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Oliphana Project

Quarterly Report

1st Quarter – 01 10 2021 to 12 31 2021

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AOR Name: Melissa Knight

Submitted by: Carolina Reynoso-Pieters, National Director

NCBA CLUSA

cpieters@ncbaclusa.net



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I. PROJECT OVERVIEW/SUMMARY

Program Name:	Olipihana
Activity Start Date And End Date:	July 8 th 2021 – July 8 th 2024
Name of Prime Implementing Partner:	NCBA CLUSA
[Contract/Agreement] Number:	72065621CA00004
Name of Subcontractors/Subawardees:	Consultoria em Desenvolvimento Social, Ltda (SCDS), Unidade de Assistência Técnica de Alfabetização Funcional – Associação para o Fortalecimento Comunitário (UATAF – AFC), and Plexus Mozambique Limitada (Plexus)
Major Counterpart Organizations	N/A
Geographic Coverage (cities and or countries)	Balama, Ancuabe and Montepuez districts of Cabo Delgado province, northern Mozambique
Reporting Period:	10/01/21 - 12/31/21

1.1 Project Description/Introduction

The Oliphana project is a dynamic partnership that will galvanize public and private investments to support 12,000 individuals, mostly youth, women and internally displaced persons (IDPs), to restore their livelihoods and enhance their resilience so they can better withstand future shocks in Montepuez, Ancuabe, and Balama districts of Cabo Delgado. The program will support USAID's New Partnership Initiative (NPI) by working through underutilized partners.

It is being implemented in three districts of southern Cabo Delgado province, Mozambique's most northern province – Balama, Montepuez and Ancuabe districts. This is the area which has absorbed the bulk of IDPs fleeing from the violent insurgency facing the northern part of the province since 2017, with around 160,000 IDPs now temporarily residing in the three project districts.

Oliphana, under the leadership of the prime NCBA CLUSA, is comprised of three highly qualified, underutilized local partners: *Consultoria em Desenvolvimento Social (SCDS)*, a multidisciplinary consulting firm with expertise in socioeconomic analysis, gender equity, and IDP resettlement and livelihoods restoration; *Unidade de Assistência Técnica de Alfabetização Funcional – Associação para o Fortalecimento Comunitário (UATAF)*, a Mozambican NGO with a strong track record in adult education, financial literacy, VSLAs, and community resilience; and private sector partner *Plexus Mozambique Limitada (Plexus)*, a leading agribusiness in Cabo Delgado with a network of over 75,000 farmers.

With a budget of \$3,000,000 and a leverage contribution of \$1,600,000 from private partner Plexus Mozambique and other private and public sector partners operating in Cabo Delgado, over three years Oliphana will: **(1) Strengthen economic pathways, particularly for youth.** Through hub farms and farmer associations linked to Plexus' extension network and through referrals from partners working with IDPs, the project will offer two training and technical assistance tracks: **On-farm**, which will focus on production-related practical and farm administration skills; and **Off-farm**, which will be centered on business development and entrepreneurship skills. Participants in both tracks will benefit from training in technical and soft skills and "on-the-job" experiential learning (8,000 beneficiaries). **(2) Support recovery from natural disasters** by increasing the use of Conservation Farming (CF) through hands-on trainings and demonstrations; diversifying livelihoods, incomes and risk; improving rural savings; increasing citizens' positive coping strategies, recognizing youth, women and IDPs' unique needs; and testing and promoting risk mitigation mechanisms, e.g., micro-insurance (6,000 beneficiaries). **(3) Improve information dissemination.** Using a local radio and SMS platform, the project will disseminate information on agronomy, weather, and markets; employment, technical training, and internship opportunities; COVID-19 prevention, health, WASH and nutrition; and facilitate social assistance and information from partners working in the same districts (12,000 beneficiaries).

The project aims to reach these goals by targeting two main profiles: 1) vulnerable populations (mostly IDPs, women and youths) unable to meet their own consumption needs, and 2) established producers supplying Plexus through its extension network of informal village buying posts, formal groups, informal village buying posts, formal groups and Plexus managed hub farms, in addition to other rural MSMEs with an extension footprint in the province.

2. ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

2.1 Progress Narrative

This report discusses implementation progress achieved by the Olipihana Project during Quarter 1 of the first year of the project, covering the period October to December 2021. It includes discussions on the major accomplishments during the reporting period, implementation challenges and planned activities for the next quarter. Within these sections, the report also includes the key successes, tasks and challenges, reasons why established goals were not met, if applicable, and any other pertinent information.

