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Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian
Assistance Office of Food for Peace**

**FISCAL YEAR 2017 ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT FOR
THE TIGRAY PRODUCTIVE SAFETY NET PROGRAM 4
(TPSNP4)**

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ACRONYMNS

ACCESS	Appropriate Cost Effective Centres within the School System
ARR	Annual Results Report
BAITO	Local People's Council or Representatives
BCC/IEC	Behavior Change Communication/Information Exchange and Communication
BOLSA	Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs
CAP/ADMIN	PSNP Capital and Administration Budget
CC	Community Conversations
CU5	Children Under 5 Years
CFI	Chronically Food Insecure
CVLP	Community Voluntary Labour Program
DA	Development Agent
DFSA	Development Food Security Activity (USAID)
DS	Direct Support
EMMP	Environmental Management and Monitoring Plan
ESMF	Environmental and Social Monitoring Framework
ETB	Ethiopian Birr (Local Currency)
EWS	Early Warning System
FAL	Functional Adult Literacy
FDP	Food Distribution Point
FY	Fiscal Year
HEW	Health Extension Worker
HH	Household
HO	Head Office
IO	Intermediate Outcome
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
ITSH	Internal Transport, Storage and Handling
KM	Kilometer
LYPW	Landless Youth Public Works
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MT	Metric Ton
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PCD	PSNP Program Coordination Department
PDS	Permanent Direct Support PSNP Beneficiary
PIM	PSNP Implementation Manual
PLW	Pregnant and Lactating Women
PREP	Pipeline and Resource Estimate Proposal (USAID)
PW	Public Works
REST	Relief Society of Tigray
SP	Sub-purpose
TABIA	Sub-district Administration Zone in Tigray
TPSNP	Tigray Productive Safety Net Program
USAID/FFP	United State Agency for International Development/Food for Peace
USG	United States Government
C/T/W/FSTF	Community/Tabia/Woreda Food Security Task Force
WDGL	Women Development Group Leader
WHH	Women Headed Household
WLP	Women's Literacy Program
WOREDA	District Administration Zone in Tigray
WUA	Water User Association
YR	Year

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A. ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT NARRATIVE

I. Activity Interventions and Results

This Annual Results Report describes the outcomes attained by the Relief Society of Tigray (REST) while implementing Year I of its Title II Development Food Security Activity (DFSA) in the period 30 September 2016 to 29 September 2017. Focused on the REST Tigray Productive Safety Net Program Phase 4 (TPSNP4), the DFSA targeted 498,707 food insecure and climate vulnerable people in 12 woredas and 545 watersheds in the Central, Eastern, Southern and South-Eastern zones of Tigray utilizing a mix of food and cash resources obligated by USAID under Cooperative Agreement No: AID-FFP-A-16-00006.

The goal of the TPSNP4 is to “*enhance resilience to shock, and improve food, nutrition and livelihood security among vulnerable rural women and men in 12 woredas of Tigray*”. Central to achieving this goal are four interlinked domains of change (purposes) including: i) reduced vulnerability to shocks and stresses, ii) increased agricultural production and productivity, iii) improved sustainable livelihoods of vulnerable women, men and youth groups, and iv) reduced malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women, and children under five. The project’s crosscutting issues are gender equality and women’s empowerment, climate change adaptation, social accountability and institutional capacity building. Together, the aim is to develop sufficiently absorptive and adaptive capacities capable of buffering against the constant shocks that disrupt livelihoods and wellbeing in target woredas.

Implementation of the TPSNP4 is coordinated by REST through its Woreda and Head Office staff, in collaboration with Government sectoral offices, Food Security Task Forces and all levels, and directly with communities. Coordination with other USAID programs, in particular, the Joint Emergency Operation (JEOP), GRAD2 and GTN is also practiced to ensure complementarities, better program integration, and ultimately increased impacts.

I.1 Synopsis of FY2017 Project Progress and Results

a. Project beneficiary caseload FY2017

During FY2017 the TPSNP4 assisted a total of 545,215 (regular 498,707, 5% contingency 23,008, and youth 23,500) chronically food insecure people in 12 woredas: Ahferom, WerieLeke, KollaTembien, KildeAwlealo, GantaAfeshum, GuloMekeda, SehartiSamre, Hawzien, HintaloWajerat, Raya Alamata, EndaMehoni and Offla. This caseload consisted of four parts: 1) a core project caseload made up of 398,211 regular, able-bodied Public Work/Temporary Direct Support beneficiaries (e.g. pregnant and lactating women) who received 3 to 5 months of food transfers, and 1 to 3 months of cash transfers that were delivered by the Tigray Government. Of these core beneficiaries 212,805 were female and 185,406 were male (53% female/47% male); 2) around 100,496 Permanent Direct Support beneficiaries (65,113 female/35,383 male) deemed most vulnerable and unable to work (e.g. the elderly, the disabled or chronically ill), received unconditional transfers for all 12 months of the year; 3) 23,500 Landless Youth (11,280 female, 12,220 male) who were supported through a package of cash transfers administered by REST to work on a specified menu of public works; and 4) to alleviate transitory food needs among PSNP and non-PSNP beneficiaries, a 5% contingency component was used to support the distribution of 3-5 months of food transfers among 23,008 non-PSNP beneficiaries (11,453 female, 11,555 male) experiencing severe food shortages due to production losses caused by drought during the past year. Overall, these achievements are consistent with initial planned beneficiary targets.

Comment/Response No 1: As per the PSNP4 PIM, the government undertakes retargeting of PSNP beneficiaries on an annual basis. The annual retargeting for the current report year 2017 was carried out late in November 2016, and was after the submission of REST’s DFSA YR2 PREP. Although the total number of TPSNP4 beneficiaries remained the same as the initial numbers REST submitted to USAID, there were some slight changes with regard to beneficiary numbers by category. The retargeting process resulted in some beneficiaries being shifted from the Public Work category to Permanent Direct

Support(PDS) and vice-versa too. The reasons for the reshuffling were: a) during the verification process some irregularities were identified such as the wrong identification of some elder beneficiaries under Public Work while they were supposed to be categorized as PDS beneficiaries; and b) in contrast, some families comprised of able-bodied persons were incorrectly categorized as PDS beneficiaries while clearly eligible public work participants.

REST reported these revisions/changes in beneficiary figures to USAID in its 1st Quarter DFSA Report. The following table shows the comparison between the original and revised number of beneficiaries by woreda.

No.	Woreda	PW and TDS Beneficiaries			PDS Beneficiaries		
		Original (O)	Revised (R)	Difference (R-O)	Original (O)	Revised (R)	Difference (R-O)
A	Traditional						
1.	Ahferom	28,095	28,307	212	14,943	14,731	-212
2.	Ganta Afeshum	47,428	47,428	-	8,281	8,281	-
3.	Gulo Mekeda	54,119	54,119	-	9,013	9,013	-
4.	Hawzien	30,344	30,344	-	9,912	9,912	-
5.	Kilte Awlealo	35,982	35,982	-	6,645	6,645	-
6.	Kolla Tembien	20,819	20,904	85	6,566	6,481	-85
7.	Seharti Samre	26,646	26,549	-97	8,455	8,552	97
8.	Werie Leke	29,737	29,198	-539	5,484	6,023	539
B	New						
9.	Raya Alamata	26,560	26,559	-1	5,420	5,421	1
10.	Enda Mehoni	24,099	24,249	150	7,435	7,285	-150
11.	Offla	35,147	35,198	51	10,521	10,470	-51
12.	Hintalo Wajerat	39,300	39,374	74	7,756	7,682	-74
	Total:	398,276	398,211	-65	100,431	100,496	65

b. Utilization of FY2017 food and cash resources

In FY2017, REST distributed 44,492.23 MT of food directly to targeted beneficiaries constituting 95.1% of the volume of commodities received. The amount of food carryover is 1,488 MT. In this FY, the total cash budget was \$16,615,197 (Section 202: approved budget \$9,288,009; ITSH: approved budget \$4,451,213 and Enhanced Funds: approved budget \$2,875,974). Of these, some \$8,764,099 of section 202(e) resources (94.4% of the budget), \$4,123,564 of ITSH resources (93% of the budget) and \$2,859,781 of Enhanced Funds resources (99.4% of the budget) were expended to procure capital items, for community institutional capacity building, commodity transport, storage and handling costs and other program management costs. The cash carryover amount is \$867,753.

Comment/Response No 2: REST accepts the comment and acknowledges a reporting error. The correct amount of food distributed/achieved is 44,492.23 MT as indicated in the IC Report. This anomaly has arisen due to the fact that at the time of preparing the FY2017 ARR, REST was still in the process of distributing the 11% Federal Contingency Budget which was significantly delayed as a result of the Government's late approval for the use of the 2017 contingency budget. Ultimately this made it difficult for REST to obtain the exact food amounts distributed in time for the ARR. REST has now revised the food distribution achievement as per the IC data.

Comment/Response No 3: Comment accepted. The correct carryover food amount is 1,500 MT as reported in the IC report. This inconsistency is also related to the delayed distribution of the 11% Federal Contingency food resources. In line with this, REST has revised the carryover commodity resources as per the IC data.

c. Progress towards meeting FY2017 plans and targets

TPSNP4 Year 1 of implementation had several important milestones. First, as it was the program start-up year, REST was able to successfully establish 4 new woreda coordination offices and project operations; recruit the project personnel needed to run the TPSNP4 in Relief Society of Tigray/ETHIOPIA ARR FY2017 TPSNP4 Award Number: AID-FFP-A-16-00006 2 Resubmitted on 18 December, 2017

the field and in the Head Office; sign operational agreements with the Government; and orient Government and community institutions on program design, PIM requirements, and annual project plans to garner their ownership and sustained participation in project implementation. Second, the majority of planned activities were successfully implemented, with 85-100% achievement of planned targets for all intervention areas. High level performance was evident in the execution of a wide range of public works, the delivery of safety net food transfers in diverse settings, the introduction of new components like livelihood transfers first piloted in Ethiopia by REST, the effective scale-up of youth oriented and risk (drought) reduction initiatives using mobile technologies, as well as a range of capacity building interventions designed to drive the management and viability of the project into the future. Third, effective implementation of interventions was possible due to REST's strong collaboration and high level of engagement with local government, and grass-root communities at all stages and levels. Other important factors for these successes are strong technical support and capacity within REST; sound participatory approaches during planning, project execution, monitoring and problem solving; timely procurement and delivery of capital inputs; and effective capacity strengthening of communities and government alike, so that they take responsibility for the assets created, and the project overall.

1.2 Key Results Achieved

During the fiscal year 2017, tracking of DFSA/TPSNP4 performance was conducted using established REST monitoring and reporting procedures which measured changes at the community and household levels. Overall project performance was favourable across most activity areas, and high levels of results against planned annual targets were attained. Progress made in achieving stated Sub-Purposes (SP), Intermediate Outcomes (IOC) and Outputs are presented in the following section.

Purpose I: Reduced Vulnerability to Shocks and Stresses

Under Purpose I, REST sought to reduce the vulnerability of PSNP households to shocks and stresses through three integrated measures that are designed to minimize exposure to risk, reduce sensitivity to risk impacts, and improve long-term adaptation capacities to shocks. These combined measures include: (a) stabilizing household consumption and assets via food/cash transfers, (b) improving the management of natural resources, and (c) strengthening local capacities (response) in disaster risk management.

