



# FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

## FEED THE FUTURE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR FOOD SECURITY

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MID-YEAR REPORT: YEAR I

*April 2016*



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

FEED THE FUTURE ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR FOOD SECURITY  
MID-YEAR REPORT: YEAR I

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## I. INTRODUCTION

On September 23, 2015 the Office of Market and Partnership Innovations launched the \$13.5 million Feed the Future Enabling Environment for Food Security project to offer consulting services to augment the capacity of the USAID/Washington bureaus, primarily the Bureau for Food Security, and Feed the Future focus and aligned Missions worldwide to address constraints to the enabling environment for food security. Through this demand-driven mechanism, USAID may secure (1) technical analysis services to identify key enabling environment constraints, (2) advisory services that can catalyze country-led reform initiatives, and (3) strategic knowledge management services to facilitate learning and exchange to build the evidence base for clearer technical coherence.

USAID structured the Feed the Future Enabling Environment for Food Security as a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) with a one-year base period for implementation, along with four annual options to extend the project to ensure flexibility in design, scope, and scale. Project services are not known at the outset, but are driven by call orders issued by USAID for discrete support services. Thus, the level of service provided to USAID under this mechanism within any contract year flows from express USAID office or mission demand.

**This mid-year report for the first year under the BPA mechanism provides information on activities ordered by USAID and implemented across both call orders under the mechanism from September 23, 2015 to March 25, 2016.** During this period, USAID issued two call orders involving numerous activities within each call order. The project team provided support in the area of regional seed regulatory harmonization in Southern Africa, designed and implemented a knowledge management assessment unlike any past enabling environment reform programs, and provided substantive support across a range of requests from the Office of Market and Partnership Innovations (USAID/BFS/MPI) within the Bureau for Food Security. Foundational activities under this mechanism included substantial strategy design and work planning undertaken in close collaboration with the USAID/BFS/MPI office. This period also included rapid mobilization of staff to manage the mechanism, as all key personnel proposed by Fintrac were mobilized within one day from receipt of approved Level of Effort.

The following report provides a summary of activities implemented under the BPA through the two call orders issued during the period covered by this mid-year report. Call Order 1 was executed September 25, 2015 and included a modest level of effort to manage and implement two discrete activities, including a regional seed regulatory harmonization assignment for the USAID/Southern Africa Mission and a Knowledge Management assessment, as well as a small pool of funding for short-term “on-demand consulting” support. Call Order 2, executed on December 23, 2015, provides level of effort for BPA Key Personnel to serve as a global support unit for USAID in the area of agribusiness enabling environment reforms as well as a small pool of funding for short-term “on-demand consulting” support. From December 24, 2015, the BPA Key Personnel have been primarily dedicated to management and implementation under Call Order 2.

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## 2. CALL ORDERS AND ASSIGNMENTS

### CALL ORDER I

#### *USAID Southern Africa Regional Seed Sector (SARSS) Assessment*

##### **BPA Component(s): 1. Technical Analysis and Targeted Technical Assistance**

In September 2015, the USAID Southern Africa Regional Mission issued a request for support to gather information and analyze the status of the regulatory environment for the regional seed market throughout the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

Requested through Call Order I concurrently with the launch of the Feed the Future Enabling Environment for Food Security Blanket Purchase Agreement mechanism, the project team provided field support to the USAID/Southern Africa Regional Mission. The purpose of this assignment was to assess legal, regulatory, and market constraints affecting cross-border trade in seeds throughout the Southern Africa region within the SADC Harmonized Seed Regulation (“SADC HSR”) framework. By establishing regional harmonization of seed regulations, small and medium seed companies may see reduced barriers to entry for new regional markets, allowing increased competition and market efficiencies that should enable small and medium producers greater access to improved seed. The findings from this analysis fed directly into the work plan discussions for the newly-launched “Harmonized Seed Regulations Project (“HSRP”)”, a five-year regional support project launched in 2015 that is charged with building up country-level implementation capacity within seed regulatory systems as well as the capability for improved impact from regional seed technology exchange.

