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Inclusive Socio-Economic Development in the Beni Mellal Khénifra Region (ISED-BMK)

Quarterly Project Performance Report January 1-March 31, 2021

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIDECA	Association Al Intilaka pour le développement, l'environnement et la culture Afourer
AMELP	Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan
ANAPEC	Agence Nationale de Promotion de l'Emploi et des Compétence
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
AWP	Annual Work Plan
BMK	Beni Mellal Khénifra
BMP	Branding and Marking Plan
CAP	Communal Action Plan
CGEM	Confédération Générale des Entreprises du Maroc
CRI	Centre Régionale d'Investissement
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CYM	Community Youth Mapping
DCL	Division Collectivités locales
DGCT	Direction Générale des Collectivités Territoriales
DNH	Do No Harm
DPO	Disabled Persons' Organization
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
FHI	Family Health International
FSVC	Financial Services Volunteer Corps
GBC	Gender-based Constraint
GBF	Gender-based Framework
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GESI	Gender and Social Inclusion
GGB	Good Governance Barometer
ISED-BMK	Inclusive Socio-Economic Development Project – Beni Mellal Khenifra
LMA	Labor Market Assessment
LoA	Letter of Agreement
LOE	Level of Effort
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MSU	Mississippi State University
ODCO	Office du développement de la coopération
OPFPT	<i>Office de la Formation Professionnelle et de la Promotion du Travail</i>
OGP	Open Government Partnership
PAC	Plan d'Action Communale
PFM	Public Financial Management
PPR	Project Performance Report
PwD	People with Disabilities
PYD	Positive Youth Development
RBEC	Regional Business Environment Council
RC	Regional Council
RMP	Rapid Mobilization Plan
RTI	Right to Information
SGI	Sub-national Government Institutions
SME	Small-Medium Enterprise
SMSU	Sultan Moulay Slimane University
SOW	Scope of Work
STTA	Short-term Technical Assistance
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

I. Project Overview

A. Background

The Beni Mellal Khénifra (BMK) Region has enormous potential. The combination of a strong agricultural sector, enormous opportunities for higher levels of tourism (both domestic and international), major phosphate mines, an attractive climate, and a willing workforce provide the region with a solid foundation for accelerated and inclusive growth. The leadership of its sub-national government institutions (SGIs) has demonstrated its commitment to growth and its understanding of the socio-economic barriers to a more robust economy and engaged civil society. For these reasons, in 2019, USAID began a process of co-designing an initiative that would respond directly to the priorities expressed by regional stakeholders and work at the inter-section of democratic governance and economic growth. The Inclusive Socio-Economic Development in Beni Mellal-Khénifra (ISED-BMK) project is the result of that process and reflects the consensus that emerged between USAID and regional actors that to achieve sustainable and equitable accelerated growth, the BMK region must address socio-cultural and economic constraints holistically.

This second quarterly Project Performance Report (PPR) covers the period from January 1-March 31, 2021. The first PPR covered only the brief period from project start-up to the end of the last quarter (December 7-December 31, 2020). This second report describes the project start-up phase that was dominated by staff recruitment, strategic start-up planning, securing office space, making initial contacts with ISED-BMK stakeholders, organizing an official project launch, and developing working relationships among staff, with partners, and with USAID. The quarter has been significant for the generally smooth start-up process despite the many challenges of having new staff working remotely due to the pandemic and the sensitivity of some of ISED-BMK's activities during an election year. ISED-BMK has benefitted from strong support from the USAID AOR, from skilled and agile support from FHI 360 headquarters, from a strong start-up team in Morocco, and from the keen interest and encouragement of ISED-BMK's stakeholders in the regional and provincial governments.

During the third quarter (April-June), ISED-BMK expects to move robustly into full implementation with the initiation of the activities described primarily in Section IV below. The success of these initiatives will depend not only upon how well each activity is carried out, but also on how all of them, taken together, produce change that is systemic and sustainable, opening pathways to institutionalize and scale-up results that directly and manifestly benefit women, youth, people with disabilities and other populations. Innovations in participatory governance, creative and in-depth backstopping of civil society organizations, support for the business “ecosystem” that will promote investment, expand market opportunities and create jobs; provision of grants at the communal level to implement community-defined projects, and the ISED-BMK co-implementation process where stakeholders are full partners – these, in combination, will offer ISED-BMK an optimal environment for maximizing its impact. The challenge before ISED-BMK is to ensure coordination and engagement internally as these activities unfold and externally as ISED-BMK interacts both with projects funded by other development partners and with the full range of its stakeholders (sub-national government institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, the university (SMSU), and others).

B. Project Description

This section provides a brief project summary to provide context for the balance of the report for readers who may not be familiar with ISED-BMK's goals, structure, planned activities and expected results.

The Vision. The ISED-BMK vision is driven by its commitment to address co-identified socio-economic challenges collaboratively so that the region, by 2025, will have achieved faster, more inclusive, and sustainable growth where vulnerable and marginalized populations benefit disproportionately and begin to close the gap with the general population in terms of incomes, skills, access to information, employment opportunities, levels of participation in governance and share of resources accessible to them. ISED-BMK plans to address issues systemically and to co-implement activities with the full engagement of BMK stakeholders (government, civil society, private sector, and the academic community). The ISED-BMK vision also includes a strong emphasis on innovation and piloting to demonstrate new ways of programming, creative ways to build synergies between governance and economic growth, and to experiment with approaches that may serve as a model for other regions.

Theory of Change. ISED-BMK's approach is based on the understanding that improved governance and livelihood opportunities are closely linked and are most effectively addressed through an integrated approach that ensures the inclusion of citizens and all stakeholders from the region. **If** ISED-BMK effectively facilitates a participatory and transparent decision-making process, fostering strong links among government (regional, provincial, and national) and public and private stakeholders, and amplifies marginalized voices, **then** sustainable processes for the development of citizen-led solutions to address identified challenges will be established and prospects for improved livelihoods and inclusive economic growth will be enhanced.

The ISED-BMK Structure. ISED-BMK has two components. Component I will improve governance and citizen participation by increasing inclusive economic growth and Sub-national Government Institutional (SGIs) performance and efficiency, strengthening the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in governance and advocacy for youth, women, and people with disabilities, by increasing SGI transparency and empowering civil society via improved access to information and by improving governance of business and economic "ecosystems" using a systems approach. Component II will enhance livelihoods and business activity by increasing inclusion of youth, women, and people with disabilities in business via innovation and entrepreneurship, increasing business and job growth via improved market access, business development services, finance, and small grants (focused initially on agriculture/agri-business and tourism), and by improving workforce development, especially by better aligning training to market needs (including core skills) and providing quality work-readiness offerings.

Geographic Focus. ISED-BMK, with the BMK Regional Council (RC), will assess the Region's 135 communes (16 urban and 119 rural) and select about 40 with high growth potential, effective leadership, and high levels of vulnerability (i.e., poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and disability rates). ISED-BMK will full participation from the RC will finalize selection criteria, invite selected communes to submit proposals, and help select 20-25 commune proposals for funding.

Gender Integration and Social Inclusion (GESI). GESI is a core project element that drives project activities by assuring inclusive decision making, and by building the capacity of marginalized groups, (women, youth, people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations) to participate meaningfully in civic engagement, governance activities and the economy. A GESI plan was completed in this quarter as a basis for ISED-BMK to address constraints that limit the participation and empowerment of women and girls, youth, people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations. ISED-BMK will 1) ensure women’s integration into the Good Governance Barometer (GGB) that helps measure civic engagement; 2) involve vulnerable youth in Community Youth Mapping (CYM), including youth with disabilities; 3) increase young women’s understanding, capacity to support and involvement with the 2021 elections, 4) work with local, regional and national governments to increase gender integration and social inclusion and 5) ensure that labor market assessments focus on women, especially marginalized women, youth and people with disabilities. ISED-BMK will also work with the SMSU Gender Studies Department to reinforce their capacity to analyze the socio-economic situation of women, youth, PwDs, and other vulnerable groups in BMK to help guide project implementation.

Grant Program. The program supports local actors to achieve improved participatory governance and/or inclusive economic growth. Beneficiaries include CSOs, cooperatives, enterprises, and aspiring entrepreneurs from the Sultan Moulay Slimane University (SMSU) Innovation Lab and Challenge Competitions. The RC, Regional Investment Center, SMSU, the *Office de la Formation Professionnelle et de la Promotion du Travail* (OFPPT) and the private sector will develop selection criteria and the program will learn from other USAID initiatives.

