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Food Security Through Agribusiness in South Sudan (FSABSS)

Annual Report January 1 to December 31, 2022

Food Security Through Agribusiness in South Sudan (FSABSS) is a five-year project funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Juba to improve food security, increase income and create job for 10000 Farmer Households in Bor, Yambio and Torit. The Project is implemented by a Consortium Organizations including CORDAID, SPARK and AGRITERRA

CORDAID South Sudan



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Abbreviation

AR	Action Research
A2F	Access to Finance
A2I	Access to Input
A2M	Access to Market
A2T	Access to Technology
B2B	Business-to-business
BDAs	Business Development Advisers
BPC	Business Plan Competition
BSC	Business Support Centre
BSO	Business Support Officer
BST	Business Skills Training
C-BED	Community Based Enterprise Development
CLAP	Community Led Action Plan
CMDRR	Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction
COOPs	Cooperatives
CRA	Conflict Risk Analysis
CRR	Conflict Risk Reduction
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN)
FEMA	Farmer Economic and Marketing Association
FFs	Field Facilitators
F2FE	Farmer-to-Farmer Extension
FSABSS	Food Security through Agribusiness in South Sudan
HH	Household
GAIS	Global Agriculture Innovation Solution
GoSS	Government of South Sudan
M4P	Making Market Work for Poor
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MOExt	Market-Oriented Extension
MPC	Multi-Purpose Cooperatives
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises – Existing Business
MSP	Multi-stakeholder Platform
NGOs	Non-Government Organization
PDRA	Participatory Disaster Risks Assessment
PfR	Partnership for Resilience
PfRR	Partnership for Resilience and Recovery
PVCA	Participatory Village Community Analysis
RBDS	Resilient Business Development Services
RLF	Revolving Loan Fund
RUFI	Rural Finance Initiative
SSAPU	South Sudan Agriculture Producers Union
SSP	South Sudan Pound

SSRA	Seed Security Resilience Assessment
STO	Star Trust Organization
TiT	Trainers in Training
ToT	Training on Training
UN	United Nation
VCA	Value Chain Assessment
VEMSA	Village Economic and Marketing Association
YWAE	Youth and Women Agribusiness Entrepreneurship
YWE	Youth & Women Enterprise – Start up Business

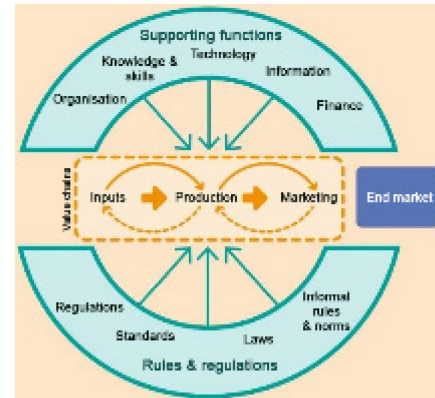
**Project data:**

Project Location/S	Bor, Yambio and Torit
Project Name/Acronym	Food Security Through Agribusiness in South Sudan (FSABSS)
Project Number (Code)	JBA- 4000001744
Implementing Organisation(S)	CORDAID, SPARK and AGRITERRA
Project Period	August 2018 to July 2023
Total Project Budget (€)	9,928,924
- EKN Contribution (€ & %)	100%
- Contribution from Requesting Organisation (€ & %)	0%
- Other Funding to The Project (€ & %)	0%
Period of Current Narrative Report	January 2021 to December 2021
Current Financial Reporting Period	January 2021 to December 2021
Total Budget Planned Current Reporting Period (€)	2,546,255.13
Total Utilized Budget for Current Reporting Period (€)	N/A
Burn Rate for Current Reporting Period (%)	N/A
Previous Report(S) Submitted	Yes, four reports were submitted – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inception Phase (Aug 2018 - Jan 2019) - Interim Report (Feb 2019 - July 2019) - Annual Report (Feb 2019 - Dec 2019) - Annual Report (Jan 2020 – Dec 2020) - Annual Report (Jan 2021 – Dec 2021)

1. Introduction

The Food Security Through Agribusiness Development in South Sudan (FSABSS) is a five-year project that runs from late 2018 to July 2023 with a fund, 10 million Euros, secured from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) in South Sudan. The project is implemented by a consortium of three international NGOs including Cordaid (lead agency), SPARK and Agriterra, with three local partners including Rural Finance Initiatives (RUF) for Access to Finance (A2F), South Sudan Agriculture Producers Union (SSAPU) for Cooperative Development and Premium Agro Consult PLC for Business Development Service.

The overall goal of the project is to improve food security, increase income and create job for agribusinesses based on Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) approach in Yambio, Torit and Bor. Moreover, the project strives to increase farmers' and agribusiness' (MSMEs, Cooperative, VEMSA) access to organization, technology, markets, and finance. The project has four interlinked outcome results which contribute to achieve the intended goal through ten outcomes and nineteen outputs.



During this reporting period, the project reached 2,915 (1,646F, 1267M) under four priority value chains (Maize, Sorghum, Groundnuts and Cassava) and vegetable production, who are organized into 90 Farmers Economy and Market Association (FEMA) and 5 vegetable groups respectively. The community managed disaster risk reduction program selected and trained 55 (10F, 45M) community members as CMDRR committees, who participated in 37 PDRA exercises that resulted in development of community action plans.

To coach and mentor start-ups and existing agribusiness on Business Plan Preparation and Business Skill, 11 (all male) Business Development Advisors (BDAs) were remain operational. As a result, 87 (57F, 103M) Youth and Women Entrepreneurs (YWE) were identified and trained; and 307 Micro-Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) were scouted and trained on BST and supported to develop bankable business plans to access loans from RUF, which has been managing the revolving loan grants. RUF disbursed 37,350,000 SSP (about USD 86809) to 351 borrowers (162F, 189M) of various types like cooperatives, FEMA, individuals, YWE and MSME. Four Private sectors were supported to enhance and strengthen the backward and forward business to business linkages.

Key findings in 2022 implementation period.

- ✓ The annual data on harvesting collected from target households showed that, the majority of farmers have become more resilient to shocks, hazards and disasters as they were able to prepare and implement their own community disaster management plans by help of the CMDRR committees
- ✓ Development of participatory disaster management plans fostered the process of identifying local hazards, disasters and shocks with local solutions generated from within the community and this made implementations of action plans easy by the respective communities in Bor, Yambio and Torit.
- ✓ 46% (1284) of the targeted households reported increase in agricultural production and productivity.
- ✓ Majority (85%) of the survey respondents felt that as they perceive an improvement in availability and access to agricultural input (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, tools) in the last 12 months
- ✓ 40 % of the households reported access to training on Good Agricultural Practices and are applying the knowledge and skills in their daily farming practices. This reflects on an improvement of from 10%, at baseline to 40% during 2022 data harvest results.
- ✓ During follow up survey, majority of the start-ups and MSMEs (scale ups) agribusinesses confirmed to have accessed Business Skills Trainings (98%), coaching to grow businesses (89%) and market information (67%) from the BSCs (Business Support Centers).
- ✓ 87% of the 250 assessed agribusinesses (82% MSMEs and 92% Start-Ups) confirmed that their business performance improved after receiving the Business Skills Trainings (BST).
- ✓ The men-led agribusinesses' average annual revenue increased by over 386% while women-led agribusinesses revenue increased by 122%.
- ✓ Among those 213 agribusinesses interviewed, (95%) affirmed that as they improved on marketing of their products, followed by finance management practices (89%) and record keeping (87%).
- ✓ Respondents believe that 62% cooperatives have adequate organizational and financial management capacity
- ✓ 45% of the respondents agreed that there is availability of and Access to Appropriate Financial Products and Services compared to the baseline finding of 9%, this implies 36% improvement in availability and accessibility of financial products.

Table 1: Summary of 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 Project Performance

Nr	Target type	Project End Year Target	2019 Result	2020 Result	2021 Result	2022 results	Cumulative total as of Dec 31, 2022	%age of the Project End Target Reached
1	Payam	17	13	2	1	0	16	94%
2	Individual Farmers	10000	4501 (2,309F)	3515 (1,776 F)	2910 (1659 F)	2915 (1646 F)	13841 (7390F)	138%
3	CMDRR	105	30	22	23	5	80	76%
4	PDRA	136	0	52	57	5	114	84%
5	CMDRR Activities outreach	8000	2593 (1,373 F)	2511 (1,275 F)	2910 (1,659 F)	2915 (1646 F)	10929(5953 F)	136%

6	Farmer Economic and Market Association (FEMA)	350	91	79	90	90	350	100%
7	Cooperatives (coops)	135	8	45	60	17	130	96%
8	Village Economy, Market and Social Association (VEMSA)	120	0	60	51	9	120	100%
9	Private Sector Engagement	0	0	6	0	4	10	100%
10	Technology Machines	0	0	0	18	15	33	100%
11	Construction and renovation of Warehouses	3(18)	0	1(6)	0	2(5)	3(11)	100% (61%)
12	Seed Lab	3	0	0	3	0	3	100%
13	Business Development Advisors (BDA)	65	28 (3F)	24 (3F)	10 (1F)	0	62 (7)	95%
14	Micro-Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)	750	75 (16F)	60 (23 F)	155 (42F)	307 (224F)	597 (305 F)	80%
15	Youth & Women Enter.	1000	88 (44F)	107 (32F)	160 (57F)	87 (47F)	442 (180F)	44%
16	Access to Finance	3000 Individuals	267 (103F)	667 (337F)	318 (128F)	280(129F)	1532 (697F)	51%
		895 Agribusinesses	8	31	47	71	86	18%
			15735 USD Loan	115000 USD Loan	86809 USD			

2. Progress

2.1. Long-term Outcome Result A: Farmers and Agri-businesses more resilient to shocks and hazards – both natural and conflict

To enhance farmers and agribusiness capacity to be more resilient to shocks and hazards - both natural and conflict, over the last 3 Years, the Project formed and strengthened 80 CMDRR committees in the respective project locations. The committees were provided with range of trainings to build their capacity to conduct PDRA within the communities. The PDRA process conducted by the CMDRR committees involved identification of common disasters and risks including raising community awareness on DRR. The Outcome of the PDRA process was the development of the Community Led Action Plans highlighting common disasters in the community, community coping and mitigation measures. The PDRA process was adopted to enhance sustainability of the CMDRR interventions by harnessing existing community knowledge about the prevalent hazards, community capacity to cope with hazardous events and community attitudes towards recovery. Cordaid in partnership with Meteorology Department of GoSS ensured access and utilization of climate and weather information to determine the farming activities considering the rainfall projections provided.

2.1.1 Result A1. Enhanced DRR and trust in targeted communities

Output A1.1	Farmers and Agri-businesses more resilient to shocks and hazards – both natural and conflict
Output A1.2	Enhanced DRR and trust in targeted communities
Output A1.3	Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction Plans & Peace Dialogues Operational

A.1.1: Farmers and Agri-businesses more resilient to shocks and hazards – both natural and conflict

In 2022, 5 CMDRR Committees were formed and strengthened with knowledge and skills to conduct PDRA assessments in the communities. A total of 174 (55F, 119M) community members selected from CMDRR committees were trained on early warning and early action. The trained CMDRR committee members took lead to guide communities during development of the community led action plans. Overall, a total of 5 PDRA exercises were conducted in 5 Bomas (3Torit and 2 Bor). The outcome of the PDRA exercise was the development of 37 community led action plans (CLAP). During the PDRA, the major hazards identified in Torit included dry season fire outbreaks, lack of clean drinking water, and water logging of fields especially during heavy rains. While the main hazards identified in Bor South included prevalent floods from the River Nile and associated human and livestock health challenges, and insecurity in some of the Payams bordering the Greater Pibor Administrative. In Yambio, no new CMDRR committees were formed in 2022. The Project team only strengthened the CMDRR committees formed in 2020 and 2021 in Yambio. The committees were engaged to review and update their Community led action plans. During the review process, no new hazards identified. The Project team in Yambio encouraged the CMDRR committees to continue with raising community awareness about the potential hazards focusing on prevention and mitigation of wildfire outbreak which had become prevalent. Other actions taken by the Project team was encouraging farmers to undertake early land preparation and planting to avert pest and disease attack. The team also encourage one of the CMDRR committee in Buswera Primary School in Yambio to lobby JRS for borehole drilling where lack of clean drinking water was identified as major issue in the area.