From October to December 2015, a team consisting of one international seed sector consultant and three local seed sector consultants met with more than 50 representatives from across the seed sector, including government, private sector, and civil society organizations, in South Africa, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Mozambique. The project team provided analysis on SADC HSR commitments, the current state of implementation, capacity constraints in key institutions, and insights on factors that could influence uptake of the SADC HSR system by regional seed sector players.

The assessment team found that while many of the legal instruments required to launch a regional seed harmonization regulation are in place, institutional capacity remains lacking within SADC to fully implement the regional seed system. At the country level, capacity gaps in national seed regulatory and certification bodies effectively limit implementation. Poor communication and dialogue with seed sector stakeholders have limited seed sector buy-in into the SADC HSR system, and have potentially failed to fully address concerns raised by farmer organizations, namely farmer’s rights to save, sell, or barter local variety seeds under the SADC HSR system. Poor planning around the treatment of publicly-owned genetics and the ability to fully benefit from the SADC HSR system. These observations, as well as practical constraints regarding the financing of the SADC HSR rollout, present important systemic gaps that will require practical solutions before the SADC HSR system can be operationalized.

SARSS Assessment findings and recommendations were designed to support the USAID/Southern Africa Regional Mission as it negotiates the work plan for a newly-launched regional SADC HSR institutional capacity support mechanism.

#### *Knowledge Management (Assessment and Implementation Plan)*

##### **BPA Component(s): 2. Knowledge Management**

Concurrently with BPA award and launch, USAID issued a request for an innovative knowledge management assessment for data-driven and targeted content creation, design, and distribution. The project used a mixed methodology to reach priority stakeholders. , Sixty USAID staff from Washington,

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regional and county missions working on Feed the Future were reached with an emailed online survey. Additionally, a similar version of the survey was completed by 226 stakeholders that included non-profit and private sector implementing development partners, other donors, advocacy groups, researchers, and members of the private sector working in agribusiness and related sectors. Fifteen key informant interviews were conducted with selected group of USAID Washington and Mission based staff and implementing partners to supplement the survey feedback with additional perspective. Results of this report have been highly positive, and have gained significant visibility. The knowledge management assessment was featured in the Agrilinks resource library and newsletter for March. The study and report received positive feedback from the KDAD team (USAID and project) and preliminary feedback from them suggests they see the User Profiles as very helpful for their ongoing KM work with many similar audiences. Specifically, it also identified mutually beneficial opportunities for collaboration on the Agrilinks online platform, that were noted in both our project and KDAD's work plans. This work also is proving to be a useful resource to other groups looking to conduct assessments to inform KM and learning work. For example, the project was contacted by the Cash Learning Project (supported by USAID's office of Food for Peace) specifically to learn more about our work in the hopes of utilizing some of our tools and experience to inform their needs assessment. Their tool ultimately followed our project's survey structure and drew heavily from many questions in our multi-stakeholder KM survey. Further, the Food Security and Nutrition Network KM Task Force, a community of practice of largely implementing partners working on food security, also supported by USAID's Office of Food for Peace, invited us to present findings from the KM assessment as well as then how we used these to inform our KM plan at an upcoming meeting in June 2016.

### *On-Demand Consulting Services*

#### **BPA Component(s): 5. On-Demand Consulting Services**

Under the BPA, Component 5 On-Demand Consulting Services provides USAID with a rapid-response capability for discrete assignments and activities. The BPA provided the following technical support under this activity between September 23, 2015 and March 23, 2016:

- Authored original content on the enabling environment to be incorporated into a high-level African Development Bank conference and provided key talking points (October 2015)
- Developed content providing a succinct definition of the enabling environment and an introduction of the FTF EEFS for a "Notes to the Field" email transmission for USAID/BFS (October 2015)
- Participated in a USAID Local Systems Community event on enabling environment reforms. The USAID Local Systems Community is a group within USAID focused on supporting local systems strengthening. This group hosted a special event at the USAID headquarters in Washington DC looking at how to do enabling environment reforms differently, featuring a presentation by the DFID LASER mechanism as well as a group discussion for how to encourage new models for enabling environment reform. (November 2015)
- Participated in the "Moving the Needle" conference for knowledge management improvement. Funded by USAID Policy Planning and Learning Bureau, the **Moving the Needle Conference** was hosted on November 17, 2015 at the US Institute for Peace. It is the first in a series of annual events to highlight different aspects of USAID's learning efforts and to promote learnings in CLA. The stated purpose for this year was around 'supporting greater adoption of intentional practices in strategic collaboration, continuous learning, and timely adapting throughout the mission Program Cycle'. (November 2015)