This first quarter was a period of formally commencing the project. It involved establishing project offices, configuring the M&E system, contracting and on-boarding staff and acquiring materials and equipment, formalizing contracts with sub partners, and extensive meetings with government and non-governmental entities to introduce the project and obtain stakeholder approval and buy-in. In addition, significant progress was made in programmatic elements of the project, which will be discussed in more detail below. These include:

Activities relating to Outcome 1: increased participation in on and off-farm economic activities and incomes: To prepare for activities relating to the promotion of off-farm income generation via formal jobs and entrepreneurship, during this period the project conducted district level mapping of the market system for agricultural commodities, in addition identifying the private and public actors in each district (including a range of local micro entrepreneurs or Last Mile Entrepreneurs - LMEs - who will receive technical and business support from the project). As a result of these surveys, MoUs were drafted with key partners. Of particular mention were meetings held with key partners involved in providing technical training courses for entrepreneurs and job seekers, including the Alberto Cassimo Institute for Professional Training and Work Studies - IFPELAC (with whom the project will partner to conduct a skills/job market assessment to determine which technical courses should be prioritized) and Balama Agricultural Institute (a potential partner for co-designing and running courses). This means that the project is on track to start designing soft skills, business, and technical trainings, and providing technical assistance to rural entrepreneurs, during the next quarter. There are at present no reasons to doubt that the project will meet its Year 1 project targets relating to the number of people trained and receiving technical assistance from the project, the promotion of income opportunities for vulnerable groups, and increased income from off-farm activities.

Activities relating to Outcome 2: increased ability to manage shocks and stresses: The project is so far on track to meet its targets in terms of the numbers of farmers trained in GAPs and conservation farming (CF), and applying promoted practices, during Year 1. During this period,

the project established the network of 17 demonstration plots that will form the backbone of its extension, training and demonstration model, enabling the it to demonstrate GAPs and CF and train farmers in yield enhancing technologies. The project established nine demonstration plots, including their respective protocols, for a mix of first season cash and food security crops. In addition, the project promoted IDPs' resilience capacity by establishing 50 multiplication fields for cassava at 12 IDP camps, involving 50 IDPs, and is currently supporting Plexus to integrate 500 contracted IDPs into its formal supplier network via its network of hub farms in the three project districts. The initial set-up activities relating to financial literacy and the promotion of village-based savings and lending associations (VSLAs) began this quarter (e.g., recruiting staff), with field activities due to begin in the next quarter.

Activities relating to Outcome 3: increased access to and use of quality information: The project is also online to meet its Year 1 targets in terms of communications. It has established an SMS platform, which was configured for all three cell phone operators in the country, and drafted the Terms of Reference for a Content Committee responsible for the prioritization and approval of SMS message content. Initial SMS content was created for two key value chains in the target districts (maize and cassava) in addition to guidance on how to deal with the Fall Army Worm. Meetings were held with government bodies responsible for disseminating early warnings to confirm their openness to the project's early warning systems being integrated into existing government systems. As such, the platform is now ready to start sending targeted SMS, including early warnings where appropriate, in line with project targets. For radio programs, the project has met with and drafted MoUs with community radio stations in all of the three target districts, and created initial radio program content. This will enable training for radio journalist to take place, and radio programs to be aired, from the next quarter onwards.

2.2 Implementation Status

Outcome 1: increased participation in on and off-farm economic activities and incomes

This outcome has the following IRs:

- 1.1 Strengthened job and self-employment related technical and soft skills
- 1.2 Increased market-led production growth and access to agricultural markets
- 1.3 Strengthened rural enterprises and expanded access to goods and services

During this quarter, the project made the following contributions towards these IRs:

District level mapping of value chains and actors

This period the project planned to conduct district level assessments to identify the private and public stakeholders with whom the project will engage, and identify potential areas of

collaboration. This was achieved by way of two assessments: 1) the District Market Study, and 2) the District Actors' Map.

The District Market Study, undertaken in October 2021, mapped the main value chains produced and the key value chain actors, mapped out how produce moves from the farm gate to processors/exporters and identified the key marketing challenges for smallholders and small scale intermediaries. Based on this, the project prioritized the target food security and market orientated value chains for the project, and identified the main challenges and bottlenecks in terms of smallholders' engagement in agricultural commercialization. Leading on from this, the District Actors' Survey, conducted in November 2021, mapped all of the main private and public actors in each of the project's districts, and identified those whom the project plans to engage. From these two studies, the project has begun drafting MoUs, for instance with the following:

- RW Machamba: horticulture firm using contracted outgrowers to supply markets including oil and gas companies in northern Cabo Delgado. The firm is willing to contract all of the project supported horticulture producers at the Chipembe dam site, and looking to collaborate in the co-design and run technical training for horticulture farmers
- Inputs retailers and agrodealers, e.g., Daudo Saíde, Mundukide, Olima Agronegocios, Moumon Kalemo, Sabina Antonio, Valgi Agronegocios, PROMA, Cornélio Comercial)
- Seed companies e.g., Phoenix Seeds: Olipihana has started linking Phoenix, the country's only provider of weather index insured seed, with inputs retailers in Cabo Delgado to promote the sale of weather index insured, certified seed
- Community radio stations in each of the three project districts
- Government agencies including SDAE (District Services for Economic Activities), SDPI (District Services for Planning and Infrastructure), SDMAS (District Services for Women and Social Action)
- NGOs and projects e.g., ADPP, SNV, TechnoServe, H2n: H2n, through the USAID funded Coragem project, is supporting Mpharama Community Radio, Balama district, via using h2n's Youth Accelerator model (which promotes youth empowerment and engagement in governance by training youths as journalists). The Coragem supported youth journalists will support Olipihana in the design and production of agriculture and other program-related content, and ensure that radio content and timing is relevant for youths. In return, Olipihana will provide youths involved in the Youth Accelerator with soft skills and technical skills training, in addition to job linkage activities, for the via the activities relating to Outcome 1. The projects will also share learning, for instance the Olipihana job market and entrepreneurial skills assessment (see above) and the Coragem funded baseline study for Mpharama radio station (which diagnosed the station's institutional, organizational, finance capabilities and needs)
- Technical training institutes e.g., IFPELAC and Balama Agricultural Institute: with IFPELAC, Olipihana will conduct a market study in March 2022 to assess the

entrepreneurial and job market related opportunities in each district. This will inform the project on the most relevant technical courses in addition to potential partners (training colleges, private sector partners and other projects) for course co-design and realization.

Identification and registration of project assisted farmers

As planned, the project began identifying and registering smallholder beneficiaries through the Plexus producer network. Like all NCBA CLUSA projects, Olipihana will register project beneficiaries using the Kobo Collect platform which enables a comprehensive mapping process of each individual project beneficiary, including farmer details, scanned ID documents, GPS registration, etc. The project has started identifying and registering project beneficiaries, and to date 413 beneficiaries have been fully registered onto the M&E system as table 1 shows:

Table 1: Registered smallholders to date

District	Outside of Plexus farmer network		Plexus farmer network		Total
	Men	Women	Men	Women	
Ancuabe	58	44	73	4	179
Balama	35	17	87	15	154
Montepuez	45	28	5	2	80
Total					413

Farmer registration is an ongoing process that will continue throughout the project, as new farmers engage with the Plexus model (including IDPs and horticulture producers). In addition, registration includes farmers integrated in business models with other agrobusinesses in the private sector, including those with the potential to engage IDPs. The registration process has been slightly slower than expected (discussed in challenges section, below).

Outcome 2: increased ability to manage shocks and stresses

This outcome has four IRs:

- 2.1 Diversified on-farm income generating opportunities
- 2.2 Increased use of Conservation Farming practices
- 2.3 Improved financial literacy and household income management practices
- 2.4 Increased access to & use of safety nets, risk mitigation tools

During this quarter, the project had the following main contributions towards these IRs:

IDP production within the Plexus hub farm model

Plexus began identifying, contracting and registering IDP farmers to be integrated into its production model. Plexus had originally anticipated supporting 1,000 IDPs to form into Plexus grower association(s) in Ancuabe district, using around 850 hectares of the land ceded to them by the government. However, due to the government being unable to clear the land for IDPs as planned, Plexus changed its strategy (see 2.3 below) and instead opted to incorporate IDPs into its existing hub farms throughout the three project districts.

In this first year, Plexus will engage with 500 IDPs (180 of which will be women), through six of its existing Hub Farms. These farmers are expected to farm around 370 hectares of cotton, sunflower and sorghum on contract for Plexus. They are now in the process of signing off-taker agreements with Plexus and receiving inputs credits for cotton (inputs for sorghum and sunflower are due to be distributed in the next quarter). Table 2 below shows the Plexus IDP production plan for the 2020/21 campaign.