SPI.1 Consumption Gaps Smoothed and Household Asset Base Stabilized

IO 1.1.1 Timely, accessible and appropriate safety net transfers received by clients

In fiscal year 2017, the TPSNP4 focused on delivering safety net transfers to targeted chronically food insecure households in order to stabilize their consumption during the lean, hunger periods, and protect their assets. The basic premise is that appropriate transfers delivered in a timely and predictable manner (in alignment with PIM guidelines), will enhance the ability of the poor to absorb shocks and will help them avoid harmful risk coping strategies (e.g. distress asset sales). To realize this, the project centred its actions on four strategies: a) delivery of USG assisted food resources to targeted households¹; b) instilling the principles of transfer primacy in government and PSNP institutions; c) establishing food distributions centres in proximity to targeted communities, and effective prepositioning of commodities; and d) extending cash transfers to landless youths (linked with public works). Key achievements for the reporting period include:

a. Distribution of USG social assistance (food) to PSNP beneficiaries

Over the past year, REST addressed the consumption needs of chronically food insecure households by directly distributing USG food assistance to 521,715 people (including 5% contingency), thus achieving 105% of the FY17 target. Three distinct categories of PSNP

¹ Note that the cash transfer component (covering 1 to 6 months of food gaps) was extended by the government PSNP with REST monitoring the effective implementation of this transfer.

beneficiaries received the food assistance as planned, and consisted of: i) 387,630 people (202,224 female and 185,406 male) Public Work (PW) beneficiaries who received food transfers for a period of 3-5 months conditional on their participation in public works; ii) 10,581 Temporary Direct Support Beneficiaries (TDS) consisting of 5,028 pregnant and 5,453 lactating women who received 6 months of unconditional food/cash transfers; and iii) 100,496 (35,383 male and 65,113 female) Permanent Direct Support (PDS) beneficiaries who are elderly, disabled or chronically ill people, and received 12 months of food/cash assistance unconditionally. In total, for its regular PSNP caseload, REST distributed 44,492.23MT of food transfers.

A key project assumption, that the Government would provide cash transfers to TPSNP4 beneficiaries for the remaining months, did hold true. Despite complaints by beneficiaries that the cash value was insufficient to purchase an equivalent amount as that of the grain ration (15kg wheat and 4kg pulses per month per person), the Government did cover 1 to 3 months of cash transfers for PW/TDS beneficiaries, and 6 months for PDS beneficiaries.

A greater part of the TPSNP4 food assistance was delivered to female PSNP beneficiaries who constituted some 56 percent of the total caseload for the FY (or 277,918 females). Of the total TPSNP4 HH caseload (i.e. 104,183 HHs), approximately 55% percent were women headed households implying that a large proportion of the safety net assistance delivered in the FY was under the direct control of women. Children under five years were also important beneficiaries of the food assistance in the reporting period, constituting 11% of the TPSNP4 caseload (54,837 children). Given this high rate of participation by women as recipients of TPSNP4 transfers, as well as the support extended to pregnant and lactating mothers, and their children, the contribution of food transfers towards improving mother and child nutrition has been great and substantial. However, further work is needed to improve gender dynamics over the control of transfers in male headed households.

b. Expansion of food distribution centres to reduce travel time and improve commodity handling.

To bring USG food assistance closer to communities, REST managed 45 existing food distribution centres (setup through previous Title II assistance), and established 10 new food storage facilities (100% of annual target for the FY). The intention is to reduce the distance travelled to distribution centres, and associated transport costs which may compromise the adequacy of transfers. As a result, the majority of TPSNP4 beneficiaries were able to access their transfer in closer proximity to their place of residence. REST's post distribution monitoring reports revealed that *82 percent of PSNP beneficiaries travelled for less than 3 hours to collect their transfer in the FY (one way)*. However, there was a marked difference between traditional and new woredas. In four of the new TPSNP4 woredas (where there was no previous Title II support), only between 50%-65% of the beneficiaries were able to collect their ration within three hours of travel. While REST intended to expand its distribution centres in these woredas by renting already existing stores, it failed in doing so due to a lack of warehouse infrastructure in these areas. Similarly, many of the storage facilities that REST rented for temporary distribution purposes in these same woredas were also below standards. This was also noted in the recent Post Distribution Monitoring visit by the USAID/Ethiopia Mission. The situation is expected to improve as the 10 new storage facilities constructed/under construction in the 2017 fiscal year will become operational in YR2. Each of these new distribution centres has the capacity to store up to 500MT of commodities at a time. REST also plans to establish an additional 8 storage facilities in YR2 to expand distribution outreach and reduce travel time to at least the minimum standards set in the PSNP PIM. These storage facilities will not only improve the proximity of distribution centres to community settlements, but also enhance warehouse standards and commodity handling overall.

c. Effective prepositioning of commodities to ensure timely distribution of transfers

A total of 46,753 MT of USAID/FFP obligated food resources were received on time during the FY at the REST Makelle PDP. The delivery of 1,045 MT of pulses was however delayed due to protracted custom clearance requirements at the Djibouti Port. To fill this resource gap, REST borrowed pulses from the JEOP which prevented potential distribution delays and any negative nutritional impacts, though there were some limited distribution delays at a small number of distribution centres. Overall however, REST was able to preposition food resources to its 45 final distribution points (FDP) on a timely basis across all 12 target woredas. Food resources were consistently *prepositioned at final distribution stores at least one month ahead of planned transfers*. As a direct result, prepositioning transfers in this way facilitated smooth access to food supplies, and the timely transfer to beneficiaries.

d. Increase responsiveness to the primacy of transfers by local institutions

To improve both the responsiveness and adherence to the primacy of transfers, REST focused on two interventions in FY17: the development of fixed transfer schedules jointly with tabias; and provision of training on the PSNP4 PIM to increase local FSTF sensitivity towards transfer primacy. In total, fixed transfer schedules were developed for all 276 tabias falling under the TPSNP4, and these were posted in public spaces to communicate to the beneficiaries. The aim was to improve timeliness and predictability (clients know when, how much and type of transfer) by increasing transparency and accountability. However, in practice, adherence to fixed transfer schedules was found to be challenging. Field monitoring reports indicate that only *63% of transfers were delivered according to agreed schedules*. The problem was significant in four of the new TPSNP4 woredas which are new to the approach. In some instances transfers were delayed by up to one month in these areas. It was noted that there is a need for REST to strengthen its follow up in these woredas in order to mainstream the approach properly. Failure to adhere to fixed transfer schedules was mainly associated with PW verification, impacting the timeliness of transfers, particularly for PW beneficiaries. Though the PIM clearly states that PW verification should not be a reason to delay transfers, in practice, there is still a tendency among local FSTF to use PW verification as conditional for transfer delivery. REST will continue to bring this issue forward in regional and federal JRIS meetings as a means of finding better solutions.

Adherence to fixed transfer schedules was better for PDS beneficiaries with most PDS transfers executed on time. These improvements are related to the shift of management responsibilities for PDS beneficiaries to the Tigray Regional Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (BoLSA). In FY17, BoLSA successfully took over the management of PDS beneficiaries in all REST DFSA woredas, and they are effectively collaborating and coordinating with REST and other PSNP stakeholders at woreda and regional levels. As a result, transfers to PDS beneficiaries were timely and effective ever since the shift of responsibilities occurred. To therefore assist BoLSA assume its new role and gain improved capacity, REST supported the training of new BoLSA staff at woreda level with a focus on creating awareness about the PSNP PIM.

e. Cash transfer to landless youth

With high rates of unemployment and landlessness, rural youth in Tigray are among the most vulnerable to food insecurity and other livelihood shocks. Cognizant of this fact, the REST TOC incorporated a special cash transfer component (linked to public works) to address existing vulnerability among rural youth in its operational woredas. In FY17, some 23,500 landless youth (48% female) contributed their labour for specially designed youth-focused public works for which they received 6 months of transfers in cash (94% of the annual target). Specifically, the project transferred a total sum of \$US 1.5 million in payments to the youth, achieving 99.4% of the planned target. Though a formal survey was not carried out, information collected through focus group discussion with youth beneficiaries during regular REST field monitoring revealed that cash transfers have significantly filled their consumption needs. Some youth additionally reported that savings from the transfer helped them to engage in income generating activities which require low initial capital such as backyard poultry farming and petty trading. Almost all invariably

reported that the cash transfer approach has assisted in avoiding risky behaviours and distress migration both within and outside of the country.

REST employed both manual and mobile cash transfer arrangements to deliver the cash to the youth beneficiaries. In regards to mobile cash transfers, REST partnered with a private mobile financial service provider known as M-BIRR, which has relatively better outreach in the rural areas of Tigray. The mobile service, using a network of local agents, allows youth clients to withdraw and collect their transfer from their account using a simple mobile text message. The plan was to execute all cash transfers to the youth through this mobile system, however during the reporting period it was only possible to reach 4,083 youth clients (1,752 female) due to (a) challenges with the mobile service provider, and (b) the longer than expected time it has taken to register/enter the youth into the system and open individual mobile bank accounts. The registration process is still continuing and REST expects to finalize the process before the start of the public work season in YR2. In regard to the manual cash transfer, REST deployed its cashiers to manage payments at field level. REST applied standard financial control procedures to ensure the proper management of the cash transfer including (a) engaging existing PSNP local institutions at tabia and woreda levels in the identification and selection of the landless beneficiaries, and verification and approval of youth public work attendance sheets; (b) verification of client identity through the use of client cards during payments; and (c) segregation of duties between those involved in payroll preparation and those who perform the actual payments to mitigate possible fraud and abuse of resources.

Progress toward achievement of outcomes under SP 1.1

The TPSNP4 is generally on-track to achieve stated outcomes pertaining to the stabilizing effect of transfers on household consumption and assets. Performances variances in the timeliness of transfers, the 5 person cap on family size, and the lower value of cash transfers are ongoing challenges that could deter the achievement of better results in this area.

Though the degree is relatively low, REST post distribution monitoring assessments continue to find that 8% of PSNP households in REST DFSA woredas did experience distress asset sales to meet their food needs. Many households reported that the cap on family size and the lower value of cash transfers as being the major factors driving them to make distress asset sales. A similar finding was also reported in the recent DFAP Final Performance Evaluation².

The issue of “inadequacy of cash transfer” is particularly concerning for the coming program year given the recent change in context related to the devaluation of the Ethiopian Birr by 15% against the USD. The major concern is that the devaluation will lead to higher inflation including for food prices. As most of the REST DFSA woredas practice a food/cash mix approach involving 2 to 3 months of cash transfers, it is expected that they will be impacted by the change. Unless the Government urgently considers increasing the value of cash transfers, the contribution of cash transfers in stabilizing consumption and household assets could be further undermined. The “provision of adequate cash transfer by the government” is one of the critical assumptions considered in the REST TOC to achieve SPI.1 (consumption gaps smoothed and HH assets stabilized). REST will therefore collaborate with the USAID Ethiopia Mission and other DFSA partners to advocate for change and improvements in both the “cap on family size” and “cash transfer value” issues.

SPI.2 Climate Smart Natural Resource Management Enhanced

The hypothesis for this outcome is based on the central logic that a thriving environment is better positioned to absorb the impacts of a natural disaster than a degraded environment. Activities under Sub-purpose 1.2 therefore seek to tackle environmental risks evident in TPSNP4 areas, as well as increase adaptation to hazards and climate variability, by implementing measures that reduce land degradation by curbing soil and water erosion, increasing vegetation cover, and promoting better land use and management strategies. The key results achieved during FY17 toward this outcome are as presented below:

² USAID (2017): Performance Evaluation of Title II Funded Development Food Assistance Program in Ethiopia. Relief Society of Tigray/ETHIOPIA ARR FY2017 TPSNP4 Award Number: AID-FFP-A-16-00006 6 Resubmitted on 18 December, 2017

IOC 1.2.1 Improved Soil Conservation and Moisture Availability

The REST DFSA used Title II food resources to effectively mobilize community labour for the execution of a wide range of physical soil and water conservation measures across all project watersheds. These are physical barriers that are built to arrest land degradation and enhance soil moisture and groundwater tables by reducing erosion and increasing rainwater capture. During the FY, the project restored a total of 8,964 hectares of degraded catchments in 278 sites by applying different SWC techniques (92% achievement of the annual target). This action directly benefited 3,856 farmers (1,081 females) who own farmlands in lower catchment areas due to its effect in controlling floods and thereby reducing farmland vulnerability to flood hazards and associated soil erosion risks.

The TPSNP4 also successfully reclaimed 10.17km of gully canals located in 25 sites (107% of the annual target). A most destructive type of land degradation, gully erosion causes serious damage to farmlands if left uncontrolled, and can lead to a total loss of affected plots. As gully erosion involves heavy flooding, REST ensured that the physical barriers (check dams) were properly designed and executed to high quality standards in order to withstand the water-flow pressure and be long lasting, with technical support from REST SWC engineers and woreda government experts. Industrial materials such as cement and gabion were also supplied by the project to reinforce the check dams and increase structural stability. As a result of gully reclamation work, 390 farmers (124 females) who were previously at the risk of losing their farmland to gully erosion were directly protected in the reporting period.