A 1.2 Enhanced DRR and trust in targeted communities

The PDRA process was conducted in participatory and inclusive manner where all stakeholders (Women, Youth, elderly, people with disabilities, business community and pastoralist) participated. This strategy was adopted to enhance ownership/trust among the community to develop and implement their action plans. This was achieved through collective identification of hazards affecting their livelihoods and through consensus building on the priority actions that were implemented. e.g., building dykes because of the floods in Bor affecting farming activities, creating

fire lines around homesteads and gardens in Yambio, peace dialogue with pastoralist in Torit. DRR activities fostered coexistence among the conflicting communities by implementing actions in the CMDRR plans that were focusing on addressing the impacts of common hazards that were affecting the communities. Implementation of the community action plans were not based on political borders but rather protecting assets that were contributing to improved livelihoods of the communities.

A 1.3. Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction Plans & Peace Dialogues Operational

A total of 37 community led action plans were developed to address, a range of hazards affecting the communities in the three counties. The hazards include Covid-19, Droughts, Floods, Wild bush fire, crop pest and diseases, human diseases such as Cholera and resource based conflicts mainly between farmers and pastoralist.

In Yambio, the CMDRR committees in their action plan resolved to control bush fires. This followed a refresher workshop organized by Cordaid to equip selected community members with skills and knowledge on bush fire control. In 2022 during annual data harvesting, it was reported in the FGD that there was significant reduction in losses due to wild fire outbreaks in Yambio. The CMDRR communities have continued to intensify awareness raising in the communities during the dry season. To address the impact of water shortage, CMDRR committees in Yambio have lobbied JRS for construction of borehole in Buswera Primary School where lack of water was identified as a major need in the area.

In Torit, resource-based conflict majorly between farmers and pastoralist was identified as priority hazard in the community action plan. The CMDRR committees together with the local authorities, took lead to raise awareness to cattle keepers about dangers they were posing to the crop farmers mainly in Himodonge payam. During the FGDs conducted in December 2022 during the annual data harvesting, farming communities reported reduced incidences of crop damage in the area compared to the previous years. To cope with the impacts of draught in Imurok and other neighbouring Bomas around River Kinneti, Communities resolved in their action plans with guidance from extension workers to carryout commercial vegetable farming utilizing the water from River Kinneti to ensure vegetable production throughout the year. The Project supported Youth Vegetable entrepreneurs with skills and knowledge in vegetable production and thereafter linked them to RUFU where they accessed loans to finance their BPs. With increased vegetable production, communities reported improved HH nutrition as they can access variety of nutrient rich vegetable at affordable prices. To mitigate the impact of human diseases such as Cholera, the CMDRR committees, implemented awareness raising to stop open defecation as recommended in the CMDRR action plans. During the annual data harvesting, communities reported reduction in open defaecation due to hygiene promotion activities conducted by the CMDRR committees among communities in Imurok Payam in Chiful Boma. To mitigate the impacts of climate change in Torit, the CMDRR committees in their action plans identified tree planting. A cost sharing mechanism was agreed upon between the CMDRR committees and Cordaid where the communities will contribute land for establishing tree nursery, labour and security. While Cordaid in 2023 will support the CMDRR committees with assorted tree seedlings (Mangoes, jack fruits, oranges, and guavas) among others. To mitigate the impacts of wildfires in Torit, the chiefs, and the youth- ruling class, 'Monyoemiji' resolved in the community action plans to institute punishments to culprits who are found guilt of bush burning. This sent a strong signal on need to avoid unnecessary bush burning in Chiful Boma Torit County. The CMDRR committees encouraged community members engage in Off-farm businesses to supplement on their farming income to minimize the challenges posed by drought. To foster coexistence among conflict communities, Cordaid conducted peace building training in the three Project locations which targeted the local government authorities, CMDRR and peace committees and other stakeholders involved in peace building (115 participants (Bor – 50, Torit – 30 and Yambio – 56). During the training, chiefs, organized forces, CMDRR and government officials shared their experience about conflicts happening in the locality and agreed to be champions of peace at the grassroot level and to adopt culture of forgiveness and social cohesion among their communities. Other discussions in the agropastoral areas focused on cattle raiding, child abduction, land disputes and competition over grazing lands and water sources. These remained the key driving forces for conflict within the community. At the end participants developed their Community-Led Peace Dialogue and Conflict Resolution Action plan. During the annual data harvesting,

communities reported low incidents of conflicts among neighbouring communities. They attributed this reduction to the impact of the peace dialogue conducted by the CMDRR committees.

Result A2: Continued Action Research Supporting Informed Decision Making

Output A2.1	Lessons learnt generated from action research
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In 2022, there was no action Research conducted. At baseline there were no lessons, though overall target set were 4 lessons from action research to be used to support decision making. However, several more than 4 lessons learnt and recommendation from action research were used and these are presented as follows.

a) Action Research by Johan te Velde, 6 February 2020

i. Recommendations on Conflict sensitivity

Need to pay more attention to conflict sensitivity and conflict analysis (see resources from the Conflict Sensitivity Resource Facility): The project had conflict sensitive lens in its implementations where community leaders have been consulted even at stage of beneficiary selection to avoid potential conflicts of interest. In 2022, the project continued to use conflict sensitivity approach in implementing project activities across three counties. Recognizing that the project location were prone to resource based conflicts mainly between farmers and pastoralist, Cordaid conducted peace building training in the three Project locations which targeted the local government authorities, CMDRR and peace committees and other stakeholders involved in peace building. The recommendations from the peace dialogues have been mainstreamed during the implementation of the CMDRR action plans. E.g., During dyke construction members of the neighbouring communities equally participated without discrimination.

CMDRR: support already existing structures rather than setting up new ones: Following this recommendation an assessment was conducted on existing CMDRR committees and need to establish new ones Cordaid continued to strengthened 52 CMDRR committees formed in 2020 and 2021 through trainings on early warning signs, identification of disasters and shocks, preparation of participatory community disaster management plans, awareness, and training of community members on disaster management. In 2022, only five CMDRR committees were formed in communities that were prone to conflicts and floods.

ii. Recommendations on Agribusiness and value chains

Using more than one communication channels: To promote coherence and information flow for the cooperatives, VEMSA and FEMAS, in 2022 the project ensured that several communication channels were used including community meetings, radio talk shows, field days and group meetings. Occasional insecurities in some locations like Bur Payam in Torit there was limited telephone networks connections which limited information flow to the communities.

Focus on one value chain per intervention area: The Project focused on sorghum, groundnuts, and maize value chains with minimal focus on vegetables to supplement the major value chain interventions. In Yambio the main priority value chain is Maize while in Bor and Torit the main value chain is Sorghum.

Training on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) (e.g. planting in a row) is higher among women or among men: In 2022 the trainings on GAP were conducted mainly at demonstration sites organized for cooperatives and FEMA by Project Agriculture Extension workers in collaboration with Government seconded staffs. The model farmers trained in Good Agricultural Practices [GAAPs] were [F=467, M=313 and T=780 in 2022. On the other hand, the lead farmers trained on the GAAPs were [F=232, M=183 and T=415]. The farmers testified that they learnt how to make use of seasonal calendar to conduct planning as per their specific counties, prepared land on time, planted online, controlled weeds, pests and diseases based on acquired skills and knowledge sets from the trainings on post-harvest handling, value addition and marketing. Cordaid will continue to undertake deliberate targeting to ensure equal gender participation during TOT training on GAP.

Recommendations on Access to finance

Streamline the internal loan procedures of the SSADP II: do not pass the buck between Cordaid, RUFU, SPARK and Agro Premium: RUFU introduced 2 more loan products (Group Loan and VEMSA Loan) to increase loan uptake. In 2022, Cordaid facilitated training on financial literacy which enabled more youth and women entrepreneurs and cooperative members to benefit RUFU loans. However, challenges like limited market especially in Yambio for maize value chains hampered effectiveness of loan repayment among the entrepreneurs. To address the challenge poor loan repayment to due lack of Market, Cordaid supported private sector companies who are engaged in Maize processing to guarantee market for the farmer produce.

Build the capacity of staff on gender-transformative strategies: In 2022, Cordaid and its partners took deliberate effort to ensure gender transformative strategies are mainstreamed in the project activities. Women and men and youth were oriented on their roles in their groups, participation in the cooperatives and their involvement in decision making regarding project implementation (leadership, monitoring and financial management). Groups reviewed their leadership structures to involve women in leadership and group activities. Cordaid M&E system (DevResults) captured the gender aspects and participation of both men and women in the 2022 project activities.

b) Action Research by Mama Julius, 5th February 2022

i. Recommendations on gaps/challenges in conducting action research.

Train, coach, and mentor the project implementation team on problem identification, gathering data using participatory methods, analysis of qualitative data and presentations well as on variety trials, determination of seed rates, conducting soil tests to guide in decision making on fertilizer requirements and soil improvement/ amendments, carrying out yield estimation, conducting market research for product testing for new product lines and conducting participatory climate risk assessment and disaster risk assessment: In 2022, Cordaid and its partners build the capacity of staffs on the following: problem identification, gathering data using participatory methods like community meetings, establishment of demonstration sites to facilitate skills and knowledge transfer in regard to germination testing and determination of seed rates. In regard to soil testing, there is no institution certified to undertake soil testing to recommended appropriate fertilizer usage in South Sudan. Lead farmers mentored on yield estimation. With this skills, the lead farmers are able to conduct yield estimates in their respective locations.

Recommendations on programming gaps

Conduct refresher trainings to the project implementation staffs in particular areas such as integrated soil fertility management, climate smart agriculture, financial analysis and management, participatory community managed disaster risk reduction, value chain management and value addition including market linkages: to address this recommendation, Cordaid conducted training on climate smart practices, financial literacy and CMDRR which have increased production and productivity mainly among vegetable growers (some of the practices include, proper land use planning, adoption of GAP, and pest and disease management).

Continue to standardize timing and quantities of input and equipment distributed so that results of their use by the beneficiaries can be compared for productivity and other related impacts: Additionally, continue to sequence activities in line with production and marketing calendars: In 2022, Cordaid guided farmers through their CMDRR committees to update seasonal calendars. The updated seasonal calendars were shared with the farmers which helped farmers to plan and scheduled their farming activities on time. Cordaid through the Extension Staff conducted posted planting assessments which form the basis for additional training on post-harvest handling and storage. This was done to help farmers align their farming activities with the marketing calendars in respective Counties.

Start the business planning process early and recruit more staffs in order to reduce workloads of developing several business plans: In 2022, Cordaid and its implementing partners streamline the business plan development and assessment process. There were three layers of business plan development undertaken. 1st Business plans for private sector companies to access stimulus grants(4 Private Sectors). 2nd Business plans for Youth and Women

Entrepreneurs to access loans from RUFU(78). 3rd BPs for Cooperatives to access technology machines (18 Cooperatives). The Process was conducted on time and recommended.

If funds allow provide transport means to CMDRR committees (3 bicycles per committee) to support them in mobility especially to far locations in their Bomas: Provision of means of transport still remains a challenge as this was not provided during the Project design. Cordaid has planned to present to the stakeholders who will be the custodians of the community action plans.

Train CMDRR committees in related enterprises such as agro-forestry and tree nursery establishment for business so that they could start it as a business so that they can become self-sustaining entities instead of relying on the project for financial support: Following this recommendation, Cordaid engaged the CMDRR committees to review their action plans to include, sustainability strategies such as establishing tree nurseries that will create income of the committees while also responding to restoration of the ecosystem. Cordaid would follow up on this in 2023 during exist meetings with stakeholders.

ii. Recommendations on communication between the project management teams and the project implementation staff.

Report challenges associated with internet on time to be rectified immediately not to cause delays in communication between project management team and project implementation team: In 2022, the logistics and procurement team made efforts to remind the service providers to improve on the efficiency and speed of the internet. The communication between field and Juba level staffs has relatively improved minimal challenges in Bor.

iii. Recommendations on key success and constraint factors (both internal and external) for each outcome based on the mid-term evaluation (2021) results.

Conduct continuous market linkage so that the members can have access to wide market instead of relying on local market and CRS only for the product as was the case of Bor: following this recommendation, Cordaid regularly shares market information through Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMIMI) published by REACH South Sudan. In Addition, efforts were made to link farmers to market, for instance HODA cooperative members were linked to a buyer from Torit market by the project team. In Yambio most of the cooperatives were linked to Agro processors who were supported by the project with stimulus grants in 2022.

If resources allow support the cooperatives to establish a model storage structure for the groups that do not have. Repair and equip community stores such as the two in Imurok in Torit with storage pallets and other post-harvest equipment so that cooperatives members will store their products in a good storage environment: In 2022, the Project constructed two Joint Stores (Torit Cooperative Union Joint Store and Bor Multipurpose Union Joint Store). The Project also renovated five stores including Imurok Store in Torit. All the constructed and renovated stores were equipped with pallets.

