shipping system using FedEx for mailing products to international buyers who purchased items from one of Trade Afghan's three online stores.⁵⁸ In August 2013, PARSA opened a retail site for Trade Afghan products at Marastoon, located just outside of Kabul that generated over \$1,100 in sales during its first month of business.⁵⁹ The following month, 100 samples of Trade Afghan products (listed below) were delivered to Finest for taste and quality testing. Twelve were selected in September 2013 as part of Finest Supermarkets' new Made in Afghanistan product line that was initiated by IDEA-NEW.⁶⁰ Altogether, Trade Afghan generated 3,125,937 AFN (\$58,045) in sales for beneficiaries.⁶¹

TABLE 5. TRADE AFGHAN PRODUCTS INCLUDED IN FINEST'S MADE IN AFGHANISTAN LINE

Product Name	Name of Agribusiness	Province
Kidney Beans	Shorgal Village Project	Kapisa
Black Pepper Spice		
Dried Green Pepper Spice		
Walnuts		
Sun Dried Tomatoes	Trade Afghan Product using Shorgal Village Project raw materials	Kapisa
Red Tomato Chutney	Agriculture and Animal Husbandry	Parwan
Mixed Pepper Spice	Dorokhshan Agriculture and Handicraft Cooperative	Parwan
Green Pepper Spice		

⁵⁷ This process mirrored that of IDEA-NEW's agribusiness teams in 2013.

⁵⁸ PARSA is negotiating with One World International, Global Indigo and Far & Wide Collective.

⁵⁹ Marastoon is a government-funded institution run by the Afghan Red Crescent Society that houses and trains the homeless.

⁶⁰ Finest announced the launch of its Made in Afghanistan line on November 18, 2013. Completely sourced from Afghan entrepreneurs, it includes more than 30 high quality food products from agribusinesses in Kabul, Parwan, Kapisa, Balkh and Nangarhar provinces.

⁶¹ Based on reports as of December 31, 2013 with 17 of 20 beneficiary organizations reporting.

Product Name	Name of Agribusiness	Province
Coriander Seeds	Social Protection Women's Association of Charikar	Parwan
Dried Mint		
Chopped Dried Tomato		
Raisins	Tomato Paste and Dry Foods Business	Kapisa

Taraqi Saba. Another one of IDEA-NEW’s flagship gender initiatives was Taraqi Saba (development for tomorrow), a business skills training course designed for high school students. The course taught basic business principles, such as finance, marketing, and management in order to improve participants’ capacity to increase their future economic opportunities by starting and managing a small business. In October 2012, IDEA-NEW trained 15 new Taraqi Saba instructors—13 of them women—to teach the course. An initial exam was given to 45 high school teachers and the top 15 (three Kunar, three Laghman and nine Nangarhar) were then selected as trainees. Instructors completed the same curriculum as students, including small group exercises and individual work assignments and met twice a week for 10 weeks. IDEA-NEW staff then conducted exams in 15 high schools in Nangarhar, Kunar and Laghman and selected the top 307 students to participate in the course.⁶² Thirty-six Taraqi Saba classes were held between December 23, 2012 and March 20, 2013. IDEA-NEW gender staff made regular monitoring visits to ensure that the curriculum was being followed and to gauge the quality of the teachers. Approximately 60 business plans were developed by students, who were grouped together according to their business interests, at the end of course. These plans focused on beauty parlors, poultry and food processing activities. On June 9, 2013, 303 young women graduated from Taraqi Saba.⁶³

Supporting Woman-Owned Businesses. The majority of IDEA-NEW’s early support to women came in the form of technical training and support to home-based businesses, such as poultry farms, silk production facilities, and kitchen gardens. Building upon its support to woman-owned and/or operated businesses, IDEA-NEW encouraged businesses in its target provinces and value chains to submit EOIs for potential participation in its 2014 and 2015 grant activities. A total of six woman-owned businesses met the selection criteria and were awarded matching and promotional grants in 2014 and 2015. Several of these grants included a training component focused on women, with *Farah Farhat Faizi (3F)* training 90 women in straw basket weaving in Kabul province, *Ali Bahar Sabz* training 20 women in processing dried fruits in Kabul Province, *Women Prophecyable Cultural and Social Organization (WPCSO)* training 20 women in vegetable processing in Kapisa province, and *Faisal Kohistani* training 20 women in tomato paste making in Kapisa province.

One of the most successful grantees was *Farah Farhat Faizi (3F)*, which was awarded both a promotional and a matching grant. With support from IDEA-NEW, this company gained skills in food safety and hygiene, signed an agreement with Finest Supermarkets, delivered business skills training to 90 women, created two FTE jobs, applied for MoPH

I started a beauty parlor business to overcome the economic situation of my family...after getting Taraqi Saba training, I now know how to expand my business and attract customers. I can write business plans and know keeping reasonable prices can increase the number of my customers.

—An 18-year old student from Nangarhar

⁶² Exams were held from November 15 through December 15, 2012.

⁶³ Four students were dismissed from the course for not abiding by IDEA-NEW’s strict attendance policy.

certification, delivered a presentation at the U.S. Embassy on women entrepreneur empowerment, and delivered food production training to the students of the agriculture institute at Badam Bagh in Kabul. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

IDEA-NEW's early support for women in 2009-2012 was characterized by smaller, home-based initiatives, but as the project progressed and capacity of women increased, support came in the form of in-kind grants to AISA-registered, woman-owned/operated businesses, marking a significant shift in the operating environment for women in Afghanistan, and an opportunity for continued expansion in future USAID interventions.

FIRST PERSON

Building bodies, building profit

3F employs 14 women on a full-time basis and produces a variety of pickles, jams and chutneys.



PHOTO: USAID/IDEA-NEW

“With USAID assistance my company grew significantly—from five employees to 18. Per month production increased dramatically and we now use standardized processes.”

- Kobra Dastgirzada

Kobra Dastgirzada, a 46-year-old woman, has always been complimented on her cooking skills. But she never thought she would be running her own food processing company that is quickly gaining ground in Kabul and neighboring provinces.

Impressively, Ms. Dastgirzada's food processing company isn't her first business endeavor. She successfully started an exercise club for women in 2005 after returning from Pakistan. “At the time, there were no gyms available for women in Kabul. Though I faced resistance, I knew the positive impacts of exercise and wanted to share my knowledge with other women in Kabul,” she shares.

The idea of starting a food processing company had appeared when she hosted women from her gym instruction classes at her house. “I made a few dishes including a bean dish and green chutney for a small party and was encouraged to start my own business because the food was so delicious,” she recalls.

Interested in improving her business skills and the quality of her products, Ms. Dastgirzada's food processing company—Farah Farhat Faizi (3F)—applied for support from USAID's Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) project, which provides support to agribusinesses operating in central and eastern Afghanistan. Intensive value chain development that promotes income generation and job creation in poppy-prone areas is also a priority for IDEA-NEW. She heard about IDEA-NEW activities from an input supplier who sells inputs in Kohistan district of Kapisa province. Her company received cost-share grants from IDEA-NEW to improve the company's promotional materials, source updated equipment and new technology and participate in a number of trainings, including food safety and hygiene, marketing and accounting.

One of her innovations was to sell her packaged products in hand-made woven baskets. To do this, 3F—with assistance from IDEA-NEW—trained 90 women in weaving straw baskets. This initiative has proven so successful that other organizations have placed orders for more baskets.

With increased production comes increased profits—3F boasts more than a 30% increase in annual sales compared to the previous year, due in large part to USAID assistance. Now that her company is in a good operating position, Ms. Dastgirzada is making business decisions based on the company's profits, and not donor funding. Plans are in place to expand her business to other parts of Kabul, Parwan and Ghazni provinces, fully funded by the company's revenue. 3F has also purchased QuickBooks accounting software and plans to start using it soon.

COORDINATION WITH GIROA AND OTHER DONOR PROJECTS

Recurring Stakeholder Coordination Efforts. Throughout IDEA-NEW, program staff met regularly with local, district and provincial-level GIROA leadership in each of its areas of operation to ensure that relevant government stakeholders were abreast of IDEA-NEW’s plans and could contribute their input to activity development, implementation and, if necessary, problem solving. Program representatives also routinely spoke with national-level leaders in MAIL and other ministries, including the Ministries of Women’s Affairs, Economy and Rural Rehabilitation and Development.

IDEA-NEW representatives actively participated in regular coordination meetings across its three regions, including Provincial Development Council meetings, Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings, and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan’s (UNAMA) NGO coordination and disaster management committee meetings, as well as meetings with various village shuras, CDCs and District Development Assemblies (DDAs). Regular attendance at these and similar meetings helped promote understanding of others’ programming and helped minimize duplication of efforts while also providing a forum to discuss shared obstacles to implementation and brainstorm solutions. Beginning in October 2012, IDEA-NEW Quarterly Reports added an annex on *IDEA-NEW and GIROA Coordination*, demonstrating how DAILs were extensively involved in the coordination and facilitation of interventions. Between October 2012 and the end of the project, IDEA-NEW staff participated in approximately 379 coordination events. The following table lays out the principal coordination meetings that IDEA-NEW staff participated in on a regular basis.⁶⁴

TABLE 6. PRIMARY GIROA COORDINATION MEETINGS ATTENDED BY IDEA-NEW

Name of Meeting	Host	Meeting Frequency	Other Participants	IDEA-NEW Attendance Timeframe
Agriculture Sector TWG	DAIL	Monthly	All national and international NGOs and UN agencies working in the agriculture sector, DAIL staff, provincial council members and internationally-funded implementing partners	2009–2015
Provincial Development Committee (PDC)	Provincial Governor	Monthly	Provincial Governor, Deputy Provincial Governor, District Governors, Line Directors, ACBAR, DDA and provincial council members, UN agencies, national and international aid agencies, NGOs and other implementing partners working in this area	2009–2015

⁶⁴ Unless otherwise noted, IDEA-NEW participated in similar meetings in all of its target provinces for the years specified.

Name of Meeting	Host	Meeting Frequency	Other Participants	IDEA-NEW Attendance Timeframe
MAIL Coordination Meeting	MAIL	Semimonthly	All MAIL partners and relevant District Governors, agriculture-related implementing partners and NGOs	2009–2014
Private Sector Development TWG	DoE	Monthly	GIRoA line directors, UN agencies, national and international aid agencies, relevant NGOs and other implementing partners working in this area	2009–2013
Capacity Building Working Group	Deputy Provincial Governor	Monthly	GIRoA line directors, UN agencies, national and international aid agencies, relevant NGOs and other implementing partners working in this area	2013–2014
Infrastructure and Environmental TWG	DoPW	Monthly	GIRoA line directors, UN agencies, national and international aid agencies, relevant NGOs and other implementing partners working in this area	2009–2013
Education TWG	DoEd	Monthly	GIRoA line directors, UN agencies, national and international aid agencies, relevant NGOs and other implementing partners working in this area	2009–2013
Social Protection TWG	DoWA	Monthly	GIRoA line directors, UN agencies, national and international aid agencies, relevant NGOs and other implementing partners working in this area	2009–2013
Civil/Military Coordination and Disaster Management Committee	UNAMA	Quarterly	All internationally funded programs, NGOs and UN agencies working in the province	2009–2014
Horticulture Coordination Meeting	MAIL	Quarterly	MAIL, DAIL, UN, NGOs and programs working in vegetable and/or orchard crops, fruit and vegetable associations	2009–2013
Citrus Promotion Group	MAIL	Monthly/ Quarterly ⁶⁵	MAIL, DAIL, PHDP, HLP, MADERA, CHAMP, NVDA, ANHDO, ANNGO and nursery and fruit associations for Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunar provinces	2009–2015

⁶⁵ The Citrus Promotion Group members met monthly during the relevant growing and harvest seasons; outside of those times they convened on a quarterly basis.

Name of Meeting	Host	Meeting Frequency	Other Participants	IDEA-NEW Attendance Timeframe
Agricultural Knowledge Information System Workshops ⁶⁶	MAIL/ IDEA-NEW	Annual	MAIL, DAIL managers, finance, program and policy staff and extension officers	2010–2011
National Day Celebrations ⁶⁷	Varied	2-3 per year	Various district- and provincial-level GIRoA representatives, local leaders and community members	2009–2014
Activities' Opening & Closing Ceremonies	IDEA-NEW	Varied	DAIL, DoWA, DoE, District Governors, CDC and shura members, community members	2009–2014
Women's Empowerment Working Group	Director of Home Economics Department	Varied (approximately once per month)	MAIL, DoWA representatives and IP representatives from active projects	2014–2015

Agriculture Fairs. IDEA-NEW also supported GIRoA by participating in high profile government-hosted events. In addition to the annual celebratory events organized by DAIL, DoWA, etc. (see above table), MAIL, in an effort to empower Afghanistan's agricultural sector, regularly organizes two international agriculture fairs in Kabul every year that bring together numerous businesses from across the agriculture sector.⁶⁸ From 2012–2015, IDEA-NEW personnel worked closely with MAIL staff to ensure that the program and its beneficiaries had a strong presence at the fair.

Each year, IDEA-NEW established an information center equipped with multimedia and printed promotional materials—newsletters, reports, fact sheets, success stories as well as beneficiary-specific business cards, brochures and banners—to support its participating beneficiaries to reach out to visitors. In 2013, IDEA-NEW received a request from MAIL's Department of Private Sector Development to support a Knowledge Center at the fair. IDEA-NEW team members worked closely with MAIL to develop the center, which was comprised of three tents that provided information on one of the following topics—primary production, value addition and finance and marketing. The program's technical experts focused on the challenges, opportunities and recommendations in their particular category and then engaged in question and answer sessions with audience members. In two days, 610 people visited the Knowledge Center.⁶⁹ Five hundred copies of IDEA-NEW's knowledge management CD and 7,500 printed manuals on various topics were distributed.

⁶⁶ AKIS workshops introduced DAIL and MAIL staff to new agricultural technology that extension staff could then share with farmers via demonstration farms in 50 districts of six provinces. IDEA-NEW technical experts conducted the workshops for GIRoA staff. Each event was three days long; four workshops were held for all Kabul, Herat, Balkh, Nangarhar, Kunar and Laghman DAIL and MAIL technical staff.

⁶⁷ These included GIRoA-sponsored events in honor of International Women's Day, Farmers' Day, etc.

⁶⁸ The fall fair is MAIL's largest event of the year. A smaller version is also held every spring.

⁶⁹ Three hundred and seventeen people, or 52% of visitors, came to the primary production tent while 157 (26%) attended presentations on value addition and processing and 136 (22%) on finance and marketing.

In November 2012, IDEA-NEW sponsored 21 farmers and businesses from its three regions to participate in the fair. This increased to 35 agribusinesses in 2013, 22 in 2014, and 21 in 2014, with beneficiaries covering an increasing percentage of participation costs.⁷⁰ After two years of subsidized participation, beneficiaries were well aware that the event provides an excellent forum for them to sell their goods and make new business connections with other farmers, food processors, agriculture input suppliers and exporters and IDEA-NEW encouraged their continued participation without the expectation of an external subsidy.

Ad-hoc Coordination Efforts. Besides attending regular meetings and participating in annual GIRoA-sponsored events, IDEA-NEW also occasionally arranged tours of its project sites for government and local authorities. This allowed stakeholders to visit activities during implementation, interview beneficiaries and program staff and then share that information and feedback with others, such as District Governors, DDA and CDC members, etc.

The vast majority of tours visited several sites, each in a different value chain, over several hours. For example, in January 2013, IDEA-NEW and the Nangarhar DAIL conducted joint site visits to three activities in Kama and Behsud districts. The delegation—comprised of IDEA-NEW’s Liaison Officer, the Nangarhar DAIL Director, the Plan and Program Manager and Central Jalalabad Extension Agent—first stopped at a commercial production farm in Khakho village that was growing cauliflower, cabbage and lettuce using a staggered planting system that had been introduced to the farmer by IDEA-NEW.

The DAIL Director was very interested in hearing directly from beneficiaries about the quality of IDEA-NEW’s support and immediately interviewed the farmer, Ghulam Nabi, asking him about his sales and whether he was happy with IDEA-NEW’s assistance. He responded that his total income from his first harvest of lettuce and cauliflower exceeded 80,000 AFN (\$1,542), which was more than double what he had previously earned by growing corn, wheat and rice using traditional farming methods. He also described how IDEA-NEW had linked him to traders who came directly to his farm and purchased lettuce and cauliflower and that several neighboring farmers were copying the layout and practices used on his farm. The DAIL Director asked Nabi if he knew the Extension Agent and the answer was yes, that the agent often visited the farm with IDEA-NEW’s field technician as well as on his own.

The delegation then traveled to a citrus orchard in Nawabad village, also in Kama, followed by a visit to Behsud district to visit a greenhouse that was growing offseason crops, including zucchini. The DAIL Director was impressed with the work being done at each of these sites and expressed his appreciation for IDEA-NEW’s ongoing support of Nangarhar farmers.

⁷⁰ It is worth noting that at the 2012 Fair, IDEA-NEW-supported agribusinesses made 272,530 AFN (\$5,276) in sales; the following year, this figure doubled to 609,840 AFN (\$10,576). In 2014 the sales were 3,836,565 (\$59,946) and in 2015 752,850 (\$11,763).

SUSTAINABILITY AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Sustainability. Program staff knew that the long-term success of IDEA-NEW depended heavily on its programmatic approach—how its activities were designed—so technical teams attempted to build off previous successes wherever possible and often developed follow on projects to support earlier work. This was particularly true of its infrastructure projects, many of which were implemented in areas where farmers were receiving training and inputs to increase their production capacity. Preventing flooding or expanding irrigation in areas where farmers were trying new farming methods and/or equipment helped ensure that beneficiaries would see the true impact of the concepts IDEA-NEW promoted. This was important because beneficiaries, regardless of what stage of the value chain they were on (production, processing or marketing), showed a strong willingness to continue following new ideas and/or approaches if they resulted in increased profits. For example, improving vineyard owners’ knowledge and skills via vineyard management and grape pruning training in the North had an immense impact on vineyards’ productivity and profitability, which resulted in direct beneficiaries as well as neighboring farmers adopting these techniques even if the associated out-of-pocket costs were higher than those associated with traditional cultivation methods.

IDEA-NEW’s value chain interventions were structured so as to sustain the productivity improvements achieved during the program’s life once it ended. In good measure, that was a matter of keeping the beneficiaries from becoming dependent on the program. The voucher system in particular—and the fact that the vouchers subsidized input purchases without covering the full cost of the inputs—was introduced to IDEA-NEW programming mainly to keep farmers from expecting to always receive hand-outs of inputs. Cost-sharing accustomed farmers to paying for the improved seed stocks, fertilizer, and other inputs introduced through IDEA-NEW programming. The vouchers simply eased the financial burden, thereby encouraging farmers to use the new inputs before the advantages were apparent. Farmers convinced of the net benefits from using the new inputs should be willing to continue to use the benefits at full cost. IDEA-NEW then slowly reduced its subsidy as activities continued allowing the program to avoid some of the dependency problems that can arise when farmers expect to be provided inputs at no cost for the duration of a program. With farmers in half of its target value chains (grapes, orchards, vegetables, wheat and silk) paying 100% for inputs and services by all 2013, IDEA-NEW is confident that demand for unsubsidized, high quality inputs and proven commercial services—trellising, pruning, dormant oil spraying and land leveling to name a few—will continue beyond the life of the project. Other aspects of IDEA-NEW’s activities that promoted sustainability were:

- Most interventions were designed to serve as demonstrations. They were not intended to benefit only the farm or enterprise directly involved in the intervention. IDEA-NEW’s production farm projects, demonstration plots, and pilot projects directly involved only a subset of the farmers in a district or province. IDEA-NEW enabled other farmers to learn new farming practices and witness their advantages through site visits and “field days.”
- To help make Afghan value chains better able to meet its own needs, rather than relying on imports, and to foster job-generation throughout the value chain, IDEA-

NEW helped strengthen input suppliers, poultry associations, farmer and wholesaler associations, and providers of veterinary services. Additionally, the program took purposeful steps to build linkages between the various components of the value chain.