ISED-BMK’s Partners. FHI 360 is the ISED-BMK consortium lead with overall technical and financial responsibility for implementation. FSVCLixCap provides the lead team for enterprise development and business climate improvement. AIDECA is a civil society organization (CSO) based in the BMK region that promotes inclusion of women, youth, and people with disabilities through its CSO network. MSU (Mississippi State University) will strengthen SMSU to engage more effectively with the private sector.

II. Achievements during the Quarter

A. Strategic Planning

During this start-up quarter, ISED-BMK was intensely involved in strategic planning to ensure rapid and effective implementation of activities. The ISED-BMK team developed and submitted to USAID the following deliverables:

- The Rapid Mobilization Plan (RMP)
- The Branding and Marking Plan (BMP)
- The Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP)
- The First Annual Work Plan (AWP)
- The Gender and Social Inclusion Plan (GESI)
- The Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMELP)

- The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Plan
- The Grants Manual

Most of these plans were prepared using a co-creation approach that involved substantial stakeholder consultation during drafting (virtual meetings, virtual focus groups and a few in-person meetings) and after completion to get validation of the direction and priorities outlined in the documents. Some plans were developed using USAID templates (e.g., BMP and EMMP) and some are based on FHI 360 documents (e.g., the modified Grants Manual, GESI Plan). Taken together, these plans provide a solid foundation and roadmaps to accelerate project implementation.

B. Short-Term Technical Assistance (STTA) Planning and Priorities

During the quarter, ISED-BMK completed an internal 2021 STTA plan by reviewing activities proposed for implementation in the Year I Work Plan and then estimating Levels of Effort (LOEs) for each proposed STTA, comparing needs and priorities to the STTA budget. Staff broke down tasks into sub-tasks, estimated days for each sub-task, and then proposed the lowest possible LOE consistent with quality and timely delivery.

STTA will be provided by FHI 360 home office staff designated and budgeted in the ISED-BMK proposal, by local Moroccan STTA consultants, and, rarely, by expatriate consultants where no Moroccan is available for the work. Scopes of Work (SOWs) will be prepared early in the third quarter for those STTAs expected soon while others will be developed on a rolling basis as needed throughout the year. STTA identified in the quarter will be provided in Year I for the following tasks:

Related primarily to Component 1:

- GESI Advocacy Capacity-building Plan
- GESI intervention mapping
- Making the RC website accessible for PwDs
- Political economy analysis to help target activities
- Participatory Democracy Assessment
- Good Governance Barometer training and coaching
- Community Youth Mapping (CYM) training and coaching
- Right to Information IT development (governance) (from FSVC)
- Sub-national government policy and procedures (from FSVC)
- Project management for stakeholders (from FSVC)

Related primarily to Component 2:

- Enterprise training
- Career Center guidance and capacity-building based on LMA outcomes
- Improving access to domestic and international markets
- Improving access to finance for target enterprises
- Improving access to and application of business skills

- Support for Business Support Organizations
- Enhancement of the business climate
- Delivering core skills (strategic management communication)
- IT development for area above
- Investment promotion

C. Systems Development

During the co-creation process and the recent planning process, ISED-BMK has focused on how to ensure a systemic approach that integrates activities and components internally and addresses systemic constraints to the achievement of project objectives externally. Specifically, ISED-BMK in the past quarter has examined systemic issues related to:

- The general business environment for the agricultural and agro-processing ecosystems, in order to identify weak and/or missing linkages along the agriculture and agribusiness value chains. The approach is market oriented, where the needs of buyers are examined in-depth within the specific value chain and, more broadly, in the business environment. This should promote strong and sustainable market linkages between buyers and BMK operators.
- Agricultural and agro-processing work process systems, identifying steps in specific value chains that, if improved systematically within and across the product's value chains, should lead to an increase in productivity, reduce wastage and enhance quality. These can then be used as a roadmap to develop new high added-value products that can be derived from products such as pomegranates, and innovations in products such as carob that can differentiate BMK processors from their Moroccan counterparts.
- Approaches that can facilitate access to market activities to identify linkages where foreign and national buyers are engaged to collaborate closely with the BMK farmers and agro-processors.
- How CSOs taken together define and carry out local development activities and territorial planning. To identify barriers that hinder CSO involvement in local decision-making processes, ISED-BMK adopted a competitive approach when selecting CSOs, observing their respective strengths and weaknesses, to better orient technical support and training to respond to shared constraints, particularly in terms of advocacy, mobilization, and support for people in vulnerable situations. Regarding organizational capacities, ISED will adopt the Organizational Performance Index (OPI) to assess CSO capacities and reinforce them in upcoming activities.
- The contribution of the SGI public servants within the civil service system in the application of the reforms required by the new law (law 31.13). Understanding the civil service system will help ISED-BMK to design a holistic and integrated capacity building approach that responds to needs across a range of areas.

D. Staff Recruitment

Staff recruitment continued throughout the quarter with most new staff joining the project in late March and April. The organization chart (Annex I) shows the names of those hired and the remaining vacancies. As of late April, five vacancies remained: the Human Resources and Administration Manager, the Grants Manager, the accountant, one program officer, and a second driver. The second driver will be recruited only after receipt of project vehicles. A rigorous and fair competitive process was used for recruitment. Positions were advertised on the FHI 360 WorkDay site and Moroccan job posting sites. The ISED-BMK Gender Specialist was closely involved in the process to ensure both an equal opportunity for women candidates and an equitable outcome. Of the fifteen staff hired so far, seven are women. Of the five vacancies, we expect 3-4 women since, for these positions, we are receiving more female applicants. The second driver is likely to be male since, among more than 200 CVs received from drivers, no woman applied. We have also hired young people for the program officer position and two others.

E. Finance and Administration

During the quarter, the Finance & Administration department has undertaken several actions to develop a working framework that meets Moroccan administrative and human resource regulations as well as the requirements and procedures of FHI 360 and USAID. Since the recruitment of the Director for Finance and Administration on January 18, 2021, the following has been achieved.

ISED-BMK offices

The lease of office premises was signed on February 5, 2021. The premises consist of three offices totaling 289 m² located in downtown Beni Mellal. These premises are without interior partitions and lack air conditioners, electricity and internet service. The office development work includes dividing the space into 20 workstations, installing internet and electricity service equipping training rooms, installing air conditioners, adding a kitchenette, etc. To accelerate office space development and ensure work was completed properly, an architectural firm was retained to make the layout of workspaces pleasant, functional, efficient, and sustainable, while responding to labor legislation requirements, accessibility standards, regulatory constraints, fire safety, and adapting to the any technical constraints inherent in the design of the building. No construction (per USAID's definition) is included.

A restricted invitation to tender was launched on 03/01/2021 and the architectural firm MDLM was selected. On April 5, 2021, the office plan was approved, and the technical specifications were submitted to ISED-BMK on April 16, 2021. Water and electricity connections were finalized on February 26, 2021.

Office property insurance

A property insurance policy took effect on March 7, 2021 with Assurance Lyazidi.

Group health and work injury insurance

FHI 360 guarantees ISED-BMK employees health coverage until group health insurance with a Moroccan company is effective. The insurance company selection process is underway.

IT equipment

The process of acquiring IT equipment is underway. The two offers received were shared with the Regional IT Manager for review. The latter recommended continuing the process with the lowest bidder and confirmed that the bid met the requested technical specifications and that it complies with section 889. The equipment will be delivered and installed soon.

Sub-contractors:

The AIDECA 90-day budget and narrative required for the modification of the 60-day Letter of Authorization (LoA) was prepared as well as the full budget and narrative for the project life. The LoA amendment was signed by FHI 360 and AIDECA on April 07, 2021.

Other

During this quarter, numerous other tasks were completed. For example:

- Preparation of monthly cash requests
- Reconciliation of cash received at the field level
- Coordinate and collaborate with the AJ Consulting for the preparation of salaries and monthly declarations of the CNSS and income tax
- Preparation of accruals reports
- Preparation of FFATA reports

F. Stakeholder Collaboration

I. ISED-BMK and Sub-National Government Institutions (SGIs)

ISED-BMK initiated a process of collaboration and coordination with key SGIs in the Region by:

- Ensuring broad participation in the official ISED-BMK Launch held on January 28, 2021, where they were briefed on the content and initial activities of ISED-BMK and had an opportunity to meet the ISED-BMK team.
- Engaging SGIs in the co-creation process that developed both the first Annual Work Plan (AWP) and the Gender and Social Inclusion Plan (GESI). The ISED-BMK team held 21 consultations with representatives of public institutions, the Regional Council (RC), and the social division at the Wilaya and in other provinces.
- Engaging the SGIs in the AWP Presentation and Validation workshop to ensure they had an opportunity to engage in a full and frank discussion of ISED-BMK's initial work plan. The Wilaya took charge of the technical aspect of the workshop and mobilized all the institutional actors to ensure their attendance and participation in the discussion.