During this quarter, in collaboration with SNV, Plexus ran a training event for extension staff in organic cotton production. From this, it contracted five of the best performing trainees as new extension staff (two of which are women), who have now been allocated to the three project districts where they will be responsible for managing the IDP producer network and supporting them to produce cotton according to international organic standards. Note that the number of extension staff was lower than the planned number of ten extension staff since the number of IDPs has reduced in the first year (from 1,000 to 500). Given that most IDPs – coming from coastal areas and often traders or fisher people rather than experienced farmers – lack experience in the commercial production of many semi-arid crops, Olipihana is in the process of distributing 500 kits of land cleaning tools composed of hoes, axes and machetes. These farmers will also benefit from the project supported demonstrations at hub farm demonstration plots in both market-orientated and food security crops established during this period (including sweet potato, beans and cassava – see below). They will also receive tailored extension messages via SMS (see intervention 3.2 below).

Table 2: Integration of IDPs into the Plexus hub farm model

Nr	Hub Farm	Inputs credits provided (hectares)			Number of IDP farmers		Total IDP s
		Cotton (ha)	Sorghum (ha)	Sunflower (ha)	Men	Women	
1	Hub Farm Namara	79.5	0		53	2	55
2	Mombe hub farm	23	22.5	-	40	5	45
3	Sivaka IDP Farm	38	38	0	42	33	75
4	Mapupulo IDP Farm	112	-	-	98	125	223
5	Meluco_Minapo	34	-	7.5	56	15	71
6	Impiri- Sirimula IDP Farm	15.5	-		31	-	31
	Total	361	60.5	24	368	180	500

Below: Training of Plexus extensionists at Balama Agrarian Institute.



Establishing project and Plexus managed demonstration plots for food security and cash crops

To promote GAPs and CF, the project established demonstration plots which will be used to establish a peer-to-peer farmer extension network for training smallholders on GAPs, CF and other technologies and innovations through practical, hands-on training events and demonstrations. Private sector suppliers of goods and services also attend these events, enabling private sector

firms and famers to meet face to face, share experiences and information. Oliphana is establishing three types of demonstrations: Plexus hub farm demos, community and IDP camp based demos, and demos in Plexus supplier groups.

During this quarter project has established demonstration plots as planned. Together with Plexus, Olipihana has established protocols and begun planting for nine ½ hectare demo plots for Plexus value chains (sunflower and cotton) in addition to other rainy season food security and cash crops (maize, maize, peanuts, sweet potatoes, cassava and new varieties of sorghum). They will be co-managed by Plexus hub farm members and Plexus and Olipihana extension staff.

Eight additional community and IDP camp based demonstration plots to be co-managed by Plexus and the project were established in Ancuabe District (Plexus complex of Nanjua and the IDP campo of Marrocane), Montepuez district (former Municipality office, Plexus gin and Ncoripo), and in Balama district (Chipembe, Mombe, Namara and Sivaca).

During the next quarter the project will establish further demos in village-based groups, which will be managed by Plexus Contact Farmers (a type of Lead Farmer) together with Plexus and Olipihana extension staff and will include a mix of food security and market orientated second season crops (e.g., beans and horticulture).

Promoting food security crops at IDPs camps

In order to increase the food security of IDPs, the project is establishing community multiplication plots for cassava and sweet potato in IDP camps. This is important as most of the IDPs come from coastal areas and their traditional staple crops are cassava and sorghum. Olipihana is the first and only project supporting the introduction of these crops in the area, as most other projects - including humanitarian aid programs – are focused on the distribution and promotion of maize as the staple food security crop. Cassava and sweet potato, however, are more climate resilient, nutritionally rich and context appropriate.

In order to scale up the production of cassava and sweet potato, the first ten producers selected in each IDP community will be responsible for using the multiplication plots for training other farmers to produce sweet potatoes and cassava on their own plots. To date, 50 IDP farmers in 12 IDP camps have received 200 cassava stems each and have begun planting. Project staff are providing technical support. Information on GAPs will be disseminated via the project's SMS and community radio programs (discussed below).

Table 3: IDP farmers receiving cassava stems for multiplication

District	IDP village	# of farmers receiving cassava
Ancuabe	Cujupane	
	Marrocane	
	Milamba 2	
	Nathove	
	Nannonna	
Balama	Angalia	
	Impiri	
Montepuez	Ujamaa	10
	Nacaca	10
	Mararanje	10
	Mapupulo Piloto	10
	Mapupulo Upajo	10
Total	12	50

Coordination with government bodies for the creation and dissemination of early warning messages via SMS and radio

In order to begin designing the system for creating and sharing early warning messages with project beneficiaries, and integrating this system in existing government processes, during this quarter the project met with government department National Disaster Management Institute (INGD), the District Services Planning and Infrastructure (SDPI) and Emergency Operations Commission (COE) to establish their openness to collaborate with the project in the creation and sharing of early warnings for shocks (for markets, prices, weather and other natural shocks and stressors). During the first quarter of 2022 the project will meet with the relevant provincial and district government actors to establish the modality for integrating the project system into its existing early warning mechanisms. This may include, for instance, engaging with COE to create and issue early warning messages to project beneficiaries via SMS and radio – which would involve alerting COE of potential shocks (particularly the shocks for which the project team is often the best placed to become alerted to first, and advise on, such as the Fall Army Worm), supporting COE to create messages to warn communities and support them to take action, and providing training and support to the district level COE.