- The more-productive inputs (vegetable seeds, CTV-resistant rootstock, wheat and chicken breeds, etc.) and modern cultivation methods introduced by IDEA-NEW will help Afghan farmers maintain the higher productivity levels achieved while the program was operative.

As IDEA-NEW entered its fourth year of programming, staff were increasingly focused on plans to ensure that farmers' primary needs—inputs, sound technical advice and market access—would continue to be met. Consequently, IDEA-NEW increased its efforts to train strong private sector providers across all of its regions to provide high quality inputs and technical training to producers and processors. For example, in 2012, members of IDEA-NEW's business development team met monthly with the boards of six agricultural retailer associations from all five Northern provinces to conduct a performance analysis and provide training on bookkeeping, capital funds as well as cash and inventory management. Board members then replicated the training to association members to help them better manage their businesses.

IDEA-NEW also used its field days to introduce farmers to local input suppliers that carried similar high quality seeds, fertilizer, tools, etc. that were showcased on demonstration plots for its vegetable, orchard, wheat and grape value chains. Gulam Hossain, a retailer in Taluqan district (Takhar) that was introduced by IDEA-NEW's technical team to vegetable farmers as a local source of improved seeds confirmed that this strategy was beneficial both to farmers and the retailers. He stated, "I am happy to be supplying farmers with good quality seeds and feel proud to be serving my country in my own way. Before farmers would buy low quality seeds on the market and suffer the consequence of their poorly informed purchase, but now they come to my shop to buy good quality seeds. I also appreciate IDEA-NEW's efforts to connect local farmers to reliable suppliers so that we learn about each other and stay in contact even long after the program has ended. Winning the farmers' trust in the quality of my seeds has also helped me win their interest in buying other goods from me."

IDEA-NEW worked collaboratively with GIRoA line departments, namely DAIL, DoE and DoWA, in various stages of project implementation so that government staff could learn about the design and rationale behind the program's interventions and its private-sector driven approach to sustainable development. Engaging GIRoA representatives in key project implementation stages proved to be an effective capacity building exercise in that government personnel gained exposure to farmers and were encouraged—both by beneficiaries' feedback as well as seeing the positive impact modern techniques had on harvests and subsequent sales—to continue endorsing the best practices promoted by IDEA-NEW during GIRoA-hosted field days. This inclusive working relationship was particularly important during program closeout as turning activities over to relevant GIRoA line departments capable of managing them effectively helps ensure that beneficiaries will continue to reap the benefits of its programming after IDEA-NEW ends.

Lastly, IDEA-NEW also hosted several events in 2013-2015 that facilitated connections between traders, buyers and producers to help solidify existing relationships and facilitate new ones that would last beyond the program. The largest was the Agriculture Value Chain Conference, Exhibition and Business Network Day that took place in Kabul on July 7, 2013. This event brought together the agriculture producers, food processors, wholesalers and packaging companies where different key players in the market could be linked with each other in order to strengthen IDEA-NEW's specific value-chains, and in the long run, sustain Afghanistan's agriculture and economic sectors.

More than 180 representatives from different businesses, organizations and institutions encompassing the food processing sector, packaging companies, traders and exporters, wholesalers and financial sector attended the event. In addition, GIRoA officials from MAIL, MoPH, AISA and the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) participated. Four panels discussed regional demand for Afghan products and opportunities in Dubai, India, Russia, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan; the importance of food safety, quality control, developing Afghanistan's processing industry and challenges and opportunities, the public and private support services available to agribusinesses, and the need to better coordinate production efforts. After each discussion, panelists answered audience members' questions.

The event also featured an exhibition of over 80 locally produced food items from 17 IDEA-NEW supported agribusinesses. IDEA-NEW's communications staff arranged 45 business-to-business meetings for producers, processors, traders, exporters and wholesalers in order to facilitate new connections among these key value chain players. These resulted in five provisional deals among companies that had not previously worked together.

The following month, IDEA-NEW organized an Agro-Processing Conference and Exhibition in Mazar-e-Sharif (Balkh) that brought together representatives from the Balkh Governor's Office, Provincial Council, DAIL, DoWA and USAID. Attendees participated in a series of discussions on the challenges and opportunities of processing agricultural products, and the way forward for expanding agro-processing enterprises in Afghanistan. In addition, 30 Afghan businesses displayed their products at an exhibition. Over 200 people attended the event, which was praised by participants for successfully connecting farmers to new markets and food producers. This was the first event of its kind for most of the attendees in Mazar-e-Sharif and was well received by all participants.

Sustainability was critical to IDEA-NEW as there remains substantial room for improvement in the productivity of vegetable and fruit cultivation through wider adoption of best farming practices and increasing farmers' penetration of regional and international markets. This is critical to the long-term success of the country's licit agriculture sector.

Capacity Building. Building the capacity of program participants, whether government officials or the public at-large, was a critical component of the overall success of IDEA-NEW. Agricultural growth under IDEA-NEW required activities that increased both land and labor productivity of small-scale farms in all three regions. The participation of farmers and other agricultural stakeholders was essential to this process; therefore, IDEA-

NEW provided theoretical and practical trainings such as workshops, field days, formal courses and ToTs, and established demonstration plots to transfer modern agronomic practices and new technologies for increasing productivity to farmers throughout its target provinces. For example, improving farmers' knowledge and skills via theoretical and practical trainings (farmer field days) can have an immense impact on farm productivity and profitability. An impact study from the Spring 2011 season (harvested in October 2011) in Kunar, Laghman and Nangarhar provinces, showed that participants in a vegetable cultivation project had between 30% and 900% higher yields (depending on the crop type) over their non-trained counterparts. Consequently, these farmers increased their incomes by an average of 227% over the previous year.

Farmers who took part in a vegetable cultivation project in the Northeast received training on crop productivity including planting, irrigation, pest management, irrigation and marketing. When IDEA-NEW conducted a post-implementation assessment to gauge its effectiveness, 81% of participants stated they thought the techniques they learned helped them produce greater yields and higher incomes. One of the markers of a sustainable project is whether neighboring farmers are keen to learn from IDEA-NEW beneficiaries (rate of adoption). To this end, the survey found that 88% of trainees had shared the skills they learned from the project with other farmers, with each participant teaching an average of 11 other people. Participants in the vegetable cultivation project paid 30% of the cost of seeds and fertilizer and 83% reported that they would buy the inputs again even if they had to pay market prices, since they would earn enough from selling the higher quality produce to cover their costs.

IDEA-NEW worked closely with input suppliers to strengthen their ability to provide training and technical assistance to farmers. To achieve this in the North, IDEA-NEW established six legally registered associations comprised of 123 agricultural retailers in May 2010 to work with farmers in Balkh, Samangan, Sari Pul, Jawzjan, and Faryab provinces.⁷¹ Members paid monthly dues that were used by each association to procure materials on more favorable wholesale terms through bulk orders. Through these associations, retailers received training in business development, financial management and procurement, pesticide application, pruning, business, finance, 2WT operation and maintenance and inputs (tools, fertilizer, chemicals, etc.) and equipment (2WTs, power sprayers, vegetable seeder, pruning shears, saws, etc.) for subsidized sale to farmers and technical training in vineyard trellising, pruning, and basic pesticide safety and application methods.⁷² With support from IDEA-NEW, associations held monthly meetings, ad-hoc trainings seminars and annual general member meetings.

Associations' board members and IDEA-NEW held monthly coordination meetings that focused on the associations' progress to date, the collection of outstanding loans from members, groups' future goals and how best IDEA-NEW could support these plans. Program staff also made regular site visits to all six associations to spot check their records and reconcile stock book balances with their warehouse stores. IDEA-NEW

⁷¹ The six associations are Sabz Baba Yadgar (Balkh), Balkh Bastan (Balkh), Kawsar (Jawzjan), Bahar (Sari Pul), Motmayean (Samangan) and Bawar (Faryab).

⁷² Association members received a total of 21 inputs. The exact percentage they paid varied by item; however, in general farmers supplied 50–70% of an item's price.

conducted on-the-job training for finance officers to strengthen their familiarity with bookkeeping best practices, using invoices, receipts, payment vouchers and managing accounts receivable. By 2013, the results of IDEA-NEW's capacity building efforts were clear, with all associations able to develop budgets, calculate their profits and losses, manage their loans and support their membership with trainings and technical assistance.

Although IDEA-NEW included building the capacity of GIRoA into its activities from the very beginning; in 2012, it began emphasizing the need for line department staff (particularly DAIL) to begin providing services to Afghan farmers independent of external support. Whenever possible, program staff began a phased handing over of activities to GIRoA personnel. For example, after attending planting field days as trainees, DAIL extension workers in the North took over field day trainings for farmers at PVS that had previously been led by IDEA-NEW in late 2012. A few months later, in February 2013, IDEA-NEW turned over the management of a 2012 women's poultry-rearing project to the Badakhshan DAIL. Through this activity, IDEA-NEW distributed 120 hens and 173 kg of feed to six female beneficiaries, trained them in appropriate poultry-rearing techniques and linked them to local VFUs and feed suppliers. Having gained new skills, the farmers expressed their intention to expand their chicken farms and local DAIL extension workers were given the responsibility of managing those plans. It was successful transitions such as this—coupled with its management of field days and other capacity building events—that allowed GIRoA to show their ability to meet farmers' needs once IDEA-NEW programming had ended. This then bolstered the general population's faith in the government's abilities and their willingness to engage with its representatives, both of which will be crucial to GIRoA's future success.

In the East, a wide range of projects funded by the international donor community were focused on building the institutional capacity of GIRoA. As such, IDEA-NEW initiated a gap analysis in February 2013 to identify areas where there was a clear need for specific assistance. As part of its research, IDEA-NEW spoke with various GIRoA representatives from the Directorates for Development of Agriculture Cooperatives; Production and Development of Cereal Crops; Human Resources; Programs; and the Parwan, Kapisa, Nangarhar and Laghman DAILs. In addition, a number of meetings were held with other agriculture projects and the European Union. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss each implementing partner's current MAIL/DAIL capacity building initiatives and areas for improvement. IDEA-NEW completed its gap analysis of DAILs in Badghis, Parwan, Panjshir, Kapisa, Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunar provinces in late March 2013 and their evaluations found that DAIL staff lacked knowledge in: vegetable production, price discovery, project management, technical training for newly hired district staff (pruning, grafting, etc.), agribusiness- and agriculture-focused marketing, finance and procurement. These results formed the foundation of IDEA-NEW's annual work plan, the majority of which included ToT sessions to ensure that DAIL staff received the knowledge they needed to understand and address farmers' requirements.

Over the next year, IDEA-NEW implemented an ambitious work plan that included theoretical and practical trainings, study tours and other support to GIRoA staff as well as the agriculture faculties of various universities. In response to requests from the

agriculture faculties at Nangarhar and Al Beroni (Kapisa) Universities, IDEA-NEW established a one jerib demonstration plot at each university in April 2013. The vast majority of Afghanistan's university curricula focuses heavily on theory and lacks any practical component. In addition, many departments rarely update their programs to match recent advancements in their field. These plots and the practical training series they hosted were an attempt to remedy this issue. Introducing agriculture students to modern farming techniques plays an important role in ensuring the long-term adoption of these methods because many graduates will go on to work for DAILs and will be responsible for training local farmers across the country. Al Beroni University's Dean of Agriculture, Mr. Fazlul Rab Arya, said, "This is the first time that Al Beroni students were exposed to new techniques of agriculture practices. This [plot] is going to be a sustainable source of knowledge for the students and the knowledge gained will be promoted as soon as they graduate." A student, Gardez, echoed these sentiments, stating: "It is my fourth year and throughout my education I have not received such kind of training. It is a great experience for me and I learned a great deal of information from these demonstrations. I wish I had this opportunity from the beginning, but I am happy that others will have it from now on."

One of the most well received workshops was a comprehensive project management training for GIRoA officials from Kapisa and Parwan provinces that was held at IDEA-NEW's Parwan office in May 2013.⁷³ The course was designed to strengthen trainees' knowledge of project management practices and included a week of in-class training that covered the importance of and best practices for needs assessments, project planning and implementation as well as M&E. This was then followed by a week of practical on-the-job coaching and mentoring in each province. Twenty five Parwan staff and 26 from Kapisa participated, including 15 women who demonstrated a very strong interest in the training's topics. The Parwan Provincial Governor, Mr. Qazi Shah Wali Shahid, stated "This course is essential and important for civil servants at the provincial level and mainly for those who are involved in different parts of project management. The low level of the government's budget for such training at the national and sub-national levels is a strong sign of the insufficient knowledge and skills that civil servants have in the area of project management. By providing such capacity development programs, IDEA-NEW is helping civil servants in different directorates at the provincial level to be able to execute developmental projects with maximum results." Based on his feedback, which was strongly echoed by other participants, IDEA-NEW decided to offer this course to other provinces, training an additional 81 GIRoA officials from the Panjshir, Nangarhar and Laghman DAILs.

IDEA-NEW also trained DAIL staff on how to request and receive up-to-date prices for various products and supplies on their mobile phones using Malomat.⁷⁴ The objective of the training was to equip district level DAIL employees with knowledge about Malomat

⁷³ This training was designed for 10 representatives from DAIL, five from DoWA, five from the DoE and five from the Provincial Governor's office.

⁷⁴ Malomat is a mobile price information system currently managed by Roshan, one of Afghanistan's most popular cell phone providers. It provides users with up-to-date prices for 42 agriculture commodities in 14 Afghan markets as well as one in Peshawar, Pakistan.

services and enable them to assist farmers and traders in obtaining current prices of agricultural commodities. The training was conducted IDEA-NEW at the Laghman, Kunar and Badghis DAIL compounds for a total of 124 extension workers from the Laghman, Kunar, Badghis, Kapisa, Parwan and Panjshir DAILS.

As requested by GIROA and other stakeholders, IDEA-NEW organized several study tours so officials could learn from the experiences and knowledge of colleagues from other provinces. For example, a two-day study tour to Nangarhar and Laghman was organized by IDEA-NEW in June 2013 for eleven representatives from the Badghis DAIL, the Badghis Municipality, the Badghis Fruit and Vegetable Wholesalers Association and Badghis University's agriculture faculty. Attendees made 11 site visits to learn about association regulations, establishing and maintaining linkages between farmers and the municipality and providing facilities for retailers and consumers in order to improve market activities in the province.

A four-day tour for 12 DAIL officials from Parwan, Kapisa and Panjshir and three lecturers from Al Beroni University to Nangarhar province took place three months later. As with previous tours, the overall objective was to transfer IDEA-NEW's best experiences with agriculture and agribusinesses from Nangarhar province to other provinces' representatives. In addition, the visit aimed to enhance participants' appreciation of new agriculture production technologies in vegetable cultivation, green house farming, fruit nursery, forestry, ornamental nursery, citrus and stone fruit orchard production by traveling to relevant IDEA-NEW project sites and allowing officials to speak directly with beneficiaries and technical staff.

IDEA-NEW developed trainings to introduce topics that were relatively new to Afghan farmers and GIROA staff, such as a four-day general introduction to agribusiness, adding value; agricultural marketing, entrepreneurship and management; business plan development; an overview of food quality and safety and farm management economics. The training was designed to provide participants with a basic understanding of agribusiness and marketing and encouraged them to explore newer dimensions of agriculture so that they are better placed to assist farmers and local businesses as these issues continue to develop in Afghanistan. A practical component on grading, sorting and packing was added to the theoretical section so trainees could get hands-on experience in these areas. Over 85 DAIL staff from Parwan, Kapisa, Nangarhar and Badghis completed this training. Attendees' feedback was quite positive, with one participant, Mr. Jahangir Miakhel from the Laghman DAIL, stating "The information provided in this training was very current [and] the methods were based on various examples with which the attendees were very comfortable. The practical work such as grading, sorting, waxing, and cleaning were so helpful and [we] appreciated it very much. Altogether, I would say that this is a top-class training."

INDICATOR PERFORMANCE NARRATIVE

Indicator Title	Qualitative Information	LOP Target	LOP Achievement	Successes	Challenges	Lessons Learned
Number of households benefitted by agriculture and alternative development interventions in targeted areas	This is a cooperative agreement required indicator, which measures the number of households benefiting directly from USG agriculture and alternative development interventions in IDEA-NEW supported communities. This indicator simply aggregates data from six other indicators including (<i>“Number of farmers using IDEA -NEW-supported agricultural inputs in targeted areas”</i> , <i>“Number of farmers planting high value crops”</i> , <i>“Number of farmers receiving public/private sector training /Number of participants who have received IDEA -NEW-supported agricultural productivity training”</i> , <i>“Number of participants who have received business skills training”</i> , <i>“Number of government line staff participating in IDEA-NEW training activities”</i> , <i>“Number of households directly benefiting from infrastructure projects including roads, market centers, cold chain and storage facilities projects”</i>)	1,070,900	1,092,709	This indicator simply aggregates data from 6 other indicators. Therefore no additional effort was required to collect/or provide data for this indicator.	Preventing double counting under this indicator is a real challenge. For example, if a beneficiary from the same household receives an input package and through another program participates in a training, it is difficult to prevent this beneficiary from being counted twice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular refresher training on Data Quality Standards and proper data collection techniques should be required for all personnel involved in data collection and management. • A system for conducting regular review and quality checks of the data received from the field should be implemented.
Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created by USG sponsored alternative development or alternative livelihood	Equivalent full time jobs created by IDEA-NEW both through farms and agribusinesses are counted. 0.25 hectares planted to licit agriculture production are counted as one FTE. Also, for agribusinesses, one reported FTE is counted as one, while one reported “part-time” employee is calculated as ½ FTE.	47,800	50,088	The majority of the FTEs created were verified and confirmed through field visits and random cross-check methods prior to being reported to USAID.	In some cases, the part-time FTEs were reported as full-time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All involved in FTE reporting (including the grantees and technical units) should be informed of the FTE calculations and how to collect and report the data.

Indicator Title	Qualitative Information	LOP Target	LOP Achievement	Successes	Challenges	Lessons Learned
activities						
Number of farmers receiving public/private sector training	Beneficiaries under this indicator include those participants to whom significant knowledge or skills have been imparted through informal means. Most trainings were short-term (a few hours), and included technical assistance as a learning approach to share skills and knowledge. Individual participants are defined as those who sign the participant sheets to acknowledge that they have participated in the training – these participants are not registered with the GIRoA as enterprises. Agricultural productivity training includes: irrigation techniques, cultivation methods, harvesting techniques, fertilization methods, packing and marketing, etc. Participants are individuals who attend the trainings; it is expected that individuals will attend multiple IDEA -NEW trainings.	490,000	499,598	The LOP target is achieved in a way that all the required information as well as the fingerprints from all the participants are available in the hard copies, and that majority of the participants were called and confirmed their participation in the training events/field days.	Most of the farmers, particularly the women had no mobile phone/contact numbers, or in some cases they didn't want to provide them (due to security or cultural issues).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a female beneficiary is unwilling to share her contact info, then a relative's contact number may also help during verification. • For both male and female beneficiaries who did not have contact numbers, appointment of a group/team leader or community elder who can distribute information about the participants is helpful during verification.
Number of public-private agriculture change agents trained in new techniques (former language was "Number of participants who have	This indicator measured number of people who have participated in the off-farm business skills training provided by IDEA-NEW. Business skills included marketing, bookkeeping, production, and other business-related skills. Overall, business owners and/or their employees, and (in some cases university students) who participated in the trainings were counted. Also, the training duration varied from a few hours to weeks where the participants were provided with	13,100	15,455	Finger prints and all the necessary information about the training and the participants was captured and then verified by the M&E Verification Officer prior to reporting. In some cases,	Improper selection of the participants for the training affected the results of the training and created a burden for M&E. For instance, some businesses sent illiterate persons to receive accounting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking into consideration the type of training, appropriate personnel should be selected for the training.