To specifically increase underground water recharge, the project also constructed 1,000 percolation structures (93% of annual target). By collecting rainwater run-off during the rainy season into dugout ponds (water holding capacity of 450m³), channels, and deep trenches, percolation structures help water to infiltrate into the ground and enrich the groundwater aquifers. Due to their importance in groundwater recharging, the percolation structures were integrated with 89 existing potable water supply schemes across REST DFSA woredas which are servicing some 75,000 people of whom 39,450 were female and the remaining 35,550 were male. In addition to increasing water discharge, this action has significantly lowered the incidence of wells drying up during extreme climate events like drought.

Comment/Response No 4: REST confirms that an error was made in describing the activities being reported on. That is, instead of stating “percolation structures” the report incorrectly referred to “percolation ponds” only, while the achievements described referred to all percolation techniques applied by the project in the FY including ponds, channels and deep trenches. REST has now revised the description on percolation structures consistent with the DIP.

Comment/Response No 5: Comment accepted. REST has now included gender disaggregated data for the number of people who were served by potable water points. The total beneficiaries were 75,000 people of whom 39,450 were female and the remaining 35,550 were male.

To combat land degradation, over 23,500 landless youth took part in specially designed SWC public works (i.e. Landless Youth Public Works). Remuneration for the work performed was in the form of Title II cash transfers. A popular initiative introduced by REST, during the fiscal year 2017 LYPW has resulted in the conversion of 625 hectares of degraded hillsides (90.3% of the target) into farmlands by applying bench terracing- a special SWC technique which involves the construction of a series of nearly level strips of land running vertically across a slope. Improved hillsides/farmlands were then apportioned to 1,250 landless youths (562 female or 45%) with each individual youth receiving access to 0.25 hectare plots. The size of the plots was decided based on the regional policy for apportioning recovered hillsides, which sets the maximum limits to 0.25 hectares per person. REST woreda SWC engineers and pertinent government staff were responsible for

providing technical support during site identification, and the design of bench terrace activities. REST field staff additionally provided close coaching and supported the youth to acquire land ownership certificates in discussion with local administration. An important consideration when all bench terrace sites were selected is access to irrigation water to ensure the youth obtain optimal productivity from their small plots. Cultivation of the bench terraces by the youth owners will commence in FY18. REST will provide training on irrigation agronomy and facilitate access to improved high value seeds. Therefore, by creating new arable lands near water sources the project is assisting previously landless youth to engage in productive farming activities and effectively supplement their food and income sources.

The implementation of all SWC activities was on the basis of established participatory approaches involving community food security task forces, watershed committees and the PSNP community at large. To ensure planned SWC actions had no adverse environmental and social impacts, Environmental and Social Management Framework Assessments (ESMFA) were carried out for each watershed site prior to implementation. To retain the quality standards of SWC public works, training was also given to 797 people (140 females) consisting of foremen, public work group leaders and DAs who are in charge of leading the work technically at local level. The quality of the SWC structures was closely monitored by REST field staff and Woreda Agriculture Offices as part of the regular process of Public Work verification as required under the PSNP PIM. These assessments confirmed that most of the structures were developed according to the design specifications set in the PSNP Participatory Community Based Watershed Development Guideline (PCBWD).

To facilitate the sustainable management of the rehabilitated lands and SWC structures, REST has handed over management responsibility to the respective Watershed Committees (in 276 sites). Watershed Committees have ample experience using free community labour mobilization to carryout maintenance needs in SWC areas (which is happening annually for 20 days); and they have their own local bylaws through which they coordinate operations and maintenance of structures, benefit sharing mechanisms, guarding and overall resource management. Training was provided by REST to strengthen Watershed Committees and improve existing local bylaws, ensuring the fair and effective management of NRM resources.

IOC 1.2.2 Environmentally and Economically Sound Vegetation Cover Increased

To tackle environmental risks in TPSNP4 watersheds REST has sought to sustainably increase vegetation cover using three strategies: (a) tree plantation measures to reforest degraded lands; (b) protection of degraded communal lands through enclosures; and (c) promotion of fuel saving stoves to curb deforestation.

a. Reforestation and tree planting

Consistent with project plans for FY17, over 17 million multipurpose tree seedlings were planted on approximately 6,833 hectares of degraded land (101% of the annual target), including coverage on communal lands, private homesteads and institutions (e.g. schools, health centres and farmer training centres). To improve the survival rate of planted seedlings, plantation activities were purposely integrated with moisture harvesting structures (e.g. micro basin, trench), and post plantation management was applied to nearly half of the plantation sites on communal lands including through watering, weeding, hoeing and mulching. To facilitate access to water sources for seedlings, the project constructed 27 mini-ponds inside plantation sites with each having a volume of 450m³ (93% of the annual target). The project also supported 95 community nurseries with inputs and technical advice to raise the seedling planned for the year.

Comment/Response No 6: Of the total 17 million tree seedlings raised in the FY17, around 11,958,375 seedlings were planted on communal areas; 1,708,339 were planted at institutions (such as health facilities, schools and other government institutions); and approximately 3,416, 678 seedlings were planted on individual homesteads. The individual

plantation activities have directly benefited a total of 97, 620 households (10,235 females), who on average planted 35 seedlings each in their individual holdings/backyards.

As part of the TPSNP4 reforestation measures, the project also promoted agro forestry measures to enhance livestock forage, soil fertility and to retain moisture on selected individual farmlands. During the FY17, a total of 681 hectares of farmland (113% of annual target) were planted with 1.4 million multipurpose trees benefiting 750 households (225 female) (110% of the target). This was supported by training on how to manage the planted seedlings for 228 agro forestry beneficiaries (69 female) (108% of the annual target). Ensuring a continued supply of tree seedlings is a key sustainability issue related to reforestation activities, and will primarily be addressed by encouraging market based tree seedling production whereby the management of 50% of community tree nurseries will be handed over to private seedling producers. In line with this Government directive, REST will commence transferring the ownership of 9 community tree nurseries to organized landless youth groups starting in YR2 as initially planned. This move is expected to lay the foundation for, and facilitate a sustainable market-based seedling supply in advance of the project exit period.

Overall, the program is well on track in terms of achieving the output targets set under IOC 1.2.2 for the year. An important output indicator under this activity component related to the “survival rate of planted seedlings” will be implemented and then measured in the coming year in May due to seasonal factors, with the findings reported in the FY18 ARR.

b. Enclosure management

During the reporting period, the TPSNP4 supported the protection of 81,326 hectares of existing, and 4,090 hectares of new enclosure areas in order to improve vegetation cover on degraded lands (100% and 102% of the annual targets respectively). The main objective is to facilitate the self-regeneration of remnant plants within degraded areas by prohibiting human and livestock entry. Using Title II PSNP PW transfers, the project assigned guards who are PSNP beneficiaries and selected by the community to look after the protected areas. While the new enclosure sites will take some time to regenerate, older enclosure sites are continuing to provide important ecosystem services to targeted communities including access to forest products, fodder for livestock as well as serving as valuable sites for beekeeping and honey production for landless households, and in particular youths.

Comment/Response No 7: During the FY17, a total of 84,640 people (27,084 females) have economically benefitted from enclosure areas. For the majority of beneficiaries (80,140), benefits have accrued from having access to livestock forage/grasses from enclosure sites on the basis of a cut and carry system; while the remaining 4,500 people (1,340 females) generated income by undertaking group beekeeping activities inside the developed enclosure areas.

As part of the exit and sustainability strategy in enclosure management, during the reporting period, the project handed over the management responsibility of 4,336 hectares of old enclosure sites to respective Community Watershed Committees. The sites were handed over after being properly assessed that the vegetation cover on these lands is well developed to avail forest and fodder resources for household/livestock use, and to improve the livelihood of the surrounding community. The assessment was conducted jointly by REST, woreda BoANR, DA and representatives of the community watershed committees, and the handover was completed through joint efforts and consultation within each community. To facilitate the handover process, REST provided training to all watershed committees as a means of improving the internal bylaws that guide the mobilization of resources from members (e.g. labour and fee contributions for future maintenance and guarding expense), and ensure equitable resource sharing.

c. Fuel saving stoves

To achieve incremental improvements in vegetation cover, in addition to planting new trees, it is also important to work on the demand side to reduce the rate of deforestation. To this effect, REST promoted the use of low cost improved fuel saving stoves which have the potential to cut household fuel wood consumption by up to 50%. During FY2017, REST provided 1,018 improved fuel saving stoves to selected women HHs across the TPSNP4 woredas who will be serving as model households to disseminate the benefit of the technology to others in their communities (113% of the annual target). Of these women, 310 were trained on the details of the technology, and its benefits (including both fuel wood reduction, and health benefits such as the reduced risk of eye infection and exposure to respiratory diseases) so that they will be able to effectively communicate the message about the stove and hence influence other HHs in the community. REST worked with 34 private improved fuel saving stove producers located in the TPSNP4 woredas (set up by different actors) to source the stoves. Assessments undertaken by REST suggest that the stove producers are not functioning to their full capacity due mainly to limited market outreach. REST has planned to continue working with them in expanding their outreach in the coming years, and has already set higher targets for awareness raising and promotional activities in its YR2 plan. In addition to reducing deforestation and hence vegetation cover, this intervention will also stimulate the market for improved stoves, and enhance the incomes of existing private producers.

IOC 1.2.3 Environmental Governance Improved

To convert investments in NRM into self-sustaining results, the role of strong community based structures at grass root level is crucial. While there are a number of community institutions organized around NRM management, their effectiveness is in general constrained by managerial and technical capacities. This intervention particularly targeted Community Watershed Committees (CWC) and User Groups organized around NRM and it focused on three strategies to build capacity: a) training; b) exposure visits and c) organizing multi-stakeholder forums to encourage local policy discussions. During the reporting period, the TPSNP4 extended tailored training to 373 watershed committee members. The training covered both managerial (how to build group solidarity, setting clear bylaws to manage internal affairs/conflicts and resource allocations, leadership skills in facilitating participation with special consideration for marginalized groups such as FHH and landless youths, understanding the legal environment (natural resources policies and strategies) and the technical aspects (including watershed planning, CVCA tools, and ESMF). Though it was planned to organize one multi-stakeholder forum in every woreda on an annual basis, it was not possible to rollout the forums due to complications in bringing the relevant actors together within the given timeframe. REST will strengthen its planning, follow-up and supervision to ensure the realization of the forum in the coming year.

Results of SPI.2 Outcome Indicators:

The TPSNP4 IPTT sets out four outcome indicators under SPI.2 to measure changes at both Sub-purpose and Intermediate Outcome level results. Information gathered through REST's regular monitoring indicates that the project is well on track toward achieving the outcomes, with achievements for most of the indicators ranging from 92% to 109% against targets. Some of the important progress made toward achieving outcomes in this regard includes the following:

- *Hectares of closed areas with improved management practices as a result of USG assistance.*
This outcome indicator was met with a 96% achievement against the set IPTT target. During the reporting period a total of 81,326 hectares of enclosure areas were assessed to have been put under improved management practices. Though the project closed more areas in the reporting period (84,525 hectares), no improved management practices were noticed on 4,090 hectares of enclosures as these sites were new. The remaining sites were existing enclosures and the relatively well established vegetation cover on these sites allowed community members to practice improved management such as applying a cut and carry system to collect fodder from closed areas, and allowing landless youth groups to establish beekeeping production inside the closed areas.

- % of watershed committees and user groups practiced their role and responsibilities. This outcome indicator measures the changes brought about by TPSNP4 activities through capacity building actions related to environmental governance. Over 43% of community watershed committees (or 150 CWC) who received capacity building support were found to apply the learning and effectively discharge their roles and responsibilities. The REST monitoring assessment found the committees to have at least updated their respective watershed by-laws, developed maintenance plans, and started to regularly consult with their respective communities to decide on resource allocations in an equitable manner. This achievement is, however, 108% of the IPTT target and indicates that REST was ambitious in setting the target for this indicator. Thus, on the basis of progress achieved in FY17, REST may revise its IPTT target for YR2.

