

REPORT FOR MALAWI

**FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT 'CONTRIBUTING TO THE
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN AFRICA THROUGH
CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE'**

Implemented in Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Agricultural Association
AC	Agricultural Cooperatives
AICC	Africa Institute for Corporate Citizenship
ADD	Agricultural Development Division
BI	Bountifield International
BfW	BuyfromWomen
CDM	Centre for Development Management
CfP	Call for Proposals.
COMESA	Common Market for East and Southern Africa
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EPA	Extension Planning Area
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FO	Farmers' Organization
GERAAS	Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System
GoM	Government of Malawi
HACT	Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfer
ICT	Information, Communication, and Technology
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IPoA	Istanbul Programme of Action
MaLS	Market Link and Support
MFI	Micro Finance Institutions
MoAI&WD	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development
MoEM&NR	Ministry of Energy, Mining and Natural Resources
MoGCD&SW	Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare
MoIT&T	Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism
NAP	National Agricultural Policy
NSO	National Statistics Office
PwD	Persons with Disabilities
RBM	Result Based Management
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMS	Short Messages Services
SADC-RISDP	Southern African Development Community Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (SADC RISDP)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
VPA	Vienna Programme of Action
WEE	Women Economic Empowerment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Since 2019, UN Malawi and its partners, African Institute for Corporate Citizenship (AICC) and Market Link and Support (MaLS), have been implementing a climate smart agriculture project called '*Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture*'. The project was a three year activity, funded by the Standard Bank Group. It was a regional multi-country project, which, in addition to Malawi, was also implemented in Nigeria, Uganda and South Africa. The project was coordinated by the UN Women East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), based in Kenya. The project ended in December, 2021, but was given a no-cost extension up to March, 2022.

The project goal in Malawi was to strengthen women's agricultural productivity and access to markets in groundnuts. The project implementation focused on four outcomes, which were: 1) Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate, 2) Opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain are provided, 3) Using ICT platforms (BfW) for increased access to markets and finance for women, and 4) The project was implemented in three targeted districts of Lilongwe, Mchinji and Mzimba North. Key project activities included: 1) access and utilization of certified seed of improved groundnuts varieties which are also high yielding, tolerant to drought, early maturity and with multiple uses, 2) adoption of early planting of groundnuts on double rows per ridge, 3) Access and use of weather forecast information for timely planting of groundnuts, 4) access and use of CSA extension services, 5) access and use of market information and financial literacy, and 6) adoption of time and labour-saving technologies.

Evaluation background

The final evaluation activities were implemented in December 2021-January 2022 by an evaluation team comprised of one national evaluation consultant and one research assistant. The overall objective of the final evaluation was to assess the achievement of programme results and performance of the CUN Women CSA project. The evaluation aimed to provide a measure and provide robust empirical evidence related to the success and results of the CSA interventions (both intended and unintended). The evaluation assessed changes in outcomes observed, the mechanisms that delivered the observed changes, key features of these mechanisms and using contribution analysis methods, determined to what extent these could attributed to the interventions. The consultant used both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data. For quantitative data, the National Consultant reviewed project reports to extract data for outcome, impact and output level indicators and where such reports do not have data for particular indicators. For qualitative data, the consultant will use key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) to collect data. The final evaluation took place during the third wave of the COVID-19 in Malawi and at the beginning of the Omicron wave, which limited the number of FGDs that could be held and the number of FGD participants that attended interviews.

Findings and conclusions

Relevance: The evaluation found that the CSA project was strongly aligned to rights, practical and strategic gender needs of women farmers in Malawi, especially those that live in rural areas, where poverty and vulnerability to climate change is high and affects women more than men. The CSA project was critical and supported implementation of gender and women empowerment objectives for District Development Plans in the three target districts of Lilongwe, Mzimba and Mchinji and was strongly aligned to international and regional commitment, AU Agenda 2063, SDGs and UN Women strategy. Further, the project was consistent with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, which was the overall development framework for the

country at the time the project was designed and with the with the adoption of the new vision for the country, which focusses on wealth creation and industrialization, the evaluation found that the CSA project is still consistent with the Malawi 2063, which is a new vision for the country as well as sectoral objectives and it supported implementation of the UNDAF/UNSDCF.

Coherence: Interviews with the two Implementing Partners, the African Institute for Corporate Citizenship (AICC) and Market Link Support (MaLS) indicated that the project helped the two organisations in terms of capacity and market linkages their current portfolios. At the same time, the project benefited from the existing capacities, networks and markets that were initiated by the two IPs before UN Women engaged them. This shows a symbiotic relationship between UN Women and the two IPs, which is also important, not only for coherence, but also for sustainability. The project was internally coherent with other projects being implemented by UN Women, including two key ones, the Greenhouse Farming Project and the ASWAP Project.

Effectiveness: The project has achieved over 90% of its targets and has been enabled women smallholder farmers to adopt CSA related agronomic practices and technology including double row planting, use of certified seed of improved groundnuts varieties, early planting of groundnuts, access and use of weather forecast information for timely planting of groundnuts, access and use of CSA extension services, access and use of market information and financial literacy, and adoption of time and labor-saving technologies. In turn, the project has been able to double productivity of groundnuts, which increased household income for participating women farmers. The project strengthened farmer organization through various training programmes, which cascaded down to individual women farmers. The project established business clusters, through Lead farmers who were trained by the project. Business clusters or business groups are groups of farmers which help farmers to acquire basic business skills such as record keeping, gross margin analysis for enterprise selection and commodity prices and development of business plans. Currently, the business groups have a total membership of 4033 smallholder farmers (3,051 female and 982 male), directly receiving support from the lead farmers.

Efficiency: UN Women implemented the project through local implementing partners, who were selected on a competitive basis and were adequately experienced in value chain development and were already implementing similar projects in the same districts. The use of experienced IPs meant that the UN Women did not invest significant amount of resources in training the IPs in value chain development issues. It also meant that the IPs did not struggle with project implementation, such that some FOs that the IP were already working with, were quickly drafted into the project, which improved speed of implementation, resulting into delivery of project results within the stipulated timeframe. The resources were limited but with these limited resources UN Women made the right decision not to include the rice value chain, which was supposed to be implemented in Karonga District. Inclusion of the district would have increased costs of both implementation and monitoring, thereby reducing the efficiency of the project. It is also for this same reason that the evaluation argues that inclusion of Mzimba District compromised project efficiency, as it is geographically detached from the other two districts. With the limited budget and short implementation time, it would have made more sense to limit the project to two adjacent districts in the Central Region, develop value chain lessons and use such lessons to raise more resources for scaling the project to other districts and value chains. While the project targeted 10000 women, the actual numbers of women are 10641, meaning that more beneficiaries than planned have been reached with the same resources budgeted for.

Impact: Using contribution analysis methods, the evaluation found that the project made strong progress towards achieving impacts. An analysis of the ToC for the project compared with the ToC observed by the evaluation showed that impacts were being and/or likely to be achieved, despite the project has been

of short duration and limited budget. However, the impacts were recorded and reported by the project because of lack of impact level indicators. Further, an analysis of an end of project theory of change, compared with the theory of change at the design of the project, showed that the project made significant impacts, which go beyond the original theory of change, implying that there were unplanned impacts as well. Specifically, there were four pathways or impacts that were found, which should be used in future to inform design of impact level monitoring systems for similar projects. These were 1) the farmer organization development, 2) the groundnut productivity and income pathway, 3) the gender relations pathway and 4) the advocacy and policy engagement pathway.

Sustainability: The evaluation found that the project worked with existing farmer organizations, dominated by women, and strengthened them with capacity building and organizational development activities including linkages with markets, which is key in continuing project activities beyond the project. The evaluation found strong evidence of collaboration between IPs and Government extension workers at community level, while there was also strong evidence of UN Women collaboration, especially during implementation (not design) with central line ministries. These “collaborations” strengthened the role on UN Women in enhancing gender and women empowerment mainstreaming in policy implementation. Building capacities of FOs, the government extension system and individual women has been a key intervention of the project. The people trained have formed a strong and skills base, which is vital for continuation of benefits to women.

Lessons Learned

Lesson 1: Programmatically, one value chain for resilience building was not enough, especially in the context of climate change where one value chain can be vulnerable to climate change impacts such as floods. It has been learnt that there is need to expand the value chains in the project which in essence mitigates production failures due to climate change extreme weather events and market functionality risks. However, more value chains can only be incorporated in the project if the budget is adequate and the project implementation time is long enough.

Lesson 2: The project showed that the private sector, especially banks, can and should play a significant role in promoting women empowerment in poor countries such as Malawi. The project provided an opportunity for UN Women, other UN Agencies and banks to negotiate partnerships that could facilitate inclusion of women in the social and economic development process of the country. The project has shown that advance of gender equality and women empowerment is a development issue and should not just be left to Government, development partners and the UN only. Spaces exist for the private sector to play a transformative role.

Lesson 3: Early Identification and continuous engagement of strategic partners is critical for effective implementation of a project as it contributes to sustainability of the project, once the project ends and the donor stops financing the project. Internally, co-locating projects in a particular geographical area has shown multiple efficiency benefits, through cost sharing arrangements. It also has effectiveness benefits, as projects learn from each other, while at the same time allowing more opportunities for cross-learning visits for women.

Lesson 4: It is clearly emerging from the project that projects that have gender transformative objectives, such as the CSA project, need more time and larger budgets to allow for a more robust impact oriented implementation, robust monitoring and evaluation. The CSA timeframe of two growing season and the

budget were also limited to address deep cultural and social norms that cause gender inequality. However, it is also clear that the project has laid the foundation for a more robust future intervention.

Lesson 5: In promoting CSA crop-based projects, a functioning and accessible seed system is critical for project success because appropriate and high quality seed is a critical input. This suggests that that certified seed production should be incorporated in the programming, to enhance seed availability, while seed production on its own provides another sustainable stream of income for women.

Lesson 6: The impacts of COVID-19 was a critical issue during project implementation. The pandemic significantly impacted negatively on market functionality, shrinking off business activities, such as travel and tourism and others. Given the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project showed that investing in digital platforms is strategic for provision of technical support and extension services as well as delivery of project interventions, because digital platforms are cost effective and do not pose a risk to COVID-19 infection to project staff, beneficiaries and the community in general.

Lesson 7: Given the geographical distances between target districts, a key lesson is that during project design, efficiency issues need to be incorporated in the design. Where possible, project districts should be close to each other and co-location should be promoted, without undue duplication of efforts and maximizing synergy.

Lesson 8: The CSA, although it has been implemented over a short period of time, showed that there is movement towards contributing to long-term development goals, such as welfare improvement, resilience building and poverty reduction (wealth creation). A key lesson is that during the design of projects, indicators for these impact level goals should also be included in the results matrix and also measured continually. The CSA monitoring and evaluation system missed this opportunity.

Lesson 9: It is evident that development projects will continue to be constrained by funding levels and implementation time. In the cases where funding is low and implementation period is short, it is imperative that the project executing agency invests in partnerships, especially Government partners, who could carry on the activities of the project. This lesson may also apply where funding is not necessarily a challenge, but there is need to focus on sustainability.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions made and the lessons learnt, the evaluation makes the following recommendations:

Recommendation

- i. UN Women should liaise and request Standard Bank for continued funding of the project, given the success and potential for more impacts of the project.
- ii. Building on the above, the evaluation recommends that the next funding should be increased and the implementation period be longer than just two growing seasons
- iii. Funding allowing, future projects should at least include two value chains, so that they can support each in cases of crops failure due to climatic and non-climatic problems.
- iv. Future projects should also ensure that during design period, stakeholders are properly consulted and engaged right from the beginning, not just after the design is already done.

- v. Future projects should include a stronger advocacy and lobbying component, which should also include mobilizing private sector companies to support gender equality, women empowerment and human rights of women and girls.
- vi. During design of future projects, co-location of projects (both new and existing) should be considered
- vii. Continue investing in developing partnerships with government ministries, departments and agencies to maximize synergies and sustainability.
- viii. Future similar projects should always incorporate and promote activities to ensure functioning and accessible seed systems.
- ix. Invest in digital platforms as a way of adapting to COVID-19 pandemic.
- x. Continue implementing the project through the two IPs, if addition funding is mobilized, to ensure continuity and deepening impacts that have started showing amongst beneficiaries.
- xi. Given the geographical distances between target districts, it is important that future projects should be implemented in districts that are adjacent to each other, depending on, of course the value chains proposed. Co-location with other projects should also be considered as recommended above.
- xii. Future project designs and monitoring and evaluation systems should also include impact level results and their indicators in the results matrices. Periodical monitoring should also include collection of data on high level indicators for targeted beneficiaries.
- xiii. Related to the above, projects should conduct baseline studies, regardless of the size of their budgets and length of implementation period.
- xiv. Implementing partners should proactively continue to support all groups that were supported by the project
- xv. District Councils, particularly the sectors that were involved in the project, should continue to provide extension services to the groups that were supported by the project.
- xvi. Traditional Leaders as well as extension workers at community level, including Lead Farmers and Male Champions, should also continue to provide support to the FOs and the community on their respective mandate. These should organize their own community-based coordination meetings that do not need funds to arrange and continue to disseminate information to project beneficiaries.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This section of the evaluation report describes two important aspects of the evaluation. Firstly, it provides the national context of the project to provide readers of the report an understanding of the “big picture” of the project and how relevant the project is to Malawi. This is followed by a description of the object of the evaluation, which is the Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) project, which has been implemented by UN Women and its two implementing partners: African Institute for Corporate Citizenship (AICC) and Market Link and Support (MaLS).

1.2 National context

In 2018, the total population of Malawi was at 17,563,749, of which 49% were males and 51% were females (NSO, 2018). With regard to poverty, about half of the population in Malawi lives below the poverty line (GoM, 2017). About 84% of the population lives in rural areas (NSO, 2018) and mostly depend on non-mechanized smallholder, rain-fed agriculture. With regard to the economy, agriculture happens to be the most important sector of the Malawian economy, as it contributes about 90% of export earnings and around 40% of GDP. In addition, the agricultural sector employs about 80% of the workforce (MoAIWD, 2012).

The agricultural sector is highly gendered in Malawi. Women have limited decision making powers, including decisions on and access and control over land. In Malawi, women have to seek permission from their spouses, if they have to go out, which means that they cannot easily access agricultural markets, especially high value markets, which are mostly available in urban areas which are far from rural areas where they live (Holmes & Jones, 2011). As a result, women and men are not only affected by the same agricultural production risks but are also facing different and diverse types of risks. It is also estimated that rural women farmers make up a large proportion of the subsistence farmers, as they contribute between 60% and 80% of the agricultural labor force (World Bank, 2007).

The majority of farmers, who are women, cultivate small landholdings, largely for subsistence, which explains why poverty is prevalent and deep (ibid). Any shocks that directly or indirectly affect the smallholder agriculture sector, therefore, leads to poverty at household level and most household look up to the state for humanitarian and social protection support (World Bank, 2007). Despite their effective contribution to the agriculture sector in Malawi, rural women farmers’ agricultural productivity per hectare remains lower than that of men. Systematic gender differences in agricultural productivity continue to persist, mostly due to differences in: (i) access to and use of agricultural inputs, including improved technologies; (ii) land tenure security and related investments in land; (iii) market and credit access; (iv) human and physical capital; and (v) informal institutional constraints affecting farm/plot management.

In relation to economic vulnerabilities, women are often paid less, have fewer economic assets that they control at household level, and most of these are reproductive in nature. Even women have to work more, they have less access to credit and financial services to support their farming systems, they have higher employment insecurity and low education/literacy, which keep them in low-skilled casual work, including limiting their effective and impactful participation in the upper echelons of agricultural value chains.

With regard to poverty and vulnerability, it should be noted that poverty in Malawi is severe and deep-rooted and has been increasing (GoM, 2012). About a quarter of the population lives in extreme poverty, especially in rural areas where poverty is widespread (Rasmussen, 2018). In 2017, about 74% of households in Malawi reported that they were poor, while 24% reported that they were extremely poor, using

subjective self- assessment (National Statistics Office, 2017). In both urban and rural areas of Malawi, poverty is a gendered phenomenon, with women being more affected than men (NSO, 2019). Women in Malawi play an important role in the economic development of the country, but they have limited or no control over economic resources such as land, valuable household assets, even when such resources and assets belong to them (NSO, 2019).

The gendered poverty is partly caused by women’s time poverty. Women in Malawi face greater time poverty due to multiple roles, including domestic and caring tasks (Holmes & Jones, 2011). Due to a multitude of unpaid work in the home, women in Malawi have limited time to participate in economic activities outside, a fact which is compounded by the limited access to financial services and products by women. The lack of control over such economic assets is an important setback to attainment of economic independence for women, which also compromises achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment, and is particularly an important factor in making women vulnerable to poverty (Chirwa, Kumwenda, Jumbe, Chilonda, & Minde, 2008). According to NSO, 49.3% of people in male-headed households are poor compared to 58.3% in female-headed households (NSO, 2019). In addition, and when considered by sex of household head and residence, poverty rates are higher in both rural and urban female headed households; 64.5% and 29.5% respectively, compared to male headed households; 57.6% and 16.8% respectively (NSO, 2019). To minimize deprivation and suffering and to uplift the welfare of the poor, especially women, the poor are targeted with different social protection programmes, depending on their vulnerabilities and availability of labour at household level (GoM, 2012).

1.3 Project description

The Project “Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture” was a multi-country initiative funded by Standard Bank Group. It was implemented by UN Women in four that include Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda. The goal of the project was to strengthen women’s agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture value chains. The project sought to close the gender gap in agricultural productivity by increasing women’s access to resources, which often limits women’s effective participation in value chains. As a multi-country project, the project targeted to reach 50,000 women in the four countries with entrepreneurial and financial capacities, affordable technology, and value addition, and using information and communications technology (ICT) to increase access to markets and to finance (UN Women, 2019), over a three-year period (2019 to 2021). In Malawi specifically, the purpose of the project was to enhance the livelihoods of 10,000 women and their households through the production and marketing of groundnuts, thereby building their resilience to

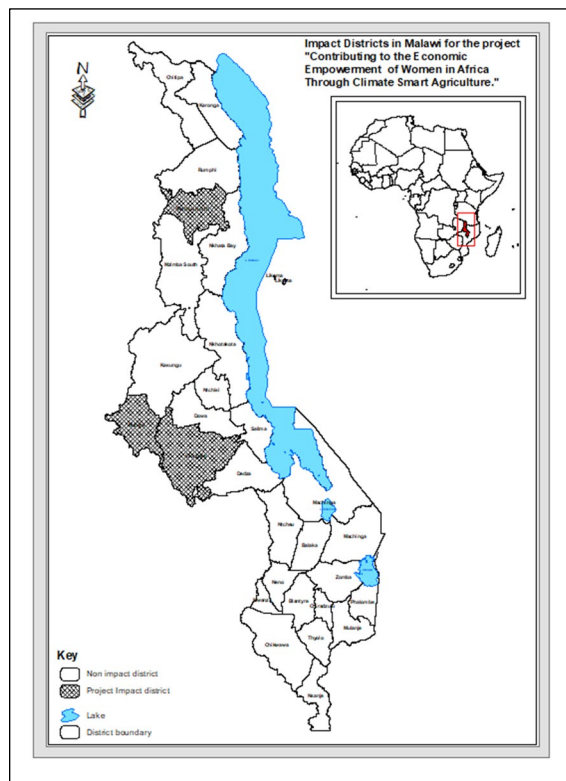


Figure 1: Map of Malawi: CSA Implementation Districts

climate change through the provision of resources, skills and improved technology for project sustainability in three targeted districts. These interventions implemented in the country aimed at addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability of women to climate change related risks. CSA was promoted to enhance the adaptive capacity of women farmers to the effects of climate change. Regarding implementation arrangements, the project in Malawi was implemented by two Implementing Partners (IPs), which are the African Institute for Corporate Citizenship (AICC) and Market Link and Support (MaLS). The project had four outcomes and 13 outputs as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary project outcomes and outputs for Malawi

Outcomes	Outputs
1. Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate	1.1. Women’s access to labor and time-saving equipment and services increased
	1.2 Women’s access to climate-smart non-labour agricultural inputs improved 1
	1.3 Access to climate-resilient agricultural extension services and information for women and men farmers improved
	1.4 Socio-cultural barriers (including gender-based violence) reduced through policy and advocacy (including engaging men at household level) to increase agriculture productivity and women’s equal land rights
2. Opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain are provided	2.1 Women’s shift to high value agricultural enterprises (selected crops, fisheries, animal husbandry etc.) and inclusion in green agricultural value chains at the national, regional, and international levels achieved
	2.2 Local infrastructure developed to improve access to markets, reduce labour, and save time for women value chain actors
	2.3 Capacity of women value chain organizations for production and marketing is increased
3. Using ICT platforms (BMWs) for increased access to markets and finance for women	3.1 Deploy the buy from women digital platform to connect women farmers to large scale buyers of agricultural products
	3.2 Information stored in the BfW platform is being used as a form of collateral for women’s access to finance
	3.3 Link women to financial institutions providing innovative financing in CSA
4. The Multi-Country Project is coordinated and implemented with a focus on ‘research for development’ and documenting lessons learned	4.1 UN Women Country offices, and agricultural research institutions in the respective countries and at regional level engaged to increase research on gender and CSA in the region
	4.2 Regional and national institutional, policy and legal frameworks that will be key enablers to facilitate women’s engagement in CSA evaluated for their effectiveness
	4.3 South-South cooperation and learning among participating countries of the multi-country proposal and other countries in the region is fostered

To achieve the outcomes and outputs in Table 1, the project planned to implement the following strategic activities:

- i. Improving access and utilization of certified seed of improved groundnuts varieties which are high yielding, tolerant to drought, early maturity and with multiple use as confectionaries and for oil extraction.
- ii. Adoption of early planting of groundnuts on double rows per ridge as a CSA farming system which conserves moisture, maximizes on land resources as well as labour for agronomic practices.
- iii. Access and use of weather forecast information for timely planting of groundnuts.
- iv. Access and use of CSA extension services.
- v. Access and use of market information and financial literacy and
- vi. Adoption of time and labor-saving technologies. For a woman to be counted as a beneficiary, she needs to access or be a user of any three of the technologies or practices.

2. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES, APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

This section of the report describes the objectives of the evaluation, the approaches and methodology that were used to implement the end-line evaluation in Malawi. Given that the evaluation was a multi-country evaluation, the approaches and methodology was uniform across the four countries. The section will be followed by a presentation of the findings from the approach and methodology used.

2.1 Objectives of the final evaluation

As explained in the terms of reference, the overall objective of the final evaluation was to assess achievement of programme results and performance of the CSA project in Malawi. The evaluation was expected to measure and provide robust empirical evidence related to the success and results of the CSA project in Malawi, including both intended and unintended results. The evaluation included assessment of changes in outcomes observed, the mechanisms that delivered the observed changes, key features of the mechanisms and determine to what extent these can be attributed to the interventions.

The specific evaluation objectives were as follows:

- i. Analyse the relevance of the implementation strategy and approaches of the “Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture” project;
- ii. Assess organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of the project’s results as defined in the intervention;
- iii. Validate the project impact in terms of achievements and/or weaknesses toward the outcome and outputs;
- iv. Assess the potential for sustainability of the results achieved by the project;
- v. Document lessons learned, best practices, and challenges to inform future work of UN Women on women’s economic empowerment;
- vi. Assess the implication of COVID-19 in the entire project implementation;
- vii. Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the programme’s best practices;
- viii. Provide actionable recommendations for the implementation of the second phase of the project and maximize ownership by partners in the countries covered by the project to foster sustainability of the intervention; and
- ix. To assess how the project and its results relate and contribute to commitments and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Malawi.

2.2 Scope of the evaluation

The final project evaluation targeted the CSA Programme, which was implemented by the UN Women, between 2019–2021 in Malawi. The evaluation covered all the four outcomes areas and ten output areas in the three project implementation districts. The Programme was evaluated through an analysis of the progress towards achieving expected results, measured against the project indicators and their targets.

The evaluation identified and documented short-term, intermediate, and long-term results achieved by the CSA project. It also assessed progress towards achieving the CSA project outcomes and potential impacts at the end of the project implementing period. The evaluation examined all the relevant documents of the Project, including the results framework/logical framework of the project, its Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, annual work plans, semi-annual and annual reports to the donor and knowledge products produced in the frameworks of the project. These documents were provided by the UN Women Regional Office as well as the Country Office.

1.4 Evaluation standards, criteria and evaluation questions

The final evaluation was conducted according to the revised evaluation policy of UN-Women, which was developed in accordance with Executive Board decision 2016/2 and is the result of an external review which drew on recent assessments of the evaluation function and consultations with stakeholders. The policy is informed by the General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review, by the UN-Women Strategic Plan 2018–2021, and is aligned with the 2016 norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UN Women, 2020).

UN Women Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) has developed the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS) which adapted UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System to guide evaluation managers and evaluators on what constitutes a good quality report at UN Women. The consultant, guided by the Team Leader, the UN Women and also other national consultants, ensured that the evaluation process and the final report were in compliance with the GERAAS quality standards (Gurbo & Gugeshashvili, 2021).

In addition, the final evaluation of the project was done according to the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The criteria was adapted from the OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet), to align with the terms of reference of the evaluation (OECD DAC, 2019). The definitions of the six evaluation are provided in Box 1 (ibid):

1. **Relevance:** The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies. Note: Retrospectively, the question of relevance often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed circumstances.
2. **Coherence:** The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution. Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution/government, as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres. External coherence considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonization and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.
3. **Effectiveness:** The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance. Note: Also used as an aggregate

measure of (or judgment about) the merit or worth of an activity, i.e. the extent to which an intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its major relevant objectives efficiently in a sustainable fashion and with positive institutional development impact.

4. **Efficiency:** A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.
5. **Impact:** Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended
6. **Sustainability:** The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.

Box 1: Definitions of evaluation criteria

1.5 Data collection and analysis

This section briefly explains the methodology that was used to conduct the final evaluation of the CSA project. For quantitative data, the National Consultant reviewed project reports to extract data for outcome, impact and output level indicators and where such reports did not have data for particular indicators, other secondary sources of data were used and appropriately referenced. For qualitative data, the consultant used key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) to collect data, based on an evaluation framework and tools developed by the consulting team. Some FGD data on women's agricultural productivity and income were quantified to generate some quantitative evidence of project achievements.

Key informants were purposively selected and included those stakeholders that participated in the implementation of the CSA project. Key informant interviews focused on national level partners, the four key government ministries involved in the project, implementing partners and district level authorities. At national level, key ministries interviewed included the Ministry of Trade and industry's Cooperatives Development Department, the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare. At district level the respective representatives of the key ministries and the implementing partners (AICC and MaLs) were also interviewed using interview guidelines that were developed during the inception phase of the evaluation. Key informant interviews sought to unearth individual perceptions on all elements of the evaluation criteria, including relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and innovativeness. Table summarizes the numbers of interviews done through KIIs and FGDs.

Table 2. Data collection methods and Stakeholders Who Participated in the evaluation

Data collection method	Participants	National	Mchinji	Lilongwe East	Lilongwe West	Mzimba North	Totals
KIIs	Government ministries	4	2	1	1	2	10
	Implementing partners (AICC and MaLS)	2	1	1	1	1	6
	Leaders of farmer organizations	2	2	1	1	2	8
	Extension workers	0	1	1	1	1	4
FGDs	Project beneficiaries	0	2	1	1	2	6
Total interviews		8	8	5	5	8	34

The consultant analysed data using thematic analysis of findings, organized around the six evaluation criteria. Findings from interviews and review of documents were grouped under each theme, which in this case, were the evaluation criteria. The analysis was guided by the International Team Leader, since the country report fed into the overall programme evaluation report.

1.6 Evaluation management

The evaluation was managed at three levels. From the UN Women side, the evaluation was managed by the UN Women Regional Office for East and Southern Africa (ESARO), based in Nairobi, Kenya. A Regional Evaluation Group (REG) was formed at that level to review the consolidated report, to which this report was a contributor. Preliminary results of this evaluation were shared with the REG on 7th February, 2022, through a virtual meeting, convened and facilitated by ESARO.

At national level, the Programme Team Lead for Women Economic Empowerment, provided oversight for the evaluation, while the Programme Officer for the Project provided day-to-day management of the evaluation. The Country Office Monitoring and Evaluation Lead provided support on the monitoring and evaluation aspects of the project. Three coordination and consultation meetings were held with the UN Women Country Team, in addition to more interactions with individual UN Women officers. The majority of meetings were done via zoom to minimize risk of COVID-19. A draft report was shared with the UN Women Malawi Country team and the team provided feedback which was duly incorporated by the consultant, before a submission to the Team Leader and ESARO.

The last level of management was within the evaluation team. The evaluation team composed of four national consultants, one for each country, who were led by a Team Leader, based in Nairobi, Kenya. The team convened a number of coordination meetings to discuss and plan the evaluation and implement it in

a harmonized way. The TL consolidated reports from the four national consultants into a synthesis report, that represented the overall end line evaluation report for the CSA programme.

1.7 Ethical issues

This evaluation was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (March, 2008). The evaluation team adhered to the principles of respect and empowerment, informed consent, cultural sensitivity, privacy and confidentiality and fair representation.

1.8 Limitations

The final evaluation took place during the third wave of the COVID-19 in Malawi and at the beginning of the Omicron wave. Combined with limited resources, this made it difficult for the consultant to include many farmer organisations in the sample. At the same time, it was not possible to interview more beneficiaries within FGDs, as a precautionary measure for COVID-19. The risk of COVID-19 was managed by limiting the number of women participating in FGDs, as well as the number of FGDs interviewed, while there were also some key informant interviews that were conducted by phone.