Indicator Title	Qualitative Information	LOP Target	LOP Achievement	Successes	Challenges	Lessons Learned
<i>received business skills training</i>)	certificates, and both in country and off-shore training/s are included.			pre/post tests were given to the participants in order to understand the quality of the training/s and identify future improvements.	training, and could not receive the benefits of the training directly or transfer any information or knowledge to other members of the business.	
Number of public-private agriculture change agents trained in new techniques (former language was "Number of government line staff participating in IDEA-NEW training activities")	This indicator measured the total number of government employees from different ministries/departments, particularly from MAIL/DAILs. The provided trainings included but were not limited to agricultural extension, program planning, accounting, marketing, etc.	2,200	2,715	This target was overachieved and included more than 300 female government employees from different departments. This target was overachieved due to a high level of interest from GIRoA employees, due in part to IDEA-NEW's close coordination with MAIL/DAIL counterparts.	Nothing Significant To Report (NSTR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close coordination with GIRoA and helping to increase their capacity will have a long-term, sustainable impact on the agriculture sector in Afghanistan. Also, it will help ensure the successful and efficient implementation of future programming.
Number of agriculture-	This indicator measured the total number of enterprises/microenterprises supported	8,970	9,018	A detailed M&E data collection tool	Most of the enterprises were	NSTR

Indicator Title	Qualitative Information	LOP Target	LOP Achievement	Successes	Challenges	Lessons Learned
related enterprises participating in IDEA-NEW-supported value chains	through IDEA-NEW by providing inputs, training, and technical support.			(form) containing all required information was filled out for every enterprise supported.	home-based and were not registered with AISA or another GIRoA entity.	
Number of private enterprises, producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations and community-based organizations (CBOs) that applied improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance	<p>This indicator measured the number of enterprises applying new technology or improved management practices due to IDEA-NEW support. Under this indicator, those enterprises that participated in the HACCP program, adopted SMS marketing strategies, and/or aired live radio shows were counted.</p> <p>If an enterprise participated in more than one of these activities, the enterprise was counted once.</p> <p>Note: This indicator was introduced in April 2015.</p>	36	24	IDEA-NEW successfully supported enterprises in applying unique practices in Afghanistan (i.e. HACCP, SMS Marketing, Live Radio Shows).	NSTR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The business should be reported only when and if the business applied improved technology or management practices.
Proportion of	For this indicator, all women who participated	75%	89%	The pre/post-tests	In several cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The responsible person for the pre/post-test

Indicator Title	Qualitative Information	LOP Target	LOP Achievement	Successes	Challenges	Lessons Learned
females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG supported training/programming	in training of at least one full day or longer were given a pre/post-test. The unit of measurement was a proportion expressed in the format of X/Y, where X was the number of women whose scores improved and Y was the total number of women who participated in the training program.		(1492/1680)	were administered during all relevant trainings.	the women were illiterate and could not fill out the pre/post-test papers easily/by themselves.	should read aloud every question to every illiterate woman in order to ensure that reliable/unbiased data is collected.
Percentage increase in household income from licit agriculture in targeted areas	This indicator measured the percentage increase in annual household income from the baseline over the life of the project. It also measured the direct impact to households as a result of IDEA-NEW intervention from productivity enhancement of annual and perennial crops, value added processing, pre- and post-harvest practices, and market linkages.	Target for 2012 was 15% increase over the baseline in 2009 (the baseline for 2009 was \$2,566)	The result for 2012's Annual HH Survey was \$3,246	The surveys aimed at collecting data for this indicator were conducted successfully and all the processes were carefully monitored. All raw data was rechecked and verified prior to analysis.	Changes in program focus, geographic coverage area, and types of target beneficiaries, which could not be predicted at the start of the project.	Other project information should help to inform indicators when drastic program shifts have taken place.
Number of livestock under increased technology and improved management	This indicator measured the total number of livestock who received vaccinations or other health-related inputs, or whose owners received training and technical assistance for animal health under IDEA-NEW. Livestock include hooved animals raised for livelihoods, e.g. cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and buffalo. Livestock also includes non-hooved animals chickens (layer), bee hives and fish ponds.	9,000,000	9,450,193	All data was collected by type of livestock received support.	NSTR	NSTR

Indicator Title	Qualitative Information	LOP Target	LOP Achievement	Successes	Challenges	Lessons Learned
Number of farmers planting high-value crops	This indicator counted the total number of farmers who planted crops including perennial (tree) crops and trellised crops. M&E data collection tools/forms were filled out and signed/thumbprint by the recipients (farmers) during the plant distribution phase.	12,450	15,440	The input distribution program consisted of two phases: 1) conduct a farmer registration survey; and 2) real input distribution. The M&E team, local shura members and government extension workers were present during both phases. Also, every farmer provided a fingerprint during the input distribution for verification.	Most of the farmers, particularly the women, had no mobile phone/contact numbers, or in some cases they didn't want to provide them (due to security or cultural issues).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a female beneficiary is unwilling to share her contact info, then a relative's contact number may also help during verification. • For both male and female beneficiaries who did not have contact numbers, appointment of a group/team leader or community elder who can distribute information about the participants is helpful during verification.
USD value of agricultural exports as a result of IDEA-NEW	Under this indicator, IDEA-NEW measured the total USD value of exports of agriculture commodities facilitated by the intervention. Exported agricultural commodities included but were not limited to onions, potatoes, and crafts (rugs).	7,700,000	8,154,799	All the data received for this indicator included a copy of required custom documents.	NSTR	NSTR
Number of organizations/	Under this indicator, IDEA-NEW counted all organizations that actively participated in	75	75	NSTR	Some of the associations were	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enterprises should be differentiated from an association or

Indicator Title	Qualitative Information	LOP Target	LOP Achievement	Successes	Challenges	Lessons Learned
associations assisted as a result of IDEA-NEW	IDEA-NEW's activities and were not enterprises/microenterprises. All reported organizations/associations possessed registration documents (by an entity of the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan). If an organization was not registered with GIRoA, then a letter certifying the entity as an organization, association, or cooperative was required as proof.				operating (100%) as enterprises but were called associations or cooperatives.	cooperative and should be reported accordingly.
Number of rural infrastructure projects completed through cash-for-work programs	Almost all of the infrastructure projects reported under this indicator were constructed through direct implementation by IDEA-NEW. Infrastructure projects included irrigation canals, roads, wells, protection and/or surrounding walls, micro hydro power plants, bridges, fruits and vegetable markets, or any other type of vertical structures. An infrastructure project was considered complete and reported when a proper form (data collection tool) designed by the M&E team was filled out and certified/signed by the local shura.	285	295	Almost all of the projects were completed 100% prior to data collection/signing of the forms/data collection tools by the shura members/elders.	NSTR	NSTR
Number of KM of transportation infrastructure constructed or repaired	Transportation infrastructure included construction (new roads) or rehabilitation of roads and bridges. The main purpose of this activity was to link the farm/farmers to the markets. GPS software was used to collect the data under this indicator.	160	178.9	Successfully measured all of the roads and structures constructed or rehabilitated using GPS software (even in insecure	Insecurity, particularly when using GPS for data collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working very closely with the communities and community elders, and assigning professional data collectors.

Indicator Title	Qualitative Information	LOP Target	LOP Achievement	Successes	Challenges	Lessons Learned
Number of KM of irrigation system constructed or repaired by IDEA-NEW	This indicator measured the length of canals or reservoirs constructed or rehabilitated. GPS software was used to collect the data under this indicator.	78	90.8	areas). Successfully measured all of the canals or other irrigation systems and structures constructed or rehabilitated using GPS software (even in insecure areas).	Insecurity, particularly when using GPS for the data collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working very closely with the communities and community elders, and assigning professional data collectors.
Number of hectares under improved irrigation in IDEA-NEW assisted areas	The actual surface area of land served by an IDEA-NEW constructed/rehabilitated system was measured and reported. Polygon was collected using GPS software for all data reported.	37,000	38,201.7	Successfully collected polygon of the actual area irrigated (after completion of the project), and the data was confirmed and plotted by the GIS Officer prior to report.	Insecurity, particularly when using GPS for the data collection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working very closely with the communities and community elders, and assigning professional data collectors.
USD value of wages paid through cash-for-work infrastructure activities	USD figures reported under this indicator were calculated based on payroll to the laborers and were paid directly to the laborers by IDEA-NEW through its Cash For Work program.	7,750,000	7,800,415	NSTR	The M&E team could not participate in every wage distribution event. Data reported was received from the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field monitors should visit the infrastructure project site on days when the wages are scheduled to be disbursed to the laborers.

Indicator Title	Qualitative Information	LOP Target	LOP Achievement	Successes	Challenges	Lessons Learned
Number of households directly benefiting from infrastructure projects including roads, market centers, cold chain and storage facilities projects	This indicator measured the total number of households benefiting directly from IDEA-NEW constructed infrastructure projects. For road projects, direct beneficiaries as reported by shuras were counted. For irrigation projects, end-household users of water were counted as reported by field monitors. For market center and cold storage projects, direct beneficiaries were considered as actual users of the facilities (vendors) as collected through surveys and it was assumed that each user was from a unique household.	297,000	298,520	NSTR	Finance team. No real data of the actual number of residents in a community or village exist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should receive household data from the local shuras and confirm the totals with other community elders.
Number of FTE created through cash-for-work infrastructure activities	For this indicator, one FTE equals 2018 hours or 260 labor days. The calculation was made based on the timesheets/payrolls received from the field.	5,000	4,938	NSTR	NSTR	NSTR
Volume of production of licit farm products (MT)	This indicator measured the actual volume of licit crops harvested and marketed. Production of licit crops harvested (and marketed) was calculated through a statistical random sampling of assisted farmers.	74,854	64,274	NSTR	Most of the time, farmers forgot about or could not directly communicate the total metric tons or kilograms of his/her harvest. Or, sometimes they hesitated and felt that they should claim a higher yield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An experienced field surveyor should be hired and trained on how to collect required unbiased data from farmers in the field.

Indicator Title	Qualitative Information	LOP Target	LOP Achievement	Successes	Challenges	Lessons Learned
					(to receive more support) or lower (to avoid paying government taxes or bribes).	
Number of hectares under improved natural resource management	<p>This was not an area of IDEA-NEW focus nor was it in the 2012-2014 activity plan. IDEA-NEW performed activities under this indicator in just two districts - Pachir wa Agam of Nangarhar and Nurgal district of Kunar province - by planting trees/saplings in these mountainous areas. The data under this indicator was collected using two approaches (GPS software for collecting polygon for the surface area planted and technical calculations based on the number and type of trees planted). Sample photos were received prior to reporting the data.</p> <p>Note: this indicator was removed in 2012.</p>	2,103	380	The program was implemented and data collected without any major incidents or accidents in extremely remote and insecure area.	Data collection and follow-up of the program in remote and insecure mountainous area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close coordination with the local communities and involving them in different steps of the program made our job possible and easier.
USD value of capital provided by IDEA-NEW to participants in the agricultural value chain	<p>Capital was counted as in-kind or cash in the form of grants and vouchers. This indicator measured the total capital provided by IDEA-NEW to farms and agribusinesses.</p> <p>Note: this indicator was removed in 2012.</p>	11,541,056	2,069,494	NSTR	NSTR	NSTR
Number of	Individuals reported under this indicator	5,040	15,656	NSTR	NSTR	NSTR

Indicator Title	Qualitative Information	LOP Target	LOP Achievement	Successes	Challenges	Lessons Learned
individuals benefiting from financial agreements	<p>benefited from grant and loan programs. Proof that the grants and vouchers were disbursed to these people was required prior to reporting.</p> <p>Note: this indicator was removed in 2012.</p>					

CHAPTER THREE: BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Over the past nearly seven years, IDEA-NEW has conducted hundreds of site visits and produced field monitoring reports that captured the strengths and weaknesses of various activities and beneficiaries' feedback. In addition, numerous needs assessments and surveys have been conducted throughout the life of the project to inform management decisions and activity plans. The following section summarizes the best practices, challenges, and lessons learned stemming from these reports and staff experience in the ever-changing landscape of development programming in Afghanistan. The section concludes with some recommendations for future USAID interventions.

BEST PRACTICES

Facilitating Linkages. One of IDEA-NEW's major activities was the facilitation of connections between producers, traders and buyers through market information activities and sales promotion. This facilitation took the form of business-to-business meetings between these parties to identify common issues, and encourage partnership and collaboration. In addition, IDEA-NEW provided forums for discussion between interested agribusinesses and banks/financial institutions issuing formal loans and credit to the agriculture sector in its target provinces. IDEA-NEW hosted several A2F conferences and follow-on workshops with these loan providers, bringing in agribusinesses for interactive conversations on the loan application process, risk-sharing, collateral and guarantees.

IDEA-NEW also maintained close relationships with other donor projects working in agriculture and related sectors. IDEA-NEW hosted monthly coordination meetings, inviting other USG projects including CHAMP, ABADE, SAGAL and FAIDA with the goal of developing synergy across activities by avoiding duplication of efforts and promoting information sharing.

The outcome of channeling staff time and energy toward this type of facilitation was invaluable for grantees and resulted in numerous partnerships, deals, and issued loans—see 'Support to Domestic Agribusinesses in Expanding Markets' for more information.

Integration of MAIL/DAIL Counterparts. Throughout the life of the project, IDEA-NEW worked closely with provincial and district level government and local communities, especially provincial directorates of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL). By the end of the project, a total of 2,715 MAIL/DAIL extension workers of which 165 are women had participated in a range of IDEA-NEW supported demonstrations and trainings. IDEA-NEW views this relationship building as key to the continued sustainability of its activities, and encourages future USAID programming to place a high priority on this type of multi-level government counterpart integration. Establishing government interest and buy-in from the start proved indispensable to the project's ability to implement activities in a volatile political and security environment.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Changing Established Mindsets. Over the past decade, the international community has invested millions of dollars in the rehabilitation and development of Afghanistan’s agriculture sector. For the most part, donor assistance has focused on the distribution of agriculture inputs (seeds, feeds, fertilizers, equipment) and training to farmers as well as support to various GIRoA line ministries. In many cases, this assistance has had profound impacts in addressing food security, increasing agricultural production, introducing new technologies, expanding market opportunities and in building the capacity of various state and non-state actors across several value chains. However, the downside is that implementers of donor assistance programs have distorted market systems by becoming key market actors (i.e. customers and/or suppliers) in the provision of goods and services to farmers, agribusinesses and government line ministries. The end result is that in many cases, agribusinesses, farmers and even GIRoA line ministry staff have come to rely on donor support for many types of agriculture-related assistance. With the steady decrease in donor funds, one of the key challenges faced by IDEA-NEW during implementation was altering this mindset.

For example, IDEA-NEW experienced difficulties in helping beneficiaries realize the importance of the cost-share component required for participation in some of IDEA-NEW’s activities. This was exemplified during the IDEA-NEW financed input distribution program (2009-2012), which began with a minimum cost-share that increased over time. Changing this ‘handout’ mindset with beneficiaries—and IDEA-NEW staff—was a significant challenge. Additionally, 2013-2014 saw a shift in focus from producers (farmers) toward agribusinesses on either end of the farmer in target value chains. When IDEA-NEW was researching program design ideas with agribusinesses, it was evident that these businesses were either expecting IDEA-NEW to procure inputs from them to distribute to farmers or for IDEA-NEW to procure some large piece of equipment for their business.

IDEA-NEW addressed these challenges by transforming them into opportunities for success. From the outset, IDEA-NEW viewed the role of NGOs/donors (i.e. IDEA-NEW) as facilitators to design program interventions that bring farmers, agribusinesses and government together in a way that is mutually beneficial and sustainable. The end goal was for farmers to trust the quality and advice from agricultural input suppliers, for agro-processors to work with farmers to source the best quality produce at a fair price, for agriculture input suppliers to view farmers as valued customers as opposed to passive recipients and for the government line agencies (MAIL/DAIL) to be partners with the private sector to promote Afghanistan agriculture, provide quality advice and support.

Security and Government Insecurity. Implementation issues resulting from an ever changing and volatile security environment are an inherent reality when working in Afghanistan. IDEA-NEW did its best to mitigate such issues through interaction with local communities, adherence to strict security protocols, and hiring of local field monitors. Regardless of the security environment, IDEA-NEW strived to maintain a field presence and continue with operations. Through relationship building with local communities and elders, IDEA-NEW was largely able to overcome this obstacle and continue implementation. However, security threats were a consistent challenge for IDEA-NEW, adversely affecting its ability to meet all program deliverables on schedule.

For instance, during last year’s protracted election period, threats and violence surrounding voting days and other events led to the closing of IDEA-NEW’S office in Jalalabad for approximately 10 days. Offices in Kabul were closed or locked down for a total of six days. Additionally, field visits, meetings,

beneficiary trainings and grant development activities were delayed or canceled due to difficulty of travel in and around IDEA-NEW target provinces.

Regardless of the best laid plans in designing activities, security incidents and resulting restrictions are an unfortunate commonality in the Afghanistan context. Wherever and whenever possible, IDEA-NEW addressed the effects to minimize adverse impacts on IDEA-NEW activities. The main ‘lessons learned’ as they relate to security and government insecurity are to establish a local presence, build and maintain strong relationships with government representatives and local elders, and adopt a flexible approach to implementation of activities in particularly dangerous and insecure areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INTERVENTIONS

Throughout the life of the project, IDEA-NEW has continuously assessed and re-assessed many of its initiatives—both to gauge impact and inform future programming. In addition, the project has undergone numerous internal and third party assessments, the findings of which were incorporated into subsequent project management plans (Activity Plans, M&E Plans, etc.). These impact assessments and surveys are included in Annex IV.

Below summarizes some of the key recommendations included in these assessments, as well as the recommendations of IDEA-NEW senior management at the project’s close:

Access to Financing: Access to credit remains a stumbling block for small farmers and all sizes of agribusinesses. Input suppliers, for example, report selling 60% of their products to farmers on credit. This lack of cash flow directly impacts the ability of agribusinesses to repay commercial lenders.

Access to financial institutions that take into account the cyclical nature of agribusiness cash flows would open up expansion opportunities for Afghan agribusinesses. This is also relevant in terms of loan size and time horizon, as most agribusinesses said that they needed smaller loans and longer time-horizons to pay back such loans.

Another major obstacles reported by businesses was the documentation required for loans (collateral requirements and associated bureaucracy), which typically involved certifying land titles from five or more ministries and reportedly \$10,000 in bribe payments. If banking institutions would accept other types of collateral that do not require extensive government certification (such as business equipment), then this would open doors for more financing opportunities.

Predatory Credit Practices: Many input suppliers provide credit to farmers with extremely high fees. IDEA-NEW and other USAID programs, rather than just linking input suppliers to farmers, should take this reality into consideration, and build the capacity of input suppliers that have the interests of their profits *and* farmer profitability in mind. USAID could also encourage the input suppliers with whom it works to sign fair practices agreements. Larger policy initiatives also need to be implemented to protect farmers in this area, who are often discouraged from buying inputs over the long run because of predatory business environments, but who often lack the ability to advocate on their own behalf.

Import Competition: Competition from cheaper Pakistani imports was the most common concern for food producers and input suppliers supported by IDEA-NEW. There are several inter-related enabling environment measures to be taken into consideration for this concern:

- The cost of electricity needs to be lowered. The cost of electricity impacts the region at the agribusiness level, as most companies must use generators because of unreliable and/or intermittent

electricity supply for their business. Until this broad problem is solved, Afghan businesses will have difficulty in competing with lower-priced imports from China and Pakistan, which cross the Afghan border with relative ease.

- Access to local raw materials needs to be expanded so that unit production costs drop. This is an area of continued need for agribusinesses who buy raw products, and is a potential area of focus for follow-on USAID programs. In such cases, grants need to explicitly require local raw material providers as sources.

Even though this was a part of IDEA-NEW grants, many of the businesses still bought materials on the open market. This was generally a combination of ease (the product was ready when they needed it) and price (they found the lowest-priced raw material, often imported). With greater production, unit costs will decrease, incentivizing area agribusinesses to buy locally instead of buying lower-cost imports.

Farm Linkages: Most businesses purchase their produce on the open market. While increasing product demand was a key component of the IDEA-NEW model, the project could have done more to prioritize this. Future programs should seek to work more closely with agribusinesses who are working with Afghan farmers, and to the extent possible, mandate such linkages in grant agreements.