SP 1.3 Improved Local Capacities to Manage Disaster Risk

IOC 1.3.1 Increased Local Capacity to Prevent and Mitigate Disaster Risk

Achievement of IOC 1.3.1 was pursued through four strategies: (a) support for the adoption of improved and diversified coping strategies by farmers; (b) mainstreaming disaster/climate sensitive planning among local government and community institutions; (c) strengthening local early warning systems; and (d) facilitating the process whereby a continuum of responses are put in place. The key achievements during FY17 under this component are:

a. Improved and diversified coping strategies adopted by women and men

During the reporting period, REST trained 764 PSNP farmers (267 female) on diversified Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) techniques and technologies that help farmers to cope with the impact of drought (100% of the annual target). Topics covered in the training included the benefit of using drought tolerant and short maturing crops, mulching, seed priming techniques particularly for maize crops, as well as fodder conservation for emergency livestock feed. In addition to theoretical sessions, the training was accompanied by practical demonstrations especially for mulching, seed priming and display of samples of locally available drought tolerant and short maturing crops for the different crop varieties. The training was provided jointly by REST woreda crop experts and woreda BoANR staff.

In the same period, REST also supported 3,335 farmers (34% female HHs) to gain access to Weather Index Crop Insurance so as to enhance the capacity of PSNP HHs to cope with shock (83.4% of the annual target). To facilitate the access to insurance, REST collaborated with R4 weather index program implemented by REST with support from Oxfam America and WFP³. The R4 program provided the insurance coverage through an insurance-for-work arrangement, whereby farmers pay the insurance premium through their labour by participating in certain public work activities organized by the insurance service provider. The TPSNP4 covered the premium required to buy the service for the targeted farmers, while the farmers in addition to their labour, contributed 15% of the total premium in a direct cash payment. On top of this, the TPSNP4 organized awareness raising events for 4,000 people (36% female) to inspire PSNP farmers to make use of the crop insurance service available in their area through the R4 program. Encouragingly, out of those farmers that participated in the awareness raising event, 1,820 of them did purchase the insurance coverage from the R4 program immediately after the event. Taking note of this positive achievement, REST DFSA discussed with R4 program team on ways to strengthen future collaboration and integration between the two programs. Consensus was reached in two key areas: a) as the crop insurance service is now available in 7 out of the 12 REST DFSA woredas and is open for all PSNP households, REST will focus more on scaling up its awareness raising activities; and b) R4 will avail sufficient funds to cover the premiums for vulnerable farmers who prefer to access the service through an insurance-for-work arrangement. In view of this change, REST will consider revising its YR2 PREP to focus its

³ R4 refers to the four integrated risk management strategies found in REST's weather insurance project which aim to strengthen farmers' food and income security. These consist of improved **resource management** (risk reduction), **insurance** (risk transfer), **microcredit** (risk taking), and **savings** (risk reserves).

activity targets and budget on crop insurance toward awareness raising actions. In FY2017, a total of 27,024 PSNP households (9,377 females or 34.7%) in REST DFSA woredas accessed crop insurance from R4 to safeguard themselves against potential drought shocks.

b. Local government and community institutions trained on disaster/climate sensitive planning

To mainstream disaster sensitive planning REST trained 1,735 members of Community institutions (433 female) during the FY which is 99.8 percent of the annual target.

Watershed committees were specifically targeted for this intervention in view of their important role in the preparation of watershed development plans across REST DFSA woredas. Topics covered during the training included understanding of shocks and stresses, including hazards/disasters; the effects, trends and causes of exposure; how human action can reduce (or increase) vulnerability; and where to focus for more benefits and avoid negative impacts. The training was provided by the respective woreda government early warning experts. REST expects that the impact of this training will be reflected in subsequent watershed planning seasons starting from project YR2. Progress in this area will be closely monitored by REST, and reported on in subsequent ARR.

Comment/Response No 8: REST has noted an error in the figure reported as an achievement for the training of community and sectoral institutions. As stated in the DIP, the correct number of people trained in the FY was 1,735 (433 females) which is 99.8 percent of the annual target. REST has now revised the achievement statement and figure accordingly.

c. Local early warning systems strengthened

The TPSNP4 strengthened existing Early Warning Committees (EWC) in 276 tabias. The capacity building effort consisted of provisions for both training and technical backstopping. During the FY, the project trained 132 people (33 female) on disaster risk management (DRM) principles, preparedness, emergency response planning, and trigger indicators which is 93 percent of the annual target.

Comment/Response No 9: REST has noted the numerical error in the achievement report related to the training of local Early Warning Committee members. The correct number of Early Warning Committee members trained in FY17 is 132 (33 females) which is 93 percent of the annual target (see DIP Line: 109). REST has revised the figure accordingly.

Further, REST provided technical assistance to EWC by assigning early warning experts at woreda level. REST early warning staff facilitated the regular collection of early warning data at woreda level and provided technical advice by working as a central member of the woreda EWC. Early warning data collected with the support of TPSNP4 included 22 different indicators ranging from rainfall data, to crop yields (type, market price), livestock conditions (including disease, mortality, feed, water and market), food (consumption, gap and overall food security), labour (availability and wage rates), coping strategies and nutrition indicators (acute malnutrition-both complicated and with no complication). This information has been used by woreda EWC to decide a) on the use and allocation of the woreda level PSNP contingency budget for different tabias to respond timely to localized shocks; and b) to report and request additional emergency response/assistance from the region in case of transitory needs.

Comment/Response No 10: To strengthen early warning systems at woreda level, the TPSNP4 supports the timely collection and dissemination of early warning data on selected indicators. As the functioning of local early warning systems involves the participation of multi-sectoral representatives, the TPSNP4 focuses on availing early warning data on a diverse set of indicators to assist with evidence-based planning and decision making at local level. The TPSNP4 collects early warning data on some 22 different indicators ranging from rainfall data, to crop yields, livestock conditions, overall food security and nutrition indicators. Some of the data collected was directly used by REST to inform TPSNP4 activity decisions such as food/cash mix approaches (using data on crop yields and price trends), and

contingency budget use (food gap indicators). On the other hand, some of the early warning indicators were shared with relevant institutions with the intention to influence decisions at woreda level. For instance, REST shares information on livestock disease outbreaks in order to sensitize the woreda animal health departments to get prepared for an effective response. Similarly, information on acute malnutrition has been directed to woreda health offices to help them get prepared for a response by arranging the required therapeutic feeding inputs. Therefore, the early warning information that REST has been collecting during the FY has not only been used to inform REST DFSA interventions (such as contingency budget use), but were also disseminated to relevant actors at woreda level in a timely manner to both inform and assist them towards preparing for suitable responses on their own part. However, despite efforts to disseminate timely early warning information to relevant woreda actors, REST has noted a gap in terms of monitoring how the information supplied has been used by woreda actors for actually triggering a response. Therefore, monitoring the use of early warning information by woreda sector offices will be a major area of focus for REST in YR2 of project implementation.

d. Continuum of response put in place

During FY17, the TPSNP4 prepositioned contingency food resources required to ensure a continuum of response so that evolving household food security needs are addressed in a timely manner during shocks, and as a safeguard for protecting household assets and livelihoods. In alignment with the PSNP PIM, the contingency budget consisted of two parts:

- **11% federal contingency budget:** totaling 3,831 MT of food (3,025 MT wheat and 807MT of pulses). Triggered upon the decision by the Federal Food Security Office, the contingency budget is being used to cover transitory emergency needs in three REST DFSA woredas (Offla, HintaloWajerat and KollaTembien) which were assessed as hotspot woredas experiencing severe food shortages due to drought. The contingency food is being used to extend the transfer to a total of 89,093 PSNP PW beneficiaries in these three woredas by two months. However, the decision to trigger the use of the federal contingency budget was delayed by up to two months. Though further assessment is needed to better understand how such a delayed decision impacted the affected beneficiaries, it nevertheless has undermined the project's commitment to guarantee a continuum of response in a timely manner.
- **5% woreda contingency budget:** totaling 1,687.58MT of food. REST effectively worked with woreda EWC and Food Security Offices to timely distribute the woreda contingency food resources. Accordingly, the contingency food budget was distributed to a total of 23,008 non-PSNP beneficiaries (11,453 female) in eleven woredas who were assessed to require additional support in response to localized shocks. The woreda contingency budget was used to cover transitory need and correct exclusion error for 3-5 months. Unlike the federal level contingency budget, the woreda contingency budget was triggered in a timely manner.

Comment/Response No 11: REST accepts the comment. The correct tonnage amount used for the distribution of 5% of contingency food resources is as per the IC data which is 1,687.58 MT. REST has revised the amount accordingly.

In times of transitory needs that go beyond the capacity of the contingency budget, the project assumed the additional need would be met from government HRD/JEOP emergency resources. Fortunately the project did not encounter such incidents during the FY. While the assumption still seems to hold true, the experience from the delayed decision in the use of the federal contingency budget is indicative of the potential challenge the project may face in accessing timely HRD responses to ensure its continuum of responses when needs arise.

Results of SP 1.3 Outcome Indicators

The REST IPTT has one outcome indicator under SPI.3:

- Number of people using climate information or implementing risk reducing actions to improve resilience to climate change as supported by USG assistance. The progress toward achieving this target during the FY was very positive. REST’s regular monitoring report found that 4,593 people (94% of annual IPTT target) were effectively implementing risk reduction measures to improve resilience to climate change. Major contributing factor to this achievement was the successful result achieved in promoting Weather Index Insurance in the FY. In particular, the project’s awareness raising event led to a wider adoption of the Weather Index Insurance by farmers. Though this achievement is positive, results for the adoption of diverse sets of technologies are less favorable. There is also little evidence to show farmers are using climate information to improve resilience to climate change. Therefore, these mixed results suggest that REST will need to strengthen its approaches and follow-up of training activities on DRR techniques and technologies in FY18. REST will also consider revising its IPTT target at more realistic levels to better capture change.

Purpose 2: Agricultural Production and Productivity among Women and Men Improved

Under Purpose 2, REST’s Theory of Change positioned sustained access to agricultural water (within the context of arid climates) as a critical *game-changer* for making smallholder agriculture more productive, diverse, and resilient through two overarching intervention areas: (a) enhanced agriculture water use and management (for crops and livestock) including the strengthening of local water user institutions; and (b) improving access to, and use of locally appropriate agriculture technologies and practices (i.e. input supply, farmer knowledge and behaviors). Key achievements under this purpose during FY17 include:

SP 2.1 Improved Uses and Sustainable Management of Agricultural Water Resources

IOC 2.1.1 Increased Access to Small Scale Irrigation Water by M/WHHs

During FY17, the TPSNP4 constructed 374 small scale irrigation (SSI) schemes comprised of six different types of technologies with a combined irrigation potential of 689 hectares across the 12 REST DFSA woredas (87% of the annual hectares of target). This under achievement was related to the delayed construction of one mini-dam which was not completed during the reporting period (current construction status at 80%). REST did however incorporate the needed budget in its YR2 PREP in order to complete the remaining work. In FY17, the implementation of SSI public works was generally delayed due to the protracted Food for Peace IEE and Environmental Plan approval processes. Since restricted approval was received in April 2017, the majority of SSI associated public works only commenced after this period.

As a result of the construction of the SSI, a total of 2,710 HHs (813 female HHs) obtained access to irrigation water (90% of annual target). To boost women’s control over irrigation resources, small hand dug wells were designed and specifically targeted at women farmers enabling 338 WHHs to gain individual access to irrigation water. Of the total irrigation beneficiaries, 1,950 HHs have access to irrigation on a full time basis which will enable them to produce up to three harvests per year; while the remaining 760 HHs who have benefited from spate irrigation schemes have access to supplementary irrigation only. Gathering of production data was not possible during the reporting period as the irrigation season is expected to start after November 2017. However, farmers with supplementary irrigation have effectively used the irrigation water to complement their rain-fed crops as meher rainfall ceased early during the long 2017 rain season. Though the impact on production will only be known after the coming harvest (December 2017), beneficiary farmers expressed that owing to spate irrigation, they have been able to avoid a discernible decline in crop production due to the failed rains.