The second limitation was that, although the consultant qualitatively found that the project had achieved some impacts, it was difficult to get quantitative evidence to validate the impacts at household level because the project did not have impact level indicators and did not conduct a baseline study for the project. In view of this limitation, the consultant used contribution analysis evaluation methods (Mayne, undated) to track impacts along the theory of change of the project as presented in Figure 2.

3. EVALUATION FINDINGS

This section presents and discusses findings of the final evaluation, based on the OECD DAC criteria, read together with the terms of reference for the evaluation. The section starts with evaluation of relevance, then coherence, followed by effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Within each criteria, the main findings are presented in a box, followed by a full description of the findings.

3.1 Relevance

Main Findings

- *Finding 1:* The CSA project was strongly aligned to human rights, practical and strategic gender needs of women farmers in Malawi, especially those that live in rural areas, where poverty and vulnerability to climate change is high and affects women more than men;
- *Finding 2:* The CSA project was critical and supported implementation of gender and women empowerment objectives for District Development Plans in the three target districts of Lilongwe, Mzimba and Mchinji;
- *Finding 3:* The CSA project was strongly aligned to international and regional commitment, AU Agenda 2063, SDGs and UN Women strategy;
- *Finding 4:* The CSA project was consistent with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, which was the overall development framework for the country at the time the project was designed;
- *Finding 5:* Even with the adoption of the new vision for the country, which focusses on wealth creation and industrialization, the evaluation found that the CSA project was still consistent with the Malawi 2063;
- *Finding 6:* The project was consistent and aligned well with sectoral gender objectives, in particular for the agriculture and HIV and AIDS gender strategy, the National Gender Policy and the National Agricultural Policy;
- *Finding 7:* UN Women successfully managed to engage key stakeholders in the implementation of the project to contribute to project local ownership and sustainability;
- *Finding 8:* The project was aligned to and supported implementation of the UNDAF/UNSDCF, in particular the Pillar on Inclusive Growth and Resilience building;
- *Finding 9:* The design and implementation arrangements of the CSA project were appropriate, although some government stakeholders wanted the project to be implemented Government departments;
- *Finding 10:* The project interventional targeting approach was appropriate, but geographical targeting could have been improved. For example, geographically Mzimba should not have been included as it is very far from the other two district;
- *Finding 11:* Outcome 3 was not implemented in Malawi as it required more investments and resources than UN Women Country office was provided.

Full description of findings

Finding 1: The CSA project was strongly aligned to human rights, practical and strategic gender needs of women farmers in Malawi, especially those that live in rural areas, where poverty and vulnerability to climate change is high and affects women more than men.

The evaluation found that the CSA project is relevant to both practical and strategic gender needs of women, who are the target beneficiaries of the support. This is evidenced by the fact that Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world with 50.7% of the population living below the poverty line and 25% living in extreme poverty (Ministry of Finance Economic Planning and Development, 2017). Women form the core of the poor, hence interventions, such as the CSA, which provide women with technical support in agriculture, which is the mainstay of the economy and the main livelihood source for women, goes a long way in addressing women's poverty.

As explained in Section 1.1, poverty in Malawi has a gender dimension; female-headed households are more likely to be poor and are disproportionately represented in the lowest quartile of income distribution. National data shows that about 57% of female headed households are poor compared to 43% of their male-headed counterparts (Ministry of Finance Economic Planning and Development, 2017). This gender disparity is echoed in lower earnings for work of the same calibre, more time spent in unpaid labour, lower labour force participation rates, and limited access to assets (NSO, 2013). Women's poverty is directly related to their concentrations in low-income activities, low access to resources such as land and capital; higher illiteracy rates compared to men, inadequate health facilities mean that they become victims of maternal related deaths. In addition, HIV/AIDS pandemic has had a more devastating impact on women as victims and as care takers of HIV/AIDS victims.

In addition, female-headed households have more dependents, lower income earning capacity and fewer assets and other resources. In general, women, especially those residing in rural areas, have limited knowledge about their social and economic rights, which diminishes their potential to become effective agents for change at the personal, household, and community levels. As such women remain poor and observers of development rather than change agents (UN , 2015). On the other hand, access to economic resources is a serious challenge for Malawian women. For example, in 2017, only 13% of households obtained credit or a loan for business or farming purposes and most of them were male headed households. Figures indicate that 14% of male-headed households compared to only 10% female-headed households obtained a loan (NSO, 2017). While women are estimated to constitute 70% of the labour force in the agricultural sector, they have limited access to agricultural inputs and credit than men. Only 11 % of agricultural extension workers are female and this means that gender specific issues may not always be addressed (African Development Bank, 2020).

The project is also critically important for Malawian women in the three districts, where women face many poverties, including time, labour and energy, and gender-based violence related poverties. In terms of time poverty, women spend a lot of time in agricultural related activities because of lack of mechanization and limited access to financing that can enable them to buy agricultural equipment. Women also spend a lot of time fetching water, firewood and food for the household. These challenges have now worsened, due in part to effects of climate change. The project targets women, who, despite being the main providers of

agricultural labour, have limited access to agricultural inputs, credit and other financial services and for these reasons, they suffer from high levels of vulnerability, both agricultural, economic, social and climatic. By increasing women's participation in marketing opportunities, especially in high value markets, through participation in ground nut value chain, the project has increased women's income and therefore improved their ability to pay for their children's education and health needs, in addition to providing nutritious food for their households. The evaluation found evidence of this result chain in annual reports and success stories as well as interviews with key informants and beneficiaries.

Finding 2: The CSA project was critical and supported implementation of gender and women empowerment objectives for District Development Plans in the three target districts of Lilongwe, Mzimba and Mchinji.

District partners in all the three implementing districts stated that the project was responsive to the needs of the district as indicated in their respective District Development Plans (DDP). In addition and to ensure that the project was implemented in geographical areas where it could address specific needs of the DDP, project implementation sites were determined by the District Council, in collaboration with UN Women.

in Mzimba, for example, the project interventions were reflected in the 2021 DDP. The implementing partners and the district partners were jointly planning and executing activities including trainings. For example, the agronomic and post-harvest trainings were all conducted by the District Agricultural Development Office (DADO) through their extension planning area staff, which indicated that the project was relevant to their sector.

Finding 3: The CSA project was strongly aligned to international and regional commitment, AU Agenda 2063, SDGs and UN Women strategy

In terms of alignment with SDGs, the evaluation found that the project is directly contributing to six of the 17 SDGs. These six SDGs are as follows:

- ***Goal 1:*** End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- ***Goal 2:*** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- ***Goal 3:*** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages Child health
- ***Goal 5:*** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- ***Goal 8:*** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- ***Goal 13:*** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

The project is directly contributing to outcomes 2 and 3 of the UN Women 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, which provides strategic direction, objectives and approaches to support efforts to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls by 2030. The project interventions on promoting land rights for women, through the HeforShe campaigns, directly contribute to Outcomes 4 and 5 of the Strategic Plan (Box 2). The UN Women Strategic Plan builds on recommendations from the 20-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, highlights UN-Women's contribution to the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development, and spells out how UN-Women intends

to leverage its comparative and collaborative advantages to accelerate the achievement of results for women and girls (UN Women, 2017).

1. *Outcome 1:* A comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms, policies and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is strengthened and implemented
2. *Outcome 2:* Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems
3. *Outcome 3:* Women have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy
4. *Outcome 4:* All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence
5. *Outcome 5:* Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and from humanitarian action

Box 2: Outcomes of the UN Women Strategic Plan

Finding 4: The CSA project was consistent with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, which was the overall development framework for the country at the time the project was designed.

At national level, the project was well aligned with the development objectives of the Government of Malawi (GoM), which were at the time of the design and during implementation described in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS), which was at that time, the main national development strategy for the country. The MGDS identified gender equality and women empowerment as a key development objective that required all stakeholders to prioritize in their policies and programmes. The MDGS III recognized gender equality as a cross-cutting issue, which is foundational to socio-economic development since it has multiplier effects on all sectors of the economy (GoM, 2017). The MGDS recognized that systematic mainstreaming of gender, children, youth, persons with disability and the elderly can facilitate effective development planning and coordination, budgeting, implementation and monitoring and recommends implementation of gender transformative approaches (GTA) to challenge rigid norms, beliefs and practices that cause gender inequalities at all levels, (GoM, 2017).

Finding 5: Even with the adoption of the new vision for the country, which focusses on wealth creation and industrialization, the evaluation found that the CSA project was still consistent with the Malawi 2063.

With the launch of the Malawi 2063, which is a new vision for Malawi, the CSA project was also consistent with the aspirations of Malawians, which are that Malawi should industrialize, should be a wealthy country and self-reliant. The project facilitated achievement of these national objectives by mobilizing women into productive agriculture, by linking them to high value markets, enabling them to add value to their produce, hence fetch more income, which economically empowered them and reduced their dependence on their male counterparts, which can be a precursor to gender based violence.

Finding 6: The project was consistent and aligned well with sectoral gender objectives, in particular for the agriculture and HIV and AIDS gender strategy, the National Gender Policy and the National Agricultural Policy.

At sectoral level, the project collaborated with Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Gender and Community Development, Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Industry and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The collaboration ascertained that the needs of these sectors were appropriately mainstreamed into the project, from the start to the end. For example, the project was aligned to the National Gender Policy (2015-2020) whose purpose is to strengthen gender mainstreaming and women empowerment at all levels in order to facilitate attainment of gender equality and equity in Malawi, which is key to achieving economic growth. Its goal is to reduce gender inequalities and enhance participation of women, men, girls and boys in socio economic development processes, which will contribute to achievement of SDG 5.

In the agricultural sector, the CSA project was critical as it addressed almost all of the seven outcomes of the National Agricultural Policy (NAP) and the Agricultural Gender and HIV and AIDS Strategy. The NAP has seven expected outcomes as follows: (i) increased agricultural production and productivity. (ii) Increased diversification of agricultural production and marketed surpluses. (iii) Increased use of irrigation in crop production. (iv) Increased mechanization of farming and agro-processing activities. (v) Increased agro-processing and value addition of agricultural products, particularly by women and youth. (vi) Increased access by producers and consumers to well-functioning agricultural markets – input, output, and consumer retail markets and (vii) increased engagement by women, youth and vulnerable groups in agriculture policy processes and programs. Based on the seven policy outcomes, the NAP has identified eight policy priority areas: 1) sustainable agricultural production and productivity. 2) Sustainable irrigation development. 3) Mechanization of agriculture. 4) Agricultural market development, agro-processing and value addition. 5) Food and nutrition Security. 6) Agricultural risk management. 7) Empowerment of youth, women and vulnerable groups in agriculture and 8) Institutional development, coordination and capacity strengthening.

Finding 7: UN Women successfully managed to engage key stakeholders in the implementation of the project to contribute to project local ownership and sustainability

The evaluation found that the requirements for state ownership were satisfied by the project. The project was designed by UN Women, based on an articulate analysis of the constraints faced by women in agriculture in Malawi. Although the evaluation found that the project was written with limited consultation with key stakeholders, the project ably corrected this approach and worked with key stakeholders during the inception phase to ensure that the theory of change is explained and met the needs of women and key stakeholders involved. As a result of engagement of stakeholders, the project pursued a holistic approach to address underlying causes of vulnerability, which have been explained earlier and is embedded in its Theory of Change (ToC). At the end of the inception phase stakeholders were happy and agreed on a ToC of the project, which comprised three interlinked and logically linked outcomes that:

- a. If women have access to climate-smart non-labour agricultural inputs and labour- and time-saving equipment and services;
- b. if they are supported by climate–resilient agricultural extension services, providing them with relevant CSA information;
- c. if the relaxation of the sociocultural barriers to equal land rights and land access is assured;

- d. if they participate fully in high value agricultural enterprises with increased access to markets;
- e. if they can use digital platforms that will connect women farmers to large scale buyers of agricultural products; and
- f. if national agricultural research institutions in the respective countries and at a regional level are engaged to increase research on women and CSA in the region

then:

- g. women farmers will be economically empowered and more resilient in a changing climate, because (7) the root causes and drivers of gender gaps in agriculture have been removed (UN Women, 2021).

At district council level partners felt that they were fully involved to an extent that they were in control of the project activities. For example, in Mzimba north, the Director of Agricultural and Extension Services, described the project as a government’s responsibility, which has been “relieved by the partners and UN Women”.

Finding 8: The project was aligned to and supported implementation of the UNDAF/UNSDCF, in particular the Pillar on Inclusive Growth and Resilience building.

UN Women, by nature of the entity being a member of the UN System in Malawi, is mandated to work and support the government in its policies and programmes to implement Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2019-2023 UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), in short UNCF, is the main vehicle through which the UN system is supporting priority areas in the MGDS based on its mandates and capacities. The Malawi UNCF is structured around three pillars, namely: Pillar 1 – Peace, Inclusion and Effective Institutions; Pillar 2 – Population Management and Inclusive Human Development, and Pillar 3 – Inclusive and Resilient Growth. The UNCF has a total of nine development outcomes (UNDP Malawi, 2022). The CSA project is aligned to Pillar 3, which focuses on inclusive and resilience growth and includes issues related to building climate resilience and adaptation, which are the main objectives of the CSA project.

Finding 9: The design and implementation arrangements of the CSA project were appropriate, although some government stakeholders wanted the project to be implemented Government departments.

The evaluation responded to this important question by examining three elements: 1) the theory of change, 2) the implementation modality and 3) the targeting methods. In terms of the theory of change, the evaluation found that overall the design of the project was strong. The focus on Climate Smart Agriculture’ to strengthen women’s agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture products in Malawi, is a strong objective and resonates strongly with the challenges women farmers in particular and majority of women in Malawi generally face. The ToC as explained, was strong, and in the impact assessment section of this report, the evaluation found that the ToC was functioning at the household level, meaning that the expected outcomes are being achieved.

With regard to the implementation modality, the choice of working through Implementing Partners, who are local NGOs, was found to be strategic, because it will enhance sustainability of the programme. Local NGOs have context knowledge of the agricultural value chains, which may not be readily available with international NGOs. The choice not to implement through the Government (in terms of direct funding),

was also mitigative of fiduciary risk associated with Government systems. By opting to work with nongovernmental organization (NGO) IPs, UN Women avoided potential conflicts with Government in relation to financial and procurement management, which are common issues in development assistance discourse in Malawi.

Finding 10: The project interventional targeting approach was appropriate, but geographical targeting could have been improved. For example, geographically Mzimba should not have been included as it is very far from the other two district; In relation to targeting, the evaluation found mixed results. Based on definition of targeting by Mooij, (1999) and Phiri, (2012) , the evaluation found mixed results. With regard to geographical targeting, the evaluation found that the project targeted three districts (Lilongwe, Mchnji and Mzimba). Lilongwe and Mchinji district share boundaries and are in the same agricultural zone and close to each other in the Central Region of Malawi. However, Mzimba District is well over 300 km north of Lilongwe, where UN Women and the two implementing partners are based. The implementing side of Mzimba District, which is Mzimba North) is even further, almost over 400km away from Lilongwe. The long distance to Mzimba weakened the project design as it reduced implementation efficiency, especially that both UN Women and the IP responsible, AICC are based in Lilongwe.

With respect to interventional targeting, the evaluation noted that initially the project had included rice value chain, which meant that another district, Karonga, which produces one of Malawi's finest rice variety called Kilombero, would have been included in the project. However, UN Women decided quickly before implementation started that adding another value chain would have weakened the project, especially considering the limited project budget and timeframe. Further, adding Karonga District would have increased monitoring costs because Karonga District is nearly 600km North of Lilongwe. This analysis aside, the evaluation noted that the idea of including one more value chain was a good idea, as a climate related crop failure risk mitigation strategy, but it needed to be supported with more funds, which were not available for UN Women Malawi Country Office.

Finding 11: Outcome 3 was not implemented in Malawi as it required more investments and resources than UN Women Country office was provided.

Outcome 3 has not been implemented in Malawi because by the time the project was rolling out, the platform was not completed in terms of design. While it was completed by end of year one, the cost was huge, totaling to about US\$80000 (which was about 18% of the project budget for Malawi) . The view of the evaluation was that UN Women made the right decision to opt out of the planned platform and use locally developed platforms, especially Farm Radio Trust and warehousing receipts.

3.2 Coherence

Main Findings

- ***Finding 12:*** The project was internally coherent with two other projects implemented by UN Women, both of which target women farmers;
- ***Finding 13:*** The project was externally coherent with interventions implemented by key stakeholders who have been engaged in the project, especially from the inception phase of the project.

Full description of findings

Finding 12: The project was internally coherent with two other projects implemented by UN Women, both of which target women farmers.

Internally, CSA Project complemented the Greenhouse Framing Project, which also targeted women in Mzimba and Salima and Lilongwe district, hence geographically overlapping (co-location) with the CSA project in Lilongwe and Mzimba District. UN Women implemented the two projects through similar approaches and strategies, focusing on building economic capacities of women through farmer organisations. The Greenhouse Farming Project also focused on empowering women through climate resilience agriculture and was funded by Korea International Cooperative Agency (KOICA). Due to co-location of the two projects in two districts, lessons from implementation, monitoring and supervision are often shared between the projects, which enhances internal coherence.

The CSA Project was also coherent with the World Bank funded Agriculture Sector Wide Project (ASWAP) project, which aimed at strengthening the agricultural extension system in Malawi, with the long term objective of attaining gender equality in agricultural productivity. The ASWAP main intervention was building the capacity of extension workers on gender mainstreaming, household HHA, markets studies, agribusiness management skills with a focus on extension staff. The implementation of the CSA project incorporated the HH approach which was not in the design of the CSA approach but was in the ASWAP.

Finding 13: The project was externally coherent with interventions implemented by key stakeholders who have been engaged in the project, especially from the inception phase of the project.

During the inception phase in 2019, the project conducted a number of preparatory multi-stakeholder engagement activities that culminated into an Inception Workshop in 2019. The purpose of the inception workshop was to create and promote a shared understanding, collective ownership, implementation approach, thereby fostering strong coordination, required for the achievement of project objectives (UN Women, 2021). The workshop ensured that all stakeholders' needs were incorporated in the project, that is why, participants also discussed and ensured that the projects Theory of Change (ToC) is inclusive. After the Inception Workshop, the project was launched by senior Government officials in October 2019, a development which provides further evidence of good partnership and working relationship between the UN Women and Government.

During implementation, UN Women ensured that all key stakeholders were involved. Although the project has two NGO Implementing Partners, Government officials from all the three districts where the project was implemented, played a key role to ensure that the project is implemented in a sustainable way. This had also ensured that the project has been imbedded in existing government extension systems, which in addition to promoting external coherence, it ensured sustainability. In fact, the evaluation field work took place after the project had already ended, but our observations found that the farmer organisations that the project worked with were still active.

Further relating to external coherence, UN Women Malawi engaged financial service providers like commercial banks and Micro Finance Institutions (MFI) in order to facilitate access to credit and other financial services by women. The implication is that through the project, MFIs have begun to realize the importance of targeting women, especially with climate agriculture technology that are sustainable, hence

not risky in terms of financial investments. It is reported in annual reports that through such engagements with the banking, some banks, such National Bank of Malawi, have increased the collateral-free loan amount to US\$6,700 for women entrepreneurs (UN Women, 2021). The need for collateral to access bank loans, is a major barrier for women's access to credit.

Interviews with the two Implementing Partners, the African Institute for Corporate Citizenship (AICC) and Market Link Support (MaLS) indicated that the project has also helped the two organisations in terms of capacity, as well as accessing new agricultural markets and new partners for their current portfolios. At the same time, the project has also benefited from the existing capacities, networks and markets that were initiated by the two IPs before UN Women engaged them. This shows a symbiotic relationship between UN Women and the two IPs, which is also important, not only for coherence, but also for sustainability.

3.3 Effectiveness

Main Findings

- **Finding 14:** The Project made very good progress toward achieving its goal /objectives in targeted districts. Overall for 18 were regularly tracked and for the 16 indicators that had data, the project achieved 91% of its targets. Two indicators did not have data on targets;
- **Finding 15:** UN Women engaged partners such as Bountifield International Malawi to produce labour and time saving technologies for use by women. The time saved was used by women to invest in other income generating activities and better management of their households;
- **Finding 16:** UN Women developed sustainable systems for ensuring that women have access to improved and certified groundnut seed, which is important for improving productivity;
- **Finding 17:** The project was able to provide, through multimedia platforms, extension messages to women, which has contributed to women to adopt CSA technologies;
- **Finding 18:** The project trained and build the capacities of local Government and NGO extension workers, as one of way of building local level capacities to prevent gender based violence;
- **Finding 19:** The project provided opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain are provided by establishing business clusters, through Lead farmers who were trained by the project;
- **Finding 20:** The project strengthened 10 Farmer Organizations, which have been trained in agricultural cooperatives related topics. Through these trainings, the project has established capacities to continue to provide business linkages for women farmers;
- **Finding 21:** UN Women contributed to commemoration of the International Day of Rural Women (IDRWD), a platform which the project used to show-case its activities;
- **Finding 22:** The project was affected by a number of issues, which included, but not limited to COVID-19;
- **Finding 23:** The project addressed gender and human rights of women, men, boys and girls.

Full description of findings

Finding 14: The Project made very good progress toward achieving its goal /objectives in targeted districts.

Overall for 18 were regularly tracked and for the 16 indicators that had data, the project achieved 91% of its targets. Two indicators did not have data on targets.

3.3.1 Outcome 1.0 Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate

The project in Malawi focused on the groundnut value chain and provide inputs and CSA technology that have doubled production of groundnuts. The most important technology that contributed to this achievement were the double row planting, the use of certified seed, the use of aflatoxin management technologies, use of inoculant and others. The following findings describe achievements for specific indicators under this outcome.

3.3.1.1 Output 1.1: Women’s access to labour and time-saving equipment and services increased

Table 3: Performance of output 1.1

Outcome: Outcome 1.0 Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate			
Output 1.1: Women’s access to labour and time-saving equipment and services increased			
Indicator	Target	Actual	Performance ¹
Output Indicator 1: Number of women (processing groundnuts at harvesting) using labour saving technologies	4000 (from 14 FOs)	2919	73%
Output Indicator 1: Number of women , youth and PwDs participating in certified seed multiplication	455 farmers (296 women, 83 men,70 youth and 6 PwDs) from 21 FOs participated in certified seed multiplication against a target of 500 farmers out of which 300 were women	500	91%
Indicator 2: Yield increase of groundnuts	The yield has increased from 800 kg/ha to 1,500 kg/ha within 2 production seasons. Against a target of 1,800 kg per ha among the 10.000 women	1500	83%
Output Indicator 1: Tonnage of certified seed produced	43.2 metric tonnes of certified seed for groundnuts (CG9 and CG11) against a target of 50 metric tonnes	43.2	86%

Finding 15: UN Women engaged partners such as Bountifield International Malawi to produce labour and time saving technologies for use by women. The time saved was used by women to invest in other income generating activities and better management of their households.

The project engaged Bountifield International Malawi (BIM) to fabricate labour and time saving equipment for processing groundnuts and distributed the equipment to FOs for use by women farmers. The project also procured six strippers and nine shellers to be used in threshing and shelling groundnuts, respectively. The strippers and shellers reduced the time women spent in processing groundnuts, which means that the women used the saved time for other productive or reproductive functions.

Through an agreement with Global Seeds, a local seed production and distribution company, the project implemented a seed multiplication program to increase supply, access and use of certified seed for

¹ Actuals achieved divided by target, expressed as a percentage

improved varieties by women farmers within their vicinity. Table 4 shows progress made on indicators under Output 1.1

Table 4: Output 1.2: Women’s access to climate-smart non-labour agricultural inputs improved

Outcome: Outcome 1.0 Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate			
Output 1.2 Women’s access to climate-smart non-labour agricultural inputs improved			
Indicator	Target	Actual	Performance
Indicator 1: Number of women farmers receiving input subsidies	Seven Hundred and Twelve (712) women producers from 2 of the 3 districts accessed farm inputs such as certified seed of drought tolerant and short duration groundnuts varieties and groundnuts inoculant through a commercial line provided by the SRLS.	No targets given	N/A
Indicator 2: Number of women farmers receiving business management and financial literacy skills	Four Hundred and Thirty-three (433) women producers out of 698 smallholder groundnuts farmers were trained in business management and financial literacy and 433 of them were women.	No targets given	N/A

UN Women has succeeded in negotiating with commercial banks to create a conducive environment for improving women’s access to formal financial services and products. As a result, some banks, such as National Bank of Malawi, have waived the need for collateral for loans up to US\$6,700, which opens a door for women, in particular those targeted by the project to access credit. In the context of economic dynamics in Malawi this is a huge breakthrough as this will trigger growth in numbers and size of business portfolios among businesswomen.

***Finding 16:* UN Women developed sustainable systems for ensuring that women have access to improved and certified groundnut seed, which is important for improving productivity.**

UN Women established a Seed Revolving Loan Scheme, which supported women to access certified seed and inoculant, which key inputs for the production of groundnuts. UN Women also managed to train 10641 women in business plan development for the groundnuts value chain. The main focus of the trainings had been on budgeting, gross margin analysis, record keeping, exploring mechanisms for increasing yield of the groundnuts and post-harvest handling processes (UN Women, 2019). The skills gained by women will last long after the project, which enhances project sustainability.

3.3.1.2 Output 1.3: Access to climate resilient agricultural extension services and information for women and men farmers improved

Table 5: Performance of output 1.3

Outcome: Outcome 1.0 Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate			
Output 1.3 Access to climate-resilient agricultural extension services for women and men farmers improved			
Indicator	Target	Actual	Performance

Indicator 1: Number of women accessing CSA extension services.	6,284 women were reached with CSA extension messages through the on-farm demonstrations, field days, radio programmes and Mobile phone SMSs. The target for this output was 6,500 women	6500	97%
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Findings 17: The project was able to provide, through multimedia platforms, extension messages to women, which has contributed to women to adopt CSA technologies.

The project had implemented many on-farm demonstrations (OFD) in all Extension Planning Areas (EPAs), where the project was implemented. OFD enabled smallholder farmers to adopt CSA related agronomic practices including double row planting, use of aflatoxin management technologies, use of certified groundnut seed and use of weather forecast information, which is important for planning agricultural and farm level activities. Reports shows that about two thirds (65%) of adopters were women. Lead farmers who have been trained by the project organized and hosted on-farm demonstration activities. At the time of the evaluation, 260 lead farmers (230 Female and 30 Male) had been trained by the project with technical support from the Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with MaLS and AICC as Implementing Partners. In addition to OFD, MaLS had also used digital platforms and developed leaflets to disseminate relevant agricultural extension and market information to women

3.3.1.3 Output 1.4. Socio-cultural barriers (including gender-based violence) reduced through policy and advocacy (including engaging men at household level) to increase agriculture productivity and women’s equal land rights

Table 6: Performance of Output 1.4

Outcome: Outcome 1.0 Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate			
Output 1.4. Socio-cultural barriers (including gender-based violence) reduced through policy and advocacy (including engaging men at household level) to increase agriculture productivity and women’s equal land rights			
Indicator	Target	Actual	Performance
Indicator 1: Number of agric. extension workers trained in HeForShe Initiative.	55 agric. extension workers were trained against 100 planned	55	55%
Indicator 2: Number of men and boys trained as partners in empowerment of women	530 men and boys trained against the target of 500	530	106%
Indicator 3: Number of women engaged in land ownership rights for women	3650 women engaged against the target of 2000	3650	183%
Indicator 1: Number of male champions deployed as advocates for women land ownership right and leadership roles in FOs	346 male champions against a target of 400 were deployed	346	87%

Indicator 3: Number of traditional leaders engaged on women land ownership rights.	47 traditional leaders engaged against a target of 50.	47	94%
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Finding 18: The project trained and build the capacities of local Government and NGO extension workers, as one of way of building local level capacities to prevent gender based violence.

The project trained 55 agricultural extension workers from the 3 participating districts in the concept and principles of the HeForShe initiative to mobilize men and boys who can stand in solidarity for the empowerment of women. The HeForShe initiative was further cascaded to 128 local traditional leaders who were trained in Lilongwe district in view of the influence traditional leaders have in promoting development activities including empowerment of women.

Finding 19: The project provided opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain are provided by establishing business clusters, through Lead farmers who were trained by the project.

3.3.2 Outcome 2: Opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain are provided

The project had established business clusters, through Lead farmers who were trained by the project. Business clusters or business groups are groups of farmers which helped farmers to acquire basic business skills such as record keeping, gross margin analysis for enterprise selection and commodity prices and development of business plans. At the time of evaluation, reports indicated that business groups had a total membership of 4033 smallholder farmers (3,051 female and 982 male), who directly received support from the lead farmers. The project also conducted value addition and processing trainings for targeted women farmers focusing on identifying technical needs in processing and adding value to their products. The project introduced farmers to Malawi Bureau of Standards (MBS) Standard #19 which focuses on packaging and labelling and #21, which emphasizes hygiene as necessary pre-conditions for certification.

