

**Mid-Term Review of BMZ / KfW-funded AGRA programme in
Ghana and Burkina Faso
Final Report – 04 Oct 2022**

LETTER OF CERTIFICATION

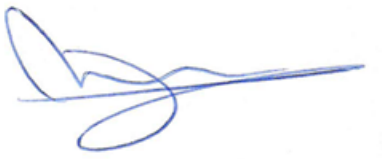
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The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators and does not necessary reflect the views of BMZ/KFW or AGRA.

If you require any additional information regarding this evaluation assignment or MDF as an organization, please do not hesitate contacting me directly.

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Acronyms

1D1F	1 District 1 Factory
AEA	Agricultural Extension Agent
AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
AMIS	AGRA Management Information System
APO	Associate Programme Officer
BMZ	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
COP	Country Operational Plan
E&S	Environmental and Social (risks)
ESMS	Environmental and Social Management System
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FRI	Food Research Institute
GAL	Grantee Award Letter
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW Development Bank)
KIT	Royal Tropical Institute (Amsterdam)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation (or MEL: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning)
MOTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MOFA	Ministry of Food and Agriculture
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OFSP	Orange Flesh Sweet Potato
PfJ	Planting for Food and Jobs
PIATA	Partnership for Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Africa
PO	Programme Officer
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
SHF	Smallholder Farmer
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
VBA	Village-Based Advisor (sometimes called Community-Based Advisor)

Executive Summary

KfW's support to AGRA's programme in Ghana and Burkina Faso is focussed on **four projects**, namely in Ghana a project in rice development and another in cassava, and in Burkina Faso a rice project and a project to develop decentralised extension services. All four projects included a component of farmer training, input supply especially seeds, market development linked to access to credit, and to some extent enabling policy environment. Both rice projects leveraged public input subsidisation programmes, while in rice and cassava public and private investment in processing took place as well.

This **Mid-Term Review** (MTR) had been planned by KfW to review the design of the first financing phase of KfW's support to AGRA (2017-2021), aiming to identify scope for improvement, provide lessons learnt, and assess prospects for future cooperation. However, because of the numerous restrictions caused by the COVID-pandemic, the MTR only took place in Summer 2022, while the programme was extended till end of 2022. Although the MTR still operated in its original terms of reference, it does in fact review the project results up to its final year, and no further end-of-project evaluation is foreseen.

This MTR was based on a **mixed methods approach**, collecting data from desk research, stakeholder interviews, focus group discussions with farmers and processors, as well as a limited survey among project farmers. The methods complement each other, allowing for the evaluation questions to be reviewed from different angles and findings to be triangulated. Although the MTR only allowed for a narrow data set to be collected, together they enable a balanced review of the KfW-AGRA programme in Ghana and Burkina Faso and the formulation of forward-looking recommendations. It is to be noted, however, that because of the limited budget and dataset, as well as absence of a comprehensive counterfactual analysis (because an MTR method was followed, not an evaluation methodology), no causality can be claimed of observed results to KfW inputs.

A review of **relevance** found the projects to fit into national policies for agriculture development, and indeed government was associated with all of them, while these projects were clearly matching the needs as expressed by farmers through the mini-surveys and focus group discussions. The AGRA operations are **coherent** with each other and the governments' work, ensuring considerable synergies and avoiding duplication.

All four projects were **effective** in raising farmers' production standards while connecting them to input suppliers, seeds in particular. This helped raise their yields by 50-100%, increase product quality, and incomes. Post-harvest losses were also reduced. In spite of this, the connection of farmers to structured markets (rice and cassava) disappointed as buyers hesitate to commit themselves to an offtake contract and fix a price in advance, while in cassava (semi-)industrial processing capacity was insufficient. Access to credit, foreseen through value chain finance mechanisms, disappointed as a result. This finding is reflective of international experience showing that value chain structuring is often possible when there is a clear and unique offtaker identified, e.g., in tea, cocoa and cotton, but much more difficult in local food crops where farmers have many (local) buyers to choose from, hence are easily induced to disrespect their forward-sales contracts. The KfW-AGRA projects were far too short in duration (2-3 years) to allow for sustainable development of trust and relations in the value chain, e.g., from input suppliers, to farmers, to aggregators and processors. A project to establish sound value chain connections and

build mutual trust, including reliable contracting and thereby leveraging other services such as credit and input supply, would take at least double this time. This is especially true as the projects in both countries included significant public and private investment in processing capacity, which takes some years to be completed and be available to farmers.

Relating to **efficiency**, the various project implementing consortia generally performed the tasks they were supposed to. Coordination within the consortia, however, was poor as partners did their work on an individual basis with insufficient consultation and mutual trust – this except for the Burkina Faso extension project. This was in large part due to the project structure whereby AGRA contracted consortium partners individually, each having their own work plan, budget and reporting requirements, not installing the consortium “leader” in a real leadership role. The various grant proposals were well prepared, although the budgets were structured in such manner that consortium members may have interpreted these as entitlements. The management and support by AGRA was generally appreciated, although some found it bureaucratic and inflexible.

The projects were **impactful** in terms of raising farmer incomes, food security, access to health and education, although the cassava project trailed the others. The (rice) seed production sector was durably improved, and general awareness of the benefits of using good seeds (and fertilisers) was raised. Some unintended positive impacts were seen on neighbouring farmers, not involved in the project, taking on the good practices from the project farmers. Women processing cassava in communities benefited from increased supply of raw material, even though they were not directly targeted by the project. The same was seen in the rice projects. The MTR also revealed that some project farmers used their increased incomes to invest in other income generating activities, such as a small village grocery.

The **sustainability** of the newly learned agricultural practices adopted by farmers is generally high, as they recognise the benefits of new ways of working. However, links with input suppliers are not sufficiently solid in all cases, and access to structured markets weak hence likely unsustainable. The sustainability of the extension model in Burkina Faso is fragile, as village advisors are essentially volunteers who were expected to develop into sales agents for input suppliers or aggregators as their key revenue model. Many do not have this inclination or capacity, and neither have local input dealers, hence the village advisors’ role in farm advisory and input intermediation is under pressure. The MTR found that the extension model needs more time to be refined, finding an attractive value proposition to village advisors and farmers alike, and selecting, training and capacitating the right individuals to play this role. The government of Burkina Faso has now taken the responsibility to develop and upscale the VBA model.

The MTR found that all projects paid some attention to **women and youth** inclusion, but not overwhelmingly so. In the rice projects, some women groups were supported in seed production, processing and parboiling. Women also benefitted indirectly as they operate local SMEs in transformation and trade, with more material on the market now (e.g., cassava processing). This, however, supports and confirms women in their traditional roles downstream the value chain, and does nothing to combat fundamental inequalities in society – chiefly access to land. By contrast, reaching out to women as seed producers may turn out transformational. A matching grant was available for youths investing in rice processing and services in Burkina Faso, but unsuccessful as youths did not have their own capital contributions.

The evaluation team found that AGRA had set up an **E&S** risk awareness system, which implementation and inculcation is still a work in progress. While the MTR did not reveal cases where the projects contributed to adverse impacts of a social or environmental nature, nor farmer indebtedness or unfair land practices, we could also not detect many instances where the projects decisively acted to remedy E&S risks that are present in society. While it is true that the projects promoted environmentally sound production, such as not burning weeds and using organic fertilisers, while stressing the importance of child education, we found many stakeholders uncritically accepting or explaining away current cultural and agronomic practices. The MTR would favour AGRA promoting increased attention to E&S risks and preferably including such components in the programme ToC (e.g., expand land under sustainable management).

1 Introduction

1.1 AGRA in Ghana and Burkina Faso

Founded in 2006, AGRA's vision is to catalyse and sustain inclusive agriculture transformation in Africa by increasing incomes and improving food security for 30 million smallholder households in Africa, and to support countries on a pathway to attain and sustain agricultural transformation. In 2017, AGRA launched the Partnership for Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Africa (PIATA), aiming to drive inclusive agricultural transformation. Ghana and Burkina Faso are among the 11 countries currently benefiting from PIATA, each of which have tailor-made country strategies. As AGRA follows a systems approach, it works with all agriculture stakeholders, not just farmers and agri-business, but governments and knowledge institutes too. Hence, AGRA works on agricultural policy, farm inputs (e.g., seeds, fertilisers), markets, warehouses, value addition, access to finance, as well as extension services and outgrower schemes.

AGRA's specific areas of work are Policy and State Capability (strengthen government execution capacity), Systems Development (downstream delivery of agro-inputs, credit, etc to smallholders), and Partnerships (aligning public and private sectors for investment beneficial to smallholders). AGRA's tools includes grant-making, technical assistance, knowledge management, brokering and facilitating government and partner/private sector relations, communications, convening ability, and building partnerships to drive a transformation agenda in its focus countries.

AGRA's goal in **Ghana** is to increase the incomes and food security for 600,000 smallholder farmers (SHF) reached directly and for 1.2 million SHF reached indirectly through targeted investments on maize, rice, cassava, soybean, cowpea, groundnut & OFSP. AGRA Ghana focus areas are Seeds / input systems, Fertiliser / soil systems, Extension services, Distribution systems / agro dealers, Market systems, Inclusive finance, and Resilience strengthening. The KfW-funded interventions concentrated on the rice and cassava value chains, both commodities with large local demand and far too little local supply (see chapter 2 below). Both faced low productivity, high cost of production, and high post-harvest losses. Local processing capacity was low, and in addition underutilised.

AGRA's objective in **Burkina Faso** is to increase incomes, improve food security and reduce shocks and stresses for at least 1.3 million smallholder households directly and 0.9 million indirectly in four value chains, namely cowpeas, maize, rice, and sorghum. AGRA Burkina Faso focus areas are Seeds / input systems, Fertiliser / soil systems, Extension services, Market systems, Inclusive finance, and State Capability. One of the KfW-funded interventions targeted the rice value chain, aiming to increase local production of a product that is more and more appreciated by local consumers, and to substitute imports (productivity increase, enhanced processing, marketing). Interventions included provision of better seeds, extension services, market linkages, upgrading rice mills and strengthening other value chain partners. The second project was responding to the observed low access to extension services in Burkina Faso, and helped government appraise and set up a private sector led extension approach using model farmers at village level (the VBAs). The project also included an e-extension component to enhance the delivery of extension services through ICT. Beneficiaries were mainly SHF in maize and cowpeas value chains.

BMZ, through KfW, made available EUR 10 million to support AGRA's strategy in Ghana and Burkina Faso (first phase 2017-2021, extended till 2022, a second phase is starting for Burkina Faso and

Nigeria). According to the financing agreement, KfW is co-financing AGRA's Country Strategy (through the Country Operational Plan – COP) in Ghana and Burkina Faso, which totals USD 73 million. Other donors include USAID and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. However, it has subsequently been decided to select specific projects for KfW financing. Hence, it looks like as if KfW is not making a contribution to the entirety of the PIATA programme in Ghana and Burkina Faso (joint co-funding) but supporting specific activities directly attributable to KfW (parallel co-funding). Therefore, the projects financed by KfW can be unambiguously identified, in this case two in Ghana and two in Burkina Faso, although there is some ambiguity on this matter with KfW financing some overall staff and operational costs and with AGRA reporting to KfW on its country programmes rather than the KfW projects only. As mentioned above, one project in Ghana was focussed on rice, the other on cassava. In Burkina Faso, one project was to improve extension services in maize and cowpeas mainly, while the other was a rice project. All four projects were led by a consortium of implementing partners. More information on these projects is provided in chapter 2 below. The logical framework for the German support is provided in chapter 3.

In both countries the KfW-AGRA projects focussed on strengthening input systems through linkages between demand and supply for improved inputs (e.g., seeds), supporting output markets and improved access to finance. The developmental aim was to sustain agricultural growth, contribute to access to food and reduce dependency on food imports, and build more resilient communities.

1.2 Purpose of the Mid-term Review

According to the ToR, the objectives of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) are as follows. Firstly, the MTR needs to assess AGRA's compliance with the Financing Agreement signed between KfW and AGRA, analyse implementation procedures and AGRA's monitoring and safeguard system. Secondly, the MTR needs to review the effectiveness of the programme in terms of achieving intended outcomes and goals. Thirdly, the ToR specifically ask for a review of projects' conformity with environmental and social risks as well as possible human rights aspects. Finally, the MTR is to provide lessons learned and forward-looking recommendations to improve programme implementation, which is particularly relevant as a second phase is now starting. The detailed evaluation questions were included in appendix 1 of the inception report, and are reproduced in sections 5-9 of this report.

This Mid-Term Review is dealing with the (four) KfW-funded projects only. Although this cannot be seen separately from the overall AGRA programmes in Ghana and Burkina Faso (PIATA), the MTR does not evaluate the entirety of AGRA's work in these countries, just the work for which KfW funds have been used in light of target group needs and national agricultural development policy. A lot of documents were availed by AGRA for our perusal, but we concentrated our efforts on those that are directly relevant to the KfW-funded operations.

The MTR was initially planned for in mid-2021, covering project results up to end-of 2020. However, due to the restrictions imposed by COVID the MTR started one year late. As the MTR research and interviews took place in June/July 2022, the respondents have given much more recent information. Although we could have asked respondents for the situation as of Dec 2020, it is likely many lack accurate recollection, and in addition it seems more meaningful to make use of the most recent information available. Therefore, in practice the MTR covers project results until mid-2022, and nearly equals an end-of-project evaluation. It is to be emphasized, however, that although the projects were essentially completed when this delayed MTR took place, the research methodology was not equal to a (final) evaluation. In line with MTR practice, the MTR has a learning purpose mainly.

This MTR report was based on desk research and field work in the period June/July 2022. As to the contents of this report, after an introduction to the four projects in chapter 2, the ToC in chapter 3, and the review methodology in chapter 4, the report follows the OECD evaluation criteria of relevance and coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability in chapters 5 to 9. All chapters repeat the evaluation questions as we synthesised them in the inception report, appendix 1. Conclusions and recommendations follow in chapter 10.

It is to be emphasised that the MTR only had the resources to undertake a limited data collection effort, certainly when compared to the size of the programme. The research included a mini-survey, a number of focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews that provided useful information, but cannot be certain of being representative of the overall KfW-funded programme, let alone the wider PIATA in Ghana and Burkina Faso. Furthermore, counterfactual analysis was limited and no contribution analysis was conducted, hence claiming causality of observed effects to the KfW funding is methodologically challenging. Nevertheless, MDF believes that many of the findings and conclusions in this report can help AGRA and KfW improve on their joint efforts to develop the agricultural sector in Africa.

The evaluation team wishes to take the opportunity to thank AGRA, consortium partners, related stakeholders and farmers, as well as KfW, for the collaboration, information provided and time taken to make this MTR possible.

2 Portfolio in Ghana and Burkina Faso

According to AGRA's country analysis, both Ghana and Burkina Faso deem agricultural development critical to long-term economic growth and food security. The governments in both countries prioritise agriculture in national development plans. Smallholder farmers, however, the mainstay of agricultural production, still have low incomes, commercialisation in agriculture is limited, food insecurity in some regions is very worrying, and both Ghana and Burkina Faso have high food importation bills.

The funding agreement between AGRA and KfW covered investments in a 5-year project (now extended till end of 2022), *"Catalytic investments toward agricultural transformation in Ghana and Burkina Faso"* in a number of value chains (see section 1.1 above). However, given the time needed for preparing the programme, selection of implementing partners and preparing projects, as well as training of implementing partners in AGRA processes and M&E, the KfW-funded operations eventually took the form of 3-year projects (max). The projects were also concentrated on fewer value chains than initially intended (rice and cassava, and the others indirectly through extension services in Burkina Faso), leaving the other value chains to different parts of the PIATA programme.

AGRA's intervention logic is based on the understanding that smallholder farmers' incomes are low and food insecurity high because of the core problem of low productivity, arising from:

- a) Underdeveloped agricultural systems: weak linkages between supply and demand for inputs, limited output markets, low access to finance. SMEs providing services along the value chains would be strengthened to enhance service delivery. Particular interest would be in value addition to increase competitiveness of the agro-processing industry.
- b) Poor policy enabling environment: poor cross-ministerial policy coordination and weak implementation of policies to guarantee an enabling regulatory environment. Additionally, there are inadequate capacities to mobilise resources to fund national plans and programmes, thus stimulating private sector development.

These challenges hinder a sustained agricultural growth in both countries, which underlies AGRA's project proposal to KfW.

2.1 KfW-funded programme in Ghana

KfW funded two projects in Ghana in the total value of USD 3.5 million, targeting 140,000 smallholder farmers directly and 592,000 indirectly, in two value chains: Rice and Cassava. These aimed to address key challenges of unmet market demand, huge imports, low processing capacities, low productivity of farmers, poor organisational capacity of farmer groups, low value and quality of product derivatives.

AGRA's strategy to address these is closely aligned and explicitly complementary to that of the government of Ghana, particularly its flagship agricultural transformation agenda, *"Planting for Food and Jobs"*. Both implementing consortia were initiated in 2018. AGRA's services were delivered through full and matching grant mechanisms, challenge funds, consultancies and partnerships.

2.1.1 Ghana Rice Consortium - Public-Private Partnership for Competitive & Inclusive Rice Value Chain Development

A total investment of USD 2.4 million was allocated to develop the rice value chain, including additional support of USD 314,000 provided in 2020 to mitigate the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, targeting 128,764 smallholder farmers directly and indirectly. A consortium of six (6) implementing partners was selected through a two-stage open call for proposals. Intervalle Ltd, the initial consortium Lead, is an agricultural development company with years of experience in commodity trading and facilitating PPP development. Two private certified seed producers (Volta City Farms and Sparkx SM Ghana Ltd) would address the demand gap for improved seed varieties. An agricultural value chain development NGO (Hope Line Institute) offered capacity building of value chain actors in agronomic and business practices. To address the need for facilitating policy dialogue to improve the enabling environment in the rice sector, John Kufuor Foundation (JAKF), an NGO specializing in Policy, Advocacy and Governance, was included. The primary public institution responsible for agricultural development, the Crop Services Directorate of the Ministry of Food & Agriculture at the regional and district level, was responsible for smallholder farmer outreach, provision of subsidised inputs and agronomic training. One and half years into the project, the Lead Grantee role was taken over by Hope Line Institute as the contract with Intervalle was terminated following poor performance and an unfavourable audit.

The Rice Consortium in Ghana, in combination with the Government's input subsidisation through the Planting for Food and Jobs (PfJ) programme, sought to stimulate a thriving rice industry that would contribute to reducing Ghana's rice import bill by about 30% during the project period, through significant increases of smallholder productivity, enhancement of processing quality, and promotion of the consumption of local rice. This would open up market opportunities for local traders and stimulate production from smallholder farmers who would have received improved varieties of seeds and been supported with inputs and training to meet the market requirements. The project was executed in 5 regions of the country: Northern, Brong-Ahafo, Central, Ashanti and Volta.

The initial intervention strategy was to leverage Intervalle's ongoing agreements with the Government of Ghana to mobilise funding for the national rice development strategy. A targeted public investment of USD 50 million was envisaged for development of 50,000 hectares of land for both smallholder cooperatives and large commercial entities. On the other hand, the competitiveness of an inclusive rice value chain would be achieved through targeted investments in production, processing, market facilitation, mechanisation, and the adoption of productivity enhancing technologies, among others. This initial strategy, however, was changed as the expected facilitation of large investments by Intervalle did not materialise. The consortium focused on enhancing the competitiveness of the rice value chain through:

- Strategic **policy dialogue** – JAKF facilitated a high level platform with key stakeholders in the rice sector, led by the MOFA, to address policy bottlenecks limiting private investments in the rice sector.
- Stimulating **private investments** in branding and marketing local rice varieties through enforcing policies that restricted issuance of import licences and stimulating an increased quality rice production that attracted private sector interest in marketing local varieties.
- Supporting **upstream and downstream actors** to expand their productivity of good quality local rice brands through brokering access to inputs, best practice knowledge and access to funding.

- Facilitation of structured **market linkages** between the processors (millers & parboilers) and traders as off-takers and organised groups of smallholder farmers. Processors played a central role engaging the market on the one hand to understand its demand and quality requirements, and through contractual engagements supporting producers to supply quality products, which are then sold on the market under off-taker contracts.

The interventions of JAKF through the National Rice platform resulted in the initiation of a draft Rice Development Strategy. The Government also set up a fund of GHC 20 million to support processors to acquire better processing equipment to produce high quality rice. A policy to oblige importers to trade local rice varieties up to 30% of their portfolio was operational, attracting large investors like Olam Ltd, Wilma (formerly Unilever) as well as introducing more than 23 local rice brands when it started with only two (2). The subsequent “Eat Ghana Rice” campaign was considered successful, triggering an increase in local rice consumption.

AGRA provided grants to consortium members for their defined deliverables, which were agreed under separate sub-grant agreements while the implementation activities were monitored through joint grantee meetings. The coordination of reporting of activities of all consortium partners for submission to AGRA was only effectively carried out when Hope Line Institute assumed the leadership role.

2.1.2 Cassava (Ghana Cassava Industrialisation Partnership)

KfW’s funding to the cassava project in Ghana amounted to USD 1.2 million, and targeted 110,000 farmers in the Brong-Ahafo and Northern regions. AGRA’s grant was provided under a sole sourcing agreement in response to a request by the Government of Ghana, represented by the Ministry of Trade and Industry under its “One District, One Factory” (1D1F) initiative. Thus, like the above rice project, the KfW-funded project was to complement and co-fund the government’s ongoing strategic investments, namely a programme in the Cassava sector in which 11 large-scale cassava processing companies were supported to expand and modernise their factories to offtake 1.4 million tonnes of cassava from local producers in the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti regions.

The project sought to address key challenges to competitiveness in the cassava chain arising from weak middle management capacities of processing companies, low organisational and technical capacities of producers and associations leading to low yields and high post-harvest losses, among others. The project aimed to leverage the government’s USD 85 million investments in cassava processing, significantly increase farmer productivity, enhance efficiency of primary processing, and support the government’s cassava industrialisation agenda.

The consortium membership was initiated by MOTI and was led by Agri-Impact Limited, a company with previous experience facilitating the development of value chains, organising and training farmers in agronomic practices. The Ghana Industrial Cassava Stakeholder Platform, a multi-stakeholder network of actors in the cassava value chain, was included to create awareness of value-added products using cassava and to assist the platform members advocate for policies to improve their businesses. The Food Research Institute provided training to processors on improved technologies in cassava processing to meet best practice quality standards. Amantin-Agro processing Ltd, Ohumpong and JOSMA companies, private cassava processing companies were off-takers who were to provide planting material to the farmers in their respective clusters and buy their produce. The Crop Research Institute developed improved planting materials for multiplication.

Essentially, the intervention was an off-taker model that had the processors, mainly the commercial factories that benefited from the 1D1F initiative, being linked to clusters of farmers in their respective

communities as supply sources, under contractual agreement. Organised farmer groups were trained by Agri-impact to deliver improved varieties according to agreed schedules and quantities. The demand for cassava from processors supported under the 1D1F would stimulate productivity of farmers and guarantee their market under off-taker contractual agreements, hence increased incomes. This structured market arrangement would be supported by brokerage of funding by MOTI to improve the quality of processing facilities and technologies.

AGRA supported the MOTI to strengthen its capacity to lead the implementation of its Cassava Industrialisation programme. Under an MoU with AGRA, MOTI was to develop policies to stimulate local investments in production, support expansion of domestic and export markets, as well as stronger regulatory framework among public institutions to facilitate market growth.

The performance of the Cassava project was dogged by challenges, the key one being the failure of Amantin Agro Processing to complete its processing facility on schedule (see section 6 on effectiveness). Not only did the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lock-down prevent the Chinese suppliers of the equipment from travelling to carry out installations, but delays in funding of the research institution affected the timely supply of planting stock. With the added problems of poor weather, farmers suffered the double agony of losing their market and poor output in some areas. The market challenge was met by supporting the expansion of the facilities of Ohumpong and JOSMA Ltd and broadening the product portfolio of these companies to absorb output from farmers from the Amantin cluster.

2.2 KfW-funded projects in Burkina Faso

Two projects were funded in Burkina Faso to address the peculiarities in its context - a country with high security risk in some parts due to terrorism and insurgent activity, but with well-integrated output markets in the West African sub-region. Opportunities have been created by the government's investments in the financial sector and prioritisation of ICT in its development strategy.

Total investments by KfW in Burkina Faso were USD 5.5 million.

2.2.1 Rice - The "Improved Rice Quality for better income" (QUALIRIZ) project

The QUALIRIZ project sought to reduce Burkina Faso's rice import bill of USD 250 million annually and develop a quality rice value chain locally. Local production was inadequate to meet demand due to various weaknesses along the value chain, key of which were: low acreages under cultivation, poor agronomic practices, poor seed and milled rice quality, under-utilisation of processing capacity and inefficient output market systems.

The project, with a budget of USD 2.9 million, aimed at leveraging the government's investments in irrigation schemes to expand production of high-quality rice varieties that meet market requirements, and to expand processing capacities. It would also invest in processing and distribution systems of both paddy and milled rice. The goal was to reach 50,000 farmers and at least 16 processors delivering a minimum of 125,000 mt of rice to the market in the project period.

The location of the project was the Centre East region, which accounts for 20% of the country's rice production and 29% of its rice processing capacity. The strategy was to improve the commercialisation of rice in the region, built on ongoing government efforts at stimulating rice production for its food security reserve. Increasing and marketing of local rice for traders who were hitherto importing rice would require improvements in quality of marketed rice and integration of production and processing

systems to achieve more collaboration to take advantage of household's market opportunities. Financing of USD 10 million was to be mobilised and targeted at actors along the chain to ensure they deliver to market requirements timely.

The approach to integration of the production and market systems was similar to the off-taker model adopted in Ghana, where the central role is taken by processors to pull production volumes through contracting arrangements and push end market volumes through supply contracts. Of particular note was that women, who are the main adopters of the parboiling processing method, were also organised and trained in improving their technologies in order to save time and also achieve higher quality output. They were also to be supported to access finance for acquiring improved equipment through a matching grant facility.