2. ISED-BMK and Civil Society Organizations

In February, ISED-BMK mapped CSOs in five target provinces of the BMK Region, building on AIDECA's existing database. The mapping included in-person and online meetings. The field team asked questions related to the work of CSOs, their interventions, past performance, internal

Regional Mapping of CSOs, that participated in introductory ISED meetings. (64 CSOs)

- Azilal(12)
- Khenifra (20)
- Béni Mellal: (11)
- Khouribga: (9)
- Fquih Ben Salah: (12)

governance, and linkage with neighboring communes and other local CSOs. This database will serve as an entry point to identify potential local CSO partners in ISED-BMK's 25 targeted communes and facilitate the selection of fifteen CSOs. The meetings were also a good opportunity to discuss and gather information about local community issues and to identify CSO needs that can be shared with local stakeholders.

ISED-BMK conducted virtual meetings with BMK CSOs to contribute actively to the development of ISED-BMK's AWP. ISED-BMK involved 15 CSOs in focus groups from

the region's five provinces and worked on promoting rights of youth, women and PwDs.

ISED-BMK engaged 27 CSOs and 12 cooperatives in the co-development of the GESI plan through online focus groups facilitated by AIDECA's team and the GESI specialist. Questions for the focus groups were direct and clear. This allowed ISED-BMK to obtain valuable responses and information. Participants shed light on barriers to and opportunities for gender equality and social inclusion and proposed approaches on how to address these challenges.

The 47 CSOs that were part of the project co-creation process (GESI and AWP cocreation workshops) were invited to attend the AWP Presentation and Validation workshop.

In March, ISED-BMK with AIDECA launched a call for interest for BMK CSOs to apply to join ISED-BMK's initial group of 15 CSO partners. Fifty-seven applications were received and will be processed in late April to select the 15 CSOs using objective criteria and with the participation of USAID.

ISED-BMK provided technical support to 47 CSOs to attend several online workshops (co-creation AWP and GESI workshops) and meetings. The CSOs have contributed through the sharing of needs, priorities of their community and good practices in terms of socio-economic inclusion of vulnerable populations. In case of low network coverage or technical difficulty using online platforms, ISED-BMK invited CSOs to send inputs by WhatsApp, e-mail, or phone to receive support.

3. ISED-BMK and SMSU

During the quarter, MSU had regular meetings with Dr. Youmna El Hissi, head of SMSU's partnership and international relations department to learn more about SMSU's organization, entrepreneurship focus, and agricultural research. MSU also met with Dr. Mohamed Najimi, Vice President of Scientific Research and Cooperation. Dr. Najimi shared the university's organigram and its current research structure. He expressed the university's goal to increase its economic visibility and impact on the region. MSU and SMSU have also scheduled meetings between agricultural researchers from both universities to identify specific initiatives that will help increase SMSU engagement in agri-business and regional economic development.

4. ISED-BMK, the private sector and business ecosystems

ISED-BMK approached institutional players as well as private sector organizations such as the CRI, CGEM and ANAPEC to grasp the current situation of SMEs in BMK. This coincided with the launch of the IZDIHAR program by the CRI, which assembled all major players that influence the regional business ecosystem. This program should help ISED-BMK reach SMEs more efficiently as CRI accompanies a large majority in their creation process, enhances collaboration among ecosystem partners and helps ensure the sustainability of ISED-BMK's initiatives since all institutional players in the BMK region are part of the same program, and all have a stake in making it succeed. Also, and as part of the IZDIHAR program, a sustainable accompaniment program will become part of the CRI's prerogatives.

ISED-BMK has begun mapping the regional entrepreneurial ecosystem to identify major prospects for collaboration during year 1. The agricultural and agri-business value chain assessments are also facilitating identification of all regional stakeholders.

III. Results - Component I

The first three months were an opportunity to carry out several preparatory actions to ensure a successful launch of Component I. These actions permitted ISED-BMK to mobilize relevant elected officials and public institution stakeholders and build a unified vision with them to help ensure more effective future engagement. ISED-BMK also launched the selection process for the 15 CSOs that will be involved in advocacy activities, and adapted tools and approaches to ensure that the GGB and CYM tools are appropriate to the Moroccan context. This will facilitate implementation in the next quarter.

ISED-BMK launched an SGI diagnostic evaluation on Right to Information (RTI) and a Public Financial Management (PFM) assessment to provide a baseline and context for the design of capacity building plans for SGIs and awareness/information plans. In this quarter, ISED-BMK collected data for targeted communes and prepared an inventory of participatory democracy mechanisms that will facilitate Year 2 implementation. Details follow by activity.

Activity 1.1. Increase participation, inclusion, and empowerment of citizens in local governance activities and decision-making processes.

a. Select Communes for Project Participation

To prepare for this task and identify the targeted communes, ISED-BMK:

- Prepared an application form for the targeted communes
- Prepared a database of 135 local communes that meets these criteria: demography and social development; economy and local governance and partnership.
- Gathered data related to the criteria above.

b. The CSO partner identification process

ISED-BMK conducted meetings to prepare for CSO selection that complied with GESI and AMELP requirements. ISED-BMK elaborated inclusive criteria for the selection of 15 partner CSOs, which will include at least three women CSOs, with one involved in Gender-based Violence (GBV) prevention, three youth CSOs and three Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs). This will help ensure that socio-economic issues affecting these groups will be effectively incorporated in the CSO-led advocacy plans.

The process was as follows:

- Prepare a draft of the selection criteria, application form.
- Prepare an application form that addresses administrative, financial and technical aspects related to ISED-BMK where priority will be given to those working with women, PwDs, youth and other vulnerable populations.
- Prepare the call for interest and an online form.
- Publish a call for interest on-line in Facebook and Tanmia.ma.
- AIDECA invited its network of CSOs, and those who were involved in the AWP and GESI co-creation process and the AWP presentation and validation workshop to apply.
- AIDECA's team assisted CSOs that had difficulty filling the form online or who had low network coverage.
- In the seven-day period ending March 31st, ISED-BMK received 57 applications from the five provinces of the region.

ISED-BMK consulted with the Wilaya and RC since they will be involved in the final CSO selection in April.

For CSOs that will become partners in implementing Community Youth Mapping (CYM), the Good Governance Barometer (GGB) and territorial planning, AIDECA held in-person and virtual meetings to update its CSO database in the five BMK provinces.

This preparatory phase helped ISED-BMK to identify needs and challenges at the communal level that limit CSO ability to address community issues when implementing GGB. It also ensured that CSOs have a good understanding of the project and the scope of CSO participation and engagement.

1.1.1. Initiate GGB Process in BMK

In this quarter, ISED-BMK started the GGB process by drafting the GGB and CYM implementation timeline in the five pilot communes. Commune selection criteria include rates of economic and social vulnerability of women, young people and people with disabilities, and communes that have demonstrated commitment to the socio-economic inclusion of women, young people and people with disabilities (for example, those that have integrated gender and social inclusion in their PAC).

ISED-BMK collected data and developed indicators from the regional direction of the High Commission for Planning and the Wilaya-BMK via meetings where the ways GGB methodology

can improve local governance were explained. The regional actors were interested in GGB and expressed their willingness to participate in its implementation.

Activity 1.2. Increase performance and efficiency of sub-national government institutions (SGIs)

1.2.1. Build Internal Capacity of SGIs to Achieve Regional Growth Objectives

SGIs have expressed their desire to improve their capacity and achieve regional growth objectives by working to overcome structural challenges they face. If unaddressed at the systemic-level, these constraints will continue to hamper effective implementation of development plans and delivery of local services. SGIs (the RC and targeted communes) know that they need to adopt more effective public financial management (PFM) and good governance practices to comply with the requirements of the decentralization framework and to implement their regional plans effectively. In response, ISED-BMK prepared a scope of work and methodology to conduct a PFM assessment and then design and implement PFM training and capacity-building activities.

Activity 1.3. Strengthen CSOs' participation in local governance for greater inclusion of vulnerable groups

1.3.1. Increase CSO Participation in Governance via Existing Governance Mechanisms

This activity was scheduled to start in year 2 but USAID requested a year 1 assessment so this will begin next quarter.

