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PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE INCENTIVES DRIVING ECONOMIC ALTERNATIVES – NORTH, EAST, AND WEST PROGRAM

FINAL REPORT

APRIL 2015

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ACRONYMS

ADP	Alternative Development Program (USAID)
AHDP	Animal Health Development Project (EC)
CCI	Community Constructed Infrastructure
CDC	Community Development Council
DAI	Development Alternatives, Inc.
DAIL	The provincial offices of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
GIRoA	Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GPS	Global Positioning System
Ha	Hectare
HACCP	Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points
ICARDA	International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas
HLP	Horticulture and Livestock Programme (World Bank)
IDEA-NEW	Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives—North, East and West
IP	Implementing Partner
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock
MC	Mercy Corps
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MT	Metric Ton
PHDP	Perennial Horticulture Development Project - Phase I & Phase II (EC)
RAMP	Revitalizing Afghan Markets (USAID)
ToT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	Value Chains and the Value Chain approach

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East, and West (IDEA-NEW) project began in early 2009 and is scheduled to end in September 2015. The Cooperative Agreement was signed by Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI), which operated in the East and West, in cooperation with ACDI/VOCA in the North, and Mercy Corps in the Northeast. IDEA-NEW continues to operate in the central and eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, Kabul, Kapisa, Panjshir and Parwan.

Over seven years of implementation, IDEA-NEW undertook a remarkably wide range of activities and tested a large number of implementation methodologies in the 19 provinces where it was active. Initially designed as an alternative livelihoods project, IDEA-NEW shifted focus in 2010 to increasing rural incomes through improved agriculture practices and support for agriculture enterprises across the agriculture sector. In mid-2012 the project adopted a more formal value chain approach. The project has been evaluated and audited on several occasions, with generally positive findings, confirming many strengths of the project's approach and verifying compliance with reporting and accounting regulations.

2. METHODOLOGY

The Evaluation Team used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, drawing upon data collected by the evaluation team, as well as data from various IDEA-NEW assessments and surveys. The review focused on statistical results of crop and livestock assessments – in particular, the contribution of the project interventions to outcomes such as beneficiary income and production. Key informants and participants of the focus groups were chosen to represent the views of the various types of beneficiaries in the value chain, the geographic scope of the evaluation, and type of value chains (vegetable, orchard, and livestock).

3. FINDINGS

To what extent has IDEA-NEW's value chain approach affected diversification of agricultural activities by beneficiary farmers?

IDEA-NEW studies demonstrate that beneficiary households are more likely to diversify than non-beneficiary households, and to have higher rates of production and household income. The Evaluation Team's synthesis of project studies indicates that IDEA-NEW interventions strengthened linkages in value chains.

IDEA-NEW interventions were responsible for increased diversification. However, IDEA-NEW's value chain interventions were not intensive enough to absorb the increase in agricultural productivity. Food processors assisted by the project mentioned that the number of food processing businesses and their demand for produce was small in relation to the

number of farmers capable of increased production. In particular, the downstream activities for vegetable processing were perceived by study participants to be quite limited in number with a limited impact on vegetable markets.

How successful has the project been in empowering women in decision-making and leadership activities through its support to women-owned entrepreneurial businesses?

The Evaluation Team found relatively few female representatives on association boards, and none of the associations consulted had any specifically women-focused activities. Project interventions were sometimes too short to be effective. The Evaluation Team heard from several informants that numeracy and literacy training and support for credit access was a necessary but missing element for promoting women-owned businesses.

While the project may not have made a significant contribution to women's leadership and representation on association boards, women beneficiaries interviewed reported many positive effects of their participation with IDEA-NEW, including positive effects on their confidence and their contribution to family decision-making.

How effective were IDEA-NEW's activities for agricultural productivity improvement at achieving sustainable results?

IDEA-NEW's impact assessments showed growth in the local input supply businesses for vegetables and strong increased productivity at the farm-level. Improvements in production increases found at farm level are statistically correlated with provision of inputs like fertilizers. The effectiveness of program interventions in poultry and orchards was not found to be statistically significant, although it could be the result of a lagging effect. The full effect of IDEA NEW interventions may not be measurable for some time yet.

The sustainability of activities varied between communities depending on the success of the activity and the degree to which it addressed the needs of the average farmer. It was reported that activities were too expensive for ordinary farmers to replicate without project support. For example, IDEA-NEW support to three-jerib commercial vegetable farms is not sustainable by ordinary farmers.

Similarly, community leaders and apex organization key informants believed that inappropriate beneficiaries had been selected for poultry interventions. This perception has to be weighed against documents provided by IDEA-NEW, which show the involvement of a DAIL representative and/or the leadership of the local agricultural producers association in beneficiary selection, indicating some local oversight.

Due to great competition, poultry farms can only succeed if feed costs are competitive and if good veterinary practices are adopted. The dominance of the industry by relatively few Pakistan-based exporters, and their importing associates, is a threat. IDEA-NEW did not collect cost of production data so that the profitability of enterprises and technologies could

be demonstrated. Data on the financial health of supported enterprises would have proven the link between sustainability and project interventions. While there is evidence of increased agricultural production, farmers mention they cannot afford improved seed and other inputs. Such practices are unsustainable if the value chain in the area of study is not strengthened so farmers can demand a higher price for their produce and afford the costlier inputs.

How effective has IDEA-NEW's support in capacity building for agribusinesses and rural enterprises been in strengthening their businesses and profitability?

Evidence supports the IDEA-NEW training of trainers (ToT) approach. Good agricultural practices, such as the pruning of fruit trees, have increased yields for participating enterprise farmers. Farmers widely appreciated the benefits of new technologies and said they preferred to receive training in good agricultural practices rather than receive subsidized inputs or tools.

Further up the value chain, the SMS marketing and information systems were widely appreciated by input suppliers that used them. However, there is concern about their sustainability now that the cost share to be paid by businesses has increased. The training for agribusinesses (food processors and input suppliers) was effective, as demonstrated by business expansion.

IDEA-NEW provided training to apex organizations, but it appears to have been inconsistently introduced and stopped altogether in 2012. Apex organizations told us they were not able to replace or continue the employment of the staff IDEA-NEW had supported.

Finally, we note that the USAID/Afghanistan Office of Agriculture has submitted a statement of differences that articulates significant unresolved differences of opinion and errors of fact regarding the findings, conclusions, and recommendations stated in the evaluation report. This Statement of Difference highlights concerns that the evaluation, analysis, and reporting is not consistent with USAID's 2011 Evaluation Policy, which states: "Evaluation findings [should be] based on facts, evidence and data. This precludes relying exclusively upon anecdotes, hearsay and unverified opinions. Findings should be specific, concise and supported by quantitative and qualitative information that is reliable, valid and generalizable."

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following summarizes the more than 25 recommendations the Evaluation Team has made:

Planning: Enterprise development should be planned in a more integrated way, nationally and regionally, and better involve the important actors in the value chain. Important concepts include the replicability of activities to ordinary farmers, meeting the real and prioritized needs of farmers, and properly orientating and involving women.

Capacity Building: Training in good agricultural practices and in mechanization is highly recommended for farmers. The ToT approach should be implemented through farmer field schools, in line with seasonal activities. For agribusinesses, the HACCP training was valued and should be continued. Support needs to be continued for apex organizations so that they may become more self-sufficient.

Monitoring: Communities need to be more fully involved in planning and monitoring project activities, and the allocation of capital equipment assets to communities needs to be transparent and monitored. Projects should monitor cost of production and enterprise profitability so they can demonstrate the benefits and financial sustainability of enterprises.

Empowering Women: More attention is required to orient women to project activities. Where male resistance to female participation is found, it may be necessary to engage men prior to attempting to implement activities for women. The needs of women beneficiaries should be better understood and integrated in to project activities; for example, numeracy and literacy training may be a necessary foundation for rural women, in order to enable further empowerment.

Sustainability: Beneficiary selection and the role of community representation must be highlighted. A sufficient time-frame is required, and projects should develop systems to identify and take action based on lessons learned.

INTRODUCTION

1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

USAID's Office of Agriculture launched the Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East, and West (IDEA-NEW) program in March 2009. The project's mission has been to expand the licit agricultural economy in northern, eastern, and western Afghanistan. Originally, IDEA-NEW was designed as an alternative livelihoods project as part of USAID's counters narcotics programming. The project was subsequently directed away from counter narcotics toward generalized agriculture development and production. From 2009–2013 DAI, in partnership with Mercy Corps and ACIDI/VOCA, worked to achieve the broad objective of USAID's agricultural and alternative development strategy. Project components during its first five years of implementation were:

- Rehabilitation and construction of irrigation, road, and market infrastructure;
- Promoting increased licit agriculture production;
- Improving access to agriculture finance; and
- Developing rural enterprise.

In 2012, the project's methodology shifted to a value chain approach, dropping infrastructure and support for agriculture production, and increasing support for private sector agribusinesses.

In 2013 ACIDI/VOCA's and Mercy Corps' implementation ended and DAI became IDEA-NEW's sole implementer, continuing work in the Eastern region. Current activities include:

- Strengthening agricultural input suppliers;
- Supporting food processors;
- Supporting domestic agribusinesses' efforts to import key inputs; and
- Facilitating market entry for regional and international agribusiness retailers.

IDEA-NEW ends September 30, 2015. A linked series of follow-on USAID-funded projects such as the Regional Agricultural Development Program (RADP) will continue and expand upon the gains made by IDEA-NEW.

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE

The purpose of this performance evaluation is to assess IDEA-NEW's progress towards its stated objectives and whether implementation is effective and sustainable. The evaluation findings and recommendations are intended to inform the design and implementation of follow-on projects, including RADP.

3. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This performance evaluation is guided by the USAID Results Framework for IDEA-NEW, outlined in the figure 1.

Figure 1: IDEA-NEW Results Framework



The report seeks to answer the following evaluation questions:

1. To what extent has IDEA-NEW’s value chain approach affected diversification of agricultural activities by beneficiary farmers?
2. How successful has the project been in empowering women in decision-making and leadership activities through its support to women-owned entrepreneurial businesses?
3. How effective were IDEA-NEW’s activities for agricultural productivity improvement at achieving sustainable results? Please discuss in order of most sustainable to least sustainable. Answers should focus on ‘sustainability’ not necessary on the greatest quantitative improvements during the project life-cycle.
4. How effective has IDEA-NEW’s support in capacity building for agribusinesses and rural enterprises been in strengthening their businesses and profitability?

4. METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

The Evaluation Team used a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. The sources of information are:

- **Project documents** include annual work plans and quarterly reports. In addition, internal, ad hoc performance and impact research reports were reviewed.
- **Performance reports** from the project’s M&E system.
- **Primary analysis** of a recently-completed household survey of project beneficiaries.
- **Key informant interviews and/or focus group sessions** with project staff and beneficiaries. Key ‘actors’ in the agricultural sector were also interviewed, such as members of apex agricultural producer organizations, local governance bodies (e.g, CDCs), as well as sub-national government entities (e.g., DAILs).

a. Quantitative Analysis

The Evaluation Team used data from various IDEA-NEW assessments and surveys to examine broad achievements of the project. The review focused on statistical results of crop and livestock assessments – in particular, the contribution of the project interventions to outcomes such as beneficiary income and production, as well as any associations found between level of crop diversification and household income. See Annex V for a complete description of the statistical review.

The quantitative analysis consisted of:

- An analysis of responses to five questions inserted into the survey at the request of the Evaluation Team, recently released IDEA-NEW endline survey of Annual Household Income Survey, April 2015.
- A synthesis of existing statistical data in IDEA-NEW crop assessment survey reports (2013-2014), having specifically to do with the effect of project interventions on productivity, diversification, and household income.
- The 2014 endline survey, which included remote sensing data on cropping area for project and non-project households in 25 randomly-selected beneficiary sites and 25 randomly-selected non-beneficiary sites. Remote sensing results presented here are related to crop diversification of IDEA-NEW beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiaries.

b. Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis provides insight into the logic of the intervention that cannot be answered by statistical analysis alone. Key informants and participants of the focus groups were chosen to represent the views of the various types of beneficiaries in the value chain, the geographic scope of the evaluation, and type of value chains (vegetable, orchard, and livestock).

Table: 1 Number of Consultations Conducted with Beneficiaries

Province	In-Depth Interviews		Focus Group Participants		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Mazar-e Sharif	27	2	13		42
Nangarhar	16	8	39	4	63
Parwan	3	3			6
Kabul	1				1
Grand Total	47	13	52	4	112

Total Number of Focus Groups = 16

5. LIMITATIONS

a. Language translation

Key informant interviews and focus groups were conducted in Dari and/or Pashto. A standardized multi-step approach was used to collect the results from the field work of in-depth interviews and focus groups. All Evaluation Team members, including translators, were required after an interview or focus-group session to independently fill out a ‘summary sheet’ (in English), which were then compared. This provided a degree of cross-validity for the qualitative results.

b. Participant recruitment

In certain areas where the field work for this evaluation was conducted, the project had ceased to operate. This presented a problem when it came to identifying beneficiaries to be recruited for the key informant interviews. To overcome the issue, the Evaluation Team adopted a ‘pyramid’ approach to recruitment. This is where key informant interviews were conducted with apex organizations, which were then asked to identify project beneficiaries.

c. Geographic scope of the statistical analysis

The crop and livestock impact assessments’ statistical analyses were conducted across several regions in Afghanistan, while the scope of this evaluation is only the East and Center. It is assumed, reasonably, that at least the general statistical trends are the same across geographic areas.

d. Reporting anecdotal results

The information gained from key informant interviews and focus groups are the experiences of individuals. These are assumed to be the honest responses of the study participants. Also, information documented is idiosyncratic to the individual and by definition anecdotal. However, when the sum total of these individual experiences reveals a pattern, it can be considered evidence and worthy of reporting. The Evaluation Team systematically documented and analyzed qualitative information. Anecdotal evidence was cross-referenced with other interviews or sources of information such as the statistical evidence or documents such as project quarterly or annual reports.

FINDINGS

1. DIVERSIFICATION

To what extent has IDEA-NEW’s Value Chain Approach affected diversification of agricultural activities by beneficiary farmers?

Project data provides strong evidence that IDEA-NEW’s value chain approach positively affected diversification of agricultural activities. According to IDEA-NEW’s 2014 Vegetable Impact Study, beneficiary farmers grew on average four types of vegetable crops per year. Each additional crop type that farmers harvested added about 1,473 kg to the household’s annual production.

During a 2014 endline survey, remote sensing data analysis was conducted for a total of 25 beneficiary sites and 25 non-beneficiary sites, all selected at random. At the regional level, the findings are not considered statistically significant across all program areas, given the small sample size, but they do give accurate, exact data of specific communities in specific areas. Remote sensing data corroborated the household survey findings in terms of crop diversity and planting levels.

- Communities in the area of study, over time, showed an increase in crop diversification, but IDEA-NEW communities generally reflect more diversification than non-beneficiary communities.
- Wheat production decreased across beneficiary and non-beneficiary communities by about the same amount, replaced by orchards, vineyards, and “other” high-value crops. Overall, the area cultivated increased for beneficiary sites. On the other hand, bare land (uncultivated) increased to a greater extent in non-beneficiary communities. According to the IDEA-NEW analysis, poppy planting, seen only in a few communities in the eastern region, increased more in non-beneficiary than beneficiary communities.

a. Diversification and the Value Chain

According to key informants at apex farmer associations, more food processing capacity is still required to absorb surplus production, and therefore encourage greater diversification. Specifically, the poultry industry representatives reinforced the need for better planning for the industry to focus more on a value chain approach that supports marketing and processing, not just production. In addition, the honey producers’ association wants donors to buy its products and expand the area of fruit trees so there is more nectar for bees and the amount of time needed to take beehives to Pakistan in search of nectar is reduced.

The need for cold storage infrastructure was mentioned by fruit growers to extend the marketing season; they specifically mentioned the need for new varieties. In addition, nursery grower key informants want improvements in the future to include: a) being more self-sufficient in certified root stock; b) extension to farmers of the benefits of certified root stock; c) more international visits to learn new technologies; d) greenhouses for root stock that is not cold tolerant; and e) a testing laboratory for diseases.

In the vegetable sector, gains can be preserved by strengthening the vegetable value chain. Vegetable farmers said that they need more support for vegetable packaging and marketing. Vegetable prices have declined and more attention needs to be given to value-added activities. Food processors supported by IDEA-NEW were linked to farmers through field days and promotional materials, but study participants thought the number and throughput of food processing businesses was small in relation to the productive capacity of farmers in the area.

2. PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE RESULTS

How effective were IDEA-NEW's activities aimed at agricultural productivity improvement at achieving sustainable results?

The evidence presented here proves that IDEA-NEW supported agricultural productivity. There is anecdotal evidence for improved wheat yield with better seed, but farmers complain they cannot afford the improved seed. This issue is mentioned by seed sellers, as well as by association informants. Therefore, the key issue with respect to this question is whether the productivity gains are sustainable.

Another potential explanation for weak results in poultry is the break in the value chain, which is then too weak to completely absorb the increase in the supply of high-value agricultural products that diversification brings. In interviews, at least one poultry farmer mentioned that too many breeder enterprises were supported while there was a lack of support further up the value chain for processing, cold storage, and marketing.

Breeder farms and feed mills underpin the entire poultry industry. The industry requires viable breeder and hatchery units to supply the birds required for poultry farmers,¹ and the need for a local feed mill to reduce the dependency on feed imported from Pakistan.² Farmers also mentioned that Afghanistan imports frozen birds from Brazil.

Between 2009 and 2013, the project's goal was to increase production through higher yields for existing farmers and through supporting new farming enterprises. The evidence points to interventions further up the value chain not progressing at a pace that would support the extra production. According to poultry growers consulted, IDEA-NEW had created an oversupply of poultry products, particularly for broilers, and this depressed prices and made their businesses less viable.

a. Agriculture Productivity by Sector

The factors that correlate well with higher poultry production and sales (such as number of years of operation) do not have anything to do with IDEA-NEW interventions. The lack of correlation with project interventions could be due to the fact that outcomes in the poultry sector are slow-developing. However, the evidence from the qualitative analysis points to other reasons. Both focus group participants and key informants mentioned numerous closures of project-supported breeder farms. Members of the poultry association estimated that about 40% of IDEA-NEW-supported poultry farms ceased operations.

¹ Breeder units were supported by IDEA-NEW but failed.

² A feed mill in Nangarhar is now being supported by CARD-F under DFID funding.

One reason for this lack of success, backed by survey data, is the lack of follow-up technical support. According to a 2014 IDEA-NEW Poultry Assessment, sales figures for poultry producers positively correlate to veterinary care. Therefore, if the project failed to follow-up with needed technical support, this may have contributed to the reports of closed breeder farms. Beneficiary farmers suggested that, to be successful, only professional poultry farmers should be selected, preferably members of the producers association.

With respect to the vegetable industry, commercial production is relatively technical, and the three-jerib (five hectares) commercial farms were entirely supported by IDEA-NEW. Support included lease of land, provision of improved seed, and the labor cost of the farmer who was paid wages in the first year of production and for making the raised beds required for this type of vegetable farming.

This enterprise is unlikely to be sustained independently by the average farmer, due to the cost of the capital assets and inputs involved in production. As an example, a greenhouse of 350-400 sqm costs around USD 7,000, with trickle irrigation installed and ready to plant. The cost of replacing the plastic is around USD 1,000. To put this cost into perspective, an RSI 2012 household income survey reported average farm income for the IDEA-NEW program area in the North/Central region to be USD 2,667. Credit is difficult to obtain for farmers who lack collateral for loans.

Women who had been given greenhouses were unable to afford replacement of plastic parts damaged by storms. Given that the plastic must be replaced regularly and the trickle irrigation system must be replaced every five years, the owner needs to plan ahead for these costs. There is a risk of business failure if high cost assets such as greenhouses are damaged and beneficiaries cannot afford to replace them. Insurance options, which can provide protection for these costs, are also not easily available, especially for women with no access to credit or collateral.

In the poultry sector, large farms were supported or established by IDEA-NEW, but these are only affordable for relatively wealthy farmers. As a result, one of the success stories mentioned by study participants is a case in Parwan. A professional poultry farmer was introduced by the DAIL as an IDEA-NEW beneficiary to whom the project provided 2,000 newly born one-day chicks and 120 bags feed with the relevant equipment. For the farmer, these inputs resulted in revenue of Afs 200,000. This farmer now has increased capacity to 4,500 chicks. The poultry business is highly competitive in the East, and profitability and sustainability depend on competitively-priced feed and good hygiene and veterinary health practices, which only farmers with sufficient economies of scale can afford or have provided by donors.

An example of a successful, sustainable intervention was documented in fruit production. Farmers perceived an improvement in quality and report positively on the IDEA-NEW grape trellising activity. Grape trellising increases the amount of sunlight that can reach the crop

and improves the quality of grapes by keeping them off the ground. Respondents did not mention any concerns with respect to sustainability.

Finally, related to the issue of sustainability and the high cost of factors such as inputs and capital assets, is the issue of equity. If project interventions in diversification and production are effective only at certain economies of scale, then without continued donor intervention or a strengthening of the value chain, the benefits of the project are unequally distributed among farmers.