Field activities relating to IR2.3 (improved financial literacy and household income management practices) have not yet begun this period due to delays in obtaining local government approval for UATAF staff to work in the project districts. However, during this quarter UATAF-AFC has prepared much of the groundwork. It has contracted its team, which is already in the project site locations (Montepuez, Balama and Ancuabe), and its staff have received the motorbikes and

computers. Staff are currently participating in the beneficiary registration process and assessment of the farmers groups who will start with literacy programs, and the process of community promotor selection is now taking place. During the next quarter, the UATAF-AFC team activities will include the adaptation of literacy manuals to the local context, negotiations with district authorities for the integration of the 15 community promotors to be engaged in the activity, and the start of VSLA training/technical assistance related activities.

Outcome 3: increased access to and use of quality information

This outcome has three main IRs:

- 3.1 Improved quality of information disseminated through community radio content
- 3.2 Increased access to SMS market, price, product & services information to improve product quality and trade (including early warning information)

The following achievements have been made towards achieving these IRs:

The establishment of an SMS platform for project beneficiaries

During this quarter the project made significant progress towards establishing an SMS platform for the project. In December 2021 it contracted a local service provider – SISLOG – to host an SMS platform which will be used to issue one-way, “blast” SMS to project beneficiaries (Plexus IDP and non IDP farmers, youths benefitting from training, VSLA group members, networks from other organizations, etc.) with project and other related content (e.g., training, employment and internship opportunities; governance, youth, gender and IDPs; commodity markets and prices; information regarding private sector partners’ products and services; GAPs and CF; WASH, COVID-19 and health; early warnings and risk mitigation measures for shocks and stresses, etc). The SMS system is currently being configured to work with all three local cell phone service providers – Movitel, Vocacom and Tmcel (Movitel being the provider most commonly used in rural areas) and will be ready for testing in January 2022.

This quarter the project prepared the terms of reference for the SMS Content Committee, a multistakeholder committee which will be responsible for deciding on the SMS system mechanisms (e.g., SMS timing, frequency and language), prioritizing SMS content, identifying content creation partners and approving SMS content before dissemination. The core members of the Committee are expected to be project consortium partners NCBA CLUSA, UATAF, SCDS and Plexus, in addition to USAID and (ensuring government representation) and SDAE from each of the three project districts. Other NGO, private sector and government stakeholders will be invited to attend on a case-by-case basis. The first meeting is scheduled for February 2022.

As well as configuring the platform, during this quarter the project modified existing content from the MultiMedia project’s 321 platform (cassava and maize GAPs, in addition to advice for

prevention of the Fall Army Worm) which will be ready to be aired on a trial basis in early 2022. This will enable the platform to start sending messages while the first batch of new SMS content is being created in accordance with the decisions made at the first Content Committee meeting.

2.3 Implementation Challenges

Delays in obtaining government authorization for project introductions and for the IDP Social and Market Study

Some project start-up activities were delayed due to delays on obtaining authorization from provincial government authorities to conduct visits and introduce the project at the district government level. In addition, the SCDS managed Social and Market Study for IDPs, due to be completed during this period, has been delayed as a result in delays in obtaining permission from local government authorities to work in IDP camps – the report is now due early in the second quarter. The challenges in obtaining local authority approval are related to the challenges in working with the new dual system of government in Mozambique, which is discussed in more detail in Lessons Learned, below.

The rapidly changing IDP context in the project districts

One of the main factors causing potential challenges for the project, and which will likely require subsequent adjustments to project interventions, has been the rapidly evolving IDP situation. Since the project proposal was submitted, the IDP population the target districts swelled to around 160,000, the majority of whom are residing in host communities. This has put increased pressure on local communities and increased the levels of tensions between IDPs and hosts, with land being the most contentious resource – IDPs claim that first and foremost they need land in order to produce for their own consumption and to have enough surplus to buy additional goods. Access to cleared land is critical for IDPs resilience in the communities, and the project will need to continually engage with government and community authorities to mediate land access, security and conflict issues. It also makes it imperative that the project finds ways to engage IDPs in private sector business models, where they can access not only land but also inputs and technical assistance, in addition to conducting other activities which increase IDPs' resources and knowledge to produce on the land that the government has made available to them (e.g., sweet potato and cassava multiplication plots, demonstrations for food security and cash crops, the provision of basic agricultural implements, etc.) Although the increased number of IDPs in the intervention area has not yet required the project to make any major changes in terms of implementation or application of funds, it is likely that this may happen in the coming quarters.