Security: Security remains a significant barrier to business marketing and expansion. **Hussain Zada Agriculture Company**, for example, reported that “a warlord kidnapped a branch agent. They wanted money from us,” highlighting the dangers of conducting even routine business activities in Afghanistan. This will remain a challenge for the foreseeable future.

One of the fruit and vegetable wholesalers assisted by the program (**Wasiq Imran Limited**) noted that the promotional materials made for his company with the help of IDEA-NEW were limited in their utility, as the USAID logo prevented them from being distributed anywhere but main cities; even then, the owner was concerned that people with insurgent links would see the items and use such a brochure as proof that he was working with the US government.

Future USAID programs could look into branding with only company logos through a “host country priority” exemption of promoting local businesses. This would allow companies to distribute collateral material more widely without risk.

Donor Program Policies: One of IDEA-NEW’s strategies was to move away from the donor-as-customer model that has dominated the Afghan market in the last ten years. However, not all donors and government actors have followed similar strategies. Without a more uniform policy in this area, the strategies of one program are unlikely to change the market in this regard, and successes may be undermined by competing donor programs. Therefore, USAID programs and USAID’s Office of Agriculture need to work with other donors at the policy level to change their incentive models.

Sharq Seeds, for example, noted that their poor sales achievements were largely a result of the fact that the Ministry of Agriculture (MAIL), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Rescue Committee (IRC) and others had purchased seeds for distribution to thousands of eastern region farmers; as a result, farmers did not need to buy seeds.

ANNEX I: FINAL PERFORMANCE INDICATOR OVERVIEW

ANNEX II: SELECTED SUCCESS STORIES

ANNEX III: IMPACT ASSESSMENTS AND SURVEYS

ANNEX IV: APPROVED M&E PLAN (2015)



Annex I - Final Performance Indicator Overview

S/No	Performance Indicator	IDEA-NEW Achievements By Fiscal Year								IDEA-NEW LOP Target	IDEA-NEW LOP Achievements	Final Gender Breakdown	Variance
		Baseline	FY'09	FY'10	FY'11	FY'12	FY'13	FY'14	FY'15				
1	Number of households benefitted by alternative development or alternative livelihoods activities in USG-assisted areas (changed to "Number of households benefitted by agriculture and alternative development interventions in targeted areas (IR 1.2)" in April 2015, per USAID direction) <i>*cooperative agreement required indicator</i>	0	108,678	269,371	307,011	245,041	140,425	14,329	7,854	1,070,900	1,092,709	N/A	No significant variance
2	3.8 Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created by USG sponsored alternative development or alternative livelihood activities <i>*cooperative agreement required indicator</i>	0	637	24,159	12,362	9,103	1,426	2,294	107	47,800	50,088	Male - 46,820 Female - 3,264	No significant variance
3	Number of hectares of alternative crops under cultivation targeted by USG programs <i>*cooperative agreement required indicator</i>	0	154	5,481	2,844	1,640	3,909	496	0	14,000	14,522	N/A	No significant variance
4	USD value of final sales of licit farm and non-farm products (changed to "Value of sales of targeted commodities as a result of USG Assistance (IR 1.2)" in April 2015, per USAID direction) <i>*cooperative agreement required indicator</i>	0	0	9,270,070	5,577,865	13,834,812	7,016,249	11,188,814	15,351,559	45,000,000	62,239,368	N/A	This indicator was difficult to predict, and as such several IDEA-NEW grantees reported higher than anticipated sales, leading to a significant variance between the target and achievement for this indicator. For instance, one supported business reported sales of more than \$3M during one quarter, which was verified by IDEA-NEW's technical and M&E teams.
5	3.4 Number of farmers using IDEA -NEW-supported agricultural inputs in targeted areas	0	1,537	74,654	83,938	72,499	23,305	2,648	2,400	260,000	260,981	Male - 248,616 Female - 12,365	No significant variance
6	Number of participants who have received IDEA-NEW supported agricultural productivity training (changed to "Number of farmers receiving public/private sector training (Sub IR 1.2.3)" in April 2015, per USAID direction)	0	108,176	121,703	117,830	105,470	39,752	4,371	2,296	490,000	499,598	Male - 488,193 Female - 11,405	No significant variance
7	Number of participants who have received business skills training (changed to "Number of public-private agriculture change agents trained in new techniques (Sub IR 1.2.3)" in April 2015, per USAID direction)	0	358	2,530	3,261	2,208	3,806	2,507	785	13,100	15,455	Male - 5,718 Female - 9,737	In 2012/2013, the program's focus shifted from production to marketing. This shift in activities called for increased support to agribusineses, whereas before the focus was at the individual farmer level. As such, more business skills trainings were conducted than originally planned.
8	Number of government line staff participating in IDEA-NEW training activities (changed to Number of public-private agriculture change agents trained in new techniques (Sub IR 1.2.3) in April 2015, per USAID direction)	0	31	812	301	343	695	334	199	2,200	2,715	Male - 2,550 Female - 165	IDEA-NEW planned for the participation of 1-2 government representatives (MAIL/DAIL) for each of its training activities. However, as a result of the strong and consistent coordination of activities between IDEA-NEW and its MAIL/DAIL counterparts, interest in these trainings rose, along with the number of government participants.
9	2.1 Number of agriculture-related enterprises participating in IDEA-NEW-supported value chains	0	12	1,757	1,888	3,853	1,342	89	77	8,970	9,044	Male - 2,402 Female - 6,642	No significant variance
10	Number of private enterprises, producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations and community-based organizations (CBOs) that applied improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance <i>(this is a newly added indicator - April 2015)</i>	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	24	36	24	Male - 22 Female - 2	IDEA-NEW planned to support approximately 20 businesses under its HACCP program. However, as planning commenced during the NCE-2 period, IDEA-NEW decided that it was more practical to focus its efforts on those businesses which held the most promise for HACCP certification. After careful analysis and the recommendations of an international certifying body, 7 businesses were selected. This resulted in overall lower achievements under this indicator.
11	Proportion of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG supported training/programming <i>(this indicator was introduced in November 2012)</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	97% (1159/1191)	66% (300/453)	92% (33/36)	75%	89% (1492/1680)	Female: 1492/1680	No significant variance
12	Average annual household income from licit economic activities in IDEA-NEW communities (changed to "Percentage increase in household income from licit agriculture in targeted areas" in April 2015, per USAID direction)	\$2,566	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$3,246	N/A	\$2,431	N/A	N/A (the bi-annual target was set every other year)	N/A	N/A	The survey results in 2012 indicated a significant improvement in the income level of IDEA-NEW communities, but the survey results for 2014 showed a decrease. The primary reasons for the decrease from FY 2012 to 2014 relate more to a major shift in program focus from production agriculture (farmers) to agro-processing an input supply (agro-enterprise) as well as marked changes in the geographical area of IDEA-NEW from 15 provinces in the North, East and Western Afghanistan in 2012 to seven provinces in the East and Central. Additionally, FY'14 saw the end of direct assistance to farm households as well as the end of cash for work activities.

Annex I - Final Performance Indicator Overview

S/No	Performance Indicator	IDEA-NEW Achievements By Fiscal Year								IDEA-NEW LOP Target	IDEA-NEW LOP Achievements	Final Gender Breakdown	Variance
		Baseline	FY'09	FY'10	FY'11	FY'12	FY'13	FY'14	FY'15				
13	Number of livestock under increased technology and improved management	0	1,709	554,403	2,806,197	3,264,258	2,374,677	448,949	N/A	9,000,000	9,450,193	N/A	No significant variance
14	Number of farmers planting high-value crops	0	0	0	2,204	4,577	5,671	2,988	N/A	12,450	15,440	Male - 15,440 Female - 0	No significant variance
15	USD value of agricultural exports as a result of IDEA NEW	0	1,281,477	1,378,125	22,583	362,243	4,711,831	398,540	N/A	7,700,000	8,154,799	N/A	No significant variance
16	Number of organizations/associations assisted as a result of IDEA-NEW	0	0	0	51	16	7	1	N/A	75	75	N/A	N/A
17	Number of rural infrastructure projects completed through cash-for-work programs	0	1	73	64	63	88	6	N/A	285	295	N/A	No significant variance
18	Number of KM of transportation infrastructure constructed or repaired	0	0	54.5	75.826	9.033	39.233	0.403	N/A	160	179	N/A	No significant variance
19	Number of KM of irrigation system constructed or repaired by IDEA-NEW	0	0	39.475	10.378	22.708	6	12.285	N/A	78	91	N/A	No significant variance
20	Number of hectares under improved irrigation in IDEA NEW assisted areas	0	0	4,190.14	6,611.52	25,135.51	2,264.60	0	N/A	37,000	38,202	N/A	No significant variance
21	USD value of wages paid through cash-for-work infrastructure activities	0	0	3,824,389	2,650,495	1,082,075	241,726	1730	N/A	7,750,000	7,800,415	N/A	No significant variance
22	Number of households directly benefiting from infrastructure projects including roads, market centers, cold chain and storage facilities projects	0	750	69,672	99,477	59,944	67,196	1481	N/A	297,000	298,520	N/A	No significant variance
23	Number of FTEs created through cash-for-work infrastructure activities	0	0	2,582.18	1,554.49	659.18	141.13	0.74	N/A	5,000	4,938	Male - 4,848 Female - 90	No significant variance
24	Volume of production of licit farm products (MT)	0	0	28,024.28	15,433.00	20,817.00	0.00	0.00	N/A	74,854	64,274	N/A	At USAID's direction, per Modification #11 to the cooperative agreement, the program focus shifted and this indicator was closed.
25	Number of hectares under improved natural resource management	0	0	0.00	0.00	379.55	0.00	0.00	N/A	2,103	380	N/A	In consultation with USAID, this indicator was removed in 2012, as it was a not one of IDEA-NEW's focus areas.
26	USD value of capital provided by IDEA-NEW to participants in the agricultural value chain	0	0	0	736,204.67	1,333,289.53	N/A	N/A	N/A	11,541,056	2,069,494	N/A	In consultation with USAID, this indicator was removed in 2012, as it was not related to the project's core work.
27	Number of individuals benefiting from financial agreements	0	0	0	3,441	12,215	N/A	N/A	N/A	5,040	15,656	N/A	In consultation with USAID, this indicator was removed in 2012, as the area of financial services was not part of IDEA-NEW's core work. There was also the possibility of double-counting participants in the voucher programs if this indicator were to be continued.



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AFGHANISTAN

SNAPSHOT

Pesticide Spurs Economic Growth

When orchards in northeastern Afghanistan were sprayed with dormant oil it marked a big advance for the area



USAID/IDEA-NEW

Wolasmir's spraying service is doing good business

The oil-based pesticide is considered very effective in controlling winter pests. And spraying has become a thriving business in the region

When orchards in northeastern Afghanistan were sprayed with a pesticide called dormant oil, it was more than just another disease-control measure. More than 3,000 farmers felt assured of higher yields because the oil-based pesticide is considered very effective in controlling winter pests. And pesticide spraying has become a thriving business in the area.

The spraying was carried out by 47 private providers with support from USAID's Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) program.

The sprayers were trained by the program, which seeks to develop the agricultural sector across the northeastern provinces of Kunduz, Takhar, Baghlan and Badakhshan. A key part of the program is enhancing the private sector's capacity.

Wolasmir, who has a spraying service in Badakhshan, says he earned \$265 in a short time, working on 65 orchards in one district. "Now, I want to expand the business by targeting more farmers," he says.

There is every chance that he will be able to do just that because the farmers whose orchards were first sprayed have been spreading the word. Now, many more farmers in northeastern Afghanistan are expressing interest in trying horticulture oils to control disease.



USAID
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AFGHANISTAN

FIRST PERSON

This Businesswoman Learns Hardsell

An Afghan woman benefits from networking opportunities and real-life stories at a business conference



USAID/IDEA-NEW

'I heard about other women's problems and it made me think that they were working in more challenging environments than I was.'

- Rabiya Maryam, who runs a small Afghan handicrafts company, at the South Asia Women's Entrepreneurship Summit

Just three days at a business conference and Rabiya Maryam's life – and work – changed forever. She runs a small company in Afghanistan, which manufactures silk handicrafts, and says she benefitted enormously from the networking opportunities and inspirational real-life stories at the South Asia Women's Entrepreneurship Symposium in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Rabiya says the USAID-facilitated trip prompted her to bring about "a lot of changes to my business. I am going to increase my weaving plants from 60 to 100 and I will hire 100 more women." She has tripled the looms to 30 in the expectation of more orders as a result of the great "marketing opportunity" provided by the conference. "The samples I had taken received a lot of attention. A group of women from Kazakhstan invited me to come to Kazakhstan at their expense." An Afghan-American entrepreneur also showed interest in Rabiya's handicrafts.

Rabiya says the psychological impact of meeting other entrepreneurs from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka was almost as substantial as the potential orders. "I heard about other women's problems and it made me think that they were working in more challenging environments than I was," she says.

The conference, which brought together 100 entrepreneurs, buyers and government officials from south and central Asia, was attended by the foreign minister of Bangladesh Dipu Moni, US Ambassador at-large for Global Women's Issues Melanne S Verveer and US Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asia Robert O Blake.



USAID
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AFGHANISTAN

SNAPSHOT

Fruitful Harvest For Baghlan Farmers

In northern Afghanistan, nearly 2,000 fruit growers have learnt new ways to improve yield and income



Sayed Sakandar (left) in his orchard, in animated conversation about the merits of growing fruit

USAID/IDEA-NEW

Farmers such as Sayed Sakandar were taught about weed control, fertilizer application and irrigation systems. Each was given high-quality seedlings, a pair of secateurs, barbed wire and chemical fertilizer

Sayed Sakandar's 70 apricot trees offer more than the promise of an abundant harvest. They symbolize the slow but steady success of attempts to persuade Afghan farmers that there are viable alternatives to opium poppies.

Nearly 2,000 farmers in four northern provinces of Afghanistan – Badakhshan, Baghlan, Kunduz, and Takhar – have made the switch to fruit orchards with the support of USAID's Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW).

The project, which works throughout northeast Afghanistan to boost agricultural livelihoods by training farmers and improving linkages between farm and the market, has focused on fruit production in some districts. Thirty years of war destroyed most of Afghanistan's more productive fruit orchards and when Afghan farmers returned to their lands from exile in Pakistan and other neighboring countries, they found that fruit trees and traditional crops were not as profitable as opium poppies.

The USAID project has been working to change that. In four districts of Baghlan province — Puli Khumri, Baghlan Jaded, Bano and Dehsallah — it helped farmers such as Sayed Sakandar to learn about weed control, fertilizer application and irrigation systems. Through a voucher system, each farmer was given high-quality certified saplings, a pair of secateurs, barbed wire and chemical fertilizer.

Sayed Sakandar says he is glad he made the shift towards growing fruit. "Some people advised me to start cultivating poppies again, but now I've been helped to establish a new orchard on my land," he says as he dreams of planting more fruit trees. He initially planted just one jerib, a traditional unit of measurement roughly equivalent to half-an-acre, but now he plans another two orchards. It is converts like him that attest to the success of the initiative.



USAID
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AFGHANISTAN

SNAPSHOT

The Plot To Teach Modern Farming

Agriculture students learn the latest farming techniques at a demonstration plot on their university campus



Learning land preparation

Photo : USAID/IDEA NEW

The program is meant to update the students' knowledge and skills and compensate for the lack of practical training at most Afghan universities

A unique exercise is underway at Alberoni University in Afghanistan's Kapisa province. A small demonstration plot has been prepared and 170 agriculture students are being trained in modern farming techniques. It is part of USAID's Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) program to update the students' knowledge and skills and compensate for the lack of practical training at most Afghan universities.

The training is especially important for these students, nearing the end of their undergraduate careers. Many of them will eventually find work in government agriculture departments and will be responsible for training local farmers. It is consequently essential for them to know proper land preparation, sowing and planting techniques, integrated pest management and post-harvest best practice.

Shareefullah, a third-year student, said the training was invaluable. "They demonstrate efficient irrigation and minimizing the quantity of seeds used. There is a better harvest because of integrated pest management techniques."

Gardez, who is in his last year of college, says he regrets not having received "such training throughout my university course."

Alberoni University's Dean of Agriculture, Fazl ul Rab Arya, says it is the first time his students are exposed to new agricultural techniques. He describes the demonstration plot, measuring one jerib (the traditional Afghan unit that equals 2,000 square meters) as a "sustainable source of knowledge for the students."

Another demonstration plot will be established at Nangarhar University in Jalalabad. IDEA-NEW also plans to provide current textbooks and laboratory equipment to both universities as well as to the agricultural department of Kabul University.



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AFGHANISTAN

SNAPSHOT

Learning How To Grow A Business

Backyard greenhouses to cultivate off-season vegetables are just one of the creative ways devised to help Afghan women earn a living from their land



Photo : USAID/IDEA NEW

Koko Shirin checks on the cabbages growing in her greenhouse

The women learnt how to make the most of their small plots of land by growing crops that sell well

Koko Shirin is looking to literally grow her business. She cultivates off-season vegetables in the greenhouse in her backyard. Each harvest brings in good money, a key consideration for a woman who is her family's sole provider.

Ms Shirin's home-based business started as an idea. In fall 2012, USAID's Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) program recruited 35 women in the northeast Afghan province of Takhar to test out greenhouse designs for off-season cultivation. Participants were helped to build their own greenhouses, using local materials. Female agronomists taught the women the basics and tips and tricks of cultivating off-season vegetables.

It was first time Ms Shirin had grown vegetables in a greenhouse. "I am very happy with the results," she says, recalling the high prices fetched by her off-season cucumbers and cabbages. "My sales were about 20,000 AFN (\$400), which is a lot of money."

IDEA-NEW promotes long-term agricultural development and alternative livelihoods for farmers that result in a sustainable, thriving agricultural economy. Its gender-focused work emphasizes capacity-building training and creates culturally appropriate income-generating livelihoods for women whenever possible. This includes backyard greenhouses, smallholder egg production, kitchen gardens and rearing silkworms.

For Ms Shirin, the experience was life-changing. "Perhaps the most valuable lesson I've learned is to make the most of the little land I have, by selling my harvest when market prices are high," she says. For instance, Ms Shirin has learned to plan for and embrace change. That is why ahead of the spring planting season, she plans to grow tomato, eggplant, okra and pepper seedlings for sale to local farmers. She believes that good quality seedlings will be more profitable than vegetables during the planting season. It is a reasonable calculation and suits a growing business.



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AFGHANISTAN

SNAPSHOT

Warmer Appreciation Of Afghan Pelts

Women karakul farmers learn ways to produce more lustrous pelts that command higher prices internationally



USAID/IDEA-NEW

A livestock extension class in progress in Balkh province

Each session covered a different aspect of karakul farming. The women were introduced to a drying technique successfully used in Namibia to produce high-quality pelts

Najiba's family did not fully appreciate its benefits when they reluctantly allowed her to participate in livestock extension training. The 19-year-old helped her father raise karakul, the sheep whose wool is used to make hats and coats. But Afghan karakul did not usually command high prices internationally. And Najiba and her father struggled to support their family of nine.

The training changed all that. It was specially designed for women engaged in the karakul trade, as part of USAID's Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW). It is part of the attempt to raise the export value of Afghan karakul. Local stories about the tips and tricks taught by the trainers eventually persuaded Najiba's father she should attend. It was a decision he would not regret.

Each session covered a different aspect - from shed management to pelt processing - of karakul farming. The class introduced the women to a drying technique successfully used in Namibia to produce high-quality pelts that were more lustrous than the Afghan. The Namibian method used a metal frame and burlap, which contrasted favorably with the traditional Afghan practice of piling pelts on each other and leaving them to dry.

Back in her village in the northern Afghan province of Balkh, Najiba applied all she had learnt to the family's flock of a hundred sheep. The results were remarkable. Each pelt, dried in the Namibian fashion, sold for \$36, a significant increase on the \$22 they hitherto earned.

Najiba is one of more than 1,700 farmers, buyers and extension workers in the Faryab, Jawzjan and Balkh provinces to have been trained in the Namibian method of karakul drying. They also received burlap-covered frames to put their training to practical use.