3.3.5.1 Output 2.1: Women’s shift to high value agricultural enterprises (crops,) and inclusion in green agricultural value chains at the national, achieved

Table 7: Performance of Output 2.1

Outcome 2: Opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain are provided			
Output 2.1: Women’s shift to high value agricultural enterprises (crops,) and inclusion in green agricultural value chains at the national, achieved			
Indicator	Target	Actual	Performance
Indicator 1: Number of women participating in financial literacy activities through business clusters	3,050 women producers out of the 4033 smallholder farmers have attained active membership in the 40 business clusters. The target for financial literacy services is 5000 women by the end of the project in December 2020.	3050	61%
Indicator 2: Number of women undertaking value addition	2,714 women benefited from value addition technologies against the target of 2,000 women	2714	136%

Indicator 3: Number of women trained in key elements of agric.	597 members (221 women and 45 men and 321 youth) were trained. The target was 620 members with 400 women, 120 men and 100 youth	597	100%
Indicator 4: Number of cooperatives trained and registered.	10 FOs were trained and 5 of them at completion point for registration against a target of 15 FOs	10	67%

Finding 20: The project strengthened 10 Farmer Organizations, which have been trained in agricultural cooperatives related topics. Through these trainings, the project has established capacities to continue to provide business linkages for women farmers.

The project trained 10 Farmer Organizations, with a total of 597 members (221 women, 45 men and 321 youth). The FOs were trained in agricultural cooperatives related topics, including principles of Cooperatives, membership criteria, financial literacy and accountability ethics as well as by-laws that govern the operations of an Agricultural Cooperative. The training provided to FOs is a pre-requisite for registration of an FO to transition into a full Agricultural Cooperative. The progress made under this output are summarized in the Table 7.

3.3.3 Outcome 3. Using ICT platforms (BfW) for increased access to markets and finance for women

The project planned to deploy a digital platform BuyfromWomen (BfW) ICT with technical support from UN Women Headquarters in New York. After the platform was developed, it was noted that deploying it would be too expensive, considering the limited budget of the project. This idea was then dropped and replaced by locally available platforms, which are reported in other outcomes of the project.

3.3.4 Outcome 4: The Multi-Country Programme is implemented with a focus on ‘research for development’ and documenting lessons learned (UN Women ESARO). Sentence or two on this Outcome and proof. Bring what is relevant in Sections 3.5.3 here

3.3.4.1 Output 4.1 UN Women Country offices, and agricultural research institutions in the respective countries and at regional level engaged to increase research on gender and CSA in the region – Output 4.1

Table 8: Performance of Output 4.1

Outcome 4: The Multi-Country Programme is implemented with a focus on ‘research for development’ and documenting lessons learned (UN Women ESARO)			
Output 4.1: UN Women Country offices, and agricultural research institutions in the respective countries and at regional level engaged to increase research on gender and CSA in the region			
Indicator	Target	Actual	Performance

Number of International Events undertaken	2 IRWD event against the planned 2 events was celebrated in collaboration with other stakeholders under the leadership of the Ministry of Gender.	2	100%
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***Finding 21:* UN Women contributed to commemoration of the International Day of Rural Women (IDRWD), a platform which the project used to show-case its activities.**

In 2020, Malawi joined the World in commemorating the International Day of Rural Women (IDRWD) on 15th October 2020 under the banner *Rural Women and Girls; Building Climate Resilience*. Prior to the main events, 45 women from Seven Civil society organizations (CSOs) and 14 from government departments under the leadership of the Minister of Gender, participated in a series of build-up activities which included media events and round table discussion on policy aspects affecting women in the realm of climate change and resilience building. During the main event, over 800 women and men were taken through pavilions mounted by government departments, CSOs and private sector players who were showcasing services, products, interventions and technologies which contribute to resilience programming and delivery for rural women. Respected international NGOs such as Oxfam Malawi, Action Aid in Malawi, Christian Aid, Plan Malawi, Rural Women Assembly, AICC, MaLS and SeedCo Malawi attended the event and showcased the seed systems products as important input in the agro-based livelihood system for rural women.

3.3.4.2 Output 4.2: South-South cooperation and learning among participating countries of the multi-country proposal and other countries in the region is fostered

Under this output, UN Women organized some virtual cross-country learning events to share experiences and learning across some key elements of the project. Professional experts and members of the academia engaged with the regional audience and key members of the project on relevant and important topics, including but not limited to climate change and weather station management, renewable energy systems, production, maintenance, exploration of male engagement strategies, community animal healthcare, local seed management and climate resilience and digital transformations and the future of farming & entrepreneurship (UN Women, 2021).

***Finding 22:* The project was affected by a number of issues, which included, but not limited to COVID-19**

The first and foremost factor that slowed down implementation was the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to Covid-19, the Government of Malawi introduced preventive measures that restricted travel, face to face meetings, limited the number of people that could met, use of face mask and sanitary activities. More importantly the pandemic has had huge negative impact on market functionality where shrinking of business activities for off-takers demand for agricultural produce have been affected (UN Women, 2020). As a result of these measures and to protect project staff, beneficiaries and communities, most activities that required community mobilisation were put on hold, delaying the overall progress towards the project impact as indicated in the ToC in Figure 1.

Secondly, the project implementation period has been too short and essentially has covered only two growing seasons (2019/2020 and 2020/2021). Almost all stakeholders interviewed reported that two seasons were not enough to implement the four pathways in full. They were also not enough to design and

implement proper monitoring and evaluation activities. However, all stakeholders agreed that the project has been effective, and had been a launch pad for future women and climate smart agriculture projects in Malawi.

Thirdly, the budget for the project was also limited to the extent that the whole project was allocated \$450,000, to cover three districts and to reach to 10,000 women. This was not sufficient to implement the four pathways and also cover an additional value chain. The evaluation team and most stakeholders interviewed, were of the view that a larger budget would have enabled the IPs to add at least one more value chain, do more market linkages and scale up technology adoption, which would have upped the impact of the project. A larger budget would also have enabled a more robust M+E system, which potentially, would also have included an impact evaluation which would have compared between supported women and FOs and those not supported. The gender relations pathway is particularly sensitive to project time and budget, because it deals with structural causes of poverty and inequality and such issues cannot be addressed and impact observed in two growing seasons.

The fourth issue, which relates to the budget, it was also reported that funding delays were experienced by IPs, to the extent that this delayed procurement and distribution of critical inputs to farmers. This affected critical groundnuts agronomical practices, which, as with any crop, must be aligned to the rainfall season. Pathway on agricultural productivity was mostly affected by this challenge.

Although the project was a regional project, concerning four countries, stakeholders in Malawi indicated that UN Women did not organize any cross-country learning activities that involved implementing partners and project stakeholders. As a result, stakeholders have not learnt from the other three implementation countries. On the other hand, UN Women organized learning activities, but these only involved project staff from the four countries.

The evaluation team also observed a targeting problem with the project. It has also been noted that the geographical coverage and long distances in North Mzimba overstretch the workforce as well as transport logistics for all women producers to be visited and supported regularly. Geographical coverage needs to be rationalized in view of the realities on the ground.

The impact of floods which occurred between mid-January and March 2019 affecting more than 10 districts in Malawi coupled with the post Tri-Partite Elections (TPE) seriously affected livelihoods of the poor. Functionality of markets were also affected with the price of maize continuing to increase even during surplus production at national level. As a result of the agricultural produce market failure for livelihood of the rural people was seriously affected with more than 1 million people missing food entitlements by December 2019

Natural and climate related as well as man-made disasters also affected implementation of the project and achievement of its theory of change. For example, the flooding which occurred between January and March 2019 affected more than 10 districts in the country disrupted livelihoods of most poor people and in many ways compelled the affected household to find coping mechanisms. After the 2019 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections, there were massive demonstrations against the results of the elections, with demonstrators demanding the resignation of the then Malawi Electoral Commission Chairperson. The

political situation also delayed the launch of the project due to the ad hoc scheduling of the mass demonstrations in many parts of the country including districts covered by the project.

3.3.4.3 Gender equality and human rights (UN-SWAP)

***Finding 23:* The project addressed gender and human rights of women, men, boys and girls**

In terms of addressing gender equality, the project targeted women, who are amongst the most vulnerable groups of the community. By economically empowering women, through CSA, the project ensured that women are not left behind in the groundnut value, particularly because of their vulnerability to climate change. The project addressed the land rights of women, who are victims of property grabbing, including land grabbing, mainly after the death of their husbands, particularly in the communities where the project was implemented which follow virilocal systems of marriage. While the project targeted women, almost all project intervention directly and indirectly benefitted, men, boys and girls, particularly those belonging to the targeted FOs and those living in the households of women targeted by the project. Further, the project used a household approach, which is promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture in Malawi. The household approach is an inclusive gender mainstreaming method, where all household members are involved in planning their agricultural activities, including allocation and use of benefits. The project beneficiaries included young people and people with disabilities, which means that it was inclusive and considered the needs and rights of the most vulnerable in the society. However, the project did not put in place mechanisms to measure the impacts of the project on such groups.

3.4 Efficiency

Main Findings:

- ***Finding 24 :*** The project allocated its resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) strategically to achieve the project outcomes and for this reason, more beneficiaries have been reached compared to what were planned;
- ***Finding 25:*** UN Women made appropriate decisions on number of value chains to be pursued by the project given the size of the budget and the limited project implementation time;
- ***Finding 26:*** UN Women implemented the project through Implementing Partners who had experience in value chains, which minimized investments costs in training of implementing partners;
- ***Finding 27:*** UN Women invested in community-based training of various cadres of Government extension works, who have reached to more beneficiaries than the targeted 10,000 women. These have also included men, who are members of targeted farmer organisations;
- ***Findings 28:*** UN Women provided agricultural inputs timely to match with the requirements for groundnut production and the agricultural calendar in Malawi;
- ***Finding 29:*** Project utilized existing local capacities of right-bearers and duty-holders to achieve its outcomes;

Finding 30: The project was managed effectively and coordination with partners was strong;

Full description of findings

Finding 24 : The project allocated its resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) strategically to achieve the project outcomes and for this reason, more beneficiaries have been reached compared to what were planned.

The project budget was \$450000 and by the time of the evaluation, almost all the funds had been spent, except for about \$6000 that was committed to support the evaluation. A total of 10641 women of the targeted 10000 had been reached by the project, representing an over-performance of 1.1%. While the evaluation acknowledges that the project targeted women only, the FOs targets also included men, which means that, if men are also counted, because they also benefitted from the interventions, it would be argued that even more beneficiaries have been reached. If the household was the targeted unit and not just women, even more households would have been said to have been reached, because that would mean, counting all household members as beneficiaries. This suggested that the project had allocated and used resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) strategically to achieve the project outcomes. The main factor that was raised by key stakeholders during consultations as well as during the ERG meeting, was that the project was underbudgeted and the implementation time was too short. For example, in Malawi, although the project is recorded as a three year project, the effective implementation period was two growing (agricultural) seasons (2020/21 and 2021/2022).

Finding 25: UN Women made appropriate decisions on number of value chains to be pursued by the project given the size of the budget and the limited project implementation time.

With the limited budget, UN Women made the right decision not to include the rice value chain, which was supposed to be implemented in Karonga District. Inclusion of the district would have increased costs of both implementation and monitoring, thereby reducing the efficiency of the project. It was also for this same efficiency reason that the evaluation argued that inclusion of Mzimba District compromised project efficiency, as it is geographically detached from the other two districts. With the limited budget and short implementation time, it would have made more sense to limit the project to two adjacent districts in the Central Region, develop value chain lessons and use such lessons to raise more resources for scaling the project to other districts and value chains.

Finding 26: UN Women implemented the project through Implementing Partners who had experience in value chains, which minimized investments costs in training of implementing partners.

UN Women implemented the project through local implementing partners, who were experienced in value chain development and the two IPs implemented the projects in areas where they had implemented other projects before, which meant that they leveraged on their previous experience and capacities for the benefit of the CSA project. In addition, the use of experienced IPs meant that UN Women did not have to invest significant amount of resources in training the IPs in value chain development issues. It also meant that the IPs did not struggle with project implementation, which could have caused delays, such that some FOs that the IPs were already working with, were quickly drafted into the project. This was also the case with market linkages, where some UN Women supported FOs were linked to off-takers that the IPs were already working with. For example, Mkanda FO was already working with ADMARC even before AICC introduced the project to the cooperative.

The evaluation however noted that some Government stakeholders interviewed queried the decision by UN Women to use NGOs as implementing partners, instead of using Government structures. The evaluation team, however, had the view that UN Women had made the right efficiency decision, because of the high

fiduciary risk associated with Government implementation modalities. UN Women was also tactical in ensuring and recognizing that despite the fiduciary risk, Government structures are important for project effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, hence the project ensured that the relevant government authorities were engaged at all levels.

Finding 27: UN Women invested in community-based training of various cadres of Government extension works, who have reached to more beneficiaries than the targeted 10,000 women. These have also included men, who are members of targeted farmer organisations.

The project invested in a lot of training activities at community level targeting various cadres of extension workers and traditional leaders. Combined, in the short term, these delivered project the results in the shortest period possible. In addition, beyond the project end date, these cadres will reach to many additional women and members of the community, creating and deepening the impact of the project, at no additional cost to the project. Use of digital platforms to disseminate information was an efficient way of providing extension services to farmers, especially in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic. In addition, the project has used radio programmes to disseminate messages on CSA. Radio programmes reach many listeners, regardless of the project geographical areas where the project is being implemented.

Findings 28: UN Women provided agricultural inputs timely to match with the requirements for groundnut production and the agricultural calendar in Malawi.

UN Women provided support in terms of agricultural inputs, such as certified seed, inoculant, fabricated equipment and other technologies to women participating in the project timely. There were no reports of delayed distribution of inputs to farmers, which could have affected project delivery. In addition and given the importance of high quality and certified seed, UN Women established local seed revolving schemes, where some women were trained as certified seed producers. The seed produced was sold to other farmers, which ensured that seed was locally and timely available to farmers. In addition, the project linked farmers to commercial seed companies, who were readily supplying parent seed to farmers through the Farmer Organisations, that had been trained by the project.

Finding 29: Project utilized existing local capacities of right-bearers and duty-holders to achieve its outcomes

UN Women, through its two IPs, developed local capacities to support implementation of the project and achievement of project objectives. For example, UN Women worked trained 260 lead farmers (230 Female and 30 Male), with technical support from the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with MaLS and AICC as Implementing Partners. In lead farmers have facilitated training of other follower farmers on various CSA technologies, leading to adoption of the project promoted technologies. In addition, the project under the HeforShe Campaign mobilized 346 male champions from the community where the project was implemented to sensitize other community members on gender issues, women's rights and other concepts, which supported implementation of the project as well as ownership by the community.

Finding 30: The project was managed effectively and coordination with partners was strong.

UN Women implemented the project through two local NGOs, AICC and MaLS. The IPs were identified through a competitive process call for proposal (CfP) process, which was published and circulated in different

media platforms in the country to ensure transparency and accountability and in an effort the best qualified IPs. In total sixteen (16) applicants submitted their proposals which were evaluated, and the 2 applicants (AICC and MaLS) were successful from the procurement process and were engaged as Implementing Partners. The IPs identified were already working with farmer organisations and had experience in linking farmers with both input and produce markets. The evaluation noted that the IPs had implemented the project and owned it well as it was internally coherent with their institutional mandates. The evaluation did not find any reports of mismanagement of project financial, human or equipment resources.

3.5 Impact

Main Findings:

- **Finding 31:** Using contribution analysis methods, the evaluation found that the project made strong progress towards achieving impacts. An analysis of the ToC for the project compared with the ToC observed by the evaluation showed that impacts were being and/or likely to be achieved, despite the project was of short duration and limited budget. However, the impacts were not being recorded or reported by the project because of lack of impact level indicators.
- **Finding 32:** An analysis of an end of project theory of change, compared with the theory of change at the design of the project, showed that the project has made significant impacts, which go beyond the original theory of change, implying that there are unplanned impacts as well.
- **Finding 33:** Specifically, the evaluation found four pathways or impacts that were found, which should be used in future to inform design of impact level monitoring systems for similar projects.

Full description of findings

Finding 31: Using contribution analysis methods, the evaluation found that the project made strong progress towards achieving impacts. An analysis of the ToC for the project compared with the ToC observed by the evaluation showed that impacts were being and/or likely to be achieved, despite the project was of short duration and limited budget. However, the impacts were not being recorded or reported by the project because of lack of impact level indicators

The evaluation, tracks the theory of change below, using contribution analysis methods, and finds that the project indeed had achieved impact level changes at household level.

3.5.1 Project theory of change

The task of the evaluation was to assess whether the theory of change “steps” (in Finding 6) have been achieved as a result of implementation of the project. The following section presents the main findings. In this section, the evaluation tracks each stage, up to impact level.

3.5.2 Realized theory of change

3.5.2.1 Step 1: Women have access to climate-smart non-labour agricultural inputs and labour- and time-saving equipment and services and Step 2 they are supported by climate-resilient agricultural extension services, providing them with relevant CSA information;

From the effectiveness section of this report, the evaluation confirms that women targeted by the project have indeed been supported with a range of climate-smart non-labour agricultural and labour- and time-

saving technologies. Key technologies that have been provided to women, included but not limited to: certified seed of drought tolerant and high yielding varieties of groundnuts, double row planting, aflatoxin management technologies, time and labour saving tools and value addition equipment, in addition to technologies, women have been supported with CSA extension services on adoption and up-scaling of time and labour saving technologies, improved skills, knowledge and practices in seed systems and business management, financial literacy, contract farming with market off-takers, market linkages and weather information. The evaluation found that UN Women, through the two IPs, managed to reach to 10,401 who have now adopted the minimum package of at least 3 key CSA interventions and can be described to have adopted CSA.

3.5.2.2 Step 3: the relaxation of the socio-cultural barriers to equal land rights and land access is assured;

UN Women had successfully integrated land rights advocacy in the CSA project. The project had identified and trained 346 male champions to advocate for land rights for women using the HeForShe principles. The male champions have in turn worked with traditional leaders and community members to address negative social norms and cultural values, which impinge on women's land ownership rights. With more awareness on land policy and land laws, traditional leaders were found to be appreciating the significance of recognizing women as rightful owners of land and other productive assets. So far, 55 agricultural extension workers and 128 local traditional leaders from the 3 participating districts have been trained in the concept and principles of the HeForShe initiative to mobilize men and boys to promote empowerment of women.

3.5.2.3 Step 4: they participate fully in high value agricultural enterprises with increased access to markets and Step 5: they can use digital platforms that will connect women farmers to large scale buyers of agricultural products

The project has implemented various market linkages activities to ensure that women access high value and predictable markets for their groundnuts and other crops, such as maize. From these activities, the project had ably negotiated contracts with FOs. For example, in the 2021/22 season, three companies (Global Seed, Pyxus Agriculture and Milele Agro-processor) had contracted 251 farmers (174 women and 77 men) from 5 Farmers' Organizations in Mzimba and Mchinji. In addition to providing access to markets, contract farming ensures sustainability of the project. The partnership with Global Seed as a private seed systems player and Pyxus Agriculture as an off-taker for groundnuts grain, is a sustainability strategy to ensure stable availability of certified seed as well as market for the grain (UN Women, 2022).

3.5.2.4 Step 6: national agricultural research institutions in the respective countries and at a regional level are engaged to increase research on women and CSA in the region

The final evaluation did not find any substantive research activity in the project, except for the mapping of FOs that was done in 4 districts and supported both the CSA project and the Green Farm Project, funded by the Korean Government. There were various virtual learning events between the four implementation partners, but local implementing partners and stakeholders that were interviewed reported that they were not involved in cross-county learning activity, which in their view should not have been the case.

The evaluation also found that the project did not conduct a baseline neither a midterm evaluation, with UN Women explaining that the omission was basically because to limited time and resources. The

problem that the lack of baseline has caused is that the final evaluation does not have specific beneficiary data on which to benchmark the impacts that were observed.

Secondly, the project assumed that that women who belong to FOs are homogenous in terms of social and economic status, which is not the case. There was need for more analysis of project beneficiaries, to identify different strata of women within the project beneficiaries, to ensure that targeting was specific to their social economic status. This is where research institutions and impact evaluation consultants could have been engaged.

Finding 33: An analysis of an end of project theory of change, compared with the theory of change at the design of the project, shows that the project has made significant impacts, which go beyond the original theory of change, implying that there are unplanned impacts as well.

3.5.3 Progress towards outcomes

3.5.3.1 Outcome 1: Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate

The evaluation found that equipment such as strippers and shellers procured by the project which women were using in threshing and shelling groundnuts, respectively, have reduced time for threshing and shelling by over 40% with an efficiency rate of 98% in terms of unbroken nuts. The increased efficiency of rate of 98% means that postharvest losses are reduced and hence women farmers in the project sold more groundnuts or consume more which improves food, income and nutritional security at household level. An example of improved productivity as a result of investments by the project was provided by a FGD for Katonde Famers Cooperative. The table 9 shows that women have doubled their groundnut productivity, primarily because of the double row planting, use of certified seed, use of inoculants and improved postharvest management technologies.

FGD Member (all women)	Groundnuts production (kgs) on the same piece of land		Increase
	Before the project	After the project	
#1	250	750	200%
#2	200	500	150%
#3	500	1000	100%
#4	400	700	75%
#5	550	900	64%
Average	380	770	103%

Table 9: Production levels of groundnuts before and after the project

An example of improved productivity as a result of investments by the project was provided by a FGD for Katonde Famers Cooperative. The table 9 shows that women have doubled their groundnut productivity, primarily because of the double row planting, use of certified seed, use of inoculants and improved postharvest management technologies.

3.5.3.2 Outcome 2: Opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain are provided

UN Women, through the two IPs managed to increased productivity of groundnuts by women, which has also increased the amount of income that women earn from groundnuts, compared to the period before the project (see Table 8). The project has connected women through their farmer organisations to high value groundnuts and maize markets, which has means that women are selling their produce at higher prices than selling to vendors in the community, something that is common amongst smallholder farmers in rural areas in Malawi. One woman in Mchinji testified that, '*because of the linkages that have been made by the FO and AICC, I have made more profits from my groundnuts that I have now even opened a grocery shop, which is an addition business for my household*'. Many similar examples were provided in all sites that the evaluation team visited.

3.5.3.3 Outcome 3: Using ICT platforms (BfW) for increased access to markets and finance for women

The project reached women through various extension methods, including those that are based on ICT, such as SMS. These technologies had been critical for the project during the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected project delivery especially during the second wave between January and March 2021. Therefore, implementation rate during this time stalled significantly and critical services like agricultural extension depended largely on radio programming and digital platforms like Short messages services (SMSs). By 2020, a total of 6,240 women were reached with CSA extension messages through the on-farm demonstrations and 1622 members of FOs signed up to receive messages through SMS on extension and commodity prices in different markets.

3.5.3.4 Outcome 4: The Multi-Country Project is coordinated and implemented with a focus on ‘research for development’ and documenting lessons learned

The final evaluation did not find any substantive research activity in the project, except for the mapping of FOs that was done in 4 districts and supported both the CSA project and the Green Farm Project, funded by the Korean Government. There were various virtual learning events between the four implementation partners, but local implementing partners and stakeholders that were interviewed reported that they were not involved in cross-county learning activity, which in their view should not have been the case. The evaluation also found that the project did not conduct a baseline neither did a midterm independent evaluation, with UN Women explaining that the omission was basically because of limited time and limited resources. The problem that the lack of baseline has caused is that the end line does not have specific beneficiary data on which to bench mark some qualitative findings on impact. Secondly, the project assumed that women farmers who belong to FOs are homogenous in terms of social and economic status, which is not the case. There was need for a more analysis of project beneficiaries, to identify different strata of women within the project beneficiaries, to ensure that targeting was specific to their social economic status. This is where research institutions and impact evaluation consultants could have been engaged.

3.5.4 Progress towards impacts (Take this under impact above)

The main goal of the project was to strengthen women’s agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture products in Malawi. The evaluation team noted that the project did not have impact indicators, hence we used our discretion to describe the impacts that we saw, from where indicators of impact can be drawn. This notwithstanding, the lesson learnt is that future projects, should include and measure impact level indicators, even if they may not be solely the responsibility of the project to achieve them.

3.5.5 Observed theory of change

The evaluation of the Malawi project identified four critical pathways to impact that the project had delivered, that were contributing to the impacts of the project. Figure 1 summarizes the observed theory of change at the end of the project. The evidence of this theory of change is presented in the analysis of the four pathways that follow and also in the effectiveness section of this report. In general, comparison between the actualized ToC and the planned one during design (Finding 6) , showed that more outcomes and impacts have been realized than what was planned and actually measured and reported on, implying

that the design level ToC was less ambitious, in terms of the logic of results. It also showed that had the project invested more in outcome and impact level monitoring , there would have been stronger evidence of achievement of impacts, beyond routine output and activity level monitoring.

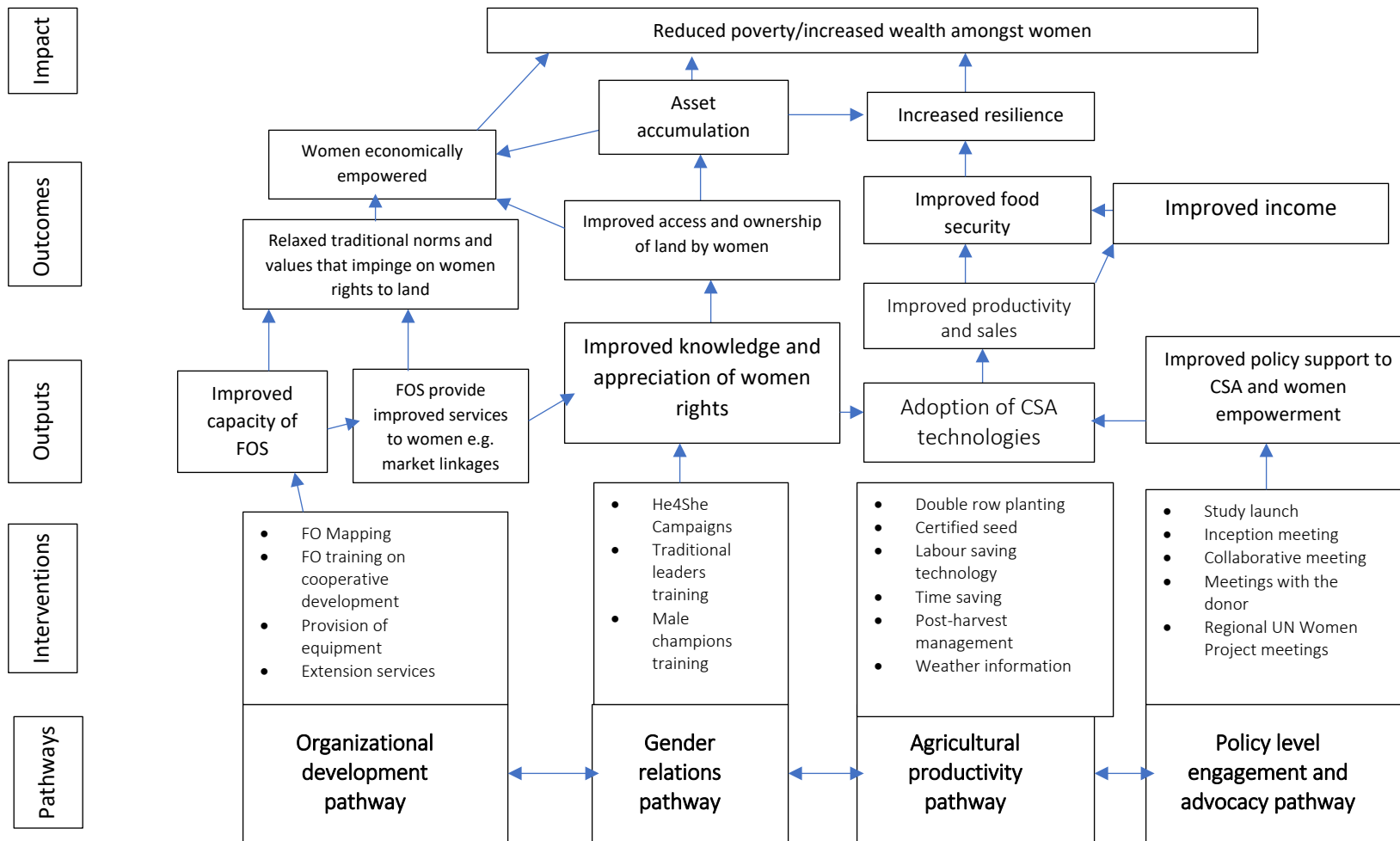


Figure 2: The project theory of change and pathways at final evaluation

Finding 34: Specifically, the evaluation found four pathways or impacts that were found, which should be used in future to inform design of impact level monitoring systems for similar projects.

3.5.5.1 Organizational development pathway

The first pathway was the development of farmer organizations, which included investments in training of extension workers, beneficiaries and FO leadership in various aspects of capacity building. It also involved provision of inputs, equipment and various technologies to FOs and their beneficiaries. The project improved the capacity of the farmer organizations and enabled them to be proactive in identifying markets for their members, to provide better services to the membership and build strong partnerships with the private sector, with support from UN Women, through the two IPs.

Improved access to high value markets has in return resulted into better income for the FOs, for the members and their households, which, at household level is expected to increase wealth, improve gender relations and eventually reduce poverty and vulnerability. Almost all women interviewed reported that part of the income earned was used to pay educational expenses for children, production or purchasing of high value assets for the household such as livestock, iron sheets, agricultural inputs etc. Together, these outcomes contribute to improved food and income security resulting in reduced vulnerability of women, increased resilience and self-reliance which in the long term reduces poverty.