Activity 1.4. Increase transparency of SGIs and empower civil society on access to information

1.4.1. Identify and disclose datasets

Right to Information (RTI) is a key pillar of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) framework, which seeks commitments from governments to promote open government. The e BMK RC is seeking to join the OGP. ISED-BMK launched the sub-activity "Assessment to Yield a Supply-Side Training and Capacity Building Plan" to assess the needs of SGIs in identifying and disclosing datasets. ISED-BMK is conducting individual and focus group interviews with public officials responsible for managing and supplying information to the BMK public. An interview protocol was developed and shared with the GESI team and MEL Advisor for their input to assure alignment with indicators related to access to information. This past quarter, interviews were held with four elected officials (including two women). ISED-BMK will now analyze the information.

1.4.2. Use Government Information for Meaningful Purposes

ISED-BMK will start working on this activity once activity “1.4.1. Identify and Disclose Datasets” is finalized.

Activity 1.5. Improve governance of BMK’s business and economic ecosystems

1.5.1. Improve Regional Business Environment

Developing a vibrant regional private sector is central to ISED’s approach. During the quarter, ISED-BMK prepared an activity plan and SOW, and interviewed short-term consultants to launch the CRI-BMK assessment. The objective is to develop an action plan to strengthen their internal operations with a focus on investor-oriented services that will help lead to business climate improvement reforms even in the absence of a Regional Business Environment Committee (RBEC).

1.5.2. Strengthen Role of University in Governance and Economic Development

In this quarter, MSU built its knowledge of SMSU through internet research and conversations with university staff. Dr. Mohamed Najimi, Vice President of Scientific Research and Cooperation, shared an organization chart that provides information on the university leadership and its research structure. MSU was encouraged by his interest in the potential role of research in regional economic development and the application of new techniques. MSU and SMSU discussed their respective research strengths and areas of mutual interest, identifying water management, agricultural production, and dairy cattle as potential themes in the SMART FARM approach. Specific follow-up is most likely during the fall academic semester. During the next quarter MSU will schedule virtual discussions on applied research in agriculture.

In response to the new law (51.17) that restructures national and higher education, SMSU has proposed projects for its three-year contract with the Ministry of Higher Education that promote its increased regional involvement. These projects, which include developing a center to focus on regional socio-economic development and strengthening academic programs to align more closely with regional needs, support ISED-BMK’s objectives and underscore the potential of the university to be a strong partner.

IV. Results – Component 2

Component 2 has set clear goals that target mainly the agricultural and agro-processing ecosystems in Year 1. Current assessments will yield results once the value chain analyses are completed, since there is such an in-depth focus on agriculture and agri-business, sectors that offer the largest job creation potential in BMK. Other sectors will be assessed later as ISED-BMK works to identify all key sectors with growth potential. Close collaboration occurred with regional institutional stakeholders during the quarter. This should facilitate efforts to build a better business environment since interest from new investors can lead to more job opportunities.

2.1.1 Increase socio-economic inclusion of vulnerable populations through innovation and entrepreneurship

SMSU is actively promoting entrepreneurship, and MSU has been invited to participate with the university in two programs: a June conference on digitalization's impact on the public and private sectors and an entrepreneurship training program that began in March and culminates with student assessments for an international entrepreneurship certificate. Certificates will be presented to qualifying students at a July conference that explores the impact of entrepreneurship on regional development. MSU is considering ways to backstop these efforts. During this quarter, SMSU proposed its plan of modifying its current FabLab to include a social FabLab. In the updated model, engineering students will collaborate with business students to develop and promote projects with a FabLab festival planned for November. The SMSU emphasis on entrepreneurship aligns well with MSU's technical support capacity which will drive the MSU-SMSU partnership as professional relationships are built with key SMSU faculty and staff and as vulnerable populations have increased opportunities through innovation and entrepreneurship.

2.1.2. Tap Local Social Entrepreneurship Potential

ISED-BMK is mapping social enterprises in the region to assess the breadth and capacities of existing social entrepreneurship projects, their impact, their successes and challenges. The mapping will advance the activity goal which is to expand and deepen entrepreneurship opportunities for social enterprises. ISED-BMK has just begun the process of identifying sectors with high development potential for social entrepreneurship that could offer enhanced opportunities. Success stories will be highlighted as they are identified to inspire and motivate new entrepreneurs.

2.1.3 Promote Inclusive Entrepreneurship and Employment Opportunities for PWD

ISED -BMK initiated discussions with ANAPEC and Entraide Nationale to examine the *Fonds d'appui à la cohésion sociale* which helps PwDs to launch micro-enterprise projects. Entraide Nationale confirmed interest in formalizing a work plan and to co-identify with ISED-BMK specific actions to increase efficiency and streamline its selection process.

The ISED-BMK GESI Advisor met with Handicap International/Humanity & Inclusion (HI) to benefit from their experience and examine how ISED-BMK could apply best practices and tools that HI developed and tested in the region of Casablanca-Settat to support employers' efforts to include PwD in their recruitment process. This enabled ISED-BMK to identify the following process to support BMK-enterprises to adopt disability-friendly workplace policies and procedures:

1. Work with CGEM to identify priority sectors and profiles of target enterprises. The GESI Advisor engaged with CGEM, which confirmed its commitment to help identify and mobilize businesses to benefit from the training.
2. Launch a BMK region-wide call for expression of interest for enterprises to engage with this technical support process

3. Conduct site visits with focal points within interested enterprises
4. Assess the level of inclusiveness across the enterprise
5. Define an action plan specific to each enterprise, with defined timelines and milestones
6. Provide ad-hoc support to each enterprise in their action plan implementation

As the above process requires ISED-BMK staff to be trained, ISED-BMK will identify relevant expertise that needs to be acquired to deliver that training.

2.2.1. Improve Businesses' Access to Markets, Business Development Skills and Finance

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in the socio-economic development of BMK. ISED-BMK launched the “Formalize partnerships with ecosystem builders” sub-activity to effectively engage with SMEs by forming meaningful partnerships with national/regional ecosystem builders, such as CRI-BMK through the IZDIHAR program, the Office du Développement de la Coopération (ODCO-BMK), and national and regional business support organizations. ISED-BMK will partner with ecosystem players to ensure a larger regional impact on business' access to markets, and sustainability of the tools, and methods developed to reach the activity's objectives.

The partnerships' objective is to help identify and enroll SMEs in ISED-BMK-facilitated training and capacity building activities and to provide resources (e.g., training facilities, access to business networks) and institutional credibility to assist SMEs. ISED-BMK identified strong institutional partners such as the CRI and ANAPEC, prioritizing those with the highest potential to help BMK-based SMEs grow. This partner mapping describes prospective partners' recent and current programs and/or services that benefit SMEs and includes an analytical review of how ISED-BMK can build on potential partnerships to support its SME development objectives. Close collaboration is expected with organizations such the Club des Jeunes Dirigeants de Beni-Mellal, which has a dynamic local team leading its activities. They provide excellent mentoring services within the group of member SMEs, as well as innovative training to keep managers motivated, and looking to grow their businesses.

2.2.2. Support Business Activity, Innovation, and Better Working Conditions in Agriculture and the Agribusiness Sector

An agricultural and agro-processing sector assessment SOW was developed covering the key objectives ISED-BMK expects to achieve during year I. The assessment was launched with STTA support. An assessment outline was completed, and desk research is ongoing. Three questionnaires were developed to collect as much relevant data as possible for the different ecosystem players. The GESI Advisor developed specific tools based on USAID's best practices to integrate gender and include youth in value chain development.

MSU and SMSU have also been engaged in the assessment design with three SMSU agriculture faculty brought into the discussion. SMSU recognizes that it needs to build a culture that supports moving agricultural products from the field to the market to enhance the agricultural economy. In this early stage of planning, MSU is continuing faculty conversations to pinpoint optimal types and levels of faculty engagement with regional producers. Optimally, MSU will provide technical

assistance to SMSU faculty who will develop research projects that engage regional producers. This will facilitate collaboration around SMART FARM technical assistance in particular sectors and be germane to the outcomes of the agricultural sector assessment.

V. Applying the Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Plan Holistically

This quarter, ISED-BMK prepared a Gender & Social Inclusion Plan (GESI Plan) to identify issues and barriers, and to provide a detailed roadmap and recommendations about how most effectively and holistically to ensure gender integration and full inclusion of youth, people with disabilities and other vulnerable communities in the project's activities, including in project management, operations, planning, and technical and cross-cutting activities such as monitoring, evaluation, learning, communications, and outreach.

The GESI Advisor produced a set of recommendations to integrate into the annual work plan ensuring that activities and interventions integrate gender and social inclusion in all project components and activities.