Delays in registering farmers

Producer identification and confirmation is a one-on-one, comprehensive and time-consuming process that ensures the individual verification of each farmer. In addition, since Olipihana is

registering Plexus farmers, the process needs to occur in tandem with Plexus' own farmer registration for the 2021/22 campaign (Olipihana and Plexus field teams visit farmers together and register them for the Plexus production network and on the project database simultaneously). In other words, Olipihana registration of Plexus farmers can only occur as fast as Plexus itself is able to register farmers. Plexus' own registration process is delayed this year due to the fact that it has been late in paying payment some cotton producers, and the registration of new farmers can only take place in communities where Plexus has fully honored its payments for the previous season – in sum, Olipihana's registration can only go as fast as Plexus is able to pay farmers and re-contract them for the next season.

Challenges in incorporating IDPs without their own land in the Plexus production model

The process of integrating IDPs into the Plexus producer model as planned has been made difficult by a lack of cleared land available for IDPs. Originally, Plexus intended to work in Ancuabe district where the government had recently ceded land to IDPs. The plan was to support 1,000 IDPs, farming around 850 hectares of this land, to form themselves into new Plexus producer associations/hub farms. However, lack of government funds for the clearing of that land using a bulldozer meant that those farmers were not able to fully access the land, meaning that the IDPs in Ancuabe have only been able to farm on very small areas (the area that they have been able to clear manually).

As such, Plexus needed to find another way to integrate IDPs into its production program. Rather than creating new IDP associations using the government ceded land in Ancuabe, Plexus took the decision to incorporate IDPs in nine of its existing hub farms throughout the three project districts per table 1 above. Although the number in the first year is likely to be less than expected (500 IDP farmers versus the 1,000 planned), this number is likely to grow in subsequent years as more IDPs are integrated into the hub farms. In addition, Plexus's extension team will still encourage IDPs in Ancuabe to produce for the company, by distributing a small amount of cotton seed so that they can cultivate a limited area of cash crops (sunflower and cotton) on the areas of land that they have managed to clear by hand. Given their immediate needs, IDPs are mostly farming food security crops on their small areas of land - the seed for which has been distributed by government and other humanitarian agencies – however there is the scope for them to begin to integrate small amounts of market orientated crops which would provide them with additional income to purchase the goods (e.g., food stuffs, hygiene related goods, medicines etc.) that they cannot produce themselves, and to invest in other income generating activities.

Climate related challenges

Differentiated rainfall patterns were observed in the region this year. Although Balama district registered early rains and farmers started sowing earlier, in general the rainy season started in the late December 2022 (particularly for Ancuabe) which resulted in late sowing for first season rainy crops and is likely to impact negatively on crop sowing and germination. The full effects of this will become more evident during the next quarter.

3. INTEGRATION OF CROSSCUTTING ISSUES AND USAID FORWARD PRIORITIES

3.1 Gender Equality and Female Empowerment *This brief narrative should highlight the gender gaps and key gender achievements.*

Oliphana Gender Analysis

In September 2021 consortium partner SCDS conducted a gender analysis which identified the challenges for women and youth in the project area, and how the project activities can address these. SCDS used the GALs methodology to determine issues such as gender roles and decision making within the household. Based on this study, the project has identified the need to:

- Use project communications channels (e.g., SMS and radio) to promote gender equitable norms (e.g., zero tolerance for gender-based violence, gender equitable decision making within the home). Ensure that message content is appropriate, engaging and accessible for women, e.g., radio messages are aired at a time when women are able to listen. Identify barriers to women accessing messages (e.g., lack of access to cell phones, limited literacy)
- Train women and men – through VSLAs – in gender equitable decision making and promote women’s sense of agency in activities such as household financial management, off-farm income generation activities, the production/ sale of cash crops, etc.
- Raise awareness of and promote women in roles of leadership (e.g., women led VSLAs)
- Provide referrals to existing services beyond the scope of the project
- Address the physical and cultural barriers to women participating in and benefitting from commodity commercialization (at present, for instance, they sell their goods closer to the farm gate than men, due to safety concerns and reduced transit - resulting in lower margins)
- Promote more equitable decision making and control of resources for men and women. For instance to address the fact that women often conduct small scale income generating activities but tend to hand their income over to men. This will mean that as well as basic business training for female entrepreneurs the project will need to address cultural and physical barriers to women maximizing and benefitting from their financial returns
- Conduct a gender assessment of Plexus and other partners to identify specific capacity building needs that will address gender constraints and create additional business opportunities for women (e.g., support Plexus to design a gender policy)