3.5.5.2 Agricultural productivity, income and assets pathway

The second pathway observed was the agricultural productivity pathway, which involved the adoption of the CSA technologies that the project promoted. As has been explained in the effectiveness section of this report, the project promoted a range of technologies, which focused on saving time and labour for women, while enhancing productivity of groundnuts. For example, the project promoted the use of improved and certified groundnuts seed (CG7 and CG9 varieties) and double row planting which resulted to many economic benefits to women farmers.

According to women interviewed, double row resulted into doubling production of groundnuts per hectare (increased productivity). The implication is that while production increased, women are spending half the time they would have needed to double their production. It also meant that women used their land more efficiently, since they produced more groundnuts on the same piece of land compared to before the project. Combined with better prices, since se women were linked to high value markets, the project led to improved household and individual income for women. FGDs and KIIs reported that improved income for women had multiple results, in that women were able to meet their individual and household expenses. It was further reported that their spouses are able to open up spaces for women to make decisions (Box 3).

- **Case study 1:** With income from groundnuts, I bought 4 goats in 2019/2020 and another 4 goats in 2020/2021 and now I have just sold some goats at MK102,000.00. From this income, I have paid school fees for my child at college (reported by a woman);
- **Case study 2:** From the income from groundnuts, I have bought a piece of land with my husband and we registered at village head. I now know with this registration that I own the land and it cannot be taken away from me. Thanks to the project. (reported by a woman);
- **Case study 3:** I realized MWK790,000 from my groundnut sales alone which and I have now embarked construction of my own warehouse where I plan to keep my own produce and offer a storage service to my community at a fee (reported by a woman);
- **Case study 4:** Due to the project, I am now able to start new businesses which provide more income for my household. I am even able to develop a business plan (reported by a woman).

Box 3: Evidence of changing gender relations as explained by project beneficiaries

With regard to environmental management, double row planting also resulted in improved soil cover, which reduces weeds growth and increases water retention capacity of the soil, which means that the project increased the resilience of women’s farming system to climate change, which was not the case before the project, where the dominant system for planting groundnut seed was single line planting.

Introduction of processing equipment meant that women spent less on processing their produce, improved storage of their produce as well enabling women to access better markets, which increased income, as it has already been argued. According to FDGs, the labour and the time women save was used on other economic generating activities, which improves household income thereby contributing to improved household resistance to the shocks.

3.5.5.3 Gender relations pathway

Gender relations define the roles, responsibilities and obligations and governs the division of resources between men and women. In Malawi, given the agricultural nature of the economy, land is an important household asset, which, unfortunately, women have less control over, even though they provide over 70% of the agriculture labour (Sibale, 2021). Building on this context, the third pathway, the gender relations pathway, was reported by government extension workers interviewed to have had a ground breaking impact in the project implementation sites. This is the HeForShe Campaigns implemented by the project to address unequal gender relations between men and women in Lilongwe and Mchinji districts, which, although the community is matrilineal, there are many incidences where patrilocal or virilocal marriages occur. In such cases when a husband dies, the woman is stripped of all her assets, including land and is asked to leave the village to go back to her maternal home. The HeForShe Campaign used elements of Naila Kabeer’s social relations framework to implement campaigns against these gender injustices to tackle land ownership and rights by women by working with gender institutions, such as male champions, local and community leaders and government extension workers. Both men and women interviewed through FDGs reported that the efforts are bearing fruits, in that men, women themselves, local leaders such as chiefs are now realizing the importance of ensuring that women have ownership rights over land and that they have to proactive take part in decision making. Some qualitative statements in the following quotes (Box 4) provide evidence of the impacts and the gender relations pathway:

- **Case study 5:** I am now able to access money because I earn my own money from groundnuts with support from the project. This is unlike the money from tobacco, where my husband goes alone to bank/auction to collect money and uses the money himself (reported by a woman);
- **Case study 6:** Because of the various training that have been done by the project, I am now able to contribute the decisions within my household, such as what kind of crop to grow on a farm. Previously it was only my husband who was making all the key decision (reported by a woman);
- **Case study 6:** From the income from groundnuts, I have bought a piece of land with my husband and we registered at village head. I now know with this registration that I own the land and it cannot be taken away from me. Thanks to the project. (reported by a woman);
- **Case study 7:** We agreed with my husband that I should grow groundnuts and my husband should grow soybean, a thing which was not happening before the project. Unfortunately, there was low yield on soybean as compared to groundnuts and we sold groundnuts and paid school fees for our children;
- **Case study 8:** A man reported that, in a household a husband should not be the only one controlling money . In my household I used to do it like that but now, I don't. It is me and wife making joint decisions, this increases trust and love between the two (reported by a man).

Box 4: Case study evidence of changing gender relations as explained by project beneficiaries

However, the main challenge reported was that the project was too short to address core cultural issues that undermine gender equality. However, anecdotal evidence from key informant and FGD (Box 4) show that some men are now engaging with their relations and advising them not to grab land from their spouses in case of death. A typical case was reported in Nathenje where a woman said,

We decided that they would not settle in the man's village, but at a neutral place, where we bought land, using income from our groundnuts sales. We locally registered the land with the village chief as dual ownership. This means that even if my husband dies, none of his relations can claim or grab the land from me.

Studies show that men are often the culprits of property grabbing in Malawi and involvement of male champions to disseminate gender messages in the community, where men dominate in decision making, was critical for the project in relation to changing gender relations in favor of both men and women.

3.5.5.4 Policy level engagement and advocacy pathway

The fourth and last pathway identified by the evaluation was the policy level engagement and advocacy pathway. This pathway was not planned; therefore, it is an unintended but positive pathway. The evaluation found that the project implemented a number of policy advocacy activities that included the launch of study report on the Cost and Factors of Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity, the inception workshop and the UN Women engagement meetings with the Chief Executive of and Management of Standard Bank. These activities were attended by high level authorities, who are likely to have been inspired by the project and likely to support women empowerment activities in future.

For example, the Secretary to Treasury presided over the launch of the study on cost and factors of gender gap, with dignitaries like UN Resident Coordinator (UN RC), UN Women Representative, the Academia and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) attending. For the project launch, UN Women Malawi and Standard Bank of Malawi collaborated with Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAI&WD), Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare (MoGCD&SW) and

Ministry of Industry Trade and Tourism (MoIT&T). The Chief Director in the MoAI&WD presided over the launch as the Guest of Honor. The high level authorities that attended such project activities meant that the project enhanced the coordination capacity and public profile of UN women and Standard Bank. It also means the partnership between UN Women and Standard Bank provided an opportunity and lessons for other private sector companies to support gender and women empowerment activities implemented by UN Women and other related agencies.

3.6 Sustainability

Main Findings:

- **Finding 35:** There was evidence of institutional sustainability in that the project worked well and built capacity of existing farmer organizations, dominated by women, and strengthened them with knowledge, skills and organizational development activities including linkages with markets, which will continue to catalyze women economic empowering beyond the project.
- **Finding 36:** With regard to interventional sustainability, the majority of project activities, especially at community level, will continue because they have supported practical as well as strategic needs of women. It was noted that benefits of the project are economic in nature and tend to accrue at household and individual level quite quickly.
- **Finding 37:** UN Women implemented strong measures to enhance projects' financial sustainability, although project activities and financial benefits may reduce because of reduced monitoring and supportive supervision as a result of the ending of Standard Bank funding.

Full description of findings

Finding 35: There was evidence of institutional sustainability in that the project worked well and built capacity of existing farmer organizations, dominated by women, and strengthened them with knowledge, skills and organizational development activities including linkages with markets, which will continue to catalyze women economic empowering beyond the project.

The evaluators found that the project worked with existing farmer organizations, dominated by women, and strengthened them with capacity building and organizational development activities including linkages with markets. Evidence gathered from key informants, members of FOs and community leaders reported that these FOs will continue to operate because they have the membership and through the project, they have been provided with groundnuts production skills and most importantly, they have been linked to the markets, to the extent that now they “produce for the market”, as opposed to the period before the project.

A key gap of the project was that it only managed to develop to cooperative level, only 8 (18%) out of 45 FOs. The main challenge that affected this process was the limited project implementation period and the limited budget, since building farmer organisations or associations to cooperatives takes time.

The evaluation found strong evidence of collaboration between IPs and Government extension workers at community level, while there was also strong evidence of UN Women collaboration, especially during

implementation (not design) with central line ministries. These “collaborations” strengthened the role of UN Women in enhancing gender and women empowerment mainstreaming in policy implementation. Government officials interviewed at national, district and community level were clear that CSA and gender issues are core priorities of the Government and that they would continue to push for mainstreaming of the two in all policies and programmes. The main threat to mainstreaming of gender and CSA in government, especially at district and community level, is the limited funding by government departments. Building capacities of FOs, the government extension system and individual women was a key intervention of the project. The people trained have formed a strong and skills base, which is vital for continuation of benefits to women. For example, training of lead farmers combined with establishments of on-farm demonstrations, ensured that women have ongoing access to extension services. Provision of extension messages through mobile phone platforms to women by UN Women reinforces this approach, in addition to closing the digital gender gap between women and men.

***Finding 36:* With regard to interventional sustainability, the majority of project activities, especially at community level, will continue because they support practical as well as strategic needs of women. It was noted that benefits of the project are economic in nature and tend to accrue at household and individual level quite quickly.**

The “low hanging fruits” of the project are improved productivity, income and food and address practical and immediate needs (food security) as well as long-term strategic gender needs of women, such as decision making, participation in the market economy and decision making. The combo of practical and long-term needs, addressed concurrently, incentivizes women to continue practicing the CSA technology.

As has been alluded to, value chain development in agriculture needs high quality seed, backed by a functional seed system, that enables farmers to access seed that is of high quality and that the quality can be verified and proved through germination, growth and yield. UN Women established a seed system that has the stated characteristics. The system was administered on a loan/pass-on system, which meant that more farmers would continue to benefit from the scheme beyond the project. Community based seed multipliers have been trained and ensuring that seed is accessible to women (and men) farmers in the community. The seed operates on a private sector basis, meaning that seed multipliers produce seed and sale, thereby also earning additional income and contributing to both project effectiveness, impact and sustainability. A quote from one beneficiary captured in one annual report by UN Women, showed how the project was keen on sustainability, through the seed system:

As the project draws closer to the end, more efforts are focusing on sustainability elements. From a programmatic perspective, the seed system is one of the priority aspects for sustainability in as far as availability and access to certified seed for improved varieties are concerned. During the last six months 455 farmers (296 women, 83 men, 70 youths and 6 persons with disabilities) received 6,100 kgs of basic seed on soft loan as seed for seed multiplication. By June, 43,200 kgs of certified seed was produced which increases the availability of certified seed to women producers within their vicinity. Additionally, the seed multipliers will earn an additional income from the certified seed sales which goes at not less than US\$1.2 per kg (UN Women, 2021).

The CSA project has been promoting labour and time saving technologies amongst women, who, by nature of the gender roles of fetching firewood, food, water and general household welfare, are constrained by

limited labour and time. Technologies promoted by the project have freed women from time and labour poverty and FGDs with beneficiaries, confirmed that women are happy with the technology and suggested that they would not abandon the technology, because of the benefits the technologies have on women. In addition, some technology, such as double row planting for groundnuts, has increased productivity of groundnuts, which also means that women are harvesting and selling more groundnuts from the same land, which incentivizes adoption of the technology, beyond beneficiary groups.

Finding 37: UN Women implemented strong measures to enhance projects' financial sustainability, although project activities and financial benefits may reduce because of reduced monitoring and supportive supervision as a result of the ending of Standard Bank funding.

The project put in place measures that enhanced, albeit at reduced level, financial sustainability of the project. For example, the evaluation found that UN Women, through the two Implementing Partners, had succeeded in linking FOs supported by the project to produce market by enabling women to aggregate their groundnuts and sale at higher prices to the market. Further, it was found that all the farmer organizations charge a commission of between 5% and 10% of sales. The funds raised were used for FOs operations, which meant that the farmer organisations supported will have some resources to continue to support women, after the project ends. Some FOs used the commission earned to buy land, to be developed for construction of warehouses to support produce aggregation and storage. Another evidence of sustainability is that all FO members contribute a membership fee every year. UN Women, through the CSA project has strengthened women's ability to pay membership by increasing productivity of groundnuts.

The evaluation found that UN Women was tactical in providing inputs to FOs. For example, the project provided groundnuts processing equipment on cost recovery basis, which improved not only sustainability but also efficiency, since the FOs paid for the machines and, therefore, they will be operating and maintaining the machines more seriously, as opposed to being given to them free of charge. The project also allowed non-cooperative members from within the community to hire the machines to generate some revenues for the FOs. To ensure that the benefits spread more to women, who are the target group for the project, UN Women allowed women cooperative members to have a preferential hiring fee (50%) as compared to their male counterparts.

The project has carried out a mapping and negotiation exercise for buyers and input suppliers in the groundnuts value chain in Malawi in 2020, with the aim of identifying and mobilizing potential groundnuts buyers and input sellers. From the mapping exercise, MaLS has signed a market agreement with Afrinut Company, under which the farmers will sell their groundnuts at a negotiated price. Afrinut is one of the active off-taker of groundnuts for peanut butter production supplied to under-five clinic as a supplement for malnourished children. The market agreements enabled women to have reliable markets for their groundnuts, which will improve earnings at FOs, household and community level, contributing to project financial sustainability

2.0 CONCLUSIONS

This final evaluation sought to answer questions under the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The conclusions presented below under each of the criteria are based on the analysis of the project documentation and the data from key informant interviews and focus group discussions, as well as consultant observations and interfaces with project beneficiaries during field visits.

2.1 Relevance

Conclusion 1: The CSA project is relevant and supports national and international and development goals, especially those that aim to promote gender equality and women empowerment, climate resilience and agricultural productivity, particularly in low income countries like Malawi.

Conclusion 2: The programme supported implementation of the Malawi 2063, the UN Women Strategic Plan and more importantly, the globally agreed Sustainable Development Goals. Implementation of the project in Malawi is, therefore, supporting mainstreaming of SDG is the development discourse in Malawi.

Conclusion 3: The project was consistent and addressed both practical and strategic needs of women in Malawi, whose participation in productive agriculture is affected by inadequate access to technology, finance, inputs, land, markets and skills. Yet, women provide the bulk of agricultural labour.

2.2 Coherence

Conclusion 4: The project was internally and externally coherent with other project implemented by UN Women and those of her partners in the country. UN Women engaged its strategic partners' right through the project implementation phase to ensure that the programme theory of change, which fed into implementation, was consistent with the needs of its partners, including Government and non-governmental organisations.

Conclusion 5: The project was internally coherent with two similar projects implemented by UN Women. One project, which promoted greenhouse farming by women, was implemented in two of the three CSA project, which meant that some project implementation and monitoring costs as well as implementation methods were shared between the two projects, strengthening coherence, harmonization and efficiency.

2.3 Effectiveness

Conclusion 6: The project was implemented effectively as it had met most of its set targets, although in some areas, targets had not been met because of the impact of COVID-19. Implementing the project through two experienced local IPs enabled UN Women to access and reach out to women. The project achieved its objectives. It doubled groundnuts productivity amongst beneficiaries, which improved their earnings at individual and household level.

Conclusion 7: Even though the project had been implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic era, it still managed to build the capacity of FOs to provide better extension support to women farmers, who were in turn adopting labour and time saving technologies, and also linked them to high value markets. Eventually, the project improved income and food security, which reduce household poverty.

Conclusion 8: Contrary to common beliefs that the private sector is not keen in investing in gender related activities, the CSA project showed the private sector is keen to make tangible contributions to the

empowerment of women agenda, as key players of the national economy. The project provided an opportunity for Standard Bank and UN Women to invest more into their partnerships, whose ultimate beneficiaries are women and girls of Malawi. This will in turn contribute to Malawi 2063.

2.4 Efficiency

Conclusion 9: The project was implemented efficiently as it achieved its objectives within the agreed project implementation, although a no-cost extension of 3 months was provided to finalize the final evaluation. The achievements were registered amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and consequential government policies to manage the pandemic, which restricted movement of people, required people to social distance and other related COVID-19 prevention measures.

Conclusion 10: It has also been noted that the geographical coverage and long distances to North Mzimba overstretched the workforce as well as increased monitoring and supervisory costs and logistics for UN Women, which compromised programme delivery quality.

2.5 Impact

Conclusion 11: The evaluation of the Malawi project identified four critical pathways (Figure 1) to the impact that the project delivered, that contributed to the outcomes and impacts of the project. Figure 1 summarizes the theory of change which the project has actualized. In general, comparison between the actualized ToC and the planned one (Finding 6), showed that more outcomes and impacts have been realized than what was planned and actually measured and reported on by the Project. This implies that the design level ToC was less ambitious, in terms of logic of results. It also shows that, had the project invested more in outcome and impact level measurements of results, there would have been stronger evidence of achievement of project impact.

2.6 Sustainability

Conclusion 12: UN Women was conscious about the short period of implementation and the limited budget of the project, so appropriate focus was put on sustainability measures, such as working quite closely with partners (at national, district and community level), investing in grass root capacity building to ensure that there are community cadres that could carry on the project beyond the funding phase. Through its IP approach, UN Women built local implementation capacity, building on the experience of the two IPs, to the extent that the two IPs have right technical capacity to support the UN Women supported FOs beyond the project end date. This argument was confirmed by the IPs, who reported that most of the FOs that were supported under CSA project, were being linked to other services within the IPs, including ongoing linkages with markets, off-takers and financing institutions.

Conclusion 13: The project promoted simple but highly relevant (especially to women) technologies, that did not require complicated operations and maintenance, hence they may not demand funding to finance Operations and Maintenance expenses after the project. In fact some of the key technologies promoted by project, such double line planting of groundnuts seed, did not need financial resources.

3.0 LESSONS LEARNT

Lesson 1: Programmatically, one value chain for resilience building was not enough, especially in the context of climate change where one value chain can be vulnerable to climate change impacts such as floods. It has been learnt that there is need to expand the value chains in the project which in essence mitigates production failures due to climate change extreme weather events and market functionality risks. However, more value chains can only be incorporated in the project if the budget is adequate and the project implementation time is long enough.

Lesson 2: The project showed that the private sector, especially banks, can and should play a significant role in promoting women empowerment in poor countries such as Malawi. The project provided an opportunity for UN Women, other UN Agencies and banks to negotiate partnerships that could facilitate inclusion of women in the social and economic development process of the country. The project has shown that advance of gender equality and women empowerment is a development issue and should not just be left to Government, development partners and the UN only. Spaces exist for the private sector to play a transformative role.

Lesson 3: Early Identification and continuous engagement of strategic partners is critical for effective implementation of a project as it contributes to sustainability of the project, once the project ends and the donor stops financing the project. Internally, co-locating projects in a particular geographical area has shown multiple efficiency benefits, through cost sharing arrangements. It also has effectiveness benefits, as projects learn from each other, while at the same time allowing more opportunities for cross-learning visits for women.

Lesson 4: It is clearly emerging from the project that projects that have gender transformative objectives, such as the CSA project, need more time and larger budgets to allow for a more robust impact oriented implementation, robust monitoring and evaluation. The CSA timeframe of two growing season and the budget were also limited to address deep cultural and social norms that cause gender inequality. However, it is also clear that the project has laid the foundation for a more robust future intervention.

Lesson 5: In promoting CSA crop-based projects, a functioning and accessible seed system is critical for project success because appropriate and high quality seed is a critical input. This suggests that that certified seed production should be incorporated in the programming, to enhance seed availability, while seed production on its own provides another sustainable stream of income for women.

Lesson 6: The impacts of COVID-19 was a critical issue during project implementation. The pandemic significantly impacted negatively on market functionality, shrinking off business activities, such as travel and tourism and others. Given the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project showed that investing in digital platforms is strategic for provision of technical support and extension services as well as delivery of project interventions, because digital platforms are cost effective and do not pose a risk to COVID-19 infection to project staff, beneficiaries and the community in general.

Lesson 7: Given the geographical distances between target districts, a key lesson is that during project design, efficiency issues need to be incorporated in the design. Where possible, project districts should be close to each other and co-location should be promoted, without undue duplication of efforts and maximizing synergy.

Lesson 8: The CSA, although it has been implemented over a short period of time, showed that there is movement towards contributing to long-term development goals, such as welfare improvement, resilience building and poverty reduction (wealth creation). A key lesson is that during the design of projects, indicators for these impact level goals should also be included in the results matrix and also measured continually. The CSA monitoring and evaluation system missed this opportunity.

Lesson 9: It is evident that development projects will continue to be constrained by funding levels and implementation time. In the cases where funding is low and implementation period is short, it is imperative that the project executing agency invests in partnerships, especially Government partners, who could carry on the activities of the project. This lesson may also apply where funding is not necessarily a challenge, but there is need to focus on sustainability.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

For clarity and simplicity of implementation, the evaluation recommendations are presented in table format. They are based on and referenced to key conclusions and lessons learnt sections of this report.

Table 10: Evaluation recommendations

Evaluation criteria	Reference	Recommendation	Target Institution	Priority
4.1 Relevance	Conclusions 1, 2 and 3 and Lesson Learnt 1	<p>4.1.1 UN Women should liaise and request Standard Bank for continued funding of the project, given the success and potential for more impacts of the project.</p> <p>4.1.2 Building on the above, the evaluation recommends that the next funding should be increased and the implementation period be longer than just two growing seasons</p>	Standard Bank	Very High
	Conclusions 1, 2 and 3 and Lesson Learnt 1	<p>4.1.3 Funding allowing, future projects should at least include two value chains, so that they can support each in cases of crops failure due to climatic and non-climatic problems.</p> <p>4.1.4 Future projects should also ensure that during design period, stakeholders are properly consulted and engaged right from the beginning, not just after the design is already done.</p>	UN Women	High
	Conclusion 8 and Lesson 2	4.1.5 Future projects should include a stronger	UN Women	Medium

			advocacy and lobbying component, which should also include mobilizing private sector companies to support gender equality, women empowerment and human rights of women and girls.		
4.2 Coherence	Conclusion 11 and Lesson 8	4.2.1	During design of future projects, co-location of projects (both new and existing) should be considered	UN Women	High
	Conclusion 12 and Lesson 9	4.2.2	Continue investing in developing partnerships with government ministries, departments and agencies to maximize synergies and sustainability.	UN Women	High
4.3 Effectiveness	Conclusion 6 and 7, Lesson 5 and 6	4.3.1	Future similar projects should always incorporate and promote activities to ensure functioning and accessible seed systems.	UN Women	High
		4.3.2	Invest in digital platforms as a way of adapting to COVID-19 pandemic.		
		4.3.3	Continue implementing the project through the two IPs, if addition funding is mobilized, to ensure continuity and deepening impacts that have started showing amongst beneficiaries.		

4.4 Efficiency	Conclusion 10 and Lesson 7	4.4.1 Given the geographical distances between target districts, it is important that future projects should be implemented in districts that are adjacent to each other, depending on, of course the value chains proposed. Co-location with other projects should also be considered as recommended above.	UN Women	Medium
4.5 Impact	Lesson 8	4.5.1 Future project designs and monitoring and evaluation systems should also include impact level results and their indicators in the results matrices. Periodical monitoring should also include collection of data on high level indicators for targeted beneficiaries. 4.5.2 Related to the above, projects should conduct baseline studies, regardless of the size of their budgets and length of implementation period.	UN Women	High
4.6 Sustainability	Conclusion 12 and 13, Lesson 9	4.6.1 Implementing partners should proactively continue to support all groups that were supported by the project	Implementing Partners	Very High
		4.6.2 District Councils, particularly the sectors	District Councils	Very High

		that were involved in the project, should continue to provide extension services to the groups that were supported by the project.		
		4.6.3 Traditional Leaders as well as extension workers at community level, including Lead Farmers and Male Champions, should also continue to provide support to the FOs and the community on their respective mandate. These should organize their own community-based coordination meetings that do not need funds to arrange and continue to disseminate information to project beneficiaries.	Traditional Leaders and Extension Workers	Very High

Annex 1: List of documents reviewed

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Annex 2: List of people interviewed

No.	NAME	SEX	ORGANIZATION	POSITION
1.	Yolanda Bulirani	F	Standard Bank	Project Focal Point
2.	Dr Therese Gondwe	F	UN Women	Team Lead, Economic Empowerment
3.	Francis Matita	M	UN Women	Monitoring and Evaluation Manager
4.	Wilie Kalumula	M	UN Women	Project Manager, CSA
5.	Gertrude Kambauwa	F	Land Resources Department	Director
6.	Amos Ntonya	M	Meteorology Department	Deputy Director
7.	Anderson Chimkomola	M	Ministry of Agriculture-Extension Department	Deputy Director of Agricultural Extension Services
8.	Driana Lwanda	F	African Institute for Corporate Citizenship	Acting Chief Executive Officer
9.	Howard Nkhoma	M	Market Links	Chief Executive Officer
10.	Letia Chunga	F	Mkanda EPA	AEDC
11.	Sophie Nyangwali	F	Katonde Cooperative	Chairperson
12.	Steven Chindzu	M	Katonde Cooperative	Member
13.	Amos Weleman	M	Katonde Cooperative	Chairperson for production subcommittee
14.	Emily Ndiwo	F	Katonde Cooperative	Member
15.	Beatrice Uladi	F	Katonde Cooperative	Member
16.	Yohane Tsoka	M	Tsachiti Cooperative	Secretary
17.	Efrida Nyadani	F	Tsachiti Cooperative	Lead Farmer
18.	Chitsola Baison	M	Tsachiti Cooperative	Lead Farmer
19.	Grace William	F	Tsachiti Cooperative	Lead Farmer
20.	Tommy Banks	M	Market Links	Marketing Coordinator
21.	Peter Watson	M	Ministry of Agriculture-Nathenje	AEDC
22.	Lawrence Kuntengula	M	Ministry of Agriculture - Chileka EPA	AEDO

23.	George Jesman	M	Ministry of Agriculture	AEDO
24.	Eliyas Clement	M	Ministry of Agriculture	AEDC
25.	Sara Phiri	F	Ntenjemanga Cooperative	Vise Chair
26.	Jojina Macheza	F	Ntenjemanga Cooperative	Secretary
27.	JK Phiri	M	Ntenjemanga Cooperative	Treasure
28.	Anderson Wenje	M	Mkanda Cooperative	Vice Chairperson
29.	Enoch Kaingo	M	Mkanda Cooperative	Member
30.				
31.	Henry Mandere	M	Ministry of Industry- Cooperatives Education	Registrar of Cooperatives
32.	Perrina Phewa	F	Ministry of Agriculture- Mzimba North District Agricultural Office	Deputy Director of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources
33.	Raphael Msyali	M	Ministry of Agriculture- Mzimba North District Agricultural Office	Agribusiness Officer
34.	Franco Gondwe	M	Ministry of Agriculture- Mzimba North District Agricultural Office	Land Resources Officer
35.	Albert Tembo	M	Ministry of Agriculture- Mzimba North District Agricultural Office	Agricultural and Extension Methodologies Officer
36.	Edith Mithenga	F	Ministry of Agriculture- Mzimba North District Agricultural Office	AGRESSO
37.	Anthony Chisambi	M	Mzimba North District Agricultural Office- Engucwini EPA	AEDC

38.	Edith Chipeta	F	Kapiri Cooperative	Chairperson
39.	Midred Kumwenda	F	Kapiri Cooperative	Secretary
40.	Simon Mumba	M	Kapiri Cooperative	Treasurer
41.	Grain Banda	M	Kapiri Cooperative	Member
42.	Simon Chilanga	M		Member
43.	Jessie Tembo	F	Kapiri Cooperative	Chairperson for the social Welfare Committee
44.	Malumbo Chiumya	F	Engucwini Cooperative	Chairperson
45.	Osward Tembo	M	Engucwini Cooperative	Member
46.	Vayida Mkandawire	F	Engucwini Cooperative	Member
47.	Vincent Lugawa	M	Engucwini Cooperative	Member
48.	John Mhango	M	Engucwini Cooperative	Member
49.	Silvia Nhlema	F	Engucwini Cooperative	Member
50.	Grace Mvula	F	Engucwini Cooperative	Chairperson Finance Subcommittee
51.	Mercy Chirwa	F	Engucwini Cooperative	Member

Annex 3: Data Collection Field Plan for Malawi

Mon, 6th	Bright Sibale	Aeckim Kumwenda
8:30 - 10:00	KII-Ministry of Trade-cooperatives development	With Bright
11:30 - 12:30	KII-Ministry of Agriculture	With Bright
14:00-15:00	KII-Ministry of Forestry and Natural Resources	With Bright
15:30-16:30	KII-Ministry of Gender	With Bright
Tue, 7th		
8:30 - 10:00	KII-Leaders of Farmer Organisation 1-Lilongwe West	With Bright
11:30 - 12:30	FGD with Farmer Organisation 1-Lilongwe West	With Bright
14:00-15:00	KII-Leaders of Farmer Organisation 2-Lilongwe East	
15:30-16:30	FGD with Farmer Organisation 2-Lilongwe East	Travelling to Mzimba
Wed, 8th		
8:30 - 10:00	KII-MaLs Lilongwe district	KII-AICC Mzimba North
11:30 - 12:45	KII-AGRESSO Lilongwe district	KII-AGRESSO Mzimba North
14:30-15:00	KII-DSWO Lilongwe district	KII-DSWO Mzimba North
Thu, 9th		
8:30 - 10:00	KII-AICC Mchinji district	KII-Leaders of FO 1-Mzimba North
11:30 - 12:30	KII-AGRESSO Mchinji district	FGD with FO 1-Mzimba North
14:00-15:00	KII-DSWO Mchinji district	KII-Leaders of FO 2-Mzimba North
15:30-16:30		FGD with FO 2-Mzimba North
		Travel to Mchinji
Fri, 10th		
8:30 - 10:00	KII-Leaders of Farmer Organisation 1-Mchinji	With Bright
11:30 - 12:30	FGD with Farmer Organisation 1-Mchinji	With Bright
14:00-15:00	KII-Leaders of Farmer Organisation 2-Mchinji	With Bright
15:30-16:30	FGD with Farmer Organisation 2-Mchinji	With Bright

PROJECT EVALUATION

Increasing Women economic empowerment through cage fish farming in Bugiri district, Uganda



FUNDED BY: THE STANDARD BANK GROUP

Final Report -08 April 2022

Prepared by: Harriet Kivumbi

Email: harriet.kivumbi@yahoo.com

National Evaluation Consultant- Uganda

Prof Okwach Abagi (PhD); Team Leader



¹ Women beneficiaries of the aquaculture project, feeding the fish in one of the production cages/Photo by Project staff

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As independent external evaluators, we wish to express our appreciation to the various participants, coordinators, and logisticians, whose contribution and inputs enabled the field data collection, document reviews and finalizing of the report. We thank UN Women staff, Patricia Elotu Eiyu and Joan Babirye, and the Country Office M&E team, their inputs, guidance, feedback are invaluable.