The implementation of the project was carried out by a consortium of partners with varied expertise, led initially by Rikolto Ltd, for business and value chain development. The national public research institute, INERA (Institut de l'Environnement et de Recherches Agricoles) supported the production of early generation seeds. SICAREX, a private consulting firm facilitated access to financing and business plan development. TRIAS, a local NGO was responsible for farmers' organisation and capacity building in agronomic practices. Coris Bank International was expected to roll out a matching grant facility to enable processors purchase modern equipment. Regrettably, Rikolto failed to play its coordination and facilitation role in the consortium, which resulted in project delays, in particular in the investments foreseen in rice processing. Thus, toward the end of the project the consortium leadership was taken over by Sicarex. However, given limited experience of Sicarex in investment and finance, AGRA had to engage an officer with experience in brokering finance to join the team and salvage this project component.

As mentioned above, the project implemented a matching grant facility to support processors upgrade their milling capacity. This required Coris bank to analyse and process loans applications, which the project would co-finance. While this approach enabled beneficiary SMEs to build relationships with the bank and increase their bankability, it required time from application to loan disbursements as some of the applicants required credit guarantees, which was provided by a third-party guarantee fund (SOFIGIB). Given the time needed to launch this project component, and also the replacement of Rikolto, the project received a no-cost extension until 2022.

2.2.2 Extension Service Project

The main objective of the extension project was to get the Village Based Advisors (VBA) approach to extension service delivery adopted by the government of Burkina Faso and integrated into the public extension support to farmers country wide. A VBA is a role model, a farmer who is selected by the Ministry of Agriculture extension agents in collaboration with farmers from his/her village for being dependable. VBAs are trained to become self-employed extension agents in their village, training farmers in good agronomic practices and managing demonstration plots to show varietal performance of different seed varieties.

Weak extension support is a major factor hindering market competitiveness of Burkina Faso's high value staples. The lack of effective extension services results from farmer to extension agent ratios as low as 1 to 3,500, and inability of both government and farmer organisations to achieve access to information on productivity improvements and new plant varieties. Thus, output markets' quality standards could not be met by farmers due to poor agronomic practices, low climate resilience, and

high post-harvest losses, among others. Furthermore, extension practices were outdated and expensive, and did not take advantage of the widespread use of mobile phones and ICT.

KfW funded the USD 2.6 million investment in the VBA system, aiming to reach 294,000 smallholder farmers in the maize and cowpea value chains. Apart from addressing this weakness in extension approaches, the project supported the production of higher yielding seed varieties and the strengthening of farmers' resilience to drought.

The project was implemented in the Hauts Bassins, Cascades, Centre-Ouest, and Boucle du Mouhoun Regions. Two institutions, Association Burkinabè d'Action Communautaire (ABAC) – {a national NGO involved in agriculture development and farmer capacity building} and KAWORO - a seed company were implementers of the project. 125 professional seed producers would also be supported to develop high yielding seed varieties. Engagement at the national level with the Extension Services Department (DGPV) in implementation resulted in changes in the national extension service policy and is now being implemented at regional levels through annual work plans and step-down training, setting the basis for replication of the VBA model.

The intervention was built around a Training of Trainer approach where Master trainers (NGOs) provided training at the regional level to consortia of partners to conduct step-down training for VBAs. VBAs were supervised by trained Agricultural Extension Agents (AEAs) to set up 1,176 “mother” demonstrations and 294,000 “baby” (farmers’) demonstrations using improved seeds they had received in a package from the consortium. Other investments were planned for irrigation set-ups at the local level as well as climate resilient technologies. Ultimately, the project aimed to demonstrate to the government the viability of the VBA model, for its adoption and institutionalisation. 1,826 VBAs were engaged in this project.

During the project, and to respond to the constraints of Covid, an ICT-based remote extension service was added, offering farmers access to online information or through a call centre. VBAs received smart phones with video content linked to a cloud platform. However, the content needed to be regularly updated and with low connectivity in the villages some VBAs had challenges connecting to the platform.

As a supplementary extension approach, the use of the VBA model has been widespread across the AGRA value chain development programmes in both Ghana and Burkina Faso and has been replicated in both countries under government-sponsored programmes in different locations outside the intervention areas of AGRA.

2.3 Cross-Cutting themes

AGRA's agreement with KfW also includes commitments towards adherence to KfW's and other international organisations' conventions on environmental and social impact standards. These include effects on natural resources consequent to project activities, use of hazardous chemicals, and violation of labour rights, child labour, occupational health, and safety. Other themes include mainstreaming gender and youth in programmes.

To monitor adherence to the commitments an Environmental and Social Management System was developed by AGRA and all Grantee Award Letters (GAL) oblige implementing partners to apply these standards in their sub-grants and within their own organisations. AGRA has incorporated these standards within its Grants manual and all grantees are trained on how to keep to the standards set in

the manual. During the field work most of the stakeholders engaged confirmed that training sessions had included ESMS and thus there was general awareness of these. AGRA has, however, not included any monitoring indicators regarding E&S risks within its monitoring system and thus grantees and other partners do not report on these specifically. Furthermore, none of the respondents were aware of any system in AGRA or the project to address any infringements of environmental and social guidelines that may have occurred. AGRA is planning to develop such functionality shortly.

The subject of E&S risk management and reporting is further discussed in chapters 6 and 7 below.

3 Theory of Change and M&E

3.1 Theory of Change

The starting point of any evaluation or mid-term review is the Theory of Change (ToC), or intervention logic, with result indicators, as formulated at the outset of the programme, or as revised afterwards in mutual agreement. In its proposal to KfW (31st Oct 2017) AGRA included a very detailed and highly ambitious ToC as is summarised below (see appendix 1 of the proposal). A shortened version was attached to the financing agreement¹, and this version was used by AGRA in its semi-annual results reporting to KfW. In agreement with KfW, some indicators and targets were subsequently revised to reflect programming decisions and baseline data as they came available.

- The **overall objective** (impact goal) was to “Catalyse and sustain an inclusive agricultural transformation to increase incomes and improve food security for smallholder farmers in targeted regions in Burkina Faso and Ghana”. The programme was to reach 296,000 households directly and 592,000 indirectly. The following result indicators, with 2018 baseline and 2021 targets (not shown here), were formulated (simplified version of the financing agreement with appendixes):

1. Average number of months of adequate household food provision
2. Percent of population living on less than USD 1.90 / day

It is important to understand that the KfW-programme is meant to contribute to this impact goal, so is not all by itself meant to achieve (all of) it.

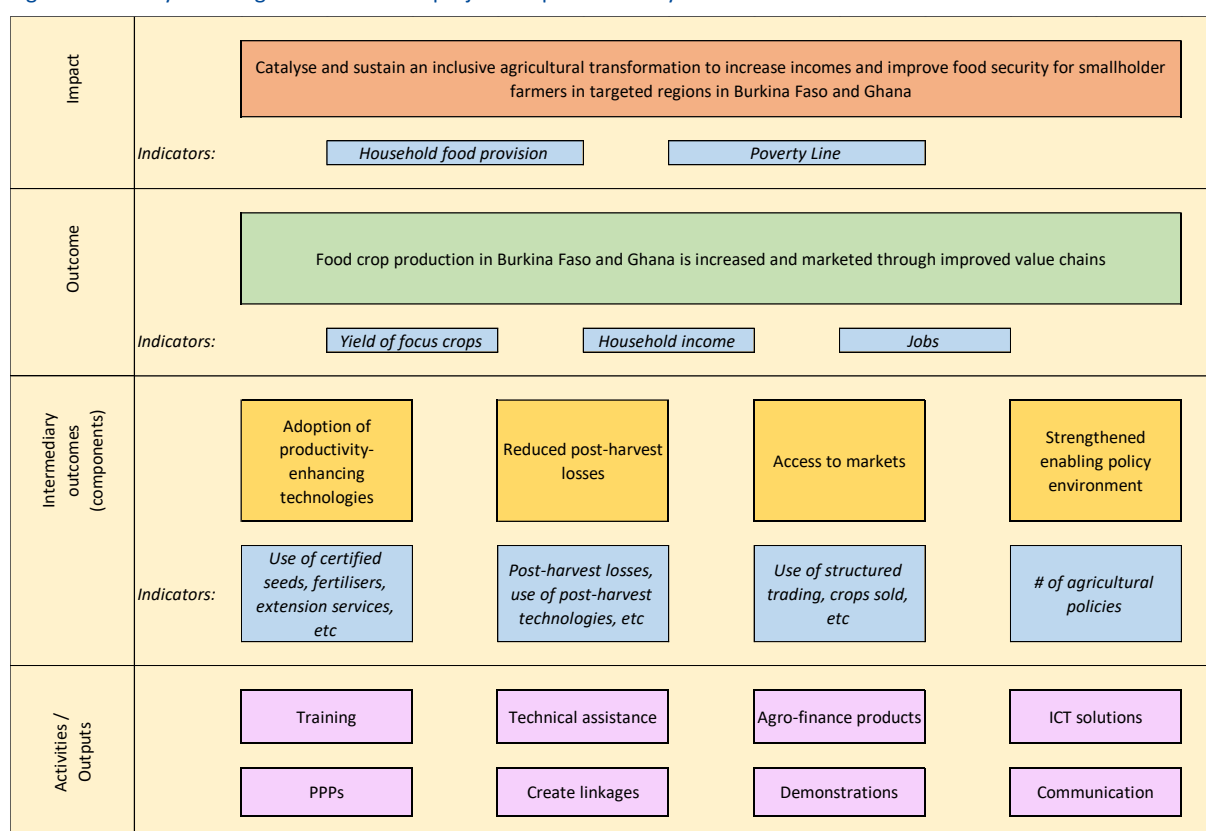
- The **project objective** (outcome) was “*Food crop production in Burkina Faso and Ghana is increased and marketed through improved value chains*”. The following result indicators, with baseline and targets (not shown here), were formulated (simplified version as included in the financing agreement):
 1. Average yield (mt/ha) of focus crops. As projects undertaken under the programme do not reach all crops mentioned in financing agreement, some crops were dropped from the subsequent results matrix
 2. Percentage change in household agriculture income, differentiated by gender of household head
 3. Number of jobs in the selected value chains, differentiated by gender
- The proposal goes on to define four outputs, but these should in fact be seen as intermediary outcomes, or perhaps as **project components**, all with result indicators, baselines and targets (not shown here).
 1. Increased adoption of agriculture productivity-enhancing technologies
 2. Reduced post-harvest losses
 3. Increased access to markets
 4. Strengthened enabling policy environment (access to finance, country support and policy engagements, partnerships)

¹ Consisting of a Financing Agreement and a Separate Agreement to the Financing Agreement (Feb 2018) with details and results matrix in appendix.

- The proposal ends with a long and detailed list of activities without mentioning the outputs (but this is implicit in the performance indicators). In the financing agreement the activities were just summarised as follows:
 1. Production of seed and fertiliser; training of agro-dealers and farmers in management and application of seed and fertiliser; linking farmers to credit providers for inputs.
 2. Training of farmers and SMEs in post-harvest management practices and technologies; linking manufacturers of post-harvest technology to last-mile distributors.
 3. Training of farmers, traders and processors in produce quality assurance and in structured trading; linking farmers to markets including off-takers; linking farmers and processors to ICT platforms.
 4. Reform of policies for agricultural value chains; training of SMEs in business management and finance; linking SMEs to credit institutions; developing agricultural finance products with credit institutions; developing de-risking instruments to strengthen operational capacity of agricultural enterprises; facilitating public-private partnerships to support farmers.

We may graphically show the simplified ToC as follows:

Figure 1 - Theory of Change of KfW-funded projects implemented by AGRA



The above-shown ToC is clear, and the result indicators are logical. However, the ToC is highly detailed, in particular the version of the project proposal, which is at odds with the chosen methodology of partner selection through grants. In a grant modality one would normally expect the financing organisation to give prospective grantees orientations of a broad nature only, leaving it to the applicants to come up with suitable solutions to the challenges at hand. In this case, however, AGRA offered detailed guidance to grant applicants on the project content. All four projects under the KfW-AGRA programme reflect the above intervention logic.

Where this MTR report refers to effectiveness or impact, the above intervention logic is the basis.

3.2 M&E system

3.2.1 Organisation of M&E

AGRA has a well-established and mature M&E system, collecting data for outputs, outcomes, and impacts. Data are stored in the central AGRA Management Information System (AMIS) and can be quite easily retrieved. The M&E database includes quantitative data and narratives, comprising 1) data to inform management decisions, 2) accountability to AGRA and partners in result achievement and cost-effectiveness, 3) lessons learned and knowledge generation.

In line with common practice, all sub-projects in the KfW-AGRA programme have their own ToC (see section 2 and 3.1 above), result indicators are defined, baselines are set where possible, targets are formulated based on known benchmarks, and data collection tools are put in place. Output data are mostly provided by grantees themselves through their quarterly reporting, while AGRA commissions surveys for outcome measurement. However, AGRA has a system of data validation in place to challenge the veracity of data. At quarterly review meetings grantees present the results to their consortium partners and AGRA representatives, and inconsistencies may be discovered. AGRA also cross-checks data with third parties, such as seed suppliers. Furthermore, AGRA programme and M&E officers make site visits to verify data on the spot. From 2021, counterfactual analysis has been performed and control groups were included in outcome surveys. This is meant to reinforce the attribution of results to AGRA. Some limited contribution analysis has been done as well.

Four regional M&E officers lead the M&E effort, supported by staff at HQ in Nairobi. The M&E team already intervenes in the project formulation stage, setting up the results framework and indicator targets. The team then oversees all data collection, and evaluations as well. Result reporting to donors is also a key task of the M&E staff. At country level AGRA has M&E consultants who support the Regional M&E Officers in their respective countries. These consultants make regular visits and calls to grantees to support them with data validation, entry and reporting in AMIS, follow-up on effective roll-out of the outcome surveys and special studies, and generate grant and consortia level dashboards to support validation and critical reflexion during quarterly project review meetings for all projects including KfW-funded grants. Apart from the M&E consultants in the countries, AGRA also has Program Officers (POs) and Associate Program Officers (APOs) assigned to each project. The POs and APOs are responsible for the overall performance of the project they supervise and use the dashboards accessible in AMIS for programmatic decision making with the grantees. They participate in monthly consortia meetings, conduct field visits and report on challenges and success in weekly country level staff meetings led by the country Managers. On a quarterly basis, AGRA specialists on thematic areas (fertilizer, seeds, agro-dealership, policy and advocacy, inclusive finance, and Market) attend quarterly review meetings, provide feedback and inputs into the reports submitted by grantees, draw POs/APOs attention on areas of improvements before the latter approve the reports in AMIS. M&E Officers come in last in the approval process.

Project monitoring during implementation includes training grantees on primary data collection and uploading in the central Management Information System (AMIS). The quarterly joint review meetings of all grantees in AGRA's portfolio are intended to interrogate the data submitted by grantees. Thus, at multiple levels of the project, both AGRA staff and Grantees have responsibility for generating data on the project, collation and entering into the database. From this database periodic reports on project performance at grantee level can be generated. Also uploaded are narrative reports by grantees. Each

grantee can only upload its data page in AMIS during a 15-day window during which the system is enabled for uploading quarterly reports after which the system is closed for data entry. This is to preserve the integrity of data and to ensure completion within a set time for global reporting. All data and reports entered in the system, however, are accessible at all times to grantees with a direct contract with AGRA and any other user with valid access credentials. As mentioned above, AGRA supports monitoring processes with field visits, this to validate data submitted by (sub-)grantees. Internal audits are also carried out – at least once on each grantee over the respective grant agreement period to validate implementation progress and adherence to the terms of the grantee agreements. Furthermore, all grantees must commission annual external audits of their expenditures.

A weakness is that Lead Grantees, who are supposed to collate data from other grantees and submit to AGRA, have no access to the individual grantees' data in AMIS to tally data at both levels, unless the partners or AGRA share this information. While consortium partners are supposed to discuss and share such information during quarterly review meetings, the extent to which this happens depends on the level of cooperation within the consortium (see chapter 7 on efficiency). Although AGRA carries out field visits during which spot checks are made of data submitted, these periodic visits only validate a small percentage of the database. AGRA has, however, supporting staff at provincial level as well as consultants who occasionally follow up through field trips.

Not fully developed and integrated is a measurement system for Environmental and Social metrics. AGRA confirms that planning for a robust Environmental and Social Management System came much later in the implementation of the KfW-funded projects. AGRA developed a policy framework and guideline for ensuring that an ESMS was established and included in all projects, while checking that no activities are financed that figure on the (IFC) exclusion list. Grantee agreements obliged beneficiaries to incorporate ESMS guidelines in their operations. Training on the guidelines was carried out for both AGRA staff and grantees and these were to be practiced throughout the projects. What has not yet been developed are clear monitoring indicators to track the occurrence of E&S risk events, and the response to these. It may require additional resources of AGRA or external parties to ensure that these matters of contemporary concern are effectively monitored.

3.2.2 Outcome Surveys

Outcome surveys are a key data collection tool to AGRA. AGRA manages a large portfolio of projects which are in varying geographical locations, cover many commodities, and have many funding sources. The KfW-projects are part of the PIATA portfolio, cover several crop value chains, and take place in geographical areas where other partner projects are executed by AGRA as well. Disaggregation of survey findings by each and every crop and funding agency may overburden the data collection effort and result in enumerators making errors due to excessive complexity and fatigue. So, AGRA has had to prioritise the most important commodities, and did not disaggregate to funding sources. The initial baseline studies were agreed for selected crops², and cassava, funded by KfW in Ghana, was not prioritised. At the next outcome survey cassava was also not included. Thus, for cassava AGRA does not have the same level of information on outcomes and impacts as it has for other crops.

For Ghana and Burkina Faso, outcome surveys were done by KIT (Royal Tropical Institute – Amsterdam). KIT surveyed both farming households and SMEs. In Ghana, KIT surveyed producers in the maize, soybeans, and rice sub-sectors, while it was maize, cowpeas, and rice in Burkina Faso. In

² In Ghana Maize, Rice, and Soybean, in Burkina Faso Maize, Rice and Cowpeas. AGRA had to make choices based on priority, and cassava being a relatively small commodity in the overall PIATA was not included in the outcome surveys. This was already known when KfW signed the financing agreement, see appendix to the separate agreement to the financing agreement.

2019, KIT-led first outcome surveys were conducted pertaining to the 2018 cropping season. The 2020 survey was cancelled due to Covid. The next survey was done in 2021 (for the 2020 crop season), and a final outcome survey is planned for 2022. The KIT outcome survey, addressing data need of all PIATA partners, is extremely detailed, and contains far more data points than would be required for the German-funded projects and their agreed result indicators. Obviously, in the MTR we only used the data that our evaluation questions ask for. As mentioned above, the surveys do not identify the projects to which the farmers belonged, hence the source of funding (e.g., KfW). The reasons are as follows:

- Enumerators are not aware which sub-projects supported the farmers, and farmers may not know that either. So this is not recorded in the survey.
- In case of Ghana, all rice farmers belong to the KfW rice consortia (cassava not being surveyed), so the survey data can be attributed to KfW jointly with the government's PfJ support. In Burkina Faso, multiple donors were involved in AGRA's rice project, while data for rice were collected in geographies not directly covered by the KfW programme.
- In addition, rice farmers in Burkina Faso may have received assistance from multiple donors simultaneously, making it very hard to attribute results to KfW. In fact, all four KfW-funded projects substantially leveraged other support, chiefly from national government public investment and from financial institutions, meaning that result attribution to KfW can be tricky.
- As mentioned, cassava was not included neither in 2019 (serving as baseline) nor in 2021.

Due to the above, many outcome and impact results in the AGRA reports to KfW reflect the situation of the aggregated AGRA PIATA programme in Ghana and Burkina Faso, not necessarily the KfW-funded interventions only. Given the above, while the MTR used the KIT outcome surveys where possible, we opted to do some outcome data collection ourselves by way of a limited outcome survey. This mini-survey limited itself to the outcome indicators of the KfW-AGRA financing agreement and reached a small number of farmers only (see chapter 4 on methodology).

It is noteworthy that the AGRA programmes in Ghana and Burkina Faso have already passed through a Mid-Term as well as a Final Evaluation for the entire country programme under PIATA, this including the KfW-funded parts. The above-mentioned outcome surveys, including control groups and counterfactual analysis in 2021, played a key role here. In the MTR we have obviously taken account of the MTE and final evaluation, but this without failing to make our own assessment.

4 Methodology

4.1 Research Methodology

The MTR was designed around the following research methodology and sources of information:

- **Desk review:** available programme documents at AGRA, project documents and reports by grantees, AGRA annual reports and previous evaluations. This also included the outcome surveys by KIT and impact assessment report. Relevant (national) policy documents were consulted as well.
- **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs):** meetings and discussions with AGRA staff, members of implementing consortia and related stakeholders, small-scale enterprises, government representatives and extension officers, as well as beneficiaries. This involved travel to the project locations, although some meetings were held online.
- **Farmer (Mini-)Survey:** to collect data on any progress SHF have made since AGRA support began, both in terms of their farm performance and their personal well-being. As noted, KIT already undertook outcome surveys, and the last was quite recent. As observed in section 3.2, these surveys were detailed, but cannot always be disaggregated to KfW-funded sub-projects, while cassava was not surveyed at all. Thus, our (mini-)surveys are meant to complement this work and get more clarity on the outcomes and impact on KfW-supported farmers.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):** group meetings with farmers and small-scale entrepreneurs in group form, often using farmer groups that already exist. This involved travel to the project locations. The value added of the FGDs over the survey instrument is that through the group dialogue a deeper level of analytical understanding can be reached. In most FGDs about a dozen participants took part.

The locations for the mini-survey and FGDs were selected with AGRA, this to obtain a reasonable cross-section of beneficiaries, while making the logistics of visits feasible (not too remote, security challenges in Burkina Faso). The FGDs were always conducted with / through existing farmer groups.

The (four) mini-surveys were to consist of 40 farmers in all four projects, and 20 non-assisted farmers as a control group in each project. Given that in both Ghana and Burkina Faso over 100,000 farmers were meant to be affected by the German-funded projects, this small sample cannot claim to be representative of the full population.³ The survey did, however, help better understand the AGRA intervention model and its potential to be effective and impactful, and is complementary to the FGDs and other research methods. Thus, whereas the mini-survey is not statistically significant in its own right, it does help inform and amplify the evidence base and complements the FGDs and KIIs while triangulating findings. Farmers to be surveyed were randomly selected from beneficiary lists provided by the sub-projects. The control group was found in the same areas where the projects worked, mainly through introductions from farmers and extension workers. Control group farmers should not have taken part in project activities, nor in another project, yet have similar overall characteristics as project farmers. The survey results were processed through simple descriptive statistics. The data points

³ The ToR for this MTR had not asked for surveys, nor was budget reserved for this. However, the evaluation team added this in its proposal in recognition of the valuable information that could be obtained through this research instrument.

collected through the survey were principally those from the results matrix attached to AGRA's semi-annual reports.

As to the triangulation of data and findings, the approach (in the chapters 6 and 8 on effectiveness and impact) is that we generally start from the desk research and data as presented by AGRA, subsequently review the data from mini-survey, which may or may not confirm AGRA's data, and then discuss the findings from the FGDs and KIIs to find an explanation of quantitative data. Where all sources of evidence point in the same direction, we deem a finding confirmed.

4.2 Research tools

The ToR for this MTR include a large number of evaluation questions, which are sometimes overlapping and repetitive. In the inception report these were regrouped following the usual OECD-DAC evaluation criteria and presented in its appendix, showing which of the above-mentioned research methods are to be used.⁴ This was subsequently used to produce various research tools as follows. All questions in the research tools were mapped to the evaluation questions from the inception report. The research tools, included in the appendixes 2-5 of this MTR report, were:

- Guideline for KIIs with implementing partners (consortia)
- Guideline for KIIs with (non-implementing) stakeholders
- Guideline for FGDs with farmers and SMEs
- Farmer (mini-)survey, recorded in Kobo Collect

4.3 Field work

The field work took place in July 2022. In Ghana, the team visited projects in Northern Region and Bono East (Formerly Brong Ahafo region). In Burkina Faso, the team contacted farmers and stakeholders in Boucle du Mahoun, Centre West and Centre East. In both countries, the selection of the areas to conduct surveys and interviews was conducted with the help of AGRA. However, in Burkina Faso we were greatly hampered by the precarious security situation in many areas, often making it very hard to conduct face-to-face meetings as respondents were unavailable or were on non-secure locations. Therefore, whereas enumerators visited farmers in Ghana, in Burkina Faso many surveys were done through telephone or online.

In total, the team undertook eleven KIIs in Ghana and fifteen in Burkina Faso. Interviews were conducted with AGRA staff, implementing (consortium) partners, input suppliers and seed companies, extension services, and government representatives.

The team undertook four FGDs in Ghana (two rice, two cassava), all mixed-gender farmer groups. Furthermore, the team undertook two FGDs in Burkina Faso in the extension project, both sub-divided in meetings with men and women separately, and one FGD with a mixed-gender group that was not involved in the extension project by way of control group. The team did four FGDs in the Burkina Faso rice project: two for producers, one with processors, and one with a women parboiled rice group. All FGDs were conducted face-to-face, after introductions made by project partners or extension officers.

⁴ These reformulated evaluation questions are reproduced in the below chapters 5-9, in red colour, while indicating the research methods used.

Table 1 – Key data field work in Ghana and Burkina Faso

	Ghana	Burkina Faso
KIIs	11	15
FGDs	4	7
Surveyed Rice farmers	42	39
Surveyed Cassava farmers	41	
Surveyed Extension project farmers		39
Surveyed control group farmers	40	10
Characteristics survey group:		
Male	62%	86%
Age	43.4 y	43.6 y
Education: primary or less	57%	79%
Dependents (#)	6.5	15
Land (acres)	8.9	6.3
Crops (#)	3.4	2.2

As to the mini-survey, the team contacted 123 farmers in Ghana, of which 42 assisted by the Rice project and 41 by the Cassava project. Furthermore, there were 20 farmers in the rice control group and 20 in the cassava control group. The survey did reveal, however, that not all of the aforementioned have rice or cassava as their main product. Some have other products of equal or larger importance. In Burkina Faso, the enumerators contacted 39 farmers in the rice and 39 in the extension project. Because of the above-mentioned logistical and security problems, we could not establish a control group for surveying in Burkina Faso.⁵ Although ten control farmers were surveyed, the number reached was deemed too low to be useful for comparison.

In Ghana, 62% of respondents were male, and 38% female. 90% of respondents were married. Most respondents in Ghana were above 40 years of age, with an average of 43.4 years. The educational profile was generally modest, with over half not educated beyond primary school, and many not at all. About a quarter had followed junior secondary education, and the remainder senior secondary or exceptionally vocational training. Nobody had passed through higher education or university. Respondents in Ghana reported that on average they have 6.5 dependents.