3.2 Environmental Compliance

There are no activities to report in relation to the Environmental Monitoring Plan. During this quarter there were no risk identified (for instance, no opening up of new production areas outside of the existing Plexus hub farms, no sourcing of new varieties of seed, no distribution of irrigation input kits, no irrigation activities started). The risk mitigation activities identified on the

Environmental Monitoring Plan will commence during the next quarter, once the project has commenced production related activities that could potentially have negative impacts on the environment - for instance, the distribution of irrigation kits to farmers who will produce at the Chipembe dam site - and once project has started to conduct farmer training events (regarding, for instance, the safe use of agrochemicals) at demonstration plots.

4. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Government, regional organizations, NGOs, private sector, academia, civil society, other donors, etc.

The project introduction to local government and IDPs villages took place after the issue of permits to do so by the State Secretary at Provincial level. The authorization allowed the introduction and presentation at provincial and district level to the government authorities.

A presentation was made at the provincial governor's cabinet in a session that included the Governor and Provincial Directors. It was in this session when the cabinet brainstormed the name of the project, with the Governor himself proposing the name of Olipihana.

A further meeting was held with the Secretary of the State at the provincial level with participation of the Director of Provincial Environment Services, the focal point of partnerships in the cabinet. Further meetings were held separately with key sectors, namely agriculture, youth, and women.

At the district level, a project presentation was made in the district cabinet sessions in each one of the locations. This was done with the participation of the Plexus Director. Visits also took place to district services (SDAE and SDPI).

Further project introductions to district governments took place when the NCBA CLUSA National Director visited all districts and some IDP villages.

Below: Meeting with Provincial Directorate of Education, Pemba



Below: Meeting with Provincial Agriculture, Women and Social Assistance directorates (with NCBA CLUSA National Director)



5. MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

The Olipihana project counts with a multi-sectorial team of seasoned staff experienced working with vulnerable populations in economic development activities and in engaging private sector actors to develop and implement inclusive business models. In order to foster a “one project” culture and encourage cross pollinating across sectors, all project staff are based in the same office in Montepuez and participate in all planning and pause and reflect activities.

Due to delays caused by global logistic bottlenecks. Entrepuesto Mocambique (the project vehicle supplier) will only be receiving new vehicles the first week of February. We expect to have our project vehicles (two Toyota Hiluxes) delivered to Montepuez by the second week of February. In the meantime, NCBA CLUSA has made available two vehicles from its reserve fleet to support Olipihana activities until the project vehicles arrive.

In the coming weeks we will be requesting approval to procure improved horticulture inputs and irrigation kits so that production on the Chipembe damn can begin by the end of March, at the very latest.

6. LESSON LEARNED

Challenges associated with including IDPs in the Plexus production model

The challenges in incorporating Ancuabe IDPs into the Plexus production model using land ceded to them by the government was another clear lesson in how the project's activities are dependent on the actions of other stakeholders (e.g., government – in this case, ADIN). As such, the project will often need to be flexible and quick to adapt to changing circumstances. The situation in Ancuabe - with IDP farmers manually cultivating small areas of land mostly for food security crops - also highlights the fact that IDP integration into commercial production models will naturally take second place to their securing their immediate needs. Recently arrived IDPs, or those with limited resources, will naturally prioritize their own food security needs before they are at a point at which they can focus on more market-orientated production. If Plexus is to be successful in supporting IDPs to produce for the market, it is important that those immediate land and food security needs are first met (with support from government and humanitarian agencies in addition to project initiatives such as establishing sweet potato and cassava farmer managed production plots at IDP camps, training in conservation farming for food security crops, the provision of basic agricultural tools, etc).

The project needs to be sensitive to the complexities of operating with the dual government

Operating in a conflict zone, and in close collaboration with local government, requires the project to be highly sensitive to the local context. As mentioned, for instance, there were delays in obtaining approval to conduct field activities and the project quickly learned that certain activities could not be rushed or handled indelicately. This need to be sensitive to the local context is especially relevant given the complexity of current the current dual system (Secretary of State and Government) and the need to be inclusive of all branches of government. For instance, when requesting authority to conduct field work in the project districts, Olipihana requested approval from both the Secretary of State and the Governor (rather than just one body as would previously have been the case), and those bodies themselves decided from which organ the credentials would eventually be issued – which in this case was the Secretary of State. We learned that this needs to be the approach throughout the entire project – deferring to both Secretary of State and Governor, so as to avoid appearing that the project has an affinity for one particular figure.