We thank the Bugiri DLG, the RDC Hajji Ramathan Walugembe, Deputy RDC Nseko Anthony who took time to input the evaluation process and delivered helpful feedback. We thank Immaculate Were, the fisheries officer at Bugiri DLG, and project focal person. She provided all necessary information and documentation, as well as mobilized key persons, for the evaluation success. Dr Gladys Namuswe Bwanika is very appreciated for the inputs to the project and process.

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The CSA project evaluation was multi-country, and hence included inputs from Professor Okwach Abagi (International Consultant/Team Leader); Bright Sibale (National Consultant Malawi), Andrew Onwuemele (National Consultant Nigeria) and Donald Makoka (National Consultant South Africa). I very much thank the evaluation team for the feedback, sharing of knowledge, know-how, and the joint planning. We thank the ESARO team managing the CSA project: Mehjabeen Alarakhia and Eric Waweru, your guidance, coordination, and feedback enabled a successful process.

Above all, we thank the 60 members of Women Economic Empowerment Bugiri LTD Company, (WEEB) and the Youth, who participated in the evaluation, giving candid response on their experience of the project. The cage fish farm manager staff on ground, Taabu Moses Mukoya, for coordinating the WEEB women inputting the exercise, and the WEEB Board members who joined in the exercise. We wish WEEB continued success, and growth, to realize the dream of empowering women and their immediate families, economically.

THANK YOU ALL,

Harriet Kivumbi, MD, MSc, MBA, National Consultant, Uganda.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Aquaculture project in Bugiri is part of the UN Women, Eastern South African Regional Office (ESARO) multi-country Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) project. The CSA Project Goal is to “*Strengthen women’s agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture products in Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda.*” The CSA project aimed to increase women’s agricultural productivity using CSA techniques and approaches and to support women in value addition of selected agricultural products and increase access to market and finance. The evaluation of the project was commissioned by UN Women ESARO and was conducted at the end of the two-year project period, for the purpose of accountability; learning; and decision-making for the next phase of project development or expansion.

The overall objective of this evaluation was “*to assess the achievement of program results and performance of the CSA project interventions.*” The evaluation measured and provided robust empirical evidence related to the success and results of the CSA interventions (both intended and unintended). It assessed changes in outcomes observed, the mechanisms that delivered the observed changes, key features of these mechanisms and determine to what extent these can be attributed to the interventions.

Specific objectives for the evaluation

- i. To analyze the relevance of the implementation strategy and approaches of the “Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture” project.
- ii. To assess organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of the project’s results as defined in the intervention.
- iii. To validate the project impact in terms of achievements and/or weaknesses toward the outcome and outputs.
- iv. To assess the potential for sustainability of the results achieved by the project.
- v. To document lessons learned, best practices, and challenges to inform future work of UN Women on women’s economic empowerment.
- vi. To assess the implication of COVID-19 in the entire project implementation.
- vii. To identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the program’s best practices.
- viii. To provide actionable recommendations for the implementation of the second phase of the project and maximize ownership by partners in the countries covered by the project in order to foster sustainability of the intervention.
- ix. To assess how the project and its results relate and contribute to commitments and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in, and Uganda.

Methodology.

Guided by the Terms of Reference (TORs), United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation, the revised OEC/DAC ²guidelines, the UN Women evaluation guide and gender responsive guidelines, the evaluation of the Aquaculture project in Bugiri Uganda was designed in line with the multi-country CSA project evaluation methods, tools, and standards. It

² Overseas Development Assistance Committee of the Economic Cooperation and Development

was a gender responsive evaluation, that used a theory-based approach, building from the Uganda Country Office (CO) Strategic Note (SN) 2016-2020, Women Economic Empowerment Impact's Theory of Change (TOC) and its underlying assumptions.

The evaluation analyzed project process and results vis a vis community power dynamics, norms, and preconceived gender roles in aquaculture, guided by the gender responsive evaluation analytical framework. The evaluation used a mixed method that involved (i). qualitative primary data collection using a pre-designed data collection tool and (ii). secondary document reviews, yielded some quantitative data. Primary and secondary data were triangulated to inform key results from the evaluation.

Findings

The evaluation found that Bugiri Aquaculture CSA project was relevant to the Ugandan context; and contributes to sectoral policies and targets; Uganda's NDPII and NDPIII; the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and key regional agenda. There is evidence that the Aquaculture project is high-impact, scalable, transformative, with potential to deepen UN Women Gender Equality Women Empowerment (GEWE) efforts. An estimated 60-70% of the targeted 1400 women, who had access to the project site, considering the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic movement restrictions, demonstrate benefit from employment opportunity, and re-investment of income earned. There was however limited evidence of beneficiaries participating fully and equally in decision-making at all levels; for the development of GEWE policy interventions.

Through the project funding (CFF is capital intensive) by the Standard Bank Group through UN Women, the District Local Government (DLG) effectively mobilizing the beneficiary women in geographical clusters; technical expert assistance through the CFF value chain, day to day hands on mentoring and field trainings to the previously unemployed beneficiary women, Providing employment for the accessible beneficiary women in the CFF production, feeding over 9 months for two cycles; harvesting and marketing; the provision of fisheries extension services through the farm manager and DLG officials. The project efficiently conducted the international procurement of CFF infrastructure and consumables, the fries, fish feeds and cages.

There was ample evidence that project deployed innovative and more effective CSA tools, technologies, infrastructure, and institutions to achieve sustainable resource management. Though Women Economic Empowerment Bugiri (WEEB) the private company currently managing the CFF requires strengthening on governance, leadership, management, altruism, humanity, selflessness, and accountability to enable their custodianship of the Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) transformative enterprise for the benefit of the targeted poor, uneducated beneficiary women, their households, and the community at large. Women reported benefit from multi-trainings and exposures, including working in groups, and networking; swimming, operation of boats and surviving on the lake; finance management, savings, the hands-on trainings along the CFF value chain.

Gender relations at household level improved; the employed women, put money and food on the table at home, more so during the COVID-19 lock downs, when men were no more employed; this created respect and recognition from their spouse and in-laws. Transformations included women investing in diversified business, some sent their children to school in neighboring Kenya, and a few bought land, built house for family; expanded trade to Busia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Interest shown by Government of Uganda (GoU), Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industries and Fisheries, (MAAIF) and the parliament of Uganda since the commemoration of the

world fisheries day; imply potential for sustainability and replication of CFF. The farm operations are self-sustaining and functioning even after June 2021; when external donor funding ceased; demonstrating potential for sustainability.

The HeForShe initiatives reached sixty young men; helped improve youth livelihoods, and support/protection of the CFF activities. Future projects at DLG level, should be utilized to strengthen DLG systems, versus parallel systems, that are heavily dependent on external technical expertise, throughout project cycle. The technical arm at DLG should have sustained communication, updates, and clarifications with the political arm of the DLG, to harness the positive advocacy role of the political arm.

Recommendations

- 1) **Replicate the deep water CFF CSA WEE model:** as a top priority, UN Women in Uganda and at regional level; the GoU, DLG and other funders should replicate and invest further in models similar to the ‘Bugiri CFF deep water aquaculture project model’, as a success model that can sustainably enhance women productivity and access to productive resources in the Agriculture sector. Replicable aspects are defined in the full report.
- 2) **Further strengthen WEEB leadership structures for sustainability:** As a matter of high priority, UN Women Uganda Co, should invest in strengthening WEEB management, leadership, and governance, to enable the Women in Leadership, to deliver quality, accountable work, that further economically empowers the targeted beneficiaries, their households, and immediate communities.
- 3) **WEEB annual general meeting and declaration of dividend to shareholders:** WEEB should prepare books of accounts, and plan for annual general meeting to empower beneficiary women understand economic performance of the CFF. And to clarify whether a dividend is due or not, based on performance and projections.
- 4) **Investment in knowledge management, research, and learning:** Future CSA WEE projects should invest in knowledge management and research, as good practice and to enable evidence based, implementation and sharing of lessons. This could be a good basis for policy advocacy work
- 5) **Entrepreneurship skills as part of the training package for WEE:** WEE trainings should adapt training women on personal entrepreneurship competencies. This sharpens entrepreneurship skills and enables women to own the benefit from the project. Integrate Sexual Reproductive Health, EVAW, Women in Leadership and Second Chance Education.
- 6) **Future projects to support marketing, access to finance credit and establishing the prime market:** There is the need for further training and capitalization. Additionally, as the investment is high, future donor funds, or WEEB board and management should consider investing in the Prime Markets as a WEEB project.
- 7) **Invest in communication and public relations to manage expectations:** The project should have invested in communications with beneficiaries and vertically with DLG stakeholders, public relations and explaining project success, challenges, and changed strategies driven by reality and needs.
- 8) **Systems strengthening approach versus parallel project implementation:** The PPP model was a success, and to enable sustainability, UN Women should increasingly work on GoU or DLG systems strengthening, and work within the systems.

- 9) **WEEB should develop a strategic and resource mobilization plan**, annual work plans, and produce periodical reports, to share emerging success and lessons, and where possible attract more partners. WEEB should have online presence for more visibility.
- 10) **Contingency planning and emergency preparedness to manage risk and catastrophes:** External and contingency funding would enable the prevention, response, and mitigation of risks like environmental changes, diseased fish, and any other risks.

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1. EVALUATION OBJECT: THE CSA PROJECT IN UGANDA

1.1 Country Context-Uganda

Uganda is an East African country, with a population that ranges between 44.27 to 45.7 million. More than 80% of Uganda population is rated marginalized and vulnerable, including women (52%), youth (38%), orphans and other vulnerable children (55%), older persons (4%), ethnic minorities (1%), persons with disabilities (12%), the rural and urban poor (21.4%). Sixty-five percent of the working population is engaged in agriculture, forestry, and fishing and more women (70%) are engaged in agriculture compared to men (58%). The agriculture sector had a total contribution to GDP at current prices of 24.9 percent in the FY 2016/17 compared to 23.7 percent in FY 2015/16. The fisheries subsector contributes to 12 percent of the agricultural gross domestic product of Uganda and supplies 50 percent of all animal protein consumed in the country (FAO, 2019). The Global Gender Gap 2020 report ranked Uganda at 65/153 countries, with a score of 0.717 out of a range of 0-1.^{3,4}

The country ranked poorly on women economic empowerment (WEE). Income inequality mostly affects women, especially the female headed households. Yet, women play a vital role in Uganda's rural agricultural sector and contribute a higher-than-average share of crop labor in the region. Yet compared to men, their productivity is low.⁵ Moreover, women lack access to and control over productive resources like land, education, and health services. Negative socio-cultural norms, harmful traditional practices, slow changes in perceptions on gender equality by religious and some public institutions are a challenge to the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG), yet there is limited access to the formal justice system by women and girls in this country with a fragile security.^{6,7}

The overall country rating for Uganda is 140/165, with the country score at 53.5, compared to the regional score of 51.9 for the SDG agenda. The multidimensional poverty measure for Uganda captures a four-percentage point gender disparity, with 50% of households headed by women showing multidimensional poverty compared with 46% of male-headed households.⁸ Performance per key indicators relevant to WEE is presented here. SDG1(No Poverty), indicators are stagnant; the 2021 statistics show that the poverty headcount ratio is at \$1.90/day is 38.2%; and the poverty

³ UN Women, 2019 Annual Report, East and Southern Africa Region, Strategic Plan affiliation by number of Outcomes and Outputs under East and Southern Africa (2019 RMS Report). 2019

⁴ World Economic Forum. 2020 Global Gender Gap Report. 2019. ISBN-13: 978-2-940631-03- Accessed at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf H Kivumbi. 29.08.2020
Also see: FAO, National agri-food systems and COVID-19 in Uganda Effects, policy responses, and long-term implications. 2020.

⁵ <https://www.agriculture.go.ug/2019/09/26/gender-mainstreaming-prioritized-in-agriculture-sector-strategic-plan/>

⁶ Ibid. 2019 Annual report. UN Women.

⁷ UN Women, Revised Uganda Country Office Strategic Note 2016 – 2020 “Harnessing the gains of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Uganda”. Pg.5.August 2018.

Also see. 2019 Annual Report. UN Women Uganda. Pag 11

⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/esa/media/6146/file/UNICEF-Uganda-Multi-dimensional-child-poverty-2020.pdf>. Page 4

headcount ratio at \$3.20/day is 65.4%. SDG2 (Zero Hunger); the prevalence of stunting in children under 5 years of age remains stagnant 28.9% (2016). The prevalence of wasting in children under 5 years of age 3.5% (2016); Cereal yield 2.1 tons per hectare of harvested land (2018); Sustainable Nitrogen Management Index (best 0–1.41 worst) 0.8 (2015).⁹

Performance indicators for SDG5 (Gender Equality): demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods is 55.1 % of females aged 15 to 49 (2018); the ratio of female-to-male mean years of education received 64.5% (2019); the ratio of female-to-male labor force participation rate is 91.2% (2019); Seats held by women in national parliament 34.9% (2020). Performance of SDG10 (Reduced Inequalities); Gini coefficient adjusted for top income 42.7 (2016) and Palma ratio 2.2 (2018). While SDG13 (Climate Action) is on track; CO2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion and cement production (tCO2/capita) 0.1 (2019); CO2 emissions embodied in imports (tCO2/capita) 0.1 (2015) and CO2 emissions embodied in fossil fuel exports 0.0 kg/capita (2020).¹⁰

1.2 Project context- The multi-country CSA project for WEE

Agriculture is a key productive sector in the economies of Sub-Saharan Africa. Women comprise a large proportion of the agricultural labor force in Sub-Saharan Africa, ranging from 30 to 80 percent (FAO 2011). Yet women farmers are consistently found to be less productive than male farmers. The gender gap in agricultural productivity—measured by the value of agricultural produce per unit of cultivated land—ranges from 4 to 25 percent, depending on the country and the crop (World Bank and ONE 2014).¹¹

The gender gap exists because women frequently have unequal access to key agricultural inputs such as land, labor, knowledge, fertilizer, and improved seeds. Yet agriculture is a major contributor to pro-poor growth and poverty reduction especially in rural areas. Hence, targeting and strengthening agriculture is critical for food and nutrition security, livelihoods security and the reduction of rural poverty. Though, the agricultural sector in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), is increasingly challenged by re-occurring stresses and shocks caused by environmental degradation and climate change, necessitating solutions that are climate smart, innovative, and sustainable.¹²

Informed by evidence and recommendations from the study on the cost of gender gap in Agriculture, UN Women East Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), identified Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) as a Flagship Programme Initiative (FPI); a high-impact, scalable

⁹ Sustainable Development Report 2021 The Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goal

¹⁰ <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/profiles/uganda>

¹¹ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22770?show=full>. Accessed 2/5/2022.

H. Kivumbi.

https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2015/Costing%20Gender%20Gap_Launch.pdf

¹² Ibid. Costing Gender Gap report.

Also see: The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-2011. Women in Agriculture. Closing the Gender Gap for Development. Rome

initiative to deepen its efforts on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment (GEWE); to enable transformative change.

With funding from the Standard Bank Group South Africa (Corporate Social Responsibility/CSR), UN Women supported women in agriculture/fishing in Nigeria, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda, to participate fully and equally in decision-making at all levels; for the development of GEWE policy interventions and the deployment of more effective CSA tools, technologies, infrastructure, and institutions to implement measures to build resilience; and to achieve sustainable resource management for resilient green value chains. Project implementation was to be linked to learning; on the impact of efforts to close the gender gap in agricultural productivity.^{13,14}

The Aquaculture project in Bugiri is part of the ESARO multi-country CSA project. The CSA Project Goal is to “*Strengthen women’s agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture products in Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda.*” The CSA project aimed to increase women’s agricultural productivity using CSA techniques and approaches and to support women in value addition of selected agricultural products and increase access to market and finance. This project aimed to add value to ongoing in-country initiatives and enable cross-country experience sharing that would prove useful to other countries and regions.

1.3 The Aquaculture Project in Bugiri District Local Government - Uganda

In 2019, Bugiri District Local Government (DLG) in Uganda, secured a two-year Cage Fish Farming (CFF) project/grant for the poor rural women in the district, funded by UN Women. The major donors were the Standard Bank Group, up to USD 600,000. The Bugiri aquaculture project was also co-financed by the Government of Sweden (USD 70,000), Msingi East Africa, (USD 70,000), and United Nations Environment Programme (USD 33,000); in all totaling USD773,000. The project targeted 1,400 women to work through the CFF value chain. The primary focus of the project was to “*increase the economic empowerment of women through the adoption of climate-resilient aquaculture practices.*”

Project rationale and site selection

In addition to being informed by the cost of gender gap in agricultural productivity study,¹⁵ the intervention was inspired by and aligned to several international, regional, and national policies and programs including SDGs, FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, Agenda 2063, Uganda Vision 2040, National Development Plan III. It also addressed a UN Women priority area; ‘*Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy.*’¹⁶ CFF was selected in particular because the enterprise has high productivity; high carbon conversion ratio (1.5 compared to 7 for cattle); the production cycle is short (7-9 months); the specie (Nile tilapia) is highly resilient to climate. Moreover, CFF return on investment is about 30-40% and it was considered

13 Ibid. The State of Food and Agriculture 2010-2011.

14 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/22770> accessed 28th December 2017

Also see: FAO 2011; World Bank and ONE, 2014

15 Ibid. UN Women, World Bank, UNDP Costing the gender gap study, 2015.

16 Ibid. UN Women, World Bank, UNDP Costing the gender gap study, 2015.

the easiest way to bridge the ‘fish gap’ estimated at 33,000 MT in 2020 in Uganda. Moreover, the enterprise allowed for women participation with little cultural norm limitation.¹⁷

Bugiri District in Eastern Uganda was selected as the geographical location of the project because it is by the shores of Lake Victoria, with fishing as a major economic activity in the location with an estimated production of 40MT per day. The aquaculture project was to help revitalize fishing as a key economic activity. Bugiri district has a population of 382,913 (185,925M and 196,988F) of which over 65% are youth and majority are not meaningfully employed. Additionally, the project is in line with Government of Uganda (GoU) policies, that encourage aquaculture based in natural water bodies compared to ponds, as it is more cost effective and easier, a natural habitat that enables the regulation of oxygen.¹⁸

The project was designed to further advocate for liberated and wholesome women by deliberately embracing and integrating specific women-empowering programs (including Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), End Violence Against Women (EVAW), Second Chance Education, and HeForShe male engagement, among others, into the CFF value chain training sessions.¹⁹ The project had four outcomes presented below, and these are elaborated on in a table under Annex III to this report.

1. Increase women participation in commercial fish farming by building capacity across the value chain
2. Increase fish productivity by undertaking Climate Smart cage fish farming (30-40kg)
3. Increase profitability of the enterprise by local retailing and linkages to organized markets
4. Increase farmed fish products by value addition (processing, packaging, and branding) towards increased profitability per kilogram of fish sold.

1.4 Project Stakeholders

Table 1 presents key stakeholders and their various roles, Standard Group Bank as major donors; Bugiri DLG and MAAIF, as public partners and the women beneficiaries under WEEB as private partners. UN Women as grant manager had overall project oversight, monitoring, evaluation and learning role.

1.5 Male engagement/HeForShe

Male engagement strategies deployed in this project, aimed at promoting ownership, gender equality and increasing harmonious gender relations in the process of utilization of the fisheries resources (the lake). Male engagement strategies included: Inclusion of 10% males in the CFF value chain Training of Trainers (TOTs); supporting youth groups by procuring for them standard

17 UN Women, Project Document and Letter of Agreement with Bugiri DLG for the implementation of the project on Increasing women economic empowerment through Cage Fish Farming, May 2019, Page 9.

18 Ibid. Project Document and Letter of Agreement.

19 UN Women, Second Annual Report, Standard Bank South Africa funded; January 2020-January 2021; Increasing Women economic empowerment through Cage fish farming in Bugiri district, Uganda

fishing gear (motorized boats and nets)²⁰ and some men were additionally employed to undertake CFF tasks alongside the women beneficiaries e.g., security guards, farm management and driving the boat coxswain. These are part of the HeForShe programme which is a solidarity campaign for championing male engagement.^{21,22}

Table 1: Aquaculture project stakeholders by role

Stakeholders	The Private Public Partnership, role of stakeholders:
A. Standard Bank Group of Companies	Major Donor – Providing financial support (\$600,000) for the Aquaculture project
Three other funders:	Government of Sweden – Provided financial support (\$70,000) for the project to undertake the male engagement activities as well as the construction of the Early Child Development Center to cater for child caring mothers
(i) Government of Sweden	
(ii) UNEP	UNEP provided financial support worth \$ 33,000 for procuring a refrigerated truck
(iii) Msingi East Africa	Msingi East Africa: Building the cooperative movement within the sector, financial management, skills in utilization of fish farming technology, strengthen business management and financial literacy. The support is in form a grant (\$70,000) for a period of one year
B. UN Women	Financial management, technical guidance, monitoring and evaluation and reporting
C. Pearl Aquatics	Provided technical assistance and marketing
D. Bugiri District Local government	Mobilization of the women and organize them in the cooperative movement, capacity building of the women to engage along the fish value chain, providing business management and financial literacy, provide project site and oversight on implementation.
D2. Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries	Provided permit to establish the enterprise, quality control and ensure standards are adhered to
E. 1400 Beneficiary women from Bugiri DLG	Mobilized under the private limited company Women Economic Empowerment Bugiri (WEEB). WEEB manages the CFF, for, with and on behalf of the beneficiary women

1.6 Impact of COVID 19 on Agriculture and Fisheries Sector

Globally, the fisheries and agricultural sector were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdowns and movement restrictions within countries and across borders disrupted national and local food and agricultural output and input markets and caused sharp reductions in overall economic activity globally. In Uganda for example, the fisheries and aquaculture systems suffered: i) the disruption of output markets: traders from Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and Rwanda could no longer travel to Uganda to purchase fish, and domestic traders who use public transport cannot continue to operate; ii) poor access to landing sites iii) the increased cost of production. According to MAAIF, the fishing communities faced significant distress.²³

²⁰ Funded by Government of Sweden

²¹ UN Women, Donor Report, Standard Bank South Africa funded; January 2019-Dec 2019; Increasing Women economic empowerment through Cage fish farming in Bugiri district, Uganda. Pg 6.

²² Presentation on Empowering Women through Climate Smart Agriculture in East and Southern Africa, September 2019, Page 19-22

²³ FAO, National agrifood systems and COVID-19 in Uganda Effects, policy responses, and long-term implications. 2020

2. EVALUATION PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Purpose and objectives

The evaluation of the project was commissioned by UN Women ESARO, guided by terms of reference (TORs) annex VIII to this report. This was in line with the Programme Document and the Standard Administrative Agreement which provide for an evaluation. The evaluation was conducted at the end of the two-year project period, for the purpose of accountability; learning; and decision-making for the next phase of project development or expansion. As indicated in the TORs, the overall objective of this evaluation was “to assess the achievement of program results and performance of the CSA project interventions.” The evaluation measured and provided robust empirical evidence related to the success and results of the CSA interventions (both intended and unintended). The evaluation assessed changes in outcomes observed, the mechanisms that delivered the observed changes, key features of these mechanisms and determine to what extent these can be attributed to the interventions.

The specific objectives for the evaluation were:

- 1) To analyze the relevance of the implementation strategy and approaches of the “Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture” project.
- 2) To assess organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of the project’s results as defined in the intervention.
- 3) To validate the project impact in terms of achievements and/or weaknesses toward the outcome and outputs.
- 4) To assess the potential for sustainability of the results achieved by the project.
- 5) To document lessons learned, best practices, and challenges to inform future work of UN Women on women’s economic empowerment.
- 6) To assess the implication of COVID-19 in the entire project implementation.
- 7) To identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the program’s best practices.
- 8) To provide actionable recommendations for the implementation of the second phase of the project and maximize ownership by partners in the countries covered by the project in order to foster sustainability of the intervention.
- 9) To assess how the project and its results relate and contribute to commitments and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in, and Uganda.

The evaluation scope is defined in the TORs, annexed to this report.

2.2 Evaluation criteria

The evaluation adhered to the UN Women evaluation policy, the IEAS charter, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation and Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, and it applied the criteria of UN Women’s Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS) standards to the highest degree possible. This study upheld the Overseas Development Assistance Committee of the Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability as the analytical framework for responding to the evaluation questions. Additionally, the evaluation was guided by the cross-cutting principles of human rights, gender equality and

women's empowerment, resilience, sustainability, accountability, economic transformations, and growth, and leave no one behind (inclusivity).

2.3 Key evaluative questions:

The evaluation questions presented in Table 2 below were derived from the evaluation objectives, and scope.

Table 2: The key evaluation questions for the multi-country CSA project

Key Evaluation Questions:
1. Was the implementation strategy and approaches of the CSA project, relevant to the country context, beneficiaries, and national development agenda?
2. How did the project and its results relate and contribute to commitments and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in South Africa, Malawi, Nigeria, and Uganda?
3. To what extent did the CAS project contribute to economic empowerment of women in Bugiri DLG, Uganda? To what extent were the project outputs achieved?
4. How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect project implementation?
5. Was there demonstrable organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of the project's results as defined in the intervention.?
6. What is the project impact in terms of achievements and/What were the weaknesses toward the outcome and outputs?
7. What were the key challenges and risks that the CSA faced? Were there specific unique country challenges?
8. Does the project demonstrate potential for sustainability of the results achieved?
9. What are key lessons learned, best practices, and challenges to inform future women's economic empowerment work by UN Women and partners?
10. What are recommendable strategies for replication and up-scaling of the project's best practices?

3. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overall approach

Guided by the TORs, UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, the revised OEC/DAC guidelines, the UN Women evaluation guide and gender responsive guidelines, the evaluation of the Aquaculture project in Bugiri Uganda was designed in line with the multi-country CSA project evaluation methods, tools, and standards. It was a gender responsive evaluation, that used a theory-based approach, building from the Uganda CO SN 2016-2020, Women Economic Empowerment Impact's Theory of Change (Annex IV) and its underlying assumptions.

The evaluation analyzed project process and results *visa vie* community power dynamics, norms, and preconceived gender roles in aquaculture, guided by the gender responsive evaluation analytical framework. The evaluation used a mixed method that involved (i). qualitative primary data collection using a pre-designed data collection tool (see annex XII). And (ii). secondary document reviews, yielded some quantitative data. Primary and secondary data were triangulated to inform key results from the evaluation.²⁴

²⁴ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/good-practices-in-gender-responsive-evaluations>

3.2 Approach to sampling and data collection

Sampling process

The list of key project stakeholders was used as an overall guide on who to interview. All relevant staff from the Production department and the Resident District Commissioner's office; present at the DLG office during the field visit were interviewed. Similarly key UN Women and MAAIF staff and consultants were interviewed. A two-stage sampling was applied for the beneficiaries. The list of project beneficiaries and their various roles along CFF value chain was used as the sampling frame (see annex V). A computer-generated list identified study participants and alternate; representing beneficiaries: along the value chain, and the cluster/sub-county. In all the target sample size was 50 beneficiaries. Fifty participants are more than the recommended 10 or 20 respondents for a qualitative survey.²⁵ The selected participant was contacted by telephone, own telephone or husband's or neighbor's number; in the event they were not available, the alternative respondent, the name appearing immediately after the selected respondent was invited to participate in the evaluation.

The computer-generated list was only female beneficiaries, subsequently purposeful sampling was done among the youth beneficiaries. Nine males under the HeForShe initiative were selected conveniently. Additionally, the computer-generated list did not disaggregate on vulnerabilities; however, the data collection process took care of vulnerability considerations. Participating beneficiaries acknowledged that a good number of fishing women were living with HIV,²⁶ though ethically, full disclosure was not possible. Some respondents stated that they were widowed. Since project implementation is in clusters or groups; some respondents voiced issues of concern to WEEB members with disabilities.