In Burkina Faso, 86% of respondents were male, and 14% female. All but one were married. Most respondents in Burkina Faso were above 40 years of age, with an average of 43.6 years. The educational profile was very low, with 58% unschooled, 21% to primary and 21% to secondary level, and none beyond. Respondents in Burkina Faso reported that on average they have about 15 dependents, reflecting the polygamous nature of part of society.

Respondents in Ghana stated that they had on average 8.9 acres under cultivation, but with a large variation – many had just a few acres, while some others had farmlands in excess of 20 acres. It is the same in Burkina Faso with an average of 6.3 acres, but many only have one or two. On average, rice farms in the mini-survey in Ghana are slightly larger than cassava farms, and all of the large ones are rice farms. In Burkina Faso, it was the maize farms that were the largest. When asked about their main crops, most farmers mentioned multiple products, namely rice, maize, sorghum, cassava, cowpeas, soybean, groundnuts, and others (e.g., yams). In Ghana, farmers had on average 3.4 main products, 2.2 in Burkina Faso. Few farmers were specialised on one single product. They likely also have livestock, which we did not ask about.

⁵ It was hard to get their contact details, given that most surveys were done through telephone.

4.4 Methodological constraints

As mentioned above, the MTR only had the resources to undertake a limited data collection effort, certainly when compared to the size of the programme. The research included a mini-survey, a number of focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews that provided useful information, but all having been small in number cannot be certain of being representative of the overall KfW-funded programme (of Eur 10 million), let alone the wider PIATA in Ghana and Burkina Faso (of USD 73 million). In order to be (statistically) representative, the number of surveys and FGDs should have been much larger, and should have covered all areas where the projects work, but did not. Furthermore, counterfactual analysis was limited to a small control group in Ghana and one FGD in Burkina Faso, and no contribution analysis was conducted, hence claiming causality of observed effects to the KfW funding is methodologically challenging.

Nevertheless, MDF found that the evidence obtained through various means of data collection stack up, and generally point in the same direction hence allow us to triangulate our findings. Therefore, while noting the limitations of the data set, MDF believes in the veracity of the findings in this report, and hopes these can help AGRA and KfW improve on their joint efforts to develop the agricultural sector in Africa.

5 Relevance and coherence

Relevance relates to the extent to which the KfW-AGRA programme responds to the two governments' agricultural development policies, and the needs and wishes of agri-businesses and farmers in a wider sense. Coherence is the compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector, or institution.

5.1 Relevance

EQ 1.1 Relevance of AGRA programme for GH/BF developmental needs, and relevance of the (four) grant projects undertaken in light of national and local development priorities

Relevance was researched through document review, KIIs with AGRA and government staff, as well as the farmer (mini-)surveys and FGDs.

AGRA aligns its country programmes with national policy, which is validated through a process of multi-stakeholder engagement. The initiation of the KfW-funded projects coincided with the roll-out of AGRA's strategic framework in 2017. Thus, in many respects, the policy contexts of Ghana and Burkina Faso were reflected in PIATA hence in the design of the four KfW projects. Based on its preceding period of engagement in Africa, including the two countries, AGRA together with other development partners recognised a need to change its approach in supporting agricultural development on the continent if the desired transformation in the sector should achieve significant impacts in poverty alleviation, resilience, and improved nutrition. Key among these changes is an integrated approach towards interventions at national, systems (seed, fertiliser, finance, extension and market) and farmer levels, founded on partnerships between government, donors, private sector and other stakeholders; commitments of leadership at country level; better coordination of investments by various development partnerships; scaling new technologies require functional input delivery systems and markets working within a conducive policy environment.

All four projects selected were designed with the view to stimulating multi-stakeholder engagement and partnerships across the value chains, while addressing systemic weaknesses in input and output markets so as to improve smallholder farmer resilience, incomes, and household nutrition.

In **Ghana**, the country's medium-term Food and Agriculture Sector Development Policy (FASDEP) and its accompanying implementation plan (METASIP) have a key goal of accelerating agricultural modernisation and among others, increase productivity, strengthen output markets, create jobs, increase incomes, and ensure food security. AGRA supported the government in the process of rolling out its flagship programmes "*Planting for Food and Jobs*" (PfJ) and "*1 District 1 Factory*" (1D1F), which were to enhance productivity and job creation both at farmer level and downstream of agricultural value chains. This was to be achieved through Public Private Partnerships (PPP) arrangements and stimulation of SME development. These ambitions were mirrored in the design and implementation of the two projects financed by KfW to enhance the competitiveness of the Rice and Cassava value chains. Furthermore, both consortia implementing these projects include agencies of government (Ministry of Trade, and Crop Services Directorate of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture), working with private sector and civil society actors to realise a joint goal.

Burkina Faso's priorities for agricultural development are set out in the *Stratégie de Développement Rural 2016-2025*, which aims at improving sustainable food security through improved productivity, increased incomes from greater market integration, and diversification of activities in rural areas. To be mentioned is also the National agrosilvopastoral investment plan (2021-2025), aiming to orient the agricultural sector to the market. Key components are 1) farmer productivity, 2) market access, 3) access to water. Additional to the above, AGRA also analysed policies regulating the systems of fertilisers, seeds, markets, finance, and land acquisition to identify those that present bottlenecks for furthering the national agenda for agricultural transformation. 23 of these policies were then reviewed through a stakeholder consultation process and a few prioritised for engagement with government for refinement as part of a wider programme to improve the country's enabling environment for business. The rice value chain was one of the strategic choices for government, aiming to reach 1 million tons of local production, as it has significant implications for improving the country's balance of payments, given its high food import bill, and addressing national food security.

Burkina Faso's economy has been significantly affected by insurgence in many regions, which has reduced the ability of the government to carry its outreach programmes to farmers. This has put further stress on an already limited extension service delivery system. One of the projects funded by KfW is an attempt to bring extension services closer to the farmers through a private sector extension methodology, which touches the heart of a major public sector challenge to meet farmer productivity and resilience. The VBA approach is not only intended for country-wide application and integration into the public agriculture support framework, but also supports the country's policy to improve markets for improved seed varieties and the use of ICT in knowledge dissemination, for which huge investments were made.

Thus, the projects selected for Burkina Faso and Ghana respectively respond directly to the local development priorities of the two countries. All stakeholders, government staff and consortium partners interviewed in Ghana confirmed that the AGRA projects in Ghana fully align with government agriculture policy as mentioned above. According to MOFA, the five pillars of PfJ are 1 Provision of certified seeds, 2 Subsidised fertiliser, 3 E-extension, 4 Market Opportunities, and 5 Free extension services. This is clearly seen in the strategy of the two KfW-AGRA projects in Ghana, as well the wider AGRA PIATA programme. The improved access of project farmers to seeds and fertilisers is in large part due to the government subsidising these inputs in selected PfJ sectors, while the projects connected suppliers to farmers. Regarding cassava, the cassava consortium is also in line with the One District One Factory (1D1F) programme. In Burkina Faso, the government also explicitly aims to increase rice production and reduce import bills. The government is investing in irrigation schemes to expand production of high-quality rice varieties that meet market requirements, and to expand processing capacities. The extension project in Burkina Faso was co-led by the government, hence directly related to its efforts to put in place effective farmer advisory services and raise agricultural practices.

In the mini-survey we checked relevance to target farmers, asking what were the three main constraints in their farms and livelihoods before the project started (multiple answers possible) – see table 2. We asked the same question as of now (although that would also be an effectiveness question, see chapter 6). It can be seen that much of the AGRA programme was relevant to the farmers' needs. Farmers recognised knowledge deficiencies before the project (relevance), and apparently those have been partly relieved since the project started (effectiveness). Access to seeds has improved, but access to fertilisers continues to be complicated in both countries. The increased indication of access to credit as a problem does not mean that this has become harder, but that with other constraints relieved farmers could now tick this box (the max was 3).

Table 2 – Constraints encountered by farmers in Ghana and Burkina Faso

Constraints encountered	Ghana Programme						Burkina Faso Programme			
	Before AGRA project			Now			Before AGRA project		Now	
	Ghana Rice	Ghana Cassava	Ghana Control	Ghana Rice	Ghana Cassava	Ghana Control	Burkina Faso Rice	Burkina Faso Ext	Burkina Faso Rice	Burkina Faso Ext
Lack of farming knowledge	86%	73%	0%	31%	22%	50%	69%	95%	0%	13%
No access to seeds / plant mat.	81%	76%	10%	38%	15%	35%	56%	82%	5%	23%
No access to fertilisers	60%	12%	13%	64%	49%	83%	79%	79%	72%	95%
No access to credit	17%	41%	13%	43%	59%	55%	8%	10%	18%	38%
Low product prices	17%	32%	3%	14%	22%	18%	5%	0%	8%	5%
No markets, cannot sell	21%	34%	0%	55%	15%	13%	36%	5%	23%	18%
Lack of skilled workers	19%	15%	3%	5%	39%	5%	8%	3%	3%	3%
Poor public infrastructure	0%	5%	0%	0%	2%	3%	3%	0%	10%	8%
Lack of access to equipment	17%	15%	5%	21%	39%	13%	36%	13%	67%	36%
Other	5%	24%	0%	17%	29%	20%	3%	0%	10%	3%
N/A	0%	0%	73%	0%	2%	3%	0%	0%	3%	3%

The various FGDs with farmer groups in Ghana and Burkina Faso confirmed the above, with farmers mentioning lack of knowledge in land preparation, seeding, and access to suitable seeds / plant material and fertilisers, as well as harvest and post-harvest methods. In Burkina Faso, the ratio was one extension workers for more than 3,500 farmers, and input dealers were few and far in between. Farmers were practicing outdated production practices or used poor (recycled) seeds / plant materials, consequently had very low product yields. In the case of cassava (Ghana), the old stock took too long to mature (1.5 years) and be harvested. The various KIIs in both countries also confirmed these findings, and in addition noted that access to structured markets (e.g., aggregators or processors) was a problem in all sectors. Where there were rice aggregators, these were often monopsonists, resulting in low farm gate prices. Furthermore, aggregators were not generally buying from small producers due to quality issues, variety mix-up, and small quantities offered. Cassava growers were mostly selling to local market women, at poor prices. A lot of cassava, being perishable, was lost when it could not promptly be disposed of. Post-harvest losses were also a problem in cowpeas (extension project Burkina Faso) due to lacking treatment practices. Very poor access to credit was mentioned in all FGDs, and this is a known constraint in all AGRA focus countries.

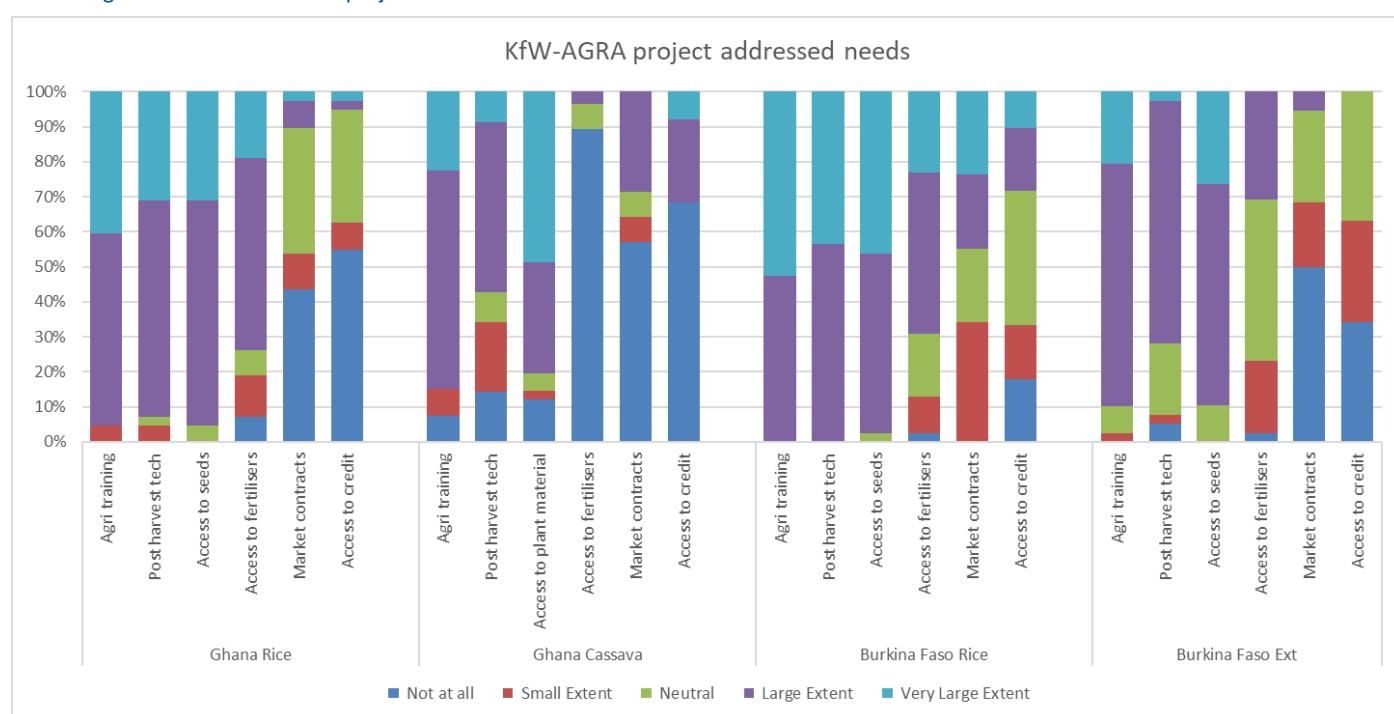
We also asked farmers in the mini-survey whether they received project assistance in the constraints encountered pre-project, and to what extent the programme's interventions addressed the above-mentioned needs. The answers are depicted in the below table 3 and figure 2. Farmers received training mostly, as well as access to input materials, and were much appreciative of it. Except for rice farmers in Burkina Faso, farmers reported to have received little support in accessing markets (and this was not the main aim of the extension project), while support in access to credit was underwhelming and only part of the Ghana Cassava and Burkina Faso rice projects. Unsurprisingly, farmers lamented not having received more support in this respect. To note that cassava farmers in Ghana do not usually apply fertilisers, even though the project recommended it.⁶

⁶ No fertiliser was subsidised under the cassava project/PfJ. However, farmers were trained on how to use organic fertiliser/manure.

Table 3 – Project assistance received by farmers in Ghana and Burkina Faso

Assistance received	Ghana Rice	Ghana Cassava	Burkina Faso Rice	Burkina Faso Ext
Training in agriculture	100%	93%	100%	97%
Training in post-harvest techn	88%	44%	97%	77%
Quality seeds / plant material	100%	90%	97%	90%
Fertilisers	79%	0%	77%	64%
Market contracts	12%	12%	54%	5%
Access to credit	2%	32%	31%	0%
Other	5%	2%	5%	3%

Figure 2 – Extent to which project assistance addressed needs of farmers in Ghana and Burkina Faso



The answers received in the FGDs in Ghana confirmed the above, pointing to better agricultural practices as the main take-away from the projects. Although the projects aimed to connect players in the value chain, farmers in all four FGDs in Ghana had been disappointed that the project could not help them link to suitable markets (e.g., aggregators through their farm associations). The KIIs with stakeholders revealed that reluctance of rice aggregators to buy may have to do with their volume as well as quality standards, namely timely harvesting of the rice (not too dry), not broken, right variety, and also free from soil and other foreign materials. In the cassava project, the KIIs revealed that cassava processors did have limitations in the quantities they could handle, as well as meet the quality required by consumers, which is why the project worked with processors and farmers alike. The KIIs, however, mentioned the outbreak of Covid as one of the reasons cassava processors delayed their projects and failed to reach out to cassava farmers in the project to source their product. The KIIs also revealed that two cassava processing factories that were supposed to start during the project period did not, while another was faced with breakdowns.

The FGDs and KIIs in Burkina Faso also pointed to improved agricultural knowledge as the main benefit, while in both projects input supply – seeds in particular – had been a main component. In the Burkina Faso rice project, efforts to link farmers with rice millers underperformed as will be further explained

in the next chapter 6. In the Burkina Faso extension project, the VBAs played a key role in providing farmers with demo input kits consisting of (subsidised) seeds to try out at their fields. Nevertheless, it was noted that the number of farmers to be served by each VBA (250) was high. Consequently, the VBAs only did demonstrations and could not visit farmers individually, nor always perform all their other tasks, such as identifying input needs of farmers and communicating this to input dealers.

5.2 Coherence

EQ 2.1 Coherence among the (four) grants undertaken as well as actions within the grants in view of AGRA's overall ToC

EQ 2.2 Collaboration and synergies with German Development Cooperation

Coherence was mainly researched through document review, and KIs with AGRA, government staff, and KfW.

As mentioned in earlier sections of this report, AGRA's 5-year strategic framework launched in 2017, Partnership for Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Africa (PIATA), targets three thematic areas: 1) Policy and state capability to strengthen government capacity and accountability and the policy environment; (2) systems development to build and expand integrated delivery systems; and (3) partnerships to facilitate alignment between government priorities and private sector interests. These thematic areas underlie AGRA's Theory of Change (ToC), articulated in chapter 3 above.

The design and implementation of all four projects selected for KfW-funding fits the PIATA strategic framework and adopts similar models of implementation. All four projects were designed with agencies of government who are also consortium members. This enables evidence-based knowledge to be used for policy advocacy and justify AGRA's investments in strengthening the capacity of government institutions to be more accountable and lead efforts at addressing the enabling environment challenges. In terms of supporting the capacity of government agencies, AGRA had already supported MOFA in Ghana in the development of its flagship projects PfJ and 1D1F, which the rice and cassava projects complemented. Under the rice project, the MOFA was supported to facilitate a high-level stakeholder platform to address policy gaps in the sector, leading to the setting up of GHC 20 million fund for rice processors to acquire equipment for improved rice quality. Efforts at enhancing the enabling environment led to the enforcement of policies for branding local rice by importers like Olam and Wilma of at least 30% of rice traded. Similarly, in Burkina Faso, working closely with the Agricultural ministry on integrating the VBA model in its annual programmes resulted in its adoption to be implemented nation-wide.

Consortia in both countries include private sector actors and public institutions, as well as civil society organisations that work towards addressing system level weaknesses. Specific competencies in farmer mobilisation and capacity building are identified among consortia partners that have enabled outreach to beneficiaries. Additionally, there is cross-country learning among project consortia. An example is the VBA approach which, initiated in Burkina Faso, is adopted across all the projects and in the process of institutionalisation by the Ministries of Agriculture in both countries. Both Rice consortia in Ghana and Burkina Faso adopt the off-taker model, which is also the basis for a value chain financing mechanism for producers. Working with governments on their priority programmes was confirmed by senior staff in the Ministries of Agriculture to have been a significant learning experience that has allowed them to achieve more outreach to smallholder farmers than they otherwise would have and allowed them to leverage their own resources for wider beneficiary impact.

The KfW-AGRA programme is also coherent with German-funded operations in Burkina Faso, and to a lesser extent in Ghana as well. In Burkina Faso, one of three focus areas for German (BMZ) assistance is “transformation of agri-food systems”, this in the context of the [ONE WORLD – No Hunger initiative](#). KfW’s interventions in Burkina Faso includes productivity increase in rice with better production methods and storage. KfW also works on small-scale irrigation and avoiding soil erosion. GIZ also has a strong agriculture programme in Burkina Faso, including work on sustainable value chains, green innovation centres and agricultural technical vocational education, and various projects in food security. Overall, the KfW-AGRA intervention fits in logically, and the Burkina Faso rice project collaborated with the GIZ-CARI project. In Ghana too German cooperation (BMZ) targets agriculture, but agriculture it is not the dominant intervention in this country. KfW has mainly been involved in outgrower and value chain work. GIZ is involved in sustainable value chains and land policy, as well as agricultural technical vocational education. Overall, the coherence and complementarity of the KfW-AGRA work in Ghana is less obvious than in Burkina Faso.

In the context of coherence and additionality we asked farmers in the mini-survey to what extent they were aware of other programmes delivering similar support to farmers since 2018, and to what extent they had taken part in those. Just over 10% of respondents in Ghana were aware of such programmes, and less than 10% had taken part. Farmers interviewed through the FGDs were also unaware of other projects offering the same services. In the KIIs we were given a few examples of similar or related projects in rice and cassava in Ghana, but these were targeted differently, hence complementary to the AGRA projects, and often not in the same project areas and not ongoing at the same time.

In Burkina Faso too, just 10% of respondents in the mini-survey mentioned any other projects offering farm development services. The FGDs and KIIs, however, identified many such examples. Indeed, according to the project documents the Burkina Faso projects do work together with others, including the GIZ-CARI programme in rice. Participants in the FGDs and KIIs described these as complementary rather than competing actions.

These findings suggest that the AGRA programme in Ghana and Burkina Faso is additional and does not duplicate other development efforts in the agriculture sector – none of the respondents suggested it was so. It is clear that all four projects do leverage often substantial government public investment programmes, such as input subsidisation or public investment (rice, cassava), and this is by design. It was also intended to leverage private investment and bank financing, although the latter underperformed in all projects (see chapter 6 on effectiveness). While AGRA leveraging public and private investment is fine, and could make the AGRA-dollar more impactful, it does make the attribution of development results to AGRA and KfW difficult. In all of the AGRA reports as well the results matrix it is often hard to determine to what extent reported achievements are due to AGRA and not (primarily) to another support.

6 Effectiveness

Effectiveness is the extent to which outputs and outcomes are produced and achieved, and whether in a wider sense impacts (are expected to) emerge. For the grantees output and outcome achievement is compared to their own proposal and grant agreement with AGRA, while for AGRA the KfW financing agreement and its appendix 1 is the reference. Impact is discussed in chapter 8 below.

6.1 Output and Outcome achievement by grantees

EQ 3.1 Achievement of agreed outputs and outcomes by grantees

The achievement of agreed outputs and outcomes by grantees was studied through desk research, discussions with AGRA and consortium partners, and above all through the farmer mini-surveys and FGDs.

The core outcome indicators from the results matrix as regularly reported to KfW are the following three (see also section 3.1):

- Average yield of focus crops
- Household agricultural income
- Employment at SMEs

We checked these indicators through the field work. In addition, AGRA reports on a number of intermediary outcomes (see section 3.1). From these, we researched the following:

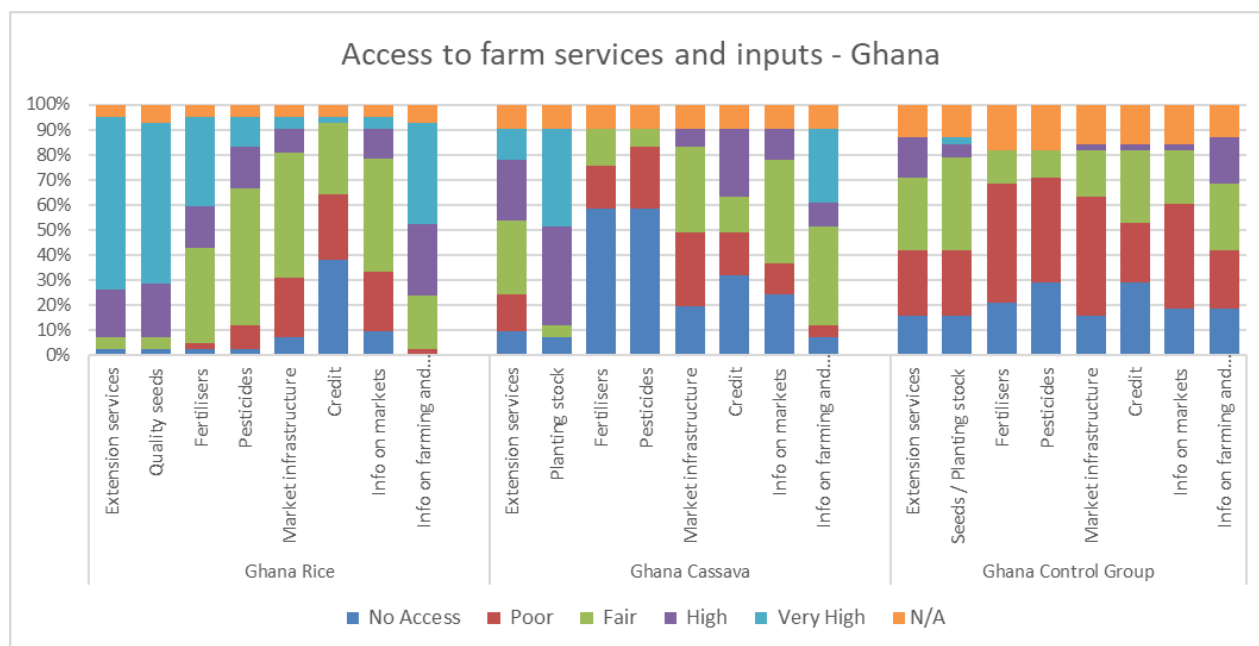
- Access to seeds
- Access to fertilisers
- Access to extension services and training
- Access to credit
- Access to structured markets
- Access to post-harvest methods

The latest progress report and results matrix to KfW dated 28 April 2022, partly based on the KIT outcome survey for the 2020 agricultural season, tracking the above, is summarised in table 4 in section 6.2. This table compares the AGRA baseline data, the targets for 2021 (end of project), and actuals 2020/21, compared to our MTR findings that will be presented in this section 6.1.

The mini-survey and FGDs conducted by the MDF team contained many questions to verify and complement the AGRA results report (summarised in table 4). As noted in earlier sections, however, the KIT outcome survey took place in 2021 for the 2020 season, while our work was conducted in Summer 2022. Furthermore, many of the data in the outcome survey were collected in other locations than the KfW intervention areas, while cassava was not covered at all. Our field work, by contrast, was both more recent and more targeted (to the KfW-funded projects). We had different findings on several of the above parameters – mostly for the better.