Conduct community meetings to discuss with livestock owners on how to control grazing and browsing of their animals: Following this recommendation, Cordaid facilitated dialogue meeting led by CMDRR committee members between crops farmers with livestock owners in Himodonge in Torit County. This dialogue contributed to reduction of crop damage by livestock.

Train and coach, the members on ox-cultivation and management of oxen as well as how to run oxen hire business. Integrated Pest Management at both field and storage levels, management of seed testing Centres and give results to the farmers and concerned stakeholders for decision making. Provide awareness to farmers on the presence and importance of the seed testing facility: In 2022 no training on ox-traction was conducted, because the project piloted the use of walking tractor with the aim of expand land under cultivation. IPM trainings were part of GAAPs trainings. The farmer cooperatives and FEMA were trained on post-harvest handling and maintenance of value addition machines that enabled them to improve quality of their products. However, not all group benefited from value addition equipment because some of the groups had not attained the required bulking volumes of produce. In

2022, the project continued to strengthen the seed testing laboratories which are now functional in Bor, Yambio and Torit Counties. Farmers are able to test seed samples in the respective seed laboratories.

Encourage individual entrepreneurs and farmers in groups involved in agribusiness, savings, and loans to open bank account so as to minimize risks of financial loss due to theft and mismanagement: In 2022 an entrepreneur who trades in sorghum and maize in Torit testified that she was able to open an account though initially she was just keeping money in her house. She linked the benefit of account opening with loan disbursement that required an account to get the loan from RUFU.

Conduct refresher training in business planning, record keeping and financial management. Review business plans of the farmers and entrepreneurs in order to strengthen the value addition, diversification and financial analysis components: In 2022, 18 cooperatives were supported to review their business plans which enabled them to with the technology machine support. The trainings in business planning helped the farmers and entrepreneurs to set visions for their businesses, conduct market research, conduct production planning, plan the workforce for their business and conduct financial analysis for their business among others.

iv. Recommendations on opportunities for expanding/ improving the markets along the whole value chains for our target groups.

Train the leaders how to operate the machines for business. Link the leaders managing the equipment to sources of spare parts and service providers who can repair the machines in case of major breakdown: The 2022 annual data harvesting FGD revealed that those who got technology items were trained by the suppliers on how to operate the machines. Cordaid linked the cooperatives who benefited from the technology machine support to DOSHI Motors for supply of spare Parts. Technicians from Doshi Motors trained the group leaders on basic repair and maintenance .

Train, coach and mentor the farmers on local seed production and business for crops such as maize, sorghum, groundnuts, okra, cowpeas and Jute Mallow, “Kudhura”: The aspect of seed production as business has been humped by some implementing partners who continue to provide seed aid to farmers. Cordaid is encouraging lead farmers in local seed multiplication. Cordaid to continue advocating for reduction is seed aid in areas which are relatively calm and have recorded increased seed production such as Yambio and Torit.

Support those with interest to start Agro-dealer business by training them in business skills, supporting them in business plan development, coaching and mentoring them in their business and linking them to sources of finance like RUFU: In 2022, the project supported two Agro-dealers (1-Yambio and 1-Torit). Through this support, farmers are able to access quality seeds and tools at subsidized prices.

Encourage cooperatives/FEMA members that can afford to build own stores and rent it out to make business from their own members and other interested farmers: With reduced incidents of insecurity in the project locations, farmers report increased production of produce. This has motivated some members of the FEMA groups and Cooperatives to invest in aggregation of produce to access markets mainly in Yambio.

Recommendations on opportunities for the opportunities that we can tap on to enhance project impact recommendations.

Encourage focal persons from government line ministries of cooperatives and rural development and agriculture, forestry, animal resources and fisheries as well as RRC to continue to share messages on radio programs, field days and exchange visits in providing awareness about the good intentions of the project so that best practices can continue to spread and spill-over to have more impact: In 2022 Cordaid involved the government staffs (State ministry agriculture and Forestry, and State Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development) to participate during radio talk shows where they shared appropriate messages encouraging farmers to engage in farming as business, get prepared for potential hazards and also shared information on available market opportunities.

Organize and facilitate entrepreneurs, FEMA, VEMSA and cooperatives to share their experiences through field days, media and exchange visits involving peer-to-peer learning to roll adoption of best practices to other farmers to expand production and supply to the market: In 2022 (25) Field days were arranged for FEMA, cooperatives and VEMSA. The field days enabled farmers to showcase the outcomes of the project, including sharing their experiences on GAP, PHH and marketing.

v. Recommendations on opportunities to further project impact by considering gender relations

More men should be encouraged to also take part in off-farm business so that they can improve savings and borrow loans: In 2022, Cordaid ensured that both men and women were involved as leaders, beneficiaries in project and participants in community meetings. By the time of outcome harvesting the number of men remained low compared to their female counterparts because rural men prefer farming activities as opposed to off-farm activities.

Increase the participation of women in leadership of CMDRR committees including the related trainings so that their role in this case will also rise: In 2022 Cordaid deliberately ensured that at least 2 of the leaders in CMDRR committees are women. This has motivated the women to join CMDRR committee activities including presenting women perspectives during implementation CMDRR activities.

There is need for the project to organize more refresher trainings on leadership, governance, drafting and review of bylaws of VEMSA, Cooperatives and FEMA with aim of increasing participation of both males and females in leadership: In 2022 Cordaid and its partners conducted trainings in cooperative leadership and governance aimed at making the cooperatives self-sustaining. By the time of outcome data harvesting at least 60% of the groups have had leaders trained and developed group bylaws. Cordaid will continue to mentor all the groups to ensure they formalize all requirements for group registration with relevant line ministries .

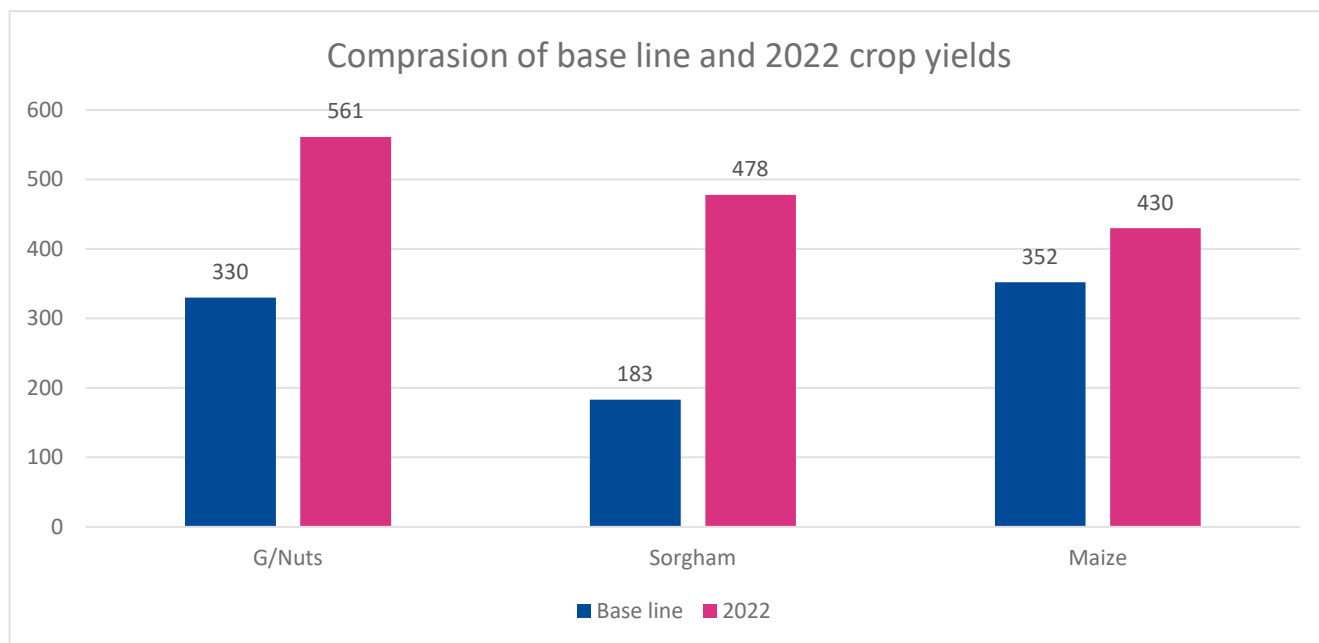
2.2. Long-term Outcome Result B: Enhanced sustainable production and productivity

During the 2022 reporting period, 90 FEMAs were formed, comprising of 2,792 farmers (57% female). The groups were supported through trainings in good agronomic practices (GAP), integrated pest management (IPM), post-harvest handling techniques and aspects of value addition and marketing of their produce. The approach used for training the new group members was the market-oriented extension services (MOExt), which engaged lead/model farmers, selected from the FEMAs and trained as trainers. The project identified and trained 415 lead farmers (232 female). The lead farmers supported their group members through a season-long farmer field schools experiential training program, conducted at the lead farmer gardens. The FEMAs were supported with assorted seeds and tools to develop specific value chains which includes, maize, sorghum and groundnuts. At least 90% of the households in Yambio grow cassava and supplied their own planting materials. The project also formed five vegetable production groups to enhance household nutrition status and income generation. These groups were made up of 123 members (54% female). The vegetable groups were supported with assorted seeds, tools, solar pumps and sprayers to increase their levels of production.



The expected outcome from the capacity building through inputs support, training and field-based extension advisory support for farmers are increase in yields, productivity, and income. 📊 annual data harvesting for 2022 indicated that farmers who grew groundnuts, sorghum and maize had average yields of about 561 Kgs, 478 Kgs and 430 Kgs per feddan (acre) respectively (see graph below) this implies 59%, 161% and 30% increase and production and productivity respectively compare to the baseline data.

Graph 1: Comparison of Base line and 2022 crop yield.



The yield increase is attributed to application and adoption of good agronomic practices taught to the farmers during trainings. Overall there was increase in feddan of land cultivated in 2022 by individual farmers compared to the average land sizes at the baseline. There was an average increase in land size cultivated by 32.527 percent. The increase in land under cultivation is attributed to trainings in good agricultural practices, regular follow-up visits for coaching and mentorship by the extension workers. The cooperative activities that involved working together on individual farms on rotational basis also explains the increase in land cultivated under the various crops. The project also piloted the use of walking tractors which greatly contributed to increase to land under cultivation. The project will continue to advocate to farmer groups to make proper use of the walking tractors in order to expand land under cultivation hence increase in production and productivity.

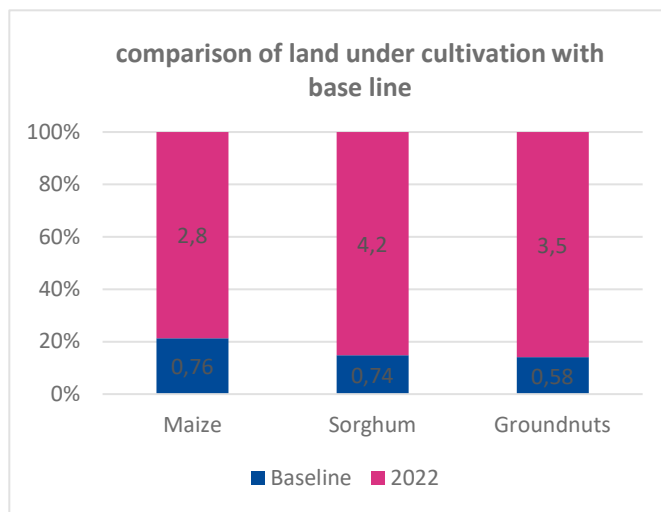


Table 2 : Comparison of acreage of land during baseline and 2022

Baseline average hectares [10,000m²]	0.588	0.630	0.504	0.574
2022 hectares [10,000m²]	Sorghum	Groundnuts	Maize	Average
Bor	0.882	0.720		0.801
Yambio		0.890	1.120	1.005
Torit	0.730	0.690	0.640	0.687
Average	0.806	0.767	0.880	0.831
Percentage increase	37.760	22.220	37.600	32.527

2.2.1. Outcome Result B1. Availability of and Access to Agricultural Inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, tools) ensured.