Qualitative analysis indicates that the capital and input costs of IDEA-NEW interventions may be unsustainable in the absence of a strong value chain and/or continued donor intervention. This point might have been corroborated by indicators of the financial health of the rural enterprises supported. DAI could not produce information about enterprise profitability, or any financial or economic data such as gross margins or profitability models for enterprises.

b. Farmer Associations

The importance of apex producer associations in production can be seen in their role as a conduit for high-value inputs such as certified seeds. Producer associations are registered as legal entities with the Ministry of Justice. Agricultural associations provide training and technical advice to members and seek solutions to members' problems through dialogue with government, donors, and NGOs. IDEA-NEW supported the agricultural associations we interviewed in a number of ways, which included paying the salaries of selected administrative staff for a period;³ administrative, marketing and technical training for members; visits to India for technical and market exposure; creative ways of financial support;⁴ as well as support to attend agricultural fairs in Kabul. The support for salaried staff appeared to end in 2012, reportedly for budget reasons.

Associations say that they are still working to become viable. For example, the Honey Growers' Association cannot fund the same level of activities that were provided with IDEA-NEW support. The farmer levy is 10 Afs per month, or 120 Afs per annum, which is about USD 2 per year. With about 5,000 members, this levy raises only USD 10,000, which is insufficient to fund association activities. A positive example is the Said Khel Nursery Growers' Association in Parwan province, which achieved self-sufficiency as a result of IDEA-NEW support. The association rents a tractor provided by IDEA-NEW, as a means of raising money; collects levies, registration fees (100 Afs or about USD 2), and investment shares (500 Afs or about USD 10); and charges for selling members products. These activities have enabled the association to pay salaries of the administration staff and a technician.

³ Nangarhar Nursery Growers Association, Nangarhar Fruit Growers Association, Spengar Poultry

⁴ through providing, for example, subsidized tents to bee keepers and giving the 20% of the farmer contribution to the Nangarhar Honey Growers Association

However, a number of associations are still looking for support from donors to buy certified seed to distribute to farmers. The Afghan National Seeds Association says that farmers cannot or will not buy certified seeds. The national requirement is 300,000 MT annually, but the growers can produce only 20,000-30,000 MT. There is also no capacity in Afghanistan to produce hybrid seed, which is imported and expensive.

Apex organizations' role in training farmer members is also a key issue. IDEA-NEW provided training to nursery growers and members of the associations. The training was led by PHDP. IDEA-NEW increased the gains of PHDP, especially in citrus. The project also imported certified citrus seed for rootstocks and distributed seedlings. CTV (Citrus Tristeza Virus) has been a problem and the growers have learned to graft on clean rootstocks. Technical training was considered very effective, but participants thought there should have been more marketing training. Association representatives realize the importance of HACCP (Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points) training and certification if they are to enter international markets; however, none of the apex organization key informants had received such training (in contrast to food processors, who had).

Thinking of the future, apex organization members mentioned the need for more training; HACCP training was mentioned for those aiming to export to international markets. They also mentioned the need for additional support in marketing and accessing new markets, and for improving the quality of products through packaging.

c. Community-Based Interventions

As discussed below, involvement of key stakeholders (mainly community and government entities) in the content, delivery, and selection of beneficiaries affords a certain level of legitimacy to IDEA-NEW. From a governance perspective, involving local GIRoA entities also enhances the perceived legitimacy of the central government.

The Evaluation Team interviewed leaders of eight community groups: three in Balkh province, four in Nangarhar, and one in Parwan. In these eight communities, IDEA-NEW activities included commercial vegetable growing (four communities), provision of pomegranate saplings (one community), assistance in establishing orchards (two communities), and wheat and oil seed demonstration plots, including the use of two-wheeled hand tractors (one community).

Questions about community-based interventions elicited a number of responses about the introduction of high-value crops. In one community, IDEA-NEW distributed pomegranate saplings to farmers for Afs 7 each. The activity was not selected by the community but by IDEA-NEW through the district governor's office staff. The pomegranates failed, and farmers pulled them out to replace them with other crops. Instead of pomegranate saplings, farmers said they should have been given orange, peach, and lemon, or livestock.

Another example comes from a community in Nangarhar province, Kuz Kunar district, a village where agricultural laborers rather than farmers cultivated the three-jerib demonstration plots. Consequently, the intended beneficiaries (e.g., farmers) did not participate in the valuable skills training that demonstration plots offer. If the Community Development Council (CDC) was involved in the selection of labor, community members suggested, they would have hired farmers to apply the skills learned in the demo plots, as opposed to agricultural laborers. However, these anecdotes regarding the inappropriate selection of beneficiaries must be viewed in context. Documents provided by IDEA-NEW show that agreements between farmers and IDEA-NEW must also be signed by a DAIL representative and/or the leadership of the local agricultural producers association.

The last example involves the need for cold storage to be better planned with beneficiaries, a finding stemming from anecdotes of multiple informants. The Team heard a report of a cold room being constructed on land where the title of the land was unclear; as a result of this, one individual became the ultimate beneficiary of the cold room. Some of the previous cold storages built by donors were reported to have been inappropriately located, contracted, or allocated to the wrong people and were perceived not to have met expectations. One large cold storage in Mazar city, constructed by a previous donor project, is apparently not used at all. Another low-tech cold storage constructed by IDEA-NEW in Balkh province, mainly for storing onions until prices rise, is still unused. One farmer stored two tons of onions during the previous season, which sprouted due to unsuitable conditions in the cold storage; this reportedly resulted in a loss of Afs 39,000 (about USD 700) for the farmer.

d. Community Development Councils

Community leaders expressed the opinion that in order to prevent missteps described above, CDCs and DAILs should be involved in the introduction of project interventions to the community. Some community leaders suggested that the best way to introduce the project to the community is to use the CDC and to make sure the CDC is involved in subsequent monitoring activities. In five communities, the project was introduced to community members through the CDC. In two of these, there was good subsequent coordination with the CDC, including forms of community monitoring.⁵ In three of the communities, subsequent CDC coordination and monitoring of the project was reported to be poor.⁶

In one of the communities, there was excellent follow-up and monitoring by both the DAIL Extension Manager and by the CDC. A community leader in Nangarhar said,

“If beneficiaries were selected in consultation with the community shuras, there would have been a chance for everyone in the community to benefit and avoid the circumstances in which a particular group benefits more than the others.”

⁵ Takhta Pul, Dehdadi; Qala Shahi, Dara Noor

⁶ Samar Khil, Behsud; Yakatut, Dehdadi; Baba Kohna, Dehdadi

In Dehdadi, Baba Kohna, Balkh province, one leader suggested that,

“If the CDC is involved in beneficiary selection it will lead to more effectiveness, transparency, and sustainability, and also the most vulnerable people will get the support, instead of warlords and rich people.”

The perceptions of the community leaders in Nangarhar and Balkh provinces, presumed to be given honestly, must be viewed in the context of documentation provided by IDEA-NEW to the Evaluation Team. The documents listing the farmer beneficiaries are signed by the District Agriculture Extension Officer, as well as a Shura or association representative, indicating at least some local oversight of the beneficiary selection. IDEA-NEW also produced Memoranda of Understanding between the program and the DAILs of Laghman, Kunar, and Nangarhar. These describe the process of beneficiary selection, including consultations by IDEA-NEW with the District Governor and District Shura, as well as certification of the beneficiary list, as described above. These formal arrangements were not mentioned by the key informants, perhaps because they were unaware of them.

e. Directorates of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock

In two communities examined the DAIL performed an active role in introducing the IDEA-NEW project to farmers.⁷ Key informants from DAIL in all locations visited reported that coordination with them was poor. DAIL representatives would have liked to have been involved with monitoring the activities of IDEA-NEW, but did not have sufficient resources to do so. In the East, the DAIL staff mentioned that they were not very involved in the training and capacity development interventions for farmers supported by IDEA-NEW.

The Parwan DAIL did, however, acknowledge receiving training from IDEA-NEW in vegetable growing technologies; however, he noted that this training was classroom-based and lacked sufficient practical orientation. The training also occurred over a short time period; the extension staff said that training would have been much better if it had focused on the seasonal activities as they occurred and had been spread across the entire growing season, in order to allow for practical training when the activities would be carried out in the field.

3. CAPACITY BUILDING

How effective has IDEA-NEW's support in capacity building for agribusinesses and rural enterprises been in strengthening their businesses and profitability?

a. Agribusiness: Input Suppliers

⁷ Malakano Kalay, Kuz Kunar; Balaghil, Charikar

Overall, IDEA-NEW's support to input suppliers appears to have been very successful. All input supplier beneficiaries reported good results and benefits; the approach supported entrepreneurs' own business objectives. It was also cost-effective because the amounts offered in grants were relatively small, with business owners making at least a 25% contribution to costs. Typical amounts for grants, including the owner's contributions, were in the range of USD 8,000 to USD 12,000.

For input suppliers, one form of IDEA-NEW support was that of an SMS marketing and information system that enabled businesses to communicate with farmers by SMS messages. One farm input supplier who was interviewed reported significant success by participating in the SMS system for sending information to farmers using mobile phone technology. The input supplier collected mobile phone contacts from farmers, and fieldworkers collected information from farmers on their enterprise interests and problems. The farmer database is grouped by topic, so that SMS messages are contextually relevant for farmers. One agribusiness input supplier⁸ increased the number of satellite outlets from two to eight with IDEA-NEW support and increased business turnover by 40%, in part by being able to contact 2,500 farmers by SMS. As a result, he hired another five staff.

The SMS marketing and information system were widely appreciated by input suppliers who used them. However, there is concern about sustainability due to the change in the proportion of costs that must be contributed by businesses. Initially, the business only contributed 25% of costs, which was affordable to businesses; now the contribution has increased to 75%. The input suppliers who had participated in the SMS system reported benefits and want the SMS system to continue because it increased their sales revenue. The Evaluation Team heard a few reports of farmers being sent incorrect information about market prices, but these complaints were not widespread. Some farmers also reported they are unable to understand the messages because they are illiterate.

b. Agribusiness: Food Processors

Food processors reported significant increases in business as a result of support from IDEA-NEW. For example, Khalid Faizan Food has increased turnover from 5,000 to 30,000 boxes per year with IDEA-NEW support, and created 25 new jobs, of which 66% are for women in fruit and vegetable preparation.

Grants were used by food processors to purchase equipment and supplies such as bottles and labels. Individual equipment items had to be in the range of USD 5,000 or less. Business owners complained this limit per item prevented them from buying what they really wanted; for example, some in-line production equipment is over this limit but works as an integrated production unit and needs to be purchased as one item.

⁸ Now Bahar Agroservices

There were also implementation issues. Business owners⁹ mentioned that IDEA-NEW-procured items were often of inferior quality. These complaints must be considered in light of IDEA-NEW procurement practices, whereby beneficiaries of capital assets signed-off on the purchase order, including its condition. Thus, business owners had accepted the items in the conditions they were received, even if some key informants later told the Evaluation Team they were of poor quality.

A very important component of training was support for HACCP certification, which is required to export food products, including to Dubai. With the project soon to finish, there is a question about whether this certification will be completed in time by those who have started the registration and certification process.

c. Rural Enterprises

Many subsistence farmers are illiterate and often have little experience with capacity-building activities. Training in good agricultural practices is highly valued, and farmers who had participated in IDEA-NEW-supported courses commented that the benefits of training will last after the project ends. Farmers consulted also mentioned they would prefer to have good technical training and learn new methods than to receive free or subsidized inputs or tools.¹⁰ Even poultry farmers who had received significant support in the form of poultry feed mentioned that improving their technical capabilities was more important than financial assistance.

Farmers reported the practical training was more effective and useful than the theoretical sessions, particularly in the following skills:

- Modern agricultural practices of cultivation and preparation of seed beds;
- Application of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides and other chemicals and time, amount, and methods of application;
- Introduction to mechanized agriculture (plowing, harvesting, land leveling, etc.); and
- Improved types of irrigation systems, and timing of water applications.

4. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

How successful has the project been in empowering women in decision-making and leadership activities through its support to women-owned entrepreneurial businesses?

a. Investment in Women

⁹ Khalid Faizan Food Processing; Khalid Haziz Non-alcoholic Drinks

¹⁰ The project policy was apparently to always ask for a beneficiary contribution to activities. However, such a contribution is normally not as a cash contribution and in-kind payments by beneficiaries are the norm rather than the exception.

A widow who received a greenhouse from IDEA-NEW subsequently expanded to two greenhouses, using savings from the first greenhouse. She now has ten acres of cropping and employs 150 laborers from the village: 70% women and 30% men. She sells seedlings, grafts fruit trees, and grows peaches, lemon, apples, and oranges. Her greenhouses are sustainable and she wants to expand her business, but lacks capital.

The Evaluation Team met with five women beneficiaries of business support, two of whom who have sustainable businesses now. One woman is a widow with a strong personality who was supported by projects for seven years and has enjoyed a better quality of life as a result. Both women also received training from the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) in agribusiness.

Women mentioned there are no organizations to provide credit for women. One reason for this is that women lack collateral because men own land and assets. Women also felt uncomfortable about the risks associated with taking loans.

At a smaller scale, IDEA-NEW's home garden initiative included research that found that 94% of the women were selling or bartering excess produce. IDEA-NEW's small animal, karakul, and home-based activities were effective at improving women's income and status. Projects like silk cocoon rearing, poultry, dairy collection, and home gardens were effective in bringing small amounts of money to women. However, women who were supported by IDEA-NEW often failed to sustain their businesses. If additional capital expenditure was needed after project support ended, women were often not able to continue with the business. Out of five female beneficiaries the Evaluation Team interviewed, three had businesses that failed, reportedly because of a lack of support for marketing, an inability to repair greenhouses due to a lack of credit, and the end of project support in 2013.

b. Access to Training

The effect of training on the economic and social life of women is dramatic. A common activity cited by staff from the early years of IDEA-NEW is Taraqi Saba, an after-school business training activity for high school girls. This inexpensive activity was implemented through teachers in girls' high schools in the eastern and central regions, even in very conservative communities. Several staff and former staff of DAI mentioned the graduation ceremony (where girls stood in front of an audience to present their business plans) as one of their peak experiences of IDEA-NEW. While the Team was unable to meet these women and understand the long-term effects of Taraqi Saba, teenage girls mustering the courage to stand up and speak in front of a large group was an important achievement, and knowing accounting and budgeting has a positive effect on family life. IDEA-NEW training was perceived as very good by recipients.

Support for Veterinary Field Units (VFU) and the Para-vet training program are important in many ways. Training female Para-vets and veterinary aides was an effective and visible project investment. IDEA-NEW training was well-received by women. Women mentioned the skills training they received by IDEA-NEW opened their minds; according to one woman,

they now know there are “*many things in the world we don’t know about.*” They become more self-confident. Livestock programs like the ones discussed above are an important way the project had a positive effect on a woman’s life and her family’s economy. Care for animals has direct economic and health consequences.

When asked about what activities they would like to be involved in, in the future, women interviewed mentioned:

- Literacy and numeracy training
- Infrastructure: school, clinics, bridges
- More support for marketing, and transport to access customers
- Access to good quality and affordable seeds
- Dairy cows as a women’s economic activity.
- Education on and access to credit
- Education for their husbands on giving more rights to women and encouraging women’s education
- Opportunities for women to visit other places so they learn from successful businesses elsewhere

Literacy and numeracy training is a precursor for other skills training. The Welfare Development Organization of Afghanistan (WDOA) provides this type of training for six months before they start any training in agribusiness activities.

c. Representation in Apex Producer Associations

Female board members were only found in the Nangarhar Honey Growers’ Association (four board members) and the Afghanistan Social, Poultry, Animals and Farmers’ Association in Kabul (also four), although associations do have many female members not serving on the board or in leadership positions.¹¹ None of these associations offered special activities for female members.

Women board members mentioned the importance of not letting people down by providing training and then failing to follow this up with the support needed to practice what had been learned. They believe the best way to impart skills is to train local farmers to become trainers, and then for these practitioners to train other farmers (the Trainer of Trainers system). They also strongly support WDOA’s practice of providing numeracy and literacy training to women for the first six months which, increases the likelihood of sustainability. For the Women’s Vocational Training Agriculture Service Organization, the training in marketing, accounting, and business planning was very effective and resulted in an improvement in quality of food products and an estimated increase in production of 30%.

¹¹ Honey Growers 10, Nursery Growers 1, Spen Ghar Poultry 400, Women Vocational Training Agriculture Service Organization

CONCLUSIONS

The evidence as a whole points strongly to the conclusion that IDEA-NEW had a positive effect on productivity and diversification. IDEA-NEW impact assessments show that the project contributed positively to farming household income. The quantitative analysis broadly supports the validity of the IDEA-NEW development hypothesis. However, the qualitative analysis identified implementation issues which require thought in future project design.

The project's effects on productivity and diversification were different by value chain. In regards to vegetables, IDEA-NEW interventions are statistically associated with resiliency in production and diversification. The effects were felt less strongly with beneficiaries involved in poultry-raising and orchards cultivation. The evaluation findings suggest that there are significant gaps in the value chains, which influence the effort to promote diversification. A strong value chain is important for sustainability, or donor support may be required while value chain linkages are strengthened. For example, poultry producers must deal with dumping practices of importers from Iran and Pakistan, in addition to the relatively high costs of commercial poultry-raising. The weakness in the breeder 'link' of the value-chain, as well as that for feed (the highest input cost for poultry farmers), means that the poultry industry in the East rests on shaky ground. The condition of the value chain in the East is such that it remains inadequate to absorb the more diversified and productive agriculture sector. This weakness is a disincentive to diversification.

The evaluation's qualitative analysis showed that training was a highly valued IDEA-NEW intervention. The only qualification is that respondents expressed the need for key stakeholders (mainly community and government entities) to be given a more meaningful say about the content, delivery, and selection of participants in the training. In general, more effective stakeholder engagement would address some key issues identified by respondents of this study. It may lessen the perception by key informants that nepotism and corruption guide the selection of beneficiaries, and that interventions target farmers who can most afford what is on offer. It may also lead to more appropriate intervention design at the village level; specifically, inputs that are tailored to local circumstances.

While the project may not have made a significant contribution to women's leadership and representation on association boards, women beneficiaries interviewed reported many positive effects of their participation with IDEA-NEW, including positive effects on their confidence and their contribution to family decision-making.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PROJECT PLANNING

1. Interventions should be planned to support a strategic vision for the industry that takes into account constraints to be addressed across the entire value chain. If there is no national strategic plan, then donors should prioritize support to the GIRoA to ensure

that production improvements are supported by the other improvements needed further down in the value chain.

2. Follow-on projects should include the provincial DAIL in planning, and make sure that the DAILs are as involved as much as possible in coordinating and facilitating interventions.
3. While associations do not necessarily represent the views of all farmers (they do not have a nationally authorized mandate), they do represent and have a vision for the future of their members and should be involved in planning project interventions that affect their members.
4. Consideration should be given to how easily activities may be replicated by other farmers; high cost activities such as greenhouses and large poultry units are not replicable for most farmers.
5. Consideration should be given to redesigning activities so that they are more relevant and affordable to the average farmer. For example, in Badakshan, IDEA-NEW tested a low-tunnel cultivation design to lower greenhouse costs.¹²
6. Cold storage development should be planned and tested with end users and a plan established for its management, before construction starts. Land ownership issues should be addressed at the planning stage.
7. Women in Afghan agriculture are still not considered by project staff, whether male or female, Afghan or expat. Activity design should include training and develop tools to illuminate the roles of women farmers.

2. CAPACITY BUILDING

8. Technical training was valued by beneficiaries more than subsidized inputs. Projects should prioritize accordingly.
9. Where possible, training should be practical rather than theoretical. Training should be staged so that activities are carried out at the appropriate time of year, when they can be demonstrated and practiced by farmers. The field school approach makes this possible and should be adopted.
10. Levels of project assistance to beneficiaries should be transparent and consistent across similar categories of beneficiary for similar activities.
11. The Trainer of Trainer approach was endorsed by farmer beneficiaries. This model should be adopted for training in good agricultural practices and, if needed, farmer trainers should be compensated for their time in this role. This approach was used by IDEA-NEW in the North for a two-week, small and large ruminants herd health ToT for ten livestock female extension workers.¹³

¹² Quarterly Report (Jan – Mar, 2013), P. 13

¹³ Quarterly Report (Jan – Mar, 2013), p. 23

12. For support to agribusinesses (input suppliers and food processors), the terms of the procurement should be more flexible so that the correct equipment may be purchased from the right source.
13. HACCP training and subsequent certification is recognized as important to associations and agribusinesses to enter export markets, including in Dubai. This process has been started and should be continued by any follow-on projects. Options should be investigated to establish cost-effective options for Afghanistan.
14. Numeracy and literacy training is recognized as a foundation for building the capacity of rural women to be able to undertake and continue sustainable agribusinesses. The need for this type of training should be evaluated at the start of any women's agribusiness activity.
15. Building the capacity of associations to represent their members' interests should be continued. This should include a plan to raise sufficient funds from association members to fund association activities, over time.
16. There is a continuing need for ongoing, proactive capacity-building activities for female professionals, including project staff, members of association boards, and women business owners.

3. MONITORING

17. It is critical to know whether farm enterprises are profitable, and to understand capital and operational cost constraints for enterprises that take time to yield benefits (for example, for fruit trees that need maintenance but bear fruit only after five years). Projects should make cost of production estimates with farmers and develop enterprise profitability models to demonstrate the benefits of project activities and funding constraints. This information should be shared with beneficiaries.
18. Projects should use the community leaders to introduce the project to farmers (the CDC is one obvious forum), and to assist in the management and monitoring of activities. This should reduce the opportunities for corrupt practices and give communities a greater sense of ownership. Simple protocols should be developed to guide community leaders in community oversight and monitoring.
19. When assets are provided to communities, the process needs to be transparent to prevent powerful elites from acquiring the assets. The DAIL Cooperatives Directorate may have a role in the registration of assets to community members.