Approach to data collection

A field visit to Bugiri DLG was conducted the week of 6th to 10th December 2021. Primary data was collected using the pre-designed interview guide/ data collection tool. Key informant interviews and group discussions were conducted with stakeholders. Participants included beneficiary women under WEEB the women umbrella organization, young men who benefited from the project; staff at Bugiri DLG, the project executing partner, Pearl Aquatics; key staff from UN Women Uganda CO and staff from MAAIF. Table 3 below presents a breakdown of respondents by category and by sex. Secondary data collection was mostly through the review of key documents, which commenced during the inception phase, and continued through the field data and report writing phase. At the project site and the DLG, the evaluator observed ongoing activities. The list of documents reviewed is annex VIII to this report.

²⁵ <https://interq-research.com/determining-sample-size-for-qualitative-research-what-is-the-magical-number/>

²⁶ Also see section on relevance, elaborates more on vulnerability of women in fishing communities to HIV transmission risks,

Table 3: Data sources by stakeholder type, gender and numbers of persons and documents reviewed

Stakeholder	Persons interviewed	Data collection method
	Number/ Sex ²⁷	
Project Beneficiaries	59 (9 Male, 50 F)	Focus Group Discussions
Bugiri DLG staff	9 (5 Male, 4 Female)	Focus Group Discussions
MAAIF staff	1 (F)	Key Informant Interview (virtual)
Pearl Aquatics/ Executing Partner	1 (F)	Key Informant Interview (virtual)
UN Women Uganda CO staff	3 (1M, 2 Female)	Key Informant Interview (virtual)
Total numbers of stakeholders interviewed	74 (15M, 59F)	Please see annex for full list
Numbers of various documents reviewed	Up to 53 key documents were reviewed	Please see annex for full list

3.3 Data Analysis, Synthesis and Reporting Phase:

Qualitative data was analyzed manually, reading transcripts looking for similarities or differences, and subsequently finding themes and developing categories. in line with the study objectives and purpose. The primary data was triangulated with secondary data, the analysis based on the Theory of Change examined factors that promote gender equality; and provided an analysis of the political and social economic structures that would enable gender equality. Additionally, the analysis aimed at answering the evaluative questions and objectives. Preliminary findings were presented to the Uganda CO, and then to ESARO team and Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), for review and feedback to inform the formulation of overall assessment results, conclusions, and recommendations, and the preparation of the final report.

3.4 Quality assurance

The external independent evaluators is a senior experienced consultant, working a team, with other senior evaluators and led by the team leader, with capacity to conduct independent and objective evaluation of CSA Aquaculture project in Bugiri. The inception report – with evaluation design, work plan and tools, developed in a consultative and participatory manner and reflecting the four country’s project context, provided the field guide and evaluation standard. Additionally, UN Women WEE lead at ESARO level and the national focal persons, and Independent Evaluation Office provided guidance and inputs to sign off the inception report and preliminary report drafts; UNEG and the UN Women Global Evaluation Report Assessment and Analysis System provided the evaluation standards. The Evaluation Reference Group (ERG), comprising regional and country level focal persons participated in reviews and validation of draft reports.²⁸

²⁷ The respondent sex was determined based on first name; details of gender identity were not captured. F is female and M is male.

²⁸ See Tool 14, <https://genderevaluation.UN Women.org/en/evaluation-handbook/tools>

3.5 Ethical considerations

The UNEG code of conduct provided key guidance on ethical standards; including the respect and protection of the rights and welfare of women and men, and the communities evaluated as per UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights conventions. The respect for dignity and diversity; anonymity and informed consent²⁹; data protection and confidentiality; fair representation including women and men in powerless, ‘hidden’, or otherwise excluded groups; compliance with codes for individuals/groups who are marginalized and/or discriminated against; stakeholders shall be given information on: a) how to seek redress for any perceived disadvantage suffered from the evaluation or any projects it covers; and b) how to register a complaint concerning the conduct of an implementing or executing agency. Evaluators minimized risks to those participating in the evaluation; and maximized the benefits and reduced any unnecessary harm that might occur due to negative or critical evaluation, without compromising the integrity of the evaluation.

3.6 Gender and Human Rights

The evaluation integrated analysis on how the programme advanced the rights of the targeted population(s) (the rights holders), particularly women and individuals/groups who are marginalized and/or discriminated against and supported or empowered them to claim for their rights; identified and analyze the inequalities, discriminatory practices and unjust power relations that are central to development problems. Evaluators shed light on how these social, historical and/or political complex processes occur; provide visibility to under-the-surface social issues and hidden problems of discrimination and inequalities and called attention to the special needs of or effects on certain groups or persons.

3.6 Study limitations

The COVID-19 pandemic changed ways business is conducted to mostly virtual approaches. It also affected project process and caused multi delays. Field visit and data collection ensured adherence to COVID-19 prevention Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs); handwashing, use of masks, social distance, and limited numbers to avoid crowds. The December festive season created competing demands among key respondents, though extending the evaluation period at no cost, created time for analysis and report writing. No big issues noted with accessing data or informants, logistics or support. Other than that project managers and focal persons at national level have changed over years.

4. Findings

4.1 Relevance

4.1.1 Relevance to the country context, SDG, and national development agenda.

Finding 1: The CSA project is highly relevant to the Ugandan context, more so it is a country that had low ranking on WEE; stagnant SDGs on poverty, end hunger, and gender equality. The project contributes to the National Development Agenda (NDPIII and Vision 2040); SDG Agenda; AU Agenda 2063, the 5th East African Community Development Strategy (2016/17-2020/21), and several key regional agreements the country subscribes to. Moreover, CSA directly furthers

²⁹ <https://oprs.usc.edu/files/2017/04/Informed-Consent-Booklet-4.4.13.pdf>

Uganda's SDG 13. It contributes to the aspirations of SDG2, and 9, to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture as well as promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation; SDG 8, promoting sustained, inclusive, economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all and it aligns with the AU Agenda 2063, Goal5's aspiration 'modern agriculture for increased production and productivity.' It is also relevant to the EAC Vision 2050 that seeks to promote value addition through agro-processing.³⁰

Finding 2: The Uganda Vision 2040 puts emphasis on the establishment of economic lifeline industries including agro-based industries to drive agriculture productivity. Uganda's NDPIII goal is to 'increase average household incomes and improve the quality of life of Ugandans.' And targets to raise Income per Capita to 1,301USD; reduce poverty rates to 15.5 % below poverty line, reduce Income Inequality; Gini coefficient of 0.39 and a Gender Equality Index of 0.523. NDPIII also seeks to increase the number of jobs created in agro-industry along the value chain by 500,000. NDPIII highlights the importance of the economic empowerment of women, and gender equality and has export-oriented strategies for agro produce amongst other products; strengthening the private sector to create jobs, and the project contributed to this through establishing the CFF to increase women agro-production and economical resilience.

Finding 3: Moreover, the National Fisheries Policy (NFP) targets doubling fish production from 0.5 million Metric Tons (MT) to 1 Million MT. Additionally, Uganda NFP promotes aquaculture in big waters versus ponds; as CFF has the potential to yield more than 10 times; and is climate resilient unlike Pond Fish farming (PFF) which is subject to draughts and floods.³¹ Further still, the amended National Employment Bill, promotes the engagement of women in employment. Women economic empowerment is key in the fisheries sector; the NFP states that 30% of support should be towards women and youth. Additionally, the 2020 Fisheries and Aquaculture Bill, promotes public private partnership, in fish production, value addition and marketing. Partnering directly with the DLG, aligns to the decentralized governance system.³²

Finding 4: DLG officials and other key respondents reaffirmed that the project was very relevant, the first of its kind with public-private partnership and direct beneficiary community engagement. Moreover, the Bugiri District Development Plan (DDP), had prioritized the empowerment of marginalized rural women. Additionally, the 2020 National commemoration of the International Fisheries day was celebrated at the project site. These commemorations were attended by the Government of Uganda (GoU) Minister of Agriculture, the Speaker of Parliament, and several senior G.O.U officials. Consequently, the office of the president of Uganda, picked interest in learning from the project. This further endorsed the innovativeness and novelty of the initiative, and its relevance.³³

30 <http://repository.eac.int/handle/11671/1952>

31 Ibid MAAIF and fisheries policy

32 GoU; Bill no 29,

33 UN Women, Donor Report, Standard Bank South Africa funded; January 2019-Dec 2019; Increasing Women economic empowerment through Cage fish farming in Bugiri district, Uganda.

Also see: GoU National Fisheries Resources Research Institute (NaFIRRI), National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO): A Survey to Assess Suitability of Wakawaka Bay On Lake Victoria in Bugiri District For Cage Aquaculture, 2019

Also see: Key informant interviews, Evaluation Bugiri Aquaculture project, December 2021

Box 1: Selected respondent voices on Relevance.

'The project is relevant and is climate smart... history is pond fish farming has suffered draught, and floods and are mindful of the environment. A study assessed the suitability...'

'The Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries focused on Technical aspects. Policy wise ...increase aquaculture project to 1million MT, aquaculture is being promoted, strategy 30% of GoU support towards women and youth.'

'The UN Women project was very welcomed. MAAIF guided UN Women for the Site suitability study, and have been working with, to support the Production, Cage etc.'

'The lake was an available natural resource; and the fish yield was low, CFF aquaculture offered options.'

So: Field data collection for the evaluation of the Aquaculture Project in Bugiri, December 2021.

4.1.2 Relevance to the beneficiaries.

Finding 5: The baseline survey showed that the majority beneficiaries had no own income source. Eighty-five percent were married; 75% lacked basic education; 76% had never practiced and lacked knowledge on various aspects of the CFF value chain. Opportunities for women's participation in scalable income generating activities like fishing, were limited. Women's decision-making power in use of money generated at household level was low. Moreover, less than 10% of women were owners or managers of fish farms; 90% worked as casual laborers. The baseline survey highlighted high poverty index, and limited exposure to CFF trainings in the past.³⁴ Additionally, the value chain analysis showed that 83.3 % of the fish farmers in Bugiri district were male with only 16.7% female at project onset.^{35, 36}

Finding 6: Respondents concurred that the project was of great relevance to the targeted women. Women in fishing communities are most vulnerable to: HIV, commercial sex work, sexual exploitation, coercion into sex at workplace and widowhood amidst other vulnerabilities, empowering vulnerable women economically, cannot be underscored. Previous participation of women in the fishing value chain was more in the role of fish vendors or mongers. Equipping, empowering, and financing the women enabled break the gender taboo; whereby women are barred from fishing (wild fish hunting). The evaluation confirms that beneficiaries included Women Living with HIV (WLHIV), Women with disabilities, and Widows.³⁷ Hence empowerment of women as CFF business owners; indirectly contributed to reduced vulnerability to sexual exploitation, in this business.

34 Pearl Aquatics. Increasing Women economic empowerment through Cage fish farming in Bugiri district, Uganda, 2019, Pag

35 Pearl Aquatics. Increasing Women economic empowerment through Cage fish farming in Bugiri district, Uganda, 2019, Pag

36 The country context was presented under section 1.5 of this report.

37 <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0249465>

Also see: <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>
<http://repository.eac.int/handle/11671/1952>

Key informer interviews, December 2021, Evaluation Bugiri Aquaculture project

4.1.3 Appropriateness of Project Design and ownership

Finding 7: The project was designed as a private public partnership; the stakeholder analysis and roles were defined under section 1.4 and table 1. The design was appropriate. GoU owned and supported the project. The DLG in Bugiri (GoU) was the lead implementing partner or project owner. The Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF) approved the project following a site suitability and site capability assessment by the National Fisheries Resources and Research Institute (NaFIRRI). Bugiri DLG Environment Department conducted the environment impact assessment. The cage operations and establishment permit were issued by the Aquaculture Department of MAAIF, as part of the standard operating procedures to ensure quality control and environmental sustainability of the lake. Though some respondents expressed views that the DLG had the tendency of not debating or questioning concepts presented by the technical expert, yet the project could have benefited from a broader debate within the technical and political arms of the DLG.^{38,39}

4.2 Effectiveness and impact

4.2.1 Overall contribution to the CSA project to the economic empowerment of women in Bugiri DLG

Box 2: Respondent voice on overall results of the project.

Down to earth project ...directly reached women beneficiaries, women mostly few men

'Strengthened women organization skills for fishing, in the past women's role was marketing, the project covers the value chain...' 'women now have paid labor'

'Enhanced marketing skills, selling fish by weight and not by piece, commercialized.... empowered from simple bargaining...'

'The project is a source of employment.... the harvest process creates business, direct and many indirect beneficiaries, e.g. transporters, packaging, food....the community purchases for food or for business...'

'A board was established, enhanced leadership skills, address fellow women, conflict management and sustainability...'

'The DLG was empowered to work with the donor, the implementing partner, synergies, project management skills, enhanced partnership....'

So: Field data collection for the evaluation of the Aquaculture Project in Bugiri, December 2021.

Finding 8: Overall, the evaluation results demonstrate that the CSA project achieved its goal 'to increase women farmers' agricultural productivity and economic empowerment.' There is evidence that the Aquaculture project is a high-impact, scalable, transformative initiative that deepened UN Women efforts on GEWE. An estimated 60-70% of the targeted 1400 women, who had access to the project site, benefitted from the project investment in various ways, and more so

38 UN Women, Donor Report, Standard Bank South Africa funded; January 2019-Dec 2019; Increasing Women economic empowerment through Cage fish farming in Bugiri district, Uganda.

Also see: GoU National Fisheries Resources Research Institute (NaFIRRI), National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO): A Survey to Assess Suitability of Wakawaka Bay On Lake Victoria in Bugiri District For Cage Aquaculture, 2019

Also see: Key informant interviews, Evaluation Bugiri Aquaculture project, December 2021

39 The site suitability of Bugiri DLG was elaborated on under section 1.3.

around their personal entrepreneurship competencies.^{40,41} Though there was limited evidence of beneficiary women participating fully and equally in decision-making at all levels; for the development of GEWE policy interventions.

Finding 9: The UN Women Uganda Country Office (CO) theory of change (TOC); the output on *‘Enabling women to invest in climate smart, time saving assets, tools, and technologies; Access CSA information and Yield opportunities for women to move up the agriculture value chain’* had demonstrable results. Close to 80% of the set outputs were achieved, in the two-year period; women working jointly along the CFF value chain. The 20% not attained, prime marketing and BfW platform, mostly due to the pandemic. Women who previously fully depended on their spouse for economic provisions at household; became shareholders and employees of the CFF.

Finding 10: Women worked as employees who fed the fish every night, since the CFF was established in 2020. They rotated fish from cages for juvenile fish, to cages with growing fish, covering a period of nine months, before harvesting the fish from the cages on Lake Victoria, in the night; and making the fish available for the market by weight (Kilograms). Some women as individuals or in their community clusters traded in the fish, buying from the CFF produce and selling it to local and international markets at a profit. Each woman received 100,000 UGX for the week she worked at the farm. Approximately 10 women were deployed per night. In monetary terms, it comes to 100,000 UGX X 10 women X 30days X 9 months; implying 270 million UGX (\$77,142) *; spent as salaries to poor rural women over one year of CFF production.⁴²

4.2.2 Progress towards achievement of set targets and results

Outcome 1. Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate

Table 4: Results on the outcome of economic empowerment of women through CSA

Outcome: Economic empowerment of women in Africa through climate smart agriculture enhanced.		
Indicator	Target	Actual
% of women who own productive resources in their name	15%	100%
% of households with women actively engaged in household decision-making	N/A	N/A
Share of household income provided by women from CSA activities;	N/A	N/A

40 Though this was a qualitative study, during the field data collection, the consultant did a rough head count of beneficiaries who stated that they have not yet gained from the project, versus those that stated that it was beneficial, and gave examples or testimonies on how they had gained from the project from its inception to the time of evaluation.

41 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340796633_Personal_Entrepreneurial_Competerencies_of_Participants_in_Experiential_Entrepreneurship_Education

Defined as: Entrepreneurial competency is one of the main aspects of a business program that must be conveyed to the students considering that these business students will become future entrepreneurs. PECs include ((1) Opportunity Seeking, (2) Persistence, (3) Commitment to Work Contract, (4) Risk-taking, (5) Demand for Efficiency and Quality, (6) Goal Setting, (7) Information Seeking, (8) Systematic Planning and Monitoring, (9) Persuasion and Networking, (10)

Also see . <http://lpulaguna.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Personal-Entrepreneurial-Competencies-of-LPU-Laguna-BSBA-Graduating-Students-Basis-For-Curriculum-Enhancement.pdf> Accessed. 2/12/2022 H. Kivumbi

42 Key informant interviews, December 2021, Evaluation of the Aquaculture project

*Applied exchange rate is 1USD =3500 UGX, as a rough guide on investment in women

Outcome: Economic empowerment of women in Africa through climate smart agriculture enhanced.		
Indicator	Target	Actual
Yield of targeted agricultural commodities within targeted areas;	330,000 MT	496,273.5 MT ⁴³
Value (USD) of targeted agricultural commodities sold:	0	US\$449,393 (by May 2022)
Proportion of targeted women farmers practicing CSA	1400	60%
Total number of hours spent on the farm/ woman/work shift	6	14
Number of gender-responsive laws/policies adopted	N/A	N/A

Finding 11: The project had an M&E framework, and tools to track progress, key indicators were defined. Progress towards achievement of outcomes is presented in the table above. The project model of establishing a CFF for the beneficiary women implies that all women have a share and are co-owners in the business, they jointly own the CFF as a productive resource registered as WEEB. Though the % of households with women actively engaged in household decision-making was not measured, majority women stated they contributed to home income, food, child education, indirectly implying being part of the decision making.

Finding 12: Additionally, the share of household income provided by women from CSA activities was not measured. While the CFF targeted a yield of 330,000 MT, the fish farm is currently stocked to produce approximately 225 MT, worth by UGX 1,667,249,917 (USD 449,393; 1 USD = 3710 Project rate) by May 2022 and with a continuous biological restocking at every harvest to ensure an output of 496,273.5 MT worth UGX 3,672,423,689 (USD 989,871; 1 USD = 3710 Project rate)⁴⁴ by May 2023. Fishing is a nighttime activity, with the hostel facility at the project site, and with travel restrictions, the norm was women spent five nights on duty at the CFF, more than the 6hrs previously predicted, though for a month, this could be one week away from home for some women. The project did not directly engage in policy advocacy work, though UN Women CO had ongoing policy advocacy work. (see table 4 above)

Output 1.1: Women’s uptake of CSA inputs (equipment and finances) and services (extension services and information) increased.

Table 5: Results linked to output on access to labor and time saving equipment

Output 1.1: Women’s access to labor and time-saving equipment and services increased. ⁴⁵ Women’s uptake of CSA inputs (equipment and finances) and services (extension services and information) increased. <i>(as written in the Uganda Results Framework)</i>			
Indicator	Target	Actual	Performance

⁴³ Transition Concept: Cage Fish Farming By Women In Bugiri District Project. Page. 1

⁴⁴ Ibid. Transition Concept: Cage Fish Farming By Women In Bugiri District Project. Page. 1

⁴⁵ Wording for the regional ESARO framework deferred from wording for the Uganda Results Framework slightly, that’s why two sentences are presented.

Number of women farmers trained in fish farming technologies (baseline 186)	1500	1400	93%
Number of women that have received fish inputs;	1500	1400	93%
Number of women fish farmers who are fully paid-up members of a women’s cooperative;	1400	1400	100%
Number of women farmers mentored/coached;	25	700	2800%
Number of post-harvest handling aquaculture infrastructure constructed;	1	1	100%
Existence of a CSA market information system;	1	0	0%
Number of women who have accessed credit;	100	0	0%
Number of fisheries extension officers hired and deployed.	3	1 + other support	100%

Finding 13: As shown in Table 5, From a baseline number of 186 women with knowledge of CFF, the project trained all 1400 targeted women in CFF, along the value chain. The CFF is a collective cooperative business, and hence all benefited and received fish inputs. Though the Uganda results framework target differed from that of the project document, 1500 and 1400, respectively. All mobilized women were paid up members, for the women’s cooperative; initially as WAFISCO, and later on as WEEB. Each woman contributed UGX 10,000; equivalent of \$2.8. However due to covid restrictions, an estimated 60% of beneficiary women worked on the fish farm and were mentored during the work by the farm manager, and other technical support that trained women on skills for survival on the lake, including swimming, steering the boat, planting fish fries, taking care of and feeding the fish to grow, using appropriate cages, harvesting, and weighing it for the market.

Finding 14: The project constructed a post-harvest handling aquaculture infrastructure that housed offices of the manager, a hostel for women to stay overnight, as fishing was done in the night, a nursery for breast feeding mothers. However, establishing the CSA market information system was deprioritized; women did not have smart phones and 85% were illiterate. Additionally, while women were trained by Stanbic Bank on finance, money management, savings, and the bank conducted outreaches to enable respondents open bank accounts; no respondent indicated that they had had access to credit facilities, except for the ‘merry go round groups’, established by the now working women. The trained farm manager was a full-time fisheries extension officer; he was deployed at the project site. He was supported by women who had TOTs, the DLG fisheries focal persons, Pearl Aquatics and Msingi East Africa. (also see Table 5)

Finding 15: The Cage Fish Farm (CFF) was successfully established; the required tools, cages, the fish fry, and fish foods were procured. The project deployed innovative and more effective CSA tools, technologies, infrastructure, and institutions to implement measures to build resilience; and to achieve sustainable resource management for resilient green value chains. Pearl Aquatics delivered training of trainers, reaching 66 out of 70 targeted trainers. The trained trainers rolled out the skilling and empowerment process to the beneficiaries, using ‘hands on’, skills-based training approaches along the CFF value chain. Training women on the assembly of cages for the fish, and environmental aspect (water quality) testing to ensure fish are growing in recommended temperature and conditions. Msingi East Africa further skilled women in confidence to be on a boat in the lake, swimming, business skills, and networking. (also see Table 5)

Finding 16: With their newly acquired skills, women were hired as part-time employees for the production and marketing of fish from the farm. Women were additionally trained on gender dynamics, group dynamics, and the male engagement component. Another key outcome of the skilling and empowerment process is improved relations within the households, as the beneficiary women working at the CFF, contributed to household economy, however the proportion of women stating improved household relationships, was not measured, though it sounded like majority active beneficiaries.⁴⁶

Output 1.3 Access to climate-smart agricultural extension services for women and men farmers improved

Finding 17: Extension services were provided to the women fish farmers through a full-time technical/Farm manager, a qualified fisheries officer, initially paid by the project and presently paid by WEEB. The farm manager was supported by women trained as trainers. He delivered continued mentoring and fisheries extension services to women handling the fish production and harvesting; in addition to technical support by Pearl Aquatics and Msingi East Africa. The District Fisheries Focal Person, and the deputy sustained fisheries extension services in the areas of establishing the cooperative; group dynamics and financial management; support in utilization of fish farming technology, strengthening business management, financial literacy branding, packaging, and marketing for the project. Grana Fish Ltd provided skilling on value addition or the production of smoked fish.

Outcome 2: Opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain are provided

Finding 18:

Table 6: Results on women up the value chain

Indicator	Target	Actual	Performance	
Output 2.1: Women’s shift to high value agricultural enterprises (selected crops, fisheries, animal husbandry etc.) and inclusion in green agricultural value chains at the national, regional, and international levels achieved				
Output 2.2: Local infrastructure developed to improve access to markets, reduce labor, and save time for women value chain actors				
Output 2.3: Capacities for women farmers to organize along the value chain nodes strengthened. (As defined Uganda Results framework)	Existence of a one-stop fish market center;	1	0	0%

Though Output 2.1: Women’s shift to high value agricultural enterprises (selected crops, fisheries, animal husbandry etc.) and Output 2.2: Local infrastructure developed to improve access to markets, reduce labor, and save time for women value chain actors inclusion in green agricultural value chains at the national, regional, and international levels achieved, were not prioritized under Uganda Results Framework, the narrative report demonstrates results along these outputs. The project delayed for one-year, modules on Marketing, in line with value chain, were close to the project end, so there is no operationalization yet. (see Table 6)

⁴⁶ Key informant interview, evaluation aquaculture project in Bugiri

Output 2.3: Capacities for women farmers to organize along the value chain nodes strengthened.

Box 3: Citations on project contribution to women

'A new way of farming, the women learnt CFF along the value chain; Pearl Aquatics an expert in CFF provided extension services and training. Stanbic bank delivered financial literacy training to the women in different locations, to empower them for fishing as a business, savings, etc. Fish production process, the marketing, local woman pick the fish, + export.'

'Smoking kilns...women trained to do the work, proved women can do what men do'

'Knowledge gained: feeding fish, harvesting, marketing, getting into a boat'

'Life has changed, empowerment, confidence, strength, hope, responsible working women, things we buy...'

'I was a fish trader, and the fish was confiscated-it was rated as immature, I faced loss, I gave up...then mobilized to work in groups and resumed the trade. In the past I worked alone, now I am in a group...'

'Trading in mukeene (silver fish), respected by men, supported by husband, need more finance.'

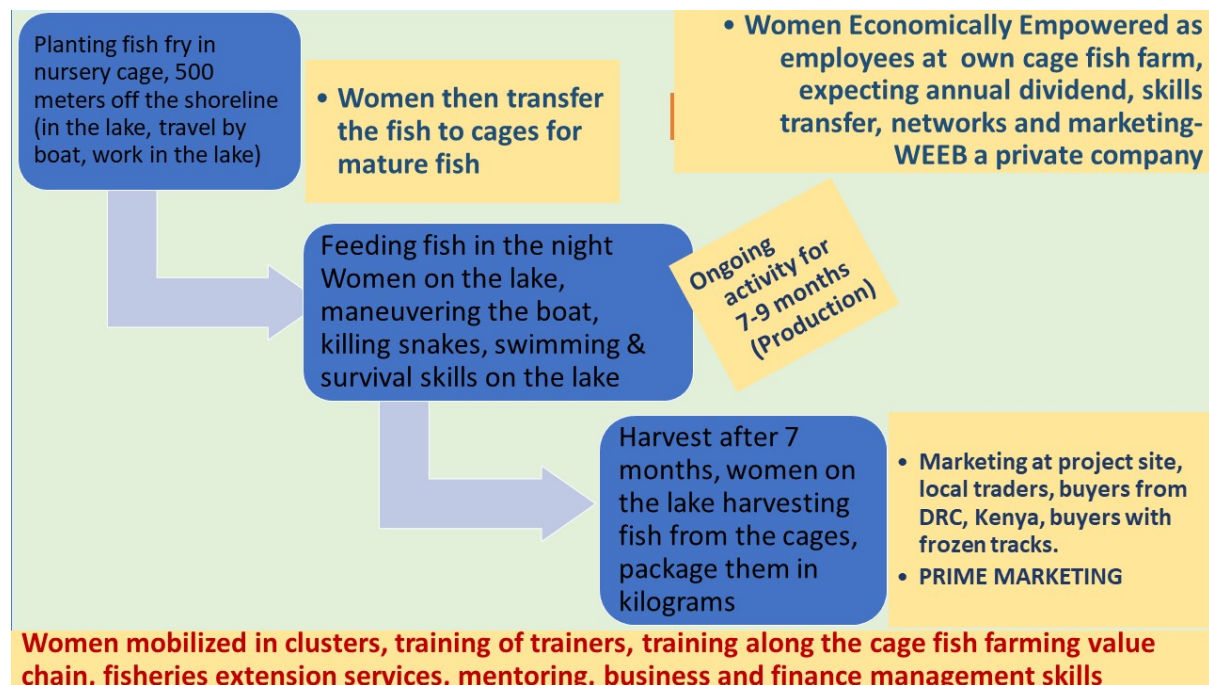
'I attended only once...training in smoking fish.... i have not yet participated...in work...'

'I was refunded 20,000 yet the actual spend was 40,000.' (In reference to transport refunded when she participated in events at the project site).

So: Field data collection for the evaluation of the Aquaculture Project in Bugiri, December 2021.

Finding 17: The project key strength was that it directly involved and engaged the targeted beneficiaries, the 1400 women, to work on the CFF, from within their sub-counties. The DLG mobilized the project beneficiaries into clusters, and into the private limited company, WEEB. Beneficiaries were organized into 5 interest groups in line with the CFF value chain (as demonstrated in Figure 1): production-140, harvesting-420, retail-420, processing-280, prime marketing-140; Empowering women for CFF production, postharvest handling, retail, processing, and prime marketing. Women networking and organization skills were enhanced; production of fish, harvesting and marketing.

Figure 1: The Bugiri aquaculture project value-chain



Finding 18: Box 3 demonstrates that more than 50% beneficiaries; acknowledged beneficial changes in own lives and at their households, such as improved feeding, and the contribution to the house money pot. Moreover, from selling fish piece by piece, the project empowered women to sell fish in kilograms, by weight; women now know how to estimate the weight. The markets for the fish expanded into export business, reaching DRC, Rwanda, and Kenya, and to districts neighboring Bugiri. While the project planned to construct and equip a one stop fish market center; at the time of the evaluation, this activity had not been attained. Though through WEEB women Training of Trainers (TOT) had been given knowledge on how to establish the one-stop fish market center. This was to be developed through mobilization of women to further invest in it, though during the field visit, some women expressed concerns around the demand to them, that they invest own money to create the prime market. Evaluators hence consider that prime marketing is an area for further investment with donor or other WEEB consolidated funds, and this is how it will be of benefit to all women beneficiaries.

Finding 19: The project purchased a refrigerated truck; whose primary business purpose was to help the project reach the prime markets. Women needed to learn to trade in the available prime markets and sufficient harvest to avail fish to sell to the prime markets. The secondary business for the truck was to lease it out to other users at a profitable and sustainable fee. Yet, the truck was delivered when the farm was harvesting the last two cages of the first production cycle and was to lay redundant for next couple of months as there were delays in stocking the second production cycle. Hence the truck has mostly been leased out.