Output B1.1	Distribution channels for agricultural production operational for farmers up to the village level
Output B1.2	Improved seed production by targeted farmers
Output B1.3	Local seed testing facilities established and operational

B 1.1: Distribution channels for agricultural production operational for farmers up to the village level






The 2022 annual data harvesting reported an improvement in the availability, access to, and quality of agricultural inputs in 2022 implementation period. From 2021 to 2022 the project engaged Four Agro input dealers (Yambio=2 Torit=1 and Bor=1) as private sector, in the inputs supply system. The input dealers were provided with stimulus grants to improve on their businesses and support farmers better.  support to Agro Input dealers has helped many farmers to easily access quality and affordable Agro inputs in  Objective Counties.  brought inputs closer to farmers with affordable and subsidized prices.  show table show number of Farmers  accessed seeds and tools through Agro input dealers in 2022.

Table3: Farmers who access seeds and tools.

Torit	Bor	Yambio	Total
742 (315 F)	530 (401F)	547 (321 F)	1819 (1037F)

Source: Reports submitted by Agro-input dealers.

 **2: Improved seed production by targeted farmers**

To improve local seed production, in 2021 the project engaged Pro-seed company limited, to provide capacity building on improved seeds production. The company conducted a rapid farmers’ needs assessment on seeds production. Sixty farmers, from Torit and Yambio counties, were then registered voluntarily, to participate in local seed production and multiplication. Through Contract farming arrangement, Pro-seed company trained the selected farmers on seeds production practices and seed business management. The trained farmers received maize, sorghum, and groundnuts as their start up seed sources. Relevant tools (3 sets including hoe, panga, and rake per farmer) were also provided based on the geographical area. Farmers produced enough seeds which were bought by Pro-Seed Company at agreed price. In 2022 the Project did not target new farmers because the community-based seed production strategy is not sustainable due to free seed distribution by other implementing partners. This equally demotivated the old seed producers targeted by Pro-seed company to continue with contract farming arrangement. The Project will continue to advocate with local authorities and implementing agencies through FSL Cluster to undertake seed availability assessment so that seed aid is provided to areas where there is high need.

B 1.3: Local seed testing facilities established and operational

In 2021 the project established and equipped three seed laboratories in Torit, Bor and Yambio. These rehabilitated seed laboratories were handed over to the respective state ministries of agriculture and forestry in the three counties. A total of six (all Male; Bor=2, Torit=2 and Yambio=2), staff from each State Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry were selected and trained as Laboratory technicians with technical assistance from FAO and IFDC. The seed Laboratories are operating in cost recovery basis. In Torit, individual farmers test their samples at 2000 SSP, Cooperatives groups at 5000 SSP, Agro input dealers at 10000 SSP while NGOs test their samples at 15000 SSP. In Bor, individual farmers test their samples at 5000 SSP, Cooperatives groups at 15000 SSP, Agro input dealers at

15000 SSP while NGOs test their samples free of charge. In Yambio, the Seed control board is yet to set fees for testing of samples in the Laboratory. The project will continue to encourage Yambio seed control board to follow Torit and Bor examples for future sustainability of the seed laboratories. Since the Project is coming to end, Cordaid and the consortium will hand over the activities of the seed laboratories to A 3 Seed Project by IFDC and REPRO Project by UNFAO.

Table Below show sample tested under different categories in the three project locations.

Table 4: Categories of seed sample tested.

Location	Individual farmers	Testing fee/sample (SSAP)	Cooperatives	Testing Fee/Sample (SSP)	Agro-Input dealers	Testing Fee /Sample (SSP)	NGOs (No. of Samples)	Testing Fee /Sample (SSP)
Yambio	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	0
Torit	30	2000	0	5000	5	10000	55	15000
Bor	7	5000	2	15000	2	15000	4	0

Voices from the field

Impact of the seed testing and quality (Field Visit report)

During a joint field monitoring with the EKN mission team in Torit, a Lab technician in Torit Seed Laboratory mentioned that: *“The establishment of the seed Laboratory has silenced complaints from farmers for receiving unviable seeds. Now we can test seeds from input dealers, cooperatives, individual farmers and NGOs before they are distributed or sold to farmers.”*

2.2.2 Result B2: Good Agricultural Practices Enhanced and Extension Services Improved

To enhance good agricultural practices and improve extension services, the project recruited two extension workers per each project location (Bor, Yambio and Torit). The project also request and engaged seconded government extension workers (2 per each location) making the total of 4 extension workers per location. The project provided refresher trainings to both project and government seconded extension workers on GAP, PHH, IPM and marketing. The project identified 415 (56%female) lead farmers and 780 model farmers (60% female) who were trained on GAP, IPM, PHH and marketing through TOT. The lead and model farmers supported their group members through a season-long farmer field schools experiential training program, conducted at the demonstration sites. The Annual data harvesting reported that about 40 % of the households had access to training on good Agricultural Practices

such early land preparation, setting deep dug nursery beds for vegetables, raw planting, early weeding, pest identification and management among others and are applying the knowledge and skills in their daily farming practices. This reflects an improvement of from 10%, at baseline to 40% during 2022 data harvest results.

Output B2.1	Farmers apply good and climate smart agricultural practices
Output B2.2	SSAPU Operations & Extension Service Delivery Improved

B 2.1: *Farmers apply good and climate smart agricultural practices*

In 2022, a total of 2915 farmers comprising of 2,792 (57% female) members of the FEMA groups and 123 members of the vegetable groups were trained on good agronomic practices, climate smart agriculture and specialized vegetable production practices for the market. The project used a combination of extension approaches in addition to the farmer-to-farmer extension approach using lead and model farmers. A total of 44 demonstration plots (Torit – 19, Yambio – 15, & Bor – 10) were established to facilitate training for (56% Female) lead farmers and 780 (58% female) model farmers on GAP, PHH, CSA, value addition and marketing. On average, a model farmer works closely and provides practical advice to 5-7 farmers. A monitoring tool was developed and used by extension workers to record progress. During 2022 Annual data harvesting 40 % of the households reported access to training on good Agricultural Practices such early land preparation, setting deep dug nursery beds for vegetables, raw planting, early weeding, pest identification and management among others and are applying the knowledge and skills in their daily farming practices. This reflects an improvement of from 10%, at baseline to 40% during 2022 data harvest results.

B 2.2: *SSAPU Operations & Extension Service Delivery Improved*

To ensure SSAPU operations and extension services delivery improved, the project divided the element of the cooperative trajectory into three: (1) number of farmers that joined cooperative membership, (2) number of farmers who benefitted from SSAPU extension services and (3) number of primary cooperatives that joined SSAPU/ County Cooperative Unions.

I. Number of farmers that joined cooperative membership.

Agriitera updated the membership of the cooperatives to reflect the changes in membership – either as increasing (new members joined) or decreased (some members exited). At least (84%) of cooperatives showed stability and have increased membership. Overall, 872 new members joined into existing cooperatives bringing the number of farmers participating as cooperative members to 3937(2100F). Number of active Cooperatives dropped from 130 Cooperatives to 104 active Cooperatives across the three Counties, because they were degraded to farmer group status by the state ministries of cooperatives and rural development especially in Yambio and Torit.

II. Number of farmers who benefitted from SSAPU extension services:

Overall, 20 cooperatives underwent training in basic knowledge of production through demonstration units established at the block farms (for the case of Bor and Torit) or farms belonging to lead farmers (especially in Yambio). The number of farmers who benefitted from such training were 120 men and 80 women. Apart from capacity building provided to the cooperative members by SSAPU, in 2022 SSAPU managed to link 508 (257F) cooperative members to markets. SSAPU also provided advisory services to the cooperative members in term of pest and disease control, financial management, networking and linking the primary cooperatives to the County Unions.

III. Number of primary cooperatives that joined SSAPU.

By December 31, 2022, the number of primary cooperatives that got formally legalised as cooperatives (issued certificate of registration to be a cooperative by the state ministry of cooperative and rural development in the respective states) 104(17 registered in 2022). These include 38 in Yambio, 23 in Torit and 43 in Bor. These primary cooperatives did not directly subscribe to the membership of SSAPU at the national level but rather took the legal path of the national cooperative structure to join their county unions. So far, two county unions have been formed – Bor Multi-purpose Union (BMU) and Torit County Cooperative Union (TCCU). All the primary cooperatives within these counties have joined the membership of the county unions. This brings the legally registered cooperatives to 104 including 102 primary cooperatives and 2 county unions. The two county unions – BMU and TCCU have been charged with the responsibility of not only managing the central warehouse facilities in Bor and Torit, but also to own it as well. The law empowers the state ministry of cooperatives and rural development (or any line ministry with the same function at the county) to be a trustee for the assets of the cooperatives (primary and union) or any arbitrator in case of conflicts among the members of the cooperatives, but not to own or seize cooperative assets. Due to political interference, primary cooperatives in Yambio are yet to ascend to form their own county union. Eden Multi-purpose cooperative – selected to manage the warehouse, does not have a representation equal to that of a county union. Currently, the state ministry of agriculture is the default owner of the warehouse. The Consortium have shared the issue with the state secretariate, and a committee has been formed including representatives from the state and county to ensure the county has farmers' structure well represented by their members and that all assets are under the ownership of the county union. All decision awaits the appointment of the county commissioner due to the demise of the former commissioner.

2.3. Long-term Outcome Result C: Improved inclusive agribusiness market functioning

To ensure improved inclusive agribusiness market functioning, the project deployed several approaches which includes (I) multi-stakeholder plat forms, (II) group marketing by cooperative members, (III) facilitating meetings and contract negotiations and (IV) value addition for quality produce and (V) market-oriented farmer field days. In 2022, the project facilitated 25 farmer market field days in Torit and Bor which brought in 10 private sector companies, 20 VEMSA, 35 Cooperatives and 40 FEMA. These events also served as platforms for creating market linkages among various stakeholders or actors in the selected value chains. The project also supported 2 private sector companies with stimulus grants and are engaged in processing of Maize flour in Yambio. During the farmer market field days, members of cooperative and FEMA were linked to the processors. As a result, a total of 250 Famers sold 50 tons of maize grains were supplied to the processor, each farmer earning an average income of 60,000 SSP.

2.3.1 Result C1. Adequate and relevant Market Information Accessible and Available for Farmers and Agri-businesses

In 2022, 727 (419F) farmers accessed relevant market information to make decisions for their produce. During annual data outcome harvesting, it was noted majority of the farmers sold their produce in the local market. Bor cooperative union had linked at least 5 cooperatives to NPA, CRS and WFP to buy their sorghum. In Torit HODA got market for its groundnuts by a private trader in Torit after linkage by project staffs. In Yambio, most of the cooperatives were linked to WFP through STO and others sold their produce in the local market. Farmer Market field day's events were used to link farmers to markets. Farmers also accessed market information aired on radio (Anisa FM Station in Yambio, Grace FM station Torit Jonglei FM Station in Bor).

Output C1.1	Formal market outlet access expanded by target farmers as part of their income base
Output C1.2	Market information is available and accessible for key stakeholders as part of their decision making

C1.1: Formal market outlet access expanded by target farmers as part of their income base.

To ensure farmers access formal market outlets as part of their income base, the project continued to improve farmers capacity in making informed decision about marketing of their produce. The annual cropping and marketing calendar of each county were updated and distributed to all the new FEMAs and cooperatives. Yambio has two cropping seasons from March to July and from August to November each year. Marketing season in Yambio starts in the month of November and ends in March. Access to regional markets for Yambio is a major issue due to poor road conditions connecting Yambio with other States within the Republic of South Sudan and its capital Juba. Torit has one cropping season for cereals, but groundnuts sometimes are planted twice (between April and November). The road condition between Torit and Capital Juba has improved and most of the farmers and Aggregators have started accessing markets in Juba such Konyokonyo, Gumbo and Custom markets. On the contrary, Bor has only one cropping season from May to October each year. The peak of marketing activities is experienced between the months of November and March each year. With improved road condition between Bor and Juba, farmers now can access better prices for their produce.

C 1.2: Market information is available and accessible for key stakeholders as part of their decision making

Market information is monthly updated and made available to farmers as the project is part of the Joint Market Monitoring Initiative (JMMI) led by REACH. All data collected by participating agencies (Cordaid, CARE etc.) is consolidated and analysed through one commonly adapted tool and is then published in the form of monthly factsheets and datasets, as well as the online dashboard. In addition, SSAPU collected market information through surveys and shared with Cooperatives and FEMAs. Both farmers and cooperatives are benefitting from this information through several information dissemination channels such as radio stations, first-hand information through the field facilitators and agribusiness liaison officers. With increased access to market information, farmers reported during the annual data harvesting assessment that they were able to get better prices for their produce compared to what the middlemen were offering.