ISED-BMK also ensured that gender equality and social inclusion was integrated into its operations, particularly in its recruitment procedures. For instance, ISED-BMK formalized its commitment to ensure diversity among its team by explicitly encouraging applications from youth, women and people with disabilities in all its job offers and in short-term technical assistance (STTA) SOWs. ISED-BMK offices have been made physically accessible to PwD.

During the quarter, ISED-BMK developed a rigorous monitoring, evaluation and learning plan based on quantitative and qualitative indicators to track progress towards gender equality, women's socio-economic empowerment, youth, and PwD inclusion. ISED-BMK's Activity Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Plan (AMELP) defined 19 indicators, disaggregated by, among others, sex, age group, area (commune), and/or by integrating an inclusive dimension in their definition. Six of these indicators are specific to measuring progress towards economic, social and civic empowerment of women, perception change towards gender social norms, and access of youth, women, and people with disabilities to private-sector job opportunities.

VI. Issues, Challenges and Lessons Learned

A. The impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The ISED-BMK team will continue to monitor Morocco's situation and plan for alternative strategies that work within the current Moroccan COVID context. ISED-BMK will fulfill its primary obligation of creating a safe and practical foundation to protect staff, partners, and beneficiaries' health and lives by minimizing their exposure to risk, coordinating closely with the GOM and USAID/Morocco.

During this quarter, ISED-BMK coped with the pandemic by having staff work from home and holding virtual meetings while also participating in some direct interactions using social distancing and taking other protective measures. The newly recruited staff are trained in relevant FHI 360

procedures and fully and remotely operational. Despite the remote communication challenges, the team has been efficient to engage with all partners and stakeholders and to ensure their deliverables. Documents are sent and shared electronically in advance for staff to study and collaborate in.

Conditions may soon permit more normal field activities and the resumption of in-person training. Should this not occur, FHI 360 has formed a Digital Learning Taskforce to digitize training and learning content. If ISED-BMK's training during this period needs to take place remotely (e.g., in case of a new lockdown), FHI 360 will convert in-person training into online delivery.

B. The impact of the impending elections

During this quarter, the upcoming elections have not affected the smooth implementation of the project's activities, especially since the project has not yet started field activities. ISED-BMK has taken several measures to prevent any form of "capture" of project activities for political purposes. The ISED-BMK team has been vigilant, especially during the co-creation phase and in consultations with the BMK Regional Council during this quarter.

Promoting the right to vote

To enable youth to influence public policy choices and participate in decision-making, it is important to encourage them to vote. ISED-BMK entered the electoral context to engage the SMSU in designing and implementing an activity to promote the right to vote among university students and promote their participation in all forms of civic participation. ISED-BMK and AIDECA conducted three meetings with SMSU to prepare for activities to promote the exercise of the right to vote among SMSU students. The student survey was disaggregated by sex and disability status and contains questions to assess young male and female information needs in terms of SGLs' roles and formal participatory democracy mechanisms.

Through these meetings, the ISED-BMK team launched a survey for SMSU students that includes:

- Number of male and female students registered in the electoral lists.
- The needs of male and female students in terms of information about the competencies of local sub-governments and the mechanisms of participatory democracy.
- The percentage of male and female students engaged in their communities.
- The types of social networks and communication media that interest students the most (to use them in the awareness campaign).

Once the questionnaire is prepared, SMSU will publish the questionnaire to reach about 42,000 students on its campus. ISED and SMSU will receive responses until May 15, and start processing them.

In the next quarter ISED-BMK will:

- Organize GESI workshops for about 15 CSOs supported by university representatives to develop a memo for political parties to encourage them to propose more gender inclusive

initiatives and to support increased representation of women, youth and PwDs at the elected council level.

- Organize citizen participation workshops by 15 CSOs and supported by university representatives. These workshops will encourage youth to vote and train participants in awareness-raising techniques, including developing the right to vote awareness campaign messages.

Once ISED-BMK develops the awareness kit, and with the full participation of the 15 CSOs, ISED-BMK will launch the awareness campaign in social media and on SMSU campuses to encourage students to register to vote. Another awareness campaign will then encourage youth to participate actively in the upcoming election by voting. The second campaign will be launched one month before election day.

VII. Results Expected in the next Quarter

A. Expected Results - Component I

Activity 1.1. Increase participation, inclusion, and empowerment of citizens in local governance activities and decision-making processes.

In the next quarter, the five pilot communes will be selected, in coordination with USAID, the Wilaya and the regional council. ISED will also continue the process of selecting the 15 CSO partners which includes the steps below:

- The selection and announcement of the 15 CSOs, among which at least three women CSOs, including one actively involved in GBV prevention, three youth CSOs and three PwD DPOs.
- Sending feedback to non-selected CSOs.
- An orientation and meeting with the 15 CSOs selected.
- Conduct a capacity assessment (Administrative and financial management, reporting and communication) for the 15 CSOs.
- Once the 5 communes are identified, ISED-BMK will start the local CSO selection that will help in implementing CYM and GGB in their commune. The initial list of CSOs that participated in the project's actions, will be contacted if they are active in the 5 communes.

1.1.1. Initiate GGB Process in BMK

For the upcoming quarter, the GESI Advisor and Governance Specialist will train relevant staff and AIDECA on Do No Harm (DNH), GESI, Positive Youth Development (PYD) and social accountability. While doing so, ISED-BMK will adapt governance tools, mainly GGB and CYM, to the local context.

ISED-BMK will start with CYM, and tailor the process, including the training of trainers' guide, facilitation guide, and data collection tools. ISED-BMK, including AIDECA, will then be trained on

the tools that will be shared with the selected CSOs. Once the five pilot communes are identified, ISED-BMK will start selecting CSO partners that will implement GGB and CYM in their commune. Once the CSOs are trained, the CYM process will begin with the recruitment of 25-30 youth mappers. For each target commune, based on CYM criteria, they will receive training on facilitation, data processing, etc.

ISED-BMK will ensure that partners reach the most vulnerable, inactive and marginalized youth, for example, by visiting areas where unemployed youth congregate, or conducting outreach through existing institutions such as the Dar Talib/Dar Taliba, Ministry of Youth and Sport's "Foyers Féminins", or Women and PwD support centers operated by Entraide Nationale.

SMSU will be consulted to ensure integration of its students into existing CYM processes. Then CYM training will be conducted for youth mappers and preparations made for the mapping process scheduled for July. CYM trainees from SMSU can then serve as mentors to other youth mappers as they would have more data collection experience. By June, ISED-BMK will have fully adapted the GGB and provided TOT to AIDECA on the implementation guide.

1.1.3. Ensure Greater Inclusion of Rural Populations in Local Governance

ISED-BMK will identify community leaders in the target communes to help mobilize and gain the support of the population and contribute to the adaptation of the awareness tools to the local context. Involvement of local community leaders will help ISED-BMK gain an in-depth understanding of the potential barriers and challenges that could prevent women, youth and PwDs from participating in local governance and will help ISED-BMK prepare specific communication and awareness campaigns to reach these populations.

Activity 1.2. Increase performance and efficiency of sub-national government institutions

1.2.1. Build Internal Capacity of SGIs to Achieve Regional Growth Objectives

At the beginning of the next quarter, ISED-BMK will select an STTA to conduct a PFM assessment with SGIs, engage with non-SGI entities (e.g., the *Direction Générale des Collectivités Territoriales*) and share preliminary findings. At the end of this assessment, the STTA will submit a final report that contains: 1) the assessment's results, findings and recommendations, including how SGI budgets reflect gender and social concerns; and 2) a PFM training and capacity-building plan that aligns with the *Schéma Directeur de la Formation Régional* and is commensurate with SGIs' levels of development. Following the co-creation approach and in coordination with USAID, ISED-BMK will deliver an action plan to regional stakeholders to ensure their approval and to launch capacity building for targeted SGIs.

Activity 1.3. Strengthen CSOs' participation in local governance for greater inclusion of vulnerable groups

1.3.1. Increase CSO Participation in Governance via Existing Governance Mechanisms

ISED-BMK will initiate a data collection phase with DGCT, DCL, Wilaya BMK and elected councils by conducting meetings and interviews on:

- The development of PACs in 135 communes.
- The operationalization of consultative bodies in 135 communes and at the regional council level
 - The number and subject of petitions submitted to the communal councils and the regional council.

The data will be used to prepare preliminary findings that will be verified in the next phase, which consists of conducting interviews with local actors to identify barriers that limit the operationalization of formal participatory mechanisms and best practices for civic participation.