4. EMPOWERING WOMEN

20. Projects should be more proactive in introducing women to project activities, even when these activities are primarily targeted at men. As a minimum, the project should include women at the first community planning stages, when deciding on an appropriate activity. Subsequently, the chosen activity should be explained to women and the implications for women understood.
21. Women have problems accessing credit; it was one of the main concerns raised by women. Mechanisms for providing women with credit should be established.

22. If women are to be allowed to participate fully in project activities, men should be first engaged to explain the activity and preempt possible resistance. Women requested that workshops be held for men to sensitize men to women being more active in project activities.
23. In particular for women's activities, if based on production (say of vegetables), project activities should also address how the produce will be marketed and transported to market.

5. SUSTAINABILITY

24. Sufficient time should be allowed to ensure that activities can be sustainable. As the project starts to wind down, new activities should be halted if this time frame will be too short.
25. Where beneficiaries receive high cost capital assets, the need for insurance or emergency funds might be considered so that high cost items can be replaced or repaired should they be damaged.
26. A viability assessment should be made of the SMS database and the SMS messaging system. There is concern about the sustainability of this system now that the percentage share of cost born by the businesses has increased to 75%.

ANNEX I: STATEMENT OF DIFFERENCE FROM USAID

According to USAID policy, each USAID evaluation report can include a Statement of Difference from the implementing partners, funders, and/or evaluation team members as an annex. The Statement of Difference articulates any significant unresolved differences of opinion and should focus on errors of fact and differences regarding the findings, conclusions, and recommendations stated in the evaluation report. This Statement of Difference is provided by USAID/Afghanistan's Agriculture Office.

Issue 1: Supporting findings with facts or evidence.

As stated in USAID's 2011 Evaluation Policy, "Evaluation findings [should be] based on facts, evidence and data. This precludes relying exclusively upon anecdotes, hearsay and unverified opinions. Findings should be specific, concise and supported by quantitative and qualitative information that is reliable, valid and generalizable."

The planned methodology for this evaluation included a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches. However, the final written report does not adequately demonstrate to USAID that rigorous analysis, summary, and documentation of the data collected by the evaluation team was done. For the qualitative data, the interview findings are largely presented as anecdotal quotes and appear to the reader to lack analysis with robust techniques that would facilitate presentation of aggregate findings rather than individual perspectives.

In terms of the qualitative data collected, it would be expected that at least some of the answers to the questions asked during the structured interviews and focus group discussions could have been rigorously analyzed. That analysis could have then been cited in the report to remove the sense of "vagueness and superficiality" that permeates the document.

Considering the wealth of quantitative data available from IDEA-NEW and third party surveys for analysis, the superficiality of the discussion on quantitative data presented in the report leads one to question whether the evaluation team actually carried out a meta-analysis of the quantitative data available, as articulated on page 46 of the report – "Meta-Analysis of Quantitative Data."

A review of IDEA-NEW project reports, surveys and assessments suggests that the evaluation team did not do an independent quantitative analysis, but rather drew upon the summarized results of quantitative analyses already carried out by IDEA-NEW and its M&E sub-contractor, RSI Consulting. That being the case, it was incumbent upon the evaluation team to clearly cite the surveys and documents from which it drew its results. For example, on page 2 of the evaluation report, the evaluators state that, "The effectiveness of program interventions in poultry and orchards was not found to be statistically significant," a broad statement not backed up with concrete data or proper citation as to the exact source of the statement. It is clear to the Agriculture Office that the statement is based on a review of the Poultry and Orchard Assessments conducted in 2013 and 2014 for IDEA-NEW, for which a summary is presented in the "Overview of Quantitative Analysis" annex (page 67-68 of the evaluation report). However, USAID finds the evaluators' review and summary of the said Assessments to be superficial and un-balanced and not supportive of the expansive negative conclusion presented. For example, a thorough read of the 2014 Poultry assessments by RSI provides evidence to counter that presented by the evaluators. Please refer to exhibit 1.

The Executive Summary of the RSI Poultry Assessment, for example, summarizes its findings on pages 6 and 7 of that report as follows:

- Independent inspection by RSI staff found the results of the IDEA-NEW poultry program in the Eastern region to be, on the whole, **positive and significant at the local level**. As of summer 2014, RSI verified the existence and continued operation of approximately 100 poultry farms established with the aid of the program.

- The scale of most IDEA-NEW poultry program farms was small. The average farm was a family operation selling to relatives, neighbors, and local retail outlets or traveling middlemen who visited their farms directly. Only a small number of IDEA-NEW poultry program farms transported their wares for sale in larger markets. Awareness of poultry farming techniques, including health and biosecurity practices, was high among program participants. Execution of those practices, however, was more limited, with many farms falling below acceptable levels of hygiene.
- Regional infrastructure and market challenges limit the growth of poultry farms in Afghanistan's eastern region, and it is unlikely that the IDEA-NEW poultry program has the continued resources to substantially alter those conditions. The program is likely to remain most effective at the local level, empowering individual families to construct self-sustaining businesses for household income.

The RSI assessment, which involved on-site inspections of 94 poultry farms and phone calls with an additional 41 poultry farmers that IDEA-NEW supported, goes on to say that the average production of the “typical” poultry farm in the IDEA-NEW program was 10,000 chickens per year, which generated an employment of 200 person days per year and a household income of 272,375 AFN per cycle (\$4820) with 3-4 cycles per year [RSI Poultry Assessment, pp. 11-14].

Overall, the generally positive evidence presented by RSI in the 2014 Poultry Assessment is at odds with the tone set in the evaluation team’s report. If the evaluation team did in fact find disparities between their interview findings and the relatively recent and rigorous poultry assessment, it was incumbent upon them to explore this discrepancy in greater depth. For example, the evaluators state that, “Both focus group participants and key informants mentioned numerous closures of project-supported breeder farms. Members of the poultry association estimated that about 40% of IDEA-NEW-supported poultry farms ceased operations” (p. 10-11 of the evaluation report). They then claim that, “One reasons for this lack of success, **backed up by survey data**, is the lack of follow-up technical support. According to a 2014 IDEA-NEW Poultry Assessment, sales figures for poultry producers positively correlate to veterinary care. Therefore, if the project failed to follow-up with needed technical support, this may have contributed to the reports of closed breeder farms. Beneficiary farmers suggested that, to be successful, only professional poultry farmers should be selected, preferably members of the producers association.” (p. 11, USAID’s bold).

USAID finds the claim that the evaluators’ statement is ‘backed up by survey data’ to be unsubstantiated. If it were the case that 40 percent of IDEA-NEW-supported poultry farms ceased operations, it would have been reported in the rigorously implemented RSI Poultry Assessment. By contrast, the RSI report of 2014 confirmed with on-site visits of 94 farms and through phone calls to an additional active 41 farms that all these farms were active. Moreover, the RSI Poultry Assessment provides no support for the assertions made by the evaluators about the lack of technical support for veterinary care, and the fact that the beneficiary farmers suggested that only members of the producers association should be selected for assistance should have sent up red flags that the source was potentially self-serving or biased. Of note, a thorough read of the 2014 Poultry Assessment does, in fact, reveal many substantive issues about the IDEA-NEW poultry program. However, the evaluation largely missed these problems or failed to capture the nuances.

Issue 2: Value Chain Intervention and Sustainability

The question on the sustainability of IDEA-NEW project is of great importance to USAID/Afghanistan and its partners. One of the key findings by the Office of Inspector General’s audit of the project in June 2012 was on sustainability and how that objective was being executed by IDEA-NEW. Please refer to page 15 of exhibit 2.

While recognizing this was an evaluation and not a sustainability assessment, USAID’s Agriculture Office believes that the evaluators failed to review and respond to the question on sustainability of

IDEA-NEW interventions with adequate specificity, as defined in the mandatory sustainability analysis detailed in ADS 201.3.9.3(c).

In the executive summary of the evaluation report, the evaluation team claims, “Without adequate support at all points along the value chain, IDEA-NEW interventions for both productivity and diversification risk being unsustainable” (p.1). Again on page 10, the evaluators write, “The evidence presented here proves that IDEA-NEW supported agricultural productivity. However, there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that not all interventions for diversification and improved productivity were sustainable. The concerns with sustainability of productivity and diversification gains relate to several factors, such as the cost of securing inputs independent of IDEA-NEW support, as well as overall lack of growth in the value chain. While the Evaluation Team’s synthesis of project studies indicates that IDEA-NEW interventions strengthened linkages in value chains, it also found that these value chain interventions weren’t intensive enough to absorb the increase in agricultural productivity. Without adequate support at all points along the value chain, IDEA-NEW interventions for both productivity and diversification risk being unsustainable.”

Several paragraphs later the report stated, “The evidence points to interventions further up the value chain not progressing at a pace that would support the extra production” (p.10), positing that the interventions for productivity were therefore not sustainable. The evaluators provide a number of anecdotal examples throughout the report to support the claim that the interventions are unsustainable, which will be addressed in greater detail later in this section.

USAID Agriculture Office would first like to clarify that the idea of the value chain is based on a process view, i.e. seeing a manufacturing (or service) organization as a system, made up of subsystems each with inputs, transformation processes and outputs. Inputs, transformation processes, and outputs involve the acquisition and consumption of **resources - money, labor, materials, equipment, buildings, land, administration and management**. ["Decision Support Tools: Porter's Value Chain". Cambridge University: Institute for Manufacturing (IfM). Retrieved 9 September 2013.]

With limited budget and resources, it is not within the manageable interest of IDEA-NEW [and for that matter any other organization] to spread themselves too thin in an attempt to influence each subsystem in the value chain in equal measure, as the evaluators posit is required in the evaluation report. As a result, the conventional practice in development interventions is to take actions that will inform decision-making on the most effective and efficient way(s) to impact the value chain. Examples of such actions include needs assessments undertaken through a survey or consultative process or value chain constraint analyses. In the implementation of IDEA-NEW, the contractor held a number of consultative processes prior to making a decision on where to intervene in a value chain. A sample of the documentation for such a consultative process that resulted in the signing of a MoU with community development council is attached as exhibit 3 and 4.

Moreover, Page 6, paragraph 3 of modification 11 of IDEA-NEW contract states, “The impediments in a value chain represent opportunities for Afghan agribusinesses to sell goods and services to producers, wholesalers, and retailers that eliminate the problem. All of the IDEA-NEW interventions focus on value chain problems that have a business solution.” In other words, value chain impediment solutions that are political or cultural in nature may be beyond the manageable interest of the project – exhibit 5.

Additionally, IDEA-NEW learned lessons gathered through assessments it commissioned, as well as through value chain constraint analyses undertaken by sister projects, such as the Commercial Horticultural and Marketing Program (CHAMP). This alignment in lessons learnt and programming is consistent with paragraph 2 on page 4 of the IDEA NEW award modification 11, which states, “Furthermore, we will align and coordinate program activities with farm-to-market activities carried

out under USAID's CHAMP implemented by Roots of Peace in the East" – exhibit 5. Examples of the products of such assessments that USAID funded are attached as exhibit 6, 7, 8, and 9 (a) & (b).

Page [slide] 14 of the Dalberg Agricultural Assessment, undertaken for USAID Afghanistan, also cited on page 4, paragraph 3, line 4 in IDEA NEW's contract modification 11 as one of the assessments influencing the shift in paradigm, reiterated the same point about intervening in key points [**not every point**] in a value chain to achieve impact. A reference to this assessment in exhibit 10 will provide more details.

On the claim of unsustainable interventions, the program description in the referenced modification goes further to state IDEA-NEW's approach on sustainability in their programming. "Long-term sustainability depends on program activities [that] result in profit creation for agribusinesses and growers, and thus creating a sustainable business model. Through calculated interventions at different points of each value chain, IDEA-NEW will increase the potential earnings for beneficiaries. During the first three years of operation, one way in which IDEA-NEW enhanced sustainability was by building canals, karezes, and retaining walls that can now be used to improve crop production and increase yields. These improvements provide rural farmers with access to more resources and give them more control in determining the adequate amount of water their crops require throughout the year. In the final years of the program, IDEA NEW will keep subsidies to a minimum and will mimic a 'loss leader' concept used by businesses to entice sales of a variety of products...IDEA-NEW will encourage the sales of goods and services that the vendor can provide; or will invest in building the capacity of the vendor to sell a good or service, rather than invest in the good or service itself."

To return to the examples provided by the evaluators throughout the report as evidence of unsustainable interventions, below follows a summary of the claims and USAID's responses. Of note, many of these findings appeared to USAID to constitute a wish list from the respondents, or a needs assessment report of the beneficiaries, rather than a critical evaluation of the sustainability of the interventions themselves.

- ***Claim: IDEA-NEW interventions are unsustainable for the average farmer due to cost***

The evaluation report states that "This [commercial vegetable production] enterprise is unlikely to be sustained independently by the average farmer, due to the cost of the capital assets and inputs involved in production" (p.11), a statement based on interviews with a few farmers. However, the project manager at USAID explained that IDEA-NEW provided two types of greenhouses - low green houses for medium-scale farmers at low prices and more sophisticated greenhouses for progressive farmers who had the ability to maintain the larger green house. See page 20 of the evaluation report for an example of a woman who is able to properly operate the greenhouse with good income. As shown in exhibit 14, 15, and 17, IDEA NEW maintained a due diligence process, whereby a potential beneficiary who has submitted an expression of interest in a certain investment (i.e. green houses) must demonstrate the ability to sustain the investment before he/she is approved. We believe that beneficiaries are making an excuse for free inputs to perpetuate a dependency on donor funding.

- ***Claim: IDEA-NEW provided inputs of inferior quality***

The evaluation report states that, "Business owners mentioned that IDEA-NEW- procured items were often of inferior quality" (p.17). Out of 9,044 enterprises supported, only two enterprises reported this complaint, while Contract Officer's Representative has provided signed documents to demonstrate that IDEA-NEW ensured beneficiaries received items in good condition – See exhibit 19.

- ***Claim: Absence of production cost and profitability data***

The evaluation team claim on page 2 that "IDEA-NEW did not collect cost of production data so that the profitability of enterprises and technologies could be demonstrated. Data on the financial health of supported enterprises would have proven the link between sustainability and project

interventions. While there is evidence of increased agricultural production, farmers mention they cannot afford improved seed and other inputs. Such practices are unsustainable if the value chain in the area of study is not strengthened so farmers can demand a higher price for their produce and afford the costlier inputs.” They also claim on page 13 that “Qualitative analysis indicates that the capital and input costs of IDEA-NEW interventions may be unsustainable in the absence of a strong value chain and/or continued donor intervention. This point might have been corroborated by indicators of the financial health of the rural enterprises supported. DAI could not produce information about enterprise profitability, or any financial or economic data such as gross margins or profitability models for enterprises.”

However, using exhibit 20 as an example, the RSI consulting assessment on orchard did collect this information. Page 5 of the orchard report has the following information:

Production and Sales Information

- 49% of the surveyed farmers had produced and sold fruit from their IDEA-NEW trees.
- Total production yields were highest for apricot farms (2382 kg. on average), followed by sweet orange (2095 kg.) and sour orange (1585 kg.). In terms of yield per jerib, sweet orange farms were the best producers (1812 kg./jerib), followed by apricot (1688 kg./jerib) and sour orange (916 kg./jerib).
- Apricots were the cheapest crop to produce (roughly 14 Afs per kilogram yield), followed by sweet orange (20 Afs/kg.) and pomegranate (22 Afs/kg.).
- Price per kilogram was very similar across all fruit types. Persimmons fetched the highest prices at 20.08 Afs/kg., while apricots earned the least at 16.40 Afs/kg.
- Sweet orange farmers saw the highest net profits, with an average profit of 31,631 Afs for a single growing season. Apricot farmers were next with 19,385 Afs/season. Only persimmon farms averaged a net loss: approximately 904 Afs lost in a season.
- Only 4% of the surveyed farmers were selling their products at local marketplaces or to national markets and supply chains. The majority still sold from the farm gate, or to local buyers.

Additional crop prices, sales, and profit information is available on page 16 of the orchard report. However, the evaluation team failed to adequately take into consideration RSI’s data when provided to them for analysis.

- ***Claim: Inappropriate beneficiary selection***

In multiple places throughout the evaluation report, the evaluators criticize IDEA-NEW’s selection of beneficiaries. For example:

- In the executive summary, the evaluators claim that, “community leaders and apex organization key informants believed that inappropriate beneficiaries had been selected for poultry interventions” (p. 2). Again in the conclusion, the evaluators indicate that there is a “...perception by key informants that nepotism and corruption guide the selection of beneficiaries, and that interventions target farmers who can most afford what is on offer” (p. 20). The evaluators did provide a qualifying statement on page 2 by saying that, “This perception has to be weighed against documents provided by IDEA-NEW, which show the involvement of a DAIL representative and/or the leadership of the local agricultural producers association in beneficiary selection, indicating some local oversight,” after reviewing IDEA-NEW signed documentation to show that the selection of beneficiaries was done in full cooperation and coordination with the community leaders and government officials. However, the statements influence the reader to believing nepotism and corruption were a major issue in IDEA-NEW, with which USAID disagrees. Moreover, the evaluators did not demonstrate that these perceptions are generalizable and representative by failing to provide the number or percentage of apex organization leaders and percentage of key informants that held this perception. They also failed to provide evidence to support the critique, or any in-

depth analysis of the response, by triangulating it with other respondents, secondary data, and project data.

- On page 14, the evaluation report states, “consequently, the intended beneficiaries (e.g., farmers) did not participate in the valuable skills training that demonstrations plots offer. If the Community Development Council (CDC) was involved in the selection of labor, community members suggested, they would have hired farmers to apply the skills learned in the demo plots, as opposed to agricultural laborers.” However, it must be noted that agricultural laborers are farmers too. The skills that they learn stay with them. Also, just because there were agricultural laborers working on the demo plots, didn’t preclude farmer ‘beneficiaries’ from learning from the experience.

On page 14, the evaluation team stated, “Community leaders expressed the opinion that, in order to prevent missteps described above, CDCs and DAILs should be involved in the introduction of project interventions to the community. Some community leaders suggested that the best way to introduce the project to the community is to use the CDC and to make sure the CDC is involved in subsequent monitoring activities.” It should be noted that projects through CDCs are as susceptible to “elite capture” as other mechanisms. (See, for example, Beath, Randomized Impact Evaluation of Afghanistan’s National Solidarity Programme, July 2013, and Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, “A Study of Gender Equity through the National Solidarity Programme’s Community Development Councils.) Therefore, it is important to take the unsupported opinions of community leaders with a grain of salt. The evaluation goes on to say that in five communities, the project was introduced to community members through the CDC. In two of these, there was good subsequent coordination with the CDC, including forms of community monitoring... A community leader in Nangarhar said *‘If beneficiaries were selected in consultation with the community shuras, there would have been a chance for everyone in the community to benefit and avoid the circumstances in which a particular group benefits more than the others.’*” The evaluation admits that IDEA-NEW went through the CDCs in all five cases. If coordination in three of these subsequently didn’t pan out, it was incumbent upon the evaluation team to discuss why. Perhaps, if these had been discussed with DAI, the team could have identified mitigating circumstances or other factors that affected impact. In any case, relying on the opinion of CDC representatives in assessing blame for lack of coordination might not be a sound approach.

USAID believes that the evaluators’ analysis and write-up of findings in the report related to beneficiary selection does not sufficiently demonstrate a preponderance of evidence to support these claims, but rather relies heavily on quotes from individuals. Management of bias and potential sources of error is one of the key functions of an evaluation team. Therefore, the team could have used triangulation and data saturation to address bias and potential sources of error. The evaluation team could have cascaded the sample in a way that would minimize potential bias by speaking to representatives and by drawing on rigorous empirical studies and data sources. However, there is likely to be a degree of error because the team only had one or two data points for this claim, which may be leading to distortion and inaccuracy.

- ***Claim: Need for more food processing***

On page 2 the evaluation team claims, “Food processors assisted by the project mentioned that the number of food processing businesses and their demand for produce was small in relation to the number of farmers capable of increased production.”

As discussed above, interventions and investments made by IDEA-NEW were based on a broad consultative process with agreements to back the conclusions reached. In addition, and as is the case for several of the discussion points mentioned above, USAID believes the evaluators did not adequately demonstrate how the results they found were aggregate findings of a sufficient number of food processors.

Moreover, as evident in exhibit 11 to 18 [grants process], IDEA NEW's support to agribusinesses, including food processors, is based on expressions of interest that go through a due diligence process. It defeats the purpose of the activity to fail to do due diligence on agribusiness or support an entity that has no interest in perpetuating the objectives of the activity.