No	Description of Irrigation Scheme	Annual Number of Schemes			Area Covered by Irrigation (Hectares)			Remark
		Target	Achieved	%	Target	Achieved	%	

1.	Mini dam	1	0	0	80	0	0	Under construction, 80%completed
2.	River diversion	6	6	100	210	190	90.5	
3.	Spate	1	1	100	300	320	106	
4.	Water harvesting check dam	27	27	100	126	126	100	
5.	Spring development	2	2	100	16	16	100	
6.	Small open hand dug wells	338	338	100	42.25	37.5	89	
Total:		375	374	99.7	794.5	689.5	87	

Comment/Response No 12: Comment is accepted. This is a typographical error as the percentage achievement in irrigation schemes is 99.7 percent. REST has revised the percentage accordingly.

In implementing the SSI schemes, REST strictly followed standard procedures to address ownership, environmental issues and quality concerns. Prior to construction, irrigation sites were selected after thorough consultation with communities to promote ownership and avoid negative social impacts. Technical feasibility studies, including environmental risk assessments, were also carried out to determine the type of SSI technology suited to the different agro-ecology and topography of the targeted areas. To ensure structural quality, REST assigned experienced irrigation engineers to provide technical support to local government staff and the community during site selection, feasibility study, design and construction. The community contributed labour through PSNP public works, while the project provided industrial inputs (e.g. cement) and mobilized heavy duty machineries required for excavation and compaction works (e.g. dozers, excavators and dump trucks). Upon completion of the SSI schemes, REST successfully handed over each scheme to the respective Water User Associations (WUA) for proper, sustained management and utilization.

IOC 2.1.2 Increased Access to Water for Livestock Production

As part of efforts to increase access to agriculture water, the TPSNP4 sought to bring water sources closer to homesteads and animals as a means of preserving the health and productivity of livestock assets. In FY2017, a total of 23 livestock and 27 bee-watering ponds were constructed, achieving 92% and 93% of annual targets, respectively. The bee-watering ponds were strategically linked with 27 landless youth groups who are undertaking beekeeping activities inside enclosure sites, benefiting 300 youth (102 females) in total from the combined activities. The developed livestock water points are currently serving over 2,530 livestock owners with an estimated 12,656 heads of livestock having daily access to water for about 2 to 4 month periods. Though it was difficult to assess the impact of reduced distance traveled to water sources on livestock productivity through regular monitoring, on average the distance was found to drop from 4 km to 1.5km in targeted areas as a result of the livestock watering ponds. Many studies on livestock water productivity suggest that the loss in animal body weight from long distance travel is considerable as more energy and fat is consumed by animals during trekking.

Comment/Response No 13: Of the 300 landless youths who are engaged in group beekeeping activities inside enclosure areas, 102 of them (or 34%) are female youths. REST has now revised the achievement on the basis of sex disaggregated data.

IOC 2.1.3 Improved Management of Small Scale Irrigation Systems

During FY17, REST supported the establishment of 30 Water User Associations (WUA) to guarantee the sustainable use and management of SSI schemes constructed through TPSNP4 (96% of annual target) investments. Elected from among the direct water users, each WUA has set up leadership structures that coordinate the routine functions of the association including developing bylaws, water rationing, and collection of fees, and mobilizing members for maintenance of the schemes. Training was provided by REST to 443 WUA core members to strengthen their technical and leadership capacities, including the upkeep of

canals (98% of the annual target). In similar undertakings, REST also supported the establishment of 23 WUA for livestock watering ponds so that they are better able to maintain pond assets and ensure the equitable use of the water resources (92% of the annual target). To facilitate ongoing access to technical support into the future, REST further linked the WUA to relevant woreda government offices including the Woreda offices for Water Development, Agricultural and Rural Development, and Cooperatives.

Result of SP2.1 Outcome Indicators

Results for several of the outcome indicators under this SP 2.1 are positive and show that the project is on the right track toward achieving the intent of Purpose 2. One of the important outcome indicators that saw relatively weak performance was: “*Number of households benefiting from small scale irrigation as a result of USG assistance*”. Achievement of the target for this outcome indicator is lower than expected at 89% for the FY as a result of late IEE and Environmental Plan approvals by FFP. Despite these unforeseen delays, REST exerted maximum efforts to realize the planned targets within the relatively short public works season, with the exception of just one mini-dam scheme. Given that the PW season is known to run for only six months from January to June, it is incumbent on FFP to approve all environmental requirements on time, thus allowing REST to complete SSI activities within the designated PW season, and for farmers to commence irrigating immediately and within the FY timeframes.

SP 2.2 Increased Use of Improved Agricultural Techniques, Technologies, Inputs

IOC 2.2.1 Increased Access to Improved Agricultural Techniques and Inputs among Women and Men HHs

Augmenting SSI schemes with improved agronomic practices and inputs is crucial to maximize gains in productivity from irrigation activities. In FY17, REST facilitated access to improved high value crops and other inputs to irrigation water users, and extended capacity building support through training to improve their skills and knowledge on irrigation agronomy. Specifically, the support included the following:

a. Increased access to local and improved agricultural seeds and inputs

Fruit: Over the past year REST distributed 99,150 fruit tree seedlings to poor farmers (97% of annual target) to facilitate their shift towards high value and market based crop production. The seedlings were raised in 4 community fruit nurseries supported by the project, and distributed to a total of 3,305 beneficiaries (760 female), achieving 97% of the annual target. As part of its sustainability plan, the TPSNP4 supported the establishments of 8 private fruit seedling nurseries run by organized landless groups that consist of 11 youth members per group (4 female). REST support has been in the form of initial nursery inputs and skill training to build the capacities of the private nurseries. Over the course of the year, these private nurseries managed to produce/supply 8,050 fruit seedlings. Building on this positive experience, REST has also planned to handover the management of community fruit nurseries currently under the TPSNP4, to private producers (to organized landless youth) in the coming three years. This intervention will not only enhance access to a sustained supply of fruit seedlings in targeted project areas, but also contribute to increased participation of private sector actors in the supply of fruit seedlings. The opportunities this offers to landless youth to diversify their incomes and livelihoods are enormous.

Vegetable seed supply: To improve the productivity, incomes and nutrition of small scale irrigation users, some 7.2 quintals of different varieties of improved vegetable seeds were supplied to 6,673 farmers (36% female HHs). The vegetable seeds distributed consisted of onion, tomato, swisschard, cabbage, lettuce, and carrot distributed (97% of annual target). As a result of this intervention, more than 939 hectares of irrigated land plots were put under high value vegetable production systems. On-site technical assistance and advice to farmers was also facilitated by strengthening farmer links to existing government extension services.

Water lifting technologies: Water-lifting technologies made up of 78 water pumps were provided to 308 farmers (91 women HHs) in order to improve water use efficiency from Relief Society of Tigray/ETHIOPIA ARR FY2017 TPSNP4 Award Number: AID-FFP-A-16-00006 16 Resubmitted on 18 December, 2017

wells, and other water harvesting schemes established through TPSNP4 public works. This action enabled targeted beneficiaries to cultivate 98 hectares of land. As a result of continued technical support, approximately 85% of beneficiaries opting for a water-lifting technology were properly using it and practicing irrigation on their farmlands. Training and continued technical support by REST and the woreda BOARD expert were important for ensuring this achievement.

A key project assumption that “ATA Farmer Service Centres (FSC)⁴ will be established and linked to REST DFSA beneficiaries for the sustainable supply of improved vegetable seeds and other agriculture inputs” did not materialize during the reporting period. As the centres only went operational towards the end of FY17, the only project activities that were implemented were joint discussion on how to implement the linkage in the upcoming year. ATA has established three FSC in Tigray of which two are in close proximity to REST DFSA woredas. Given the centres are now functioning, REST will effectively collaborate with ATA FSC to realize the linkage for beneficiaries in all DFSA woredas in YR2.

IOC 2.2.2 Female and Male HHs Trained on Improved Agriculture Practices and Technologies

During the year, the TPSNP4 provided various capacities building training sessions to 7,881 farmers (2,367 female) small scale irrigation farmers with a focus on improved agronomic practices and the efficient use of irrigation water (100% of the annual target). To effectively transfer the desired skills and knowledge to participants, the trainings were supported with practical exercises and demonstrations.

Result of SP2.2 Outcome Indicators:

The TPSNP4 is progressing well towards the achievement of outcomes under SP2.2; the rates of achievement for three of the outcome indicators developed to measure change along this pathway were between 98% and 106%. The outcome indicator: *Number of men and women HHs who have accessed to improved agricultural inputs* was 98% met. REST’s monitoring reports show that a considerable number of farmers (12,437 HHs) have benefited from USG assistance in agricultural inputs. A large part of this achievement is ascribed to the supply of improved fruit seedlings to a large number of farmers during the FY, followed by vegetable seeds. The supply of water lifting technologies specifically targeting poor women HH farmers was also a prominent achievement in this area from the point of strengthening women’s agricultural productivity and incomes, as well as asset ownership and overall empowerment. Given the inputs promoted are sources of nutritionally rich food, their contribution towards enhanced diet diversity in targeted localities will be considerable.

Purpose 3: Improved Sustainable Livelihoods of Vulnerable Women, Men and Youth Groups

Purpose 3 aims to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable households by transitioning them from insecure and fragile sources of income to more sustainable incomes and livelihoods through two strategies: (a) provide a complete livelihood transfer package specifically designed for poorest households that consists of a productive asset transfer on a grant basis, skills training, savings promotion, and intensive coaching; and (b) extending general livelihood support to all PSNP households including interventions to improve access to finance, entrepreneurship development support, literacy services, and access to markets. In FY17, two contextual design considerations have also guided the implementation of Purpose 3 activities.

- In 7 REST DFSA Woredas where the TPSNP4 geographically layers with the USAID supported Livelihood for Resilience Activity (L4R), REST’s focus is on collaboration and coordination to best link DFSA beneficiaries to livelihood services provided by the L4R.

⁴ The Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA) is implementing a USAID supported “Farmer Service Centers” which aims to encourage private sector/actor engagement in the supply of diverse agricultural inputs as wholesalers, including the provision of professional support for extension advice and services.

The underlying reason for doing so is to avoid duplication of efforts since the L4R is also implemented by REST, and it promotes viable farm, off farm and employment pathways for PSNP households by offering a comprehensive livelihood package consisting of financial services, training in entrepreneurship and access to markets. The seven woredas served by L4R are Ganta Afeshum, Gulo Mekeda, Hawzien, Offla, Enda Mehoni, Raya Alamata and Hintalo Wajerat, and they benefit from DFSA food transfers, PW related activities, literacy, and health and nutrition services.

- In 5 REST DFSA Woredas REST has focused on a) delivering a livelihood transfer package especially designed for ultra-poor PSNP HHs (Women HH and Landless youth), and b) on strengthening the capacity of the government to provide livelihood services to other PSNP households. Pertinent woredas are Seharti Samre, Kilde Awlealo, KollaTembien; Werie Leke and Ahferom.

The key achievements under Purpose 3 during FY17 are as follows:

SP 3.1 Increased Livelihood Diversification and Income of Vulnerable Women and Men HHs

IOC 3.1.1 Improved Access to and Use of Livelihood Assets among Asset-poor Women, Men and Youth Beneficiaries

Livelihood asset transfer: In FY17, REST delivered livelihood asset transfers to a total of 5,000 ultra-poor PSNP households in five target woredas as planned (100% of annual target). Asset transfers were extended on a grant basis to assist ultra-poor HHs embark on income generating activities (IGAs) of their choice, with assistance from REST in identifying a potential menu of IGAs from which they can choose from. The value of the asset transfer each household received is USD 200 based on the norm stipulated in the PSNP PIM.

Comment/Response No 14: REST is organizing the 5,000 livelihood transfer beneficiaries into Livelihood Groups (or VESA). During the reporting period, a total of 135 VESA groups were established consisting of 2,700 members. The establishment of VESA is continuing and all the 5,000 beneficiaries will be organized into livelihood groups, with each group consisting of up to 20 members.