2.3.2 C2: Improved post-harvest handling and physical market infrastructure

Output C2.1	Improved warehouse facilities at county/local level
Output C2.2	Post-harvest handling technologies adopted

C 2.1: Improved warehouse facility at the county/local levels

The Project improved warehouse facilities at the County and Payam levels. In 2022, the project renovated five warehouses (5 Warehouses all in Torit) owned by five cooperatives. Cordaid technical Engineer assessed and recommended the type of renovation for each warehouse required and prepared a Bill of Quantity for each renovation. Two (2) new joint warehouse (1-Bor and 1-Torit) were constructed and handed over to the Cooperative Unions in the respective Counties. Initial assessments in Torit and Bor indicated high costs of warehouse construction and renovation compared to Yambio. The construction in the two locations delayed due to challenges in land allocation, as cooperative unions were in the process of being formed. Bor on the other did not have any warehouse owned by cooperatives to be renovated. In Bor, the Ministry of Cooperative and Rural Development provided the Land for the construction and the Union contributed in-kind construction materials in form of sand soil. While in Torit, the warehouse is constructed in the land which belongs to former Torit County Union which has been official handed over to the new Union. The Project built the capacity of each cooperative union

management on how they can manage the stores sustainably. The Unions introduced a cost recovery scheme to generate income to sustain the operation of the warehouse.



Newly Constructed Joint warehouse for cooperative Union in Bor



Newly Constructed Joint warehouse for cooperative Union in Torit

C2.2: post-harvest handling technologies adopted.

During this reporting period, 2792 (57% Female) farmers were trained on post-harvest handling (PHH). The Project promoted the use of Hematic Storage bags to reduce post-harvest losses and after the training each farmer was provided with 2 hermetic bags. To ensure proper storage of farmer produce, all farmers have access to store their produce in the constructed and renovated warehouses in Yambio, Torit and Bor. The Unions were linked to Agro-input dealers in the project location to enable the Unions continue accessing the hermetic bags at subsidized prices.

2.3.3 Result C3: Market Linkages Enhanced through Cooperatives/ Associations/ Farmer Organizations

Output C3.1	Improved market access and availability for selected and developed value chains
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The project continued to use several approaches to support improved market linkages, availability and access for the cooperatives and farmer groups. The approaches adopted by the project includes (i) multi-stakeholder plat forms, (ii) group marketing by cooperative members, (iii) facilitating meetings and contract negotiations, (iv) value addition for quality produce, and (v) market-oriented farmer field days. In 2022, the consortium partners Facilitated 25 Farmer Market field days which attracted 40 FEMA, 35 Cooperatives, 20 VEMSA groups 5 MSMEs and 5 YWE. The events were attended by 727 (419 F) in Bor and Torit. These events were used to identify challenges facing farmers and cooperative marketing, generate a common understanding on tackling the challenges of marketing and ways of working together through the cooperative structures especially with the private sector players and other NGOs that purchase produce from the farmers, such as, Amoria, STO and other international organisations working in the seed sector. During the events, 12 business-to-business (B2B) linkages (7 in Bor and 5 in Torit) between farmers, cooperatives and traders were created. The issues agreed upon includes price, delivery time, means of transport, delivery location and mode of payment (Most agreed to pay in cash immediately, while STO (WFP agent), follow bank payment system through Kush Bank. Eighteen (18) cooperatives got machinery to do value addition. The strategy enabled farmers to reach the market with high quality produce with added value which enabled them to negotiate for better prices compare to selling inform of grains.



Grinding mill for Pingaroor Cooperative in Bor



Members of Arthuro cooperative in Torit getting training on use of walking Tractor

2.4. Long-term Outcome Result D: Improved Performance of Cooperatives and Agri-MSMEs and new jobs are created.

2.4.1 Result D1. Cooperatives have adequate organizational and financial management capacity.

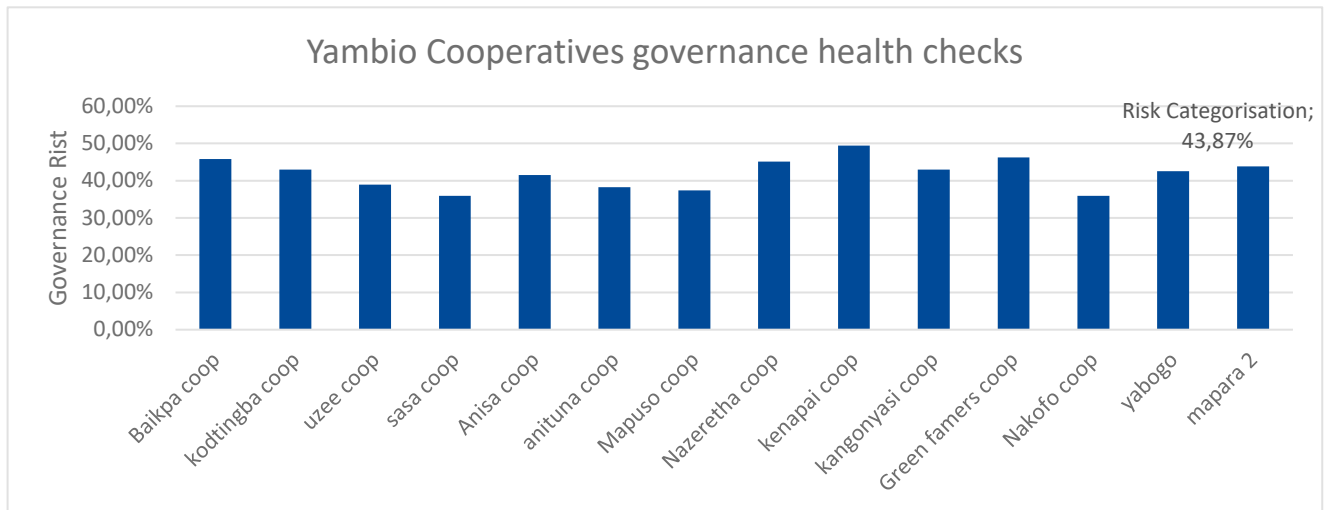
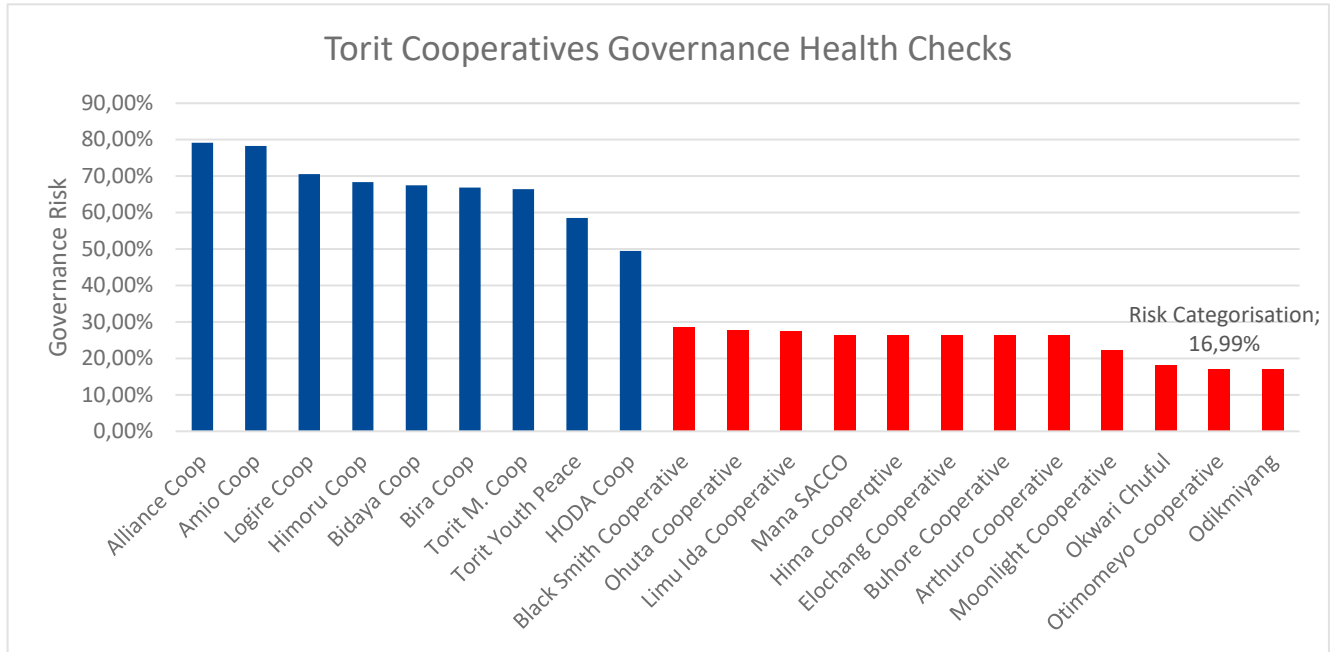
Output D1.1	Cooperatives organizational and financial management capacity improved/enhanced
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Agriterra employs two sets of tools (financial and governance health checks) for grading the capacity of the cooperatives with the aim of strengthening their financial management. Due to the robustness of the financial health scores, Agriterra modified the governance health check to suit the context of the cooperatives to operate in South Sudan. In 2022 Agriterra and SSAPU scored 45 primary cooperatives and one union (BMU) after assessing the strength of their governance. The pillars that Agriterra investigates to allow each cooperative to mirror its performance include (1) structure, (2) roles and responsibilities of the board, (3) relationship between cooperative and its members, (4) recruitment, development, succession planning, (5) transparency and ethics and (6) strategic vision or forward-looking. Overall, 65% primary cooperatives as well as the county unions have improved in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th pillars. However, the 4th and 6th pillars remain a challenge due to limited resources to employ independent management team to help run the business of the cooperatives including illiteracy that the cooperative will not be able to address soon.

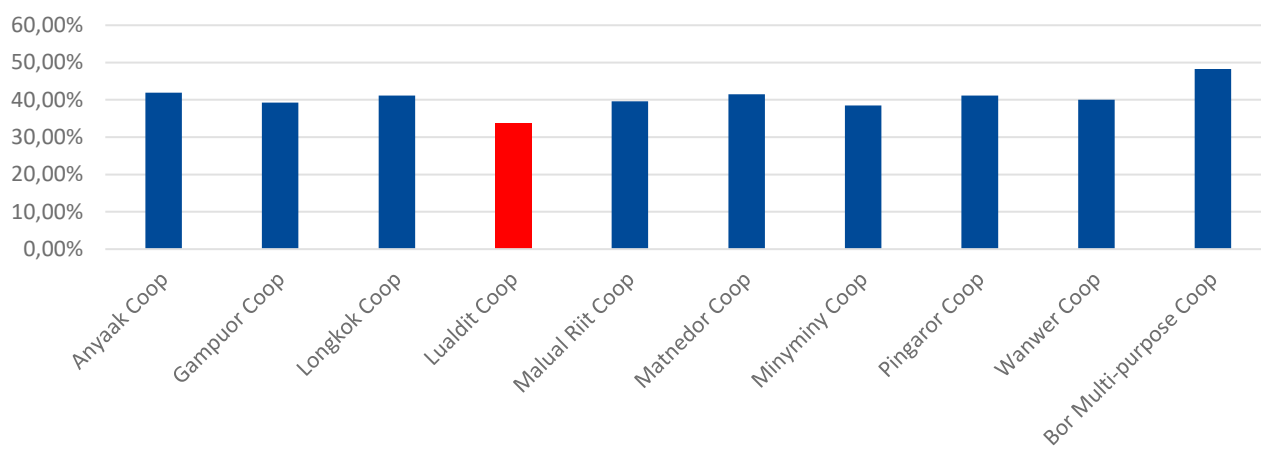
Table 5: Summary of health checks

Summary Health Checks			
Risk Categories			
County	Low Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
Yambio	0	15	0
Bor	0	9	1
Torit	3	6	12

Governance health checks



Bor Cooperatives governance health checks



D2: Women, youth, MSMEs are capable and equipped with skills to start and grow their business.