- ***Claim: Gender programming***

On page 18 the evaluation team claims, "...women who were supported by IDEA-NEW often failed to sustain their businesses." Some quantitative clarification is called for here. "Often" is too vague a term, especially when businesses supported by IDEA-NEW develop a strategy and sustainability plan, which is vetted before support is given. Moreover, this claim is based on interviews with just 3 women whose businesses had failed. It must be noted that IDEA-NEW supported 6,642 women-owned enterprises

On page 2, "The evaluation team heard from several informants that numeracy and literacy training and support for credit access was a necessary but missing element for promoting women-owned businesses." A review of the program description by the evaluators will reveal that numeracy and literacy training was not, and has not been, an objective of IDEA-NEW, nor has it been an objective of the Agriculture Office of USAID/Afghanistan. Consequently, the referenced support was not within the mandate of the project. Project documents and reports that clearly defined the scope of the project were provided to the consultants. While capacity building for women was a key priority of the project, the breadth to which the consultants expanded their inquisition that led to this finding, we believe, is out of scope. The program description for IDEA NEW is provided as exhibit 5. Moreover, a lack of rigor and representativeness is present in this finding as well – "heard from several informants" does not satisfy USAID's demand for rigor in its evaluations.

Claim: Inputs vs Training

On page 3, the evaluation team claim, "Farmers widely appreciated the benefits of new technologies and said they preferred to receive training in good agricultural practices rather than receive subsidized inputs or tools."

A review of the program description and amendments provided to the evaluation team will reveal that IDEA NEW was initially designed as a stabilization project, which involved input subsidization. However, with the transition of the portfolio to a development focused one as a result of recommendations from assessments and analysis resulted in IDEA-NEW shifting programing from input subsidization to development-focused interventions. In other words, the evaluators failed to account for the trajectory of the project in their assessment/analysis even though the relevant documents were provided to them prior to commencing the evaluation. Please refer to exhibit 5.

ISSUE 3: Poor Coordination with GIRoA and MAIL/DAIL

In several instances throughout the report it is inferred that IDEA-NEW did not coordinate, cooperate or involve GIRoA or MAIL/DAIL in planning, implementation or trainings. For instance, the report states, "Key informants from DAIL in all locations visited reported that coordination with them was poor. DAIL representatives would have liked to have been involved with monitoring the activities of IDEA-NEW, but did not have sufficient resources to do so. In the East, the DAIL staff mentioned that they were not very involved in the training and capacity development interventions for farmers supported by IDEA-NEW" (p. 15).

In the Recommendations section (pg. 21) the report recommends, "Follow-on projects should include the provincial DAIL in planning, and make sure that the DAILS are involved as much as possible in coordinating and facilitating interventions" and "Interventions should be planned to support a strategic vision for the industry that takes into account constraints to be addressed across the entire value chain. If there is no national strategic plan, then donors should prioritize support to the GIRoA

to ensure that production improvements are supported by the other improvements needed further down in the value chain.”

USAID Agriculture Office maintains that every IDEA-NEW Quarterly Report since October 2012 contains an annex on *IDEA-NEW and GIROA Coordination* demonstrating how DAILs were involved extensively in coordinating and facilitating interventions. In addition to GIROA coordination sections in each monthly report, the Quarterly Report annexes describe IDEA-NEW involvement and participation in monthly Provincial Agriculture sector working groups, Rural Rehabilitation and Development (RRD) working groups, Provincial Development Council meetings, GIROA and MAIL strategic planning exercises as well as IDEA-NEW’s hosting and/or sponsoring of numerous trainings, seminars and workshops for various relevant GIROA agencies including sponsoring the MAIL Women’s Empowerment Working Group meeting at IDEA-NEW Kabul offices (December 2014).

Also, the evaluation fails to mention the attendance of MAIL/DAIL representatives in IDEA-NEW grantee sponsored Farmer Field Days (FFDs). Beginning in 2014, IDEA-NEW grant recipients for Matching, SMS and Live Radio grants were required as part of their cost share to sponsor FFDs. FFDs are where the Grantee (Ag. Input Supplier), in coordination with DAIL extension agents, sponsor half-day trainings in different districts. A total of 143 Farmer Field Days were held from July 2014 – August 2015 providing training to 3,577 farmers, 179 retailers and 325 GIROA staff.

It must be noted, however, that providing resources to mobilize the DAIL staff was not within IDEA-NEW’s mandate. This is USAID policy. One can criticize it, but the criticism should be directed towards USAID or MAIL, not necessarily IDEA-NEW. The challenge is that MAIL does not adequately fund its field operations. USAID is working through other programs to help address that, but GIROA’s resources are limited.

Finally, the report fails to account for the “transition” that occurred at many MAIL/DAIL offices throughout Afghanistan as a result of the 2014 elections. Most, if not all MAIL/DAIL persons interviewed by the evaluators were new to their post and had little prior knowledge of activities in their respective provinces/districts.

ISSUE 4: Sustainability of SMS Marketing Activities

The evaluators wrote of their concern over the sustainability of SMS Marketing Activities: “The SMS marketing and information systems were widely appreciated by input suppliers that used them. However, there is concern about their sustainability now that the cost share to be paid by businesses has increased” (p. 3); “There is concern about sustainability due to the change in the proportion of costs that must be contributed by businesses. Initially, the business only contributed 25% of costs, which was affordable to businesses; now the contribution has increased to 75%” (p. 16); and in the recommendations, “A viability assessment should be made of the SMS database and the SMS messaging system. There is concern about the sustainability of this system now that the percentage share of cost born by the businesses has increased to 75%” (p. 23).

USAID would like to take this opportunity to state that as of August 25th 2015, of the 11 SMS grants awarded since 2014, 10 firms have continued with the SMS Marketing activity, countering the speculation in the report that it will not be affordable. These firms have signed 6 and 12-month contract extensions with the SMS service provider (Paywast).

ISSUE 5: Inconsistent support to/involvement of apex organizations

The report makes numerous references to IDEA-NEW's work involving "apex organizations", which are loosely defined in the report as various agricultural associations in IDEA-NEW targeted provinces. Various claims are made stating that IDEA-NEW did not select appropriate beneficiaries for interventions or provide consistent training and support to apex organizations in its target areas.

On page 3, the report states that "IDEA-NEW provided training to apex organizations, but it appears to have been inconsistently introduced and stopped altogether in 2012. Apex organizations told us they were not able to replace or continue the employment of the staff IDEA-NEW had supported." Also on page 3, the report states that, "Support needs to be continued for apex organizations so that they may become more self-sufficient."

IDEA-NEW has strived throughout the life of the project to engage with key community leaders and associations in all of its target provinces. In addition to close coordination with GIROA as detailed above, IDEA-NEW hosts monthly donor project/NGO coordination meetings, with participants including the Afghanistan National Horticulture Development Organization (ANHDO), a local NGO working with MAIL to develop a long-term strategy for horticulture development in Afghanistan.

In reference to poultry interventions, IDEA-NEW has given grants to two poultry associations – the Afghanistan Social Poultry and Animal Farmers Association in Kabul and the Spin Ghar Poultry Farm Association in Nangarhar (Jalalabad). In addition to these poultry associations, IDEA-NEW has more recently (2013 – 2015) engaged with the following apex organizations/associations through the provision of various grants:

- Afghanistan Industrial Association;
- Kunar Fruit and Vegetable Wholesaler Association;
- Saidkhail Nursery Growers Association;
- Kapisa Farm Services Center; and
- Parwan Women's Farm Services Center.

Training to apex organizations also did not completely stop in 2012. While the program shifted in 2013 to provide assistance directly to private enterprises, select grants were still awarded in 2013 and 2014 (that included a training component) to apex organizations such as the Afghanistan Industrial Association, Kunar Fruit and Vegetable Wholesaler Association, and the Kapisa Farm Services Center. Participation in Accounting and Marketing training was required for all grantees, including these associations. In addition, all IDEA-NEW grantees from 2013 onwards were regularly contacted to participate in B2B meetings, A2F workshops and other events to receive additional training.

Overall, it appears as though the evaluators were not comprehensive in their conducting of interviews with apex organizations and beneficiaries writ large, particularly in Kabul. According to their planned vs. actual beneficiary visits, they met with approximately 15% of the total number planned (112 actual individuals interviewed out of 732 planned). It is surprising to note that the evaluators held an in-depth interview with only one single male in all of Kabul province during the assessment period.

The claims made in the report also purport that donor support needs to be continued for apex organizations, without regard to the sustainability of such initiatives. Given the limited scope of interviews conducted, the validity of these claims as representative of all apex organizations involved with the IDEA-NEW project is questionable.

Issue 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusion section appears to be a summary of IDEA-NEW's performance, introducing points that aren't fully supported by the evidence and which weren't actually discussed in the body of the

report, as well as issues (e.g., the dumping practices of Iran and Pakistan) that don't pertain to IDEA-NEW's performance.

It was also not clear if the recommendations are directed at USAID or IDEA-NEW. If both, no distinctions were made. Some of the recommendations (e.g., the comment on associations under project planning) are phrased as absolutes, even though their validity would depend on contextual and logistical factors. Not all associations, for example, are representative of the views of farmers in all cases. Some qualifiers that should have been included were omitted.

ANNEX II: SCOPE OF WORK

SCOPE OF WORK

OFFICE OF AGRICULTURE (OAG) / OFFICE OF PROGRAM AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT (OPPD)

STATEMENT OF WORK: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

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

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT NO, 306-A-00-09-00508-00

I. PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program/Project Name:	Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East, and West (IDEA-NEW)
Contractor:	Development Associates, Inc (DAI) <i>[previous contracts held also by ACDI/VOCA and Mercy Corps]</i>
Contract #:	Cooperative Agreement No. 306-A-00-09-00508-00
Total Estimated Cost:	\$156,878,589
Life of Program/Project:	March 2009 – February 2015
Active Provinces:	<i>Current provinces:</i> Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, Kabul, Kapisa, Panjshir, and Parwan <i>Previous provinces:</i> Balkh, Jawzjan, Samangan, Sari Pul, Faryab, Badakshan, Takhar, Kunduz, Baghlan, Nuristan, Badghis, and Herat
Mission Development Objective (DO):	DO1: Sustainable, Agricultural-led Economic Growth Expanded
Linkage to Standard Program Structure (SPS):	4.5.2 Agriculture Sector Capacity
Required?	Required - large project
Public or Internal:	Public

II. INTRODUCTION

USAID/Afghanistan’s Office of Agriculture (OAG) intends to conduct a performance evaluation, as defined by USAID’s Evaluation Policy¹⁴, of the Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East, and West (IDEA–NEW) program, implemented by the Development Associates, Inc. (DAI), in the East and West, ACDI/VOCA in the North, and Mercy Corps in the Northeast. The project started on March 2, 2009 and was scheduled to conclude on March 1, 2014, but was extended until February 28, 2015. During the extension

¹⁴USAID Evaluation Policy, January 2011. The evaluation team will reference USAID’s definition of “Performance Evaluation” contained in the Evaluation Policy (<http://www.usaid.gov/evaluation>) to ensure a common understanding of USAID’s expectations. The evaluation team will be familiar with and follow the Evaluation Policy to conduct an objective performance evaluation.

period, DAI was the sole implementer and activities concentrated just in the Eastern region, specifically in Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, Kabul, Kapisa, Panjshir, Parwan. IDEA–NEW has a cumulative budget of \$160 million.

USAID’s Evaluation Policy encourages independent external evaluation to increase accountability and to inform program management, development strategy, and resource allocation. In keeping with this aim, this evaluation will be conducted to review and evaluate the performance of the USAID-funded IDEA-NEW project activities. The evaluation will focus on assessing the program’s performance between 2009 and 2014, in achieving its program goals, objectives, and results.

III. BACKGROUND

Alternative Development in Afghanistan

The Afghan agriculture sector faces a number of constraints at different points along each value chain, with the constraints varying in severity and potential impact depending on rapidly changing circumstances in each of the provinces or regions being targeted. Constraints such as limited access to quality inputs and infrastructure such as irrigation, electricity, cold storage facilities, roads, transport, etc. limit profits for farmers and options for value-added processing, thus limiting growth when it is most needed. A dynamic agriculture sector raises labor productivity in the rural economy, pulls up wages, and gradually eliminates the worst dimensions of absolute poverty. A robust agricultural economy will play a major role in helping to eliminate poppy production and move the country toward both economic and political stability.

An estimated three-quarter of Afghans is employed in the agriculture sector and dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. Historically, Afghanistan has been a prolific producer of high quality agricultural products, but a generation of civil war obliterated the systems and severely constrained farmers who managed that efficient production. While poppy production and the opium trade have a significant share of Afghanistan’s agricultural economy, there are excellent opportunities for licit alternatives to be provided for the rural populace. Commercial agriculture can play a significant role in increasing the wealth of rural populations – international donors and Afghans themselves recognize that the opium trade is destabilizing as it contributes to insecurity and undermines both the rule of law and needed staple food production. It was in this context that USAID/Afghanistan initiated the IDEA–NEW program.

IDEA-NEW Program

The USAID/Afghanistan country strategy includes the promotion of long-term agricultural development and alternative livelihoods for farmers that results in “a sustainable, thriving agricultural economy” and contributes to the U.S. Government’s (USG) stabilization and counter-narcotics policy goals.

USAID’s Office of Agriculture launched the IDEA-NEW program in March 2009. Its mission is to support the stabilization and transition of Afghanistan by expanding the licit agricultural economy in the northern, eastern, and western regions of the country.

The program’s development hypothesis is that if the immediate needs of communities in poppy-prone areas are met through repair or construction of basic infrastructure using labor-intensive methods, this will contribute to stability, allowing stakeholders the “space” to assess constraints to a viable licit economy. Value chain analysis then reveals opportunities and needs, including priority subsectors to increase the participation of farmers and rural enterprises to bring licit goods and services to market. This, in turn, increases access to licit commercially viable alternative sources of income among vulnerable populations. When this occurs, IDEA-NEW will have contributed to expanding the economy enough so that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), USAID, and/or other international donors may then pursue broader objectives of economic growth.

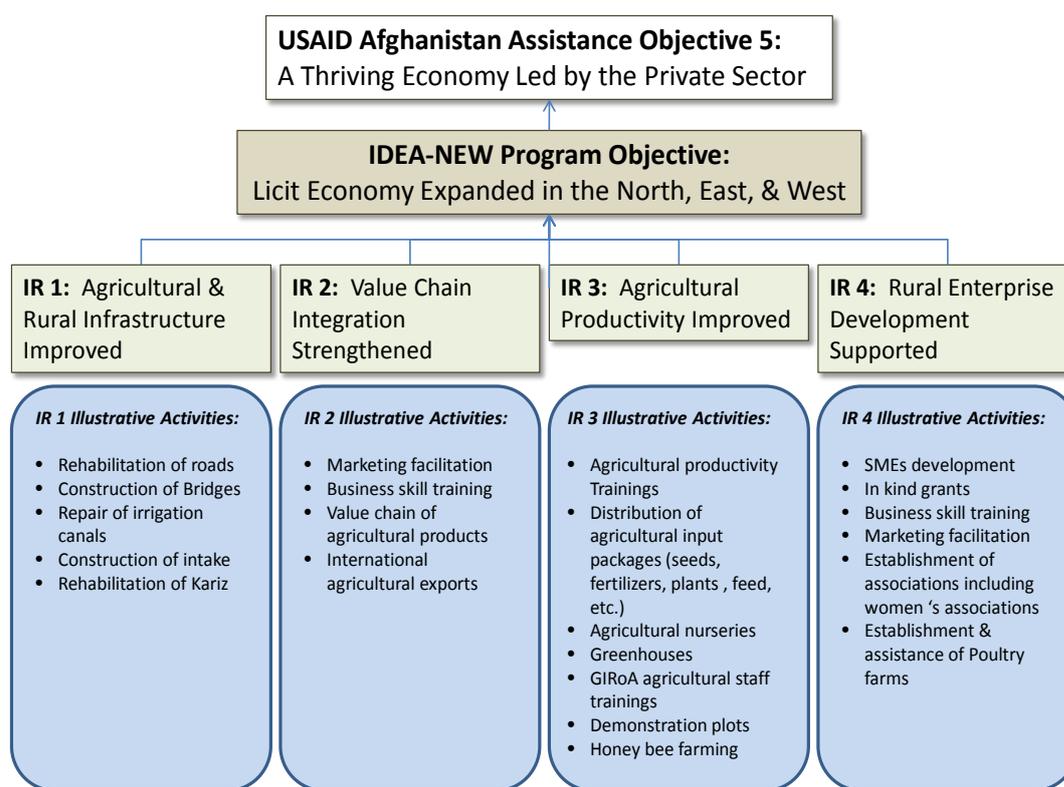
Historically, three partners implemented IDEA-NEW: DAI in the East and West; ACDI/VOCA in the North; and Mercy Corps in the Northeast. However, in the extension period from March 2014 to February 28, 2015, DAI became IDEA-NEW’s sole implementing partner, focusing on the Eastern region.

IV. PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of IDEA-NEW is to expand the licit agricultural economy in North, East and West by improving agricultural and rural infrastructure, strengthening and integrating agricultural value chains, enhancing agricultural productivity, and supporting rural enterprise development.

To accomplish this goal, IDEA-NEW focuses on activities that promote income generation and job creation through increased commercial agricultural opportunities for Afghan farmers in poppy-prone areas. The program supports agribusinesses in three economic development corridors and at different points along eight targeted value chains (grapes, vegetables, orchard crops, honey, wheat and oilseed, poultry, silk, and karakul) in order to improve productivity, market access, and processing capacity and ultimately to catalyze investments into Afghanistan’s agricultural sector. Program activities include rehabilitation and construction of agricultural and rural infrastructure, capacity building for improved productivity, on-farm water management, strengthening of input supply, facilitating connections between producers, traders and buyers through market information activities and sales promotion, and supporting rural enterprise development. The program works closely with provincial- and district-level government and local communities to build strong relationships among local stakeholders.

Figure 1: IDEA – NEW Results Framework



V. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this Performance Evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of IDEA-NEW's progress towards its stated objectives and to assess the extent to which the program was implemented sustainably. The evaluation will provide important feedback on strengths and weaknesses of the project for USAID staff, actionable recommendations for USAID/Afghanistan, as well as lessons learned for the USAID and the broader donor community as well as GIRoA. In addition, the evaluation findings and recommendations will be taken into consideration in the design of follow-on projects, such as the Regional Agricultural Development Program in the East (RADP-E).

As RADP-E has goals similar to IDEA-NEW, this evaluation should provide clear guidance as to the types of activities which were most effective for IDEA-NEW, and which activities, if different, would be most effective. Specific attention should be given to interventions at different stages of the value chains. This may include agricultural infrastructure; technical assistance to primary producers; "mid-value chain" interventions such as credit, processing, or transport; or "end-value chain" actions focusing on marketing, sales, and export.

VI. EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

The following are questions to be addressed during the final evaluation of IDEA-NEW. All data collected, where possible, must be disaggregated by gender.

- 1) To what extent has IDEA-NEW's Value Chain Approach affected diversification of agricultural activities by beneficiary farmers?
- 2) How successful has the project been in empowering women in decision-making and leadership activities through its support to women-owned entrepreneurial businesses?
- 3) How effective were IDEA-NEW's activities aimed at agricultural productivity improvement at achieving sustainable results? Please discuss in order of most sustainable to least sustainable. Answers should focus on 'sustainability' not necessary on the greatest quantitative improvements during the project life-cycle.
- 4) How effective has IDEA-NEW's support in capacity building for agribusinesses and rural enterprises been in strengthening their businesses and profitability?

The evaluation team should base all answers to the above questions on empirical evidence, not subjective opinions.

VII. EVALUATION DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team will be responsible for developing an evaluation methodology that includes a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis approaches. The methodology will be presented as part of the draft work plan as outlined in the deliverables below and included in the final report. The design and methodology should not be finalized until the team has an opportunity to gather detailed information and discuss final issues with USAID/Afghanistan. The selection of the design and data collection methods must be a function of the type of evaluation and the level of statistical and quantitative data confidence needed.

The evaluation team will have available for their analysis a variety of program implementation documents, and reports. Methodology strengths and weaknesses should be identified as well as measures taken to address those weaknesses. All data collected and presented in the evaluation report must be disaggregated by gender and geography. Evaluation questions should be addressed geographically and gender disaggregated where possible. Geographic differences in successes and failures should be noted. The evaluation design and methodology will be critically evaluated against the 'purpose of the evaluation' – most importantly its ability to provide actionable guidance to USAID for current and future programming.

The suggested methodology should include, but is not limited to, partner and key stakeholder interviews, focus group discussions, expert consultations, surveys/questionnaires, and direct observation. The evaluation team should suggest methods which most rigorously and effectively answer the evaluation questions, given the time and budget constraints set forth in this SOW.

Table: Illustrative Design & Methodology

Questions	Suggested Data Sources	Suggested Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods
1. To what extent has IDEA-NEW's Value Chain Approach affected diversification of agricultural activities by beneficiary farmers?	Project documents, project staff, stakeholders, expert knowledge, beneficiaries	Desk review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, direct observation	TBD by evaluation team Requested level of disaggregation – gender, province, value chain
2. How successful has the project been in empowering women in decision-making and leadership activities through its support to women-owned entrepreneurial businesses?	Project documents, project staff, beneficiaries	Key informant interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions	TBD by evaluation team Requested level of disaggregation – province, value chain
3. How effective were IDEA-NEW's activities aimed at agricultural productivity improvement at achieving sustainable results? Please discuss in order of most sustainable to least sustainable. Answers should focus on 'sustainability' not necessary on the greatest quantitative improvements during the project life-cycle.	Project documents, project staff, expert knowledge, stakeholders, beneficiaries	Desk review, key informant interviews, direct observation, focus group discussions	TBD by evaluation team Requested level of disaggregation – gender, province, value chain
4. How effective has IDEA-NEW's support in capacity building for agribusinesses and rural enterprises been in strengthening their businesses and profitability?	Project documents, project staff, expert knowledge, stakeholders, beneficiaries	Desk review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions	TBD by evaluation team Requested level of disaggregation – gender, province, value chain

VIII. EXISTING PERFORMANCE INFORMATION SOURCES

The Contracting Officer Representative (COR) will assist the evaluation team in identifying the existence and availability of relevant performance information sources, such as performance monitoring systems and/or previous evaluation reports. A summary of the type of data available, the timeframe, and an indication of their quality and reliability will be provided by the COR to help the evaluation team to build on what is already available. A list of potential documents and data for the evaluators to review is presented below.