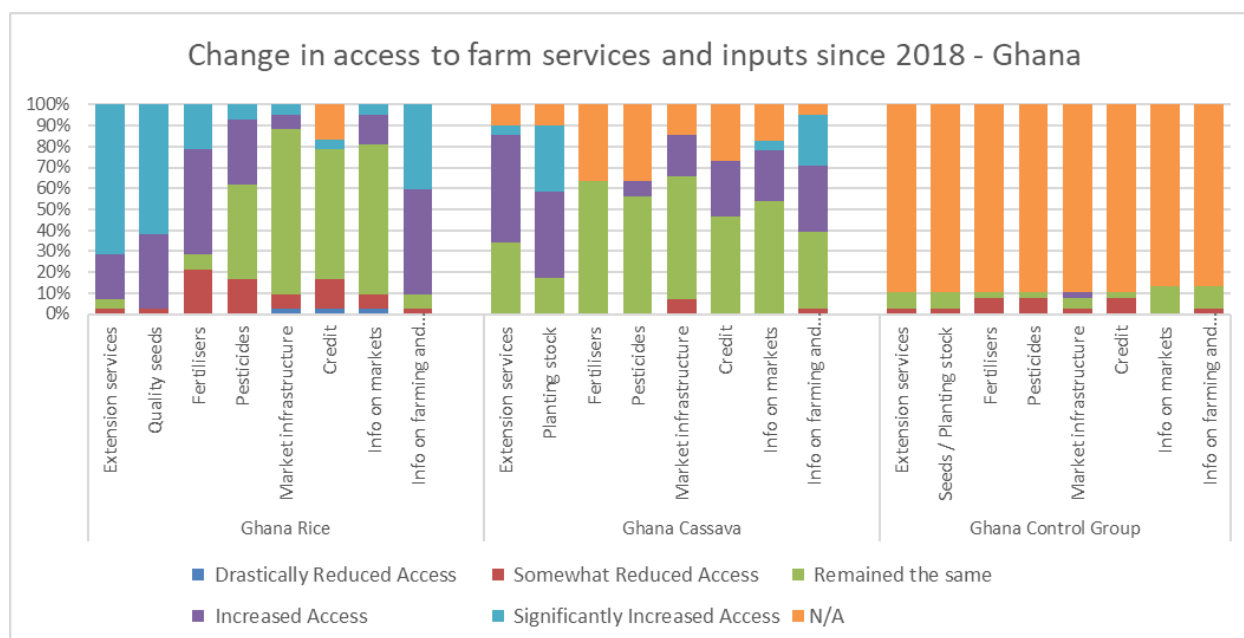
In a first question, we asked farmers to what extent they had access to farm services and inputs over the past two cropping seasons – see figures 3 and 5. We then asked if this had improved since the AGRA-supported projects had started – see figures 4 and 6.

Figure 3 – Access to farm services in the last 2 cropping seasons - Ghana



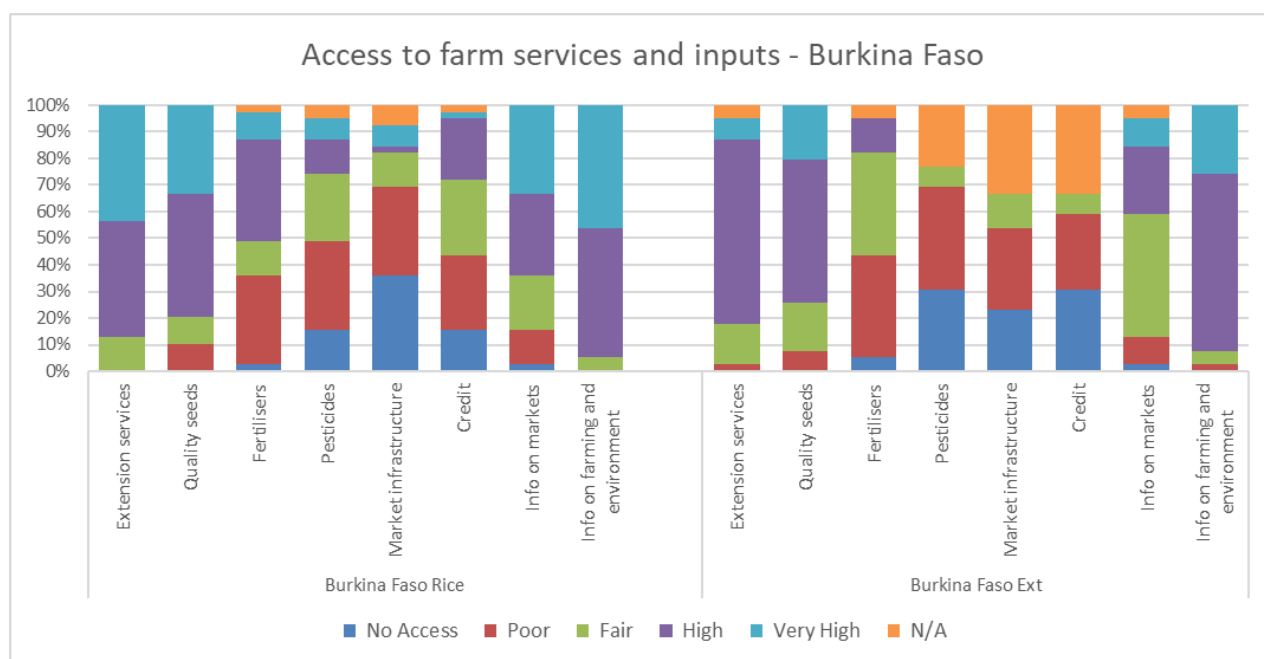
These survey results confirm the findings under relevance above. Rice farmers in the Ghana programme report good access to extension services and seeds, they are less well-endowed in the other services, with access to credit quite poor. Cassava farmers have good access to extension and planting stock, and some to credit. The control group is much less well-off, although it was only a small number of farmers.

Figure 4 – Changes in access to farm services since 2018 - Ghana



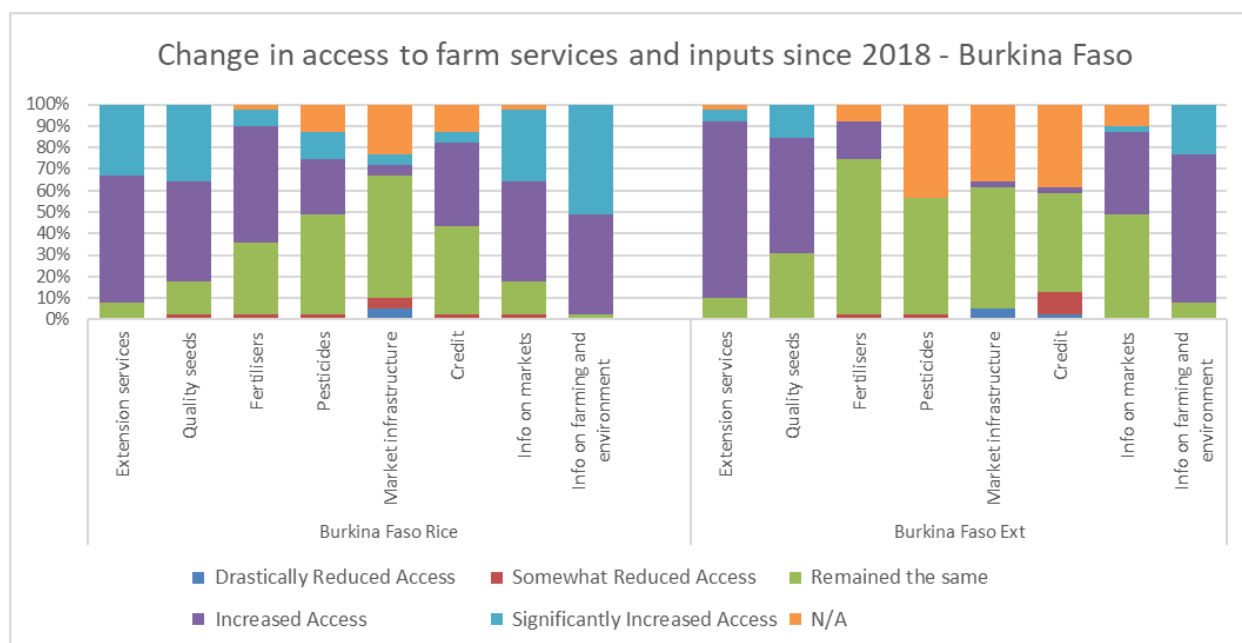
Rice farmers in Ghana reported increased access to extension services and product inputs, seeds especially, but not the other services including access to physical markets. Cassava farmers in Ghana also reported improvements, but less so. Most farmers in the control group were unable to answer these questions – many may have assumed it did not apply to them as they did not take part in the programme. To note the above findings may suggest but do not prove causality with the AGRA support.

Figure 5 – Access to farm services in the last 2 cropping seasons – Burkina Faso



In Burkina Faso, farmers in the rice project reported good access to extension services and seeds, to some extent fertilisers, and market information and even credit for some. In the extension project farmers reported access to extension services and seeds as well as information on farming and good environmental practices, not to fertilisers, pesticides, markets, or credit.

Figure 6 – Changes in access to farm services since 2018 – Burkina Faso



Rice farmers in Burkina Faso reported increased access to extension services and product inputs, seeds especially, as well as information on markets. Farmers in the extension project only increased their access to extension services and seeds, and to some extent market information. To note the above findings do not prove causality with the AGRA support.

In the context of effectiveness, the enumerators also collected numerical data on farm productivity (output per acre), total output, and farm income, in line with the KfW-AGRA results matrix. The survey results in both countries showed a very large variability, to the extent that we do not consider the data reliable and useful. However, we also asked to what extent farm yields, output and income went up or down, something farmers are more likely to know, even if not able to attach a nominal value – see figure 7 below.

Figure 7 – Change in farm performance since 2018 – Ghana and Burkina Faso

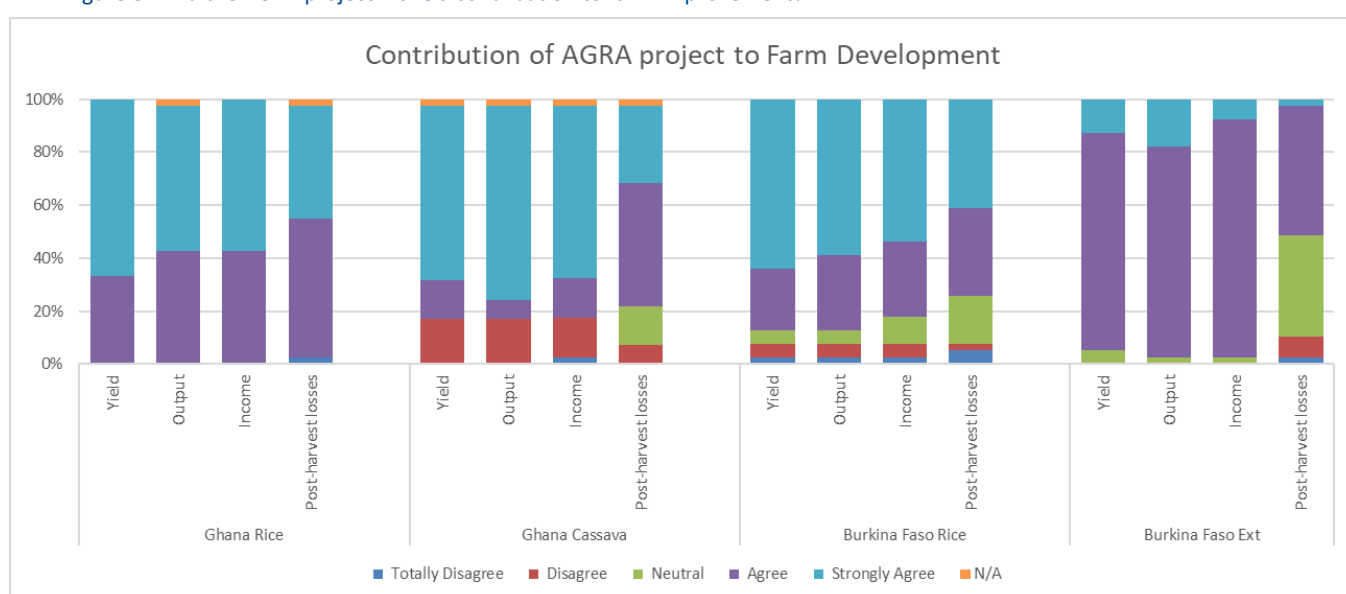


As can be seen, rice farmers in Ghana made good progress on all indicators, including reducing post-harvest losses. Interestingly, they improved on their maize production too, so there seems to be some spin-off of techniques learned from rice cultivation. The same is true for cassava growers in Ghana, who also managed to improve their maize farming somewhat. The contrast with the control group is self-evident.

In Burkina Faso, there was also good progress reported by rice farmers, and like Ghana there was seemingly some spill-off to maize as well. Furthermore, in the Burkina Faso rice project a number of seed producers (multiplying foundation seed) were set up, including some women cooperatives, and this created employment. In the extension project, most farmers were growing maize (males) or cowpeas (females), and some progress was reported, but not as convincing as the other groups. None of the surveyed farmers in Burkina Faso were growing cassava (manioc).

As none of the above proves causality, we explicitly asked survey respondents to what extent the AGRA project has contributed to the improvements made – see figure 8. This was considerably so, according to respondents, with rice farmers in Ghana a bit more positive than cassava growers in Ghana, and also compared to farmers in the rice project in Burkina Faso. Farmers in the extension project in Burkina Faso were least positive, but still appreciative of the project support received.

Figure 8 – Did the AGRA project make a contribution to farm improvement?



The FGDs were confirmative of the survey results. In all four FGDs in Ghana the main project contribution mentioned related to farm technology and input supply, chiefly rice seeds, and plant stems for cassava, as well as fertilisers for rice farmers.⁷ Both rice and cassava growers reported strong increase in product yields, often in excess of 100%, as well as product quality in line with market demand. Rice farmers also confirmed their post-harvest losses had reduced, mainly by on-time harvesting and proper storage. Cassava farmers noted that their new cassava stems grow three times as quickly as the traditional ones so can be harvested much earlier. This has the added advantage for those who rent land that their land-access risk (e.g., rent increase or loss of land with the crop still on the land) is reduced.

However, all four FGDs in Ghana reported that farmers still had to sell through traditional market outlets and the structured markets the AGRA project was meant to generate had not come true. This was thought to reduce the sales price, with some farmers not being able to dispose of all stock. Furthermore, traditional rice buyers in the village often come to pick one or two bags, and do not even pay, insisting on credit, which may cause the rice farmer to renege on its own debt obligations. In cassava, one group had negotiated with Guinness brewery, but the quantities farmers could offer were too low. Many cassava growers, faced with a highly perishable product, not able to sell all to local

⁷ Seeds and fertilisers are subsidised in Ghana in the PFJ project, the government's flagship initiative in boosting food production.

SMEs, have resorted to transforming the product into *gari*⁸ themselves. Participants in one cassava FGD expressed great frustration with the lack of expected offtake, in this case due to break-down of processing plants in their area and constraints linked to Covid. They stated that much of their cassava was left to rot on the fields, and farmers ended up worse off than before. Project efforts to link up with credit providers had failed in all four FGDs in Ghana.

The KIIs with consortium partners, government and extension officers in Ghana support the above findings. There was a strong emphasis in both projects on extension work and input supply, resulting in increased yields and reduced harvest and post-harvest losses in rice and to a lesser extent cassava. Developing structured markets was part of the projects as well, but requirements on quality and quantity were not always easily fulfilled by farmer groups, both rice and cassava. There was also a shortage of industrial buyers of cassava, while there was a poor geographical alignment of producers and processors, and few local SME processors to fill that gap. This explains why many farmers still need to sell their rice and cassava through local markets in small quantities. The Ghana rice project did promote value chain finance, e.g., farmers receiving inputs on credit through their off-takers, but as structured markets failed to take off, few managed to receive such input credit. In the Ghana cassava project, some groups managed to access credit, but this was not through intermediation by the project but through MFIs and NGOs.

The FGDs in Burkina Faso reveal a similar picture, with farmers in both projects appreciative of (variety) demonstrations and input supply such as seeds adapted to market demand. In the extension project, VBAs distributed input kits to farmers for trying out a variety of seeds and fertilisers and connected them to input dealers. Maize farmers in the extension project reported strongly improved yields, up by about 50%, as did those growing cowpeas and farmers in the rice project. The reception of good seeds was deemed especially effective in both projects, and in addition much less was used when applying good agricultural practices. Use of fertilisers went up as well, while in cowpeas better post-harvest handling was identified as effective in reducing losses. In maize post-harvest losses were not a great problem, even before the project. In the Burkina Faso rice project, the FGDs observed that post-harvest losses had been reduced but were still important due to lack of sufficient threshing capacity on the market. In the extension project farmers did not access structured markets, and this was also not part of the project, and neither was this the case for access to credit. Nevertheless, some maize farmers reported access to microfinance, but this was not through the project. The FGD with the unassisted focus group (control) revealed that they still use local (recycled) seeds and buy fertilisers locally of which they do not know the quality and suitability for production. Their declared productivity (maize) was less than for the project farmers (3.5 mt/ha versus 5.5 mt/ha).

In the Burkina Faso rice project access to structured markets was a core component, the idea being that rice millers would pre-finance seeds and other inputs for production through a risk-sharing model and covered through a sales contract. The field team did meet one FGD that had established collaboration with a rice miller, which provided the farmers with inputs and even helped with harvesting, with the costs reimbursed in kind through paddy rice. However, this was not systematic in the project. Indeed, one rice miller we spoke to stated that farmers routinely disrespect their supply contracts (side-selling), hence fail to repay their credits in full.⁹ This was confirmed by extension workers and others in the KIIs. Consequently, as in Ghana, access to structured markets was problematic as rice millers and aggregators resisted entering into contractual arrangements with

⁸ Gari is cassava grit, a local widely consumed processed derivative of cassava, that has a shelf-life of more than a year.

⁹ Contract default is a common problem in food chains in Africa, as there are so many other sales outlets including foreign aggregators that may overpay on previously agreed prices. This also the reason why value chain finance in food chains is so hard to establish. This in contrast to such structured value chains as cocoa, tea, and sugar cane.

farmers (often implying a pre-set price) and deemed the quantities small anyway. Hence, like in Ghana, many rice farmers in Burkina Faso ended up selling on the local market as before. The problem here is not that rice farmers cannot sell (they can, locally), but that not being linked to a structured market they have weak access to quality inputs, services, and input credit, which hampers their potential to develop into long-term productive farms. Although rice millers have access to credit to some extent, due to lack of trust among partners in the value chain, the hoped-for value chain collaboration and value chain finance benefitted few rice farmers. Small input dealers also found it hard to access credit. Nevertheless, some women groups in parboiled rice received microfinance, according to the KIIs. One MFI in Burkina Faso provided rice farmers credit guaranteed by stocked rice (warehouse receipt finance).

In the context of effectiveness, it is noted that most projects had an SME-development component, in particular the two rice projects. SMEs took the form of individual businesses as well as cooperatives. The field team had the pleasure to visit some input suppliers, threshers, millers, seed multipliers, and parboiled rice producers who had benefitted from project support. This mainly took the form of counselling and administrative support (e.g., temporary support to set up a sound administration). In Burkina Faso matching grants were foreseen for investment, but only six processing units received investment as beneficiaries found it hard to mobilise their part. In Ghana, the project connected some SMEs to banks.

Some projects also had a policy component, notably the rice project in Ghana. It worked on bringing together sector partners through their national representatives (e.g., farmers, millers, mechanisation service providers), and gave them a stronger voice at national policy level. The project helped create the Ghana Rice Interprofessional body as an apex for the rice sector. The Ministry set up a Technical Committee meeting for Rice, which was a multi-stakeholder platform – state and public – for discussing rice policy, and for developing a national rice strategy. The broader objective of having the government listen to the sector was met.

The Burkina Faso extension project had a component ICT4Ag, which makes available agricultural information to farmers through a mobile phone portal, this way complementing the extension services. This system, however, could not be operationalised within the project period.¹⁰

6.2 Achievement of results agreed with KfW

EQ 3.2 Achievement of the results agreed by AGRA with KfW funding

The achievement of the results agreed by AGRA with KfW was studied through comparing the financing agreement, the separate agreement to the financing agreement, and its results matrix with the achievements as listed in the previous section above.

The separate agreement to the financing agreement identified the regions in Ghana and Burkina Faso in which the projects would operate, and these were indeed the areas of intervention. Furthermore, it was stated that in Ghana the project would focus on maize, rice, soybean, and cassava, while it was maize, rice, cowpeas, and sorghum in Burkina Faso. In the end, fewer commodities were targeted, namely rice and cassava in Ghana, and rice, maize, and cowpeas in Burkina Faso, and this was agreed with KfW. The agreement aimed to reach 1,237,000 resource-poor smallholder farmers and 1,500 SMEs, which numbers are very hard to verify. The project intervention entailed prioritising projects

¹⁰ Several reasons were given for this delay. 1) Delayed acquisition of equipment. 2) Long negotiations with telecoms providers, and in particular the payment of the service. 3) Bureaucratic inertia in the government.

that catalyse and complement funding by the government and other donors, the main example of which was the PfJ in Ghana that subsidised farming inputs, as well as input-subsidisation and public investment in rice in Burkina Faso. The 1D1F programme in Ghana mobilised funding for cassava factories. This, however, makes it impossible to attribute results achieved to KfW support, as we noted in earlier chapters of this MTR report.

On the specific development results to be achieved, we may cite the following from the (revised) results matrix, while we compare this to the MTR findings from the previous section 6.1. Hence, table 4 shows the (AGRA) baseline, the project targets for 2021, the actuals 2020/21 according to AGRA, and the MTR findings with comments.

Table 4 – Results according to AGRA (Results matrix 28 April 2022) and findings of the MTR

Results matrix 28 April 2022 (AGRA report to KfW)			Findings MTR 2022 (see section 6.1)
Baseline (2018)	Target project end (2021)	Actuals 2020/21 (AGRA report to KfW)	
1 Average number of months of adequate food provision:			
11 months in Burkina Faso 10 months in Ghana	11.5 months in Burkina Faso 11.2 months in Ghana	Actuals 2020: 11.3 months in Burkina Faso 10.5 months in Ghana	The MTR found that project beneficiaries in all projects had substantially increased their food and nutrition security, mainly through their increased income from production (see chapter 8).
2 Population living on less than USD 1.9 per day:			
34.8% in Burkina Faso 8.4% in Ghana	29% in Burkina Faso 6.2% in Ghana	Actuals 2019: 32.7% in Burkina Faso 7.2% in Ghana	The MTR found that project beneficiaries had substantially increased their income from production (see chapter 8). The survey found that 90% of rice farmers in both projects as well as in the extension project reported that their income was “better” or “much better”. This was 70% in the cassava project.
1 Average crop yield			
Average yield in rice: 1.5 mt/ha in Burkina Faso 2.5 mt/ha in Ghana Average yield of maize in Burkina Faso 1.7 mt/ha Average yield for cowpea in Burkina Faso 0.4 mt/ha No baseline for cassava	Average yield in rice: 2.2 mt/ha in Burkina Faso 4.5 mt/ha in Ghana Average yield of maize in Burkina Faso 5.0 mt/ha Average yield for cowpea in Burkina Faso 2.1 mt/ha No targets for cassava	Actuals 2020: Average yield in rice: 3.45 mt/ha in Burkina Faso (hence doubled) 1.47 mt/ha in Ghana (hence reduced). 1.5 mt/ha for maize in Burkina Faso (hence reduced) 0.33 mt/ha for cowpea in Burkina Faso (hence reduced) No data for cassava. However, AGRA records show improvements in yields from 10-15 mt/ha to over 20 mt/ha, sometimes even more.	The MTR found that project beneficiaries increased productivity by 50-100% - according to FGDs. Rice farmers in Ghana reported yield increase over 100%, it was about 50% in Burkina Faso. Farmers in the extension project in Burkina Faso (maize and cowpeas) also reported yield gains of about 50%. In cassava the main yield benefit was the root growing three times as quickly as the previous stock. Therefore, the MTR was generally more positive than AGRA’s outcome survey.