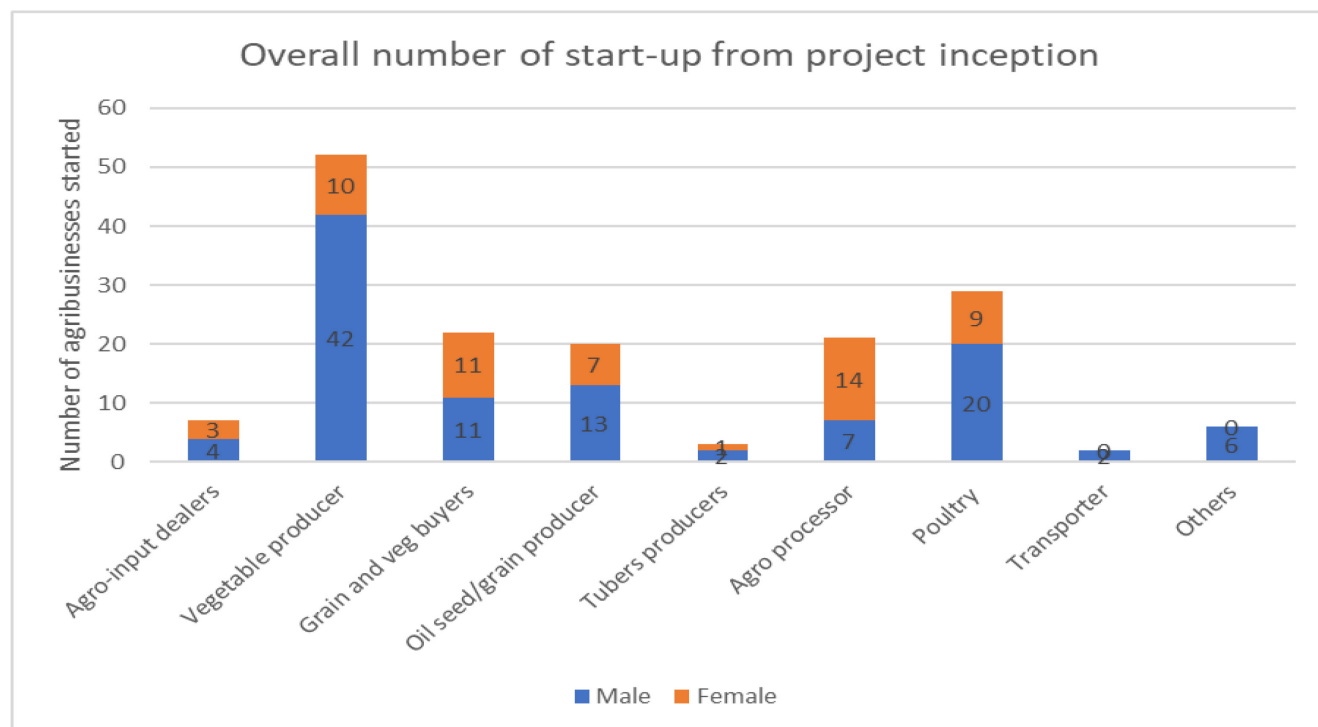
Output D2.1	Functional Business Support Ecosystem in the Project Locations for VEMSA, Co-ops/MSMEs
Output D2.2	Youth and Women have improved capacity to start-up and grow businesses

D 2.1: Functional Business Support Ecosystem in the Project Locations for VEMSA, Co-ops/MSMEs

The three Business Support Centres (BSCs) in the project areas remain integral in terms of supporting business acceleration for Start-Ups and Scale up/MSMEs as well as coordinating implementation. It is important to note that, at each BSC, there are between two - three junior and one senior Business Development Advisor (BDS) offering business skills training, coaching, business plan development, financial linkage, and facilitating businesses linkages. The BDAs are supervised by three Business Support Officers (BSOs). Despite the challenges of inadequate space and equipment (e.g., computers) at the BSCs, each BSCs receives daily visits from between 5 and 10 agribusinesses seeking support to develop business plans, follow up on their loan applications, receive coaching (more specifically on record keeping), and get agricultural advice. The BSCs have remained a one-stop centre for Start-Ups and MSMEs to receive technical support from experts. As part of facilitating market linkages between agribusinesses and clients, SPARK together with Premium Agro Consult implemented the Business to Business (B2B) event at Yambio County BSC to facilitate business interaction between agribusinesses. The event had a participation of over 50 agribusinesses' entrepreneurs (18 agribusinesses undertook on-stage exhibitions), government officials, representatives from financial providers, and representatives from stakeholder like FAO, World Vision, BRAC, World Food Programme, Young Women Christian Associations (YWEA), and Red Cross. The B2B event was a great platform to get face time between agribusinesses and for them to showcase their products and services. Through the interactive sessions of the event, the agribusiness' entrepreneur's provided feedback that, they were able to build intimate relationships with customers, sealed financial deals with financial providers, received feedback from customers and increased brand visibility.

Means to strengthen the agricultural eco-system, crowding of agribusinesses through supporting start-up was among the cornerstone of the project. Although there was a shift from targeting more start-ups to recruiting more existing MSMEs into the project, the trained start-ups 2021 were not left unattended to by the project. In 2022, eight reflection and peer to peer meetings with start-ups were undertaken as means to understand their challenges, offer mentorship and coaching to encourage kick off agribusinesses. Following that effort, 96 (33F) entrepreneurs started their own enterprises, making the overall start-ups that have been launched since the start of the project to 162 (55F). Most entrepreneurs started vegetable production because of its low capital requirements. A fair number of entrepreneurs


started poultry, off-taking (buying and selling of grains and vegetables) and small-scale processing businesses (juice making, peanut butter, and milling, etc.) as shown in the graph below




In regards to direct job creation, the follow up survey showed that 336 (127 F) community members were employed in 2022 either as seasonal casual laborers in the farm, shop attendants, and salespersons etc. by the supported agribusinesses. The agribusinesses indirectly created an estimate of over 3,000 jobs for producers and suppliers of raw materials. The agribusinesses are not only contributing to jobs but diversifying income sources for the different community members.

Table 6: Number community members employed.

Agribusiness Enterprises	Start Ups			MSMEs			Grant total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Vegetables producer	88	56	144	96	50	146	290
Transporter	2	0	2	0	0	0	2
Oilseeds (soya beans, palm oil and sunflower)	0	0	0	1	0	1	1

Off-taker (all)	4	4	8	4	3	7	15
Honey	1	0	1	1	0	1	2
Fruit producer	0	1	1	0	1	1	2
Cereals (sorghum and maize)	2	4	6	2	4	6	12
Agro-processor	3	0	3	5	0	5	8
Others	0	2	2	0	2	2	4
 Total	100	67	167	109	60	169	336

Deliberate efforts were undertaken to facilitate linkages between vegetable producers and input dealers as well as buyers and producers. According to the project monitoring data collected from the input dealers and buyers, assorted input was supplied to  1,564 farmers while grain worth 22,112 USD (11,056,000 SSP) was bought from 500 farmers by Agro-processors. The findings in the table above shows that agribusiness is not only increasing trade but also creating indirect jobs.

Follow up survey findings.

According to the follow up survey's results, most of the start-ups and MSMEs (scale ups) agribusinesses confirmed to have accessed Business Skills Trainings (98%), coaching to grow businesses (89%) and market information (67%) from the BSCs. This shows importance of an infrastructure for a BSCs whereby agribusinesses can visit to get business development supports services. On the other hand, there was a low number of agribusinesses seeking support to complete business plans (38%) and financial linkages (36%). This was unsurprising because the business plan development is a new concept to most of the agribusinesses in the project's locations. The Business plan development was also negatively affected by the low literacy levels of the targeted entrepreneurs. Based on these findings, the critical area to embark in 2023 and future project is to facilitate more market interactions between market players (buyers, off-takers, producers, financial providers, Agro-processors among others), which was insufficiently planned and offered at the BSCs and to incorporate numeracy classes to tackle the low literacy levels among the targeted entrepreneurs.

D 2.2: Youth and Women have improved capacity to start-up and grow businesses

To improve the capacity of start-ups and enhance the competitiveness of the existing agribusinesses, SPARK together with PAC, offers business skills training, coaching and mentorship, the development of business plans, and linkages to financial products and services. On a routine basis, this activity is executed by 14 (9 junior and 5 senior) well-trained Business Development Advisors (BDAs) under the supervision of the Business Support Officers. Below are the achievements.

Awareness raising campaigns and events

To ensure that there is wider knowledge about the business acceleration opportunity for agribusinesses, radio announcements and talk shows, church meetings and posters were used to mobilize agribusinesses. As a follow-on, 17 orientation sessions were undertaken, whereby 358 (177F) agribusinesses (grain dealers, vegetable vendors, transporters, agro-dealers, agro-processors, and seed dealers) were scouted to benefit from the business acceleration opportunity. The exercise attracted the participation of agribusinesses outside the targeted areas as well as non-agricultural value chain enterprises (i.e., tailoring, weaving, welding, and phone charging among others). It is important to note that, all the scouted agribusinesses were micro, and they traded within the geographical locations.

Table 7: Enterprises scouted

Enterprise	Male	Female	Total
Vegetable producer	6	39	45
Palm Oil aggregators	36	27	63
Honey aggregators	7	0	7
Grain aggregators	27	21	48
Fish mongers	24	25	49
Vegetable retailers	26	39	65
Agro processor	27	6	33
Grain dealers	26	20	46
Agro vet	1	0	1
Others	1	0	1
Total	181	177	358

Under this activity, all agribusinesses who were interested in the business accelerator programme were requested to apply by completing and submitting business idea forms prior to admission; making it demand-based. In total, 162 (74F) Start-Ups agribusinesses submitted business idea forms to the BSCs, and eventually, 109 (43F) were admitted to the BSCs after vetting by the established committees (SPARK, PAC, and RUF1) from the pitching exercise.

Business skills training for start ups and MSMEs (Scale-Ups)

As part of enhancing entrepreneurs' skills development, a total of 87 (47F) Start-Ups i.e., 35% of the target, and 224 (224F) MSMEs – 205% agribusinesses received five days of business skills training (BST) from the BSCs. The training topics included Introduction to entrepreneurship, business planning, marketing and sales, products and service development, human resource management, and financial management. During the BST's, training evaluations were undertaken to gauge which of the training topics were most appreciated by the agribusinesses. Note; financial management and marketing remain the most appreciated topics.

Note: Only 35% of initially planned start-ups were eventually trained, based on the recommendation by the donor to prioritize the scaling-up of existing (MSMEs) agribusinesses. The underachievement in Start-Ups was compensated by training more MSMEs (i.e., 205% of the target)

Table 8: Number of Start-ups and MSMEs that received BST.

Enterprises	MSMEs			Start Ups			Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Agro-input dealers	4	22	26	1	2	3	29
Vegetable producer	41	71	112	21	18	39	151
Vegetable vendors/buyers	0	67	67	0	0	0	67
Grain buyers/dealers	9	18	27	8	8	16	43
Oil seed/grain producer	3	0	3	0	2	2	5
Fish retailer	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Juice making	0	1	1	0	4	4	5
Agro processor	14	3	17	0	6	6	23
Fish traders	1	19	20	0	0	0	20

Poultry	0	0	0	10	6	16	16
Bakery	0	2	2	0	0	0	2
Transporter	1	0	1	0	1	1	2
Butcher	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Honey Aggregator	7	0	7	0	0	0	7
Palm oil Aggregator	2	20	22	0	0	0	22
Total	83	224	307	40	47	87	394

Furthermore, it was quite difficult to accurately quantify the business improvement after the BST because of the lack of baseline data. However, the follow-up survey showed positive results due the BST input. In fact, the follow survey assessed whether there was improvement in business performance and the level of implementation of different best business practices by the agribusinesses after the BST. The survey results show that, 87% of the 250 assessed agribusinesses (82% MSMEs and 92% Start-Ups) confirmed that their business performance improved after receiving the BST. Among those 213 agribusinesses, (95%) affirmed that they improved on marketing their products, followed by finance management practices (89%) and last record keeping with 87%. The fact records keeping as practice has been more mainstreamed is attributed to the constant follow-up by the Business Development Advisors.

Coaching and mentorship on how to grow businesses.

Figure 2: Start-Up adoption of best practices

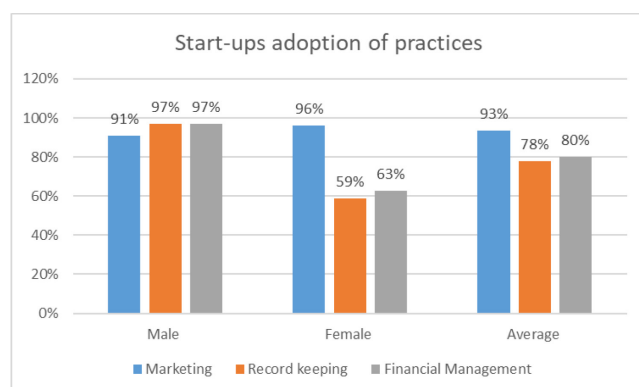
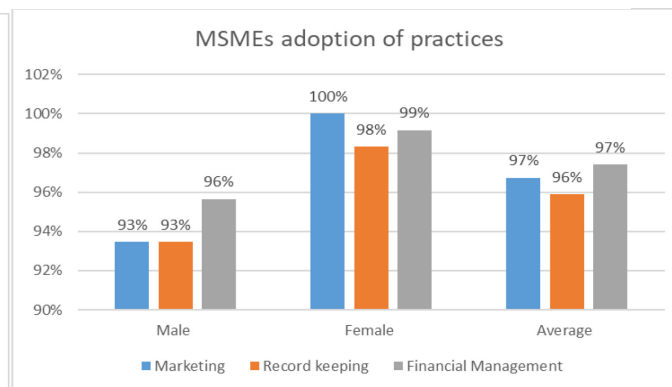



Figure 1: MSMEs adoption of best practices



In addition to the above, the BDAs are coaching operational agribusinesses to help their growth and sustainability. Under this support-category, two methods were used: The first method was the one-on-one coaching whereby the BDAs visit the agribusinesses (including on farm/site visits) to offer the technical advice on record keeping, financial management, operation management and marketing. The second method was group coaching (which was adopted this year) to facilitate empirical and peer-to-peer learning. ed on using those two methods 159 (115 F) Start Ups and 649 (393 F) MSMEs received coaching in 1,181 sessions on how to best grow their businesses.