- a) Program descriptions and modifications
- b) Work plan
- c) Quarterly reports
- d) Annual reports

- e) PMP and other M&E documents
- f) Project performance data
- g) Project-generated assessments (FLAG International Assessments)

IX. EVALUATION SCHEDULE

The estimated time period for undertaking this evaluation with a team of two expats consultants is: 55 days for the team leader and 53 days for the technical specialist, of which at least 51 days for the team leader and 49 days for the technical specialist should be spent in Afghanistan. One Afghan consultant should not work for more than 46 days. The ideal start time is the beginning of February 2015; however, the start date will be finalized between USAID and the organization conducting the evaluation.

The Evaluation Team is required to work six days a week. The team is expected to travel to selected provinces where program activities are being implemented, namely Kabul, Nangarhar, Mazar-e Sharif, and Parwan. At least 50 percent of the consultants' time will be spent outside Kabul to conduct interviews with municipal officials, project staff, government officials, and the public. The Evaluation Team will prepare an exit briefing and a presentation of the findings, which will be delivered to USAID staff before the consultants depart Afghanistan.

Table: Sample Level of Effort (LOE) in Days

Activity	Expat Team Leader	Expat	Afghan Evaluation Specialist	Total Days
Document review, work plan, draft questions, data analysis plan, suggested list of interviewees, finalized questions for the survey	5	5	5	15
Travel to/from Afghanistan	4	4		8
Capacity building	2			2
In-briefing with USAID	1	1	1	3
Preparation of work plan	2	2	2	6
Interviews in Kabul	4	4	4	12
Interviews or survey work in provinces (Mazar, Parwan, Nangarhar)	15	15	15	45
Mid-term briefing and interim meetings with USAID	2	2	2	6
Data analysis, preliminary report and presentation preparation	10	10	10	30
Initial draft evaluation report	6	6	6	18
Final exit presentation to USAID (with PowerPoint presentation and draft evaluation report)	1	1	1	3
Final evaluation report	3	3	0	6
One-page briefer preparation and translation				
Totals	55	53	46	154

IDEA-NEW Illustrative Level of Effort (LOE) in days					
Position	Prep	Travel	In-Country	Report Finalization	Total LOE
Expat Team Leader	5	4	43	3	55
Expat Ag Specialist	5	4	41	3	53
Afghan National Consultant	5		41		46
SUPPORT-II Focal point	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	15	8	125	6	154

X. USAID MANAGEMENT

Checchi/SUPPORT-II will identify and hire the Evaluation Team, pending the COR's concurrence and CO approval, assist in facilitating the work plan, and arrange meetings with key stakeholders identified prior to the initiation of the fieldwork. The Evaluation Team will organize other meetings as identified during the course of the evaluation, in consultation with Checchi/SUPPORT-II and USAID/Afghanistan. Checchi/SUPPORT-II is responsible for all logistical support required for the evaluation team, including arranging accommodation, security, office space, computers, Internet access, printing, communication, and transportation.

The Evaluation Team will officially report to Checchi's SUPPORT-II management. Checchi/SUPPORT-II is responsible for all direct coordination with USAID/Afghanistan/OPPD, through the SUPPORT-II COR, Daryl Martyris (dmartyris@state.gov). From a technical management perspective, the evaluation team will work closely with the COR for the IDEA-NEW project, Amiri Aslam Mohammad (aamiri@state.gov), the OAG M&E point of contact, Evans Lartey (elartey@state.gov), and the OPPD M&E backstop for OAG, Emily Turano (turanoer@state.gov). In order to maintain objectivity, OPPD's Monitoring and Evaluation Unit will make all final decisions about the evaluation.

XI. DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The following deliverables and timeframe for reporting are expected for this evaluation:

- 1. In-briefing:** Within **48 hours** of arrival in Kabul, the Evaluation Team, will have an in-briefing with the OPPD M&E unit and the OAG Team for introductions and to discuss the team's understanding of the assignment, initial assumptions, evaluation questions, methodology, and work plan, and/or to adjust the SOW, if necessary.
- 2. Evaluation Work Plan:** Within **3 calendar days** following the in-briefing, the Evaluation Team Leader shall provide a detailed initial work plan to OPPD's M&E unit and the OAG Team. The initial work plan will include: (a) the overall evaluation design, including the proposed methodology, data collection and analysis plan, and data collection instruments; (b) a list of the team members and their primary contact details while in-country, including the e-mail address and mobile phone number for the team leader; and (c) the team's proposed schedule for the evaluation. The OAG Team will then review the draft work plan and provide comments within **2 days** of receiving it.

Consolidated comments will be returned to the evaluation team via the SUPPORT-II COR. Once the Evaluation Team receives the consolidated comments on the initial work plan, they are expected to return with a revised work plan within **2 days**. The revised work plan shall include the list of potential interviewees and sites to be visited.

- 3. Mid-term Briefing and Interim Meetings:** The Evaluation Team is expected to hold a mid-term briefing with USAID/OAG on the status of the assessment including potential challenges and emerging opportunities. If desired or necessary, weekly briefings by phone can be arranged.
- 4. PowerPoint and Final Exit Presentation:** The Evaluation Team is expected to hold a final exit presentation to discuss the summary of findings and recommendations to USAID. This presentation will be scheduled as agreed upon during the in-briefing. Presentation slides should not exceed 18 in total.
- 5. Draft Evaluation Report:** The draft evaluation report should be consistent with the guidance provided in Section XIII: “Final Report Format.” The report will address each of the issues and questions identified in the SOW and any other factors the team considers to have a bearing on the objectives of the evaluation. Any such factors can be included in the report only after consultation with USAID. **The submission date** for the draft evaluation report will be decided upon during the mid-term or exit briefing and submitted to OPPD’s M&E unit by Checchi. Once the initial draft evaluation report is submitted, USAID’s M&E unit and OAG Team will have **10 calendar days** in which to review and comment on the initial draft, after which point OPPD’s M&E unit will submit the consolidated comments to Checchi. The Evaluation Team will then be asked to submit a revised final draft report **5 days** hence, and again the OAG Team and the M&E unit will review and send comments on this final draft report within **10 days** of its submission.
- 6. Final Evaluation Report:** The Evaluation Team will be asked to take no more than **3 days** to respond/incorporate the final comments from the OAG Team and OPPD M&E unit. The Evaluation Team Leader will then submit the final report to OPPD. All evaluation data and records will be submitted in full and should be in electronic form in easily readable format; organized and documented for use by those not fully familiar with the project or evaluation; and owned by USAID.
- 7. Briefer:** The Evaluation Team will be asked to prepare a one- to two-page briefer on key qualitative and quantitative findings and conclusions relative to the evaluation questions for each municipality that is included in the evaluation’s scope—to be given to the appropriate municipal government, provincial government, and/or GIRoA representative(s), so that they have the opportunity to review evaluation findings and share them with the larger community. Each briefer shall be translated in Dari and/or Pashto. Each briefer will be reviewed by the OPPD M&E unit and the responsible technical office prior to distribution.

XII. EVALUATION TEAM COMPOSITION

USAID/Afghanistan recommends that the Evaluation Team consist of a team leader and at least one technical specialist. Local consultants are highly recommended, and there should be Afghan experts on the team. The team leader will be responsible for coordinating with USAID and should have expert credentials in evaluation design and methods, as well as a

Master's degree or PhD in agricultural value chain development, international development, or a related discipline. The team leader must also have strong team management skills, excellent written and spoken English skills, and preferably have experience with USAID evaluations and with working in Afghanistan.

The technical specialist(s) should possess at least a Master's degree in agriculture, international development, or a related discipline. Preferably, s/he should have experience in agricultural value chains and agribusiness management. The team should have at least one Afghan consultant, preferably two, who are proficient in English and Dari or Pashto. The Afghan experts should have experience with monitoring and evaluation in the Afghan context. A statement of potential bias or conflict of interest (or lack thereof) is required of each team member. All team members should be familiar with USAID Evaluation Policy.

XIII. CAPACITY BUILDING OF LOCAL NATIONALS IN EVALUATION

SUPPORT-II continues to build the capacity of local national consultants to expert levels. It does this by identifying a number of elite-level national consultants and engaging them regularly in evaluations of their sector of expertise. In addition, as can be seen in the LOE tables above, the local national is involved at every stage of the evaluation and in equal proportions to the foreign nationals. Team Leader time is specifically set aside for the mentoring of the local national consultant. The profiles of the local nationals below are indicative of the candidates being considered for SUPPORT-II.; both of whom may eventually have the capacity to lead evaluation teams.

Dr. K. is a qualified Afghan consultant in agriculture, and has worked on a previous SUPPORT-II project where he was highly recommended by his supervisors. Inviting him to be part of future SUPPORT-II projects further develops his capacity in his sector of expertise.

Mr. S. has managed the monitoring of more than USD100m of small grants for a national donor, including the development of evaluation reports. Therefore, he is a qualified Afghan who will benefit from working on SUPPORT-II evaluations, enhancing his overall M&E capacity in the finance and micro-credit space.

SUPPORT-II will also, in this evaluation, improve the capacity of M&E professionals in GIRoA. SUPPORT-II will integrate into the team up to two Ministry of the Economy M&E specialists deemed qualified to job-shadow selected evaluation team members at the appropriate stages of the evaluation.

XIV. FINAL REPORT FORMAT

The final evaluation report should be about 25 pages in length, not including annexes. It should be written in English, using Times New Roman 12 point font, 1.15 line spacing, and be consistent with USAID branding policy. The report should be structured as follows:

1. Title Page
2. Table of Contents
3. List of any acronyms, tables, and/or figures
4. Acknowledgements or Preface (optional)
5. Executive Summary (**3-5 pages**)

6. Introduction
 - a. Description of the project evaluated, including goal and expected results
 - b. Brief statement on the purpose of the evaluation, plus a list of the evaluation questions
 - c. Description of the methods used in the evaluation (such as desk/document review, interviews, site visits, surveys, etc.), the rationale and location for field visits (if any), and a description of the numbers and types of respondents
 - d. Limitations to the evaluation, with particular attention to the limitations associated with the evaluation methodology (selection bias, recall bias, unobservable differences between comparator groups, etc.)
7. Findings
 - a. Describe findings, focusing on each of the evaluation questions and providing **gender disaggregation** where appropriate
 - b. Evaluation findings should be presented as analyzed facts, evidence, and data, and should not be based on anecdotes, hearsay, or the compilation of people's opinions
8. Conclusions
 - a. Conclusions are value statements drawn from the data gathered during the evaluation process
9. Recommendations
 - a. Recommendations should be actionable, practical and specific statements for existing programming and for the design and performance of future programming
 - b. Each recommendation should be supported by a specific set of findings
 - c. Include recommended future objectives and types of activities based on **lessons learned**
10. Annexes
 - a. Evaluation Scope of Work
 - b. Methodology description (include **any pertinent** details not captured in the report)
 - c. Copies of **all** survey instruments and questionnaires
 - d. List of critical and key documents reviewed
 - e. Schedule of Meetings and sources of information (If confidentiality is a concern, the team should discuss and agree upon an approach with USAID)
 - f. Notes from key interviews, focus group discussions and other meetings
 - g. Statement of differences (if applicable)

XV. REPORTING GUIDELINES

The evaluation report should represent a thoughtful, well-researched, and well-organized effort to objectively evaluate the validity of the project's hypothesis and the effectiveness of the project. Evaluation reports shall address all evaluation questions included in the statement of work and be written in highly professional English, free of grammatical and typographical error, and with professional formatting.

Any modifications to the statement of work, whether in technical requirements, evaluation questions, evaluation team composition, methodology, or timeline need to be agreed upon in writing by the SUPPORT-II COR.

ANNEX III: WORKPLAN

WORKPLAN

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

OF

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

Submitted

Revised March 5, 2015

SUPPORT-II Project
Checchi & Company Consulting, Inc.

I. Evaluation Team

Core Team

Allison Brown
Team Leader

Peter Jarvis
Evaluation Specialist

Ghulamulla Afghanyar
Agriculture Expert

Wajihullah
M&E Specialist, Checchi & Company Consulting, Inc.

Support

Ronald Santos, Program Design and M&E Team Leader
USAID SUPPORT-II Project

Burhanuddin Kamal, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
USAID SUPPORT-II Project

Zuhal Latif, Gender Specialist
USAID SUPPORT-II Project

II. Purpose of the Performance Evaluation

IDEA-NEW (Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East, and West) was launched in March 2009. The goal of this ambitious \$160 million project was to support the stabilization and transition of Afghanistan by expanding the licit agricultural economy in these regions. The project has sought to improve agricultural and rural infrastructure, strengthen and integrate agricultural value chains, enhance agricultural productivity, and support rural enterprise development. Implementation in the North, Northeast, and East closed in 2013, but implementation in the West will continue to the end of 2015.

USAID expects this performance evaluation to identify lessons learned from IDEA-NEW to provide actionable recommendations. The intended audiences for these recommendations are the decision-makers in the USAID Office of Agriculture (OAG) and senior leadership at USAID/Afghanistan. In addition, the evaluation's recommendations will be used to inform current and future implementation of several Regional Agricultural Development Program (RADP) projects in the various regions, in particular RADP-East; and future agriculture initiatives of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), USAID, and other international donors.

III. Proposed Methodology

a. Evaluation Questions

This performance evaluation will be guided by the USAID Results Framework for IDEA-NEW that includes the Objectives and Intermediate Results (IR) outlined in the figure below, and will seek to answer the four Evaluation Questions below.



1. To what extent has IDEA-NEW's Value Chain Approach affected diversification of agricultural activities by beneficiary farmers?
2. How successful has the project been in empowering women in decision-making and leadership activities through its support to women-owned entrepreneurial businesses?
3. How effective were IDEA-NEW's activities aimed at agricultural productivity improvement at achieving sustainable results? Please discuss in order of most sustainable to least sustainable. Answers should focus on 'sustainability', not necessarily on the greatest quantitative improvements during the project life-cycle.
4. How effective has IDEA-NEW's support in capacity building for agribusinesses and rural enterprises been in strengthening their businesses and profitability?

b. Methodological Approach

The Evaluation Team proposes to use a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods for each of the four evaluation questions.

IDEA-NEW has been implemented using a regional approach with Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) as the Lead. DAI covers the East and West regions, and partners ACDI/VOCA and Mercy Corps cover the North and Northeast regions, respectively. There were numerous project subcontractors, including national and international organizations. The total number of participants numbered around 1,100,000 households in 19 provinces. The East Region counts about 500,000 participating households.

IDEA-NEW's complexity and the difficulty of measuring progress toward project goals was recognized from the outset by DAI. Its response was to set in place a suitably complex monitoring system. Each regional team initially tracked its work along 23 indicators and geocoded each intervention. All teams used the same set of performance measuring tools. At various points along the project timeline, summary assessments were made and presented in periodic reports and evaluations.

The rich, numerical and geographical data from this monitoring and reporting system are expected to be made available to the Evaluation Team in raw and synthesized forms. The Evaluation Team is supported by skilled data analysts and GIS specialists. If the data is forthcoming and is as rich as we have been led to believe, we expect to be able to manipulate this data in exciting and creative ways to shed new light on important implementation lessons. The data will be especially important in sample selection for investigations being undertaken by the Evaluation Team.

Some of the datasets that we expect to have available from IDEA-NEW include:

- Baseline and endline surveys;
- Geocoded intervention location data;
- Project management data from all implementing partners (IPs);
- The raw data from the 19 assessments conducted by the project to date; and
- The raw data from the 2014 survey of 400-600 households to be conducted in March.

IDEA-NEW collected data for specific needs of the project, in addition to that required for USAID reporting. Much of this information, however, has not been presented to USAID

except in amalgamated form: karakul, silk, and oilseeds, for example. This evaluation expects to be able to look at the data from new angles to provide new and interesting interpretations beyond the insights that have been drawn from the analyses USAID has required for contractual reporting. In addition, we hope to be able to supplement IDEA-NEW information with data from other projects working in the same regions and value chains.

The Evaluation Team will complement the quantitative analyses with a series of stakeholder interviews.

Each of the four Evaluation Questions will be investigated using quantitative and qualitative methods. They will each be considered in terms of the eight value chains indicated in the Scope of Work (grapes, vegetables, orchard crops, honey, wheat and oilseed, poultry, silk, and karakul), and weighted in consideration of the differences in relative value per participant across each of the four Intermediate Results. For example, IR 1, Infrastructure improvement, may have a disproportionately large number of direct beneficiaries and IR 4, Entrepreneur training, may have relatively few direct beneficiaries.

1. To what extent has IDEA-NEW's Value Chain Approach affected diversification of agricultural activities by beneficiary farmers?

Diversification in the context of IDEA-NEW encompasses diversification of crops and also diversification of income streams for families and communities.

The investigation of the extent to which crop diversification has occurred is closely linked to the investigation of Question 3, increased production. Both questions can be first approached quantitatively using project monitoring data and data collected in various project reports and evaluation documents.¹⁵

“Diversification” was not tracked as an indicator and so has not been reported as such. Looking at diversification implies an historical approach – “we used to grow this in the past and now we grow these ten other things.” Project data providing indicators for diversification can be found in the baseline and endline surveys, and other periodic surveys that note exactly what crops are being grown by each respondent household in each year. Project data provides markers that track the adoption of advanced production technologies that expand farmers’ dates for selling crops. This is an important kind of farm income diversification and an indicator of sustainability. Reduction in post-harvest losses allows direct diversification into crops that previously had been too fragile. Reduction in post-harvest losses leads farmers to diversify farm management approaches that allow new crops to move into the market. Project data permits tracking income directly and indirectly, and allows inferences to be drawn from pattern of changes over time relative to control groups.

IDEA-NEW collected production data by crop and value and linked this information to individual farmers. Thus, the change in the range of crops being sold in a particular region can be tracked against baseline and endline data, and also against such indicators as

¹⁵ The ability of the Evaluation Team to undertake the quantitative analyses outlined in this work plan are based on the availability of the data from DAL. If we cannot access this data we will first try to access data from other sources and second increase the sample size of our interviews.

investment per farmer in a region and the kinds of activities in which the farmer participated. This mathematical analysis will be able to indicate:

- a. A change in the range of crops being produced and sold in a location over the life of the project; and
- b. A possible cost-benefit of particular activities in terms of production value and diversity.

These two findings are particularly applicable to Questions 1 and 3 and are secondary predictors for Question 4.

A second kind of diversification is an increase in the sources of family and community income. The data from IDEA-NEW will suggest some of these changes because there are questions that track changes in the number and kinds of marketing channels. A complete and nuanced answer to this aspect of Question 1 will be more dependent on qualitative information.

Several of the planned interviews discussed below will be important to answering both aspects of Question 1. Of particular importance will be the interviews with Apex organizations active in the various regions, farmers, farmer groups, and traders. These interviews will suggest (but not quantify) the strength of the relationship between IDEA-NEW interventions and diversification.

2. *How successful has the project been in empowering women in decision-making and leadership activities through its support to women-owned entrepreneurial businesses?*

The key questions here are how to measure “decision-making” and “leadership” and then how to apply these attributes to women who own businesses.

This is less a quantitative than a qualitative question but, still, we will begin by looking at project monitoring data. The monitoring data will give us an idea of the change in the number of women-owned businesses over time and across location. In this case, location is particularly important to note because some locations are more challenging than others in terms of distance from markets (implying a lack of opportunity for business development), and differences in culture that affect women’s autonomy. Successful empowerment of women in business cannot be compared directly across locations with significant differences in these characteristics.

Answering Question 2, then, will depend largely on results from the various interviews, especially those with Women’s Business Associations and other Apex trade groups, rural women’s enterprises, specialty producer associations, and IP current and former staff. We will pay particular attention to stories of women who are ranking members of trade groups and women from rural communities who have been able to register and license their businesses.

The answers to Question 2 will be relevant to answer Question 4.

3. *How effective were IDEA-NEW’s activities aimed at agricultural productivity improvement at achieving sustainable results?*

The IDEA-NEW monitoring data will be able to answer many quantitative questions about changes in productivity over time and the cost-benefit of certain kinds of interventions. The more important question here is: what is meant by the qualitative term “sustainable”?

Sustainability means different things to different people, and one of the important questions in some of our planned interviews is: what does sustainability mean to you in terms of IDEA-NEW? The answers to this question will bring nuance to our response to Question 3 in the final report. However, one generally agreed-upon definition of sustainability is the intention and ability of project participants to continue along their chosen paths after project implementation is over.

The technical situation of IDEA-NEW lends itself here to a matched-sample design. We will be able to compare the responses of project participants in the East, where implementation is continuing, to those from areas of the North and Northeast, where implementation stopped in 2013.

Question 3 is tied to Question 1 in that crop diversification is an experiment that must be continued for some time before it can be assessed. Are farmers continuing to develop profitable opportunities for diversified crops, or are they reverting to the traditional range of crops?

Question 3 is less closely tied to Questions 2 and 4, except in the case of traders who rely on sustained production for their supply.