Skill training and coaching: Before the actual selection of IGAs, REST organized participant familiarization events to help them develop a clear understanding of the nature and requirements (labour, time and space) of the different IGAs options, and make informed decisions. REST provided technical skill training to all the 5,000 households based on their IGA choice. The five major IGAs selected are sheep/goat fattening, poultry, cattle fattening, beekeeping and petty trading. To promote good IGA management, REST also assigned community facilitators to provide close mentoring and coaching of households, at a rate of one community facilitator per 100 people. The advice and support given to clients is on IGA selection, effective development of individual business plans, twice weekly home visits, follow-up on the proper utilization of the transfer, promotion of client saving, organization of fortnightly evaluation sessions, strategies for expanding and diversifying client businesses, and ways of linking with existing extension services to sustainably meet capacity building needs.

Woreda	Shoat Rearing	Shoat Fattening	Poultry	Cattle Fattening	Bee Keeping	Petty Trade	Total
SehartiSamre	713	45	71	0	0	171	1,000
KildeAwlealo	342	261	188	21	41	100	953
KollaTembien	836	100	58	0	6	0	1,000
WerieLeke	771	80	150	0	41	51	1,093
Ahferom	677	0	105	51	12	109	954
Total	3,339	486	572	72	100	431	5,000

Assessments of the IGAs show that all 5,000 HHs are effectively managing their assets. Most are engaged in sheep/goat rearing and fattening, followed by backyard poultry production (see table above). While it is too early in the project cycle to determine the levels of income generated by households, given the asset transfers were delivered in the last quarter of the FY, there are nevertheless a number of emerging lessons about IGA's that can inform future implementation. One is about the dominance of livestock IGAs and the associated concerns with climate vulnerability. REST has noted that additional work is needed to advise HHs about the need to diversify their IGA's and also introduce methods to mitigate possible shocks such as techniques for conserving livestock feed at HH level. Secondly, in the context of limited off-farm livelihood options in the project area, it is incumbent of REST to undertake additional assessments and learn from the experiences of others about potential ways of expanding off-farm IGA alternatives. Thirdly, in addition to individual based IGA, there is also a need to consider group based IGA by pooling together the asset transfers of groups of households as a strategy for promoting other potential income sources that may require higher level start-up capital, and thereby expand the livelihood options for the poorest households.

Targeting: The process used in FY17 to target ultra-poor households has been found to be effective in reaching the most vulnerable households as desired. Of the 5,000 beneficiaries, 64% were found to be female HHs (or 3,200), while 41.6% were landless youth between the ages of 18 and 35 years (746 male and 1,337 female). The targeting was undertaken by Tabia Targeting Committees using wealth ranking index, with the final list of households being approved by the community. The major criteria used for the selection encompassed being a PSNP client, landlessness, being a woman headed HH, and having no/or a limited credit history as per the PIM. Field based REST Community Facilitators, closely monitored the targeting process to ensure the livelihood asset transfer reached the poorest HHs as expected.

While the livelihood transfer support beneficiaries receive is a one-off investment, they will nevertheless continue to receive coaching support for one additional year. This is done to ensure the beneficiaries gain the required skills and confidence to sustain their IGA, and move ahead on their own. After such intensive support for two years, beneficiaries are expected to join conventional credit services, stand by themselves, be able to further expand their businesses, and sustain the changes gained through the DFSA asset transfer assistance.

Comment/Response No 15: REST, through the Community Facilitators, will continue to provide close technical follow up and advice to livelihood beneficiaries for two years. The coaching during this period will focus on three areas: a) ensuring participant households develop the required skills and confidence in managing their IGAs and thrive with their businesses; b) encouraging them to build up their savings; and c) closely work with participants to advise and encourage them to either expand their existing IGA or diversify into other potential IGAs. As households start to properly manage their IGAs and see success in them, REST expects participants to develop an interest to expand their initial IGAs or to look beyond these, and into other profitable IGAs. At this stage the major issue they will face will be how to access the financial capital required for expanding their initial IGAs, or to engage in other new IGAs. In this regard REST expects that households (with support from the community facilitators) will first explore the potentials of using their individual savings and group savings through VESA, to meet the capital needs for new IGAs or expansion. In the event that this is not sufficient, community facilitators will encourage households to seek credit from financial institutions including MFI and RuSaCCo. Given all livelihood transfer beneficiaries have opened formal saving accounts in MFI (DECSI) and will continue to regularly save over the two years period, REST expects this will strengthen their linkage with the MFI, as well as fostering trust in the microfinance institutions overtime. REST expects that such relationships will eventually facilitate access to MFI credit for livelihood transfer beneficiaries.

In general, before the completion of the two-year intensive coaching period, REST will ensure households have developed sufficient confidence in managing their IGAs profitably; improved their financial base through savings; helped them to develop additional business plans in order to expand their income base; and support/facilitate their links with conventional financial service providers for funding of their future business endeavours on a sustainable manner. Taking these steps will eventually prepare households for a resilient graduation from the safety net program.

IOC 3.1.2 Increased Entrepreneurial Skills and Aspirations and Practices

In FY17, REST worked to build entrepreneurial skills and aspirations of PSNP households by employing two strategies involving: a) increased access to quality business development and skill support services; and b) improving the level of literacy among vulnerable PSNP HHs. The specific achievements are as follows:

a. Increased access to quality business development and skill support to women and men

To improve access to, and the quality of extension services being provided to PSNP clients REST took action to strengthen the capacity of relevant government extension service providers. These efforts focused on improving the communication and facilitation skills of frontline extension workers, undertaking field level coaching, and business plan development. In line with this, during the reporting period, the project trained 864 (female 258) government extension staff drawn from the five REST DFSA woredas.

REST additionally provided tailored training and support to improve the business skills and confidence of ultra-poor HHs by giving training to all 5,000 livelihood transfer beneficiaries on IGA identification, business plan development, basic financial skills and where to look for input and output markets (100% of annual target). The training was provided by woreda TVTE and agriculture bureau experts. To further deepen this effort, the REST field based community facilitators gave individual, house-to-house coaching to all the 5,000 livelihood transfer clients. Such supports have played a crucial role in building the confidence of ultra-poor beneficiaries in IGA selection, and in developing their own business plans, to the extent that all beneficiaries successfully developed their own business plan before receiving the asset transfer.

b. Improved level of literacy among vulnerable women and men

Low levels of literacy among farmers and women are critical constraints to positively changing behaviours around business management, productivity and nutrition, as well as for achieve empowerment goals. To address some of these challenges the REST DFSA has implemented several education-oriented interventions for adults and children during FY17:

- **Functional Adult Literacy (FAL):** in which 3,041 adults (912 female) were enrolled achieving 101 percent of the target at 59 FAL Centres established by REST (98.3 % of annual target). In addition to building basic literacy and numeracy skills, the FAL is also serving as a platform for communicating messages about useful financial behaviors (e.g. saving), and nutrition education. FAL interventions are helping to bolster the capacity of households to develop their own business plans, use basic financial bookkeeping to better manage their investments, as well as promoting positive saving behaviours.

Comment/Response No 16: In FY17, REST supported the enrolment of 3,041 people (912 female) in Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) which is 101 percent of the annual target in terms of beneficiaries (See DIP Line: 222). The percentage stated in the report refers to the number of people enrolled and not to the number of centres established. In fact, the number of FAL centres established was 59 which represent 98.3 percent of the annual target. However, to avoid confusion, REST has revised the description in this section by including achievements both in terms of enrolment and the number FAL centres established.

- **Women's Literacy Program (WLP):** is tailored to the specific needs of female PSNP beneficiaries and is considered a key empowerment tool. During the fiscal year a Relief Society of Tigray/ETHIOPIA ARR FY2017 TPSNP4 Award Number: AID-FFP-A-16-00006 20 Resubmitted on 18 December, 2017

total of 3,313 women were enrolled in the WLP held at 59 education centres (110% of annual target). The subject matters covered are literacy, numeracy, basic financial management skills, nutrition and local development. Due to the multiple benefits offered by the WLP, they are receiving much government support especially in terms of actively mobilizing communities to participate in WLP which is helping in increasing female enrolments. The WLP are also serving as important outreach sites for behavioral change communication for health and nutrition activities.

- **Alternative Basic Education (ABE):** is operational in 24 ABE Centres established by REST across all DFSA woredas, and is currently providing access to learning and teaching services to 1,121 school aged children (93.4% of the annual target). Out of these 650 are males (58%) and 471 are female (42%). REST coordinates the ABE program along with parents, Woreda Education Offices (WEO), and assigned 24 ABE facilitators to run the activities at local level. To create conducive environment for teaching and learning at ABE centers, the TPSNP4 also constructed 24 additional classrooms using PSNP PW labour as well as equipping them with the necessary school furnishings (100% of the target).

Comment/Response No 17: REST adheres to two integrated strategies for the improvement of WASH in ABE centres: a) by developing WASH infrastructure in each ABE centre with a focus on potable water supply and development of latrines. Infrastructure based measures of this sought are predominantly linked to REST WASH activities supported by other donors (e.g. Charity Water); and b) by providing hygiene and sanitation education to students in ABE centres and in so doing improve student behaviours in these areas. The WASH education is carefully incorporated into regular ABE sessions, and is a REST/DFSA supported intervention.

IOC 3.1.3 Increased Access to and use of Appropriate Financial Services by Men and Women

Access to appropriate financial services is crucial to helping PSNP households diversify their incomes and livelihoods, and for accelerating progress towards graduation. Despite the relatively better coverage of financial services in the Tigray region, many PSNP households are still excluded from the service because of outstanding loans and accumulated debt. To address such challenges the TPSNP4 has sought to implement three strategies comprised of: a) fostering cooperation and coordination between stakeholders in the area of financial service; b) promoting Village Economic and Social Associations (VESA groups) to alternatively link households to financial services provided by VESA, and in particular the poorest livelihood transfer clients; and c) developing a culture of saving among poorest households. The specific achievements include:

a. Interface/multi-stakeholder meetings organized on financial services

In FY17, the project mainly worked to link PSNP HHs to financial services provided through other programs, in particular the Livelihood for Resilience Activity (L4R), and the government's PSNP livelihood component. The TPSNP4 collaborated with the L4R to facilitate access to finance for REST DFSA beneficiaries in 7 woredas; and with the government livelihood component to improve access to finance in 5 of the remaining REST DFSA woredas. In support of the collaboration with the government, REST organized multi-stakeholder forums on financial services at woreda level. The forum brought together 400 people drawn from MFI, RUSACO, Woreda Food Security Task Forces, Cooperatives Promotion Office, and community representatives to discuss on the progress and constraints affecting access to financial services in their respective woredas. The forums identified major issues affecting access to financial services to PSNP HHs including outstanding loan and limited loan-able capital (in particular, by RUSACCO), ultimately reaching a consensus to work jointly in solving the problems. MFI representatives agreed to greater flexibility in raising the threshold for outstanding loans from the current level of Ethiopian Birr 500; while government and community representatives committed to do their best to assist MFI by encouraging communities to adhere to loan repayments. REST will

continue to organize such important multi-stakeholder forums on an annual basis in order to best follow-up on the implementation of joint solutions, identify new challenges, and work progressively for better outcomes in the long run.

b. VESA establishment and saving

With a focus on livelihood transfer beneficiaries, in FY17 REST assisted in the establishment of 135 VESA groups consisting of 2,700 members. **Comment/Response No18:** The 135 VESA groups established during the reporting period which consist of 2,700 members are part of the 5,000 livelihood transfer beneficiaries. REST is continuing to provide its support through its field level community facilitators to ensure that all the 5,000 livelihood transfer beneficiaries are organized into VESA. The primary purpose of the VESA groups is to serve as a platform for coaching, encouraging collaboration and exchange of experience between members, and more importantly to serve as an alternative for informal access to financial services. At the time of this report, most VESA groups are preparing to start their saving activities. The REST community facilitators have been closely supporting the beneficiaries to form the VESA groups, and giving training on the group saving and lending program. This intervention will be crucial in enhancing financial inclusion of the poorest HHs by encouraging internal lending and savings between members.

REST also provided training on savings for 5,000 of the poorest households participating in the DFSA livelihood transfer. As saving is a major component of the DFSA livelihood transfer model, close coaching and assistance were provided to households through REST community facilitators. REST routine monitoring verified that as a result of these actions all of the 5,000 livelihood beneficiaries have opened a formal savings account at nearby MFI branches (DECSI) and RUSACOOs, and started saving. This step will facilitate their future access to loans as most MFI consider having a savings account as conditional/collateral to access credit.