SUCCESS STORY

Afghan Citrus Farmers Conquer Diseased Plants

Virus-resistant plants bring healthy fruits and profits



Afghan farmers are replacing disease-prone crops with imported virus-resistant plants.

“I used to make around 160,000 Afghanis a year, but with the new rootstock, it’s almost 290,000 Afghanis.”

- Esa Khan, a farmer in Nangarhar’s Behsud district.

Virus-resistant citrus plants are offering healthier prospects to farmers in eastern Afghanistan. Diseased rootstock has been replaced by 500,000 seedlings planted across 1,500 acres in Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunar provinces between 2010 and 2012. Five years from now, they are expected to yield a rich harvest every year, earning an estimated \$3 million in combined fruit sales.

Esa Khan, a farmer in Nangarhar’s Behsud district, says he is already earning nearly twice as much from the citrus saplings he received from USAID in 2010. “I used to make around 160,000 Afghanis (nearly \$3,000) a year, but with the new rootstock, it’s almost 290,000 Afghanis (more than \$5,000).”

Like many farmers, Khan was unable to capitalize on the region’s excellent growing conditions for oranges, tangerines and lemons. Many nursery growers grafted citrus seedlings that were not resistant to the Tristeza virus, which is prevalent in the region. As a result, farmers’ disease-wracked orchards had short lifespans, sometimes as little as a fifth of the normal 25 to 35 years. Yield was low.

USAID—through its Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) program—partnered with Afghanistan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock to import a virus-resistant seed. Since 2010, nursery associations and provincial government agriculture departments have been managing propagation.

IDEA-NEW focuses on activities that promote income and job creation through increased commercial agricultural opportunities for Afghan farmers in poppy-prone areas. The program strengthens farm-to-market linkages in its three target regions and works to grow agribusinesses by forming connections between producers, traders and buyers through market information and sales promotion. Since 2009, the program has distributed nearly 93,000 individual saplings to farmers in Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunar provinces.



SUCCESS STORY

Silk Helps Weave Secure Future for Afghan Women

Rearing silkworms smooths out lives affected by war and exile.



Photo: USAID/IDEA-NEW

Learning how to weave yarn

“We learned about hatching and molting, proper feeding techniques and how to control temperature and humidity.”

- Laila

Like many Afghan refugees who fled Taliban rule in the 1990s, Laila returned from Iran in 2011, glad to be home but worried about the future. The mother of five was unsure how she would keep her family fed. It took two classes in rearing silkworms for Laila to realize that this might be the answer.

Silk production used to be a flourishing sector in northern Afghanistan, and Mazar-e-Sharif is famously located along the ancient Silk Road. But decades of conflict laid waste to the tradition of household production, leaving women like Laila with few economic opportunities.

USAID helped to revive silk production in 2010 through its Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) program. The work is considered ideal for Afghan women because it can be done at home, requires very little startup capital, and has low associated costs and a good chance of a healthy income. Since 2010 until September 2013, the program has trained 2,400 women and distributed 3,400 boxes of silkworm eggs.

“We learned about hatching and molting, proper feeding techniques and how to control temperature and humidity,” Laila, who attended the classes in 2012 and 2013, recounts. Trainees were also taught how to harvest the silk from the cocoon.

Women like Laila who participated in USAID’s silkworm trainings harvested an average of 19 kg of raw silk, which for an income of \$204.

It has helped smooth out the many bumps in Laila’s life and that of many other women.



FIRST PERSON

Modern Pruning Methods Bear Fruit

New techniques are helping fruit farmers in eastern Afghanistan to improve yield.



Photo: USAID/IDEA-NEW

A fruit farmer, newly trained in pruning techniques, hard at work in an orchard in Nangarhar.

Matiullah's orchard produced nearly 60,000 kilos of apricots last season. It was a remarkable harvest from just two jeribs, says Matiullah, using the traditional Afghan unit, which equals 4,000 square meters. He says the yield is the result of professional pruning techniques. "We can easily control growth...not only do we get higher yields, harvesting is much easier."

Matiullah learnt modern pruning methods as part of USAID's Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) support for fruit farming in eastern Afghanistan. Orchard-owners have also been given varieties of fruit trees compatible with the climate. Eastern Afghanistan was once famous for its citrus and stone fruit but many orchards were destroyed in three decades of conflict, while others gave way to fields that farmers planted with annual crops.

In January 2013, IDEA-NEW taught pruning techniques to 43 farmers selected by fruit growers' associations from Kabul, Kunar, Nangarhar and Laghman provinces. Their skills are in great demand and each farmer can earn extra by providing pruning services to other orchard owners.



FIRST PERSON

Kitchen Gardens Are a Patch of Plenty in Afghanistan

Women learn to plant small vegetable gardens to harvest big profits.



Photo: USAID/IDEA-NEW

Nazira, at home in Parwan province.

“We learned good practices, which allow us to produce more with less work.”

- Nazira

Nazira cultivates a kitchen garden, selling the vegetables and earning more than she ever made as a seamstress.

“I lost my father when I was a child. It’s up to me to support my family and now I can,” she says.

Madeena also finds her kitchen garden good value. She says she was able to sell the produce right through winter.

The two women's success is the result of a USAID program—Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW). The program, which supports economic opportunities for Afghan women, teaches them to plant and maintain small vegetable gardens. Beneficiaries are then able to supplement their families’ income by selling their produce at local markets.

The project is spread across 17 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces. In Parwan province, last season in 2012, 30 women, including Nazira and Madeena, recorded combined sales of more than \$4,300. They grew horseradish, red radish, cabbage, lettuce, carrot, turnip and broccoli.

Madeena said the training was very useful and she is sharing what she learned with inquiring neighbors.

“We learned good practices, which allow us to produce more with less work,” adds Nazira.



USAID
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AFGHANISTAN

FIRST PERSON

Building bodies, building profit

3F employs 14 women on a full-time basis and produces a variety of pickles, jams and chutneys.



Photo: USAID/IDEA-NEW

“With USAID assistance my company grew significantly—from five employees to 18. Per month production increased dramatically and we now use standardized processes.”

- Kobra Dastgirzada

March 2015—Kobra Dastgirzada, a 46-year-old woman, has always been complimented on her cooking skills. But she never thought she would be running her own food processing company that is quickly gaining ground in Kabul and neighboring provinces.

Impressively, Ms. Dastgirzada’s food processing company isn’t her first business endeavor. She successfully started an exercise club for women in 2005 after returning from Pakistan. “At the time, there were no gyms available for women in Kabul. Though I faced resistance, I knew the positive impacts of exercise and wanted to share my knowledge with other women in Kabul,” she shares.

The idea of starting a food processing company had appeared when she hosted women from her gym instruction classes at her house. “I made a few dishes including a bean dish and green chutney for a small party and was encouraged to start my own business because the food was so delicious,” she recalls.

Interested in improving her business skills and the quality of her products, Ms. Dastgirzada’s food processing company—Farah Farhat Faizi (3F)—applied for support from USAID’s Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) project, which provides support to agribusinesses operating in central and eastern Afghanistan. Intensive value chain development that promotes income generation and job creation in poppy-prone areas is also a priority for IDEA-NEW. She heard about IDEA-NEW activities from an input supplier who sells inputs in Kohistan district of Kapisa province. Her company received cost-share grants from IDEA-NEW to improve the company’s promotional materials, source updated equipment and new technology and participate in a number of trainings, including food safety and hygiene, marketing and accounting.

One of her innovations was to sell her packaged products in hand-made woven baskets. To do this, 3F—with assistance from IDEA-NEW—trained 90 women in weaving straw baskets. This initiative has proven so successful that other organizations have placed orders for more baskets.

With increased production comes increased profits—3F boasts more than a 30% increase in annual sales compared to the previous year, due in large part to USAID assistance. Now that her company is in a good operating position, Ms. Dastgirzada is making business decisions based on the company’s profits, and not donor funding. Plans are in place to expand her business to other parts of Kabul, Parwan and Ghazni provinces, fully funded by the company’s revenue. 3F has also purchased QuickBooks accounting software and plans to start using it soon.

Annex III - IDEA-NEW Impact Assessments and Surveys

Ref #	Assessor	Report Name	Date
1	Internal	IDEA-NEW Household Baseline Survey Report	19-Oct-09
2	Internal	Melon Fly Training Impact Assessment - Badghis Province	Dec-09
3	Internal	TIMER Program Assessment - Eastern Region	Dec-10
4	Internal	IDEA-NEW Impact Assessment for Eastern Region Vegetable Input Program	Jan-12
5	RSI Consulting	Annual Survey Gender Section Analysis	Feb-12
6	RSI Consulting	Agriculture and Livestock Radio Show Impact Survey	Jul-12
7	Internal	The Poultry Value Chain in Afghanistan's Eastern Region	16-Sep-12
8	RSI Consulting	Impact Assessmen: Taraqi Saba	Oct-12
9	Flag International	Oil Seed Value Chain Assessment	20-Mar-13
10	Flag International	Honey Value Chain Assessment	31-Mar-13
11	RSI Consulting	Cash For Work Impact Analysis	Mar-13
12	RSI Consulting	IDEA-NEW Annual Income Analysis	27-Apr-13
13	Flag International	Silk Value Chain Assessment	20-May-13
14	Flag International	Karakul Value Chain Assessment	31-May-13
15	Flag International	Grape Value Chain Assessment	4-Jul-13
16	Flag International	Orchard Value Chain Assessment	5-Jul-13
17	Flag International	Poultry Value Chain Assessment	18-Aug-13
18	Flag International	Vegetable Value Chain Assessment	22-Aug-13
19	RSI Consulting	Orchard Program Report	2013
20	RSI Consulting	IDEA-NEW Endline Results	29-May-14
21	RSI Consulting	Poultry Assessment	Sep-14
22	RSI Consulting	Orchard Assessment	Oct-14
23	RSI Consulting	Vegetable Impact Study	13-Feb-15
24	RSI Consulting	Income Report for Farmers and Microenterprises - FY2014	Aug-15
25	RSI Consulting	Agribusiness Endline Report	Aug-15



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Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) Agreement No. 306-A-00-09-00508

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan

April 07, 2015

Original M&E Plan Submission: April 2009

Date of Last Revision: May 2014

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
ACRONYMS	3
1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION	4
2. M&E PLAN PURPOSE	4
3. M&E PLAN ELEMENTS	5
3.1 THE IDEA-NEW DEVELOPMENT HYPOTHESIS	6
3.2 MEASURING IDEA-NEW'S INTERMEDIATE RESULTS	6
Cross Cutting Programmatic Issue: Gender	6
3.3 IDEA-NEW PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	8
3.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM DESCRIPTION	9
3.4.1 Data Collection Through Formats/Tools.....	10
3.4.2 When to Implement the Data Collection Tools.....	11
3.4.3 What to Do With the Collected Performance Data?.....	12
3.4.4 Performance Indicator Reporting.....	12
3.4.5 Performance Data Flow	13
3.4.6 Data Filing.....	14
3.4.7 Who Is Responsible For What?.....	14
3.5 DATA QUALITY CONTROL AND ASSURANCE	15
3.6 ADDITIONAL DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES	16
3.6.1 Field Missions/Monitoring Activities	16
3.6.2 Impact Assessment.....	16
3.7 REPORTING PERFORMANCE DATA	17
3.7.1 REPORTING	17
3.8 M&E PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING PROCEDURES	17
ANNEX I: M&E UNIT STAFF STRUCTURE	19
ANNEX II: CALENDAR OF TASKS	21
ANNEX III: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REFERENCE SHEETS (PIRS)	22
ANNEX IV: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR SUMMARY TABLE	34
ANNEX V: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR CHANGES FOR NCE-2	34

ACRONYMS

AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
B2B	Business-to-Business
CCI	Community Constructed Infrastructure
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
EMS	Environmental Management System
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GDD	Gender Disaggregated Data
GIRoA	Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
IDEA-NEW	Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives—North, East and West
IR	Intermediate Result
LOP	Life of Project
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
PO	Program Objective
SQL	Structured Query Language
TAMIS	Technical and Administrative Management Information System
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Afghanistan country strategy includes the promotion of long-term agricultural development and alternative livelihoods for farmers (both male and female¹) that results in "a sustainable, thriving agricultural economy" and contributes to the U.S. Government's stabilization and counternarcotics policy goals. USAID's Office of Agriculture launched the Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East and West (IDEA-NEW) program in March 2009. Its mission is to expand the licit agricultural economy in northern, eastern and western Afghanistan. From 2009–2013, DAI, in partnership with Mercy Corps and ACDI/VOCA, worked to achieve the broad objective of USAID's agricultural and alternative development strategy by strengthening farm to market linkages in economic development zones in the northern, eastern, and western regions of the country and facilitating connections between producers, traders and buyers through market information activities, sales promotion and technical assistance.

IDEA-NEW's main activity components during its first five years of implementation were:

- Agriculture production;
- Agriculture and rural infrastructure
- Access to finance, business services, and information
- Value chain development; and
- Rural enterprise development

In 2014, DAI became IDEA-NEW's sole implementing partner and focuses on the Eastern region, specifically Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, Kabul, Kapisa, Panjshir and Parwan provinces. Intensive value chain development that promotes income generation and job creation for both male and females in poppy-prone areas is IDEA-NEW's priority until it ends on September 30, 2015. Specific activities for the seven month no-cost extension (March 1 – September 30, 2015) include:

- SMS Marketing for agricultural input suppliers;
- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) pre-audits, training and small grants for agro-processors;
- Matching and promotional grants to agribusinesses that address specific gaps in production and/or marketing; and
- Support to domestic agribusinesses in expanding markets, including Live Radio Shows, Farmers' Day events and business-to-business (B2B) meeting facilitation.

2. M&E PLAN PURPOSE

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan is a critical tool for planning, managing and documenting progress towards achieving the goals of the IDEA-NEW program. Data collected and reported provides the USAID Afghanistan Mission with detailed information regarding program impacts and progress achieved towards the program's Intermediate Results and overall Program Objective. It also helps inform program management decisions, improve operations, identify performance gaps, assess performance targets and set goals for program improvement.

¹ Gender blind and gender neutral language is avoided in this document. All descriptions shall be understood to be gender inclusive. For example, where 'farmer' is used it shall be understood to refer to both women and men unless otherwise specified.

This M&E Plan is a “living” document and will be updated periodically to reflect the changing conditions that affect program activities as well as any gaps that are identified over the course of program implementation. The IDEA-NEW M&E Plan is characterized by:

1. **Project management and adaptability.** The purpose of monitoring and evaluation is not only to report on performance, but also to inform decision making by USAID and IDEA-NEW managers. Managers will use M&E data including gender-disaggregated data (GDD) and performance reports to capture success, understand failures, and adjust program emphasis or change implementation tactics accordingly.
2. **Integration.** IDEA-NEW will integrate gender inclusive performance monitoring into day-to-day program activities by assigning this responsibility to all technical personnel involved in monitoring and data collection. The program will compile, analyze, and summarize our monitoring information for all personnel so they understand how the data they gather are used.
3. **Systematic Approach.** The project’s systematic approach to data quality assessment will ensure validity, integrity, precision, reliability and timeliness, in order to enhance program effectiveness.
4. **Results Framework.** The project’s framework feeds directly into USAID/Afghanistan’s Assistance Objectives as well as USAID indicators wherever appropriate and feasible.
5. **Impact Measurements.** Disaggregation of information on a variety of levels (gender and age, whenever possible) allows the M&E department and management to examine programmatic impacts in a stratified way including its impacts on women, rural households, and particular underserved districts.

3. M&E PLAN ELEMENTS

In accordance with ADS 203.3, the M&E Plan identifies performance indicators, key targets to be achieved over the life of the project, the source and quality of data and responsibilities for collection and analysis of data. Where relevant, the IDEA-NEW M&E Plan will utilize ADS 202.3.6.4 guidance on “Monitoring in High Threat Environments” (effective date 10/2008), particularly regarding the use of alternative monitoring methodologies.

The M&E Plan has the following elements, which are expanded upon in detail below:

- Results Framework
- Performance Indicators
- Data collection and management system
- Data quality control and assessment
- Additional data collection activities
- Reporting performance data
- M&E Plan review and updating procedures

Results-level and activity-level indicators allow program management to monitor and evaluate whether the IDEA-NEW activities are achieving programmatic outcomes and/or results in an efficient and timely manner that are directly attributable to IDEA-NEW program interventions.

Where possible, contextual information is also collected and reviewed to monitor changes in sectors associated with IDEA-NEW's efforts. Ultimately, the M&E Plan is but one part of the IDEA-NEW Integrated M&E System that also includes monitoring of day-to-day activities and associated reports, an Structured Query Language (SQL) database that further stratifies program data by province, district and sex, and map data and visual overlays provided by the program's use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

3.1 THE IDEA-NEW DEVELOPMENT HYPOTHESIS

IDEA-NEW's primary Program Objective (PO) is to expand the licit economy in the North, East and West of Afghanistan. The program's hypothesis can be summarized as a partial sequential progression of its component activities over time and across the geography of the IDEA-NEW target areas. Communities that have their immediate needs met through repair or construction of basic infrastructure using labor intensive methods will contribute to stability enough so that stakeholders will have the "space" to assess constraints to a viable licit economy. Value chain analysis will then reveal opportunities and needs, including priority subsectors to increase the gender inclusive participation of farmers and rural enterprises to bring licit goods and services to market. This will, in turn, increase access to licit commercially viable alternative sources of income among vulnerable populations. When this occurs, IDEA-NEW will have contributed to expanding the economy enough so that the GfRoA, USAID, and/or other international donors may pursue broader objectives of economic growth.

3.2 MEASURING IDEA-NEW'S INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

Per USAID direction received on March 19, 2015, IDEA-NEW revised its results framework to mirror the updated Mission strategy and results framework. Previously, IDEA-NEW utilized four discrete yet inter-related intermediate results to measure the ongoing progress of IDEA-NEW's activities even if external factors interrupted operations. These four IRs are listed below. More information on these IRs can be found in previous IDEA-NEW Performance Management Plan (PMP) documents.

- IR 1:** Agricultural and rural infrastructure improved;
- IR 2:** Value chain integration strengthened;
- IR 3:** Agricultural productivity improved; and
- IR 4:** Rural enterprise development supported.