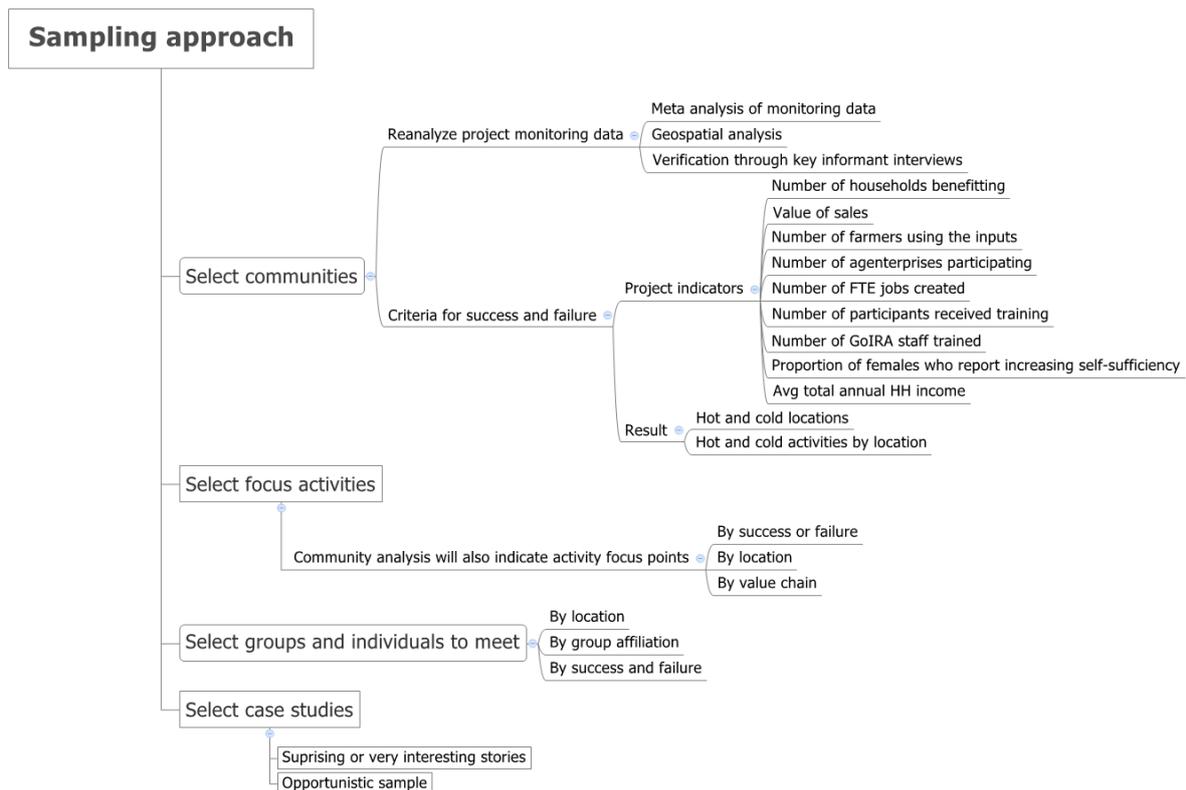
4. How effective has IDEA-NEW’s support in capacity building for agribusinesses and rural enterprises been in strengthening their businesses and profitability?

This question parallels Question 2, but has the broader inquiry of how well IDEA-NEW served all agribusinesses and rural enterprises. The methodologies will be the same.

c. Sampling

The Evaluation Team will use a community-focused approach to sample selection. The communities upon which we will focus will be selected based on the methods of data collection and analysis described below. The outline below is hierarchical from top to bottom, and each of the selections is made based on the information analysis on the right. It is important to note that the project extension IDEA-NEW is tracking nine indicators, which are listed below. However, previously, there were 23 indicators tracked. We will look closely first at the nine indicators for our selection criteria. If these seem too narrow, we will broaden our selection criteria to include all or some of the older indicators. Some of the indicators are more quantitative and others are more qualitative. The quantitative factors will be analyzed alongside qualitative factors to determine the best locations for in-depth qualitative investigations.

Value Chains will be investigated in communities and also with individuals. We are especially keen to locate and interview traders who have not directly participated in IDEA-NEW activities to learn to what they attribute recent changes in their market channels.



Sampling variables will include:

- Range of enterprises in a location;
- Size of enterprise or farm;
- Scale of action;
- Individual or group action; and
- Male, female or gender-neutral action.

The Evaluation Team has the resources to divide into 4-5 interview teams depending on the ability of the expats to travel independently. While our team is fluent in Dari and Pashto, not all individuals are fluent in both, so in some locations the fieldwork will be reduced and phone interviews increased. Our ability to interact with persons speaking minor languages is limited, and this might adversely affect our investigations, particularly of the karakul value chain.

d. Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

IDEA-NEW implementation has been especially complex because of the project's longevity, the number of primary and secondary partnerships, and the many different activities undertaken with many classes of actors across several geographic regions. In order to evaluate this complex project, the Evaluation Team proposes a multi-stage approach using several methods, which are presented sequentially. The methodology will focus most strongly on cluster analysis of data, supplemented by a range of other methodologies as needed. Each of these methods is described later in the discussion. Each of the four Evaluation Questions will be addressed using all of these methods as described above.

Data gathering and analysis 🏠	
1. Meta analysis of quantitative data	Evaluate project data gathering tools Reexamine project statistical analysis Selected gross margin analyses if indicated
3. Key informant interviews	Staff and former staff of Implementing Partners DAILs Trade association and farmer group leaders Business owners Staff of other projects Apex trade organizations Entrepreneurs
4. Focus groups	Illustrative examples: CDCs Trade organizations or farmer groups Farmers mixed group + Farmers specialized group + Entrepreneurs +
5. Site visits	Illustrative examples: DAIL mulberry nursery Mazar Poultry farms + Input supply stores Processing facilities
6. Case studies	Opportunistic sample Suprising or very interesting story

Field visits are limited by the SOW to Kabul, Parwan, Nangarhar and Balkh provinces, which restricts in-person observations of several of the target value chains (e.g. karakul and silk, which were activities concentrated in provinces other than these four). Where possible, data collection in these other regions will be pursued using key informants and telephone interviews.

The approach presented above and detailed below will help the Evaluation Team identify and quantify the differential impact of completed IDEA-NEW activities and interventions at the regional, provincial, firm, and individual level. It may also provide a new understanding of whether and how project implementation by the various partners influenced performance and the factors underlying success at reaching project performance goals.

We have developed the following estimate of the number of interviews to be conducted in the course of data gathering. Weather and security considerations may affect these numbers.

Estimated Number of Groups Interviewed								
	Nangarhar	Parwan	Balkh	Kabul	Total	Total Pax	Men	Women

Work Days:	5	3	5	2				
Number of Teams (see notes below)	6	5	5	5				
TARGET GROUP								
Open membership farmer clusters and formal groups	12	6	10	4	32	320	224	96
Women-only farmer clusters and formal groups	9	5	8	3	24	120	0	120
Agribusinesses	18	9	15	6	48	72	50	22
Apex Organizations	14	7	11	5	36	108	65	43
CDC / Community Groups	6	3	5	2	16	80	48	32
Key Informants	12	6	10	4	32	32	19	13
Site visits	3	2	3	1	8	NA		
Case studies	3	2	3	1	8	NA		

Notes:

5 Checchi Teams are led by one local or expat professional supported by interpreters and others.

At various times, the Checchi teams may be supplemented by trainees from the Ministry of the Economy. MoEc is included on this table as a +1 team.

Agribusinesses include traders, processors, input suppliers, and others.

Final selection of interviewees will be done in consultation with DAIL, Chamber of Commerce and other informants.

e. Meta-Analysis of Quantitative Data

As mentioned above, where indicated, the Evaluation Team will conduct secondary analyses of quantitative data coming from the IDEA-NEW's monitoring system or from other secondary sources. The team will investigate the use of secondary sources to measure intermediate results relating to changes in diversification of production related to crops and livestock, as well as perhaps sustainability. The specific data sources that have been identified to date for evaluation for useable data include:

- Household surveys conducted by the project over time;
- Baseline study; and
- Endline study.

Four intermediate results indicators are being tracked over time by IDEA-NEW's M&E System. These are related to enterprise-level results. They are listed below. They will also be assessed for use.

- Full-time employment
- Income
- Sales
- Women's reported self-sufficiency

Access to these datasets allows the team to undertake an almost unprecedented level of secondary verification of project findings and meta-analysis of empirical data across location, time, value-chain, and IP. These findings can then be linked to geospatial analysis for mapping and cluster analysis for the purpose of determining sample size and location. Some of the analytical tools that will be used include SPSS and ARC-GIS. Both of these tools will be used to link project activities to locations, allowing the Evaluation Team to focus their fieldwork.

f. Structured and Semi-Structured Key Informant Interviews

The results of the meta-analysis and the use of some specific geospatial analytical techniques

will help the evaluation team identify the paths of inquiry that will best answer the Evaluation Questions. However, meta-analysis of monitoring data and cluster analysis of geospatial data can only suggest patterns of better or worse response to project interventions. The data cannot tell us why this pattern has emerged.

The need to supplement a purely mathematical analysis with additional information gleaned from stakeholders is easy to understand if one considers a community that has been devastated by a flood part-way through the project. Monitoring data will show a sharp drop in progress toward a goal that might be misinterpreted if the situational detail of the flood is not explained.

To provide context to the IDEA-NEW data analysis, the Evaluation Team will use a series of structured and semi-structured interviews with Key Informants.

The Key Informant program of interviews will be developed using a layered approach, as follows:

- Project management staff (HQ);
- Project senior field staff – expat and local;
- Project consultants (for example, consultants who provided guidance on selected value chains);
- Government staff who participated in project activities;
- Key players in the market channels (for example, input suppliers or importer export firms); and
- Individual farmers and entrepreneurs.

Resource limitations require the Evaluation Team to select Key Informants to be interviewed according to their knowledge and willingness to participate. Not all of these informants will be available in all locations. Project implementation concluded in 2013 in the North, West and Northeast, and project staff have scattered. The Evaluation Team will use a triangulation approach, in which key informants are asked to identify other key informants, to identify the most knowledgeable and respected sources of information.

The content of structured interviews will be analyzed using DeDoose, a popular Computer Assisted Qualitative Analysis software program. English-language summaries of non-English interviews will be used for the analysis. The themes and concepts of these interviews will be compared to the responses from more informal interview formats, field notes, and case studies to develop the results statements and lessons learned.

g. Focus Group Interviews

Focus Group interviews will be used with:

- Community Development Committees;
- Apex groups representing trade associations and other appropriate groups;
- Mixed groups of farmers from high- and low-performing communities;
- Specialized farmer groups and associations along a single value chain; and
- Participants in training or grant programs.

Selection of location and participation in these structured interviews will be suggested by the GIS cluster analysis, supplemented by information provided by project staff and key informant interviews.

h. Site Visits

In addition to the communities visited as part of the interview program, team members will visit sites of particular value or interest. These might include poultry farms, processing facilities, the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock silk facility in Mazar-e Sharif, and examples of successful and less-successful outcomes of project activities. We anticipate that our resources will allow 1-2 site visits per province, for a total of 5-8.

i. Studies

Case studies will be developed for unusually interesting or surprising results that emerge in the course of the performance evaluation. We hope to find interesting case studies in each of the four provinces we will visit, for a total of eight.

j. Data Collection Tools

Three sources of data collection instruments are available to the Evaluation Team:

Re-administering tools developed and tested by IDEA-NEW. Using the best and most appropriate tools previously developed by IDEA-NEW is the most methodologically sound approach to data collection because these tools have been pretested and are designed to fit into the format of the other DAI data we will use.

Re-administering tools developed and tested by other projects. Provided that major modifications are not needed, tools developed and tested by other projects offer a time-saving device because they do not need extensive pretesting.

Tools developed and tested by the Evaluation Team. These tools require extensive pretesting and their use should only be considered if no other suitable tested tools are discovered.

We are still gathering information and data gathering tools from DAI and elsewhere. For illustrative purposes, some samples of tools developed by the Evaluation Team are presented in Annex 2.

In addition to the tools we develop and administer ourselves, we are negotiating with IDEA-NEW to allow the Evaluation Team to insert some special questions in the 2014 annual survey, which will be ready in 3-4 weeks. This survey is being developed and administered by the RSI Consulting research group. The stratified sample will be 400-600 households, a far higher number than we could survey ourselves. This approach can be done at no cost to RSI or IDEA-NEW or to Checchi's budget for this evaluation.

k. Anticipated Challenges and Risks

1. While attempts to access all selected stakeholders will be made, due to the unstable security situation in Afghanistan, security may necessitate the exclusion of some site visits. To the extent possible, contingency site selections will be made in advance and the Evaluation Team will proceed there if the primary site is not accessible.

2. The geographical limitations presented by the SOW will limit the analysis of certain value chains and communities.
3. Limited resources will limit the amount of original data gathering by the Evaluation Team.
4. Limitations on the availability of historical raw data may limit mathematical and geospatial analyses.

I. Specific Activities and Timeline

Time Period	Specific Activities	Milestones
20 Feb 2015- 1 March 2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Document compilation and review 2. Meet with USAID and DAI 3. Develop work plan <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify potential interviews b. Select survey instrument / observation tool c. Secure access to existing datasets 4. Develop proposed interview questions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work plan approved 2. Key informant interviews scheduled for subsequent 3-4 weeks 3. Existing datasets available for secondary analysis
2-9 March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct initial interviews and FG in selected communities 2. Conduct initial field visits and interviews in Parwan to pretest methodology 3. Begin meta-analysis and cluster analysis of existing datasets 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete pilot data-gathering exercises 2. Final data collection instruments selected 3. Meta-analysis started 4. Geospatial analysis complete 5. Success pattern map developed 6. Interview communities selection begun 7. Interviewees along value chains selection begun
10-17 March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct field visits in Nangarhar 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviews and data collection in Jalalabad and Nangarhar districts completed 2. Data analysis started
18-19 March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare and deliver mid-term briefing to USAID 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefing delivered and feedback obtained
21-29 March	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Begin data collection and site visits in Balkh 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue analyses of existing data 2. Preliminary analyses of interviews 3. Completed field visits and interviews Balkh
30 March – 4 April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue/complete data collection and field visits in Parwan and Kabul (Previous Parwan visit was to conduct tool pre-testing) 2. Complete data gathering 3. Continue content analysis of Interviews and FG discussions 4. Begin descriptive analyses of direct observation 5. Prepare summary report on findings from analyses of existing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data gathering complete 2. Content analysis complete 3. Descriptive analyses complete

Time Period	Specific Activities	Milestones
	data sets	
5-6 April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finish draft report. 2. Final exit presentation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review preliminary findings with USAID
7-12 April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revise draft report based on comments from USAID 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit draft final report
12-15 April	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporate final comments provided by the USAID M&E team 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit final evaluation report and one-page briefer

ANNEX IV: BIBLIOGRAPHY OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

The following program documents and many others were provided by USAID.

Annual Reports

DAI, *IDEA-NEW Annual Report No. 1*, March 2, 2009 to September 30, 2009.

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DAI, *IDEA-NEW Annual Report No. 3*, October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2011.

DAI, *IDEA-NEW Annual Report No. 4*, October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012.

DAI, *IDEA-NEW Annual Report No. 5*, October 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013.

DAI, *IDEA-NEW Annual Report No. 6*, October 1, 2013 to September 30, 2014.

DAI, *IDEA-NEW Activity Plan No. 3*, October 1, 2010 to September 30, 2012.

DAI, *IDEA-NEW Activity Plan No. 5*, March 1, 2014 to February 28, 2015.

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Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc., *Third-Party Monitoring Report of IDEA-NEW*, September 2010.

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Timer Program Assessment, IDEA-NEW, December 2010.

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Value Chain Assessments

Flag International Afghanistan, *Value Chain Assessment of the Honey Value Chain in Northeastern Afghanistan*, March 31, 2013.

Flag International Afghanistan, *Value Chain Assessment: Oilseeds in the North*, March 20, 2013.

Flag International Afghanistan, *Value Chain Assessment: Karakul*, March 31, 2013.

Flag International Afghanistan, *Value Chain Assessment of the Poultry Sector in Northern Afghanistan*, August 18, 2013.

Flag International Afghanistan, *Value Chain Assessments for Selected Orchard Types in Northeastern Afghanistan*, July 5, 2013.

Flag International Afghanistan, *Value Chain Assessment for the Silk Industry in the Northeast*, March 20, 2013.

Flag International Afghanistan, *Value Chain Assessment for Vegetables in Northern Afghanistan*, August 12, 2013.

Flag International Afghanistan, *Viticulture Value Chain Assessment in Northern Afghanistan*, July 4, 2013.

Impact Assessment for Eastern Region Vegetable Input Program, January 2012.

RSI Consulting, *IDEA-NEW Impact Study: Vegetables*, January 2015.

RSI Consulting, *IDEA-NEW Orchard Program Report*, 2013

RSI Consulting, *IDEA-NEW Orchard Value Chain Assessment*, October 2014.

RSI Consulting, *IDEA-NEW Poultry Program Assessment*, September 2014.

Training Reports

Flag International Afghanistan, *Business Training Completion Report*, April 15, 2013.

Flag International Afghanistan, *Final Report: Training, BDS Manual, and Completion of Business Plans*, October 31, 2013.

PowerPoint Presentations:

IDEA-NEW Completed Infrastructure Projects, March 2009 – March 2014.

Mercy Corps, *Improved Approach to the Three Needs of Farmers*, October 2011.

Mercy Corps, *CHAMP and IDEA-NEW Planning Workshop*, April 2012.

ANNEX V: SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

No	Date	Organization	In-Depth Interviews Male	In-Depth Interviews Female	FGD Male	FGD Female	Title	Province
1	07-Mar-15	Women Vocational Training and Agriculture Services		Nazifa Uffyani			Director	Parwan
2	07-Mar-15	Meda	Zakai				Farmer	Parwan
3	07-Mar-15	Parwan Women Farm Services Center		Sawanaz Hashimi			Director	Parwan
4	10-Mar-15	Samarkhail Women Community		Dowran Bebe			Community leader	Nangarhar
5	10-Mar-15	Orchard Management			Amir Hamza		CDC members	Nangarhar
6	10-Mar-15	Orchard Management			Kamin		CDC members	Nangarhar
7	10-Mar-15	Orchard Management			Waseel		CDC members	Nangarhar
8	10-Mar-15	Orchard Management			Imam Jan		CDC members	Nangarhar
9	10-Mar-15	Orchard Management			Mohammad Gul		CDC members	Nangarhar
10	10-Mar-15	Orchard Management			Mohammad Ismail		CDC members	Nangarhar
11	12-Mar-15	Ekhkoli roh afza		Hanifa			Agribusiness	Nangarhar
12	12-Mar-15	Haji Zamarak Broiler Breeder Poultry Farm	Haji Zamarak				Farmer	Nangarhar
13	13-Mar-15	Commercial Production Farm			Nader		Farmer	Nangarhar
14	13-Mar-15	Commercial Production Farm			Baba Jan		Farmer	Nangarhar
15	13-Mar-15	Commercial Production Farm			Yousaf		Farmer	Nangarhar
16	13-Mar-15	Commercial Production Farm			Ahmad Wali		Farmer	Nangarhar
17	13-Mar-15	Commercial Production Farm	Ahmad Zaki				Farmer	Nangarhar
18	13-Mar-15	Malakano Kalay CDC, Kuz Kunar District	Malak Shah Wali				Head of the CDC	Nangarhar
19	13-Mar-15	Qala-e-Muslim CDC, Behsud District	Muslim				Member of CDC	Nangarhar
20	13-Mar-15	Nangarhar Nursery Grower Association			Mohammad Rahim Danish		Director of Assn.	Nangarhar
21	13-Mar-15	Nangarhar Nursery Grower Association			Rizwanullah		Director of Assn.	Nangarhar
22	14-Mar-15	Dry Fruit Processing Association	Alhaj Ajmal Rahmani				Director of Assn.	Nangarhar
23	14-Mar-15	Commercial Production Farm	Matiullah				Farmer	Nangarhar
24	14-Mar-15	A greenhouse		Wahida			Farmer	Nangarhar