1.3.2. Strengthen Advocacy Efforts of CSOs for Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups

Once the 15 CSOs are selected, ISED-BMK will:

- Undertake CSO capacity assessments to identify needs in the design and implementation of advocacy activities. ISED-BMK will use quantitative and qualitative tools such as surveys and focus groups. Based on the results of this assessment, ISED-BMK will develop a capacity-building plan.
- Implement capacity building for 15 CSO representatives who are either members of the executive board or have executive roles inside the organization and were part of the assessment phase. The plan includes five training workshops (six hours per workshop). Every CSO representative is invited to schedule and hold sessions in their CSOs on topics from the capacity building initiative.
- Organize six analytical workshops (between 2 and 3 hours each) with CSO participation. The workshops will be an opportunity to inventory key stakeholders (allies and opponents), analyze the policy environment and identify possible advocacy activities to induce change in public policies and procedures to ensure greater inclusion of women (2 workshops), youth (2 workshops) and people with disabilities (1 workshop).

Through these workshops, several key topics will be identified that CSOs will rely on to design the advocacy activities: inclusion of youth, women, PwD, civic participation and economic empowerment. ISED will encourage the creation of consortia of CSOs when designing advocacy activities.

Activity 1.4. Increase transparency of SGIs and empower civil society on access to information

1.4.1. Identify and Disclose Datasets

Using a demand-driven approach, ISED-BMK will finalize the sub-activity assessment plan for a Supply-Side Training and Capacity Building Plan with SGIs, that will help build the capacity of SGIs to disclose information in line with the RTI law. Following the co-creation approach, ISED-BMK will validate with USAID and SGIs the timeline for capacity building for public and elected officials.

I.4.3. Use Government Information for Meaningful Purposes

ISED-BMK will start working on this activity once activity “I.4.1. Identify and Disclose Datasets” is finalized in year one.

Activity 1.5. Improve governance of BMK’s business and economic ecosystems

I.5.1. Improve Regional Business Environment

ISED-BMK is working to help the CRI-BMK to achieve its private-sector development objectives. In the third quarter, ISED-BMK will conduct the CRI assessment that will result in action plans. ISED-BMK will:

- Assess CRI services (from private sector’s perspective)
- Develop a training and capacity building plan based on CRI staff needs that links training to enhanced performance of specific tasks and processes, such as operations, internal performance, staff productivity, effectiveness of internal processes (distribution of tasks, internal procedures, etc.) and digitalization potential of processes/services
- Develop a strategic overview of operational improvement needs, e.g., in terms of streamlined processes, improved performance, communications and outreach strategies.
- Position CRI against other high-performing CRIs (national benchmarking) to improve regional competitiveness and promote business climate reforms.

At the end of this activity, ISED-BMK will present the action plan to CRI and will jointly define the timeline for execution.

I.5.2. Strengthen Role of University in Governance and Economic Development

In quarter 3, MSU will begin to introduce the SMART Farm model and dialogue with SMSU on adaptation and implementation of this model in which research can have a positive impact on economic development. MSU introduced the structure of its Office of Research and Economic Development last quarter and will share more information on office roles next quarter as they work with SMSU to adapt this model.

B. Expected Results – Component 2

During the previous quarter, ISED-BMK initiated a value chain assessment of the agriculture and agribusiness sectors and identified key potential partners in the entrepreneurial ecosystem to collaborate with ISED-BMK in identifying and selecting targeted entrepreneurs and businesses. During the next quarter, ISED-BMK will finalize these activities and build on them to begin providing training, consulting and advisory services, and coaching to help targeted businesses improve their access to finance, markets and business management skills. Emphasis will be placed on supporting businesses operating in the agriculture and agribusiness sectors to improve their

participation in higher value-added functions, and greater integration into national and global value chains.

2.1.1 Increase socio-economic inclusion of vulnerable populations through innovation and entrepreneurship

In quarter three, the MSU team will prepare for participation in the summer conferences to increase its networking opportunities and to deepen its understanding of SMSU entrepreneurship. They will co-develop with SMSU strategies and a timeline for developing an innovation lab that will be the hub for SMSU entrepreneurial activities. MSU will also introduce its Venture Catalyst(tm) program to SMSU staff for adaptation to the BMK context. Venture Catalyst™ is a comprehensive, co-curricular program, including a checklist, mentorship, and workshops, that MSU has used with success for students and faculty who are interested in starting a successful, investor-backed company.

2.1.2. Tap Local Social Entrepreneurship Potential

Next quarter, ISED-BMK will begin developing specific actions after exchanges with cooperatives and associations to support the social entrepreneurship ecosystem. Depending on assessment results and stakeholder suggestions, ISED-BMK will select actions to generate optimal impact on social enterprises, thereby impacting livelihoods of the people involved with them. ISED-BMK will also continue its stakeholder dialogue to get feedback on local social entrepreneurship issues. This will lead to the development of an action plan that responds to social enterprise needs.

2.1.3 Promote Inclusive Entrepreneurship and Employment Opportunities for PwD

In the next quarter, ISED-BMK will engage with Entraide Nationale and ANAPEC to formalize an action plan to increase the efficiency of the *Fond d'Appui à la Cohesion Sociale*. ISED-BMK will identify relevant expertise to support enterprises adopting inclusive workplace policies and procedures and develop a call for interest to identify enterprises willing to implement more inclusive policies.

2.2.1. Improve Businesses' Access to Markets, Business Development Skills and Finance

ISED-BMK will assess and validate the potential of prospective partners in meetings where objectives, roles and responsibilities can be clarified. In some cases, partnerships may be structured and clarified via Memoranda of Understanding. MOUs, if concluded, would include a 12 to 18-month action plan. The results of these meetings with partners includes improved understanding of prospective partner activities and their interest to partner with ISED-BMK in ways that can help achieve SME growth objectives. Partnerships will include ones with key ecosystem players such as CRI, CGEM, ANAPEC, INDH, ODCO and a wide spectrum of businesses from women's cooperatives to PwD and youth-led enterprises. The underlying goal is to effectively engage with BMK-based SMEs and implement capacity-building activities that will help them increase their financial resources, their turnover and acquire competencies to manage their businesses optimally.

After action plans are defined, ISED-BMK will identify SMEs as program participants in coordination with activity partners and launch the SME technical support. The assessment of the above-mentioned partners will also allow ISED-BMK to identify service redundancies and optimize the use of resources. A first selection of SMEs will take place as part of the CRI's Izdihar program, where a needs assessment will be matched with services available. This will promote close collaboration and let SMEs benefit from resources available in the region. ISED-BMK will provide technical assistance and act as an interlocutor among these entities.

2.2.2. Support Business Activity, Innovation, and Better Working Conditions in Agriculture and the Agribusiness Sector

As a result of this activity, ISED-BMK will map obstacles at the sector and subsector-level that prevent BMK-based agriculture and agribusiness operators from being more competitive. ISED-BMK will then co-design, with project partners and regional stakeholders, actions to remove or mitigate these obstacles. This process will include identifying, via a participatory process, specific agricultural chains that have significant growth potential but are currently under-exploited. The activity will also help identify public and/or private partners to leverage their resources (e.g., funding, training programs) and help identify target beneficiaries (e.g., cooperatives) that will benefit from ISED-BMK's programmatic activities. Overall, this activity will help ISED-BMK design specific program interventions to support business activity, innovation and better market access in the agricultural and agribusiness sectors.

ISED-BMK will conduct product-specific, in-depth value chain analyses by building on the initial general assessment and other value chain assessments for several products with enormous potential to be more competitive such as pomegranates, sesame seeds, and carob.

ISED-BMK will use USAID's methodology in the "Promoting Gender Equitable Opportunities in Agricultural Value Chains" Handbook to address gender issues that are embedded in how value chains work. This will help to better understand and analyze gender issues that affect agricultural value chains and identify strategies to foster equitable participation and support for women's economic empowerment. Specifically, and to ensure full integration of gender into selected agricultural value chains, ISED-BMK will map gender relations and roles along the selected value chains employing the Gender Dimension Framework (GDF), identify gender-based constraints (GBCs), i.e., restrictions on men's or women's access to resources and opportunities that are based on their gender roles and responsibilities, assess and prioritize the consequences of GBCs that need immediate attention and identify ways of mitigating or removing GBCs.

These analyses will allow local stakeholders, with technical support from ISED-BMK, to identify missing linkages, and understand what bottlenecks prevent BMK producers from being more competitive. Solutions will be developed jointly by the producers and ISED-BMK and implemented in a way that leverages resources available through public and private partners. This should help build production of the products analyzed in the value chains, allow better market access, higher quality, and possibly consider new market segments, where higher profit margins may be generated.