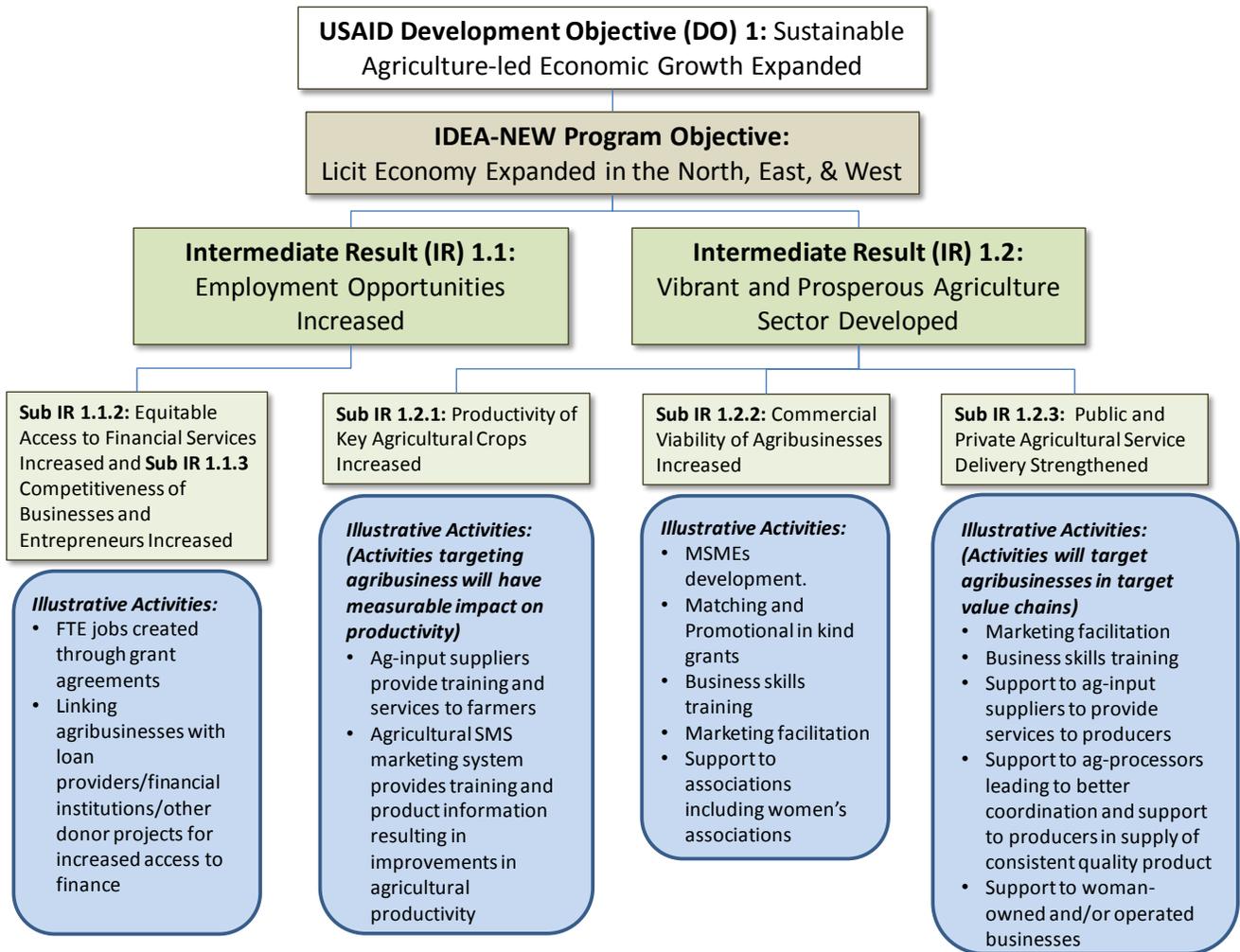
The revised IDEA-NEW Results Framework is shown in Figure 1 below. The USAID **Development Objective (DO) 1:** Sustainable Agriculture-led Economic Growth Expanded has been adopted. IDEA-NEW activities fall under **IR 1.1:** Employment Opportunities Increased and **IR 1.2:** Vibrant and Prosperous Agriculture Sector Developed. The illustrative activities under each of these IRs and related Sub-IRs are also included in Figure 1: IDEA-NEW Results Framework.

CROSS CUTTING PROGRAMMATIC ISSUE: GENDER

USAID places emphasis on closing gender gaps between the performance or status of men and women. In the context of agricultural development, empowering women means being able to make decisions over production, having ownership and access to resources, control over income and expenditures, be members of economic and social groups and be able to allocate time between productive and domestic tasks. IDEA-NEW's gender activities in 2015 focus on supporting viable businesses owned and operated by women via trainings and in-kind grants. They will be monitored through the disaggregation of data, and some will require more specific monitoring (see 3.5: Additional data collection activities).²

² In its efforts to integrate gender both in the design and implementation of its project activities (gender mainstreaming), IDEA-NEW follows current USAID gender policies, including the Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy, (implemented in 2012 and available at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdact200.pdf) and ADS Chapter 205: Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle (published in July 2013 and available at <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/205.pdf>), to the extent practicable and also in terms of how the specific needs of Afghan women are addressed.

Figure 1: IDEA-NEW Results Framework



3.3 IDEA-NEW PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

At the heart of the performance monitoring system are the performance indicators. They define the data to be collected to measure progress, which enables actual results achieved over time to be compared to planned results. The set of indicators presented here may change, decrease or expand over the life of the program as is most logical and practical to an ever-evolving program, in line with the USAID Office of Agriculture.

According to USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) 203.3.4, "**Performance indicators are used to observe progress and to measure actual results compared to expected results.**" Performance indicators help answer how or whether a project is progressing toward its goal.

When selecting performance indicators, one should ensure they are objective—meaning they are unambiguous, measure only one aspect at a time, and are precisely defined. The ADS also states that performance indicators should be direct so that they "closely track the results they are intended to measure."

In total, there are 23 performance indicators to measure program progress. IDEA-NEW removed three in 2012, and added one. Also, in order to simplify review and use of the M&E Plan during the no-cost extension period (starting March 1, 2014), the 12 indicators that IDEA-NEW had not set targets for in 2014 were separated as of the May 2014 approval from USAID. These indicators, while important for the overall portrayal of IDEA-NEW achievements, are outside the scope of planned activities in 2014 and 2015, with the exception of Indicator 3.6 – *Number of participants who have received IDEA-NEW supported agricultural productivity training*, which was proposed for reintroduction in November/December 2014. The Life of Project (LOP) targets for eight indicators have been increased to reflect previous 2013 achievements, and one has been decreased slightly. This change was included in the May 2014 M&E Plan submission. In addition, one indicator was swapped for an updated, more relevant indicator at the direction of USAID in early March 2015 (replaced "*Number of farmers using IDEA-NEW supported agricultural inputs in targeted areas*" with "*Number of private enterprises, producers organizations, water users associations, women's groups, trade and business associations and community-based organizations (CBOs) that applied improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance*"). On March 19, 2015, USAID requested that IDEA-NEW update indicator titles and definitions. These changes are reflected in Annex V: Performance Indicator Changes for NCE-2.

The Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS) on pages 23-33 below outline:

- Indicator definition, unit of measurement, and any data breakout requirements;
- Data acquisition method, data sources, timeline for data acquisition, and person responsible for data acquisition;
- Plans for data analysis, review, and reporting;
- Possible data quality issues;
- Notes on baselines, targets, and data calculation methods.

It should be noted that there are four original performance indicators that were outlined in the agreement between DAI (and its implementing partners) and USAID that need to be reported:

1. Number of rural households benefitting directly from USG interventions in Afghanistan;

2. Increased sales of licit farm and non-farm products in USG-assisted areas over previous year;
3. Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created by USG sponsored alternative development or alternative livelihoods activities; and
4. Number of hectares devoted to licit agricultural production.

Two of the indicators were changed in wording to the following as per Change Report 2 on December 9, 2010. The updated list of required indicators is as follows:

1. Number of households directly benefitting from USG interventions in Afghanistan (revised);
2. Increased sales of licit farm and non-farm products in USG-assisted areas over previous year;
3. Number of FTE jobs created by USG sponsored alternative development or alternative livelihoods activities; and
4. Number of additional hectares under improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance (revised)

In November 2012, USAID again asked IDEA-NEW to change the wording, this time to ensure the phraseology is in line with the standard foreign assistance indicators.

1. USD value of final sales of licit farm and non-farm products;
2. Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created by USG sponsored alternative development or alternative livelihood activities;
3. Number of households benefited by alternative development or alternative livelihood activities in USG-assisted areas; and
4. Number of hectares of alternative crops under cultivation targeted by USG programs.

A similar change to the wording also took place in March 2015 at the direction of USAID. These indicators now read as follows:

1. Value of sales of targeted commodities as a result of USG assistance;
2. Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created by USG sponsored alternative development or alternative livelihood activities;
3. Number of households benefited by agriculture and alternative development interventions in targeted areas; and
4. Number of hectares of alternative crops under cultivation targeted by USG programs.³

3.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM DESCRIPTION

The DAI M&E Unit, headed by the Sr. M&E Manager and the Sr. Knowledge Management Manager, has the responsibility for the collection and reporting of data on the progress and performance of IDEA-NEW activities. These staff are supported as necessary by technical experts from the DAI home office and outside M&E consultants and/or subcontractors. The M&E Manager and regional M&E staff team work

³ This indicator is linked with IDEA-NEW's previous distribution program, which ended in December 2013. IDEA-NEW no longer reports on this indicator.

closely with Technical Directors and program staff to collect monitoring data in accordance with the data collection schedule.⁴ Please see Annex I for an organization chart of the **M&E Unit Staff**.

A complete overview of IDEA-NEW's **methodology for data collection, analysis, data management and reporting** are covered under sections 3.4.1-3.8 below. All data collection forms for performance indicators have been drafted and are used for data collection activities.

In addition, on an annual basis, DAI or a designated firm conduct a **data quality assessment** (using the ADS 203 data assessment tool) to ensure that the captured data meets USAID data quality standards. The last DQA for the program was conducted by RSI Consulting in October 2014, and another DQA was conducted by Checchi Consulting in November 2014. These were the last DQAs for the project, as it is due to complete on September 30, 2015.

3.4.1 DATA COLLECTION THROUGH FORMATS/TOOLS

From 2009-2014, IDEA-NEW tracked performance data on 23 indicators, out of which 11 were reported monthly, nine quarterly, two annually and one on a biannual basis. As mentioned above, out of the 10 indicators tracked as of March 1, 2014, five are reported monthly, three quarterly, one annually and one on a biannual basis. To track and capture the performance data for each of these indicators, the M&E unit for IDEA-NEW designed specific and detailed data collection tools/formats. The formats are designed in MS Excel or Word according to the needs and requirements for the performance data to be gathered at a planned frequency. The IDEA-NEW staff also utilize GPS software to capture Performance Data and grids/location (Longitude, Latitude, and Polygon) for various activities conducted by the project.

Some data collection tools/formats capture performance data for more than one indicator. Overall, eight (8) forms/tools are implemented to capture performance data for all of the indicators.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Each data collection tool/format is designed to specifically cover/capture "Key Performance Data" for each indicator. Even then, some general/common characteristics among these designed tools/formats exist. These are:

Indicator definition: On top of each data collection tool/format, indicator definition is written, the existence of which ensures that the responsible person uses the right data collection tool/format for the right activity.

Activity location: Each data collection tool further captures the location of the activity. The location information are gathered using a "top-down" approach and capture information from Region to Province and District. In some cases, village and sub-village level location information is also gathered.

Implementer: From 2009–2013, IDEA-NEW was implemented by three implementing partners, with DAI responsible for overall project performance. Given this structure, it was important to classify the performance of each implementer. Therefore, while collecting performance data for

⁴ The timeline for data collection on the performance indicators is reflected in section 3.4.1 "Data Collection through Formats/Tools."

IDEA-NEW as a project, these data were disaggregated by each implementer, thus providing the team with the ability to analyze and report the performance data by each implementer in response to various requests from the USAID Afghanistan Mission.

Note: During the extension period (March 1, 2014–September 30, 2015), DAI is the sole implementer of the IDEA-NEW program.

"Key Performance Data Capturing Portion": This portion of each data collection tool captures/gathers the key required performance data for each indicator. Information received by this portion should be carefully filled out in order to ensure the data quality.

Data Confirmation Note: At the end of each data collection tool, a data confirmation note is written where the signature/initial of the key responsible person, normally the data collector, is received. The signature on the confirmation note adds value to the validity, reliability and accuracy of the captured data. Furthermore, that same individual will be contacted to review the provided data and remove any inconsistency, incompleteness or inaccuracy, in case noted.

3.4.2 WHEN TO IMPLEMENT THE DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Implementation time of the data collection tools varies from one data collection tool to another. Generally, a format/tool is implemented at the beginning of the program/activity, during the program/activity and upon completion of the program/activity. For some performance indicators, data collection tools can be implemented at any of the mentioned stages; however, for some it may not be practical to implement at all stages.

As per the implementation timeline for each performance indicator, the data collection tools are reported on an ongoing basis. Each tool collects concrete evidence (signature, telephone number, thumbprint, etc.) of the targeted community/beneficiaries/elders, as per requirement of the tools/formats, otherwise the progress of the performance cannot be counted towards project targets.

In addition, it is the M&E unit's responsibility to note if no forms are received from a particular unit in order to follow-up and ensure proper reporting of all relevant activities.

WHAT HAPPENS IF NO DATA COLLECTION TOOL IS IMPLEMENTED?

Data collection tools play a key role in directing the performance data into a certain line/direction where it helps to progress towards the target set by the project and finally contributes towards the overall programmatic objectives. It also serves to standardize all data reporting across project sites. Data will not be considered if the identified or right data collection tool is not implemented.

DATA COLLECTION THROUGH GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS)

GIS will be utilized as the most reliable and advanced data collection method for capturing accurate spatial data.

This will be captured through the use of geographic positioning system (GPS) software. GPS software will collect the following:

- **Taking GPS grids:** Proper GPS training will be provided to the M&E staff/responsible staff on how to take way point (Latitude and Longitude) representing that activity at a certain location.

The taken way point is downloaded from the GPS into the GIS to present or show the activity on the IDEA-NEW ACTIVITY MAP. Practical training for each identified/selected individual will be provided by DAI/M&E staff.

- **Taking Track:** The GPS training will further facilitate how to take "track" through GPS. Through this function, the length of anything can easily be measured. This will be used to measure the length of irrigation canals and road projects, as well as anything else that program managers or M&E field staff would like to capture.
- **Taking Polygon:** Areas benefited by irrigation projects brought under licit cultivation through an agriculture project can also be measured by taking "polygon", or points forming an area. Practical training will be delivered to M&E staff on how to take polygon.

***Note:** Taking track/polygon was largely used during implementation of infrastructure and orchard development projects, which ended in 2013. Currently, GPS is only used for taking grids in order to best track the exact location for new activities.*

3.4.3 WHAT TO DO WITH THE COLLECTED PERFORMANCE DATA?

The performance data, upon its collection from the field, is entered by data entry clerks into the already designed SQL database by the IDEA-NEW/M&E unit, and hard copies are filed in the M&E unit (see DATA FILING, below).

The collected information from the field is entered into electronic systems within one and a half (1.5) working days. However, the data entry clerks must consider the following key points while entering the data into the SQL database and should ensure that:

It is the data entry and database personnel's responsibility:

1. The data on the received formats/tools is **complete, clear and consistent**.
2. The data is not-duplicated.
3. All received data is entered into the database.
4. Make queries (for a specific period e.g. monthly, quarterly, annually and ad hoc basis) of the entered data and cross-check it with the data on hard copy.
5. Review and fix any discrepancy/inconsistency between the soft and hard data, if existing.
6. Ask the M&E data verification officer any data related questions, if existing. If the officer cannot answer the question, s/he should ask M&E Manager, Home Office or another designated person.

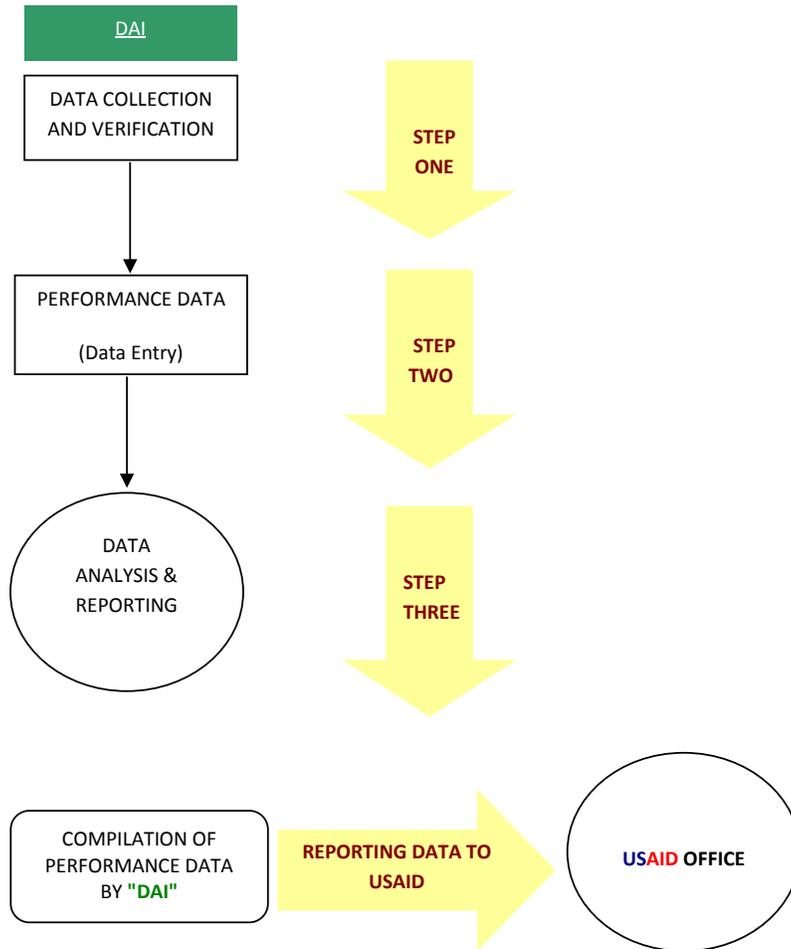
3.4.4 PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REPORTING

Data Analysis is straightforward. Queries are done in the database; the data is analyzed by region, province, district and more (if required). A few indicators require additional or further analysis. The analyzed performance data is reported in a pre-designed reporting format to DAI M&E Specialist on the 7th day after each month for Monthly indicators and on the 10th day after each quarter for quarterly indicators. No data should ever be reported that does not come from the database.

3.4.5 PERFORMANCE DATA FLOW

Overall, the performance data collection and reporting follows a three step approach (*as mentioned above and given in the Figure 1 below*) to address the performance requirement for IDEA-NEW.

FIGURE 1: PERFORMANCE DATA FLOW-CHART



3.4.6 DATA FILING

Both soft and hard data of each of the implementing partners needs to be properly filed.

Hard copy data:

- Data (hard copy) is stored in folders in following ways:
 - Community constructed infrastructure (CCI) data is stored by Province and District
 - Business data is stored by business name
 - Ag and other data is stored by reporting period

Soft copy data:

- All soft copy data is stored in a database accessible by two people, and a backup available on the server (daily).
- All Environmental Management System (EMS) forms are available on the IDEA-NEW Technical and Administrative Management Information System (TAMIS) system.
- Monitoring reports are also available on TAMIS.
- M&E formats and other forms are available on the IDEA-NEW TAMIS system as well as the Server Common Drive.

3.4.7 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT?

In carrying out the entire performance data collection, analysis and reporting process, several individuals stand responsible for conducting/taking various tasks/responsibilities to make sure that the collected/analyzed/reported data meets data quality standards. These assigned personnel play a vital role in maintaining the quality of the data and addressing any data quality issues. A list of the key personnel responsible for capturing, analyzing and reporting the performance data is given in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Data Collection Responsibilities

RESPONSIBLE FOR	RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL
Collecting performance data	IDEA-NEW Program Managers, M&E field staff
Reviewing performance information	DAI Sr. Knowledge Management Manager, Project Director or designee and USAID Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) or Alt AOR
Reporting performance results (<i>Annual Report process</i>)	DAI Sr. Knowledge Management Manager, and Sr. M&E Manager
Assessing data quality	DAI Sr. Knowledge Management Manager, Sr. M&E Manager, outside firms/sub-contractors
Reviewing and updating the M&E Plan	IDEA-NEW Regional Managers, Project Director or designee, USAID AOR /Alt. AOR
Reviewing financial records	DAI finance staff, Project Director, Deputy Project Directors

On an annual basis, DAI or a designated firm will conduct a data quality assessment (using the ADS 203 data assessment tool) to ensure that the captured data meets USAID data quality standards.

It is important to note that each M&E specialist is responsible for clean, accurate and non-duplicative data in his/her region. If data is found to be spurious, inconsistent, disorganized, incomplete or otherwise incorrect, corrective action will be taken, and appropriate administrative/HR reporting will be pursued.

3.5 DATA QUALITY CONTROL AND ASSURANCE

It is important that in the data collection process, appropriate standards for data quality are in place for use by external users (e.g., International Agencies, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and the general public). Poor-quality data can create two problems; 1) providing poor information to program decision-makers; and 2) skewing information used for reporting purposes. In order to measure and attribute results accurately that are auditable—both for reporting and management needs—the M&E staff (supported by technical experts) will ensure that collected data meet specific standardized evaluation criteria.

The Sr. Knowledge Management Manager will call upon either DAI home office experts or qualified subcontractor consultants/firms to carry out annual data quality assessment reviews in order to ensure the quality of any data captured and available in the M&E department.

All personnel are trained in M&E basics and data quality standards, and given tools (such as GPS units and related software) to use in data collection, updated regularly on program progress, and mentored on an ongoing basis. Data quality training will help staff and IDEA-NEW partners avoid common data quality pitfalls by focusing on key questions such as whether there is a direct relationship between the activity and what is being measured.