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- Participated in CSIS AgTalk roundtable event on Rural Land Tenure and Food Security. Participated in invitation-only “informal” policy dialogue event at which Rob Bertram of USAID was a featured presenter. Event focused on the issues of land tenure security, food security, and climate-smart agriculture. The event focused on land tenure as both a potential opportunity for and equally a potential barrier to investment into scaling up climate-smart ag technologies. The discussion provided an opportunity for candid discussion and an opportunity to identify potential priorities moving forward. (December 2015)
  - Developed outreach materials as part of mechanism launch (December 2015)
  - Participated in USAID/BFS/ARP implementers’ conference to support dialogue in agricultural policy reform findings and to enhance agency and implementer partner learning. Attended sessions on seed policy, institutional capacity building, and “megatrends.” (December 2015)
  - Developed an infographic on markets and the enabling environment to supplement USAID/BFS/MPI portfolio review preparations (March 2016)
  - Consultant support provided for Feed the Future Enabling Environment Challenges, Tools, and Resources study cataloguing Feed the Future investments in enabling environment reforms (March 2016)

## CALL ORDER 2

### *Work Planning and BPA Management*

#### **BPA Component(s): N/A**

Call Orders under a BPA are demand-driven, and are separate contracts which could limit the degree of technical coherence and strategy across assignments. Due to this risk, under Call Order 2 USAID/BFS/MPI established a series of BPA mechanism-wide planning, management, and reporting deliverables to ensure that clear strategy and technical coherence guide the implementation of this mechanism. During this period, and in close collaboration with USAID/BFS/MPI, the project team designed and finalized the following BPA mechanism-wide deliverables:

- Life of Project five-year Work Plan, a strategy document to guide annual work planning within a longer-term framework
- First Annual Work Plan, which provides the mechanism with coherence and project activity planning for the first year through September 22, 2016.
- Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to categorize, manage, and monitor project performance.

Furthermore, under this activity, the project initiated this Mid-Year Report for the first project year.

### *Review of Feed the Future Investments and Resources to Support Enabling Environment Reform*

#### **BPA Component(s): I. Technical Analysis and Targeted Technical Assistance**

As USAID engages in a process of looking back and forward on the Feed the Future initiative, the Feed the Future Enabling Environment for Food Security project plans to conduct a thorough review of enabling environment investments under Feed the Future to catalogue what has been done, what is working, and what lessons have been learned that can inform future programming. The review will also

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include the compilation and analysis of available data sources and toolkits that support enabling environment work, including but not exclusively those created by USAID, and will also determine technical knowledge gaps and resource needs that can be addressed by the project in future years.

This review will inform additional activities related to BPA Component 1: Technical Analysis and Targeted Technical Assistance as described in the Feed the Future Enabling Environment for Food Security Year 1 Work Plan. The results of this review will inform the selection of new topics for technical policy briefs, the upgrading of existing tools, and development of new tools aligned with Feed the Future Mission and USAID/Washington needs.

An Activity Plan was developed to establish clear tasks and deliverables for this activity, to be submitted for USAID/BFS/MPI review and acceptance imminently.