In the same vein, communication and transparency are critical in building relations with local government authorities. Some project activities necessitate the participation of public officials who must play a leading role when working in IPDs camps, for example cassava stem distribution at IDP villages takes place together with SDAE representatives. This has sometimes caused activities to take longer than expected, and will continue to pose a challenge throughout the project.

7. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER INCLUDING UPCOMING EVENTS

Indicate opportunity/need for media and/or USAID/Vietnam or other USG involvement, particularly for USAID project monitoring site visits.

- **Job and entrepreneurial skills assessment with IFPELAC:** The project will conduct a market assessment for both job skills and entrepreneurial skills, to assess the opportunities that exist and existing training providers and courses. Scheduled for: March 2022
- **Radio assessment, formative research and airing of interactive radio programs:** The NCBA CLUSA Communications Officer will conduct two weeks of capacity assessments and in-field training for community radio stations in each of the target districts. This will consist of: assessing radio stations' capacity and needs (skills, knowledge and equipment/ other material resources), formative research in the community (to identify the community's needs in terms of radio program content), training radio journalist staff in designing and airing interactive radio programs (including collaborating with a range of stakeholders as content providers), assessing the quality and effectiveness of radio programs, and designing and managing feedback systems with the community. Scheduled for: March 2022. During the next quarter three project supported radio stations will also begin airing interactive radio programs, starting with content relating to GAPs for cotton production (produced in collaboration with Plexus)
- **MoUs with key project partners:** The project anticipates signing MoUs with the following stakeholders including IFPELAC, Balama Agricultural Institute, RW Machamba and Phoenix Seeds, in addition to others. Scheduled for: January 2022
- **First CC meeting:** The first meeting will take place in February to identify the priority SMS content for the first "batch" of SMS to be released during the first quarter, finalize the Committee's terms of reference and fine tune details relating to the SMS program, for instance SMS frequency, timing, language etc. Scheduled for: 15th February 2022. During the next quarter the project, together with content creation partners, will create and air the first batch of SMS for beneficiaries
- **Activities related to financial literacy and the promotion of VSLAs**
- **IDP social and market study:** consortium partner SCDS will hand in the social and market study of IDPs, which will assess the social structures and market capacity of IDPs in the project areas (using focus group discussions in IDP camps and host communities) and will provide a more complete picture of the skills, resources and needs of IDPs, upon which the project will tailor its future interventions. Scheduled for completion in: February 2022

ANNEX A: PROGRESS SUMMARY

	Indicator	Endline Target	Unit of Measure	Quarter I (October - December 2021)		
				Target	Achieved	% of Achievement
Outcome 1: Increased participation in on and off-farm economic activities and incomes						
1.1.1	Number of participants receiving soft skills, life skills and technical skills	8,000	People	0	0	0%
1.1.2	Number of rural entrepreneurs receiving training/technical assistance	60	People	0	0	0%
1.1.3	Value of increased income through off-farm activities	40%	USD	0		0%
1.2.1	Number of individuals who have applied improved management practices or technologies with US government assistance	4,000	People	0	0	0%
1.2.2	Yield increase of targeted agricultural commodities	40%	Metric tons	0	0	N/A
1.3.1	Short-term income opportunities for vulnerable groups including women, youth and IDPs	6,000	People	0	0	0%
1.3.2	Value of private sector investment leveraged	\$1.6M	USD	0	0	0%
Outcome 2: Increased ability to manage shocks and stresses						
2.2.1	Number of participants trained in Conservation Farming	6,000	People	0	0	0%
2.3.1	Number of VSLA established, including youth- and women-led	90	Number of VSLA	0	0	0%
2.3.2	Number of members from vulnerable groups including women, IDP, and youth accessing VSLA	2,700	People	0	0	0%
2.5.1	Number of individuals benefiting from early warning information	8,000	People	0	0	0%
Outcome 3: Increased access to and use of and quality information						

3.1.1 Proportion of people perceiving local narratives positively (denominator = estimated total number of targeted people reached)	80%	<i>Percentage</i>	0	0	0%
3.1.2 Proportion of people actively engaged on targeted issues (denominator = estimated total number of targeted people reached)	80%	<i>Percentage</i>	0	0	0%
3.2.1 Number of participants accessing targeted messages (radio and SMS messages)	12,000	<i>People</i>	0	0	0%