2/3 Target for household income and for SME employment were not set in the financing agreement.			<p>The MTR found that farmers had added (seasonal) employment, while local SMEs (often women) had been able to increase processing, thereby creating jobs.</p> <p>The rice project in Burkina Faso has resulted in seed multiplication farms and cooperatives, meeting national demand for rice foundation seeds, as well as some SMEs in rice threshing and processing. The FGD also reported that some SMEs had been created in input supply and production of compost, and these created jobs. The project offered management support to these companies and cooperatives, and to a limited extent investment grants.</p>
<p>In the revised results matrix, data on household income regrettably suffer from a format change since baseline as the baseline showed aggregated farm income, while the outcome survey presented income per crop. These data cannot be compared and cannot be interpreted.</p>			
1.2/3 Quantities of certified seeds and fertilisers sold			
<p>Burkina Faso:</p> <p>Rice seeds 1,275 mt</p> <p>Maize seeds 1,430 mt</p> <p>Cowpea seeds 216 mt</p> <p>Fertilisers 1,110 mt</p> <p>Ghana:</p> <p>Rice seeds 1,545 mt</p> <p>Fertilisers 710 mt</p>	<p>Burkina Faso:</p> <p>Rice seeds 7,850 mt</p> <p>Maize seeds 8,200 mt</p> <p>Cowpea seeds 610 mt</p> <p>Fertilisers 18,750 mt</p> <p>Ghana:</p> <p>Rice seeds 5,635 mt</p> <p>Fertilisers 15,750 mt</p>	<p>Actuals 2021:</p> <p>Burkina Faso:</p> <p>Rice seeds 995 mt</p> <p>Maize seeds 3,212 mt</p> <p>Cowpea seeds 103 mt</p> <p>Fertilisers 0 mt</p> <p>AGRA was unable to implement the fertiliser component in Burkina Faso for lack of sufficient funding.</p> <p>Ghana:</p> <p>Rice seeds 4,335 mt</p> <p>Cassava 226 mt cuttings</p> <p>Fertilisers 266,000 mt (through Pfj input subsidies, assisted by AGRA through TA)</p>	<p>While we are unable to quantify results, the MTR showed certified seed and fertiliser use in rice to be strongly up in both countries, and this contradicts AGRA’s outcome survey for Burkina Faso that was unfavourable.</p> <p>In Ghana, the project helped mobilise suitable input suppliers, while input subsidisation through Pfj certainly played a key role as well.</p> <p>In Burkina Faso, the seed structure from seed research (breeder seed) to multiplication, distribution and use by farmers was set up.</p> <p>In cassava in Ghana, farmer accessed improved cassava breeds.</p> <p>It is noteworthy that AGRA helped develop crop-specific fertiliser recommendations, adapted to crop and agro-ecological zones of the countries.</p> <p>In the extension project in Burkina Faso input supply was also an important component through demonstration kits and connecting farmers to reliable input dealers.</p>
1.4 Proportion of farmers accessing extension services			
<p>53% in Burkina Faso</p> <p>31% in Ghana</p>	<p>67% in Burkina Faso</p> <p>85% in Ghana</p>	<p>Actuals 2020:</p> <p>Burkina Faso:</p> <p>Rice 57%</p> <p>Maize 42%</p> <p>Cowpea 34%</p> <p>Ghana:</p> <p>Rice 49%</p>	<p>See figures 3-6. In Ghana, the MTR was able to confirm improved access to extension services for rice, not for cassava.</p> <p>In Burkina Faso this was confirmed for both projects, but the sustainability of the VBA model is in question (see chapter 9 below). However, the government is working on implementing the model and may be able to refine the operating modalities.</p>
2.1 Post-harvest losses			

Post-harvest losses about 30% (all crops), small variations by gender	Post-harvest losses about 10% (all crops), no variations by gender	<p>Actuals 2020:</p> <p>1% all crops, both countries</p> <p>Use of post-harvest methods increased from about 20% of farmers to 50-60%, depending on the crop.</p>	<p>Post-harvest losses reduced for rice, although the 1% losses claimed in the AGRA results matrix are exaggerated. Some rice FGDs mentioned that in the face of lacking processing capacity losses still occur.</p> <p>In cassava losses were not much reduced for lack of swift sale to industrial buyers.</p> <p>In cowpea losses were also reduced, while maize was not afflicted with large losses from the start.</p>
3.1 Percent of supported farmers using structured markets (forward selling)			
3.2 Quantity of target crops sold through structured markets			
<p>Burkina Faso 11%</p> <p>Ghana 12%</p> <p>Burkina Faso:</p> <p>Rice 8,430 mt</p> <p>Maize 6,650 mt</p> <p>Cowpea 4,180 mt</p> <p>Ghana:</p> <p>Rice 4,540 mt</p> <p>Cassava 24,000 mt</p>	<p>Burkina Faso 40%</p> <p>Ghana 36%</p> <p>Burkina Faso:</p> <p>Rice 16,380 mt</p> <p>Maize 18,000 mt</p> <p>Cowpea 9,800 mt</p> <p>Ghana:</p> <p>Rice 10,600 mt</p> <p>Cassava 400,000 mt</p>	<p>Actuals 2021:</p> <p>Burkina Faso:</p> <p>Rice 39% (72,984 mt)</p> <p>Maize 2%</p> <p>Cowpea 9%</p> <p>Ghana:</p> <p>Rice 2% (617,186 mt)</p> <p>Cassava (29,510 mt)</p>	<p>None of the farmers met by the MTR in Ghana had been able to link to structured markets, although the KIIs revealed that some farmer groups have. In Burkina Faso, some rice farmers entered into structured markets, but certainly not all. The connection of rice farmers with millers and aggregators suffered from lack of quantity, and unwillingness (of millers) to enter into contractual relations.</p> <p>In Ghana, the (structured) sales target for cassava has certainly not been reached as key processing factories did not start their work or were inactive, or farmers and factory were too far away. In the extension project access to markets was not a key component.</p>
4.1 Policies that impact the agriculture sector			
	The project had targets for policies that impact the agricultural sector, namely 3 in Burkina Faso and 4 in Ghana.	<p>Actuals 2021:</p> <p>3 in both Burkina Faso and Ghana</p>	The project contributed to a national rice policy in Ghana. It supported extension services in Burkina Faso extension project.
4.4 Value (USD) of agricultural credit leveraged			
	The project was to leverage agricultural credit of USD 11 million in Burkina Faso, and 12 million in Ghana.	<p>Actuals 2021:</p> <p>USD 6 million in Burkina Faso and USD 24 million in Ghana</p>	According to the reports to AGRA, some funding was leveraged for rice off-takers (millers) and cassava processors in Ghana. There was some indication of farmers having accessed credit through the value chain, in particular in cassava in Ghana and rice in Burkina Faso. However, overall access to credit has continued to be a great constraint to farmers in Ghana and Burkina Faso, as well as SMEs. This is aggravated by lack of structured markets, and farmers themselves are compelled to sell to small buyers on credit, hence instead of getting credit, they must give it.
4.7 Value (USD) of private investment leveraged			

	Value of private sector investment to be leveraged USD 75 million in Burkina Faso and USD 84 million in Ghana.	Actuals 2021: USD 2 million in Burkina Faso and USD 131 million in Ghana (including 1D1F).	Limited private investment took place in Burkina Faso – just six rice processing SMEs. Investment took place in the cassava processing sector in Ghana, but much of it was delayed and not impactful in the project period.
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In summary, when referring back to the four key components of the KfW-AGRA programme, it can be concluded that results have been as follows:

1. The adoption of productivity-enhancing technologies => successful in all projects
2. The reduction of post-harvest losses => successful for rice in both countries, successful for cowpeas, not so much for cassava and not applicable to maize. The provision of post-harvest equipment in Burkina Faso has fallen short on target, in particular for youth. This project component, however, is still ongoing.
3. The enhanced use of structured markets => has fallen short on expectations in all projects, cassava in particular
4. The strengthening of an enabling environment (access to finance, country support and policy engagement partnerships) => this was not the strongest part of the KfW projects. The rice project in Ghana brought together sector representatives, worked on a rice policy, enabled the government to set up a fund for rice processors, and worked with branding local rice varieties, while in the Burkina Faso rice project some SMEs and some farmer groups accessed finance.

6.3 Gender and Youth

EQ 3.3 Gender empowerment and youth inclusion

Gender empowerment and youth inclusion are cross-cutting themes. The KfW-funded projects do not have a primary gender or youth goal, but in the results matrix some indicators are gender disaggregated. Attention to gender and youth empowerment and inclusion was researched through document study, KIIs with AGRA and consortium partners, and validated with beneficiaries through the mini-surveys and FGDs.

The field work in Ghana revealed strong gender inequalities in terms of benefitting from the project results, in particular at the farm level. Both rice FGDs in Ghana are located in the Northern part of Ghana where cultural impediments exist to women taking part in heavy farm work, such as rice cultivation. Hence in these projects, although women do help their husbands at harvest time, the immediate benefits accrued to men. In the cassava consortium in Ghana women do take part but are still restricted in their access to land and often depend on the goodwill of their husbands.

Gender inequalities are particularly pronounced in Burkina Faso, with women barely able to own land (they often “rent” from their husbands).¹¹ The FGDs also noted that women have difficult access to organic fertilisers (farm residues, animal waste) as this is captured by men. There are in Burkina Faso strong gender roles with women working in cowpeas and men in maize for example. In the extension project, women were assisted collectively through their farmer groups and cooperatives, while men

¹¹ Even if women do own land, because of religion many women are not allowed to work that land and must rent labour to do so, and the husbands often control that.

most received assistance on an individual basis according to the FGDs. Data collected in the field show the great majority of AGRA beneficiaries to be men (see section 4.3).

While women are constrained in access to land hence farming, they are strongly and almost exclusively involved downstream, such as rice parboiling, aggregation and marketing, and all projects offered support in this respect. Women process and trade rice in their small businesses, and this business went up with more and better-quality rice on the market. It is the same for cassava, with increased local supply of cassava resulting in women processing more into gari, starch and some other traditional products. In both Ghana and Burkina Faso, the rice project supported women groups in rice parboiling (e.g., provided equipment). Furthermore, in Burkina Faso, the consortium partner producing foundation seeds selected one women cooperative for seed multiplication. The Burkina Faso rice project also provided investment grants to two women-owned processing companies, while Ghana has such examples too. Nevertheless, in some of the KIIs it was mentioned that the projects could have given more attention to such women-owned micro enterprises processing and adding value to the product.

Our evaluative finding is that while all projects did reach out to women, none challenged traditional gender roles, and none was transformative in a cultural, social, and economic sense. Instead, the projects confirmed women in their existing roles in agriculture, namely downstream processing, and trade, not challenging existing ownership and power relations. While none of the projects had an explicit gender inclusion purpose, one may debate the extent to which the approach followed is helpful, and in reverse might even be harmful to the long-term emancipation of women.

None of the KfW-projects had a major youth inclusion component. According to the FGDs, youth took part in producer groups, but just like anybody else. According to some FGDs, the above-mentioned sales problems as well as long gestation of cassava in particular do discourage youths from entering and continuing in rice and cassava cultivation – many prefer activities that yield more rapid income. In the KIIs it was remarkable that many respondents spoke of youths in the context of being employed, not as entrepreneurs or farmers.

Nevertheless, some projects attempted to include youth in a special role. In the Burkina Faso extension project most VBAs were youth. The Burkina Faso rice project had a specific youth component, aiming to set up youth in small rice threshing companies, ten of which would be incubated, creating some 100 youth jobs. The youths were supposed to get a matching grant of 50% toward their investment, with the remainder presumably to be collected from a bank or MFI. As youths were unable to obtain such finance, this project component failed.¹²

6.4 E&S risks

EQ 3.4 Embedding E&S risk management: avoiding child labour, respecting workers' rights, protection against over indebtedness, displacing smallholder farmers or introducing dependencies, land-use rights

The ToR were particularly interested in E&S risk management, such as avoiding child labour, respecting workers' rights, protection against over-indebtedness, displacing smallholder farmers or introducing dependencies, and land-use rights. This was chiefly researched through KIIs and the FGDs. The mini-surveys also included a few questions in this respect. Generally, none of the KIIs or FGDs revealed substantial E&S incidents to which AGRA may have contributed. However, we could also not detect a

¹² The youths were not able to access the grant because of lack of collateral to access counterpart credit. Guarantee facilitators were also not willing to engage, partly because of lack of prior experience hence historical data on threshing activities.

high level of sensitivity to such issues, many just referring to local laws and regulations that are supposedly being respected.

In all FGDs the issue of child labour was extensively discussed, and we spoke about it with consortium partners as well. Farmers confirmed bringing their children to the fields, but never letting them work (for money) on somebody else's farm. Children do light work, not handling equipment or chemicals. Children also tend to farm animals, collect firewood, transport crops. Farmers deem this to be normal, and even beneficial to children as they learn the farm work from a young age for practice as adults. Most farmers claim only to do this outside of school hours and during holidays. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that some parents cannot send their children to school (for reasons of money or distance) and cannot let them stay at home for want of childcare, so take them to the fields at a very young age. It is the same for the older children, to "keep them from engaging in social vices". The problem here is probably not so much the children being on the field, but them not being at school when they ought to be. The FGDs also reported cases of (young) children deliberately brought to the fields to substitute for lack of farm labour – a clear case of child labour, therefore. Furthermore, the field team witnessed many cases of young children peeling cassava for processing into gari or starch, and this practice appeared quite systematic, not incidental. AGRA hopes that with increased farm incomes such practices will disappear, and children participate in education instead. Our evaluative conclusion is that while project implementors are not to blame for some unfortunate realities in the project areas, there was also not a great effort to remedy those.

One of the other E&S concerns is to avoid that farmers, due to the project, become overindebted. In the previous sections it was seen that the AGRA projects were not particularly active in credit intermediation, although some limited results were achieved in rice in Burkina Faso while cassava farmers received some through other channels (e.g., VLSAs organised by NGOs).¹³ In the mini-surveys we asked farmers if they had borrowed. In both Ghana and Burkina Faso most farmers did, on average about once each cropping season, and all were repaid according to respondents. The most common sources of credit in Ghana were friends and family as well as VSLAs, and to a lesser extent input suppliers. Loans from banks, informal lenders, or buyers are uncommon and always hard to get in Ghana. The survey results in Burkina Faso were somewhat different in that few borrowed from VSLAs, and rather more from input suppliers and buyers, all rice farmers who managed to get credit from rice millers as intended by the project design.

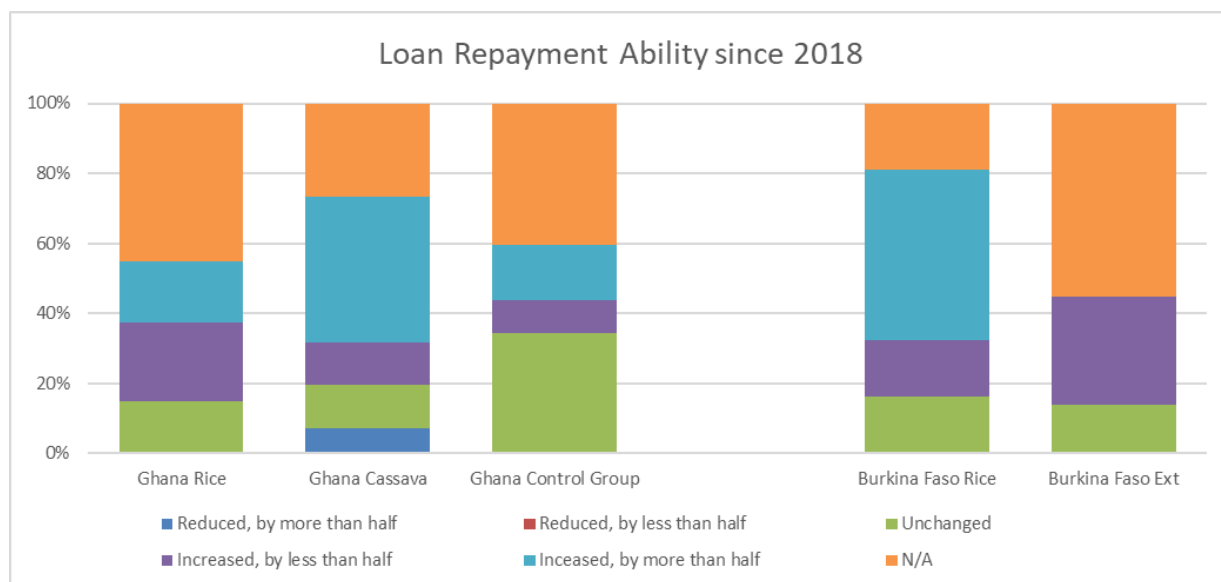
We also asked respondents in the mini-survey to what extent their ability to repay loans on time since 2018 has changed, and it improved somewhat for the project farmers – see figure 9 below in both Ghana and Burkina Faso. Nevertheless, 41% of rice farmers and 33% of cassava farmers in Ghana reported great difficulties in loan repayment. This was reflected in the FGDs – farmer indebtedness is a common problem in Ghana. Farmers may take credit for (mechanised) farming (e.g., ploughing, harvesting), but with the crop not timely sold or only sold on credit, they remain in debt. This may create a vicious circle of both farmers and service providers indebted. In the various KIIs respondents confirmed that indebtedness of farmers is definitely an issue of concern in Ghana, but project farmers being able to raise their incomes generally see reduced debt pressures. Nevertheless, in one cassava FGD AGRA stands accused of having indebted farmers as these borrowed to expand their cassava production, and subsequently had nobody to sell to as the supposed industrial cassava processor failed. Some defaulted. Thus, whereas the project is generally expected to improve loan repayment

¹³ Access to credit was an explicit component in the Burkina Faso rice project and the Ghana cassava project, not the Burkina Faso extension project.

capacity hence curtail indebtedness, the opposite is also possible if farmers and entrepreneurs make investments that do not bring the expected financial gains.

Very few of the respondents in the mini-survey in Burkina Faso reported inability to repay loans.

Figure 9 – Can you describe your ability to repay loans in a timely manner, how this changed since 2018?



Regarding access to land, the mini-survey in Ghana found that 90% of rice farmers, 76% of cassava growers, and 63% of the control group owned their land, without clear gender differences.¹⁴ Those who did not, mostly rented from persons outside the family. The FGDs and KIIs also identified few problems related to land, with most respondents in Ghana having easy access to land, although women are clearly disadvantaged in their access. Those who do rent complain of high rent, and uncertainty of lease as they may be evicted at the owner's whims.

In Burkina Faso, 85% of surveyed farmers in rice project and 95% in the extension services project claimed to own their land, without gender differences.¹⁵ From those who rent, all but one rented from a male not part of the family. The cost of rent was mentioned as a problem, as well as the location of the land far from the village. 17% of farmers in Burkina Faso cited the occurrence of land ownership conflicts, this was only 5% in Ghana. We did not come across any cases of forced land expropriation.

The FGDs also asked farmers about their relationship and possible dependence on suppliers, but this was merely transactional with inputs always paid cash on delivery. Nobody identified a key problem here, although the FGDs in Burkina Faso revealed that input dealers were not always trusted to supply the proper materials. This is what the VBAs were meant to solve, creating a connection of trust with pre-selected input dealers.

6.5 Agro-ecological aspects

EQ 3.5 Agro-ecological aspects: bio-diversity loss, compatibility of seed and fertiliser with agro-ecology, integrated crop protection, soil health

¹⁴ In the mini-survey in Ghana women were not shown to disproportionately be non-owners, but it is likely some or many may have reported land as their own which is in fact registered in name of their husbands. So, women must ask for that land.

¹⁵ Same comment as for Ghana. The FGDs revealed that land is invariably in name of the husbands.

The ToR also specifically asked to what extent the project paid attention to agro-ecological aspects, notably avoiding bio-diversity loss, compatibility of seeds and fertilisers with agro-ecology, integrated crop protection, and soil health. This was mainly asked of the consortium partners in KIIs and farmers in the FGDs. In the mini-survey it was asked if farmers had received information on farming and environment and most project farmers did (see figures 3 and 5).

From our discussion it surmised that project partners and AGRA look at respecting of agro-ecological aspects mainly in the context of national regulations established in this respect. As far as product chemicals were used in the projects, all projects (consortium partners in charge of input supply) stated that these had to conform to national environmental standards, and AGRA's field staff did monitor that. Projects had also encouraged farmers to use organic fertiliser (compost) where available. However, it was found that monitoring of adherence to country level standards was left to the Agric Extension officers as they are already aware of the national standards, which AGRA adheres to, and which are incorporated in national policy frameworks. AGRA has recognised, however, that it needs to better follow up on the extension officers' work, documenting their findings.

In the FGDs with rice farmers in Ghana it was reported that protection of the environment had been extensively dealt with by the project, and they had learned not to burn weeds and farm residues (but plough it) as burning would kill useful organisms in the ground. The extension officer, however, was in doubt to what extent this advice was being followed. Likewise, farmers in a cassava FGD stated they still believed that burning the field was good for fertility. In the Burkina Faso rice project, sustainable production was integrated through the Sustainable Rice Platform. This method uses a minimum of chemical fertilisers, and favours use of compost. The FGDs, however, revealed that farmers found it difficult to produce such organic fertilisers in sufficient quantities.

In spite of the above, the FGDs and some KIIs in Burkina Faso noted that environmental damage is in fact increasingly visible. Farmers cite soil erosion, degradation of soil fertility, requiring more and more fertilisers to be productive, as well as disappearance of hitherto common insects and ground worms, and increased occurrence of harmful weeds. Farmers identified overexploitation of land and use of wrong herbicides and pesticides as possible causes. The AGRA project partners are clearly sensitive to this, but not always fully able to prevent this.

6.6 M&E system

EQ 3.6 Review the M&E system, comprehensiveness, and suitability of indicators as well as measurement methods

The ToR also asked for a review of the M&E system, comprehensiveness, and suitability of indicators as well as measurement methods, being a requirement for proper assessment of project effectiveness and impact. A description of the M&E system was already included in section 3.2 above.

As noted in section 3.2, the AGRA result indicators are in large part populated through the KIT outcome surveys, as well as self-reporting by consortium partners. In the inception report, we already expressed surprise at the high level of granularity and numerical accuracy of these data, considering that many of the farmer respondents in both countries are barely literate (see chapter 4). Indeed, the numerical data on farm output and yields collected through our mini-surveys are clearly not credible and were not exploited by this MTR. How KIT managed to do this eludes us.¹⁶ One of the consortium leads we

¹⁶ As we did not investigate the source data of this outcome survey, we do not mean to disqualify this research.

interviewed expressed great doubts on the veracity of the data shown in the AGRA M&E, in addition observing that many farmers are reluctant to be truthful as they do not want to be seen as “rich”.

Our review of the M&E data in the results matrix also revealed that it is often difficult to determine how indicators being reported on have been measured, and how these can be cross-validated. For example, AGRA reports on very large sums of financing being leveraged – one would need to consult separate documents to see the details (which AGRA made available at our request).

Having said this, many of the AGRA M&E result data were broadly confirmed by the MTR, such as the increase in yields and output. In fact, many of our findings are more positive than those reported by AGRA to KfW. The AGRA data on post-harvest losses (from $\pm 30\%$ to 1%) are certainly exaggerated, as the FGDs revealed, but losses reduced for sure. The AGRA data on increased access to structured markets (e.g., from 4,540 mt rice in Ghana at baseline to 617,186 mt in 2021) we cannot confirm and deem implausible based on our admittedly limited survey sample, FGDs and KIs.

As noted in section 3.2, the AGRA M&E is limited to the results framework, and some of the KfW concerns such as (over) indebtedness, child labour and (lack of) agro-ecological practices are not in the results matrix, hence not systematically monitored, measured, and reported on. This is a work in progress that AGRA is aware of. See chapter 7 for further comments on this topic.

7 Efficiency

Efficiency is the way resources were used to produce outputs and outcomes, was it timely, cost-effective, and generally well-managed.

7.1 Quality of implementation by grantees

EQ 4.1 Quality of implementation by grantees (timely, cost-effective, participatory) as well as grantee reporting

The quality of implementation by grantees (timely, cost-effective, participatory) as well as grantee reporting was researched through reviewing project reports, KIIs with consortium partners, as well as the farmer mini-surveys and FGDs.

In the implementation of consortium grants to the rice and cassava projects, AGRA had chosen to provide each of the consortium partners sub-contracts for sub-grants, instead of one single grant to the lead applicant who would then manage all partner relations including (sub-)contractual and payment aspects. Although the consortium partners were meant to coordinate and collaborate, each partner had its own work package, reporting obligation to AGRA, and being contractually autonomous was not necessarily compelled to liaise with its consortium partners. Indeed, consortium partners were accountable to AGRA rather than the lead applicant.

The KIIs with consortium partners gave ample evidence of consortium partners failing to coordinate, each working in silos, this in spite of the lead grantee having budget for coordination and a Project Implementation Unit having been established. One respondent compared it to a forced marriage, another to a collection of separate projects. Virtually all lamented the poor coordination among consortium members. Consortium leaders generally felt ignored and disrespected by their partners. The exception was the Burkina Faso extension project, probably because the consortium was very small, and also because the grant contract was signed by the leader only, which sub-contracted the others.

We also found that some consortium partners were distrustful of each other, accusing each other of not doing the work agreed or receiving too much money for this. Sometimes partners indicated that work was entrusted to a partner not best suited for it, or that work was being duplicated, and in some cases project partners were in competition with each other for markets and funds. It was reported that AGRA, often with the government, had actively participated in the constitution of the consortia, sometimes selecting its own trusted partners, not necessarily the partners the consortium members would have selected and trusted. In the Ghana rice consortium, the break-down of trust went to the extent that the consortium lead Intervalle had to be replaced by another, Hopeline.¹⁷ In the Ghana cassava consortium quite severe allegations of misconduct by colleagues were aired as well. The atmosphere in the Burkina Faso rice consortium was also quite bad, and the joint project office established in Bagré was barely used. Consortium members were simply not interested to work together, even accusing others of sabotage. In this project too, the leadership was eventually changed. The Burkina Faso extension project was the only one that seems to have avoided such issues. The

¹⁷ The problem here has likely been that Intervalle was a private company, a rice trader, not used to project management in a development context. Intervalle also had other agreements with MOFA, and there was some confusion on its tasks in either project.

above finding has certainly reduced project efficiency, such as causing delays in both rice projects, while synergies among partners were not optimised and effectiveness likely suffered.

On reporting, some partners found it easy enough and straight-forward. Some other consortium members observed that reporting to AGRA (“paperwork”) was complicated and not really in their interest. Indeed, MDF observes from earlier work that private companies working in development generally resist such reporting load (narrative, financial, M&E data...), which is why it is often a good idea to include NGOs and private consultants to ensure project management – exactly as AGRA did. However, the contractual set-up whereby each consortium member had its own reporting obligations toward AGRA caused problems to some (private sector) partners as they were not structured to perform such tasks. Capacity building of the consortium partners to understand AGRA’s systems of reporting and internal control as well as AMIS – online submissions – has probably been insufficient in some cases. AGRA would also be well-advised to reinforce its capacity assessment of consortium partners prior to contracting, the leader in particular.¹⁸

In spite of the above, stakeholders and beneficiaries in all four projects reported that the project interventions were generally good, in particular the training and extension services as well as input supply in all projects. The MOFA in Ghana noted that the rice project delivered services the government’s extensionists did not have the capacity to perform (e.g., services provided by Hopeline Institute), while consortium companies provided suitable seeds. Thus, the project contributed to the PfJ through the contribution of additional seeds, training, and adoption of technologies to achieve PfJ production targets. The project interventions in accessing markets were less successful as noted in chapter six above.

In the context of efficiency, the mini-survey sought to determine to what extent the projects were implemented through (existing) farmer representative organisations, as this may increase efficiency and sustainability as well. In Ghana, 76% of farmers confirmed the existence of a farmer organisation in their community, while 79% reported the existence of a VSLA. Other types of association, such as a business or religious grouping were less common. According to farmers in Ghana, about 20% of farmer associations have women in management, but this is 72% for VSLAs. In Burkina Faso, farmer representative organisations include cooperatives and other forms of collaboration such as farmer groups linked to a processing company. Such forms of cooperation are ubiquitous in Burkina Faso. The other categories were barely mentioned. Only about a quarter of farmer organisations in Burkina Faso were said to have women in the management.

63% of surveyed farmers in Ghana were members of a farmer association, but only 40% of a VSLA. However, farmers assisted by AGRA projects had a higher level of membership, as can be seen from the below table 5. Indeed, 70% of farmers in the rice project in Ghana and 44% in the cassava project stated that the AGRA project had encouraged them to be member of a farmer organisation. This was confirmed by the FGDs, the project advising farmers to form or join groups. This was thought to enable them to link to product aggregators for reliable product off-take at wholesale prices. Farmers in the FGDs mentioned that the group formation was voluntary, and they had themselves selected the members to take part (and those to exclude).

In Burkina Faso, membership of farmer organisations, including cooperatives in various forms, was over 80% in the rice sector, and about 60% of respondents in the extension project. The FGDs revealed

¹⁸ Some consortium partners we spoke had been confronted with expenditures being deemed ineligible by AGRA or auditors, hence were not covered.

that male farmers in Burkina Faso invariably work individually, but still join forces for input supply and sales. Women, however, are used to work in collective form. It concerns some type of cooperative, also used for selling the product. Some of these are closely linked to a rice factory, carrying its name, while there were also some women groups producing parboiled rice. One women group is producing rice seeds.