25	14-Mar-15	A farm		Najiba			Farmer	Nangarhar
26	15-Mar-15	Momand Hadawal Poultry Comp. Ltd.	Dr. Zia ur Rahman				Director of Company	Nangarhar
27	15-Mar-15	Wahdat Afghan Non-Alcoholic Beverages	Dr. Ebadullah				Director of Company	Nangarhar
28	15-Mar-15	Nangarhar Improved Seeds Growing Association	Saidajan Abdiyani				Director of Assn.	Nangarhar
29	15-Mar-15	A commercial production farm	Haji Sharif				Farmer	Nangarhar
30	15-Mar-15	A commercial production farm			Noor Akbar		Farmers	Nangarhar
31	15-Mar-15	A commercial production farm			Lal Mohammad		Farmers	Nangarhar
32	15-Mar-15	A commercial production farm			Samiullah		Farmers	Nangarhar
33	15-Mar-15	A commercial production farm			Ghulam Nabi		Farmers	Nangarhar
34	15-Mar-15	A commercial production farm	Ajmal				Farmer	Nangarhar
35	15-Mar-15	A greenhouse		Hamida			Farmer	Nangarhar
36	15-Mar-15	A greenhouse		Bass jan			Farmer	Nangarhar
37	16-Mar-15	Rodat Production Agribusiness Company		Moheena (Koko)			Agribusiness	Nangarhar
38	16-Mar-15	Nangarhar Women Business Center		Jamila Sadat			Director	Nangarhar
39	16-Mar-15	Season Honey Processing & Packaging Comp. Ltd.	Ashoqullah				Deputy Director of Company	Mazar-e Sharif
40	16-Mar-15	Nangarhar Bee Keepers Association	Riaz Mohammad				Director of Assn.	
41	16-Mar-15	A commercial production farm	Zmaray				Farmer	Nangarhar
42	16-Mar-15	A commercial production farm			Rahmatullah		Farmer	Nangarhar
43	16-Mar-15	A commercial production farm			Mohammad Zar		Farmer	Nangarhar
44	16-Mar-15	A commercial production farm			Mohammad Nader		Farmer	Nangarhar
45	16-Mar-15	A commercial production farm			Sharifullah		Farmer	Nangarhar
46	23-Mar-15	DAIL			Katib Shams		Director	Mazar-e Sharif
47	23-Mar-15	DAIL			Parwiz Fakor		Extention manager	Mazar-e Sharif
48	23-Mar-15	Balkh Sabz Cooperative	Gul Ahmad				Director	Mazar-e Sharif

49	23-Mar-15	DAIL			Eidi Mohammad Abdi		Cooperatives Manager	Mazar-e Sharif
50	23-Mar-15	DAIL			Assadullah Setigh		Agricultural Affairs Manager	Mazar-e Sharif
51	23-Mar-15	Karwan Sabz Agriculture & Greening Company			Hamidullah		Director	Mazar-e Sharif
52	23-Mar-15	Umul Belad Balkh Agriculture & Greening Farm			Mohammad Sharif		Director	Mazar-e Sharif
53	24-Mar-15	A cooperative	Abdul Fatah				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
54	25-Mar-15	Karakul Institute	Din Mohhammad				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
55	25-Mar-15	Tajzada Silk Production Company	Rasoul Tajzada				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
56	25-Mar-15	Chehel Dukhtaran Cooperative	Haji Niaz Mohammad				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
57	25-Mar-15	Kernail Malak Cooperative	Haji Mohammad				Member of Cooperative	Mazar-e Sharif
58	25-Mar-15	A livestock supported activity	Dr. Barat				Veterinarian	Mazar-e Sharif
59	25-Mar-15	A seed growing company	Eng. Fazal Ahmad Wasiq				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
60	25-Mar-15	Development Credit Authority	Dr. Zai Furmulli				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
61	26-Mar-15	Head of Takhtapul CDC	Mohammad Yaqoub				Head of CDC	Mazar-e Sharif
62	27-Mar-15	A farm, Yakatut village	Haji Habibullah				Farmer	Mazar-e Sharif
63	27-Mar-15	Head of Yakatut CDC	Gulab Shah				Head of CDC	Mazar-e Sharif
64	27-Mar-15	A farm, Negari village	Haji Ghani				Farmer	Mazar-e Sharif
65	28-Mar-15	Muzhda Poultry	Bashir Ahmad Muzhda				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
66	28-Mar-15	Jamshid Ramin Trading Ltd.	Eng Faizullah				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
67	28-Mar-15	Baba Kohna CDC	Raz Mohammad				Head of CDC	Mazar-e Sharif
68	28-Mar-15	A farm, Haji Zalmai, Baba Kohna village	Zalmai				Farmer	Mazar-e Sharif

69	28-Mar-15	A farm		Zahra			Farmer	Mazar-e Sharif
70	29-Mar-15	Nangarhar Agriculture Training Center	Ahamd Zaki				Director	Nangarhar
71	29-Mar-15	DAIL, Jalalabad	Hamidullah Nazir				Director	Nangarhar
72	29-Mar-15	A silk processing company		Rabai Maryam			Director	Mazar-e Sharif
73	29-Mar-15	A karakul processing company	Mohammad Akram				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
74	30-Mar-15	Hamisha Bahar Agro Services Company			Rohullah		Director	Nangarhar
75	30-Mar-15	Bakhtar Afghan Agro Services Company			Pervaiz Takal		Director	Nangarhar
76	30-Mar-15	Falak Niaz Barakzai Agro Services Company			Ajmal		Director	Nangarhar
77	30-Mar-15	Wajid Zaman Agriculture Company			Mir Zaman		Director	Nangarhar
78	30-Mar-15	Kuz Kunar Honey Processing Association				Robina Salarzai	Board Member	Nangarhar
79	30-Mar-15	Kuz Kunar Honey Processing Association				Spogmai	Board Member	Nangarhar
80	30-Mar-15	Kuz Kunar Honey Processing Association				Nasima	Board Member	Nangarhar
81	30-Mar-15	Bihsud Honey Association				Saliha Sayedi	Board Member	Nangarhar
82	31-Mar-15	A commercial production farm			Hazar Gul		Farmer	Nangarhar
83	31-Mar-15	A commercial production farm			Qayum Jan		Farmer	Nangarhar
84	31-Mar-15	A commercial production farm			Hazrat Nabi		Farmer	Nangarhar
85	31-Mar-15	Rahmatullah Greenhouse			Rahmatullah		Farmer	Nangarhar
86	31-Mar-15	Waheeda Greenhouse			Muslim		Farmer	Nangarhar
87	31-Mar-15	A commercial production farm			Gul Rahman		Farmer	Nangarhar
88	31-Mar-15	Bas Jana Greenhouse			Attaullah		Farmer	Nangarhar
89	31-Mar-15	Afghan Women Vegetables Processing Association	Usman Safi				Director	Nangarhar
90	01-Apr-15	Haji Zamarak Broiler Breeder Poultry Farm			Haji Zamarak		Director	Nangarhar
91	01-Apr-15	Women Home -Based Layer Poultry Farm			Sadat		Family Head	Nangarhar
92	01-Apr-15	Women Home-Based Layer Poultry Farm			Faridullah		Family Head	Nangarhar

93	01-Apr-15	Spin Ghar Poultry Association			Amir Mohammad Toryalai		Director	Nangarhar
94	01-Apr-15	Spin Ghar Poultry Association			Fazal Mohammad		Deputy Director	Nangarhar
95	01-Apr-15	Ekhwad Bilal Poultry Company			Bismillah		Deputy Director	Nangarhar
96	01-Apr-15	Hidayat Barakat Hetchery and Breeding Company			Ehsanullah		Director	Nangarhar
97	01-Apr-15	Lemar Afghan Poultry Company			Dr. Ehsanullah		Director	Nangarhar
98	02-Apr-15	Parwan Poultry Farm	Dr. Abdul Wahid				Farmer	Parwan
99	02-Apr-15	Said Khel Nursery Growers Association	Haji Abdul Manan				Deputy Director	Nangarhar
100	02-Apr-15	Honeybee cooperative		Freeba Ahmadi			Director	Parwan
101	04-Apr-15	Afghanistan Social, Poultry, Animal and Farmers Assciation	Maroof Zafar				Director of Assn.	Parwan
102	26-Mar-15	Chashma Safa Seed Company, Balkh	Zahir Hashimi				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
103	26-Mar-15	Dry Fruits Processing Association, Balkh	Ahmad Javid				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
104	26-Mar-15	Etifaq Oil Processing Cooperative, Balkh			Fazlu Din		Director and Deputy Director	Mazar-e Sharif
105	26-Mar-15	Etifaq Oil Processing Cooperative, Balkh			Khalid		Director and Deputy Director	Mazar-e Sharif
106	25-Mar-15	Kurwad Sabz Agricultural Company			Eng. Ezatullah Sidiqi		Employee	Mazar-e Sharif
107	25-Mar-15	Sher Agha Seed Company			Shah Mohammad			Mazar-e Sharif
108	23-Mar-15	Karwan Sabz Agricultural Company	Hamidullah				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
109	23-Mar-15	Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Balkh			Eid Mohammad		Cooperative Manager (Retired)	Mazar-e Sharif
110	23-Mar-15	Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Balkh			Assadullah Setigh		Agricultural Affairs Director and Extension Manager	Mazar-e Sharif
111	23-Mar-15	Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Balkh			Mohammad Hassain		Agricultural Affairs Director and Extension Manager	Mazar-e Sharif

112	24-Mar-15	Farmer Cooperative	Haji Abdul Wakil				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
113	25-Mar-15	Baba Yadgar Village	Mohammad Zahir				Farmer	Mazar-e Sharif
114	25-Mar-15	Cooperative Chagdak Nahri Shahi	Haji Ahmad Shah				Director	Mazar-e Sharif
115	25-Mar-15	Takhta Pul Village	Noor Ahmad				Wheat Farmer	Mazar-e Sharif
116	26-Mar-15	Balkh University	Abdul Sami				Lecturer	Mazar-e Sharif

ANNEX VI: OVERVIEW OF QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The quantitative analysis consisted of:

- A synthesis of existing statistical data in RSI survey reports.¹⁶
- The 2014 Endline Survey included remote sensing data on cropping area, for project and non-project households, for 25 beneficiary sites and 25 non-beneficiary sites.
- An analysis of responses to five questions inserted, at the request of the consultants, into a just-completed RSI survey of farm households in April 2015.

Synthesis of Existing Statistical Data

This section presents the statistical correlations between the project interventions, such as supplying inputs to improve diversification and trainings to farmers, on indicators of outcomes achievement such as increases in: agricultural household incomes; agriculture yield and/or production and/or sales.

a. Household Income Survey 2012

In FY 2012, RSI Consulting conducted a household survey that collected information on households' annual sales, production and income information from IDEA-NEW program participants. The survey used a sample of 1,200 participants stratified by province and program, over a total of 15 provinces and three implementing partners. Indicative results are as follows:

- *Eastern Region:* IDEA-NEW programs supported households mainly in agriculture, livestock, and enterprises development. Out of the reported household income per year, IDEA-NEW support, on average, resulted in a net contribution of Afs 68,384 (36%, \$1,367) to the household's income.
- *Northeastern Region:* IDEA-NEW programs supported households mainly in vegetable programs, livestock, cash for work, and other programs such as enterprise development. Out of the reported household income per year, IDEA-NEW support on average enabled farmers in the Northern Region to increase their annual household income by Afs 29,548 (18%, \$530).
- *North/Central Region:* IDEA-NEW programs supported farmers mainly in livestock, cereal crops, fruits and orchards and others such as enterprises development. Out of the reported household income per year, IDEA-NEW support on average contributed to the household's income of these farmers by 68% (Afs 91,003).

¹⁶ RSI Consulting. (2012) *Analysis of Annual Household Incomes of IDEA-NEW's Program Participants—FY 2012* Unpublished Research Kabul.

RSI Consulting. (2013) *IDEA NEW: Orchard Program Report* USAID

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RSI Consulting. (2014) *IDEA NEW: Orchard Value Chain Assessment*. USAID

RSI Consulting. (2014) *IDEA NEW: Impact Study: Vegetables*. USAID

RSI Consulting (2014) *IDEA NEW: Endline Household Survey Report*. USAID

RSI Consulting (2015). *IDEA NEW: Impact Study: Vegetables*. USAID

RSI Consulting (2015). *IDEA NEW: ENDLINE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY REPORT*. USAID

The proportions of income attributable to IDEA-NEW can therefore be considered an increase in household income that would not be realized without IDEA-NEW.

The survey measured all forms of project interventions (such as cash-for-work and micro-enterprise support), not just provision of agricultural inputs and training for fruits, orchards, and livestock. Therefore, the improvements to income cannot be considered the result only of improved agricultural practices. More direct measures of project intervention on agricultural outcomes can be elicited from the crop and livestock impact studies conducted by RSI (see below).

b. Vegetable Impact Study 2014

RSI Consulting surveyed 350 vegetable farmers and 50 input suppliers in Kunar, Laghman, and Nangarhar provinces in eastern Afghanistan to evaluate the impact of the IDEA-NEW vegetable programming.

Farmers

- *Diversification:* Farmers receiving IDEA-NEW support grew, on average, four types of vegetable crops per year.
- *Production:* Each additional crop type that farmers harvested added about 1,473 kg to the household's annual production.
- Interestingly, receiving chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides from IDEA-NEW or linked suppliers did not correspond with higher production levels. In all cases, average yields were higher without those agrochemicals than with. This may be because the effect of input provision could be lagged.

Input Suppliers

- Substantial improvements in annual sales for IDEA-NEW linked input suppliers were reported.
- Relatively low rates of IDEA-NEW assistance, but high satisfaction rates were observed for shopkeepers.

The impact of IDEA-NEW project interventions on diversification and income improvement for farmer beneficiaries is indirectly supported by RSI's May 2014 endline survey for IDEA NEW.

c. Endline Survey 2014

This report presents the findings of a household endline survey conducted in IDEA-NEW areas of operation after the fall harvest, in late 2013/early 2014. A group of beneficiaries in each region was compared to a similar group of non-beneficiaries. Households were chosen through cluster sampling method at the village level. Households from 300 non-beneficiary and 300 beneficiary communities were sampled in each province, resulting in representative results at the regional level. The final sample in 12 provinces was 2,526.

Income Contribution

Overall, the IDEA-NEW program appears to have been most effective at providing small but significant improvements in annual incomes for households already having a positive cash income. Beneficiary households enjoyed a slightly higher average and median income

overall, and were less likely to have no cash income at all. While modest, the differences were consistent and statistically significant ($p=.05$), indicating a measureable positive effect on household income from the IDEA-NEW program. The findings represent a consistent positive effect across the entire survey sample.

As a tool for reducing household poverty, program benefits were most effective in the Eastern region. In other regions, beneficiary households were as likely to have no cash income as non-beneficiary households. Taking some regional variations into account, the program overall had a net positive effect on income and farming activity.

The average total incomes for beneficiaries were Afs 173,897, with a median income of Afs 87,500. Non-beneficiaries averaged Afs 165,593, with a median income of Afs 62,500. Regionally, the differences were more pronounced, with beneficiary incomes in the East (Afs 174,382) being higher than non-beneficiaries (Afs 135,336). Beneficiaries in the North (Afs 176,624) had slightly higher average incomes than non-beneficiaries (Afs 172,947). In the Northeast, non-beneficiaries (Afs 190,338) had higher incomes than beneficiary counterparts (Afs 169,894), largely due to a number of wealthy households surveyed in the sample.

Diversification

Remote sensing data analysis was conducted for a total of 25 beneficiary sites and 25 non-beneficiary sites. At the regional level, therefore, the findings are not considered statistically significant across all program areas, but they do give accurate, exact data of specific communities in specific areas. Remote sensing data corroborated the household survey findings in terms of crop diversity and planting levels.

- Most communities over time showed an improvement/increase in crop diversification, but IDEA-NEW communities generally reflect more diversification than non-beneficiary communities.
- Broadly speaking, wheat production decreased across communities by about the same amount, replaced by orchards, vineyards, and “other” high-value crops. Overall, the area cultivated increased for beneficiary sites. On the other hand, bare land increased to a greater extent for non-beneficiary communities. Poppy planting, seen only in a few communities in the Eastern region, increased more in non-beneficiary than beneficiary communities.

Production

Importantly, vegetable production showed consistently improved yields for beneficiary households on which IDEA-NEW focused, including tomatoes, onions, “other” (usually mung bean and cucumber), and cauliflower.

Beneficiaries were more likely to plant vegetable crops and more likely to plant the most profitable crops than non-beneficiary households. Beneficiaries also saw higher yields and incomes per *jerib*. Both of these reflect the results of high-quality inputs and cultivation techniques learned from training. Beneficiaries were also more likely to sell at least part of their vegetable crop, suggesting that more of them had moved beyond direct subsistence, another objective of IDEA-NEW interventions.

d. Orchard Studies 2013, 2014

The studies surveyed orchard farmers supported by IDEA-NEW in Kunar, Laghman, and Nangarhar provinces of northeastern Afghanistan in 2013 and 2014.

In the 2013 survey, RSI conducted a correlation analysis between sales/production and project interventions. Some indicative results are:

- The number of extension visits correlates positively with production. In most cases, the frequently-visited farms produced significantly more crops than the overall population, and in only one case did they produce less than the overall average.
- Listening to the project-sponsored *Karkila Aw Maldari* radio show also had a positive effect on production.

No other project intervention had statistically significant effect on sales and production outcome indicators.

The observed positive relationship between field visits and production observed in 2013 was not repeated in 2014. In 2014, there were weak correlations between project interventions and other outcomes such as sales and profits.

These results may be due to the relatively recent interventions of the project with orchard farmers.

e. Poultry Assessment 2014

Using the information provided by IDEA-NEW, RSI Consulting was able to contact and visit 94 farms that had received physical inputs and training over the course of the program. Many of the correlations with outcomes had only a tangential relationship to IDEA NEW interventions. Some indicative results are:

- Year of establishment correlated with production and sales. Older, more-established farms sold higher volumes and received higher profits, on average, than farms established within the last two years.
- Similarly, farms that had produced poultry prior to receiving IDEA-NEW assistance produced at higher levels than farms that began with assistance from IDEA-NEW program.
- Reported access to veterinary care was one of the strongest indicators of success. Farms that reported access to and use of veterinary care produced 1,100 more birds, on average, than farms without access, and earned almost Afs 200,000 more per cycle. However, mortality rates were comparable between farms with and without veterinary care.

New Data from Survey of Farm Households 2015

The survey polled 650 people, 314 of whom had participated in some type of agricultural production activity as part of IDEA-NEW's value chain approach to link input suppliers with farmers.

Value Chain Interventions

Some indicative results include the following: 45% of respondents exhibited some kind of engagement with an input supplier in the form of field day attendance, purchase of goods, or a change in farm behavior.

There are also indications of farmer behavior 'higher up' the value chain. The figure below depicts responses to questions regarding linkages.

Figure 2: Farmers' Engagement with Input Supplier

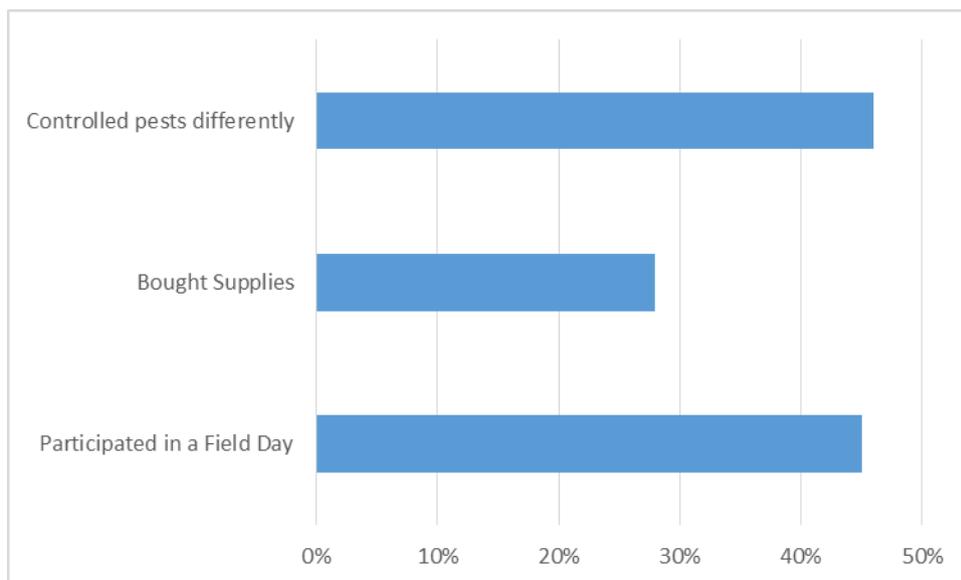
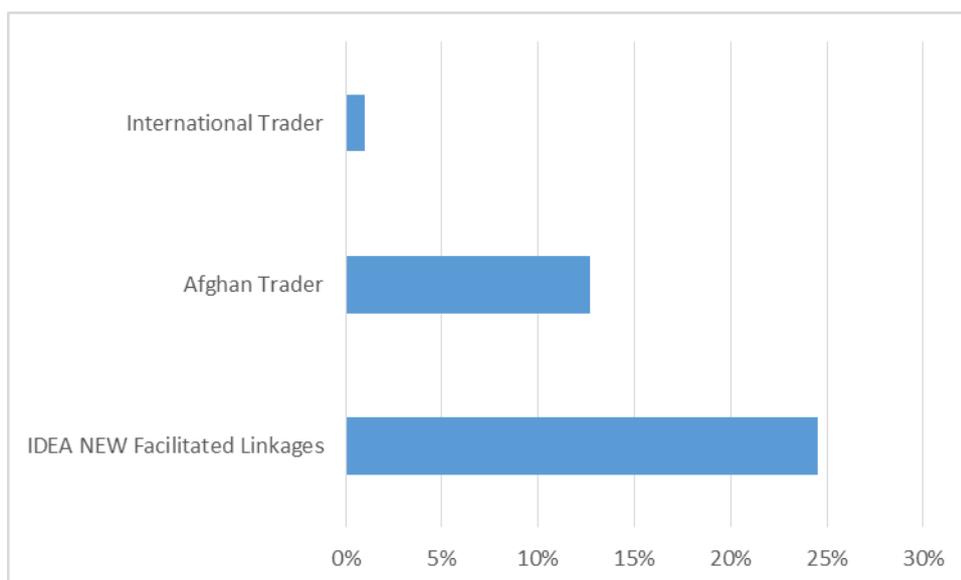


Figure 3: Linkage-Related Activities Mentioned by Farmers

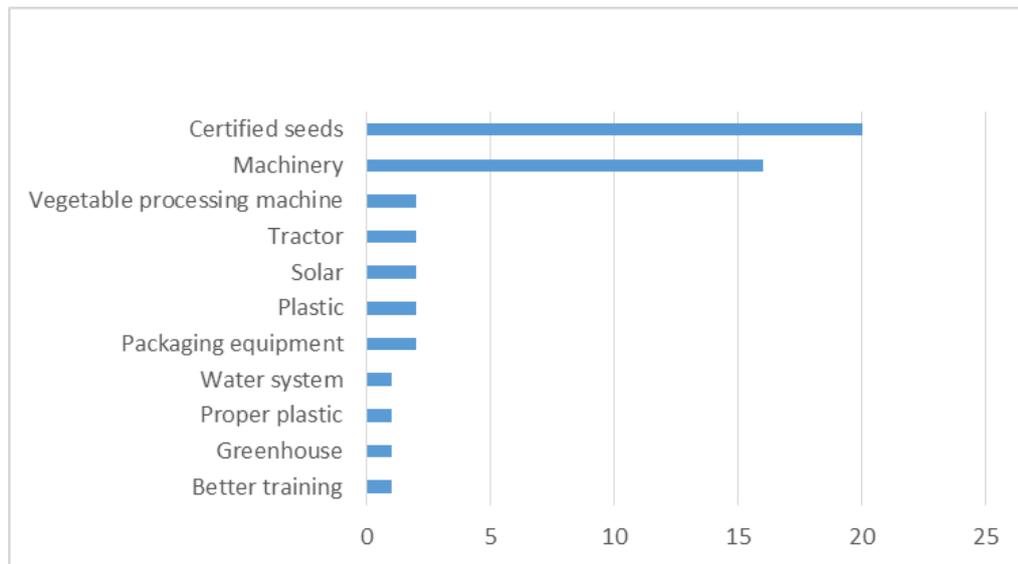


Farmer respondents, despite the developing linkages to the value chain, still faced barriers to market access. Seventy-seven percent of respondents still report hurdles that limit them from taking products to market. Forty-six percent believe that market prices are too low.