### *Knowledge Management and Support*

#### **BPA Component(s): 2. Knowledge Management**

The team has translated the finalized KM assessment and implementation plan into actionable next steps that have been integrated into our approved annual work plan, which will serve as the basis for activities throughout the remainder of the year. Additionally, through March 23, 2016, the project:

- Identified priority foundational KM infrastructure<sup>1</sup> and tools needed to position the project to support knowledge exchange around enabling environment for food security, created an activity plan for KM foundational activities and secured approval to develop these over next 3 months.
- Initiated discussions and preliminary planning with USAID BFS Communications, Feed the Future Knowledge Driven Agricultural Development (KDAD) and Feed the Future Partnering for Innovation (PI) as strategic KM partners for coordination and collaboration. Steps to establish an MOU with both entities, KDAD and PI, were initiated but not yet finalized as of late March.
- Supported the design and development of the Markets Infographic for MPI to facilitate portfolio review preparations for the office.
- Developed an initial inventory of key information from ten Global Learning and Evidence Exchange (GLEE) events hosted by USAID/BFS from 2012 to 2016.

### *Technical Analysis and Content Creation for Benchmarking and EBA*

#### **BPA Component(s): 3. Capacity Building**

The launch of the World Bank's Enabling the Business of Agriculture (EBA) 2016 project and report has generated a high degree of interest in the potential for benchmarking some of the topics relevant to the enabling environment for food security. In February 2016, the Feed the Future Enabling Environment for Food Security project developed a two-page guide to the EBA project that was distributed to all USAID Mission staff in the Notes to the Field email newsletter that announced the release of the EBA report. This guide was designed to provide Mission staff with sufficient information to understand the basics of the EBA methodology and its possible utility for Feed the Future.

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<sup>1</sup> Infrastructure in this context is referring to a set of policies, systems and processes that support KM. These include foundational key collateral (online or in paper), steps and protocols for use of tools, trackers, databases, contract management systems etc.

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To provide deeper understanding of topics raised by the EBA 2016 report, a proposed activity plan has been drafted and shared with USAID/BFS/MPI to provide deeper analysis on topics of relevance for USAID staff to use the EBA data as effectively as possible for programming. Revisions to the activity plan have been updated based upon initial feedback from USAID/BFS/MPI, and a revised activity plan will be submitted imminently. Furthermore, project staff have discussed with USAID/BFS/MPI the possibility of organizing a joint presentation of the EBA report for the benefit of USAID staff later this year.

### *Review of Enabling Environment Project Reform Strategies*

#### **BPA Component(s): 4. Implementation Support**

The BPA mechanism includes a mandate to supply short-term support services to provide targeted capacity-strengthening services that can assist in catalyzing more effective implementation of rules, regulations, laws, and policies for improved food security outcomes. In doing so, this project is one of a growing list of mechanisms offering short-term<sup>2</sup>, intermittent advisory services to facilitate reforms. While other programs across various donor organizations utilize non-resident advisory services models, little literature exists that captures success stories or lessons learned in best approaches in intermittent advisory services. In Year I of the project, the Enabling Environment for Food Security team proposes to undertake a review of the various approaches taken by non-resident policy reform projects – their main models and operational factors for success.

This review is the first step in a series of activities to support BPA Component 4: Implementation Support as described in the Feed the Future Enabling Environment for Food Security Year I Work Plan. The results of this review will lead to the delineation of project service offerings and the design of standard templates and assignment instruction guides to maximize the impact and quality of future Mission support under this component.

As of March 23, 2016, an activity plan has been developed for USAID review and concurrence and will be transmitted to USAID/BFS/MPI imminently.

### *Institutional Support Services*

#### **BPA Component(s): 6. Institutional Support Services**

Under the BPA, USAID has the capacity to secure institutional support services to enhance the capacity of USAID/BFS/MPI. Through March 23, 2016, the Feed the Future Enabling Environment for Food Security undertook the following activities through Call Order 2, Component 6:

- Served as featured speaker on behalf of project at CSIS AgTalk event on agricultural enabling environment, benchmarking, and governance. (February 2016)
- Developed Mission outreach materials regarding the BPA mechanism on behalf of USAID/BFS/MPI. (February 2016)
- Provided Key Personnel contributions to conceptual design of USAID/BFS/MPI portfolio infographic and development process management. (March 2016)

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<sup>2</sup> For purposes of this study, “intermittent, short-term” advisory services are consultancies in which the mechanism has no continuous presence within the country, but instead offers periodic short-term support consultancies. For purposes of this study, we look at consultancies where in-country presence within the country lasts 3 months or less.