Sub-Purpose 3.2 Increased Accesses to Markets

IOC 3.2.1 Input/ Output Linkage and Market Information Improved

The most prominent achievement under this outcome is for rural road interventions which aim to improve physical access to markets across all DFSA woredas by enhancing road infrastructures. During FY17, the TPSNP4 supported the construction of 171 kilometres of access roads (101% of the annual target), and 6 bridge structures (fords) where the terrain is difficult (e.g. punctuated by steep gullies, runoff ways and gorges), thus making roads more climate smart and accessible under all-weather conditions. These upgrades resulted in 32 villages having better access to markets, extension and other basic services such as health centres. In collaboration with the Woreda Rural Road Office, the project trained 276 community members/foremen that are responsible for technically leading the road construction at local level, road layout, construction and maintenance. Participants gained knowledge on environmentally sound road design and mitigation measures. Regular technical backstopping was provided by the Woreda Rural Road experts to ensure road construction proceeded in line with required quality and environmental standards. Completed roads were handed over for joint management by Woreda Rural Road Offices, and Community Watershed Committees (CWC) with the expectation that future road maintenance needs would be addressed through the Free Community Labour Program.

Other activities under this component such as, linking farmers to output markets and formation of marketing groups were not carried out as most associated livelihood initiatives were implemented towards the end of the fiscal year. These activities will be priority areas for implementation in the coming year.

Result of Purpose 3 Outcome Indicators:

REST is well on track to achieve stated outcomes under SP3.3. A major component of this - the livelihood transfer - was successfully implemented and assessed to have effectively reached/targeted the desired key target groups (i.e. Women Headed Households and Landless Youth). REST also closely monitored the assumption it made under TOC/SP3.3:

“USAID funded L4R and the Government livelihood component will provide livelihood services to REST DFSA beneficiaries” and can confirm that it is holding true. In FY17, the L4R provided business and financial skill training to 6,728 PSNP clients (3,351 female) who are also REST DFSA beneficiaries in 7 woredas; supported 3,755 PSNP clients (1,985 female) to obtain access to finance through the MFI/DECSI loan guarantee scheme, and helped them become engaged in different IGAs; and established 334 VESA groups consisting of 7,000 members (3,711 females). Though the achievement in the remaining 5woredas where the Government operates the livelihood transfer is relatively lower, REST assessments show that the Government is nevertheless providing good/adequate livelihood support to REST DFSA beneficiaries. In the past fiscal year the Government has supported 9,125 PSNP clients (female 8,975) in five REST woredas in developing their business plans, and referred them to financial service providers out of which 8,727 HHs obtained credit for IGA (4,110 female).

Despite the good progress toward achieving outcome indicators under Purpose 3, REST identified gaps in its IPTT targets. The targets were set in consideration of only REST DFSA direct interventions and did not include the contribution of other organizations as per the TOC assumption. REST has noted the need to revise its IPTT targets to be able to account and measure the changes brought, including the contribution by the other organizations.

Purpose 4: Reduced Malnutrition among Children under Five, Pregnant and Lactating Mothers

Nutritional status is the result of complex interactions between food consumption and the overall status of health and health care practices. Adequate food utilization requires a diet that provides sufficient energy and essential nutrients, proper feeding practices, potable water, adequate sanitation, access to health services and illness management. Purpose 4 combines three strategies to address chronic malnutrition in project areas: (a) an integrated food-based training approach; (b) use of Social Behavioural Change Communication (SBCC); and (c) capacity building and support of local stakeholders at all levels. Key achievements during the reporting period include:

SP 4.1 Improved Diversified Food Utilization by PLW and CU5 and Exclusive Breastfeeding Practices

IOC4.1.1 Improved Skill & Knowledge of Women, Men and Youth on ENA, IYCF and Preparation of Local Complementary Food Items

To bridge the awareness and skill gap in nutrition and food preparation, diverse training modules were offered to 3,562 community members including WDTL, adolescent girls, and school drama club members. They were successfully trained on nutrition counselling and facilitation skill training to best reach the wider community and promote improved nutrition and food preparation messages. The project also employed mobile-van video screenings to promote cost effective and best practices in nutrition, good health and sanitation through entertainment education. During the year REST organized 84 mobile van events across the DFSA woredas (7 sessions per woreda) that were attended by over 8,776 people (104% of the annual target). Trained WDTL additionally reached 15,240 pregnant women (90% of the annual target), offering important nutrition messages on exclusive breast feeding, complementary feeding, maternal nutrition, hygiene and sanitation and de-worming through Community Conversations and home visit approaches.

Table 3: Summary of training and awareness raising sessions

	Description of Planned Activities	Unit	FY2017		
			Target	Achieved	%
1.	Training of WDTL on key nutrition messages and micro-gardening	No.	3,522	3,562	101%
2.	Establish nutrition and Adolescent Girls Clubs in 5 schools/woredas	No.	127	103	81%
3.	Training of Adolescent School Girl Club members on nutrition (30 per school)	No.	900	900	100%
4.	Entertainment education on nutrition via Drama Clubs (Number of drama club members participated)	No.	144	168	117%

5.	Mobile health and nutrition education = 7 sessions x 100 participants per session per woreda	No.	8,400	8,776	105%
6.	Nutrition manual and leaflet development (for WDA) and teaching aids and pocket guides	No.	15,750	15,000	95%

IOC4.1.2 Increased Availability and Access to Diversified and Nutrient Dense Foods

Home gardening is an important source of household nutrition in rural areas. In FY17, REST supported 519 PSNP households (all women headed) to establish backyard micro-gardens to facilitate their access to nutritious food at home, and to supplement their household incomes (100% of annual target). In particular, the intervention aimed at increasing access to vitamins and mineral sources, and targeted pregnant women and mothers with children under five (PLW) for this purpose. Households were supported with training in garden preparation, and on skills in vegetable production. In turn they served as positive influencers by promoting/diffusing home-gardening techniques and technologies among a further 1,735 WHH (95% of annual target) who received vegetable seeds and other inputs from REST during start-up and work is underway to link them with cooperatives and private suppliers to ensure sustained access to seeds into the future.

Achievement of this outcome is also premised on the contribution of other DFSA activity components. Most prominent in FY17 were the safety net food transfers, interventions in small scale irrigation (SSI), and backyard poultry farming offered as a livelihood transfer. The contribution of the DFSA food transfer was paramount not only because it directly availed a diversified food ration (wheat and pulses) to target communities, it supplemented the diets and food needs of 10, 581 vulnerable PLW and children under 5 (5% of the caseload or 25,837 children of whom 12,829 were female) who were the majority of TPSNP4 beneficiaries in FY17, and needed the food assistance the most. About 572 poor women headed HHs were also supported to establish poultry farming through the DFSA asset transfer component which is having a positive result in terms of availing eggs for household consumption and as a source of income generation. Though most of the SSI schemes are just entering into production season, their contribution in providing nutritious dense food (vegetables and fruits) both at household level, and for the market in targeted woredas, will be immense.

SP 4.2 Reduced Prevalence of Communicable Diseases.

IOC4.2.1 Improved Hygiene and Sanitation Practices among PLW and Caregivers

In Tigray, poor hygiene and sanitation practices are still among the major causes of disease and malnutrition in children. Therefore, to bring positive behavioural change in child care hygiene and sanitation, in FY17 REST focused on increasing community awareness, especially among PLW and caregivers; organized Community Conversation sessions to disseminate hygiene and sanitation messages; and worked through/with school girls, religious leaders and drama clubs to influence and bring about wider behavioural changes in the community in general. Accordingly, different awareness creation training sessions were given on personal and environmental hygiene and sanitation, including menstrual hygiene management for 900 adolescent girls club members (100% of the target), 276 religious leaders (96.5% of the target), community conversations during coffee ceremonies for 10,148 beneficiaries (107% of the target), and 145 drama club members (100% of the target). The girl student approach to behavioural change in sanitation and nutrition was implemented in approximately 60 elementary schools, and 103 adolescent girls clubs were established to promote awareness among the community.

To improve sanitation conditions around water sources, attention was paid to skilling-up Water and Sanitation (WASH) Committees on all aspects of hygiene and sanitation. This was done as part of a broader coordinated approach whereby TPSNP4 capacity building actions were integrated with other REST WASH projects that are supported by other donors (as envisioned in the REST ToC). In FY17, REST WASH installed 367 potable water

supply points across all DFSA woredas enabling 92,903 people to have access to a nearby clean water supply. The REST DFSA provided training to 493 members of the new WASH committees on hygienic management of water sources. Given both programs were implemented by REST; the integration between the two projects was extremely successful. Such complementarities between the programs will ensure the gains in infrastructure development are transformed into better health and improved nutrition outcomes.

Comment/Response No 19: As part of its WASH program (mostly supported by Charity Water), REST supports access to WASH infrastructure in ABE centres such as, access to potable water and latrines. To improve the safe usage of the infrastructure, and enhance overall knowledge about WASH among ABE students, the REST DFSA integrates WASH sessions in the education activities provided in the ABE centres.

IOC4.2.2 Increased Use of Preventive Health Services

With a focus on PLW, the TPSNP4 is supporting target communities to make the best use of preventive health services provided through the Government's Health Extension Program. Some of the preventive health services given to PLW include antenatal care, institutional delivery services, post-natal care, family planning, HIV/AIDS counselling and testing, prevention of mother to child HIV/AIDS transmission, immunization, growth monitoring, and counselling on feeding during the first 1000 days of life. By providing various awareness creation initiatives sessions to health extension workers, women development army team leaders and other community members, REST aims to enhance the demand for important preventative health services listed above. To have a larger impact, the trained health extension workers and women development army group members have been cascading the training to the community at different contact points. As a result of these different efforts, in FY17 some 4,950 women (93% of the annual target) have given birth at a health facility. While more concerted efforts are required to increase health seeking behaviours to required levels on many fronts, REST assessments suggest that interest in institutional deliveries is growing and progressing well.

Comment/Response No 20: REST considers the number of people who give birth at a health facility as an important outcome health activity indicator. Hence, it has incorporated one indicator in its IPTT (Please refer IPTT **Line No 153:** "*Number of live births receiving at least four antenatal care (ANC) visits during pregnancy*") to measure progress in the use of health facilities for birth delivery. This is an FFP indicator and according to the indicator's definition (PIRS), this indicator measures the number of live births **delivered in health institutions** by women who visited health institutions to obtain antenatal care advice during their pregnancy. This means the indicator provides information on progress made in regard to births delivered in health facilities as well as highlighting changes in health seeking behaviour among pregnant women through recording antenatal care visits made. As per the REST IPTT report, a total of 4,950 women have given live birth in health institutions in FY17 and all of them were found to have attended at least four antenatal care sessions provided at health institutions during their pregnancy. As the number of births at health institutions refers more to an outcome (than an activity by itself), it is difficult to incorporate it into the DIP.

The intention to use safety transfers for PLW and caregivers as a soft conditionality to attend preventive health services (as per the PSNP PIM) such as antenatal and postnatal care did not materialize during the past reporting period. REST assessed that the attention given to such soft conditional activities by both the government and REST staff was weak. In particular, there was a wide lack of awareness and resistance among Government health staff to accept the task as their responsibility. REST jointly worked with the Regional Health Office to resolve the problem, though this occurred in the last quarter of the fiscal year. Orientation has now been given to health extension staff, and the Regional Health Office has written official letters to all stakeholders notifying them of their roles and responsibilities in this regard. There are still concerns however as to whether the concept of soft conditionality will work or not in Tigray, as they remain confusing and there are no accountability measures in place to redress the omission and enforce compliance.