The project uses simple but statistically sound procedures to collect program metrics. Data collection methods are backed up by uncomplicated, user-friendly tools (such as questionnaires) to ensure that consistent and high-quality data are collected. When program indicators are informed by multiple data sources, the Sr. M&E Manager reviews and compares each dataset. For results and indicators where a simple survey methodology is required, DAI's M&E personnel oversee the effort and provide training to ensure a standardized and statistically sound process. All data collected are checked for integrity and accuracy. After data are entered into a program-wide SQL database and stored in hard copy, simple validation checks built into the systems are used to check for missing data, outliers, or other data consistency issues. Typically, to confirm accuracy of data entry, central office M&E staff will check 100% of hard copies against entered and compiled data.

There is almost always a trade-off between cost and data quality. This trade-off has been taken into consideration when selecting indicators and methods for data collection, and efforts were made to select the most cost-effective approaches. Consequently, to the extent possible, indicator measurement values are derived from required data collection efforts by Technical Directors and IDEA-NEW, therein imposing minimal or no additional data collection requirements.

3.6 ADDITIONAL DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

Regular, scheduled performance monitoring requires a level of simplicity and practicality in data collection efforts that in some instances make it difficult to assess more complex issues of concern to management. While the M&E Plan certainly emphasizes the collection of data and presentation of performance activities in a quantifiable manner, there may also be situations that call for the collection of process data that in all likelihood will be generated through direct observation, on-site interviews with key informants and informal group interviews. These techniques usually result in generating very useful qualitative information on project processes, otherwise known as the “so what?” scenario. These data are invaluable sources of project performance.

3.6.1 FIELD MISSIONS/MONITORING ACTIVITIES

Field Missions are undertaken to provide contextual information, as well as overall quality, transparency, and effectiveness. All field missions are conducted to inform program managers about areas of improvement. All missions also review environmental compliance with USAID in accordance with our Environmental Management system, and ensure that GPS grid points for projects are captured.

While performance indicators are able to “indicate” progress being achieved by the project, some of these findings may need to be complemented with selective data to flesh out “why” a certain result is occurring. As a result, the IDEA-NEW Sr. M&E Manager, working with the respective program managers and their local resource partners, conducts additional data collection activities to ferret out some of the underlying dimensions of performance outcomes. In short, more rigorous, in-depth analysis on topics of special interest requested by the IDEA-NEW Project Director, and/or USAID AOR, complements the project’s formal performance monitoring efforts.

Standard monitoring forms for different activity types (business, agriculture training, etc.) have been developed and are used by monitoring teams in the field. Monitoring calendars are developed each quarter based on the program’s list of activities.

3.6.2 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Output indicators by themselves are not a basis for rigorous performance measurement; IDEA-NEW also conducts impact evaluation for some of its largest or more important projects. IDEA-NEW’s household income indicator however is an outcome indicator, and by collecting information related to it, it can give a clearer picture on how IDEA-NEW is impacting household-level incomes and what potential increases mean for the lives of respondents.

IDEA-NEW conducted a baseline household study in July 2009, and will follow up at the end of the project to understand household impacts in areas where IDEA-NEW is working. The baseline report, which gives a full economic picture of households in provinces where it was implemented, is available upon request. The baseline household survey collected information on women’s skills and their activities within households, including what productive and reproductive work they are engaged in (agricultural and non-agricultural), as well as any income women earn from their work. Women participants in IDEA-NEW activities will be included in the end-of-project evaluation.

IDEA-NEW has also conducted annual production and sales surveys from 2010–2014 to measure the effectiveness of training, production and sales information resulting from its largest agricultural

interventions. The results have given IDEA-NEW program managers guidance on crops that have seen the most gains, and types of training that have been the most effective for farmers in various areas.

In order to examine IDEA-NEW's impact on enterprises for FY14 and FY15, a comprehensive baseline vs. end-line comparison will be conducted in the summer of 2015. Baseline information for these enterprises was collected in 2013 and 2014.

3.7 REPORTING PERFORMANCE DATA

3.7.1 REPORTING

The revised Activity Plan, Performance Monitoring Plan (M&E Plan), and realigned IDEA-NEW budget as of January 2015 reflect the focus on core value chains and strengthened field monitoring. These core documents cover the programmatic and financial aspects of the program and will be updated annually or as operations require changes. The monthly, quarterly, and annual reports provide information on programmatic progress.

Any important financial aspects will be highlighted in the annual report. The review of financial systems and reporting will be conducted by DAI as noted above in the monitoring section, and results incorporated into overall program budget reporting.

IDEA-NEW reports data monthly, quarterly, and annually on project activities, project outcomes as they are taking place and the interpretation of project results at specific timelines. Findings are presented to USAID Afghanistan in such a way that a clear "telling of the IDEA-NEW story", reinforced with appropriate tables and charts, is integrated into the findings narrative. While the Sr. M&E Manager produces a report, it is expected that the USAID AOR will use these reports as the basis for submitting an annual report to USAID to comply with Agency reporting guidelines. By way of summation, reports include progress achieved towards IDEA-NEW program objectives and intermediate results (through a summary table of the M&E Plan indicators, with targets, actual during the reporting period, cumulative totals/%, and analysis of the sum of all IR and objective indicators at the relevant level of result, with comments)—this is called a performance indicator table (PIT); it is disaggregated, where applicable, by sex (male/female).

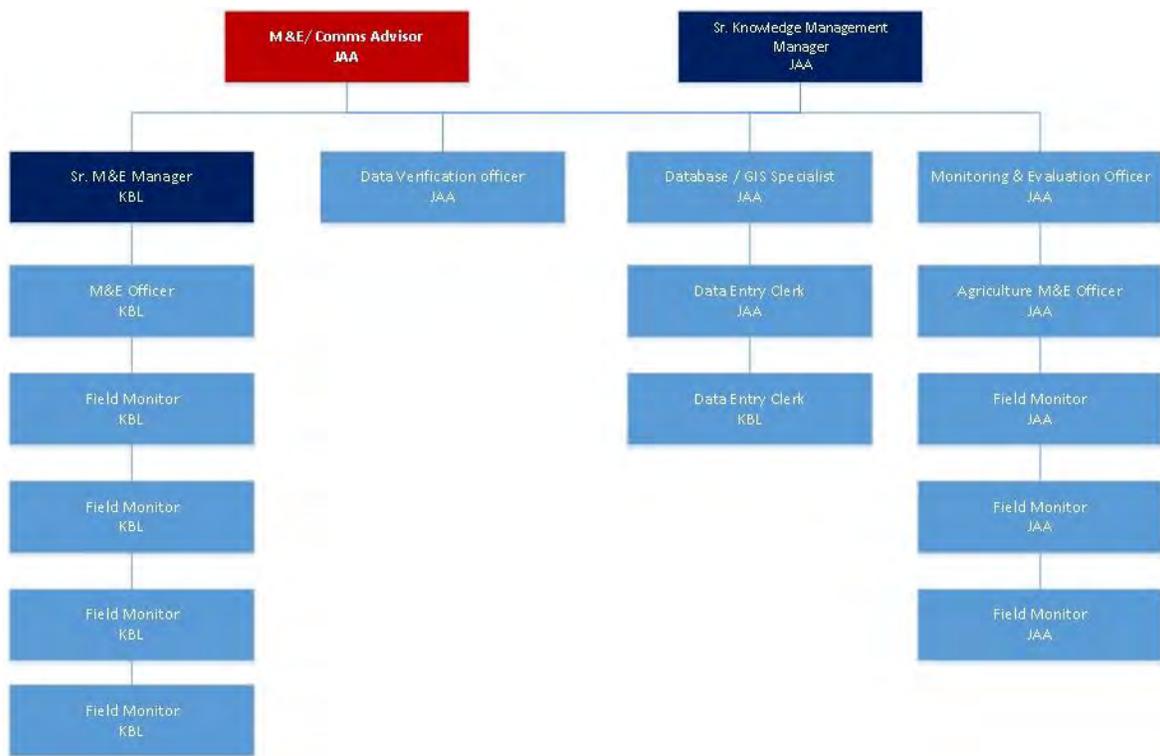
3.8 M&E PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING PROCEDURES

As mentioned above, the M&E Plan serves as a "living" document that the IDEA-NEW management team uses to guide overall project performance. One of the key principles of the M&E Plan is that it is *not* merely a mechanism to fulfill USAID reporting requirements, but a useful tool for management and organizational learning. As such, it is updated as necessary to reflect changes in IDEA-NEW strategy and ongoing project activities. M&E Plan implementation is therefore not a one-time occurrence, but rather an ongoing process of review, revision, and re-implementation. All updates to the M&E Plan will be submitted to USAID for its express written approval where the changes involve either the four contractually-obligated indicators, or USAID F-level indicators. The IDEA-NEW Sr. Knowledge Management Manager, Sr. M&E Manager or designee will also be responsible for documenting any changes to the M&E Plan using a "change report." When reviewing the M&E Plan, the following issues shall be taken into account:

- Are the performance indicators working as intended in the design process?
- Are the performance indicators providing the information needed to properly gauge IDEA-NEW activities in each component?
- How can the M&E Plan be improved?

DAI M&E staff has the responsibility for documenting any major changes to the M&E Plan along with the rationale for these adjustments.

ANNEX I: M&E UNIT STAFF STRUCTURE



Position	Rule and Responsibilities
Sr. Knowledge Management Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for overall supervision of M&E section • Reviewing Performance Indicator Table (PIT) • Reviewing all monthly and quarterly reports before submission to USAID.
Sr. M&E Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of M&E Team including M&E Officers and Field Monitors. • Preparing Performance Indicators Progress Report on monthly, quarterly, and annual basis. • Ensuring data quality and verification.
M&E Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing and finalizing M&E reports. • Preparing M&E visit, baseline, end-line and verification plans. • Reviewing and submitting M&E Field Visit reports to his/her supervisor.
Field Monitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting different field visits, such as baseline, end line, filed monitoring and verification visits. • Preparing field visit report
Data Verification Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verifying data for all performance indicators based on approved M&E Plan. • Conducting visits for verification of performance data.
Database / GIS Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing monthly and quarterly activity map. • Preparing and submitting data for Afghan Info. • Preparing data for Performance Indicator Table (PIT) on monthly, quarterly, and annual basis.
Data Entry Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entering data in SQL database for all Performance Indicators. • Checking and reviewing hard copy data of relevant performance indicators for data quality. • Cross checking monthly and quarterly data with hard copies. • Keeping and organizing files of hard copy data based on indicator.

ANNEX II: CALENDAR OF TASKS

Performance Management Tasks	FY '15						
	Q2	Q3			Q4		
	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Collect baseline data for the new businesses		X					
Establish Quarterly Monitoring Visit Plan	X			X			X
Receive/collect, verify, further analyze and report Monthly Performance Indicators' data (all 5 indicators)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Receive/collect, verify, further analyze and report Quarterly Performance Indicators' data (all 3 indicators)	X			X			X
Receive/collect, verify, further analyze and report enterprise sales							X
Survey for collecting "HH Income" information, and further reporting the result		X					
Businesses' end-line data collection and analysis (compared to the baseline collected in 2013 and 2014)				X	X		

ANNEX III: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR REFERENCE SHEETS (PIRS)

The following section contains **Performance Indicator Reference Sheets** for each indicator presented in the Performance Management Plan. Each reference sheet provides information on:

- Indicator definition, unit of measurement, and any data breakout requirements;
- Data acquisition method, data sources, timeline for data acquisition, and person responsible for data acquisition;
- Plans for data analysis, review, and reporting;
- Any data quality issues, including any actions taken or planned to address data limitations; and
- Notes on baselines, targets, and data calculation methods.

With respect to baselines and targets, most baselines for the indicators included in this section were set at zero since intervention activities were initiated by the IDEA-NEW program. All targets have been identified for each IDEA-NEW program component that corresponds to the Activity Plan #6 (March 1, 2015 – September 30, 2015) followed by Performance Indicator information. The attached indicator reference sheets provide the basis for project monitoring of each of the indicators chosen for the Intermediate Results and the Program Objective as shown in Figure 1: IDEA-NEW Results Framework.

USAID Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
Name of Result Measured: IR 1.2 Vibrant and Prosperous Agriculture Sector Developed
Name of Indicator: Number of households benefited by agriculture and alternative development interventions in targeted areas
Is this a Performance Plan and Report indicator? Yes
If yes, link to foreign assistance framework: 4.5.2 Agricultural Sector Capacity (Productivity)
DESCRIPTION
Precise Definition(s): This indicator measures the number of households benefiting directly from USG agriculture and alternative development interventions in Afghanistan. A “household” is defined as residents of a common dwelling who pool expenses and regularly live and eat together. A household is a beneficiary if it contains at least one individual who is a beneficiary. An individual is a beneficiary if s/he is engaged with a project activity and either already has shown benefit from the activity, or has a high likelihood of gaining one of those benefits, due to his/her significant level of engagement with the project. The implementing partner needs to be able to demonstrate from its records that the assistance was transmitted to the household. Households will be counted, if they benefit from increased income or welfare, or if they have adopted practices or technologies that promise to increase their household incomes in the future. In measuring beneficiary households, duplication that occurs when individual(s) within the household benefit from multiple interventions (say by participation in activities in several value chains) should be eliminated, where possible.
Unit of Measure: Number of households
Disaggregated by: Region, Province, District, Type of activity (e.g., training)
Rationale or Justification for indicator (Optional): This indicator is a measure of whether the program is likely to have a significant impact on household welfare in target areas. It is also necessary to track households by geographic area so we can estimate the percentage of the total population reached. This is a cooperative agreement required indicator for IDEA-NEW.
PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION BY USAID
Data Source: Training attendance sheets
Method of data collection and construction: This indicator aggregates data from two other indicators, namely “Number of public-private agriculture change agents trained in new techniques” and “Number of farmers receiving public/private sector training.”
Reporting Frequency: Monthly
Individual(s) responsible at IDEA-NEW: DAI/IDEA-NEW M&E Unit Manager
DATA QUALITY ISSUES
Dates of Previous Data Quality Assessments and name of reviewer: RSI Consulting: October 2014; Checchi Consulting: November 2014
Date of Future Data Quality Assessments (Optional): N/A. The project will end on September 30, 2015.
Known Data Limitations: Potentially, there could be some double counting (e.g., someone who attends more than one IDEA-NEW activity). As this is an aggregate indicator, it also double-counts any other indicator of which it is a part. For example, all people trained are also reported in households benefited.
TARGETS AND BASELINE
Baseline timeframe (Optional): The baseline value for 2009 is 0, and was updated in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.
Rationale for Targets (Optional): The project engages in an established process for determining each period’s targets, including review of the previous period’s achievements vs. projected targets and identification of trends for future projections. Technical and M&E teams coordinate closely to determine reasonable targets for each period.
CHANGES TO INDICATOR
Changes to indicator: Each of the indicators included in these PIRS are updated as of April 07, 2015. Per USAID guidance received on March 19, 2015, the indicator name and definition were slightly updated to reflect updated mission indicators.
Other Notes:
THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: 04/07/2015
To avoid version control problems, type the date of most recent revision or update to this reference sheet.

USAID Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
Name of Result Measured: IR 1.2: Vibrant and Prosperous Agriculture Sector Developed
Name of Indicator: Value of sales of targeted commodities as a result of USG assistance
Is this a Performance Plan and Report indicator? Yes
If yes, link to foreign assistance framework: 4.5.2 Agricultural Sector Capacity (Productivity)
DESCRIPTION
Precise Definition(s): The indicator will measure the total value of sales from assisted farms and agribusinesses of selected agriculture commodities. The increase in the marketable value of commodities will come from: the value added from processing primary products and the value gains from marketing. The indicator will reflect the impacts of USAID support to activities from production, post-harvest processing and marketing. It will show the increase in the value of agriculture production compared to a baseline figure resulting from any of the following: improved farm to market roads and irrigation systems, introduction of high yielding seed varieties, technology transfer, and increased access to credit and improved farm management and market linkages.
Unit of Measure: US Dollars
Disaggregated by: Region, Province, District, Type (e.g. rice, corn, veggies, cotton, orchard)
Rationale or Justification for indicator (Optional): Measuring the total value of sales will approximate the actual benefits derived from the program by the beneficiaries. The measurement of program impact on the major agriculture sub-sectors is a reasonable indicator of the program's overall contribution to the rural economy, and in turn to the country's gross domestic product derived from agriculture. This is a cooperative agreement required indicator.
PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION BY USAID
Data Source: Projects Surveys, Enterprise Forms, M&E Surveys and Records
Method of data collection and construction: Random sampling of the assisted farmers, surveys of private enterprises by IDEA-NEW staff.
Reporting Frequency: Annual
Individual(s) responsible at IDEA-NEW: DAI/IDEA-NEW M&E Unit Manager
DATA QUALITY ISSUES
Dates of Previous Data Quality Assessments and name of reviewer: RSI Consulting: October 2014; Checchi Consulting: November 2014
Date of Future Data Quality Assessments (Optional): N/A. The project will end on September 30, 2015.
Known Data Limitations: There is the potential for recall bias (farmers or enterprise owners not recalling the exact data), and/or other bias (those who might have an incentive to report lower numbers than actuality).
TARGETS AND BASELINE
Baseline timeframe (Optional): The baseline value is determined by conducting project surveys of licit farm and non-farm product sales, where farmers and business owners self-report the previous year's sales.
Rationale for Targets (Optional): The project engages in an established process for determining each period's targets, including review of the previous period's achievements vs. projected targets and identification of trends for future projections. Technical and M&E teams coordinate closely to determine reasonable targets for each period.
CHANGES TO INDICATOR
Changes to indicator: Each of the indicators included in these PIRS are updated as of April 07, 2015. Per USAID guidance received on March 19, 2015, the indicator name and definition were slightly updated to reflect updated mission indicators. Indicator title changed from "USD Value of final sales of licit farm and non-farm products" to "Value of sales of targeted commodities as a result of USG assistance."
Other Notes:
THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: 04/07/2015
To avoid version control problems, type the date of most recent revision or update to this reference sheet.

USAID Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
Name of Result Measured: Program Objective: Licit Economy Expanded in the North, East and West
IR 1.2: Vibrant and Prosperous Agriculture Sector Developed
Name of Indicator: Percentage increase in household income from licit agriculture in targeted areas
Is this a Performance Plan and Report indicator? Yes.
If yes, link to foreign assistance framework: 4.5.2 Agricultural Sector Capacity (Productivity)
DESCRIPTION
Precise Definition(s): The indicator will measure direct impact to targeted FARMER households as a result of USG assistance from productivity enhancement of annual and perennial crops, value added processing, pre- and post-harvest practices, and market linkages. This will measure the percentage increase in income from the baseline over the life of project. A household is defined as residents of a common dwelling who pool expenses and regularly live and eat together. Income is defined as the amount of monetary or other returns, accruing over a given period of time within one household.
Unit of Measure: Percentage increase
Disaggregated by: Region, Province, District
Rationale or Justification for indicator (Optional): This is a common indicator that is understood and appreciated by the host country and decision makers. The raw data for this indicator can be generated through surveys and validated through informal talk with beneficiaries.
PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION BY USAID
Data Source: Baseline household information
Method of data collection and construction: Household surveys based on questionnaires.
Reporting Frequency: Bi-annually
Individual(s) responsible at IDEA-NEW: DAI/IDEA-NEW M&E Unit Manager
DATA QUALITY ISSUES
Dates of Previous Data Quality Assessments and name of reviewer: RSI Consulting: October 2014; Checchi Consulting: November 2014
Date of Future Data Quality Assessments (Optional): N/A. The project will end on September 30, 2015.
Known Data Limitations: There may be some errors in methodology because this is an informal survey and we do not know the margin of error.
TARGETS AND BASELINE
Baseline timeframe (Optional): The baseline was established at \$2,566 in 2009 based on the FY09 Household Survey.
Rationale for Targets (Optional): The project engages in an established process for determining each period's targets, including review of the previous period's achievements vs. projected targets and identification of trends for future projections. Technical and M&E teams coordinate closely to determine reasonable targets for each period.
CHANGES TO INDICATOR
Changes to indicator: For this indicator, the language has been updated per USAID request received in April 2015 from "Average total annual household income from licit economic activities in IDEA-NEW communities" to "Percentage increase in household income from licit agriculture in targeted areas."
Other Notes:
THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: 04/07/2015
To avoid version control problems, type the date of most recent revision or update to this reference sheet.