Finding 20: Pearl aquatics supported the project by managing the leasing out of the truck to traders between January and October 2021. A travel monitoring device (SINOTRACK) was also installed in the truck to facilitate monitoring its movements. A net income of over 8 million Uganda

shillings (USD 2,280), was earned from this activity. The moneys were deposited on WEEB bank accounts; as Pearl Aquatics handed over truck management to the Bugiri DLG after October.

Finding 21: Women reported benefit from the multi-trainings and exposures, including working in groups, and networking; swimming, operation of boats and surviving on the lake; this was training by Msingi East Africa. The Stanbic bank branch in Iganga, near Bugiri DLG; empowered women in finance management, savings, took women through process of account opening, and prudence in use of own money. Pearl Aquatics conducted hands-on trainings along the CFF value chain; including production or growing the fish, feeding fish based on their age, estimation of fish weight for maturity, harvesting, marketing, and prime marketing.

Finding 22: The majority beneficiaries gave examples of improved gender relations at household level. The employed participating women, put money and food on the table at home, more so during the COVID-19 lock downs, when men were no more employed; this was reported by the women themselves, as it created respect and recognition from their spouse and in-laws. Hence husbands and partners encouraged the women to attend the project events, more so, it's the men who received the project communications via phone; and passed messages duly to the spouse.

Finding 23: Some of the beneficiary (employed) women, ⁴⁷reported transformations at personal economic and household levels. Some women diversified business, trading in silver fish; investing in goats; a number of women reported that they sent their children to school in neighboring Kenya, Uganda having faced prolonged closure of schools; one or two beneficiary women reported to have bought land, built house for family; expanded trade to Busia, DRC. Some women were ready to engage in investments for Prime Markets, bigger fish market. Interest shown by GoU, MAAIF and the parliament of Uganda including the commemoration of the world fisheries day at the project site; is another impact with the potential for replication of CFF in other settings, by other funders.

Outcome 3: Using ICT platforms (BfW) for increased access to markets and finance for women.

Table 7: Results around the Buy From Women platform

Indicator	Target	Actual	Performance
Outcome 3: Using ICT platforms (BfW) for increased access to markets and finance for women. (N/A)			
Output 3.1: Deploy the 'BUYFROMWOMEN' (BfW) digital platform to connect women farmers to large scale buyers of agricultural products (N/A)			
Output 3.2: Information stored in the BfW platform is being used as a form of collateral for women's access to finance (N/A)			
Output 3.3: Link women to financial institutions providing innovative financing in CSA: see narrative below			

Finding 24: As shown in Table 7, the market information system (Buy From Women) was not established. The challenge was that few women owned a mobile phone (the actual percentage was not established). Support from spouses was demonstrated in that husbands received project related

⁴⁷ The actual proportion was not captured, the data collection tool did not enable this, it would have been interesting to use the baseline survey tool, to compare progress on quantitative indicators, time and resources did not enable such.

phone messages and they passed information on to the women, as stated early on. The mobile phone hence remained the key communication tool.

While Stanbic Bank was brought in during the final year and delivered community level trainings to beneficiaries on finance management, savings, and account opening; women were not directly empowered to access financial credit. This could be linked to lack of direct training to strengthen beneficiary personal entrepreneurship skills.

Outcome 4: The Multi-Country Project is coordinated and implemented with a focus on ‘research for development’ and documenting lessons learned.

Table 8: Research for development and documenting lessons

Outcome 4: The Multi-Country Project is coordinated and implemented with a focus on ‘research for development’ and documenting lessons learned.			
Indicator	Target	Actual	Performance
4.1: UN Women Country offices, and agricultural research institutions in the respective countries and at regional level engaged to increase research on gender and CSA in the region			A series of baseline studies were conducted, the CO joined other countries during regional level meetings, however this was not a priority outcome at CO level
4.2: Regional and national institutional, policy and legal frameworks that will be key enablers to facilitate women’s engagement in CSA evaluated for their effectiveness.			
4.3: South-South cooperation and learning among participating countries of the multi-country proposal and other countries in the region is fostered			

In reference to outcome 4 (Table 8); a series of baseline studies were conducted, the CO joined other countries during regional level meetings, however research and development was not a priority outcome at CO level, as per evaluator’s observations. Though this evaluation report, the annual and quarterly reports have captured emerging lessons.

4.2.3 HeForShe and other initiatives for male engagement

Box 4: Selected voices on male engagement with the project.

‘During the baseline survey, 10% respondents were men.... 85% women were married.... hence male engagement was relevant...’

‘Day care facility for women with children at the project site, promoted women empowerment’

‘Men provide casual labour, offloading the fish...’

So: Field data collection for the evaluation of the Aquaculture Project in Bugiri, December 2021.

Finding 25: As described under section 1.5; sixty young men; among youth who control the Wakawaka landing site or bay, received fishing gear, boats, and nets for wild fish hunting in August 2020. This helped improve their livelihoods, and their interest to protect women, as the women did CFF. While the youth assert that the materials were sub-standard and confiscated, within six-months of receiving these items; contrary to this, the project management assert that the youth fished Nile Perch, and yet the nets given had been appropriate for Tilapia.

Additionally, Youth stated the items were in disrepair when recovered, they now have the two engines, and without boats or nets. Moreover, that two boats received were not enough for them, they had to fish in rotations, one group after another. The young men are now redundant, a risk to project and community security. They face police arrest for redundancy. HeforShe inputs lacked systematic follow, culminating in partial empowerment of the Youth. (Also see box 4 for more information on male engagement with the project).

Finding 26: Cross-country linking and learning; information sharing on CSA investment' impact of efforts to close the gender gap in agricultural productivity; is demonstrated by the minutes and records of the periodical regional meetings and updates, that were coordinated under ESARO, and with the donor. This acknowledges that most of the project implementation took place during COVID-19 travel restrictions, and closure of any international travels in 2020 and 2021. However, later on WEEB members were enabled to visit the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to see and learn from the fish markets there, and understand market requirements. Additionally, during the training of trainers for the beneficiaries; the women visited Pearl Aquatics cage fish farm and other key CFF related Entreprises, to strengthen women learning.

4.2.3 Project Impacts

Box 5: Examples of respondent voice on changes and transformations at individual level

'Women now have paid labor, project a source of employment, the harvest period process creates direct business opportunities'

'Those in production had a lot to do.... creating saving associations and merry go rounds'

'I am a single mother of four children and from earnings, I bought a plot of land ...put a locally fabricated fish cage, diversified business, trade in silver fish: charcoal'

'I had been rejected by my husband; I lived with my sister, with the employment, I have rented a house and I can pay school fees' 'self-confidence'

So: Field data collection for the evaluation of the Aquaculture Project in Bugiri, December 2021.

Finding 27: The project directly benefited women at grassroot / household level. A key impact is that CFF for Bugiri women succeeded to break the taboo that fishing in lake Victoria waters is an occupation reserved for men. Moreover, during the COVID-19 lockdowns, when men were not earning, the women employed in the project contributed to putting food on the family table and taking care of needs at their households.

Finding 28: Women CFF skills were enhanced from a total lack of knowledge to practical competence across the CFF value chain. Women cooperative and organizational skills were enhanced beyond being fish mongers or traders; which was the main role for women in the fishing industry; before the CSA project. Another unplanned effect is that the aquaculture project attracted the attention of MAAIF, who hosted the world fisheries day, at the project site. Subsequently, the President of Uganda invited project beneficiaries to share their CFF experience and stories with the office of the president.

Table 9: Project contribution to food and nutrition security/ impact indicators

Impact: Contribution to food and nutrition security and wealth generation by women in Africa increased.
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Indicator	National Status
Prevalence of poverty	Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90/day is 38.2% Poverty headcount ratio at \$3.20/day is 65.4% ⁴⁸
National average calories per capita intake	2083 Kcal/capita/day (2018 data) ⁴⁹
Household dietary diversity score	

Table 9 above presents national figures. Contribution attributable to the project was not measured.

4.2.4 COVID-19 pandemic effects on the project results

Finding 29:

Box 6: Respondent voice on impacts of COVID on project effectiveness

‘Not sure how impacted, if they did not have adequate feeds in store, due to lock down and interrupted foods; feeds are imported from Netherlands or Brazil.’

*‘Access to the market, many people could no longer move to the market; travelling to the farm was also affected.’
‘harvesting happened during COVID-19 and those close to project site participated in the work’*

So: Field data collection for the evaluation of the Aquaculture Project in Bugiri, December 2021.

- Box 6, demonstrates some respondents voice on COVID-19 impacts. It shows that the lockdowns limited beneficiary women participation at their assigned value chain levels and disrupted market access, as not more than 20 people were allowed to converge. This resulted in an estimated 30-40% beneficiaries did not actively participate at the CFF. To mitigate this challenge, the project initiated virtual meetings and also secured permission from Bugiri Resident District Commissioner (RDC) to convene up to 50 people instead of 20 while adhering to SOPs and in open space.
- Travel restrictions affected logistics and procurements of inputs into the project. Suddenly, the world was at stand still with no cross-border travels. The first harvest scheduled for December 2019, was only realized in December 2020.
- The fish landing site was no more accessible as transport was banned. Access to export market were on hold.
- UN Women staff faced travel restrictions, the project monitoring field visits was hence mostly by the DLG staff, who then reported to UN Women staff, remotely.
- Four women beneficiaries deceased during the pandemic, leaving orphaned families behind. WEEB is working on how the benefits of the deceased are passed on to families.

⁴⁸ Ibid SDG report Uganda (section 1.1)

⁴⁹ https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/10_2020Uganda_Food_Balance_Sheets_Report_2013-2018_Final_08Oct2020-1.pdf. Accessed H. Kivumbi 13/2/2022

- The lockdowns and closure of borders meant that the export market for the fish was deeply affected. Yet post lock downs, for example November 2020, the fish price dropped, this meant that gross income was affected. (Also see Box 6)

4.2.5 Project success enabling factors

Finding 30: Some success enabling factors identified included:

- Political stability, deep water aquaculture enabling and supportive policy environment, The project ownership at DLG level, with the district fisheries officer as the focal person, and involvement of political leadership during the mobilization of women was helpful. The partnership and management arrangements for the project were enabling. The site suitability studies, site selection was good, and would enable the expansion of fish farming.
- Economically, CFF in deep lake waters is a heavy capital investment. The CSR funds from Standard Bank Group, Swedish Development Organization and Msingi East Africa, was a key enabling factor. Additionally, the project offering employment and hiring of the beneficiary women to work on the farm across the CFF value chain; visa vie getting men to operationalize the business; with women just collecting profits is a good practice that put women in position of income earners. Women proved to be fast learners; maneuvered the boats on the lake, and produced fish, planting fingerlings, feeding them, and changing cage as per growth stage. Moreover, the project had many other indirect beneficiaries including the young men who received fishing gears, transporters, those in packaging; and it also has enhanced community food varieties.
- The social acceptability of the project by the male, family, and communities; enabled the continued participation of women in learning, networking, production and harvesting. The community ownership, publicity led by the DLG technical and political arms, motivated women/households to engage in the business. While the COVID-19 pandemic was a challenge, project management flexibility to allow continuity during the pandemic lock downs, was enabling.
- Technical Support, training, and skilling beneficiaries; adjusting the training modules to beneficiaries learning capacities, use of local language, hands on practical training by experts in the subject matter enabled the transfer of skills, and the subsequent employability of women down the CFF value chain. This bears in mind the fact that CFF is a new innovative project idea, women before the project commenced lacked knowledge on CFF.

4.2.6 Challenges, what did not work well (SWOT it)

Box 7: Selected respondent voices on challenges

‘Implementing partner, Pearl Aquatics, did the planning; the design the road map, and present to the district; The DLG depended so much on external technical support; other key stakeholders did not help think through the project. There was over-dependency on Pearl Aquatics. The DLG needed to question Pearl Aquatics, and not take everything. ... Even explaining WEEB. Discordancy, the DLG took a back seat.

‘Pearl Aquatics were to handover the project to WEEB, they delayed putting up the structures. Women did not grasp the company well....’

‘A SACCO ⁵⁰to buy the Fish, WAFISCO, this was discarded, and caused some challenges; it was dropped.... ‘

⁵⁰ Savings and Cooperative Organization

'Women complaint on forced opening accounts versus Stanbic Account; is a communication issue; ...an outreach, process to open bank accounts, at village level; A balance of 100,000 UGX is needed otherwise account faces charges, unfortunately no dividend means the account was not used; some beneficiaries have moved on; out of Bugiri, doing other businesses.'

'Waiting for the dividend by beneficiary women was not OK....reflects. communication gaps feedback mechanism to beneficiaries lacked.'

'Transport from Iremba is UGX 30000, the refund is 10,000, it is not cost beneficial to come to project site'

So: Field data collection for the evaluation of the Aquaculture Project in Bugiri, December 2021.

Finding 31: Some emerging challenges within the project (weaknesses) or outside the project as threats are presented in here (also see box 7 for respondent voice on challenges):

Internal weaknesses or limitations.

- **Delayed project start**, delayed inputs, outcomes, coverage, and reach; hence an estimated 30% beneficiaries (head count during data collection), have not had the chance to be employed in production, harvest, or marketing. They have had no monetary benefit from the project, beyond the skills they received.
- **Parallel implementation versus working within the DLG systems:** Some respondents raised the concern that the project appeared to have depended more on the technical expertise with limited DLG debate on key issues like WEEB concept and structures, however the evaluation finds evidence of DLG involvement and inputs, except for the political arm that felt not well informed.
- **Communication and information sharing among stakeholders:** The political arm of the DLG, lacked key updates on the project management, WEEB financial status; creating tensions and the missed opportunity of positive advocacy role of the political arm; and transparency, accountability.
- **Post-harvest handling, including marketing the fish.** There are several players and competition in the market. Initially the women were offered the harvested fish at low prices, to re-sell. The approach to marketing was for women to purchase fish in clusters. Some women complied, other clusters did not work out, yet some women traded as individuals. Some women failed to raise capital to purchase the fish and market it. While smoking kilns are available, the market for smoked fish remains low.
- **Challenges establishing the prime market:** Project delays implied capacity building for women around the prime market was done in the last months of the project. Now women have to mobilize own resources and establish a prime market. Women need support on this, some who were invited to join in, expressed feelings of a financial strain. Financial credit from the bank or from WEEB earnings should be tapped in to enable this, and this could be a further extension of WEEB investments, and profit sources. A feasibility study can help inform profitability of the venture.
- **Poor monitoring of the support to the youth** lacked follow through, hence to the youth, the project benefits lasted just six-months. Youth' boats and fishing nets did not align to MAAIF standards; hence authorities confiscated the materials. Though the project management states that materials issued were for Tilapia fishing, yet

youth used these for Nile perch fishing as well. Moreover, the two boats were few and the 60-youth used them in turns or rotations. With no boats or nets to go fishing; youth feel they lost the teamwork, they are now unemployed, and face being charged with redundancy and getting involved in criminal acts. Future initiatives need to monitor HeForShe investment and ensure the use of quality standard equipment, so it does not appear like tokenism.

Threats and risks

- **The COVID-19 pandemic business restrictions** have been highlighted in section 4.2.4 above, for example, closed borders meant delayed procurement of inputs, and closed export markets; closure of internal travel meant that only beneficiaries near project site were engaged, and more as elaborated in the section.
- **The death of fish from the cage farms:** The farm suffered death of fish; due to infection as per technical experts, or due to lake acid-welling, or to the rising levels of lake water. Such are possibly recurrent risks and can impact project sustainability, if the CFF is not financially cushioned.
- **Transition WAFISCO to WEEB:** Women initially mobilized under the Wakawaka Fisheries Cooperative Society (WAFISCO); and in 2021, this changed, on realizing that men in WAFISCO dominated the women business. Women Economic Empowerment Bugiri (WEEB) was then established as a women led and owned limited liability company. However, there remains confusion around moneys paid to WAFISCO, and moneys paid to WEEB for membership. WAFISCO had required women to pay an extra UGX 250,000 to buy shares. Some women paid this sum; however, funds remain unaccounted for as WAFISCO held no AGM to discuss the fund status with beneficiaries and has hitherto paid no dividend.
- **Failure to pay an annual dividend:** Women shareholders to WEEB were promised to receive an annual dividend from the proceeds of the CFF, ranging between UGX750,000 to 1 million UGX per beneficiary. This was not realized throughout the project life. This caused anxiety, and trust issues among beneficiaries and key stakeholders. A members annual general meeting to declare the dividend has not been held since 2019.
- **WEEB leadership, governance, and management growth needs:** WEEB is a relatively young company, operated by women beneficiaries. At the time of the evaluation, the board of governors did not seem to be experienced in Governance and holding the executing team accountable, this a risk to sustainability beyond 3, 5,10 years, if not acted on urgently.

4.3 Efficiency

4.3.1 Budget allocation

Finding 32: The total project budget was UGX 1,852,494,934; the project funds by donor/contributor was presented under the stakeholder section, with Standard Bank Group CSR as the major donor \$600,000.00. At project onset, UN Women signed a letter of agreement with the DLG. The DLG maintained separate accounts, records and supporting documents, on the project

as stipulated in the letter of agreement. At DLG level, the District Chief Accounting Officer (CAO) was responsible for all project funds and accountability (by mandate).

A bank account was opened, with Stanbic Bank, dedicated to project funds by the DLG (see box 8). The signatories included the CAO, and the fisheries officer. The CAO approved all expenditure, and authorized payments. The district shared periodical project assessment reports (PARs) with UN Women. The controls were firm and ensured efficiency, with no wastage of time, money, and energy. Cash flow made sense and was aligned to the annual workplans. The CAO delivered timely reports, in line with the M&E framework and other guidelines from CO.⁵¹

4.3.2 Project management, and coordination arrangements.

Box 8: Respondent voice on project efficiency

'Efficiency – account opened, directly to DLG, signatories CAO, the fisheries. The CAO approved the funds /authorization, firm controls. They were efficient and cash flow made sense, with Pearl Aquatics. Accounting to UN Women...'

So: Field data collection for the evaluation of the Aquaculture Project in Bugiri, December 2021.

Finding 32: This was a Public, Private Partnerships (PPP); and stakeholders with their various roles was presented in section 1.4 and table 3. Bugiri DLG as the key public institution, worked closely with MAAIF and NaFIRRI. Private partners included Pearl Aquatics⁵², Msingi East Africa⁵³ and WEEB. The project falls under WEE program component of the CO Strategic Note.⁵⁴ The participating partners had well defined roles along the fish farming value chain, that leveraged their expertise and capacities. Respondents and key documents reviewed demonstrate the finding that the CSA Bugiri Aquaculture project management and coordination structure; as well as the operationalized fish farming value chain were efficient.

Finding 33: Through the project funding (CFF is capital intensive) by the Standard Bank Group through UN Women, the DLG effectively mobilized the beneficiary women in clusters; technical expert assistance through the CFF value chain, day to day hands on mentoring and field trainings to the previously unemployed beneficiary women, Providing employment for the accessible beneficiary women in the CFF production, feeding over 9 months for two cycles; harvesting and marketing; the provision of fisheries extension services through the farm manager and DLG officials.

⁵¹ Key informant interview, evaluation Bugiri Aquaculture project, December 2021.

Also see: Project Assessment Reports, June 2020, December 2020, June 2021

⁵² A leading Aquaculture private company in Uganda.

⁵³ A company limited by guarantee based in Kenya that supports aquatics in the East African region

⁵⁴ UN Women, Interim Donor Report, Standard Bank South Africa funded; January 2020-June 2020; Increasing Women economic empowerment through Cage fish farming in Bugiri district, Uganda. Pg 7-11.

Also see: Value chain Analysis report and Key Informant Interviews during field data collection, December 2021

4.3.3 Implementation efficiency

Finding 34: The project efficiently conducted the international procurement of CFF infrastructure and consumables, the fries, fish feeds and cages. Efficiency was further analyzed, visa vie the Porter's value chain⁵⁵ components, as follows:

- **Delayed Inbound logistics:** There were delays around inbound logistics, the procurement of fish fries and cages; the project delayed one year start to production, and this inevitably affected efficiency and the delivery of all set results.
- **Operations:** The mobilization of women to work in production, positioning of cages; adding fish fries to the cage; feeding the fish 6-9 months; harvesting the fish, was successfully done. Though with the delays in logistics, some key results set for the two-year period, including marketing and prime marketing were not attained. With COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, all mobilized 1400 women could not be involved in project work, creating a portion of beneficiaries that benefited from the project, and those that did not directly benefit from working on the farm.
- **Outbound logistics:** Harvested fish were weighed in kilograms and rendered ready for the market. This was attained, as at a certain age, fish must be harvested. However, the market fluctuated, and fish price fell during post lock down season. A track with refrigeration storage facilities was procured to help preserve the fish, as it is transported to the markets. More details on the truck under the section on sustainability.
- **Marketing** as part of the value chain, was implemented as a learning process; some purchasers were beneficiary women in clusters; others individual beneficiary women; and other traders small and big, those with refrigeration tracks. Yet prime marketing remains an unpacked phenomenon. Export market to DRC, Rwanda, and Kenya, was realized.
- **Service:** Value addition through smoking plus activities in the market was applied when fish died, and yet the project has no big customers demanding smoked fish, so the kiln is not very used.

Finding 35: The support services linked to key value chain activities were also rated efficient and cost beneficial: The WEEB infrastructure: The building, the articles of association, membership, governance; Human resource management: The executing team is lean, and includes a trained fisheries officer; the women beneficiaries as part-time workers at the fish farm, production, harvesting and marketing; the security team; and the Governance oversight; Technical support and leadership by Pearl Aquatics; Msingi East Africa, DLG fisheries officers; UN Women WEE program officer and other support staff was delivered efficiently; the procurement for the inbound logistics was by UN Women Global and CO systems, and was guided by Pearl Aquatics. Project Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning used the project M&E framework, was led by UN Women and key project staff and the DLG, had limitation that it was mostly remote for UN Women staff, due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

Finding 36: At the time of the evaluation, WEEB the company with oversight of the project was still at its infancy. While physical infrastructure was observed by evaluators as of great standards and was in use; the related management and governance arrangements were still at the infancy. The board had not taken on the full responsibility expected of it, it required more orientation,

⁵⁵ Pearl Aquatics, Value Chain Analysis of Farmed Fish in Bugiri, January 2020; Page 9

accompaniment, and mentorship, to ensure effective and efficient sustenance of project operations and benefits, and to ultimately remit the expected annual dividend to the beneficiary women, while holding the company and its operations of the CFF afloat. Human resource management arrangements were in place, and have brought the company to date, though there was the need for sharing financial performance reports with other stakeholders, from the board.

4.4 Coherence, Alignment to UN Cooperation Framework and UN Women priorities and strategic plan

Finding 37: Intergovernmental support working with the DLG and MAAIF aligns with UN Women normative work. As explained in section 1, the aquaculture project was climate smart. It aligned with the UN Development Assistance Framework for Uganda (UNDAFF- 2016-2020) and UN Women’s Development Results Framework (DRF), goal 2: “Women, especially those living in poverty and vulnerability, are economically empowered and enabled to reap the benefits of development”. The Aquaculture project within UN Women Uganda CO, falls under WEE output and is coherent with other WEE investments including the CSA projects, in Gulu and in Nwoya, fruit farming intercropped with cereals; and the CO support to over 5000 Market Women in 7 markets, which use the same theory of change and project management team.⁵⁶ While UN Women had engagement with FAO, learning from FAO’ pond fish farming in Karamoja, and from UNEP at regional level, the two-year project had not yet moved to being

4.4.1 Application of the HRBA and RBM

Finding 38: There is evidence that the project applied key UN program principles including the HRBA, RBM, LNOB. The program design tool consideration of the integration of other key CO output areas including the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW), HeForShe and Sexual Reproductive Health within the trainings. As elaborated earlier, the project was signed off by MAAIF, and the DLG; meaning implementation strategy was coherent with National Frameworks.⁵⁷

4.5 Sustainability

Box 9: Respondent voice on sustainability and viability of the project

‘Yes, in the long run, on the right path, organizing the company needed; Stanbic is on the board; in the long-run it’s a viable project. The intended beneficiary must get something out of the project.’

‘A social enterprise, profitable, with potential to lift women from poverty.’

‘Women have built homes, bought livestock, assets and better relations at home.’

‘The DLG handed over the day to day of the company, they (women) manage the fish business...’

‘The DLG benefits from the local tax, licenses for selling fish’

‘The bottom line is management; sustainability depends on how well the project is managed.’

So: Field data collection for the evaluation of the Aquaculture Project in Bugiri, December 2021.

⁵⁶ Key informant interviews and UN Women CO annual reports 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Also see: C. Faye and H. Kivumbi; Uganda Country Portfolio Evaluation Report, Page 19 (Para 63), December 2020

⁵⁷ Key Informant Interviews, national and DLG level; Evaluation Bugiri Aquaculture Project, December 2021

Finding 39: UN Women funding had ended six months before the evaluation and the project ownership was fully with women beneficiaries, under WEEB Uganda Limited, an incorporated company limited by shares. WEEB was formerly registered in May 2021; has a farm manager (a fisheries extension worker) and three other fulltime staff, as the executing arm. WEEB employs at least 10 of the beneficiary women weekly, and on a rotation basis, to oversee and sustain the production at the CFF and other more women in the harvesting. The Governance structures for WEEB had just been revamped, at the time of the evaluation. The beneficiary women led board, had not fully assumed power and leadership of activities, at the time of the evaluation.⁵⁸ (Box 9)

Finding 40: The CFF value chain was operational, production, harvesting, and marketing activities were observed, with the impression that the project is so far sustainable. Other examples of sustainability include: the infrastructure to reduce post-harvest losses in the aquaculture project constructed. Plans for the structure was prepared by the District Physical Planner. Construction was under the supervision of the District Production Engineer The land base has a structure for safe storage of fish feeds; comprises a store, accommodation, standard sanitary facilities, office, and day care center for children of mothers who are on duty demonstrating integration of gender in the day-to-day activities of CFF. The fish smoking kiln is available through it is under used due to the lack of customers.⁵⁹

Finding 41: Fisheries extension services continue to be sustained through the full-time manager, who provides oversight of day-to-day activities, including, feeding of the fish and feed management as well as monitoring and reporting on performance. The manager who has vast experience in fish farming; also understands the local context and dynamics. He underwent further refresher training and coaching (3 months), at Pearl Aquatics' Fish farm. An accountant was further recruited to support effective management of the resources. Two local security guards (one female and one male) were engaged to provide security during day and two more-armed security personnel were recruited to provide security at night. A coxswain (boat driver) was recruited to operate the ordinary and the pontoon security boat.⁶⁰

Finding 42: The refrigeration fish transportation truck (lorry), as described earlier on, provides another income stream, albeit much lower than the CFF revenues. However, there is the question on WEEB readiness to manage and be custodians of the track; effectively and efficiently manage its operations sustainably over the next 3-5 years, and re- purchase a similar or better truck.

⁵⁸ Key informant interviews, field data collection for the evaluation of the Aquaculture project, December 2021.

And Observations by the independent consultant, during site visit to Wakawaka landing site, the project site

Also see: Transition Concept: Cage Fish Farming By Women In Bugiri District Project, UN Women, Pearl Aquatics, Bugiri DLG, a 2021 document. Page 1-6.

Women Economic Empowerment Bugiri (WEEB) Organizational Structure And Financial Flow Hierarchy

⁵⁹ Ibid. Key informant interviews and observations by evaluators.

⁶⁰ Ibid. Key informant interviews and observations by evaluators.

Also see: Transition Concept for the CFF. 202.

Management strategy for the truck would be helpful, moreover the generated bonus income could be used to establish prime markets or merry go rounds for women at community level.⁶¹

Finding 43: The skills, training, practical work on the CFF, networking, marketing gained by participating women are sustainable. Other indirect beneficiaries of the CFF, casual laborers, loaders, transporters etc., continue to benefit from the investment. Though the Youth initiatives had collapsed at the time of the review, the youth interviewed stated respect for the women in the CFF, and they requested for extended support, to re-enter the fishing business.

Finding 44: To further strengthen the attained sustainability, there is the need to strengthen WEEB governance, governance structures, management, and leadership skills. WEEB board had not been oriented at the time of this evaluation. There is the need to design strategies to ensure that the interests of the rural poor women, the non-board members are taken care of. There is the need for transparency, accountability to the 1400 beneficiary women. Good governance would further sustainability and requires goodwill and altruism to ensure safety nets and protection of poor woman interests.

Finding 45: Additionally, interest shown by GoU, MAAIF and the parliament of Uganda, during the visit of the world fisheries day commemoration, imply a potential for sustainability and replication of FF in other settings. Though at the time of the review, there was no practical commitment from GoU, on funding or sustaining the project. Moreover, the national policy frameworks, involvement of the DLG are enabling. The DLG continues to benefit from the local tax, licenses for selling fish.