In quarter three, MSU will introduce SMSU to the SMART Farm model, a research strategy developed by the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for soybeans and used successfully in other parts of Africa. MSU and SMSU will explore how to adapt and implement this model for the region. SMSU researchers will share with MSU their current research to determine together the crop or agricultural activity that could be the focus of the model that will be implemented in Year 2. During implementation, research, demonstration and training will be used to improve farmer yields.

C. SMSU and MSU in the Third Quarter

MSU will participate in SMSU conferences during the third quarter, including a digital governance conference (June 23-25) and an entrepreneurial conference (July 1-2). MSU attendance will advance its understanding of SMSU priorities and practices, which will facilitate implementation of the MSU-SMSU joint workplan. Activities will also intensify in the third quarter since the ISED-BMK Higher Education Institutions Coordinator started work on April 12, 2021, providing dedicated local support to advance project goals.

D. Activities Planned for Finance and Administration

ISED-BMK office

The ISED-BMK goal is to work from regular office space in Beni Mellal from June 2021, provided the Government of Morocco and health conditions permit a resumption of normal in-person office work. FHI 360's target for a resumption of office work at its headquarters is September 1, 2021. The required health measures will be put in place considering Moroccan requirements and those of FHI 360 for Covid 19 prevention. Actions will include adopting office sanitary measures, making disinfectant gel available, ensuring disinfection of common areas, carrying out awareness-raising activities for employees and visitors.

ISED-BMK bank account

A new bank account will be opened at the Banque Populaire in Beni Mellal to guarantee the speed and efficiency of ISED-BMK's banking transactions. It will be opened at the agency "Grand Compte" which is in the same building as the ISED-BMK offices.

ISED-BMK vehicles

Two vehicles will be purchased next quarter. ISED-BMK will work with FHI 360 HQ and USAID to obtain timely approvals.

Training

Procurement training will be provided to ISED-BMK employees so that acquisitions are made in full compliance with FHI 360 and USAID procedures and rules. Finance staff will benefit from training in finance to understand and comply with FHI 360's finance principles and procedures.

VIII. Reporting on ISED-BMK Indicators

During the second quarter, ISED-BMK was heavily invested in setting up the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system. This involved extensive consultations with ISED-BMK team members and implementing partners. The effort considered prior consultations with USAID and local partners as part of the co-creation process. As such, the current MEL structure considers the contextual changes that are likely to occur after upcoming elections.

The draft Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP) was submitted to USAID Morocco on March 5, 2021. On April 6, 2021 ISED-BMK received feedback from USAID and is currently addressing AMELP feedback and revising as necessary. Given that both the revised AMELP and QPPR will be submitted around the same date (April 29th-30th), the comments on progress below reflect the work performed on the proposed indicators.

Indicators Summary Table – PY1 (2021) – Q1 (January – March)								
#	Indicator	Type	Level	Reporting Frequency	Baseline	PY1 Target	Q1 Progress	Notes on Progress
Component/IR1: Improved Governance for Increased Regional Growth and Inclusion of Youth, Women and PWD								
Increase participation, inclusion, and empowerment of citizens in local governance activities and decision-making processes								
1	Percentage of agreed-upon GGB action plan milestones achieved in all ISED-BMK targeted communes by completion of ISED-BMK	ISED-BMK Custom	Outcome	Quarterly	0	NA	NA	Component 1 team held multiple consultations with GGB experts and are currently working on the selection criteria for communes. Tracking milestone achievement will begin in PY2
Increase performance and efficiency of sub-national government institutions (SGIs)								
2	Number of policies, procedures or mechanisms adopted by SGIs to enhance participatory practices between government and citizens and to improve their internal efficiency and effectiveness	ISED-BMK Custom	Outcome	Quarterly	0	NA	NA	ISED-BMK team, through both its components as well as crosscutting components such as GESI continue to build relationships with relevant SGIs in the region. Activity starts in PY2 (due to elections taking place in PY1)
3	Percentage of individuals surveyed in targeted areas who perceive that SGI transparency, accountability, and/or efficiency is improving	ISED-BMK Custom	Outcome	Annual	0	15%	NA	As this is a start-up phase, no activities have taken place yet to improve SGI transparency, accountability, and/or efficiency
Strengthen CSOs' participation in local governance for greater inclusion of vulnerable groups								
4	Percentage of project-supported CSOs whose advocacy has led to policy change that affects women, youth and/or PWD	ISED-BMK Custom	Outcome	Annual	0	NA	NA	Selection of CSOs is undergoing, and no support has been deployed yet
5	Number of CSOs receiving USG assistance engaged in advocacy interventions	USG Standard (DR.4.2-2)	Output	Annual	0	35	NA	Selection of CSOs is undergoing, and no support has been deployed yet
Increase transparency of SGIs and empower civil society on access to information								
6	Percentage of Right to Information (RTI) requests receiving an SGI response	ISED-BMK Custom	Outcome	Annual	TBD	15%	NA	As this is a start-up phase, ISED-BMK will focus first on establishing the baseline for this, then deploy a measurement metric in partnership with selected SGIs.

Indicators Summary Table – PY1 (2021) – Q1 (January – March)

#	Indicator	Type	Level	Reporting Frequency	Baseline	PY1 Target	Q1 Progress	Notes on Progress
								Tracking likely to start in Q2 of PY1
Improve governance of BMK's business and economic ecosystems								
7	Number of policies adopted by regional entities to improve business climate	ISED-BMK Custom	Outcome	Annual	0	NA	NA	Only counted starting PY3
8	Number of new cross-sectoral linkages established by SMSU in all provinces	ISED-BMK Custom	Output	Quarterly	0	5	NA	Preparations are ongoing, and an HEI Coordinator is soon to be recruited.
Component/IR 2: Enhanced Livelihoods and Business Activity through Innovation								
Increase socio-economic inclusion of vulnerable populations through innovation and entrepreneurship								
9	Number of entrepreneurial initiatives supported	ISED-BMK Custom	Output	Quarterly	0	3	NA	Preparations are ongoing
Increase business and job growth in key priority sectors								
10	Number of private sector firms that have improved management practices or technologies as a result of USG assistance	USG Standard (EG. 5.2-2)	Outcome	Annual	0	10	NA	Preparations are ongoing. Tracking likely to start in Q3 of PY1
11	Number of firms receiving USG-funded technical assistance for improving business performance	USG Standard (EG. 5.2-1)	Output	Quarterly	0	120	NA	Preparations are ongoing. Tracking likely to start in Q3 of PY1
Workforce development in line with labor market needs								
12	Number of new or adapted curriculums or training programs at regional HEIs	ISED-BMK Custom	Output	Annual	0	NA	NA	Counting for this indicator starts in PY2.
Cross-cutting								
13	Percentage of participants reporting increased agreement with the concept that males and females should have equal access to social, economic, and political resources and opportunities	USG Standard (GNDR-4)	Outcome	Annual	0	15%	NA	Preparations are ongoing. Tracking likely to start in Q3 of PY1
14	Percentage of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance	USG Standard (CBLD-9)	Outcome	Annual	0	10%	NA	Preparations are ongoing. Tracking likely to start in Q4 of PY1
15	Number of ISED-BMK-supported enterprises that are trained on or adopt disability and/or gender-sensitive workplace policies or procedures	ISED-BMK Custom	Outcome	Annual	0	10	NA	Preparations are ongoing. Tracking likely to start in Q4 of PY1
16	Percentage of youth who participate in civil society activities following soft skills/life skills training or initiatives from USG assisted programs	USG Standard (YOUTH-5)	Outcome	Annual	0	10%	NA	Preparations are ongoing. Tracking likely to start in Q4 of PY1
17	Number of USG-supported activities designed to promote or strengthen the civic participation of women	USG Standard (DR. 4.1)	Output	Quarterly	0	10	NA	Preparations are ongoing. Tracking likely to start in Q3 of PY1
18	Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations	USG Standard (GNDR-8)	Output	Quarterly	0	150	NA	Preparations are ongoing. Tracking likely to start in Q3 of PY1