Table 5 – Existence and participation in membership organisations

Types of Associations	Ghana Rice		Ghana Cassava		Ghana Control Group		Burkina Faso Rice		Burkina Faso Ext	
	Exist	Member	Exist	Member	Exist	Member	Exist	Member	Exist	Member
Farmers	88%	86%	80%	78%	58%	23%	87%	82%	85%	59%
Water users	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
VSLA	74%	24%	85%	56%	78%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Business	12%	5%	15%	12%	18%	5%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Charitable	5%	2%	15%	12%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Religious	10%	10%	59%	49%	25%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	5%	0%	13%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
None	12%	10%	2%	12%	23%	38%	15%	15%	15%	41%

The next table 6 shows that 86% of farmers in the rice project in Ghana thought their project went through the above-mentioned farmer organisations, while it was just 56% for cassava. We also asked farmers if they felt having been involved in project decision making and whether the project kept its agreements (e.g., delivered what was promised). Rice farmers were upbeat, cassava farmers rather gloomy. The FGDs came to the same conclusion, with the main negative that structured markets had not materialised. The cassava FGDs also stated that they had been promised help in land preparation (which is indeed mentioned in the grant proposal), and also had expected to receive credit, and did not.

In Burkina Faso, most respondents in the mini-survey thought the project was implemented through a farmer organisation. They had felt well-involved, and the project kept its engagements. According to some FGDs, however, farmers had not been much involved in the decisions taken by the project, explaining that their leaders had dealt with the project without much involving them.

As to the role of VBAs, which are used in both the extension and the rice projects in Burkina Faso, it was observed that the relationship input supplier-VBA-farmers was never formalised, which is thought to reduce sustainability of the collaboration including access to inputs. It is unclear who should now pay the VBA services: farmer, input dealer, processor, or otherwise, and all decline this responsibility. Although a few VBAs were remunerated by input suppliers for linking them up with farmers, most were not. VBAs had also expected to receive transport assistance (e.g., a motobike). Furthermore, in the absence of the project, the VBAs no longer have access to (free) demonstration materials, notably seeds, for use in demo plots or distribution to farmers. A few VBAs received help to develop a business plan for their small business, not very effective.

In the KIIs in the extension project it was also observed that many local input dealers are in fact quite weak, and often involved in many non-related products, not aiding the setting up of an efficient supply chain of inputs from large project-selected suppliers to the farmer level. One input dealer in the extension project visited by the field team lamented the lack of a formal agreement among the project partners (e.g., input supplier, SMEs, VBAs, farmers), and felt the project had not helped create a stable market in input materials. The key problem here is that the role of VBAs as commissioned input sales agents, hence the hoped-for link of input dealers – VBAs – farmers, did not come true.

Table 6 – Role farmer organisations and project

	Ghana					
Role farmer org	Project through farmer org		Involved farmers		Project kept agreements	
	Rice	Cassava	Rice	Cassava	Rice	Cassava
Yes	86%	56%	95%	35%	95%	29%
No	14%	44%	5%	65%	5%	71%
Not Applicable	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Burkina Faso					
Role farmer org	Project through farmer org		Involved farmers		Project kept agreements	
	Rice	Ext	Rice	Ext	Rice	Ext
Yes	59%	49%	82%	72%	77%	77%
No	41%	51%	18%	28%	23%	23%
Not Applicable	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

In the context of management efficiency (by grantees) we also reviewed the grant applications and the annual reports submitted to AGRA. A good grant application should include an intervention logic (e.g., result chain or logical framework) with result indicators and targets, with linked budget (revealing the cost of major project components, causally linked to the activities and outputs), workplan and implementation modalities such as responsibilities among consortium partners. A review of the four project documents reveals that these were generally well-done and included the above-mentioned elements, although we have some objections to the budget presentation by consortium partner. From information availed to us it can be seen that in the project preparation process detailed budgets were made by project component, attempting to cost activities based on their unit costs. However, these were subsequently aggregated to the project partners, which may have given them the impression that a grant is a gift. Indeed, the KIIs clearly revealed this understanding of a grant as an entitlement, not a payment for which a service must be rendered. This may explain some of the haggling about money within the consortia.

Ideally, the annual and final narrative and financial reports would reflect the above-mentioned structure, hence show progress on major performance metrics from the logical framework and corresponding costs compared to budget, and this for the entire project to match the grant application. However, reports made available to the MTR team were of a variable quality, hampered by the fact that consortium partners each made their own reports for the activities under their responsibility. Except for the Burkina Faso extension project, we have not seen overall narrative reports, showing progress on the entire project compared to the overall result indicators and budget. Likewise, with the exception of ABAC Burkina Faso (extension services), we did not see overall financial reports, but only reports of expenditure by the individual consortium members (which were each audited at their level only). With so many scattered reports on sub-parts of the same project, it is just very hard to evaluate how the projects have progressed. As to the financial reports, these lacked sufficient cost detail reflecting activity performance, so one cannot say whether the remaining budget is sufficient to carry out the work yet to be done.

Text box 1 – Example financial report

A	B	C	D	E	F=D+E	G=C+F	H=G/C	Euro: USD Rate	
Approved Budget Line Items	Income		Total Expenditure			Fund Balance	Fund Variances (%)	Current Reporting (US\$)	Cost Share (USD)
	Total Approved Budget Amount	Total Disbursement Received from AGRA	Previous Cumulative Expenditure	Current Reporting Expenditure	Cumulative Expenditure to Date				
Personnel Cost	€ 48,153.59	€ 48,153.59	€ 41,112.41	€ 5,508.28	€ 46,620.69	€ 1,532.90	3.18%	\$ 6,259.41	\$ 6,259.4
Meetings & Workshops	€ 14,784.00	€ 14,784.00	€ 8,040.81	€ 1,395.03	€ 9,435.84	€ 5,348.16	36.18%	\$ 1,585.26	\$ -
OBJECTIVE 1						€ -			
Consortium Management	€ 15,840.00	€ 15,840.00	€ 11,251.44	€ 2,369.78	€ 13,621.22	€ 2,218.78	14.01%	\$ 2,692.93	\$ -
End Survey (Final Evaluation)	€ 7,040.00	€ 7,040.00	€ -	€ 5,368.00	€ 5,368.00	€ 1,672.00	0.00%	\$ 6,100.00	\$ -
Linkage to Financing System	€ 7,040.00	€ 7,040.00	€ 5,098.64	€ 752.31	€ 5,850.95	€ 1,189.05	16.89%	\$ 854.90	\$ -
Farmer Organisation Development	€ 159,411.84	€ 159,344.70	€ 138,804.80	€ 23,918.22	€ 162,723.02	€ (3,378.32)	-2.12%	\$ 27,179.79	\$ -
Mobilization	€ 130,680.00	€ 130,680.00	€ 138,281.81	€ -	€ 138,281.81	€ (7,601.81)	-5.82%	\$ -	\$ -
Travel Costs	€ 30,769.20	€ 30,769.20	€ 21,079.57	€ 6,296.40	€ 27,375.97	€ 3,393.23	11.03%	\$ 7,155.00	\$ 795.0
OBJECTIVE 2									
Technical Assistance	€ 4,400.00	€ 4,400.00	€ 4,422.33	€ -	€ 4,422.33	€ (22.33)	-0.51%	\$ -	\$ -
Structured Markets Development	€ 69,942.40	€ 69,942.40	€ 71,425.95	€ -	€ 71,425.95	€ (1,483.55)	-2.12%	\$ -	\$ -
Project Monitoring & Evaluation	€ 51,010.95	€ 51,010.95	€ 28,224.13	€ 20,935.28	€ 49,159.41	€ 1,851.54	3.63%	\$ 23,790.09	\$ -
Refund		€ 1,196.60				€ 1,196.60			
Bank Charges	€ -	€ -	€ 338.30	€ 10.40	€ 348.70	€ (348.70)		\$ 11.81	
GRAND TOTAL	€ 539,071.98	€ 540,201.44	€ 468,080.19	€ 66,553.69	€ 534,633.88	€ 5,567.56	1.03%	\$ 75,629.19	\$ 7,054.4

Presented is the financial report of one of the partners in the cassava project. It is not possible to see to what extent the expenditures are justified by work done, e.g., results achieved, and outputs produced. It is also not possible to judge whether remaining fund balances on the respective lines suffice to complete the work as contractually agreed.

7.2 Programme management and monitoring by AGRA

EQ 4.2 Programme management and monitoring by AGRA – compliance with grant agreements (AGRA-grantee and AGRA-KfW)

The ToR also ask for a review of AGRA's management processes, and to ascertain compliance with the KfW-AGRA financing agreement and the separate agreement attached to it. This was mainly researched through document review, and interviews with AGRA and consortium partners.

The financing agreement, which consists of two parts, lists many requirements on AGRA's management, the most important (for this review) are the following:

Table 7 – Adherence to the financing agreement

Financing agreement	Findings MTR
Rules on competitive award of grants and service contracts	In principle, grants were awarded after a (competitive) call for proposals. However, the KIIs revealed that AGRA has actively intervened in the selection of consortium partners and also contributed to the contents of the projects. In the Burkina Faso extension project and the cassava project in Ghana, the grant was directly awarded to a pre-selected consortium.
Obligation to set up an ESMS conforming to IFC performance standards, and ensure grantees adhere to it as well. Also, set up a suitable complaints mechanism and have procedures in place to respond to ESMS risk events.	AGRA invested great effort to set up ESMS management systems and trained the consortium partners accordingly. Grantees confirmed participation in training sessions and understanding of the issues, which are included in their contractual agreements. There was, however, no reporting requirement from them regarding these issues in their quarterly reports. AGRA does not have indicators or tools in its M&E to monitor (over)indebtedness, incidences of child labour, and some of the other KfW concerns, and this is also not in the results matrix, nor was it covered in the outcome surveys.
Not to finance projects that are on the IFC exclusion list	None were found.

Ensure compliance with national and international occupational health and safety standards, as well as ILO labour standards	No infringements found
Closely liaise with other German-funded projects in the agricultural sector	In both Burkina Faso and Ghana there was evidence of AGRA coordinating with (other) German-funded interventions by BMZ, GIZ and KfW. In the Burkina Faso rice project, collaboration was established with the GIZ-CARI project.
Integrate qualitative aspects of food security, including dietary diversity	While AGRA-funded projects encourage farmers to diversify their crops, and increased incomes do add to their nutrition, nutrition security and dietary diversity was not a main part of these projects.
Prepare semi-annual progress reports	<p>Regarding the reporting to KfW, it was noted that AGRA reports present the overall PIATA programme, with sub-chapters for the individual countries that do not specifically show what happened in the KfW-funded projects as AGRA undertook many other activities. It is the same for evaluation reports, outcome surveys and impact studies. It is very difficult to read from these documents what was done with German funding, and what results were achieved from German funds specifically.</p> <p>Furthermore, we did not find a narrative to the results matrix, explaining how the respective figures were derived and how this can be attributed to the KfW-AGRA project, not another project. As the results matrix includes results for crops that are not even in the (four) KfW-AGRA projects it is likely the reported results are not due to KfW funding only. Furthermore, indicators for cassava are missing.</p> <p>We observe, however, that the KfW-AGRA financing agreement was conceived as a joint co-financing of PIATA in Ghana and Burkina Faso, so the above is not necessarily in contradiction. As KfW appears to have accepted this, and as the KfW contribution in reality is managed from a joint co-funding logic, it is probably best to stop pretending the KfW-funded projects are separate under a parallel funding mechanism.</p>

Apart from the above assessment, we also asked consortium partners for their assessment of AGRA's management and supervision. Some were happy with AGRA's monitoring and leadership, and found the regular interactions with the team helpful, as well as AGRA's support in data collection and subsequent reporting. Some others were more critical, complaining of heavy reporting requirements and bureaucracy. In the Burkina Faso rice project, several respondents complained of AGRA insisting on technical solutions that do not meet the local context, in particular the value chain finance methods and contract farming, while some processors claimed that AGRA insisted on processing lines that were too big and too expensive, and they were indebted as a result. This was, however, denied by AGRA, noting that processors were free to apply for the matching facility. Some technical solutions, however, would have needed more time to be introduced and accepted by all involved. There were also several consortium partners complaining about slow disbursement of funds, in some cases resulting in project delays.

Our evaluative conclusion is that both the grant award and grant execution process involved a larger role of the donor (in this case AGRA) than one would have expected in a grant based on an open call for proposals. AGRA actively steered the drafting of the grant, development of result indicators, and intervened in execution as well, according to the KIs. This is contrary to habitual grant practice in donor-funded projects, which typically assumes a high level of autonomy of the grant beneficiaries within the prior agreed parameters. The grant mechanism is likely not the most suitable to AGRA working with implementing partners. A partnership agreement might be more suitable and realistic.

7.3 Use of resources against budget

EQ 4.3 Use of resources against budget

The use of resources against budget was principally reviewed through the expenditure reports.

As noted under 7.1 and earlier chapters, each grant project had its own budget, which was subsequently divided over the consortium partners who each presented their own reports of expenditure with audit report, this except for the extension project in Burkina Faso. The MTR cannot make a statement on expenditure efficiency on the basis of such scattered and seemingly disconnected information. It was also noted that both budgets and financial reports were not drafted in such manner as to be able to review cost effectiveness of the respective actions and components. The level of detail over cost categories (e.g., activities leading to outputs and their unit costs) was simply too low.

Furthermore, it was noted that in the financial report to KfW, AGRA lumped together the expenditure for Burkina Faso and for Ghana, not showing the costs of the four sub-projects, let alone the expenditure components that underly these four projects. Consequently, any kind of analytical cost-assessment (e.g., output or outcome efficiency, value for money) is impossible, neither for the respective sub-projects, nor the KfW-AGRA programme.

7.4 Implementation of ESMS

EQ 4.4 Implementation of ESMS by grantees and by AGRA and ESMS risk management, as well as complaint handling

Whereas in the effectiveness section we looked at the occurrence of E&S incidents, under efficiency we look at the ESMS management processes. This was done at the level of AGRA mainly, confirmed with consortium partners and farmers through the FGDs.

In all of our KIIs we found respondents quite dismissive of the possibility that E&S incidents could have occurred, which suggests a low level of sensitivity to this. None of them showed an active attitude toward researching such risks. However, the fact that no E&S risk events were brought to their attention is not sufficient to conclude there were none.

The development of an ESMS was a requirement of the financing agreement, and as such was new to AGRA. Accordingly, AGRA developed an ESMS policy and manual, which it used throughout the programme. Grantees and staff underwent training, which is annually repeated. However, as already indicated in the above M&E sections (chapters 2 and 6), no system for performance tracking on ESMS was developed to identify and address any occurrence of E&S infringements.

In this respect the MTR team observes that the project ToC did not formulate goals of an explicit social or environmental nature, hence it is quite logical that no related indicators were formulated in the results matrix, this apart from some gender disaggregation of some. Thus, the fact that the project did not define and measure indicators on promoting good environmental practices, farmer indebtedness or avoiding child labour is consistent with its design, although the promotion of good practices was certainly foreseen as part of the sustainability agenda. It remains to be discussed to what extent a future M&E must include indicators pertaining to E&S risks, but in the very least it must track any incidents being reported and as well as the follow-up given, which is of a qualitative nature.

It is acknowledged that collecting data on current E&S risks and related practices, to be done at farmer level, would present an additional resource burden on AGRA. Some vectors of accessing information

may include enriching the existing systems of extension officers who are a necessary part of project implementation, Civil Society Organisations already involved in E&S monitoring issues, or external consultants in M&E (AGRA already uses such in project monitoring), this along with self-reporting by grant partners and AGRA's own field visits and observations. However, the depth of such data collection must be proportional to the importance given to it in the project design as noted above. While information is often worth having, resource constraints mean that priorities must be set and choices made. Where attention to E&S risks moves up on the development agenda of AGRA, so must the relevant reporting. But there is always a fine line between cost and need of information, whereby the ToC is leading.

7.5 Stakeholders and communities

EQ 4.5 Stakeholder participation, respect for human rights and freedom of choice for target groups, attention to non-intended impacts on communities, involvement of civil society

KfW emphasises stakeholder participation, respect for human rights and freedom of choice for target groups, attention to non-intended impacts on communities, and involvement of civil society. The extent to which this took place was researched through document research, as well as KIIs with key stakeholders including civil society.

Generally, participants in the project had felt involved and consulted, although this was less the case in the Burkina Faso extension project (see table 5 above). The fact that the project mainly went through farmer representative organisations helped achieve stakeholder participation. However, in some cases their leaders appear not to have taken much effort to consult their members.

In all projects, extensive stakeholder consultation was conducted at the outset. According to the KIIs, there were community entry procedures to start engaging farmers, which required engagement from the district assemblies, the local departments of the ministry of agriculture, community leaders, farmer groups, etc in order to promote the project and its benefits for participants.

There was also extensive stakeholder engagement to get the policy initiatives going. The Ghana rice project reached out to representations of the rice sector at district and regional levels in order to mobilise a voice for policy change and development of a National Rice Strategy. Similarly, the cassava project set up stakeholder platforms of cassava value chain actors and service providers in all regions also toward putting together a Cassava strategy which is still ongoing.

8 Impact

The ToC formulated the overall impact goal as “Catalyse and sustain an inclusive agricultural transformation to increase incomes and improve food security for smallholder farmers in targeted regions in Burkina Faso and Ghana”. Therefore, the ultimate aims of agricultural work are to enhance food security and incomes, to which we may add job creation. Farmers being more productive will have more income, generate jobs for others, and improve food security both for themselves and consumers who buy their quality and nutritious foods. Projects may also have wider effects, both intended and non-intended, and these are not always positive.

8.1 Contribution to food security, income, employment

EQ 5.1 Contribution to food security, income, employment

Project impact was reviewed through desk research and KIIs, and above all the farmer mini-surveys and FGDs.

The core impact indicators from the results matrix as regularly reported to KfW are the following two (see also section 3.1):

- Average number of months of adequate household provision
- Percent of people living on less than USD 1.90 per day

However, the programme would also have wider food security effects outside of rural communities as national food availability would increase and import bills reduce, but this is outside our capability to measure and attribute.

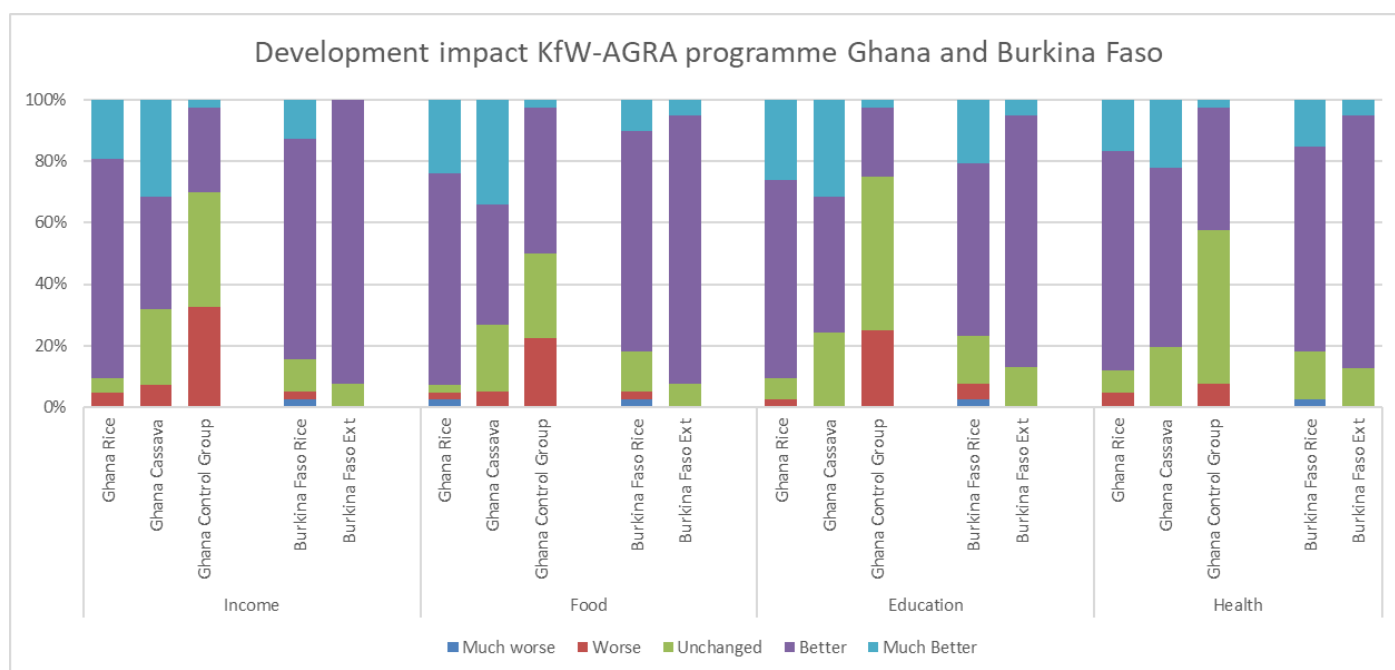
According to the latest AGRA progress report, food security of project farmers had marginally improved in both Burkina Faso and Ghana.^{19,20} The % of farmers living on less than USD 1.9 per day had marginally declined in both countries.²¹ We validated this through the mini-survey, asking respondents whether their income had increased since 2018, whether access to quality and quantity of food had improved, and the same for access to education and health services, as this is an expression of increased incomes – see figure 10. The project farmers were compared to the control group (in Ghana only), not separated into rice and cassava controls given the small size of the control groups. Project farmers did much better than the control group. Although the below results do not prove causality in the absence of detailed contribution analysis, it does suggest substantial development impact on beneficiaries of the KfW-funded AGRA programmes in Ghana and Burkina Faso. What’s more, our findings suggest much better impacts than the KIT outcome survey did.

¹⁹ As observed in chapter 3, the outcome survey covered the entire AGRA programme in these countries, and was not disaggregated to KfW interventions. Cassava farmers were not surveyed.

²⁰ Namely from 11.0 to 11.3 months of adequate food in Burkina Faso, and 10.0 to 10.5 months in Ghana.

²¹ Namely from 34.76% to 32.71% in Burkina Faso, and 8.39% to 7.21% in Ghana.

Figure 10 – Development Impact Ghana and Burkina Faso



Knowing that the project implementation period coincided with the Covid pandemic, we asked respondents to the mini-survey about the impact of Covid. 9% of farmers in Ghana saw significant impact on their income, 30% short-term impact only, and 61% just minimal impact. There were no great differences between the rice, cassava, and control groups in Ghana. In Burkina Faso, 12% of farmers saw significant impact on their income, 6% short-term impact only, and 82% just minimal impact. We also asked what the specific negative impacts of Covid were, and farmers in both countries mentioned increased input and food prices, reduced output prices and school interruption. Only few farmers mentioned impacts due to death, illness, loss of business contacts, job loss, business failure, or disruption of remittances. We may therefore conclude that Covid negatively impacted farmers, but not decidedly so.

Farmers in the FGDs in Ghana and Burkina Faso confirmed the positive impacts on their food and nutrition security, access to education and health. The mechanism by which this positive impact is created is mainly their increased income from selling larger quantities of agricultural produce. Farmers also reported having hired more seasonal labour, hence created paid work for others (although invariably paid in-kind). FGDs noted, however, that with more reliable sales their income hence impact could improve. In fact, lack of markets is holding back farmers from further investing in their farms to grow production. In one cassava FGD some farmers claimed their income had actually suffered given the cost of investments made, and lacking sales.

8.2 Wider benefits for direct and indirect beneficiaries

EQ 5.2 Wider benefits for direct and indirect beneficiaries, including non-intended benefits. This also includes negative effects.

The wider (often unintended) impacts were mainly researched through KIIs with consortium partners and FGDs with farmers.

Overall, the MTR has not found any harmful effects due to the project interventions, such as impacts of a socio-economic or environmental nature. Although some indications were received of farmers and

SMEs investing and being indebted as a result, overall farmers experienced reduced debt pressures due to their increased incomes. The MTR noted that child labour might be addressed more actively by the project, but certainly does not accuse the project of having aggravated existing social practices. On gender inclusion the MTR noted that little is done to remedy root causes of inequality. On the environment, some positive steps have been set in proper agricultural practices and resource use, but more needs to be done to ensure sustainable agriculture in Ghana and Burkina Faso.

The MTR did observe quite a few positive, and often unintended, impacts. Several farmers in the FGDs have noted that other farmers, not in the projects, have started to copy their good practices, and many farmers assisted their neighbours in this respect. In cassava in Ghana, it was noted that some farmers having seen the good results are now entering this domain as well. This, however, resulted in price pressure in some communities.

It was also noted that through the project seed companies have now entered into areas they were not before, while cassava processors were connected to new producer groups.

As mentioned above, women processing cassava in communities benefited from increased supply of raw material, even though they were not directly targeted by the project. The same was seen in the rice projects.

The interviews also revealed that some project farmers used their increased incomes to invest in other income generating activities, such as a small village grocery.

In some KIIs it was noted that the projects caused the general awareness of the need to use good seeds and fertilisers to increase, and this may have led to spin-offs outside of the projects. On the consumer side, quality awareness has increased as well. The reputation of local rice as being of poor quality is being challenged, and local rice is now being branded.

In all projects there has also been an increase in dialogue among sector partners, such as in the Ghana rice project, which influenced policy making. There is also increased interaction of a commercial nature, such as of farmers with input dealers and product aggregators/processors. This may have long-term effects on the efficiency of the value chain.

9 Sustainability

EQ 6.1 Durability of results achieved, e.g., improved farm practices and collaboration in the value chain.

Sustainability is the extent to which the benefits of the KfW-AGRA programme are maintained after its ending, and preferably even up-scaled and replicated. This was primarily researched through the KIIs with consortium partners and FGDs with farmers.

In the mini-surveys we asked farmers if they would be able to continue their newly learned practices, and nearly all farmers in both Ghana and Burkina Faso thought they could. In the FGDs the same was concluded, although some farmers in Ghana lamented the reduced presence of the extension officers after the projects came to an end. However, links with input suppliers and markets were mostly intact.