USAID Performance Indicator Reference Sheet

Name of Result Measured: IR 1.1: Employment Opportunities Increased

Name of Indicator: Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created by USG sponsored alternative development or alternative livelihood activities.

Is this a Performance Plan and Report indicator? Yes

If yes, link to foreign assistance framework: 4.5.2 Agricultural Sector Capacity (Productivity)

DESCRIPTION

Precise Definition(s): This indicator measures the equivalent full time jobs (FTEs) created by IDEA-NEW intervention. Fulltime is defined as 8 hours of work, for 260 days per year. Jobs are defined as the number of persons employed directly by assisted farms and agribusinesses in the private sector. The **employed** comprise all *persons of working age*, in paid employment or self-employment (especially relevant for farmers), who performed work for wage, salary, profit, or family gain, in cash or in kind. The employed may be **fulltime, part-time, or temporary employees** (all converted to *fulltime equivalent (FTE)* figures). The aggregate number of persons employed shall reflect *fulltime equivalent jobs*. **Persons of working age** include all those aged between 15 and 65. Where possible, agribusinesses will be tracked by hours and days worked. However, where this is not possible, the project will rely on reports from businesses and follow up such reports through monitoring visits and calling phone numbers of employees reported on the forms.

Unit of Measure: Number of jobs

Disaggregated by: Region, Province, District, Sex

Rationale or Justification for indicator (Optional): This indicator measures the number of jobs created by a number of IDEA-NEW interventions. The more people who are employed – the more the licit economy is expanded. This is a cooperative agreement required indicator.

PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION BY USAID

Data Source: Employment reports from Agribusiness Units

Method of data collection and construction: Reports collected from enterprises by technical teams, and verified by M&E team.

Reporting Frequency: Quarterly

Individual(s) responsible at IDEA-NEW: DAI/IDEA-NEW M&E Unit Manager

DATA QUALITY ISSUES

Dates of Previous Data Quality Assessments and name of reviewer:

RSI Consulting: October 2014; Checchi Consulting: November 2014

Date of Future Data Quality Assessments (Optional): N/A. The project will end on September 30, 2015.

Known Data Limitations: It is not possible to get time-sheets from farmers or agribusinesses to count hours worked, therefore this indicator must rely on self-reports from businesses, and polygons (GPS coordinates) for orchards and hectares of inputs for other farms. Because there is possible bias in self-reporting, and because calculations based on inputs/hectare do not account for how or whether the inputs were accurately applied, the FTE determined could be inaccurate.

TARGETS AND BASELINE

Baseline timeframe (Optional): The baseline value for 2009 is 0, and was updated in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Rationale for Targets (Optional): The project engages in an established process for determining each period's targets, including review of the previous period's achievements vs. projected targets and identification of trends for future projections. Technical and M&E teams coordinate closely to determine reasonable targets for each period.

CHANGES TO INDICATOR

Changes to indicator: Each of the indicators included in these PIRS are updated as of April 07, 2015. While some of the indicators have been in use on IDEA-NEW since 2009, the language has been updated to reflect activities during the NCE-2 period (March 1 – September 30, 2015).

Other Notes:

THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: 04/07/2015

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USAID Performance Indicator Reference Sheet

Name of Result Measured: Sub IR 1.2.2: Commercial Viability of Agribusinesses Increased

Name of Indicator:

4.5.2-42 Number of private enterprises, producers organizations, water users associations, women’s groups, trade and business associations and community-based organizations (CBOs) that applied improved technologies or management practices as a result of USG assistance

Is this a Performance Plan and Report indicator? Introduced in March 2015 at the suggestion of USAID to replace previous indicator “Number of farmers using IDEA-NEW supported agricultural inputs in targeted areas”

If yes, link to foreign assistance framework: Yes (4.5.2-42)

DESCRIPTION

Precise Definition(s):

Total number of private enterprises (processors, input dealers, storage and transport companies) producer associations, cooperatives, water users associations, fishing associations, women’s groups, trade and business associations and community-based organizations (CBOs), including those focused on natural resource management, that applied new technologies or management practices in areas including management (financial, planning, human resources), member services, procurement, technical innovations (processing, storage), quality control, marketing, etc., as a result of USG assistance in this reporting year. Only count the entity once per reporting year, even if multiple technologies or management practices are applied.

Since these groups may be applying new technologies or management practices incrementally over time, only count those changes applied in this reporting year as a result of the USG project. Application of a new technology or management practice by the enterprise, association, cooperative or CBO is counted as one and not as applied by the number in their employees and/or membership. For example, when a farmer association incorporates new corn storage innovations among its member services, the application is counted as one association and not multiplied by the number of farmer-members.

Any technology that was first adopted in a previous year should not be included. Technologies to be counted here are agriculture-related technologies and innovations, including those that address climate change adaptation and mitigation (e.g. carbon sequestration, clean energy, and energy efficiency as related to agriculture). Relevant technologies include, but are not limited to:

- Mechanical and physical: New land preparation, harvesting, processing and product handling technologies, including biodegradable packaging;
- Biological: New germplasm (varieties, breeds, etc.) that could be higher-yielding or higher in nutritional content and/or more resilient to climate impacts; affordable food-based nutritional supplementation, such as vitamin A-rich sweet potatoes or rice, or high-protein maize, or improved livestock breeds; soil management practices that increase biotic activity and soil organic matter levels; and livestock health services and products such as vaccines;
- Chemical: Fertilizers and pesticides sustainably and environmentally applied, and soil amendments that increase fertilizer-use efficiencies;
- Management and cultural practices: sustainable water management practices; sustainable land management practices; sustainable fishing practices; information technology, improved/sustainable agricultural production and marketing practices, increased use of climate information for planning disaster risk strategies in place, climate change mitigation and energy efficiency, and natural resource management practices that increase productivity and/or resiliency to climate change. Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM), and Post-Harvest Handling (PHH), as related to agriculture should all be included as improved technologies or management practices.

Significant improvements to existing technologies should be counted.

Unit of Measure: Number of enterprises

Disaggregated by: Type of organization (see indicator title for principal types): New (the entity applied the targeted new technologies/management practices for the first time during the reporting year); Continuing (the entity applied the targeted new technologies/management practices in a previous year and continues to apply them in the reporting year); Producer Organizations; Water User Associations; Trade & Business Associations; Community-Based Organizations; Private Enterprises; Women’s Organizations.

Rationale or Justification for indicator (Optional): This indicator tracks private sector and civil society behavior change to increase agricultural sector productivity.
PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION BY USAID
Data Source: Project records
Method of data collection and construction: Technical section to collect data in pre-approved template from assisted firms.
Reporting Frequency: Quarterly
Individual(s) responsible at IDEA-NEW: DAI/IDEA-NEW M&E Unit Manager
DATA QUALITY ISSUES
Dates of Previous Data Quality Assessments and name of reviewer: N/A. Newly introduced indicator as of March 2015.
Date of Future Data Quality Assessments (Optional): N/A. The project will end on September 30, 2015.
Known Data Limitations: N/A
TARGETS AND BASELINE
Baseline timeframe (Optional): The baseline is 0.
Rationale for Targets (Optional): The project engages in an established process for determining each period's targets, including review of the previous period's achievements and identification of trends for future projections. Technical and M&E teams coordinate closely to determine reasonable targets for each period.
CHANGES TO INDICATOR
Changes to indicator: Newly introduced indicator as of March 2015.
Other Notes:
THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: 04/07/2015 To avoid version control problems, type the date of most recent revision or update to this reference sheet.

USAID Performance Indicator Reference Sheet

Name of Result Measured: Sub IR 1.2.3: Public and Private Agricultural Service Delivery Strengthened

Name of Indicator: Number of public-private agriculture change agents trained in new techniques

Is this a Performance Plan and Report indicator? Yes

If yes, link to foreign assistance framework: 4.5.2 Agricultural Sector Capacity (Productivity)

DESCRIPTION

Precise Definition(s): This indicator will count *individuals* representing both the public and private sector who received training from the implementing partner and who serve as “change agents” - defined as individuals for whom significant knowledge or skills have been imparted through interactions that are intentional, structured, and purposed for then imparting knowledge or skills to others. The indicator includes farmers, ranchers, fishers, and other primary sector producers who receive training in a variety of best practices in productivity, post-harvest management, linking to markets, etc. It also includes rural entrepreneurs, processors, managers and traders receiving training in the application of new technologies, business management, linking to markets, etc., and training to extension specialists, researchers, policymakers and others who are engaged in the agriculture system and natural resources and water management.

There is no pre-defined minimum or maximum length of time for the training. Training reflects a planned, structured curriculum designed to strengthen capacities of others, and there is a reasonable expectation that the training recipient will acquire new knowledge or skills that s/he could translate into follow-on action.

The implementing partner will count an individual only once, regardless of the number of trainings received during the reporting year and whether the trainings covered different topics. In-country and off-shore training are included. Training should include any agriculture-based areas, such as food security, water resources management, sustainable agriculture, and technology acquisition.

Unit of Measure: Number

Disaggregated by:

- Producers (farmers, fishers, pastoralists, ranchers, disaggregated by gender)
- People in government (policy makers, extension workers, disaggregated by gender)
- People in private sector firms (processors, service providers, manufacturers)
- People in civil society (NGOs, CBOs, CSOs, research and academic organizations)

Rationale or Justification for indicator (Optional): Measures enhanced human capacity for increased agriculture productivity, improved food security, policy formulation and/or implementation, which is key to transformational development.

PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION BY USAID

Data Source: Training attendance sheets/reports, project records

Method of data collection and construction: Program managers and technical section to collect attendance records from training sessions.

Reporting Frequency: Monthly

Individual(s) responsible at IDEA-NEW: DAI/IDEA-NEW M&E Unit Manager

DATA QUALITY ISSUES

Dates of Previous Data Quality Assessments and name of reviewer:

RSI Consulting: October 2014; Checchi Consulting: November 2014

Date of Future Data Quality Assessments (Optional): N/A. The project will end on September 30, 2015.

Known Data Limitations: There could be double counting.

TARGETS AND BASELINE

Baseline timeframe (Optional): The baseline value for 2009 is 0, and was updated in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Rationale for Targets (Optional): The project engages in an established process for determining each period’s targets, including review of the previous period’s achievements vs. projected targets and identification of trends for future projections. Technical and M&E teams coordinate closely to determine reasonable targets for each period.

CHANGES TO INDICATOR

Changes to indicator: Each of the indicators included in these PIRS are updated as of April 07, 2015. While some of the indicators have been in use on IDEA-NEW since 2009, the language has been updated to reflect activities during the NCE-2 period (March 1 – September 30, 2015). For this indicator, IDEA-NEW has combined two previous indicators: “Number of participants who have received business skills training” and “Number of government line staff participating in IDEA-NEW training activities.”

Other Notes:

THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: 04/07/2015

To avoid version control problems, type the date of most recent revision or update to this reference sheet.

USAID Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
Name of Result Measured: IR 1.2: Vibrant and Prosperous Agriculture Sector Developed
Name of Indicator: Number of agriculture-related enterprises participating in IDEA-NEW-supported value chains (<i>similar to FAF standard indicator</i>)
Is this a Performance Plan and Report indicator? Yes If yes, link to foreign assistance framework: 4.5.2 Agricultural Sector Capacity (Productivity)
DESCRIPTION
Precise Definition(s): An enterprise must be registered with the GIROA (AISA specifically), unless it is a home-based enterprise. An enterprise is included in this indicator if it engages with a project activity. Benefiting enterprises do not include those merely contacted or touched by an activity through brief attendance at a meeting or gathering, but must include significant financial and/or training and technical assistance. The definition of agriculture is a food, feed, and fiber system stretching from input supply and production through marketing and processing to domestic consumption and exports. Food and non-food crops, livestock products, fisheries, agro-forestry, and natural resource-based products are included. Only additional enterprises assisted should be reported each reporting period.
Unit of Measure: Number
Disaggregated by: Region, Province, District, Farm/Off Farm business type, gender
Rationale or Justification for indicator (Optional): This indicator measures the number of enterprises receiving technical assistance or training or inputs by IDEA-NEW. As more enterprises increase their capabilities and are able to grow, the licit economy will expand and be sustained.
PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION BY USAID
Data Source: Project records
Method of data collection and construction: Technical section to collect data in pre-approved template from assisted firms. Each fiscal year the program will work with a new set of firms, different (for the most part) from the previous year. Therefore, the targets and actual for each FY are not cumulative.
Reporting Frequency: Quarterly
Individual(s) responsible at IDEA-NEW: DAI/IDEA-NEW M&E Unit Manager
DATA QUALITY ISSUES
Dates of Previous Data Quality Assessments and name of reviewer: RSI Consulting: October 2014; Checchi Consulting: November 2014
Date of Future Data Quality Assessments (Optional): N/A. The project will end on September 30, 2015.
Known Data Limitations: Sometimes the firms aren't registered with the GIROA (AISA), so they do not meet the definition above precisely. Possibility for double counting.
TARGETS AND BASELINE
Baseline timeframe (Optional): The baseline value for 2009 is 0, and was updated in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.
Rationale for Targets (Optional): The project engages in an established process for determining each period's targets, including review of the previous period's achievements vs. projected targets and identification of trends for future projections. Technical and M&E teams coordinate closely to determine reasonable targets for each period.
CHANGES TO INDICATOR
Changes to indicator: Each of the indicators included in these PIRS are updated as of April 07, 2015. While some of the indicators have been in use on IDEA-NEW since 2009, the language has been updated to reflect activities during the NCE-2 period (March 1 – September 30, 2015).
Other Notes:
THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: 04/07/2015 To avoid version control problems, type the date of most recent revision or update to this reference sheet.

USAID Performance Indicator Reference Sheet	
Name of Result Measured: Cross-Cutting (GNDR-3)	
Name of Indicator: Proportion of females who report increased self-efficacy at the conclusion of USG supported training/programming	
Is this a Performance Plan and Report indicator? Yes If yes, link to foreign assistance framework: GNDR-3	
DESCRIPTION	
<p>Precise Definition(s): Self-efficacy is a widely used and frequently assessed psychological concept first developed by Albert Bandura in 1977. Fundamentally, feelings of self-efficacy refer to people's beliefs in their capacity to produce actions that are necessary for achieving desired outcomes/attainments. As a concept, it is similar to having a sense of personal agency. Self-efficacy has been shown to have a crucial impact on goal-setting, perseverance in the face of difficulties, and action-oriented behaviors. Feelings of self-efficacy can be assessed in specific contexts or as a more general, cross-situational belief that one has the capacity to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to exercise general control over events in one's life.</p> <p>For the purposes of this indicator, only trainings of at least a full day duration or longer should be counted. Trainings or programs in any sector that have women's empowerment as a goal (even if not the only goal) should utilize this indicator. This would include programs/training in the following areas among others: leadership skills, youth development, civil society advocacy skills, conflict resolution or mediation skills, entrepreneurship, development of women's business associations or other forms of networking, etc.</p> <p>The unit of measure will be a proportion, expressed in the format of X/Y, where X is the number of women whose scores have improved over time and Y is the total number of women who participated in the relevant training/programming.</p>	
Unit of Measure: Proportion	
Disaggregated by: Region, Province, District	
Rationale or Justification for indicator (Optional): Tracks attitudes related to women, a high priority for USAID programming in Afghanistan. USAID places emphasis on closing gender gaps between the performance or status of men and women. In the context of agricultural development, empowering women means being able to make decisions over production, having ownership and access to resources, control over income and expenditures, be members of economic and social groups and be able to allocate time between productive and domestic tasks.	
PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION BY USAID	
Data Source: Project records	
Method of data collection and construction: Pre- and post- tests for the training participants and comparison of results.	
Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	
Individual(s) responsible at IDEA-NEW: DAI/IDEA-NEW M&E Unit Manager	
DATA QUALITY ISSUES	
Dates of Previous Data Quality Assessments and name of reviewer: RSI Consulting: October 2014; Checchi Consulting: November 2014	
Date of Future Data Quality Assessments (Optional): N/A. The project will end on September 30, 2015.	
Known Data Limitations: Pre and post-tests required. Possibility that women will not report truthfully.	
TARGETS AND BASELINE	
Baseline timeframe (Optional): N/A	
Rationale for Targets (Optional): The project engages in an established process for determining each period's targets, including review of the previous period's achievements vs. projected targets and identification of trends for future projections. Technical and M&E teams coordinate closely to determine reasonable targets for each period.	
CHANGES TO INDICATOR	
Changes to indicator: Each of the indicators included in these PIRS are updated as of April 07, 2015.	
Other Notes:	
THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: 04/07/2015	
To avoid version control problems, type the date of most recent revision or update to this reference sheet.	

USAID Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
Name of Result Measured: Sub IR 1.2.3: Public and Private Agricultural Service Delivery Strengthened
Name of Indicator: Number of farmers receiving public/private sector training
Is this a Performance Plan and Report indicator? Yes
If yes, link to foreign assistance framework: 4.5.2 Agricultural Sector Capacity (Productivity)
DESCRIPTION
Precise Definition(s): This indicator serves as an outcome from the following indicator: Number of public-private agriculture change agents trained in new techniques. It counts <i>individuals who have received</i> the training from the public or private sector 'change agent.' A 'change agent' is defined as an individual for whom significant knowledge or skills have been imparted through interactions that are intentional, structured, and purposed for then imparting knowledge or skills to others. The indicator counts the number of beneficiaries to whom the change agent has imparted knowledge. It can include farmers, ranchers, fishers, and other primary sector producers who receive training in a variety of best practices in productivity, post-harvest management, linking to markets, etc. Depending on the nature of the knowledge imparted, it may also include rural entrepreneurs, processors, managers and traders receiving training in application of new technologies, business management, training to extension specialists, researchers, policymakers and others who are engaged in the agriculture system and natural resources and water management. In many cases the beneficiaries will be farmer and the training will be farm level in nature.
Unit of Measure: Number of individuals
Disaggregated by: Region, Province, District, Sex
Rationale or Justification for indicator (Optional): Measures the outcome of enhancing human capacity for increased agriculture productivity, improved food security, policy formulation and/or implementation by assessing how many other individuals receive that knowledge.
PLAN FOR DATA COLLECTION BY USAID
Data Source: Agribusiness program attendance records from training sessions
Method of data collection and construction: Agribusiness Program Managers will collect attendance records from training sessions. All participants must sign (or thumb print) the attendance list for each day of training.
Reporting Frequency: Monthly
Individual(s) responsible at IDEA-NEW: DAI/IDEA-NEW M&E Unit Manager
DATA QUALITY ISSUES
Dates of Previous Data Quality Assessments and name of reviewer: RSI Consulting: October 2014; Checchi Consulting: November 2014
Date of Future Data Quality Assessments (Optional): N/A. The project will end on September 30, 2015.
Known Data Limitations: There is the possibility of double counting (a participant may attend more than 1 training). Also, sometimes for security or logistics reasons, daily attendance sheets might not be possible.
TARGETS AND BASELINE
Baseline timeframe (Optional): The baseline value for 2009 is 0, and was updated in 2010, 2011 and 2012. This indicator was recently reintroduced.
Rationale for Targets (Optional): The project engages in an established process for determining each period's targets, including review of the previous period's achievements vs. projected targets and identification of trends for future projections. Technical and M&E teams coordinate closely to determine reasonable targets for each period.
CHANGES TO INDICATOR
Changes to indicator: Each of the indicators included in these PIRS are updated as of April 07, 2015. Per USAID guidance received on March 19, 2015, the indicator name and definition were slightly updated to reflect updated mission indicators.
Other Notes:
THIS SHEET LAST UPDATED ON: 04/07/2015 To avoid version control problems, type the date of most recent revision or update to this reference sheet.

ANNEX IV: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR SUMMARY TABLE

See attached PDF.

ANNEX V: PERFORMANCE INDICATOR CHANGES FOR NCE-2

See attached PDF.