Result of Purpose 4 Outcome Indicators:

Progress towards achieving planned outcomes under Purpose 4 were all positive with achievements ranging from 93% to 107% of the annual targets for FY17. A critical assumption under this purpose related to “access to potable water supply by REST DFSA beneficiaries will be met through other REST WASH programs” was successfully met with strong coordination and integration observed between the two programs. Critical attention should however be given to operationalizing soft conditionality activities for PLW and care givers such as health counseling, because performance in the fiscal year was weak. Some of the most important outcomes achieved during reporting period as per the findings of the REST routine monitoring were as follows:

- *Number of children under two (0-23 months) reached with community-level nutrition interventions through USG-supported programs: 11,976 (105% of annual target)*
- *Number of children under five (0-59 months) reached with nutrition specific interventions through USG supported programs : 25,837 (100% of annual target)*
- *Number of pregnant women reached with nutrition interventions through USG-supported programs: 5,028 (91% of annual target)*
- *Number of live births receiving at least four antenatal care (ANC) visits during pregnancy: 4,950 (93% of annual target).* **Comment/Response No 21:** In fact, REST has reported the achievement for this outcome indicator “*Number of live births receiving at least four antenatal care (ANC) visits during pregnancy*” in its IPTT. Please refer to **Line No: 153** on the initial IPTT submission.

1.3 Collaboration, Learning and Adaptation (CLA)

To coordinate TPSNP4 activities with others, and share knowledge and experiences across PSNP stakeholders, REST carried out a number of CLA activities during the FY. Main CLA actions included:

- **After Action Review:** REST organized After Action Review meetings both at woreda and regional levels (one event in each woreda) to review the implementation performance of the TPSNP4, and to identify challenges for course correction. The review brought together all relevant PSNP stakeholders including government bureaus, the various Food Security Task Forces as well as private sector representatives (e.g. MFI and RUSACO) who have a key role in the program. Issues with regard to timeliness of transfers, weak progress on soft conditionality activities, and improving access to credit were some of the challenges discussed during the meeting with serious attempts made to set solutions for improving the situation. The event at regional level was particularly valuable and used as an experience sharing platform between REST DFSA woredas.
- **PSNP Joint Review and Implementation System (JRIS):** REST actively participated in two rounds of JRIS meetings organized for PSNP stakeholders by the Government in the FY both at regional and federal level, where it shared its concerns about programmatic and implementation issues, and contributed by sharing a number of its positive experiences.
- **Collaboration with Other USAID Programs:** In FY17, REST DFSA successfully collaborated with two other USAID projects (Livelihood for Resilience Activity/L4R and Growth through Nutrition/GtN) with which the project geographically overlapped. In both cases, the collaboration primarily focused on coordination and integration of activities to avoid duplication of efforts, and to explore potential areas of complementarities between the projects. With regards to the GtN which overlaps with the REST DFSA in two woredas, REST developed comprehensive Joint Action Plans indicating a coherent share of tasks in the implementation of health and nutrition activities planned by both projects, and as a result overlap between similar activities was successfully avoided. REST also adopted training manuals prepared by the GtN, and benefited from Training of Trainer organized by GtN at regional levels. To strengthen the link between CLA with GtN, more vigorous and timely follow-up of Joint Action Plan implementation by REST is needed.

- Collaborative Learning with FH: The plan to collaborate with FH on experience sharing in health, nutrition and NRM activities did not materialize in the reporting period. As this was the first year of the DFSA, both organizations felt it was more important to prioritize program roll-out in their separate operational areas before experience sharing. However, joint meeting at management level was held in the last quarter, and a specific timetable developed to start the learning actions in November 2017.
- Studies and Reviews: REST conducted two studies during the reporting period: a) *TPSNP Gender Analysis*; and b) *TPSNP Documentation of Best Practices*. Both studies were carried out in the last quarter of the FY and are at draft stage. The gender analysis study was primarily delayed due to difficulties identifying a suitable international consultant. REST hopes to share the final documents with USAID/FFP in the very near future.

1.4 TPSNP4 Award Management

REST is the primary program holder with responsibility for TPSNP4 implementation and management in 12 woredas. As the new RESTDFSA expanded into four additional woredas in FY17, the organization took immediate measures to upgrade its operations and outreach, building on existing excellent work relations and extensive delivery capacity already in place in the region. Major institutional accomplishments in accordance with plans, have included:

- Establishment of a comprehensive and professionally staffed PSNP Coordination Department (PCD) at the REST Head Office in Makelle to coordinate all aspects of the TPSNP4; track program performance and resource utilization; and promote coordinated information flow between REST operational departments and external institutions.
- Establishment, staffing and strengthening of Woreda Project Coordination Offices (WPCO) in four new woredas (Hintalo Wajerat, Offla, Enda Mehoni, Raya Alamata), and consolidation/strengthening of operational capacity in KollaTembien, TanquaAbergelle, Seharti Samre and Gulo Mekeda woredas by improving field team staffing composition and quality.
- Smooth Program Transition from Government to REST PSNP Operational Woredas: Measures were taken to ensure the smooth transition of PSNP management responsibilities from the Government to REST in the 4 new woredas involving: a) the conduct of a joint start-up meeting with WFSTF to garner common understanding about REST's program management model, with specific reference to food resource management principles, public works planning and implementation modalities, and reporting requirements; and b) the provision of PIM refresher training to WFSTF and new REST WPCO staff to engender deeper understanding of the PIM given the recently new geographic inclusion of the REST DFSA.

Overall, the TPSNP4 was managed in a coordinated way with high levels of effort from all REST operational departments. These efforts were also reinforced by a strong system of collaboration between REST, local government sector offices and communities. Areas needing further attention are in project management related to the follow-up of transfer timeliness, soft conditionality and CLA activities. Providing such guidance on the management of PSNP implementation ultimately ensures that the overall programmatic and financial requirements of the Cooperative Agreement are consistent with USAID guidelines and regulations.

1.5 Project Monitoring and Evaluation

Major M&E activities carried out during the reporting period included:

- REST submitted its detailed FY2016/FY2020 DFSA Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to USAID on 22 May, 2017. This M&E Plan incorporates guidance, information and other inputs highlighted at the USAID organized M&E Workshop held in Addis Ababa during February 2017. The Plan included: the Theory of Change (TOC), log frame, IPTT, PIRS, annual monitoring strategy, data management and use, quality assurance and M&E staffing and capacity development plan, and evaluation tools. Major adjustments to the TOC are:

- Refinement of initially proposed Assumptions by maintaining only those deemed most pertinent, critical and measurable. In total, the number of assumptions featured in the revised TOC was reduced from 54 to 10.
 - Revision of the majority of proposed Output and Outcome statements to better capture aspects related to gender, climate change and sustainability.
 - Addition of 6 (six) new Outputs deemed necessary to the achievement of Outcomes along several different ToC pathways.
 - Incorporation of new Outputs and/or Outcomes generated by other actors which are critical for the achievement of TPSNP4 objectives and goal (e.g. “increased wage employment opportunities of men, women and youth” which is an outcome to be generated by the government and USAID Livelihood for Resilience Activity under Purpose 3: Sustainable Livelihoods).
- **M&E Staffing and Training:** REST assigned staff at woreda level across all DFSA areas specifically responsible for collecting M&E data, and provided the necessary staff training on the REST M&E system to enable them carry out their tasks properly.
 - **Monitoring and follow-up (REST Head Office Technical Departments):** A particular REST strength is the availability of technical expertise coupled with good practices in monitoring and technical backstopping by REST HO departments (ERAD, IDD, Health, SMD and F&PD). Special attention is paid to providing technical capacity building, field monitoring and spot checking, and evaluating the implemented public works in terms of technical appropriateness, quality, effectiveness and management arrangements. A particular focus of health and education monitoring was on checking the quality of sessions, appropriateness of delivery mechanism, and appropriateness of the content of messages.
 - **Monitoring through Progress Reports:** Every quarter, REST Woreda Coordinators submit progress reports on the performance status of the project against the DIP. Based on continuous field visits, and dialogue with local governments and communities, these reports are rich in content and guide REST’s understanding of project status. Typically, once field coordinator reports are completed, they are reviewed and consolidated by the PCD to provide an overview of performance and to help rate the progress in each woreda, and the voracity of individual interventions. Feedback from performance appraisal workshops at REST HO completed the cycle, with findings and final decisions shared with technical departments and management for follow-up actions and decisions.

2. CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

2.1 Key lessons learned in the reporting fiscal year 2017

- The inadequacy of cash transfers and the capping of family size are in combination undermining the asset stabilization function of the safety net. With the recent devaluation of the Ethiopian Birr expected to cause inflation and the cost of living to rise substantially, a revision of cash transfer values is urgently called for.
- The handover of management responsibilities for PDS beneficiaries to BoLSA has resulted in marked improvements in the follow-up and timeliness of transfers. This positive performance and engagement by the institution in the PSNP offers the opportunity to work innovatively with PDS beneficiaries in other aspects of their livelihoods’.
- Efforts to link NRM PW with livelihood activities are progressing well, especially the apportioning of rehabilitated areas to landless youth for woodlot production, group beekeeping activities and the use of forage from enclosed areas for livestock production. There is however a need to scale up these actions as well as explore new approaches to integrating NRM PW with the livelihoods of the poor for added impact.
- Livelihood asset transfers are successfully reaching the most poor, and enabling more women headed households and landless youth to own assets and participate in

productive pathways. The provision of close coaching through community facilitators is making a significant difference in building household confidence towards managing IGA. The project does however need to work more in expanding off-farm IGA options. Equally, the high focus on livestock IGA (nearly by 85% of livelihood transfer beneficiaries) calls for critical attention to diversification and climate risk mitigation measures.

2.2 Main issues affecting the achievement of project objectives and targets

Several issues influenced the implementation and performance of TPSNP activities in FY17:

- *Delayed public work verification* is continuing as a major factor affecting transfer timeliness. Despite repeated efforts by REST to improve transfer effectiveness through capacity building on the PSNP PIM, and the development of fixed transfer schedules, there is a continuing tendency among local food security task forces to use public work verification as a condition for delivering transfers which is clearly against PIM regulations. Given the chronic nature of the problem, and the difficulty of addressing it through unilateral actions, there is an urgent need to critically engage all PSNP stakeholders, including the federal government as lead, in establishing a more accountable system to ensure strict compliance with the PSNP PIM on PW verification.
- *Delayed approval and release of the 11% contingency budget* by two months despite the early submission of requests from the Tigray Region to the Federal Food Security Office. Efforts to influence the Federal Food Security Office to improve efficiency in this regard are critical to ensure a continuum of responses.
- The protracted IEE *approval process* resulted in the delayed commencement of PW related to Small Scale Irrigation (SSI) in the FY. SSI PW commenced in the middle of the PW season after the FFP restricted approval was received in April 2017. To compensate, REST applied maximum efforts to deliver the planned SSI schemes within a short period of time, which it did with the exception of one SSI scheme which is delayed as a result. While the FFP provision for restricted approval has helped to resolve the problem, opportunities to complete SSI schemes and start the actual irrigation activity early on in the PW season was however, missed. As the PSNP PW period is short, flexibility is needed in regard to approval processes for environmental issues.
- Low progress on the “*employment pathway*” which is one of the critical preconditions identified in the REST TOC leading to the achievement of sustainable livelihood diversification, and *assumed* to be met through the Government’s livelihood component. Detailed assessments are yet to be undertaken, therefore to fill the gap and support the Government deliver on this assumption, REST is reviewing its experiences with the POTENTIAL project in Tigray which trains youth on different vocational skills to help them engage in wage employment or self-employment. While the project has positive results in terms of self-employment, skilled youth are having difficulty accessing wage employment (which is the core of the employment pathway). The REST DFSA is also collaborating with Livelihood for Resilience Activity (L4R) which is in the process of commissioning a study to identify specific and potential entry points for implementing the employment pathway in the region. It is hoped study results will be available for action next year.
- Despite the intention in the PSNP4 PIM to use food/cash transfers for TDS clients (i.e. PLW and caregivers) as *soft conditional* to attendance in health services and nutritional BCC activities, no progress was made during the FY. Limited attention was given by the Regional Health Bureau which has the responsibility to follow the implementation of the soft conditionality. To avoid a similar problem in the next PSNP cycle, REST worked with the Regional Health Office to increase emphasis, and cascade this understanding to all health extension staff at woreda level. Though it was not a soft conditionality, REST provided BCC on health and nutrition to all PLW and caregivers across DFSA woredas.
- *Graduation*: Following the drought incident in 2015/16, overall attention toward graduation seems to have fallen. As a result, no official graduation has happened over

the last two years in the region with the exception of self-graduation. There is a need to galvanize the overall graduation process starting from the region down to tabias.