Input Supply Gaps

The following graph shows the number of farmers mentioning input supplies that they feel are important for production but they cannot source. The importance of certified seed for production is supported by the analysis.

Figure 4: Numbers of Farmers Mentioning Input Supplies They Cannot Source



Conclusion for the Quantitative Analysis

The analysis demonstrates that project interventions did achieve a positive change in agricultural livelihoods. There is compelling evidence that IDEA-NEW beneficiary households are more likely to diversify than non-beneficiary households, and to have higher rates of production and household income.

As can be seen from discussion above, the results are mixed for specific sectors. The strongest indication that project interventions made a difference on agricultural outcomes is with vegetables crops. The relationship between project interventions and outcomes in the livestock and orchard sector is weaker. This may be due to the lagged effect of program interventions in livestock and orchards.

The overall results of the RSI studies indicated that value chains were strengthened by various project interventions. In the vegetable impact assessment, RSI reports the growth in local input supply businesses appeared strong and did not appear to be reliant on the direct assistance from IDEA-NEW staff. RSI concluded strong value chain growth resulted from farm-level improvements. Similarly, significant production increases correlated with the use of fertilizers provided by IDEA-NEW linked input suppliers.

ANNEX VII: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The following are draft data-gathering tools that have been developed by the Evaluation Team. These tools will be reviewed and modified by the team prior to the commencement of field testing in Parwan on March 7-9. Key Informant Interviews will begin the week of March 2.

Pre-testing the data collection tools designed by the Evaluation Team was conducted in Parwan. The team visited institutions with knowledge of project activities including the DAIL, Chamber of Commerce, Department of Women's Affairs, and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). These informants were able to advise the team of the beneficiaries they could visit in safe project locations, and to provide contact details for the community leaders, women's organizations, agribusiness entrepreneurs, and Apex organizations. This provided a second sampling process independent of relying on guidance from IDEA-NEW, which could, in theory, be a source of bias in choice of beneficiaries. We envisage a similar process will be adopted in the study provinces once the main field work begins. Apex beneficiaries in study locations will be visited as a priority because, in addition to providing their own information, they will be able to give insights into other beneficiaries or sites that might be interesting. The table provided in the body of the work plan provides an indication of the number of beneficiaries to be selected during the field work.

Structured Key Informant Interviews

These questions will be asked of Key Informants in face-to-face or telephone interviews. The questionnaire has been developed particularly for IP international and senior local staff, but will also be used for people who have had important relationships with the project.

General Information

Name of the interviewer:

Date:

Time:

Respondent Name	Position	Section/Department

Questions

1. I would like to start with your history with the IDEA-NEW project. Please tell me a bit about your experience with the project. How long were you with IDEA-NEW and what was your role?
2. What contact with the project have you had since that time?
3. Reflect on your experience with the IDEA-NEW and its overall goals and think of a peak experience or a time when you felt exceptionally energized about the project. Tell me about that time.
4. Generally speaking, what parts of the IDEA-NEW project do you feel have gone especially well?

5. Thinking about the project and your role in project implementation, what was especially challenging?
6. Do you think that the implementation teams in the other regions or at a different point in the life of the project faced the same or different challenges?
7. Thinking specifically about the implementation of the project, what do you think has gone especially well?
8. Let's focus on the production side of the project for a minute. I am thinking here about technical assistance and support to farmers.
9. From where you sit, what project areas do you feel has had the greatest impact? Why?
10. From where you sit, what project areas have been most disappointing in terms of impact? Why do you think the results have been disappointing thus far?
11. Thinking about Afghanistan's unique context, what external factors do you think are influencing project implementation/results?
12. I would like to hear what you think sustainability looks like for this project. How would you define success in terms of project sustainability?
13. What do feel needs to be done to increase the chances of project sustainability?
14. If you had been granted ONE wish to improve the IDEA-NEW project, what would it have been?
15. Is there anything else that you want to tell me but didn't because I didn't ask the right question? Any other comments/insights/questions you would like to share?
16. Just before we finish the interview, I would like to know what documents or resources you recommend that would be useful to the evaluation team as we continue our data collection. Are there some people you can recommend that we talk to?

Semi-Structured Interview for Apex Organizations

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to capture information on your perceptions of the IDEA-NEW project interventions. The information will be used by IDEA-NEW to evaluate what went well and what went less well, and to make improvements. There is no right or wrong answers; we are just interested in your honest opinion.

General Information

Name of the interviewer:
Name of organization:
Number of members in organization:
Year organization started operating:
Type of members supported:

Date: __/__/__

Respondent Name	Position	Section/Department

Questions

1. Have any of your members been beneficiaries of the IDEA-NEW project activities?
... If yes, what activities are you aware of that they have participated in?
4. Can you provide us with the contact information for members of your organization who have participated in IDEA-NEW activities?
... If yes, which ones would be useful for us to contact to learn how they worked with and benefited from the project?
5. What type of support does IDEA-NEW provide your organization, and with which groups of members?
Do Not Prompt e.g. training and skills development, business grants, networking with other organizations or businesses, market information, and technical information such as good production practices,
6. What has been the result of working with IDEA-NEW in the activities you have described?
For example: What were the benefits, problems, and how could the activities have been improved?
7. For the product(s) produced and sold by your members, what has been the trend in production since you, or your members, started to work with IDEA-NEW?
 - a. Has production increased?
 - b. If so, by how much?
 - c. Has there been any diversification into new products?
 - d. Have there been improvements to value added packaging or processing?
 - e. Has there been diversification into new markets?
8. How has IDEA-NEW supported your organization in improving women's role in leadership and decision-making? Can you give any examples?
9. Which IDEA-NEW activities will you continue in future?
10. Do you think that your members' businesses are more viable and profitable as a result of working with IDEA-NEW? If so, why?
11. Has your membership increased as a result of your work with IDEA-NEW?

12. Are you aware of any capacity building that IDEA-NEW has undertaken with your members? If yes, what has this been and how effective was it?

Structured Interview with Community Groups

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to capture information on your perceptions about the project interventions. The information will be used by IDEA-NEW to evaluate what went well and what went less well, and to make improvements. There are no right or wrong answers; we are just interested in your honest opinion.

Note: The IDEA-NEW implementation staff should **not** attend this meeting.

A. General Information

Name of the Interviewer:

Date: __/__/__

District:

Village:

No.	Name	Position (if any)	Village
1			
2			
3			

Note: check that all the participants are IDEA-NEW beneficiaries

B. Questions

1. When did you start working with IDEA-NEW?
2. How was the project introduced to the community by IDEA-NEW (for example, through the DAIL extension staff, the CDC, etc.)?
 - a. Was this the most appropriate way to introduce the project?
3. What activities were implemented (infrastructure, agricultural production, marketing, etc.)?
4. How were the activities selected?
 - a. Did the community take part in the activity selection?
 - b. Were the activities that were finally selected the ones you wanted?
5. How were beneficiaries selected for the activities?
 - a. Was the community involved in the selection of beneficiaries?
 - b. What were the criteria for selecting beneficiaries?
 - c. Were women and disadvantaged groups included?
 - d. Did certain community groups benefit more than others?
6. How were the activities managed by community members?
 - a. Was there an elected committee?

- b. Did the community participate in the management, as the activities progressed?
 - i. If yes, how?
 - c. What were the coordination arrangements between IDEA-NEW and the community? (For example, did IDEA-NEW involve the DAIL and other groups?)
 - d. Was the coordination effective?
 - e. Did anything change as a result of community feedback and coordination?
7. Was the community involved in monitoring the progress of activities?
- a. If so, how?
 - b. Was DAIL involved in this monitoring?
8. What were the main benefits achieved by the project activities?
- a. Did these benefits meet your expectations?
 - b. Were you satisfied with the results?
 - c. What could have been improved?
9. Was there a community financial, labor, or other form of contribution, to the activities?
- a. If yes, what was this, and was it appropriate?
10. Were there any problems with activity implementation?
- a. If yes, what were they?
 - b. What were the causes of the problems?
 - c. How could they have been avoided?
11. Do you have any other comments about how the community worked with IDEA-NEW, how effective the activities were, or how the project was implemented, that we have not asked about?

Agribusiness Structured Interview

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to capture information on your perceptions of the IDEA-NEW project interventions. The information will be used by IDEA-NEW to evaluate what went well and what went less well, and to make improvements. There are no right or wrong answers; we are just interested in your honest opinion.

General Information

Name of the interviewer:

Date: __/__/__

Name of business:

Years in this business:

Respondent Name	Position	Section/Department

Technical Information

A. Working with IDEA-NEW

1. Why did you apply to work with IDEA-NEW?
2. Did you receive a grant or a loan from IDEA-NEW as part of your project activities?
3. Was the amount of funding you requested what you actually received?
4. Were you able to fund your agreed share of the project investment?
5. Please describe what you have done with IDEA-NEW assistance.
 - a. Procurement of assets (e.g. vehicles, equipment purchase)
 - b. Technical advice
 - c. Marketing campaigns
 - d. Exposure visits (e.g., national or international)
 - e. Other?
6. Did the IDEA-NEW support address your priorities, and how effective was the implementation?
7. Which of your priorities did the IDEA-NEW activities not address?
8. How efficient would you say the project has been to work with? Have there been delays, misinformation, or mistakes?
9. If you were to undertake new activities with IDEA-NEW, what would they be?
10. Would you change the way in which these new activities would be implemented compared to your previous experience with IDEA-NEW?

B. Production

1. What product lines do you produce?
2. Has your turnover increased with IDEA-NEW activities?
 - a. If not, why not?
 - b. If your turnover has increased, how have the IDEA-NEW interventions contributed to this increase?
3. What are the problems you face increasing your turnover?
4. Which product lines offer the best future prospects for expansion? Which would be your priority?
5. Are there any problems in achieving your product quality objectives?

C. Marketing

1. How about the prices for your products? Are they about right? Do you see prices changing in the near future?

2. What are the current prices for these products?
3. Are your products competitive compared to similar products in the market (compare prices, quality. etc.)?
4. Who is your main competition? Is this from imported products or from domestic competitors?
5. Who are your main domestic competitors?
6. How would you describe the profitability of your business: (*Hint: highly profitable, somewhat profitable, a break-even situation, loss making*)

D. Impact

1. If you had not participated with IDEA-NEW project, what would your situation have been now? The same as before, or would you have done some of the activities with your own resources?
2. Have you employed any additional labor as a result of the IDEA-NEW project activities? If yes, about how many people and in what types of jobs?
3. Has the IDEA-NEW activities helped you improve your profitability?
4. Has anything else changed as a result of the IDEA-NEW activities that you would describe as a benefit?

E. Training

1. Did you receive any training?
2. What was the training?
3. Was the training effective?
4. What was the most valuable part of the training?
5. How could the training be improved?
6. How have you implemented what you learned at the training?

F. Sustainability

1. In five years' time, will your business likely be about the same as now, or do you expect further expansion?
2. What threats does your business face?
3. Are you planning any new investments? If so, what? And in partnership with whom?

4. Do you currently have the capital required to invest in new facilities to expand? If not, how would raise the capital?

G. Environmental

1. Do you have any environmental concerns with your production facility, such as discharged effluent or other factors?
2. Are there any environmental compliance standards that you must meet?
3. Do you have any other comments about things that we have not asked, but should have asked?

Farmer Semi-Structured Interview

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to capture information on your perceptions about the project interventions. The information will be used by IDEA-NEW to evaluate what went well and what went less well, and to make improvements. There is no right or wrong answers; we are just interested in your honest opinion.

Note: The IDEA-NEW implementation staff should **not** attend this meeting.

A. General Information

Name of the Interviewer:

Date: __/__/__

District:

Group Name:

Write down the names of the farmers at the meeting

No.	Farmer Name	Village
1		
2		
3		

Note: check that all the participants are IDEA-NEW beneficiaries

B. Working with IDEA-NEW

1. When did you first start working with IDEA-NEW?
2. Did farmers participating in IDEA-NEW project activities have to meet any selection criteria, or could anyone participate?
 - a. If yes, what were the criteria?
3. Did the participating farmers actually meet the criteria?
 - a. If not, why not? And did this create any problems?
4. Since you started working with IDEA-NEW, what activities have you been involved in?

- a. Which of these activities were of the most benefit, and why?

C. Infrastructure

5. Did IDEA-NEW build infrastructure (such as roads, bridges, storage, karez maintenance, etc...)?
 - a. Can you describe the infrastructure? (Type, size, cost, purpose...)
 - b. How did the community contribute to the construction and management?
 - c. What did IDEA-NEW contribute?
 - b. Did it meet the expectations of the community?
 - c. What were the benefits?
 - d. Were there any problems?

D. Farm Production

6. Did IDEA-NEW provide farm inputs for growing crops, such as seeds, fertilizer, or agricultural chemicals?
... If yes,
 - a. What were the inputs provided?
 - b. Did they have to be paid for?
 - c. For what crops were the inputs used?
 - d. Were the inputs received on time?
 - e. Were there any problems (such as poor quality seeds or fertilizer, safety issues with using chemicals)?
 - f. What were the benefits?
7. Did IDEA-NEW provide farm inputs for raising livestock, such as forage seeds, vaccinations, materials for animal housing, etc...?
... If yes,
 - a. What were the inputs provided?
 - b. Did they have to be paid for?
 - c. For what livestock enterprises were the inputs used?
 - d. Were the inputs received on time?
 - e. Were there any problems (such as poor quality forage seeds, vaccination failure, etc.)?
 - f. What were the benefits?

E. Machinery

8. Did IDEA-NEW provide any agricultural machinery or equipment?
.... If yes,
 - a. What type of equipment?
 - b. Did the community contribute to the cost of the equipment?
 - c. How was it managed – by the community or by private individuals?
 - d. How was it used?
 - e. Was it received on time?
 - f. Was the equipment appropriate?
 - g. Were there any problems maintaining this machinery or equipment?
 - h. When it is old and worn out, will you replace it?

F. Credit and Grants

9. Did you receive any credit or grants from IDEA-NEW?
... If yes,
- a. What type of credit or grant? (Grant, loan – length of term & interest rate)
 - b. Did you have to make your own financial contribution?
 - c. How much money was provided?
 - d. For what purpose was it used?
 - e. To which members of the community?
 - f. Are there any repayment commitments?
 - g. Were the funds provided on time?
 - h. Have you experienced any compliance or other problems?

G. Training

10. Have you received any training from IDEA-NEW?
... If yes,
- a. What was the training?
 - b. Did it provide the skills you needed?
 - c. How have you applied the training?
 - d. Were there any problems with the training?
 - e. How could the training have been improved? (e.g. practical versus theoretical training)
 - f. What other training do you need?

H. Marketing

11. Have you received any marketing assistance from IDEA-NEW?
.... If yes,
- a. What type of assistance was this?
 - b. What sort of information was provided and for what crop and livestock enterprises?
 - c. How was this information provided?
 - d. Were there any gaps or inaccuracies in the information?
 - e. Did IDEA-NEW link you to market traders to help you sell your products?
 - f. Did you experience any improvement in prices as a result of this marketing assistance?
 - g. Did the information encourage you to improve your product quality?
 - h. Did the market information enable you to market different types of products?
12. Have you received any information by SMS to help you with your farm activities?
... If yes,
- a. What sort of information?
 - b. How did it help you?
 - c. Were there any problems receiving the SMS messages?
 - d. Was there any problem with the technical content of the messages?
 - e. What other information could you get from SMS messages that you do not get now?
13. Have IDEA-NEW activities resulted in higher incomes and more money in your pocket?
If yes, what was the main reason that you have more income?

I. Processing and Storage

- 14. Has IDEA-NEW assisted you with any on-farm processing or storage?
... If yes
 - a. What type of processing or storage, and for what crops?
 - b. How has this helped you? (e.g., added value to farm products, extended the selling season, reduced losses, diversified farm products, etc.)
 - c. Did you experience any problems with the processing or storage?
 - d. Did you receive adequate training in the skills needed?
 - e. What other opportunities are there for on-farm processing or storage?

J. Employment

- 15. Has the IDEA-NEW project created more employment for family members on the farm?
 - a. If yes, has this resulted in these family members having more income of their own to spend or save?
- 16. Have you employed any more labor for wages as a result of the IDEA-NEW activities?
 - a. If yes, is this permanent labor (employed for wages) or seasonal labor (employed for wages)?
 - b. If for seasonal labor, for what activities?
 - i. List of seasonal activities:
 - 1. _____
 - 2. _____
 - 3. _____
 - 4. _____
 - 5. _____
 - 6. _____

K. Apex Organization

- 17. Did IDEA-NEW help you to form any farmer groups to assist with input supply, marketing or any other activity?
... If yes,
 - a. What support did IDEA-NEW provide?
 - b. How does this group, or organization, help you in your farm activities?
 - c. Are the representatives elected by the community?
 - d. How effective is this group, and do you think it will still be around in 5 years' time?
 - e. What else could this group do to help you be more successful in farming?

L. Sustainability

- 18. Will you be able to continue with the activities that you worked on with IDEA-NEW once the project closes?
If not what will you NOT continue, and why?

M. Women's Involvement

19. Did women take part in the activities that IDEA-NEW implemented?

...If yes

- a. Did they get the training for the activities they worked on?
- b. Were women involved in making decisions about how they participated?
- c. Did the project have any negative effects on women's roles or responsibilities?
- d. Did women actually benefit themselves from the projects activities, and if so how?
- e. Do you think that project activities have enhanced women's standing in the community?

N. Other

20. What other problems do you have with your farming activities that the IDEA-NEW project were not able to address but which are important?

Questions for Women Farmer Beneficiaries

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to capture the perceptions of women farmers about project interventions. The information will be used by IDEA-NEW to evaluate what went well and what went less well, and to make improvements. There is no right or wrong answers; we are just interested in your honest opinion.

Note: The IDEA-NEW implementation staff should **not** attend this meeting.

A. General Information

Name of the Interviewer:

Date: __/__/__

District:

Group Name:

Write down the names of the women farmers at the meeting

No.	Farmer Name	Village
1		
2		
3		

Note: check that all the participants are IDEA-NEW beneficiaries

B. Questions

13. Have you participated in the project activities? If YES, which ones?
14. Is the person who is targeted by the project trainings activities, the one who does the actual work on the farm? For example, is your husband trained for work that you usually do? Or are you always trained for the work that you do?
15. Have the project activities resulted in any changes in work responsibilities between you and your husband, either on the farm or in the household? If yes, what are the changes?
16. What benefits have you gained from the project activities?
17. Who make the decisions about the project activities, the men or the women? If the men, do you feel the project has benefited women, and in what way?
18. Have there been any negative consequences for women?
19. If you had not been involved with this project, would things have remained the same as before? And, if not, why not?
20. Do you feel more empowered by the project activities?
21. Has the project created more work for you? If YES, does this have any negative consequences?
22. How are the income benefits from the project distributed between men and women?

23. Have you personally received income benefits as a result of this project? If not why not?
24. If the project continues with new activities, what sort of activities would you like to see added to the project which you have not been involved in so far?
25. Have you participated in the project training? If yes which ones?
26. How did you benefit from the training?
27. Which of the training you received was of the most value, and why?
28. Which training was of the least value, and why?
29. Do you have access to credit? If YES, what have you used the credit for? If NO, what would you use it for?
30. Do you have anything else you would like to add about the project, and its consequences for you?

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