Similar to the above, a question was administered in the follow-up survey to determine whether the agribusinesses had grown or expanded in the last year (2022). According to the survey's findings, the annual turnover of 49 (58%) start-ups and 156 (95%) MSMEs increased in the previous year (see tables 3 and 4 below). For comparison purposes, more women-led agribusiness (77%) expanded in the last year compared to men led ones (61%). To obtain this information, profit and loss statements were verified to determine growth, and in circumstances where the agribusiness had an incomplete or no record, the BDAs used probing method to determine the business turnover. For comparison purposes, recall-the-past methods were used to define the previous turnover levels before getting support from the project.

Although agribusinesses are generally growing and expanding, the percentage turnover growth among women-led agribusinesses remains lower. According to the survey, the men-led agribusinesses' average annual turnover

increased by over 386% while women-led agribusinesses turnover increased by an average of 122%. The driving force behind men's high turnover is due to large capital investment in the enterprises, engagement in more profitable enterprises (value addition), and availability of time to undertake promotional activities among others. Majority of the women are undertaking low capital agribusinesses like juice making, vegetable production, and peanuts butter among others.

Table 9: Number of Agribusinesses that expanded

Category	Start Ups Total			MSMEs		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Sample	33	51	84	44	121	165
Agribusinesses that expanded	8	41	49	39	117	156

Table 10: Increase in annual turnover.

Category	Start Up			MSMEs		
	Male	Female	Average	Male	Female	Average
Average Initial turnover of equivalent in USD	160	104	132	415	149	282
Average turnover of equivalent in USD - end 2022	925	355	640	916	337	626
%age increase in turnover - End 2022	480%	242%	386%	121%	126%	122%

2.4.2 D3: Availability of- and Access to Appropriate Financial Products and Services Ensured

Output D3.1 | VEMSAs, Co-ops & MSMEs have Bankable BP & access to finance services

Under this component, the BDAs undertook one-on-one coaching of MSMEs and Start-Ups seeking credit to develop business plans. In addition to the business plan development, the agribusinesses were tasked to conduct market research on prices, market demands, competitors, branding, and promotion, among others. Under this activity, 209 (77F) Start-Ups and 353 (239F) MSMEs (see table below) benefited from coaching to develop business plans in 895 sessions.

Table 11: Agribusiness coached on business plan development.

Enterprises	MSMEs			Start Ups			Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Agro-input dealers	0	1	1	4	4	8	9
Vegetable producer	79	153	232	73	19	92	324
Vegetable buyer	7	36	43	10	22	32	75
Juice making	2	4	6	0	4	4	10
Grain buyers	7	19	26	11	11	22	48
Oil seed/grain producer	5	3	8	9	8	17	25
Fish	2	16	18	1	2	3	21
Poultry	0	2	2	9	4	13	15
Agro processor	8	3	11	15	3	18	29
Honey buyer	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
Bakery	0	2	2	0	0	0	2
Butcher	3	0	3	0	0	0	3
Total	114	239	353	132	77	209	562

Out of the above supported agribusinesses, the following achievements were registered.

- Out of overall target of 120 planned businesses plans to be completed; 26 (4F) Start-Ups and 58 (24F) MSMEs business plans were finalized. The low number of businesses plans completed is because the majority consider the process cumbersome and less important because they cannot read and write. To address that, of the illiterate owned agribusinesses were supported to come up with simple investment plans (cost benefit analysis and cash flow statements).
- 20 (0F) Start-Ups and 46 (22F) MSMEs business plans were submitted for financing, and eventually, 20 (6F) Start-Ups and 19 (6F) MSMEs were financed, with the total amount of 24,050,000 SSP (40,083 USD) – see table below.

The turnaround time for the loan disbursement in 2022 by Rural Finance Initiative (RUF) remains faster compared to 2021. This is attributed to the proper screening/vetting of credit MSMEs by the BDAs and SPARK team prior to submission to RUF, and RUF establishment of offices in the field locations made it easier to reach clients. Despite the above achievements, the number of agribusinesses receiving loans remain low because of limited access to collateral (land title ownership).

Table 12: Start-ups Business Plans funded through RUF.

Category of businesses	Start-Ups funded			Amount equivalent in USD		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Agro-Input dealers	1	1	2	1,667	1,167	2,833
Vegetable producer	9	2	11	5,708	1,750	7,458
Juice making	0	1	1	-	333	333
Grain and oilseed producers	1	1	2	333	417	750
Grain dealer	1	0	1	500	-	500
Poultry production	1	0	1	1,083	-	1,083
Agro-processing	1	1	2	5,000	7,250	12,250
Total	14	6	20	14,292	10,917	25,208

Table 13: MSMEs Business Plans funded through RUF.

Category of businesses	MSMEs funded			Amount equivalent in USD		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Agro-Input dealers	0	2	2	0	2,167	2,167
Vegetable producer	5	1	6	2,667	917	3,583
Vegetable buyer	1	1	2	1,333	292	1,625
Grain and oilseed producers	5	0	5	3,167	-	3,167
Grain dealer	1	2	3	1,667	2,000	3,667
Agro-processing	1	0	1	667	-	667
Total	13	6	19	9,500	5,375	14,875

Output D3.2 | Farmers and agri-businesses have access to appropriate financial products/services

To ensure farmers and agribusiness have access to appropriate financial products and services, the project engaged the Rural Finance Initiative (RUF) to establish a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) scheme since 2019, aiming to create improved availability of, and access to, appropriate financial products and services to agribusiness and farmers targeted by the project. RUF received USD 300,000/= as the revolving loan fund in 3 instalments. Of these funds an equivalent of USD 246,081/= is outstanding as loans while USD 20,648/= is cash in bank SSP 14,306,000/= in cash in the three RUF branches (Yambio, Bor and Torit). In 2022, RUF designed and introduced two new products - VEMSA and Group Loans. The VEMSA Loan product target the informal women associations who are engaged in a variety of activities. Upon launch of this product, interest has been more pronounced in Torit where

mature and trained VEMSAs do exist. The Group Loan Target women and youth in groups of 3 -7 individuals engaged in any activity along agricultural value chain or agriculture produce and food items. Interest has been more pronounced in Yambio followed by Torit. The VEMSA Product has picked up well in Torit given than a lot of such groups were earlier trained and capacitated by Nira’s project. In Yambio, however, group lending has picked up compared to VEMSAs. During this reporting period RUFi Financed 71 MEMS and 280 members of Cooperative and VEMSA with total amount of 86809 USD. The loan uptake is still low because some of the project beneficiaries believe that Loans/funds should be distributed free of charge. This mindset actually existed till 2022 with continued

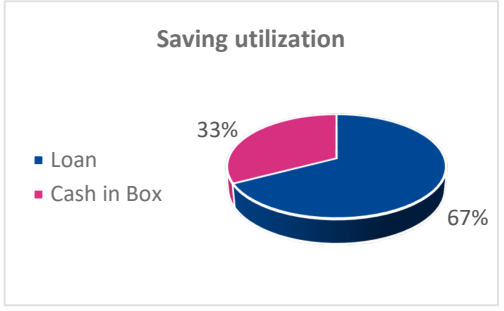
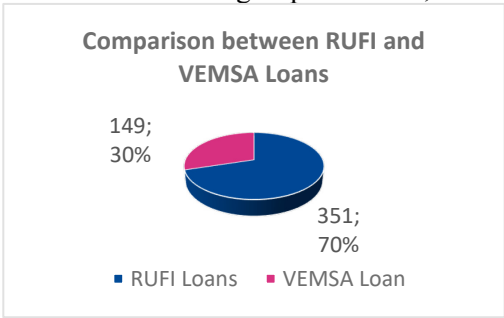
sensitization, coupled with financial literacy education and close collaboration with RUFi there is a positive trend on uptake of loans realised 2022. Today, individuals and groups walk into RUFi and present realistic farming plans. reports from follow ups indicate that diversion of funds or deliberate refusal to pay has declined. The Loans provided by RUFi have greatly improved the income of those who acquired the loans. As clients attested, they have realised improved incomes and have been able to expand their businesses. Eunice Layet from Torit dealing in Agro produce testified to this. After taking her 5th Loan of SSP 2 million, she has managed to expand her produce business and now supplies to Juba. She has a network of suppliers all over the outskirts of Torit. Nowadays, she is rarely at her business but rather crisscrossing Torit and Magwi to aggregate and collect produce. While she is the one that has taken more loans, others are following in her footsteps.




Loans Circulating in VEMSA groups:

Part from RUFi loans, members of VEMSA groups also access financial services through their savings. In 2022 Project established 9 VEMSA groups and continued to coach and mentor 51 VEMSA groups. In 2022, the 60 VEMSA groups raised savings worth 43,242,350 SSP and disbursed a total of 29,122,500 SSP loans to its members financing 149 different business (Bakery, Selling palm oil and other food items such as beans, rice, ground nuts paste, vegetables etc.). The loans disbursed by VEMSA groups accounted for 30% of loans financing different business compared to RUFi loans. The project team also noted that the VEMSAs disbursed 67% of their savings as loan to members while 33% of the savings remain the group saving boxes. Due to high depreciation of the South Sudan local currency, the project team have encouraged the VEMSA groups to invest part of their savings in value addition machines which can generate additional income for the group members through hire business. Project will also encourage and strengthen interested VEMSAs transition into SACCOs, or its members incubated to start businesses so that income sources are diversified other than relying on interests earned from their shares.

In order for these VEMSA groups to transition into SACCOs, it may require additional three years for the project team to sell the idea to interested VEMSAs and build their capacity in different aspects of



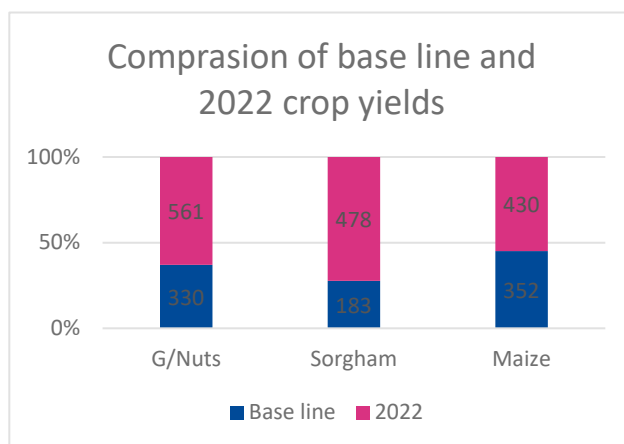
SACCO management.  aid also recommend for the use of the Rolving Loan fund held by RUFU to be injected as seed capital to interest VEMSAs who wish to transition into SACCOs.

3. Analysis

Resilient to DRR: To enhance farmers and agribusiness capacity to be more resilient to shocks and hazards - both natural and conflict, over the last 3 Years, the project formed and strengthened 80 CMDRR committees in the respective project locations. The committees were provided with range of trainings to build their capacity to conduct PDRA within the communities. The Outcome of the PDRA process was the development of the Community Led Action Plans highlighting common disasters in the community, community coping and mitigation measures. In 2022, the formed 5 CMDRR (3 Torit and 2 Bor) communities and strengthened the CMDRR committees formed in 2020 and 2021 in Yambio. The committees were engaged to review and update their Community led action plans. During the review process, no new hazards identified. The Project team in Yambio encouraged the CMDRR committees to continue with awareness raising on the potential hazards focusing on prevention and mitigation of wildfire outbreak which had become prevalent. Other actions taken by the Project team was encouraging farmers to undertake early land preparation and planting to avert pest and disease attack. The team also encourage one of the CMDRR committee in Buswera Primary School in Yambio to lobby JRS for borehole drilling where lack of clean drinking water was identified as major issue in the area

FEMA/FFS approach:- The project identified and trained 415 lead farmers (232 female) across the three project locations through TOT. The lead farmers supported their group members through a season-long farmer field schools experiential training program, conducted at the lead farmer garden. The Lead farmer approach is picking up very well compared to FFS. For future projects, there is need to incorporate FFS in lead farmer gardens to promote increased adoption of agronomic practices hence increase in production and productivity.