This was echoed by the FIIs with consortium partners and stakeholders in Ghana. Although the project consortia have disbanded, trade links were maintained. It is noted, however, that one element of questionable sustainability is the government's subsidisation of good seeds and fertilisers under PfJ. If the government were to stop input subsidisation, which for sure will happen one day, some farmers may reduce usage of such inputs, reverting to old practices. Not all will see that the benefit of good inputs justifies the cost, or they may simply not have the financial means to purchase those inputs. Some KIIs also doubted that all good agronomic practices will be maintained, in particular the avoidance of burning weeds and plant residues. With cassava processors not up to speed, the sustainability of much of the cassava project may be in doubt.

In the Burkina Faso rice project, KIIs noted that the link seed research – seed multiplication – producer is not yet well established, and government leadership is weak, hence input dealers and farmers may revert to lesser qualities. While the national seed institute provides sufficient materials, the local distribution system is still very weak. Nevertheless, most producers will try to continue sourcing good input materials if available in the local input shop.

Specifically, to the extension and also the rice project in Burkina Faso, the FGDs and KIIs came up with a number of sustainability constraints in the VBA model:

- There is lack of clarity on the VBAs revenue model in the absence of a formal structure of farmers, VBAs and input dealers working together and VBAs receiving sales commissions.²² VBAs are essentially volunteers, usually farmers themselves working under supervision of government extension officers, which the grant proposal suggests would develop into commissioned sales agents of seed companies and agro-dealers (page 14 of the proposal) as well as product aggregators, this being their main revenue. This is not coming true.
- Apart the from expected commissions, the motivation to become VBA had been the starter pack of input materials they received to set up demo plots, used for farmer learning of new technologies and seed varietal performance, and giving the VBAs some sales as well, but this demo-pack was a one-off.
- Some VBAs expected to receive a motorbike or other inducements.
- More fundamentally, upgrading VBAs into input sales agents requires them to obtain an input provider license as well as some working capital, which is a constraint to many.

²² A point also explicitly made in the PIATA evaluation, 8 Dec 2021.

Stakeholders reported that many VBAs will not continue their work after the project as they no longer have access to free seeds and inputs for use on the VBAs demo plots and input kits for distribution to farmers for trying out. Furthermore, few VBAs are inclined or capable of developing commercial input supply or aggregation services along with their advisory, and they lack access to finance or balk at distances to travel. As VBAs had played a trusted role in organising input provision for project farmers, this will likely be interrupted along with their own withdrawal. Some stakeholders went as far as to claim that most of the benefits of the extension project would be lost, and many farmers may revert to their old production practices. Already farmers face difficulties in accessing proper seeds and fertilisers, local input supply network being weak.²³ As the VBA model was used in the Burkina Faso rice project too, this project is faced with the same sustainability challenge. The government of Burkina Faso has now taken over the VBA system, aiming to replicate and upscale it. However, one cannot help but feel that the fundamentals are still weak.

Access to structured markets was a key component in the rice and cassava projects but underperformed for various reasons. Some links were established between producers and buyers, but with a relationship of trust not yet established, e.g., due to side-selling, these are not yet sufficiently sustainable. Access to credit work, which depends on structured sales markets, was mostly unsuccessful, hence unsustainable.

In a general sense, the projects promoted many models, such as rice value chain cooperation and financing, investing in rice processing, VBAs, call centres in extension services, often assuming that what worked in other countries will work in Burkina Faso and Ghana too. In Burkina Faso in particular, many such model were not (yet) successful. Some rice processors complained that they had taken on too much debt as a result. While experimentation is the only way of knowing that something works or does not, several respondents in the KIIs have accused AGRA of too easily copying models from other countries without sufficient local context analysis. The evaluators' interpretation is that such models may have been applicable, but just need far more time, try-outs, and finetuning to be successfully and sustainably implemented.

²³ The VBA is a trusted party both for farmers and the input suppliers, so as a facilitator of input and seed sales, (s)he can also be a mutually recognised broker for credit sales, which a farmer walking into an input dealership may not be able to access.

10 Conclusions and recommendations

10.1 Findings

This MTR was based on a **mixed methods approach**, collecting data from desk research, stakeholder interviews, focus group discussions with farmers and processors, as well as a mini-survey. The methods complement each other, allowing for the evaluation questions to be reviewed from different view points and findings to be triangulated. Although the MTR only allowed for a limited data set to be collected, together they enable a balanced review of the KfW-AGRA programme in Ghana and Burkina Faso and the formulation of forward-looking recommendations.

The MTR revealed great similarities of the four projects, all reflecting the **KfW-AGRA intervention logic**. All four included a component of farmer training, input supply especially seeds, market development linked to access to credit, and to some extent enabling policy environment. The rice projects leveraged on public input subsidisation programmes, while in rice and cassava public and private investment in processing took place as well. Of the four projects, the Burkina Faso extension project had the most narrow focus, namely on farmer extension services and input supply, while it targetted several crops instead of just one.

A review of **relevance** found the projects to fit into national policies for agriculture development, and indeed government was associated with all of them, while these projects were clearly matching the needs as expressed by farmers in the mini-surveys and FGDs. The various AGRA operations are **coherent** with each other and the governments' work.

The projects were generally **effective** in raising farmers' production standards while connecting them to input suppliers, seeds in particular. This helped raise their yields by 50-100%, increase product quality, and incomes. Post-harvest losses were also reduced due to better product handling and post-harvest treatment. In rice and cassava, farmers got access to seeds and plant varieties that match the quality needs of processing firms. In spite of this, the connection of farmers to structured markets (rice and cassava) disappointed as buyers hesitate to commit themselves to an offtake contract and fix a price in advance, while in cassava (semi-)industrial processing capacity was insufficient. Access to credit, foreseen through value chain finance mechanisms, disappointed as a result. In both countries, farmer-buyer relations are complicated by farmers being prone to disrespect their contracts, and by widespread side-selling. This finding is reflective of international experience showing that value chain structuring is often possible when there is a clear and unique offtaker identified, e.g., in tea, cocoa and cotton, and much more difficult in local food crops where farmers have many (local) buyers to choose from, hence are easily induced to disrespect their forward-sales contracts.

Relating to **efficiency**, the various consortia generally performed the tasks they were supposed to, although delivery of equipment was slow. Coordination within the consortia, however, was poor as partners did their work on an individual basis with insufficient consultation and mutual trust – this except for the Burkina Faso extension project. This was in large part due to the project structure whereby AGRA contracted consortium partners individually, each having their own work plan, budget and reporting requirements, not installing the “leader” in a real leadership role. The various grant proposals were well prepared. However, narrative and financial reports were not

linked and analytical, and did not show the extent to which budget absorption is reflective of work done (and yet to be done). In addition, and with the exception of the Burkina Faso extension project, there were no consolidated project reports but only sub-reports by the consortium partners, making it hard to efficiently monitor project progress. The management and support by AGRA was generally appreciated, although some found it bureaucratic and inflexible.

The projects were **impactful** in terms of raising farmer incomes, food security, access to health and education, although the cassava project trailed the others. Some unintended positive impacts were seen on neighbouring farmers, not involved in the project, taking on the good practices from the project farmers. Farmers have better understood the importance of using good seeds, and the seed chain was strengthened.

The **sustainability** of the new skills adopted by farmers is generally high, as they recognise the benefits of new ways of working. However, links with input suppliers are not sufficiently solid in all cases, and access to structured markets weak hence likely unsustainable. The sustainability of the VBA model in (both projects) in Burkina Faso is fragile, as VBAs are essentially volunteers who were expected to develop into sales agents for input suppliers or aggregators as their key revenue model. Many VBAs do not have this inclination or capacity, and neither have local input dealers, hence the VBAs' role in farm advisory and input intermediation is under pressure. The stated aim of developing VBAs into a complement to regular extension services and simultaneously input provision is not yet materialising. It is too early, however, to discard the VBA model and more finetuning is needed to offer VBAs an attractive value proposition. There are, for example, cases of VBAs not linking up with input suppliers to generate commissions, but with processors instead. Also, VBAs would need to acquire knowledge on a wider range of crops to offer meaningful farm advisory. The call center in the extension project does not appear sustainable (now taken over by the government for free service to farmers).

The MTR found that all projects paid some attention to **women and youth** inclusion, but not overwhelmingly so.²⁴ In the rice projects, some women groups were supported in seed production, processing and parboiling. Women also benefitted indirectly as they operate local SMEs in transformation and trade, with more material on the market now (e.g., cassava processing). This, however, supports and confirms women in their traditional roles downstream the value chain, and does nothing to combat fundamental inequalities in society. By contrast, reaching out to women as seed producers may turn out transformational. A matching grant was available for youths investing in rice processing and services in Burkina Faso, but unsuccessful as youths did not have their own capital contributions.

AGRA's **M&E system** was found to be effective in collecting data for outputs, outcomes, and impacts. While AGRA mainly relies on consortium partners to collect data, this effort is supported by local consultants, extension officers, AGRA staff as well as outside experts for regular outcome and impact assessment. AGRA has a system of data validation in place to challenge the veracity of data. From 2021, counterfactual analysis has been performed and control groups were included in outcome surveys. This is meant to reinforce the attribution of results to AGRA. Some limited contribution analysis has been done as well. A weakness is that Lead Grantees, who are supposed to collate data from other grantees and submit to AGRA, have no access to the individual grantees' data in AMIS to tally data at both levels, unless the partners or AGRA share this information. Furthermore, while consortium

²⁴ See also the PIATA evaluation of 8 Dec 2021, which concluded that only a small part of AGRA programmes included intentional diversity, equity, and inclusion programming.

partners are supposed to discuss and share such information during quarterly review meetings, the extent to which this happens depends on the level of cooperation within the consortium (see chapter 7 on efficiency).

The evaluation team found that AGRA had set up an **E&S** risk awareness system, yet found farmers and consortia not always sharing the same understanding (with AGRA and KfW) when it comes to some E&S risks, such as child labour and good environmental stewardship. For the most part, current practices were uncritically accepted or explained away. Furthermore, no structured E&S monitoring and reporting of risk events is yet in place. It may require additional resources of AGRA or external parties to ensure that these matters of contemporary concern are effectively monitored.

10.2 Conclusions and recommendations

In this section we present conclusions and recommendations that follow directly from the four projects reviewed.

The core strategy of the rice and cassava projects was to link farmers to structured markets, so that farmers would benefit from quality input supply, input credit, processing support, branding and assured sales markets (although rice farmers have no difficulty selling locally), which is thought to raise their long-term sustainability as agricultural operators. The KfW-AGRA projects, however, were too short in duration to allow for sustainable development of value chain relations, e.g., from input suppliers, to farmers, to aggregators and processors. All projects were just 2-3 years, and some parts shorter still, just enough to get to know each other and overcome the first feelings of distrust. A project to establish sound value chain connections including reliable contracting and thereby leveraging other services such as credit would take at least double this time. This is especially true where major public and private investment in processing capacity is foreseen.

It is the same for the VBA model, which in principle holds great potential to reach farmers in hard to reach (insurgent) areas and may involve youths, but needs to be developed into an attractive business proposition of advisory, input supply, aggregation, even machine services, that VBAs can sustainably implement. This requires careful preparation, trying out, and time.

Recommendation 1: AGRA should allow much more time to consortium partners to implement projects, hence build trustful value chain connections and bring about change.

Recommendation 2: Likewise, the VBA model needs more time to be refined, finding an attractive value proposition to VBAs and farmers alike, and selecting, training and capacitating the right individuals to play this role.²⁵

We must also recognise that there is not currently a viable alternative to the VBA model as the government in Burkina Faso does not have resources to recruit professional extension workers in sufficient numbers.

Recommendation 3: It is generally a good idea to appoint one value chain partner as the business champion, which will take a leadership role in uniting all partners and stakeholders along the value chain. This would normally be a (large) offtaker or (major) farmer cooperative or union.

²⁵ See also the PIATA evaluation of 8 Dec 2021, which concluded that AGRA needs to further refine and scale VBA models.

It was found that the project consortia were much lacking in internal cohesion. This was partly due to AGRA contracting them individually, insufficiently analysing their individual (technical and administrative) capacities, and insufficiently ensuring their cultural and professional match.

Recommendation 4: Sign grant contracts with the leader, which could be the above mentioned business champion albeit assisted by a consultant or an NGO for project management, co-signed by the consortium partners as members.

In this recommendation the leader does not sub-contract the consortium partners, because all sign the same and single contract, but the leader is the sole (official) contact point for AGRA on contractual and reporting matters. In principle, all partners are responsible for the entire project, although in practice they will be given specific tasks. All funding flows will go through the leader. There will be one single narrative and financial report including audit.

Recommendation 5: There ought to be a prior capacity assessment of all consortium partners to see their technical and managerial adequacy for the roles assigned, as well as their suitability to work together.

Recommendation 6: AGRA should not intervene in the constitution of the grant consortium, nor in the drafting of the proposal (hence accept or reject), apart from some post-award negotiations and fine-tuning. Alternatively, AGRA could intervene, but then it should not sign grant contracts but partnership contracts whereby AGRA has a specific role at the strategic level.

While the field work did not reveal major constraints or incidents of a social or environmental nature, it was also not found that consortium partners were much and sufficiently sensitive and proactive in this respect. It is concluded that the current E&S risk management is only a first step toward raising awareness. Having an ESMS policy is not enough to draw attention on a continuous basis – avoiding and mitigating E&S risks has not yet been integrated by consortium partners and not been inculcated in their methodologies. Furthermore, AGRA does not at present have indicators or tools in its M&E to monitor (over)indebtedness, incidences of child labour, and some of the other KfW concerns, and this is also not in the results matrix, nor was it covered in the outcome surveys. This is logical, however, as none of the afore-mentioned are in the project's ToC.

Recommendation 7: AGRA is advised to give key E&S risks a more prominent place in its ToC, at which point appropriate result indicators can be defined (e.g., ha of land under ecologically sustainable management). This would then be included in the methodology for outcome surveys as well as regular monitoring by AGRA.

Women face many inequalities in agriculture in Ghana and Burkina Faso, most importantly poor access to land and cultural expectations of their roles in society. Youths face unemployment, and may be tempted to migrate, attracted to illegal economic activities, or joining armed groups. None of the projects had major and convincing strategies to reach out to women and youths, in fact confirming women in their current roles. None were transformational.

Recommendation 8: AGRA projects to develop explicit and generous women and youth inclusion strategies and assign ample budget for that.

The MTR noted that there is some confusion whether KfW co-finances the overall PIATA in Ghana and Burkina Faso, or whether specific projects are being funded. In all reports to KfW, AGRA has presented results on its overall operations to the target group, not just those financed from German funds.

Recommendation 9: To ease AGRA's reporting load, and also to reflect reality, it would be better if KfW-AGRA collaboration were structured as a joint co-financing of PIATA, not a parallel co-financing of parts of it. Therefore, no specific KfW-funded projects should be identified, just KfW's share in the total programme.

The budgeting and by consequence financial reporting by grantees leaves to be improved, in particular a more analytical reporting showing a causal link between activities and costs. Furthermore, because of the way of budget presentation by partner, some consortium partners may have understood that a grant equals a gift, not a contribution for which pre-agreed work has to be done.

Recommendation 10: All (future) projects need to include an analytical budget for the whole project, clearly showing the cost per activity and output, based on transparent unit costing. Hence, no budget must be assigned to partners, but to activities and outputs (or deliverables) instead.

Recommendation 11: Budgets must be an active tool of management and monitoring. Narrative and financial reports must be integrated so that it is immediately visible to what extent activity progress and budget absorption match, and that the remaining budget will suffice to complete the project as planned. Hence, there must be one single report explaining the work done and what it has cost, and how this compares to the project proposal, notably its result measurement framework and budget.

10.3 Lessons Learnt

In this section we present a number of lessons learned of a more general nature, which AGRA may consider in the future.

Risk management needs to be more rigorous, defining in the initial project plan alternatives for delivering efficient and effective project outputs. Eventually, in three out of the four projects, AGRA was confronted with substantial risk events, namely incapacity of consortium Leads (Rikolto and Intervalle) and failure of off-takers to complete installation of their factories on schedule (Amantin Agro-processing). It would have saved time and resources if viable alternative programming had already been foreseen in the planning stages of the project (Timely scheduling of cassava planting materials; support to local small-scale cassava processors; expansion of facilities and product portfolios of Ohumpong and JOSMA; alternative project management plan [Burkina Rice]).

Clarity in **role definition between Consortium leadership and AGRA** would make for more effective project execution. When Rikolto failed to meet its coordination targets, Sicarex took over the leadership, but did not have the capacity to play the financial brokerage role, necessitating the assignment of an AGRA officer to carry this function for timely implementation. Assessing where AGRA is more effective in project management could be part of initial planning to save time.

AGRA needs to make a habit of **regular testing of the assumptions** underlying the project design, this to enable changes to be made early and thus enhance efficiency. Too much time was spent in Burkina Faso trying to secure purchase contracts with large rice importers when the inadequacy of supply from farmers did not make business sense to importers. The development of an economic interest group of

traders to supply processors in the community clusters could have come earlier. In Ghana, supporting small and medium scale processors in the cassava value chain could have reduced the challenge to market access experienced by local farmers.

Engaging **youth in agriculture** requires specific targeting and outreach. In Ghana, Hope Line Institute indicated that before the rice project a baseline was carried out - *Agric labour youth* – a youth programme for youth training for a Succession plan in the rice sector. This led to the emergence of youth-owned businesses in local rice packaging. “*Ruby Rice*” (one of the new SMEs marketing local rice) was 18 when she started. Also, specific youth engagement was seen in mechanisation, production on the irrigation schemes and Digitalisation – Drone technology applications (*Precision DS, Agro Fert companies*) emerged out of the project. SMEs in marketing are creating trading platforms – on Instagram, Facebook etc.

Sustaining **consortium relationships** for building a strong industry for rice and cassava requires more investment by (private) actors in coordination of activities. Most of the multi-stakeholder meetings convened were driven by project funds and stopped when they ended. Yet these engagements led to development of relevant national strategies and presented the field evidence for policy action. Perhaps this could be considered under matching grant arrangements. This is part of a bigger discussion on donor dependency of the private sector in West Africa.

Annex 1 - Project list

Burkina Faso

Reference Number		Organization Name	Donor	Grant Amount in USD
1. Strengthening Extension services to improve maize and cowpea value chains productivity and stakeholders' income in the Centre-Ouest and Boucle du Mouhoun, Haut Bassins and Cascades regions of Burkina Faso				
1	2018 BF 004	Ministry of Agriculture	BMZ-KfW PIATA	2,643,341
		NGO ABAC		
		Kaworo (replaced Semafort)		
2. Burkina Faso selling quality rice for better income – Bagré				
2	2018 BF 005-01	Rikolto	BMZ-KfW PIATA	1,064,916
3	2018 BF 005-02	Sicarex	BMZ-KfW PIATA	509,227
4	2018 BF 005-03	Trias	BMZ-KfW PIATA	714,551
5	2018 BF 005-04	INERA	BMZ-KfW PIATA	258,460
6	2018 BF 005-05	CORIS BANK	BMZ-KfW PIATA	335,012
Total				5,525,508

Ghana

Reference Number	Organization Name	Donor	Grant Amount in USD
1. Ghana- Rice Consortium			
1	2018 GH 005-01	INTERVALLE	787,540
2	2018 GH 005-02	CSD-MOFA	151,580
3	2018 GH 005-03	JAK FOUNDATION	337,450
4	2018 GH 005-04	HOPE LINE	757,512
5	2018 GH 005-05	SPARKX	207,280
6	2018 GH 005-06	VOLTA CITY FARMS	140,920
2. Ghana - Cassava Consortium			
7	2017 GH 009-01	Agri-Impact Limited	611,600
8	2017 GH 009-02	Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ghana	95,649
9	2017 GH 009-03	Ghana Industrial Cassava Stakeholders Platform (GICSP)	57,264
10	2017 GH 009-04	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research - Crops Research Institute	57,200
11	2017 GH 009-05	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research - Food Research Institute (CSIR-FRI)	82,661
12	2017 GH 009-06	Ohumpong Investments Company Limited	96,798
13	2017 GH 009-07	Josma Agro-Industry Ltd	96,798
Total			3,480,252

Annex 2 – Mini-Survey

SURVEY OF FARMERS IN KFW-FUNDED AGRA PROJECTS IN GHANA AND BURKINA FASO

Target respondents

- Farmers in KfW-funded AGRA projects
- Farmers in the control group, not receiving assistance from AGRA nor anybody else

How

- Kobo toolbox (online)

Screening (selection criteria for enumerators to check)

- Farmers, main product is rice (GH+BF), Cassava (GH) or cowpeas + soybean + maize (BF)
- Farmer is aware of the AGRA project or its implementer, and received its assistance => **treatment group**
- Similar farmer (e.g., same crops, similar size and socio-economic profile) but not in the AGRA project, nor in another project, hence unassisted (since 2018) => **control group**

Information for enumerators

- The survey is organized by topics (reflecting main outcome/outputs/results)
- Each question is linked to an OECD criterion applicable to this information source as per proposal (relevance and coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability)

INTRODUCTION

- Explain purpose of survey and MTR and why he/she is being interviewed

We are an independent research organisation hired by the government of Germany in order to conduct a review of the **...name of sub-project...**

In order to learn more about the way the programme has helped farmers, we would like to speak with you. Please note that all your answers will be anonymous, and your name will not be mentioned in our report in any way. We therefore hope that you will be as open as possible and give us your honest and sincere views about the project.

INFORMATION TO BE FILLED OUT BY ENUMERATORS IN ADVANCE (NO NEED TO ASK)

Country

- Ghana
- Burkina Faso

Regions

- Northern Region
- Northeast Region
- Bono East (Formerly Brong Ahafo region)
- Upper East Region
- Boucle Du Mouhoun
- Centre-Ouest
- Centre-Est

Districts

- Kumbungu
- Yendi
- Mamprugu Moadugri (Northeast Region)
- North Gonja (Savanna Region)
- Builsa South (Upper East Region)
- Kintampo South
- Atebubu-Amantin
- Pru East
- Pru West
- Sene East
- Sene West
- Nkoranza North
- Nkoranza South

Provinces

- Sourou
- Nayala
- Balé
- Boulkiemdé
- Sanguié
- Boulgou
- Koulpélogo
- Kouritenga

Geolocation

- Confirm

Sex of respondent

- Male
- Female

Sub-project:

- Extension services BF
- Qualiriz Bagré BF
- Rice consortium GH
- Cassava consortium GH

START OF QUESTIONS TO RESPONDENTS

A. Demographic Information

1. What is your age from your last birthday? _____ (years old)

2. What is your current marital status?

- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed
- ☐ Never married

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Primary education
- ☐ Junior High School
- ☐ Middle School
- ☐ Senior High School
- ☐ Vocational/Technical/Community
- ☐ Teacher Training/Agriculture/Nursing Certificate
- ☐ Polytechnic
- ☐ University (Bachelor)
- ☐ University (Postgraduate)

4. How many people including yourself live in your household? _____

(A household consists of a person or group of related or unrelated persons, who live together in the same housing unit, who acknowledge one adult male or female as the head of the household, who share the same housekeeping and cooking arrangements, and are considered as one unit.)

5. How many dependants do you have? _____

(Dependant is "a person who depends on or needs someone or something for aid, support, favour, etc. a child, spouse, parent, or certain other relative to whom one contributes all or a major amount of necessary financial support")

GENERAL INFORMATION

6. Did you receive support from ...name of sub-project...?

(You may need to help them along by referring to the key implementing partners).

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (stop survey or use the farmer for the control group if you can validate the negative answer)

7. How many farm lands do you cultivate?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ More than 3

8. How many hectares of land did you cultivate in the last 2 cropping seasons?

_____hectares

9. What are the main agricultural products you grow? Multiple answers possible, but production must be significant.

- ☐ Rice
- ☐ Maize
- ☐ Sorghum
- ☐ Cassava
- ☐ Cowpeas
- ☐ Soybean
- ☐ Groundnuts
- ☐ Other, namely...

IMPACT

10. Since 2018, has your family income changed?

- a. Much worse
- b. Worse
- c. Unchanged
- d. Better
- e. Much better

11. Since 2018, has the quantity and quality of food available in your family changed?

- a. Much worse
- b. Worse
- c. Unchanged
- d. Better
- e. Much better

12. Since 2018, has your capacity to pay for your children's education changed?

- a. Much worse
- b. Worse
- c. Unchanged
- d. Better
- e. Much better

13. Since 2018, has your capacity to pay for health services changed?

- a. Much worse
- b. Worse
- c. Unchanged
- d. Better
- e. Much better

RELEVANCE

14. Have you received any of the following support from ...name of sub-project...?

(Check as many as may apply.)

Validate that respondent is clearly able to distinguish this project from others.