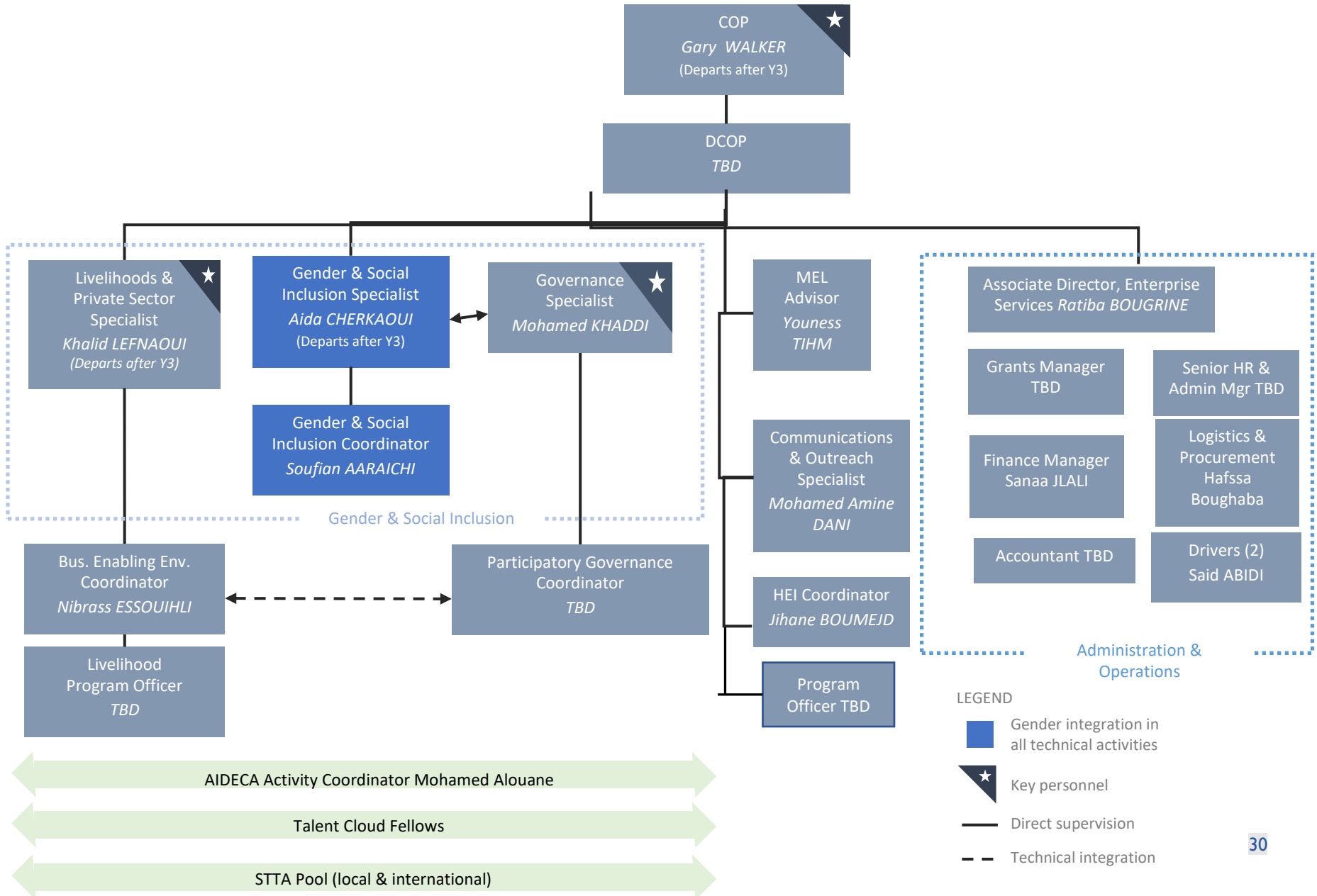
Indicators Summary Table – PYI (2021) – Q1 (January – March)

#	Indicator	Type	Level	Reporting Frequency	Base-line	PYI Target	Q1 Progress	Notes on Progress
19	Percentage of participants who are youth (15-29) in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources	USG Standard (YOUTH-3)	Output	Quarterly	0	30%	NA	Preparations are ongoing. Tracking likely to start in Q4 of PYI

ANNEXES

1. Revised Organization Chart Showing Staff Names
2. List of entities engaged with ISED-BMK during the quarter

Annex I: Revised Organization Chart



Annex 2: List of entities engaged with ISED-BMK during the quarter

N°	Entity engaged	Topic
1	Wilaya de la région BMK	Government institutions
2	Le conseil de la région Béni Mellal Khénifra	Sub-National Government Institution
3	La coordination régionale de l'INDH	Government institutions
4	La division des affaires régionales	Government institutions
5	La division de l'action sociale province de Béni Mellal	Government institutions
6	La division de l'action sociale province de Fquih Ben Salah	Government institutions
7	La division de l'action sociale province de Khénifra	Government institutions
8	La division de l'action sociale province d'Azillal	Government institutions
9	La division de l'action sociale province de Khouribga	Government institutions
10	Le conseil de la région Béni Mellal Khénifra	Sub-National Government Institution
11	Université Sultan Moulay Slimane SMSU	Academic Community
12	Agence Nationale de Promotion des Emplois et des Compétences (ANAPEC)	Government institutions
13	Comité régional du Développement Humain (CRDH) région BMK	Government institutions
14	Centre régional d'investissement (CRI)	Government institutions
15	Délégation régionale du tourisme région BMK	Government institutions
16	Direction régionale de l'agriculture (DRA) région BMK	Government institutions
17	Coordination régionale de l'Entraide Nationale région BMK	Government institutions
18	Initiative Nationale pour le Développement Humain (INDH)	Government institutions
19	Institut national de la recherche agronomique (INRA)	Government institutions
20	Office du développement de la coopération (ODCO)	Government institutions
21	Morocco Foodex région BMK	Government institutions
22	Office de la formation professionnelle et de la promotion du travail (OFPPT) région BMK	Government institutions
23	Office national du conseil agricole (ONCA) région BMK	Government institutions
24	Office national de sécurité sanitaire des produits alimentaires (ONSSA) région BMK	Government institutions
25	Union Nationale des femmes Marocaine Beni Mellal	CSO
26	Collectif civil pour la défense des droits des femmes.	CSO
27	Association Solidarité pour le développement et la protection de la famille de Khouribga	CSO

28	Association ANIR pour le Développement Féminin et la Solidarité	CSO
29	Association Oued Srou	CSO
30	Association Al Khayr Des femmes	CSO
31	Association ASKKA pour la femme et l'enfant Ait M'hamed	CSO
32	Association Mains d'Espoir	CSO
33	Association Annour pour la science et le travail	CSO
34	Association Réseau Ait Sgougou	CSO
35	Association Israa, Personnes avec Handicap. Béni Mellal	CSO
36	Association Amal association des enfants sourd et malentendant	CSO
37	Association BAIT BAHYA pour les enfants en situation d'handicap abandonnés	CSO
38	Association AL KARAMA pour les enfants en situation d'handicap	CSO
39	Association Dar Al Aman	CSO
40	Réseau des Associations des Personnes en Situation de Handicap Fquih Ben Salah	CSO
41	Association Alamal pour les personnes en situation du handicap	CSO
42	Association El wiaam pour les non-voyants	CSO
43	Association Qualification des jeunes de Béni Mellal	CSO
44	Association Mouvement Jeunesse pour le Développement Local (AMOUJ) Khénifra	CSO
45	Association Timouilt pour développement (ATD) Azillal	CSO
46	Association CARDEV	CSO
47	Association Organisation pionniers enfant du Maroc (OPEM) de Khouribga	CSO
48	Association Ourchid	CSO
49	Association Al Mawahib	CSO
50	Association Al moustakbal	CSO
51	Association Alaahd Al Jadid	CSO
52	Association régionale pour l'éducation et la formation	CSO
53	Association Amaawn	CSO
54	Association ATTAOUASSOUL pour le développement l'environnement et la culture AADEC	CSO
55	association Itran pour la créativité théâtrale et l'animation culturelle	CSO
56	Association Complexe social multifonctionnel Boulouhouch	CSO

57	Association CHOUALA pour l'Education et la Culture	CSO
58	Association Ouaourint pour le Développement et la Coopération (AODC)	CSO
59	Coopérative Tassaft	Cooperative
60	Coopérative Timicha	Cooperative
61	Coopérative Moulate Dar	Cooperative
62	Coopérative SALAMA	Cooperative
63	Coopérative LFATMIA	Cooperative
64	Coopérative Akhawate Lkharrouba	Cooperative
65	Coopérative Afourer de production et transformation d'olives	Cooperative
66	Coopérative Agricole Taymate	Cooperative
67	Coopérative SANAD Agricole	Cooperative
68	Coopérative Jil Al Maarifa	Cooperative
69	Coopérative Tassaft	Cooperative
72	Confédération générale des entreprises du Maroc (CGEM) région BMK	Private Sector