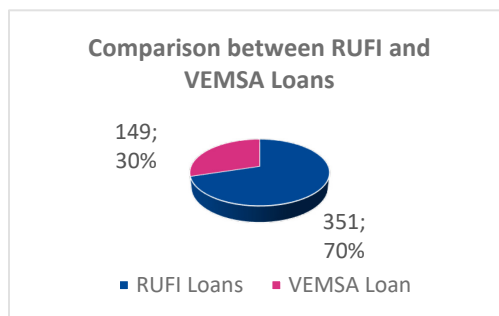
Increase in Production and productivity: The continuous coaching and mentoring (i) empowered farmers with knowledge and skills to make them an expert in their own fields, (ii) improved farmers ability to make critical and informed decisions that render their farming profitability and sustainability, (iii) sensitized farmers in new ways of thinking and problem-solving ability, and (iv) helped farmers on how to organize themselves for collective production and marketing. The project managed to collect harvesting and utilization plan from (436 maize, 965 sorghum and 825 ground nuts) who were supported in 202. The overall yield (kg per feddan) increase compared with average baseline quantity is 30% for maize; 161% for sorghum and 59% for groundnuts. The yield increase for farmers supported in 2022 is presented as follows:



Community based seed production: In 2022 the Project did not target new farmers because the community-based seed production strategy is not sustainable due to free seed distribution by other implementing partners. This equally demotivated the old seed producers targeted by Pro-seed company to

continue with contract farming arrangement. The project will continue to advocate with local authorities and implementing agencies through FSL Cluster to undertake seed availability assessment so that seed aid is provided to areas where there is high need.

VEMSA: . In 2022, the 60 VEMSA groups raised savings worth 43,242,350 SSP and disbursed a total of 29,122,500 SSP loans to its members financing 149 different business (Bakery, Selling palm oil and other food items such as beans, rice, ground nuts paste, vegetables etc.). The loans disbursed by VEMSA groups accounted for 30% of loans financing different business compared to RUFIs. The loans disbursed by VEMSA groups accounted for 30% of loans financing different business compared to RUFIs. The project team also noted that the VEMSAs disbursed 67% of their savings as loan to members while 33% of the savings remain the group saving boxes



MSMEs: According to the follow up survey's results, most of the start-ups and MSMEs (scale ups) agribusinesses confirmed to have accessed Business Skills Trainings (98%), coaching to grow businesses (89%) and market information (67%) from the BSCs. This shows importance of an infrastructure for a BSCs whereby agribusinesses can visit to get business development supports services. On the other hand, there was a low number of agribusinesses seeking support to complete business plans (38%) and financial linkages (36%). This was unsurprising because the business plan development is a new concept to most of the agribusinesses in the project's locations. The Business plan development was also negatively affected by the low literacy levels of the targeted entrepreneurs. Based on these findings, the critical area to embark in 2023 and future project is to facilitate more market interactions between market players (buyers, off-takers, producers, financial providers, Agro-processors among others), which was insufficiently planned and offered at the BSCs and to incorporate numeracy classes to tackle the low literacy levels among the targeted entrepreneurs.

Cooperatives: At least (84%) of cooperatives showed stability and have increased membership. Overall, 872 new members joined into existing cooperatives bringing the number of farmers participating as cooperative members to 3937(2100F). Number of active Cooperatives dropped from 130 Cooperatives to 104 active Cooperatives across the three Counties, because they were degraded to farmer group status by the state ministries of cooperatives and rural development especially in Yambio and Torit. The Project also piloted the formation of Cooperative Unions in Torit and Bor Counties. The two county unions – BMU and TCCU have been charged with the responsibility of not only managing the central warehouse facilities in Bor and Torit, but also to own it as well. The law empowers the state ministry of cooperatives and rural development (or any line ministry with the same function at the county) to be a trustee for the assets of the cooperatives (primary and union) or any arbitrator in case of conflicts among the members of the cooperatives, but not to own or seize cooperative assets. Due to political interference, primary cooperatives in Yambio are yet to ascend to form their own county union. The project team that noted, the established cooperative unions are at infant stage. If not supported for the next 3 years, they are most likely going to collapse.

4. Strategic changes

During this project cycle there were no major strategic changes to the plan developed during the inception period. The Annual data harvesting Survey Report suggested that the project was on the right track, with some recommendations on implementation, which do not require major strategic changes.

5. Sustainability

1. The Community Managed Disaster Risk Reduction (CMDRR) process which involves forming of CMDRR Committees, strengthening their capacity to facilitate Participatory Disaster Risk Analysis (PDRA), Conflict Risk Reduction and development of the Community Led Action Plans enhances ownership and resilience of farmers to potential shocks. The Committees are supported to implement and monitor these DRR action plans, enabling them to have more resilient livelihoods.
2. The market-oriented extension service given for FEMA and coop members through F2FE and radio talk shows including Cooperative governance, leadership and action plan preparation training changed farmers' attitude to become business oriented. The demo sites established under FEMA and Cooperatives serve as learning centres for knowledge sharing and co-learning on GAP, IPM and PHH for target farmers through learning by doing and contributed to demonstrate improved agriculture practices, technologies and to promote climate smart agriculture. The harvesting data collected from farmers groups formed in 2019 revealed that the project contribution is still sustainable.
3. The MSP helped value chain actors to interact and know each other and to create a “win-win” B2B linkage. The RLF filled agribusiness financial gap and stimulated coops and farmers to invest and start farming as a business. VEMSAs emerged from FEMA and Coops will also contribute to fill the financial gap faced by members through saving mobilization and enhance solidarity among the community. The amount of loan revolved and mobilised saving by VEMSAs will ensure the results of Access to finance will be sustainable.
4. Agriterra started the restructuring of the cooperatives to form Union, and this will increase the ability of the cooperatives to do aggregation at scale, support internal capital formation and plan investment in value addition that will enable the activities to be carried beyond the life of the project.
5. The strategy of including lead farmers in the advisory services for cooperatives increases efficiency of the team on the ground and localises knowledge at the cooperative level and makes training accessible to members of the cooperatives. This is an effective path to sustainability in terms of advisory services.
6. The increase in cooperative membership in Yambio and Bor by 5% and 10% compared to the registered 2019 membership will give confidence for the project as coops development is gaining momentum.
7. The commitment of Coops and VEMSA to prepare their own business plans as per the guidance from the project during C-BED and Farming as a Business training indicates the project contributes to the farmers mindset to be business oriented.
8. Working with Government line departments; for instance, with Ministry of Agriculture in Extension Service delivery and with local partners such as RUFU, SSAPU and Premium Agro Consult. We strive to build their capacity to be a strategic partner which will increase the project outreach and ensure the sustainability and scaling up of the results.

6. Lessons Learned

1. Business Support Centre financing strategies is critical for sustainability of Business Development Services.
2. With continued dependence on relief and aid, farmers and the general South Sudan community still assumes they are vulnerable and should continue getting support for free, including the hoes they use for farming.
3. There is huge potential for farmers to use the loans in profitable agricultural production. The challenge is only farmer's mindset on free handouts.
4. Scale-ups have more potential for success compared to start-ups. The focus was shifted to growing the business rather than targeting bigger businesses/Start Ups.
5. Agro-processing, off-takers and vegetable producer's enterprises has created direct jobs.
6. Deliberate interventions to stimulate demand and supply is critical for this kind of programming e.g. Discounting inputs through E-voucher as a way to increase of inputs and create input supply chain.
7. Integrate Pro-poor financing models (group financing, RUSACCO, matching grant etc.) is critical for post conflict market resilience interventions.
8. Women are skewed towards vegetable production, peanut butter, juice Agro processing etc.
9. The Private Sector Engagement and the C-BED training will enhance both backward and forward B2B linkages.
10. There is high adoption of agronomic practices through the lead farmer approach compare to FFS.

7. Communications and Creating Linkages

1. The project published the results, both activity and financial, every quarter on IATI website.
2. The consortium through Cordaid will continue to share the project outcomes and lessons learned in different forums and cluster meetings such as PfRR and the Food Security Cluster.
3. The project has strengthened its partnership and linkage with WFP, FAO, and UNDP.
4. Agriterra continued to communicate the project results in the organisations workplace and through their WhatsApp group. On individual basis, Agriterra business advisors use twitter for posting stories of the project and this now makes the stories accessible through the retweets to millions in the network through @Agriterra; though these messages include a lot of other projects, twitter message from South Sudan attracts a lot of interest due to our fragility and conflict sensitivity.

8. PLAN FOR THE COMING YEAR

8.1 Major Activities Planned in the Comping Year

The project detail narrative submitted to the embassy and the summary of detail implementation plan of the project is as follows:

1. **Farmers and Agri-businesses more resilient to shocks and hazards:**

- Strengthen existing "Peace & CMDRR Committees" in Payams and Bomas
- Strengthen the committees to facilitate community meetings and dialogue in peace, conflict resolution and CMDRR.
- Facilitate joint disaster risk analysis and CRA to build resilience to natural and man-made hazards.
- Support communities to meet and discuss disaster and hazard coping mechanisms.

- Support communities to develop and disseminate early warning action plans including climate smart agriculture and nutrition.
 - support and strengthen Early Warning Information Dissemination Systems
- 2. Enhanced sustainable production and productivity.**
- Strengthen existing FEMA group members through input and output market linkages and provide refresher training on GAP, IPM and PHH through radio talk show and F2FE with extension aid materials.
 - Support women vegetable groups to improve on income and nutritional status.
 - Support operationalization of local seed testing facilities in each county
 - Support SSAPU to deliver extension services to cooperative and non-cooperative members.
- 3. Improved inclusive agri-business market functioning.**
- Strengthen value chains actors B2B linkages and facilitate a multi-stakeholder platform (MSP)
 - Develop and roll out market-oriented extension services and market information system.
Support farmers and agribusiness to access improved market for their produce.
 - Facilitate rehabilitation/construction of aggregation centres for collective marketing.
 - Support Private Sector (Agro-dealer, CFSC, Processor and agribusiness) to stimulate the value chain and market development.
 - Support improved market availability and access by farmers and agribusinesses.
- 4. Improved performance of cooperatives and Agri-MSMEs and new jobs are created.**
- Strengthen and provide Resilient Business Development Services (RBDS) C-BED training to cooperatives, YWE, MSME and VEMSA
 - Provide training and coaching to Cooperative board members, members, and staffs to build Mycoop attitude.
 - Support and strengthen Cooperatives to developed action plan and function in input and output market.
 - Strengthen existing BDAs and train additional BDAs.
 - Provide core business skills and entrepreneurship training to existing YWE and MSME.
 - Support and strengthening YWE and MSME to participate in Business Start-up Acceleration for start-ups & Provide coaching for writing Bankable Business Plan
 - Support and strengthen YWE, MSME, Cooperative and farmers to access loan & financial services from RUFU.
 - Provide training to cooperative VEMSA and FEMA members on financial literacy.

8.2 Deviations from Existing plan

8.3 Initially, the project designed was to strengthen the agricultural eco-system, crowding of agribusinesses through supporting start-ups. But due to low turnover from the Start-ups the project shifted from targeting more start-ups to recruiting more existing MSMEs. The recruitment of exiting MSMEs has increased the number of MSMES in 2022.

8.4 Proposed adjustments to the plan.

1. From the onset of the project, extension services have been delivered by Cordaid recruited extension workers supported with seconded Extension Workers from the respective state ministries of Agriculture and Forestry. Since the project is coming to an end coupled with budget deficit to extend the contracts of Cordaid recruited extension workers, Cordaid will continue working with Seconded government extension workers who will provide extension services to the farmers till end of project and beyond.

8.5 Consequences of change on project strategy

- No change required.

8.6 Budget deviations

No update until financial report is finalized.

9. Annexes:

Annex 1: Results framework



FSABSS 2022 Results
Framework Data_Fin:

Annex 2: Activity Report



Activity Reporting
2022.xlsx

Annex 3: Success stories1



Vicky Mele's success
story VEMSA.docx

Annex 4: Success Story 2



Grace Alice success
story VEMSA.docx