- ☐ Training in agriculture, demonstrations or field trials
- ☐ Training in post-harvest technology
- ☐ Good quality seeds
- ☐ Fertilisers
- ☐ Market contracts
- ☐ Access to credit
- ☐ Others, specify

15. To what extent did the various project interventions address your needs?

	Not At All	Small Extent	Neutral	Large Extent	Very Large Extent
Training in agriculture, demonstrations, or field trials					
Training in post-harvest technology					
Access to good quality seeds					
Access to Fertilisers					
Market contracts					
Access to credit					
Others, _____ _____					

16. Before the ...name of sub-project...what were the top 3 major constraints/problems with your farming livelihood?

- ☐ Low yield because of lack of farming knowledge
- ☐ No access to seed
- ☐ No access to fertiliser
- ☐ No access to credit
- ☐ Low prices of output
- ☐ Lack of access to markets, could not sell
- ☐ Lack of skilled workers
- ☐ Poor public infrastructure (roads etc.)
- ☐ Lack of access to quality equipment

- Other, describe (open text)
- None, no constraints

17. Did the ...name of sub-project... help you overcome your main constraints/problems?

	Yes = 1 No = 2
(Write Top Constraint 1 here)	
(Write Top Constraint 2 here)	
(Write Top Constraint 3 here)	

18. Explain if your answer is No for any of the main constraints/problems in Q17.

19. What are the current top 3 major constraints/problems in your farming livelihood?

- Low yield because of lack of farming knowledge
- No access to seed
- No access to fertiliser
- No access to credit
- Low prices of output
- Lack of access to markets, could not sell
- Lack of skilled workers
- Poor public infrastructure (roads etc.)
- Lack of access to quality equipment
- Other, describe (open text)
- None, no constraints

20. Do you know of any other programmes that delivered the same farming support to farmers in the community after 2018?

- Yes
- No

21. Did you participate in this programme?

- Yes
- No

22. What is the name of the programme(s) and what year did it cover?

Programme 1: _____

Programme 2: _____

23. What did you receive as support from Programme 1? Check as many as may apply.

- ☐ Training in agriculture, demonstrations or field trials
- ☐ Training in post-harvest technology
- ☐ Good quality seeds
- ☐ Fertilisers
- ☐ Market contracts
- ☐ Access to credit
- ☐ Others, specify

24. What did you receive as support from Programme 2? Check as many as may apply.

- ☐ Training in agriculture, demonstrations or field trials
- ☐ Training in post-harvest technology
- ☐ Good quality seeds
- ☐ Fertilisers
- ☐ Market contracts
- ☐ Access to credit
- ☐ Others, specify
- ☐ Not applicable

25. Comparing the AGRA sub-project and the other Programmes above, to what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
The services from (AGRA) sub-project are more helpful to me/my farm household						
The services from the other programmes are more helpful to me/my farm household than the (AGRA) sub-project						
The services received from the 2 projects were all helpful and complemented each other						
The services received from the 2 projects were all helpful though they were almost similar and duplicating each other						

EFFECTIVENESS

26. Describe the level of access you have to the following farming support services in the last 2 cropping seasons:

	No Access	Poor	Fair	High	Very High	Not Applicable

Helpful extension services						
Quality seeds seeds/planting material before						
Fertiliser						
Pesticide						
Market infrastructure (market, roads, transport etc)						
Credit						
Information on markets, inputs and produce prices						
Information on improved farming practices and techniques, and their effect on environment						

27. How would you describe the changes in your access to the following farming support services since the AGRA sub-project was introduced in 2018

	Drastically Reduced Access	Somewhat Reduced Access	Remained the same	Increased Access	Significantly Increased Access	Not Applicable
Helpful extension services						
Quality seeds seeds/planting material before						
Fertiliser						
Pesticide						
Market infrastructure (market, roads, transport etc)						
Credit						
Information on markets, inputs and produce prices						
Information on improved farming practices and techniques, and their effect on environment						

28. In the last 2 croppings, what have been farm production yield (output per acre/metric ton per acre

29. In the last 2 croppings, what have been the farm output (metric ton per crop)

30. In the last 2 croppings, what have been the farm income? (local currency)

	Output Per Acre	Total Metric Ton	Local Currency
Rice			
Cassava			

Cowpea			
Maize			

31. How would you describe the changes in your farm production yield (output per acre/metric ton per acre), from 2018 to the present?

32. How would you describe the changes in your farm output (metric ton per crop), from 2018 to present?

33. In the last 2 croppings, what have been the farm income? (local currency)

	Drastically Reduced	Somewhat Reduced	Remained the same	Increased	Significantly Increased	Not Applicable
Rice						
Cassava						
Cowpea						
Maize						

34. How would you describe the changes in the level of your post-harvest losses since 2018?

- ☐ Significantly Increased
- ☐ Increased
- ☐ Remained the same
- ☐ Somewhat Reduced
- ☐ Drastically Reduced
- ☐ Not applicable

35. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

	Totally Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Applicable
The services from (AGRA) sub-project have contributed to the increased yield from my farm since 2018						
The services from (AGRA) sub-project have contributed to the increased output from my farm since 2018						
The services from (AGRA) sub-project have contributed to the increased farm income since 2018						
The reduction in my farm post-harvest losses was due to the interventions of the AGRA sub-project						

Credit/Loans and Debt Repayment

36. How many times have you borrowed funds / in-kind inputs for purposes of your farm/business in the past 2 cropping cycles (including farm inputs purchased on credit)?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ More than 3

37. How many of the above loans/credit were you / will you be able to repay in a timely manner?

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ More than 3

38. Since 2018 until present, to what extent we your loan/credit purchased increased? Will you able to repay in a timely manner?

- ☐ Not At All
- ☐ Small Extent
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Large Extent
- ☐ Very Large Extent

39. Since 2018 until present, can you describe your ability to repay your loans in a timely manner?

- ☐ Reduced more than half
- ☐ Reduced, but less than half
- ☐ Stayed about the same
- ☐ Increased by less than half
- ☐ Increased by more than half
- ☐ Not applicable

40. What are your sources of loan or credit? (Check as many as may apply). Please rank them according to the magnitude of the loan/credit

	Yes = 1 No = 2	Rank (Highest Loan= 1)
Formal lender (bank/financial institution)		
Informal lender		
Friends or relatives		
Group based micro-finance or lending, including VSLAs		
Savings and Credit Co-operatives (SACCOs), etc.		
Inputs sellers		

Middlepersons (market)		
Produce processors/millers		
Others, specify		

Land Use Rights, Negative Livelihood Impact Related To Land Acquisition By Grantees

41. Do you own the land on which you are cultivating for the past 2 cropping seasons?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

42. If No, who owns the land(s) you cultivate?

- ☐ Spouse
- ☐ Male member of household
- ☐ Female member of household
- ☐ Male non-household member
- ☐ Female non-household member

43. What are the main problems you encountered related to the use of your farmland? Check as many as may apply.

- ☐ High cost of lease/rent
- ☐ Difficulty to obtain permission to use from landowners
- ☐ Only males are given land for farming
- ☐ Land provided by landlord is far from home
- ☐ Land provided by landlord is not good
- ☐ Land ownership conflict
- ☐ Others, specify

Organizational Membership and Networking

44. Which of the following Associations exist in your community?

45. Which of the following groups are you a member of?

46. Which of the following groups have women in the Management/Executive positions?

	Exists in the Community? Yes = 1 No = 2	Are you a member of this group? Yes = 1 No = 2	Are there women in Management/Executive Positions? Yes = 1 No = 2
Agricultural / livestock / fisheries producer's group / marketing groups			
Water users' group			
Credit or microfinance group (including SACCOs / merry-go-rounds / VSLAs)			

Trade and business association group			
Civic group (improving community) or charitable group (helping others)			
○ Religious group			
○ Other (specify): _____			

47. To what extent has the AGRA sub-project supported you to become members/take on leadership position in organizations.?

- Not At All
- Small Extent
- Neutral
- Large Extent
- Very Large Extent

EFFICIENCY

48. Did your work with ...name of sub-project... go through a farmer organisation?

- a. Yes
- b. No

49. Did you feel you were involved and consulted about the project?

- a. Yes
- b. No

50. Did the project keep its agreements (e.g., do and deliver what was promised, come on time)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

SUSTAINABILITY

51. Will you be able to continue the practices you learned from the project?

- a. Yes
- b. No

52. If no, why?

- Lack of money
- No access to inputs
- No access to markets
- Other, namely: *(open text)*

53. What improvement do you want to see in the AGRA sub-project going forward?

Annex 3 – Guidelines for FGD

Mid-Term Review of BMZ/KfW-funded AGRA Programme in Ghana and Burkina Faso

- Guideline for Farmer Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Note 1: this guideline for farmer FGD follows the evaluation questions, see the inception report. Given the educational level of farmers, most questions would need to be explained in relatively simple terms.

Note 2: this guideline is maximalist in nature. Not all respondents may have the same information and capacity to answer. Check the relevance of the questions before asking. Some may not be answerable by the persons in front of you. Others you could have answered from the document review – no need to waste time then.

Note 3: make sure you have reviewed all relevant project information, in particular reports by the (sub-)grantees.

Note 4: this guidelines may not be so well applicable to the extension project in BF, so will need to be used flexibly.

Note 5: the guideline may be filled in English or French

Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of interviewers• Introduction of MTR and its scope• General discussion• Interviewers are independent• All interviews are confidential, no quotes will be put into the report without prior approval
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Date of interview	
Names informant(s) + function(s) + contact detail(s) Identify the project they work in	
General discussion and remarks by the interviewer	<p><i>Prior to the meeting, include here some notes from the desk research. In the least you should have read the relevant project / grantee reports, so you can direct the questions accordingly.</i></p> <p><i>Start with an open discussion, asking how the project has been doing.</i></p>

Relevance and coherence	
Before the project started, what were the most important constraints you were faced with on your farm?	<i>You may need to remind them which project we are speaking of. Of course this you did already read from the project documents.</i>
Was the project well-structured to solve these constraints? Did it respond to your needs? If not, what was lacking?	<i>You may need to remind them which project we are speaking of, and explain the question in simple terms.</i>
Were there other projects doing the same thing? Did you receive support from other projects? Did this complement or overlap/duplicate?	

Effectiveness	<i>For all questions, explicitly ask how the project helped.</i>
What has the project done for / with you?	
Have you, due to the project, increased access to advisory extension services? Was it helpful? Explain Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.	
Have you, due to the project, been able to raise/increase yields on your key crops? By how much? Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.	<i>This relates to the key products, e.g., rice, cassava, cowpeas.</i> <i>See beforehand what data you can get from the outcome survey.</i> <i>Many respondents may not dispose of the quantitative indicators.</i>
Have you, due to the project, increased the use of good seeds?	<i>Explicitly ask how the project helped.</i>

<p>By how much?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	
<p>Have you, due to the project, increased the use of fertilisers? By how much?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	<p><i>Explicitly ask how the project helped.</i></p>
<p>Have you, due to the project, decreased post-harvest losses? How?</p> <p>By how much?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	
<p>Have you, due to the project, started to sell your product in a different manner?</p> <p>How?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	<p><i>Ask for contract arrangements.</i></p>
<p>Have you, due to the project, been able to access credit? Explain</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	
<p>Have, due to the project, new SMEs been created that serve the agriculture sector?</p> <p>Explain</p>	
<p><u>Improved Farming Techniques</u></p> <p>From the various improved farming practices introduced by the AGRA sub-project, which ones have you adopted (e.g., Integrated Crop Protection etc)?</p>	

Describe the usefulness and effects of these practices to your farming livelihood.	
Which improved farming practices you believe were not useful? Describe the experience.	
Which of the improved farming practices have been easier and useful for female farmers to adopt?	
To what extent were women involved and empowered by the project?	
To what extent were youth (<35 y of age) involved and empowered by the project?	

Efficiency	
In what way did the project work with the farmers (Individually or through a farmer organization)?	
How did the project involve farmers in the process?	
Did you take part in project decisions?	
How have farmer groups been established. How have the group dynamics been?	
In what way did the project keep its agreement? (e.g., do what was promised, come on time)?	

Impact	
In what way did the project help you increase access to nutritious food?	
In what way did the project, help you increase your income?	

In what way did the project help you increase the number of employees?	
<p>What other benefits did the project bring you (intended and non-intended benefits)? This also includes negative effects.</p> <p>Examples?</p>	
<u>Unintended Impact</u>	
<p><u>Child Labour Practice</u></p> <p>What are the roles children (17 years and below) in farming activities? How different are roles by age cohort?</p> <p>How does the community view the participation of children in farming work? What are the positive views? What are the negative views?</p>	
<p><u>Debt Accumulation and Repayment</u></p> <p>In a year, how often do you obtain loan or credit for farming operations? From whom and what specific purposes?</p> <p>What has been the experience in repayment (Timeliness, availability of funds)?</p> <p>What have been the reasons for inability to repay in time? How did this affect your farming operations and/or household?</p> <p>Are there differences in loan/credit acquisition practices between male and female farmers? What are they?</p> <p>Are there differences in loan/credit repayment experiences between male and female farmers? What are they?</p>	
<p><u>Relationship with Input Providers</u></p> <p>How is your relationship with input sellers (seeds/fertilizers/pesticides/equipment renters etc)? What have been the</p>	

<p>positive experience? What have been the negative experience?</p> <p>Are there differences in farmer-input seller relationship between male and female farmers? What are they?</p>	
<p><u>Land Use and Acquisition</u></p> <p>What are the main problems/constraints you encountered related to the use of your farmland?</p> <p>What measures did you take / was taken to address/remove the problems/constraints? Who helped you to address the constraint?</p> <p>What was the role of the AGRA sub-project in addressing the problems/constraints? What action can the project do?</p> <p>Are there differences in land acquisition/use experiences between male and female farmers? What are difference in access and difficulties?</p>	
<p><u>Losses in biodiversity</u></p> <p>Are you aware about effects of farming activities on biodiversity?</p> <p>If yes, where did you get the information? What is the role of the project in providing this information?</p> <p>If yes (to a), have they observed any changes (positive or negative) in biodiversity?</p>	<p><i>Question needs to be explained.</i></p>
<p><u>Intensification and Soil Health</u></p> <p>Are you aware about effects of farming activities on soil health?</p> <p>If yes, where did you get the information? What is the role of the project in providing this information?</p> <p>Have you observed any changes (positive or negative) in soil health?</p>	<p><i>Question needs to be explained.</i></p>

What exactly do you think caused these changes?	
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Sustainability	
<p>Have you due to the project started to work with (new) suppliers or off-takers?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p> <p>If the project helped you work with others in your sector, will this cooperation endure into the future?</p>	<p><i>Please note the following options:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The partnership is ending with the project (not-sustainable ex-post)</i> • <i>The partnership persists, but unchanged (no upscaling, no deepening)</i> • <i>The collaboration is gradually expanding (e.g., farmers produce more)</i> • <i>The collaboration is gradually deepening, e.g., partners invest in each other, technology is transferred, credit is delivered through the value chain (e.g., for input supply), etc.</i> • <i>The model of collaboration is widened (e.g., new farmer groups are added)</i> • <i>The model is replicated and upscaled outside of its original geographical area</i>
<p>Will you continue the agricultural practices the project showed you?</p> <p>Explain</p>	
<p>What do you require to be able to do so?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	

Other comments?	
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Annex 4 – Guidelines for interview implementing partners

Mid-Term Review of BMZ/KfW-funded AGRA Programme in Ghana and Burkina Faso

- Guideline for interview with Consortium partners and key Implementing partners

Note 1: this interview guideline is meant for those who are directly involved in project implementation. It follows the evaluation questions, see the inception report.

Note 2: this interview guideline is maximalist in nature. Not all respondents may have the same information and capacity to answer. Check the relevance of the questions before asking. Some may not be answerable by the person in front of you. Other questions you could already have answered from the document review – no need to waste time then.

Note 3: make sure you have reviewed all relevant project information, in particular reports by the (sub-)grantees so that questions can be better targeted.

Note 4: this guidelines may not be so well applicable to the extension project in BF, so will need to be used flexibly.

Note 5: the guideline may be filled in English or French

Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of interviewers • Introduction of MTR and its scope • General discussion • Interviewers are independent • All interviews are confidential, no quotes will be put into the report without prior approval
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Date of interview	
Names informant(s) + function(s) + contact detail(s)	
Identify the project they work in	
General discussion and remarks by the interviewer	<i>Prior to the meeting, include here some notes from the desk research. In the least you should have read the relevant project / grantee reports, so you can direct the questions accordingly.</i>

	<i>Start with an open discussion, asking how the project has been doing. Then zoom in on the below questions.</i>
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Relevance and coherence	
What were the constraints this project was meant to solve?	<i>This you can already note down from the desk research and validate during the interview.</i>
Was the project well-structured to solve these constraints?	
Did the project complement the government's development policy for agriculture and food security? How?	<i>This you can already note down from the desk research and validate during the interview.</i>
In what ways did the project respond to the needs of smallholder farmers? Could it have been structured differently, better?	
Were there other projects doing the same thing? Did these complement or overlap/duplicate? Did you receive support from other projects?	

Effectiveness	<i>For all questions, explicitly ask how the project helped.</i>
What was the aim of your involvement – what results were you intending to achieve?	<i>This you should already know from the documents. Check the documents for the specific indicators that apply here.</i>
To what extent were these results achieved?	<i>Check with the reports that you should have studied beforehand. Try to distinguish outputs and outcomes. Check the documents for the specific indicators that apply here.</i>
In what ways have farmers, due to the project, increased their access to	

<p>advisory extension services, be it from the project or the government?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p> <p>What was your role in this?</p>	
<p>Have farmers, due to the project, been able to raise yields? By how much?</p> <p>What was your role in this?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	<p><i>This relates to the key products, e.g., rice, cassava, cowpeas.</i></p> <p><i>See beforehand what data you can get from the outcome survey.</i></p> <p><i>Many respondents may not dispose of the quantitative indicators.</i></p>
<p>Have farmers, due to the project, increased the use of good quality seeds?</p> <p>By how much?</p> <p>What was your role in this?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	
<p>Have farmers, due to the project, increased the use of fertilisers?</p> <p>By how much?</p> <p>What was your role in this?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	
<p>In what ways have farmers, due to the project, decreased post-harvest losses?</p> <p>By how much?</p> <p>What was your role in this?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	

<p>In what ways have farmers, due to the project, started to access structured markets? What was your role in this?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	
<p>Have, due to the project, new SMEs been created that serve your sector?</p> <p>What was your role in this?</p> <p>What percentage of these SMEs are owned by women?</p>	
<p>Have SMEs in your project raised turnover?</p> <p>Did they increase employment?</p> <p>What kind of jobs were created?</p> <p>What was your role in this?</p> <p>What percentage of those employed by the SMEs are women?</p>	
<p>Have farmers, due to the project, been able to access credit?</p> <p>Explain</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	
<p>Have SMEs, due to the project, been able to access credit? Explain</p>	
<p>To what extent were women involved and empowered in the project?</p> <p>How was this done?</p>	
<p>To what extent were youth involved and empowered in the project?</p> <p>How was this done?</p>	
<p>What information did you need to send to AGRA on a regular basis?</p>	

<p>Was it difficult to provide the reports and data as required?</p> <p>Your overall appreciation of the reporting requirements?</p>	
<p>What interventions has the AGRA sub-project provided to address the issues listed below? (e.g. training etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoiding child labour • respecting workers' rights • protection against over indebtedness • displacing smallholders farmers (as high potential/large farmers benefit) 	
<p>Do you know of a monitoring and redress system set up by the project for the above issues? Describe the system.</p>	
<p>Did you witness in the project, any incidents of this kind?</p> <p>If so, describe the incident and actions taken.</p>	
<p>What are the main problems/constraints encountered by farmers related to the use of farmland?</p> <p>What measures did the project take to address/remove the constraints?</p> <p>What system exists to protect land rights of SH farmers? What is the role of the project in this system?</p>	
<p>How do you assess the relationship between farmers and input sellers? (seeds/fertilizers/pesticides/equipment renters etc)? What have been the positive experience? What have been the negative experience (e.g. any emerging dependencies etc)?</p> <p>Are there differences in farmer-input seller relationship between male and female farmers? What are they?</p>	
<p>Does the AGRA sub-project have standards, policies, and principles on</p>	

<p>input acquisition as it affects agro-ecology and soil health? Explain</p> <p>Is there a monitoring system in place to ensure that standards are followed, and what are the mitigating measures for deviations from those standards.</p>	
<p><u>Improved Farming Techniques</u></p> <p>From the various improved farming practices introduced by the AGRA sub-project, which ones have farmers adopted more (e.g., Integrated Crop Protection etc)?</p> <p>Which improved farming practices you believe were not useful? Describe the possible reasons.</p> <p>Which of the improved farming practices have been easier and useful for female farmers to adopt?</p>	
<p>In your opinion, did working on the project as a consortium help to achieve better results than it would have been otherwise?</p> <p>Explain</p>	

Efficiency	
<p>How has the cooperation in the consortium been – was it efficient in terms of resource use and timeliness?</p> <p>How did you work together and coordinate your activities with consortium partners?</p> <p>Was there efficient leadership?</p> <p>Did everyone know what to do and participate fully?</p> <p>How could it have been done better?</p>	
<p>How did you involve smallholder farmers in the process?</p>	

How did you involve small businesses in the process?	
How was the leadership by AGRA - did you meet them at all and how useful was that? Explain	
Did you use up the budget? Was it sufficient for the agreed activities? What alternative activities would have been more cost-effective?	
Was the grant disbursed on time?	
Did the grant contract contain a section on Environmental and Social Management Risks? How did you implement that?	<i>See also the questions above under effectiveness</i>
How have farmer groups been established? What did you observe about the group dynamics? Describe the role of women within these groups.	
In your opinion, how could the project have been implemented /organized in a more efficient way (to save costs, reach more beneficiaries)?	

Impact	
In what way did the project make a contribution to food security, income, employment of smallholder farmers? How is this demonstrated? Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.	
In what way did the project make a contribution to food security, income,	

<p>employment of small-scale and micro entrepreneurs?</p> <p>How is this demonstrated?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	
<p>In what way did the project generate any wider benefits for direct and indirect beneficiaries, including non-intended benefits. This also includes negative effects.</p> <p>Examples?</p> <p>Was the experience different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	

Sustainability	
<p>If the project helped value chain partners work together, will this cooperation endure? How?</p>	<p><i>Please note the following options:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The partnership is ending with the project (not-sustainable ex-post)</i> • <i>The partnership persists, but unchanged (no upscaling, no deepening)</i> • <i>The collaboration is gradually expanding (e.g., farmers produce more)</i> • <i>The collaboration is gradually deepening, e.g., partners invest in each other, technology is transferred, credit is delivered through the value chain (e.g., for input supply), etc.</i> • <i>The model of collaboration is widened (e.g., new farmer groups are added)</i> • <i>The model is replicated and upscaled outside of its original geographical area</i>
<p>Where farmers have improved their practices, which ones will they continue to practice? Explain</p> <p>Which will they not be able to continue and why?</p>	

<p>Will the experience be different between male and female farmers? Explain any difference.</p>	
<p>Where SMEs have improved their practices, which ones will they continue to practice? Explain.</p> <p>Which will they not be able to continue and why?</p> <p>Will the experience be different between male and female SME owners? Explain any difference.</p>	
<p>How, in your opinion, will benefits of the project continue after the project ends?</p> <p>How else could the benefits be sustained over a long time?</p>	
<p>Other comments?</p>	

Annex 5 – Guidelines for interview stakeholders

Mid-Term Review of BMZ/KfW-funded AGRA Programme in Ghana and Burkina Faso

- Guideline for interview with non-implementing Stakeholders (e.g. government, NGOs, research centres)

Note 1: this interview guideline follows the evaluation questions, see the inception report. It is meant for non-implementing stakeholders. For government departments that are part of the consortium, use the guideline for implementing partners. The guideline is for interviewees who evidently know the project. If they do not, use the template flexibly based on what they may know.

Note 2: this interview guideline is maximalist in nature. Not all respondents may have the same information and capacity to answer. Check the relevance of the questions before asking. Some may not be answerable by the person in front of you. Others you could already have answered from the document review – no need to waste time then.

Note 3: make sure you have reviewed all relevant project information, in particular reports by the (sub-)grantees.

Note 4: the guideline may be filled in [English or French](#)

Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction of interviewers• Introduction of MTR and its scope• General discussion• Interviewers are independent• All interviews are confidential, no quotes will be put into the report without prior approval
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Date of interview	
Names informant(s) + function(s) + contact detail(s) Identify the project they have knowledge about – it may be both	
General discussion and remarks by the interviewer	<i>Prior to the meeting, include here some notes from the desk research. At least you should have read the relevant project / grantee reports, so you can direct the questions accordingly.</i>

	<i>Start with an open discussion, asking how the project has been doing.</i>
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Relevance and coherence	
What were the constraints this project was meant to solve?	<i>So this assumes the interviewee knows the project quite well, but was not directly involved. The interviewer already knows this from the desk research.</i>
Was the project well-structured to solve these constraints?	
Did the project complement the government's development policy for agriculture and food security? How?	<i>This you can already note down from the desk research and validate during the interview.</i>
Was the project responding to the needs of smallholder farmers? How? Could it have been structured differently, better?	
Were there other projects doing the same thing? Did these complement or overlap/duplicate? Was that a problem?	

Effectiveness	<i>For all questions, explicitly ask how the project helped.</i>
What was the aim of the project – what results were to be achieved?	<i>This you should already know from the documents.</i>
To what extent were these results achieved?	<i>Check with the reports that you should have studied beforehand. Try to distinguish outputs and outcomes.</i>

<p>Have, due to the project, farmers been able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access extension services • raise yields • use good seeds • use fertilisers • reduce post-harvest losses • access structure markets • access credit 	<p><i>Meaning that all or some of this improved.</i></p>
<p>To what extent were women involved and empowered in the project?</p> <p>How was this done?</p>	
<p>To what extent were youth involved and empowered in the project?</p> <p>How was this done?</p>	
<p>How did the project incorporate agro-ecological aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bio-diversity loss • compatibility of seed and fertiliser with agro-ecology, integrated crop protection, soil health? 	

Efficiency	
<p>Was (in your observation) the project efficiently conducted, on time, involving all partners and beneficiaries?</p>	
<p>Were farmers involved in the project strategy and process?</p> <p>Were small businesses involved in the project strategy and process?</p>	

<p>Are you aware of any Environmental and Social Management Incidents in the project?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoiding child labour • respecting workers' rights • protection against over indebtedness • displacing smallholders farmers or introducing dependencies • land-use rights? <p>Please explain.</p> <p>What happened next?</p>	<p><i>Need to explain what was meant.</i></p>
<p>How have farmer groups been established in the project. What was your observation on group dynamics ?</p>	
<p>Is there any way the project's results could have been achieved in a more efficient (in terms of resources and time) manner?</p>	

Impact	
<p>In what way did the project make a contribution to food security, income, employment of farmers?</p> <p>How is this demonstrated?</p>	
<p>In what way did the project make a contribution to food security, income, employment of small-scale and micro entrepreneurs?</p> <p>How is this demonstrated?</p>	
<p>Did the project generate any wider benefits for direct and</p>	

<p>indirect beneficiaries, including non-intended benefits.</p> <p>This also includes negative effects.</p> <p>Examples?</p>	

Sustainability	
<p>If the project helped value chain partners work together, will this cooperation endure/last?</p> <p>Which forms of collaboration are likely to last long?</p>	<p><i>Please note the following options:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The partnership is ending with the project (not-sustainable ex-post)</i> • <i>The partnership persists, but unchanged (no upscaling, no deepening)</i> • <i>The collaboration is gradually expanding (e.g., farmers produce more)</i> • <i>The collaboration is gradually deepening, e.g., partners invest in each other, technology is transferred, credit is delivered through the value chain (e.g., for input supply), etc.</i> • <i>The model of collaboration is widened (e.g., new farmer groups are added)</i> • <i>The model is replicated and upscaled outside of its original geographical area</i>
<p>Where farmers have improved their practices, which ones will they continue to practice? Explain</p> <p>Which will they not be able to continue and why?</p>	
<p>Where SMEs have improved their practices, which ones will they continue to practice? Explain.</p> <p>Which will they not be able to continue and why?</p>	

Other comments?	
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