Finding 46: UN Women exit strategy should have been gradual to include a longer-term technical support to WEEB governance and management structures. Future investments should consider these replicable futures: the financial investment and efficient management of resources, tailored technical support along the value chain, the site suitability, baseline, and other assessments; beneficiary mobilization, skilling, training, and employment across the CFF value chain. Yet WEEB funds might not fully cushion operations, in event of unforeseen risks and disasters, as the case escalated COVID-19 lock downs, or the unforeseen death of fish at the farm.⁶²

4.6 Best Practices, and Lessons learnt

4.6.1 Emerging best practices

Finding 47:

- The project design is a model, funding, mobilizing women, key baseline and site suitability studies, skilling the women along the value chain, establishing the fish farm, access to extension services, creating a company owned by the beneficiaries, opportunities to trade are good practices.
- Employment of the women in production of fish, feeding, harvesting was key to the women empowerment model, employment for women. The capacity building, on cooperatives, networking, and interrelationship. Many women have been complaining of lack of businesses; and this plus other business alternative IGA.

⁶¹ Ibid. Key informant interview and the evaluator saw a notice of Truck for leasing, exhibited at the production site.

⁶² Ibid. Key Informant interviews

- Empowering women, establishing the fish farm, creating trade, are good practices. The involvement of the women was key, employment for women, and capacity building, women networking, and interrelationship. Many women have been complaining of lack of businesses. Training CFF and financial literacy in local language; sessions at Wakawaka. Training hands on CFF value chain skills and financial literacy in local language; a good practice adapting training materials to practical need. Some respondents perceived that the DLG took backstage and listened to the consultant, risking the project being parallel versus within the systems, and this is a risk for sustainability.
- Male engagement was key, as 85% of women were married. It enabled positive household level relations; while empowering the youth enabled beneficiaries the 1,400 beneficiaries to access the project site, the Wakawaka bay area to utilize the lake water resource for fishing, which is a traditionally a male dominated domain.

4.6.2 Emerging lessons

Finding 48:

1. Cage Fish Farming in deep waters (the lake), has proven to be more resourceful, and with quick and rapid sustainable returns when compared to agriculture or pond or wild fish farming. Putting women in clusters to form cooperatives, skilling, equipping and establishing infrastructure to support CFF for empowering women has been demonstrated as feasible and sustainable CSA for WEE.
2. The project demonstrates that women can be part of fish farming economy; when mobilized, empowered; equipped, skilled and accompanied. The CSA aquaculture project is a learning model for the country, and for Africa. However, such project needs adequate funding and continuous capacity building/training.
3. A missed opportunity was training and integration of WEE with sexual reproductive health rights information and knowledge, and second chance education even though it had been planned. Integration of EVAW into trainings is not well captured beyond the HeForShe initiative.
4. Additionally, from economic empowerment perspectives, learning on entrepreneurship, and personal entrepreneurship skills was a missed opportunity; and this could be the reason why some of the beneficiary women failed to grasp the availed business opportunity; and waited for the dividend; or for the farm manager's phone call to come work on the farm, or to purchase fish for marketing. These could be some of the women who asserted that they were yet to benefit from the project.
5. Investments in membership fees, or opening bank account with Stanbic bank branch, with the needed minimal balance of 100,000 UGX; or investing more money 250,000 to establish the prime market was seen as a financial strainer or questionable project demand. Implying certain women beneficiaries maintained a donation mentality, albeit they seem to be less than 50%. And that alternative funding for establishing Prime Markets need to be identified, WEEB or donor funding.
6. The Stanbic Bank branch needed to have engaged with the project much earlier on, other than joining at a later stage, around project closure. Beneficiaries need to be prepared, e.g., financial training, access to credit at the start-up of the project other than late when the project is closing. Additionally, early engagement would have enabled

- Stanbic Bank visibility, even at community level, whilst UN Women was more visible with the community and the DLG.
7. The PPP partnership model was a success, though the initial phases, necessitated the DLG learning how to work with the implementing partner, and UN Women as the donor. Signed letters of agreement were helpful. Some respondents noted that the DLG took a backseat, and missed in-depth debate on Pearl Aquatics propositions, more so the establishment of WEEB. Nonetheless there is ample evidence of DLG technical teams' involvement in Technical Support, project design, infrastructure construction, site suitability assessment. The DLG should have input discussions and owned the project exit process including the articles of association of WEEB. The technical arm should have done more efforts to keep the DLG political abreast with project success and challenges.
 8. The male engagement strategy was a pacifier that enabled beneficiaries access the project site, the Wakawaka bay area and to utilize the lake water resource for the CFF value chain securely; a formally traditionally a male dominated domain.
 9. Money and income directly into the women's pockets versus women investments into the project activities; the investment seemed to out-weigh the profits or benefits to some beneficiaries. Women were requested to invest in establishing the Prime Market, opening bank accounts as individuals and as community-based organizations under the clusters. Yet they received no dividend and there were no provisions for Merry Go Rounds or VSLA SACCOs, to ensure Women pick some financial benefit. The lesson is that with such a project to succeed, ready market and relevant policies for marketing sells, taxes etc., has to be in place. Communication with beneficiaries need emphasize their role including financial inputs, to reap profits.
 10. Moreover, some of the women had to travel to Jinja or Busia districts, to open the accounts, as Bugiri had only the Centenary Rural Development Bank. As this was not an immediate nor mandatory project requirement; and as the dividend is yet to be paid; this was a premature advice to beneficiaries. This raised anxiety and a feeling of 'no gain' among some women, who found the mobilization of moneys for account opening; and travelling to neighboring districts, costly.
 11. As the project presently is self-sustaining, and re-investing resources for key CFF operations including fish foods and personnel labor expenses; WEEB board and management should consider alternatives to making the project beneficial to all 1400 women. Releasing a limited amount of funds to the clusters for 'merry go round' to women could be an interim gap bridging measure. Additionally, WEEB management and board need to invest in an annual general meeting, and other communication measures to the beneficiaries and stakeholders; where financial statements are presented, and a dividend declared or not declared.
 12. Anxiety and dissatisfaction due to the unpaid dividend: Wrong method of declaring a dividend on projected income/projected profits had been used. Yet WEEB management did not work through communication, feedback mechanism, and informing all stakeholders through annual general meetings or through other means, ending up with poor management of beneficiary expectations. This should be acted on as a matter of

- urgency. A dividend should be declared, based on financial statements and books of accounts.
13. Effective communications for information sharing and to manage beneficiaries' expectations: Based on listed gaps and challenges; on COVID-19 and beneficiary participation in production, harvesting and marketing; non-payment of annual dividend; and prime marketing; the project should have invested in communications with beneficiaries and vertically with DLG stakeholders, public relations and explaining project success, challenges, and changed strategies driven by reality and needs.
 14. An effective and efficient implemented WEE project: a strong government (especially local government) ownership, leadership, and support, Gender mainstreaming (planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting) is key ingredient of WEE for effective outcomes and sustainability, and addressing entrenched gender inequalities and discrimination against women in economic participation.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The evaluation concludes that Bugiri Aquaculture CSA project was relevant to the Ugandan context; and contributes to sectoral policies and targets; Uganda's NDPII and NDPIII; the SDGs and key regional agenda. There is evidence that the Aquaculture project is high-impact, scalable, transformative, with potential to deepen UN Women GEWE efforts. An estimated 60-70% ⁶³of the targeted 1400 women, who had access to the project site, considering the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic movement restrictions, demonstrate benefit from employment opportunity, and re-investment of income earned. There was however limited evidence of beneficiaries participating fully and equally in decision-making at all levels; for the development of GEWE policy interventions. ⁶⁴

Conclusion 2: Through the project funding (CFF is capital intensive) by the Standard Bank Group through UN Women, the DLG effectively mobilizing the beneficiary women in geographical clusters; technical expert assistance through the CFF value chain, day to day hands on mentoring and field trainings to the previously unemployed beneficiary women, Providing employment for the accessible beneficiary women in the CFF production, feeding over 9 months for two cycles; harvesting and marketing; the provision of fisheries extension services through the farm manager and DLG officials. The project efficiently conducted the international procurement of CFF infrastructure and consumables, the fries, fish feeds and cages.

Conclusion 3: There was ample evidence that project deployed innovative and more effective CSA tools, technologies, infrastructure, and institutions to achieve sustainable resource management. Though WEEB the private company currently managing the CFF requires strengthening on governance, leadership, management, altruism, humanity, selflessness, and

⁶³ Though this was a qualitative study, during the field data collection, the consultant did a rough head count of beneficiaries who stated that they have not yet gained from the project, versus those that stated that it was beneficial, and gave examples or testimonies on how they had gained from the project from its inception to the time of evaluation.

⁶⁴ Four of these beneficiaries were reported to have passed on during the project period. The cause of death was not established.

accountability to enable their custodianship of the WEE transformative enterprise for the benefit of the targeted poor, uneducated beneficiary women, their households, and the community at large.

Conclusion 4: Cross-country linking and learning; information sharing; is demonstrated by minutes and records of the periodical regional meetings and updates, that were coordinated under ESARO, and with the donor. This bears in mind, the COVID-19 travel restrictions. Additionally, some WEEB members were enabled to visit the DRC to understand market requirements. Women reported benefit from multi-trainings and exposures, including working in groups, and networking; swimming, operation of boats and surviving on the lake; finance management, savings, the hands-on trainings along the CFF value chain.

Conclusion 5: Gender relations at household level improved; the employed women, put money and food on the table at home, more so during the COVID-19 lock downs, when men were no more employed; this created respect and recognition from their spouse and in-laws. Transformations included women investing in diversified business, some sent their children to school in neighboring Kenya, and a few bought land, built house for family; expanded trade to Busia, DRC. Interest shown by GoU, MAAIF and the parliament of Uganda since the commemoration of the world fisheries day; imply potential for sustainability and replication of CFF. The farm operations are self-sustaining and functioning even after June 2021; when external donor funding ceased; demonstrating potential for sustainability.

Conclusion 6: The HeForShe initiatives reached sixty young men; helped improve youth livelihoods, and support/protection of the CFF activities. Though the youth assert that the materials were sub-standard and confiscated by authorities, within six-months of operations. The young men are now redundant, a risk to project and community security, indicating a gap in monitoring youth the HeForShe activities. Noted also were the missed opportunities in integration of WEE with sexual reproductive health information. There was a lack of training in personal entrepreneurship skills; and this could be the reason why some of the beneficiary women failed to grasp and make use of the availed business opportunity; and waited for the dividend; or for the farm manager's phone call to come work on the farm, or to purchase fish for marketing. Some of the women considered financial input on their part as distressing, implying certain beneficiaries maintained a donation mentality, albeit they seem to be less than 50%.⁶⁵

Conclusion 7: Future projects at DLG level, should be utilized to strengthen DLG systems, versus parallel systems, that are heavily dependent on external technical expertise, throughout project cycle. The technical arm at DLG should have sustained communication, updates, and clarifications with the political arm of the DLG, to harness the positive advocacy role of the political arm. Non-payment of the annual dividend was coupled with project management, non-communication with beneficiaries and other stakeholders; on the status of accounts, balance sheets from the CFF generated finances. Implying the declaration of dividend had been premature, and merely based on projected and not actual balance sheets. This reflects a gap with management of public company and beneficiary expectations on economic earnings.

5.2 Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Replicate the deep water CFF WEE model: as a top priority, UN Women in Uganda and at regional level; the GoU, DLG and other funders should replicate and invest

⁶⁵ The project consultant clarified that materials issued were for tilapia fish hunting from the lake, and it is likely the Youth engaged in Nile perch fish hunting, the nets were not the standard recommended gauge for the Nile perch.

further in models similar to the ‘Bugiri CFF deep water aquaculture project model’, as a success model that can sustainably enhance women productivity and access to productive resources in the Agriculture sector. Replicable aspects include funding, mobilizing women, key baseline and site suitability studies, skilling the women along the value chain, establishing the fish farm, access to extension services, creating a company owned by the beneficiaries, opportunities to trade are good practices. Integrate sexual reproductive health rights information, EVAW, Second Chance Education, HeForShe initiative.

Responsible actor: UN Women, Donors, GoU the DLG and MAAIF

Priority level: Very High

Recommendation 2: Further strengthen WEEB leadership structures for sustainability: As a matter of high priority, UN Women Uganda Co, should invest in strengthening WEEB management, leadership, and governance, to enable the Women in Leadership, to deliver quality, accountable work, that further economically empowers the targeted beneficiaries, their households, and immediate communities. Invest in creating the prime markets and the efficient management of the truck.

Responsible actor: UN Women CO

Priority level: Very High

Recommendation 3: WEEB annual general meeting and declaration of dividend to shareholders: WEEB should prepare books of accounts, and plan for annual general meeting to empower beneficiary women understand economic performance of the CFF. And to clarify whether a dividend is due or not, based on performance and projections. WEEB could consider interim economic empowerment activities, like releasing a limited amount of funds to the women clusters for ‘merry go round’ to women could be an interim gap measure. WEEB shall benefit from accompaniment and mentoring the next 3-5 years, to be able to deliver this successfully, efficiently, and effectively.

Responsible actor: WEEB board and management

Priority level: Very High

Recommendation 4: Investment in knowledge management, research, and learning: Future CSA WEE projects should invest in knowledge management and research, as good practice and to enable evidence based, implementation and sharing of lessons. This could be a good basis for policy advocacy work

Responsible actor: UN Women CO and ESARO

Priority level: High

Recommendation 5: Entrepreneurship skills as part of the training package for WEE: WEE trainings should adapt training women on personal entrepreneurship competencies, in Uganda this is delivered by the Private Sector Foundation Uganda, or Makerere University Business School Entrepreneurship center and other like service supplies. This sharpens entrepreneurship skills and enables women to own the benefit from the project. Integrate Sexual Reproductive Health, EVAW, Women in Leadership and Second Chance Education.

Responsible actor: UN Women CO

Priority level: High

Recommendation 6: Future projects to support marketing, access to finance credit and establishing the prime market: There is the need for further training and capitalization. Additionally, as the investment is high, future donor funds, or WEEB board and management should consider investing in the Prime Markets as a WEEB project. In this way, interest gains from the Prime Market become gains for WEEB, and enrich WEEB financial pot for the dividend, or for moneys into women clusters, for merry go round, village savings and loans associations and onward economic investment by individual women.

Responsible actor: UN Women CO, WEEB

Priority level: High

Recommendation 7: Invest in communication and public relations to manage expectations: Based on listed gaps and challenges; on COVID-19 and beneficiary participation in production, harvesting and marketing; non-payment of annual dividend; and prime marketing; the project should have invested in communications with beneficiaries and vertically with DLG stakeholders, public relations and explaining project success, challenges, and changed strategies driven by reality and needs.

Responsible actor: WEEB

Priority level: High

Recommendation 8: Systems strengthening approach versus parallel project implementation: The PPP model was a success, and to enable sustainability, UN Women should increasingly work on GoU or DLG systems strengthening, and work within the systems.

Responsible actor: UN Women CO, the DLG

Priority level: High

Recommendation 9: WEEB should develop a strategic and resource mobilization plan, annual work plans, and produce periodical reports, to share emerging success and lessons, and where possible attract more partners. WEEB should have online presence for more visibility. And have a communication plan that feedback to all stakeholders, to showcase growth, success and ensure transparency. Though donor funding ended, soliciting funding, or additional donor funding can't be underscored.

Responsible actor: WEEB

Priority level: High

Recommendation 10: Contingency planning and emergency preparedness to manage risk and catastrophes: External and contingency funding would enable the prevention, response, and mitigation of risks like environmental changes, diseased fish, and any other risks. WEEB should have a clear risk analysis; and risk mitigation measures to survive such catastrophes, and even future pandemic lockdowns.

Responsible actor: UN Women CO, WEEB

Priority level: High

6. ANNEXES

Annex I: Acronyms and Abbreviation

BfW	Buy From Women
CAO	Chief Accounting Officer
CFF	Cage Fish Farming
CO	Country Offices
CO2	Carbon Dioxide
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease Of 2019
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DRC	The Democratic Republic Of Congo
DRF	Development Results Framework
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
ESARO	East Southern Africa Regional Office
EVAWG	End Violence Against Women and Girls
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FPI	Flagship Programme Initiative
FY	Financial Year
GERAAS	UN Women’s Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System
OEC/DAC	Overseas Development Assistance Committee of the Economic Cooperation and Development
GERAAS	UN Women’s Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women Economic Empowerment
GoU	Government of Uganda
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
ICT	Information And Communications Technology
IEAS	International Evaluation and Audit Services
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGA	Income Generating Activity
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGAs	Local Government Authority
LIFE	Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprise Project
LNOB	Leaving No One Behind
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industries and Fisheries

MDAs	Ministries, Departments, And Agencies
MT	Metric tons
NaFIRRI	National Fisheries Resources and Research Institute
NDPII	National Development Plans II
NDPIII	National Development Plans III
NFP	National Fisheries Policy
OECD/DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Economic Cooperation and Development
PAR	Project Assessment Reports
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RBM	Results Based Management
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SACO	Savings and Credit Cooperate Organization
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SN	Strategic Note
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SSA	Sub-Saharan African
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
UGX	Uganda Shillings
UN Women	The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Program
USD	United States Dollar
VSLA	Village Saving Loan Association
WAFISCO	Walimi Fisheries Cooperation
WEE	Women Economic Empowerment
WEEB	Women Economic Empowerment
WLHIV	Women Living with HIV

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Annex III CSA project description, goal, aims, outcomes, and outputs

Table 10: CSA project description, goal, aims, outcomes, and outputs

<p>CSA Project Goal: Strengthen women’s agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture products in Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda</p> <p>Project aims:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Increase women’s agricultural productivity using CSA techniques and approaches II. Support women in value addition of selected agricultural products and increase access to market and finance 	
Outcomes	Outputs
<p>Outcome 1. Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate</p>	1.1. Women’s access to labor and time-saving equipment and services increased
	1.2. Women’s access to climate-smart non-labor agricultural inputs improved
	1.3. Access to climate–resilient agricultural extension services and information for women and men farmers improved
	1.4. Socio-cultural barriers (including gender-based violence) reduced through policy and advocacy (including engaging men at household level) to increase agriculture productivity and women’s equal land rights
<p>Outcome 2: Opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain are provided</p>	2.1: Women’s shift to high value agricultural enterprises (selected crops, fisheries, animal husbandry etc.) and inclusion in green agricultural value chains at the national, regional, and international levels achieved
	2.2: Local infrastructure developed to improve access to markets, reduce labor, and save time for women value chain actors
	2.3: Capacity of women value chain organizations for production and marketing is increased
<p>Outcome 3: Using ICT platforms (BfW) for increased access to markets and finance for women</p>	3.1: Deploy the ‘BUYFROMWOMEN’ (BfW) digital platform to connect women farmers to large scale buyers of agricultural products
	3.2: Information stored in the BfW platform is being used as a form of collateral for women’s access to finance
	3.3: Link women to financial institutions providing innovative financing in CSA
<p>Outcome 4: The Multi-Country Project is coordinated and</p>	4.1: UN Women Country offices, and agricultural research institutions in the respective countries and at

CSA Project Goal: Strengthen women’s agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture products in Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, and Uganda

Project aims:

- I. Increase women’s agricultural productivity using CSA techniques and approaches
- II. Support women in value addition of selected agricultural products and increase access to market and finance

Outcomes	Outputs
implemented with a focus on ‘research for development’ and documenting lessons learned	regional level engaged to increase research on gender and CSA in the region
	4.2: Regional and national institutional, policy and legal frameworks that will be key enablers to facilitate women’s engagement in CSA evaluated for their effectiveness.
	4.3: South-South cooperation and learning among participating countries of the multi-country proposal and other countries in the region is fostered

Annex IV: UN Women Uganda SN2016-2020- Theory of Change- Women Economic Empowerment

GOAL	ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS, INCLUDING FULL ENJOYMENT OF THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS	
THEORY OF CHANGE GOAL STATEMENT	<i>If</i> women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; IF WOMEN HAVE INCOME SECURITY AND ECONOMIC AUTONOMY ; <i>If</i> all women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; <i>If</i> women and girls contribute to building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from crisis prevention and humanitarian action;	
	Then women and girls will be able to exercise their full rights on an equal footing with men and boys and equally contribute to and benefit from development, according to global norms, standards and best practice on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls,	
	Because	
	I. Government and key stakeholders in the civil society have enhanced capacity to assess progress in key intergovernmental norms and standards related to GEEW; intergovernmental processes are supported, and a conducive environment is established for dialogue and exchange amongst stakeholders to strengthen global norms and standards; the development of global norms and standards is informed by substantive inputs and knowledge, as well as field realities, including women’s voices and civil society perspectives;	
	II. Women’s full participation and leadership in political decision-making is ensured, national plans, strategies and policies equally benefit women and girls and discriminatory laws are repealed; better quality of gender data and statistics inform the development of effective and evidence-based policies, and institutional accountability mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and policies are stronger;	
	III. MACROECONOMIC AND FISCAL POLICIES PROMOTE INCOME SECURITY, ECONOMIC AUTONOMY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR WOMEN; MORE WOMEN OWN, LAUNCH AND BETTER MANAGE SMALL, MEDIUM AND LARGE BUSINESSES; MORE RURAL WOMEN ACCESS PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES AND ENGAGE IN CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE - FOSTERING WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT;	
	IV Communities, government and stakeholders in civil society are better able to reject and prevent violence against women by overcoming gender stereotypes, transforming social norms and promoting zero tolerance for violence; deliver quality essential services to protect and assist survivors; make cities including markets and other public institutions have safe and empowering spaces that permit women and girls to fully exercise their rights and freedom of movement to access services, participate in public life and enjoy recreational opportunities;	
	V. Women are protected from all forms of human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence, play a greater role and are better served by humanitarian response and recovery efforts and their resilience is enhanced through increased access to productive and financial assets, protection mechanisms and effective support services; women’s vulnerability is reduced through gender-responsive analyses, gender-responsive risk management plans and sex- disaggregated disaster-related data.	
Impact	WOMEN HAVE INCOME SECURITY, DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC AUTONOMY	
Outcome areas	More women own, launch and/or better manage small, medium and large enterprises	More women secure access to productive resources and assets and engage in sustainable climate smart agriculture

Output areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public procurement policies and strategies are gender responsive - Private sector procurement policies and strategies are gender responsive - Women entrepreneurs benefit from procurement - Women entrepreneurs access appropriate finance Social protection policies promote women's access to decent employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Women's land tenure security is improved -Women invest in climate smart, time saving assets, tools and technologies - Women smallholder farmers access CSA information -Opportunities for women farmers to move up the agriculture value chain increased
RISKS &BARRIERS	Lack of political will; Discriminatory norms and practices; Limited skills and access to resources Limited investments	

So: C Faye and H Kivumbi, UN Women Uganda SN 2016-2020 Country Portfolio Evaluation; Page 59 (Annexes)

Annex V: Potter's Value Chain

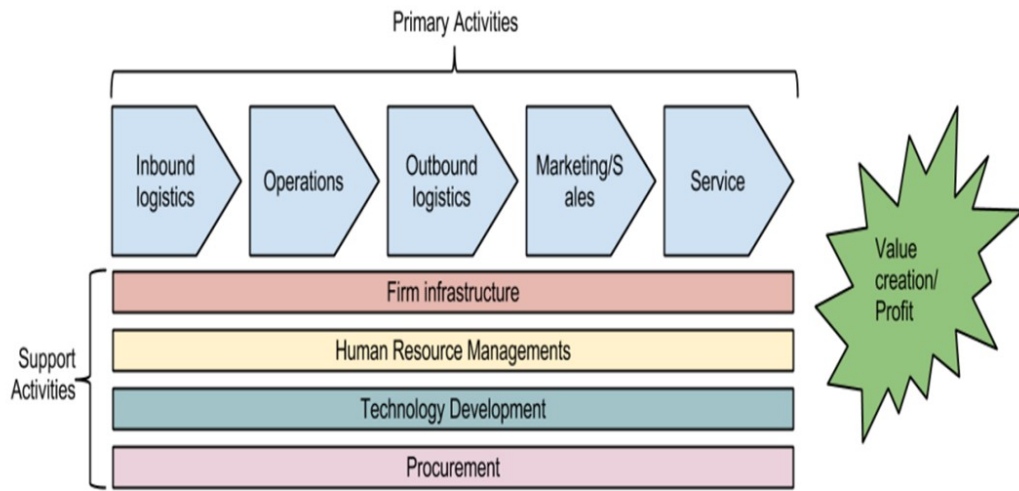


Figure 1: Porter's value chain

So: Value Chain Analysis Report by Pearl Aquatics, Page 9.

Annex VI: Beneficiary Distribution per value chain

SUBCOUNTY	No. OF BENEFICIARIES PER VALUECHAIN LEVEL PER SUBCOUNTY						
	PRODUCTION	HARVESTING	PROCESSING	RETAIL	PRIME MARKET	TOTs	TOTAL
BUDHAYA	20	36	30	40	5	6	137
BULESA	10	44	20	30	9	6	119
BULIDHA	30	40	29	50	10	5	164
BULUGUYI	10	40	25	35	5	5	120
BUWUNGA	10	40	25	35	3	6	119
IWEMBA	10	30	25	30	9	6	110
KAPYANGA	10	40	24	35	0	11	120
MUNICIPAL	10	40	32	50	10	8	150
MUTERERE	10	40	20	40	4	6	120
NABUKALU	10	35	25	40	10	5	125
NANKOMA	10	35	25	35	5	6	116
	140	420	280	420	70	70	1400

Annex VI: A table demonstrating farm performance for January to June 2021

CAGE ID	BP4	BP6	BP7	BP8	BP9	BP10	BP11	BP12
Batch Date	26-Feb-20	26-Feb-20	25-Apr-20	25-Apr-20	25-Apr-20	28-May-20	28-May-20	28-May-20
Months In	11.3	11.3	10.3	10.3	10.3	9.2	12.3	12.3
Fish Stocked	27,273	27,272	35,773	24,958	38,269	33,702	33,202	31,220
Fish Costs	3,818,220	3,818,080	5,008,220	3,494,120	5,357,660	4,718,280	4,648,280	4,370,800
Feed Used	16,991	16,611	12,270	8,144	12,523	10,094	15,800	13,701
Feed Costs	59,762,846	58,258,684	44,259,399	29,298,073	45,431,476	37,180,079	55,089,147	48,286,563
Harvest weight	10,786	10,861	9,241	5,615	9,570	7,163	8,498	7,209
Harvest No	23,408	23,641	22,343	13,376	22,949	24,071	20,127	18,104
ABW	460	459	414	420	417	294	422	390
Growth	10,729	10,813	9,203	5,585	9,520	7,023	8,440	7,148
Sales	76,673,600	80,185,000	69,727,200	41,576,000	73,110,000	51,532,500	63,847,500	54,757,000
Gross Profit	13,092,534	18,108,237	20,459,581	8,783,808	22,320,864	9,634,141	4,110,073	2,099,637
Gross Profit %	17%	23%	29%	21%	31%	19%	6%	4%
eFCR	1.58	1.54	1.33	1.46	1.32	1.44	1.87	1.92
Mortalities	3,865	3,631	13,430	11,582	15,320	9631	13,075	13,116
Survival Rate	86%	87%	62%	54%	60%	71%	61%	58%
Cage Corrections	572	805	2,506	340	1,727	(978)	(2,013)	(4,872)
Ave. Cost / Kg	5,895	5,716	5,331	5,840	5,307	5,849	7,030	7,305
Ave. Price / Kg	7,109	7,383	7,545	7,404	7,639	7,194	7,513	7,596

Figure 2: Table Of Farm Performance For January To June 2021 So: Project documents-

Annex VIII: Certificate of incorporation of WEEB as a limited liability company (April 2021)

Certificate issued on: 14-04-2021 15:17, No: BRS-INCC-6-21/46457

Registration No: 80020003042342



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA
THE COMPANIES ACT

Certificate of Incorporation

(Under section 18(3) of the Companies Act 2012)

I CERTIFY that WEEB UGANDA LIMITED (Limited by Shares) has this day been incorporated with Limited Liability.

Dated at Kampala, this 14th day of April the year 2021.

Marion



Signature: TUGUMISIRIZE MARION

Registrar of Companies

Printed on 15:21:20 14-04-2021

Annex IX: Study Participants

S/ N	Name	Gender	Title	Organization	
1	Patricia Elotu Eiyo	F	Program Analyst	UN Women/Uganda CO	
2	Joan Babirye	F	Program Assistant	UN Women/Uganda CO	
3	Job Lakal	M	M&E Associate	UN Women/Uganda CO	
4	Dr Gladys Namuswe Bwanika	F	Executing Partner	Pearl Aquatics	
5	Hajji Ramathan Walugembe	M	Resident District Commissioner (RDC)	Bugiri DLG	
6	Nangoshah Alfred	M	District Internal Security Officer	Bugiri DLG	
7	Nseko Anthony	M	Deputy RDC	Bugiri DLG	
8	Immaculate Were	F	District Fisheries Officer/Project Focal Person	Bugiri DLG	
9	Arabo Oliver Brenda	F	Member	Bugiri DLG	
10	Bazibu Fred	M	Project Accountant	Bugiri DLG	
11	Isiko Paul Moses	M	Assistant Production Officer	Bugiri DLG	
12	Bikobere Sylvia	F	Board Member	Bugiri DLG	
13	Mugala Martha	F	PCDO liaison officer	BMC	Bugiri DLG
14	Kurusumu Munaaba	F	Production	WEEB	Budaya
15	Nabbumba Safina	F	Production	WEEB	Buludha
16	Victoria Amojong	F	Production	WEEB	Budaya
17	Namudhope Yamaawa	F	Production	WEEB	Nankoma
18	Namukose Jenifa	F	Production	WEEB	Buwunga
19	Njogeza Rosemary	F	Production	WEEB	Kibuye
20	Nangobi Rebecca	F	Production	WEEB	Kapyanga
21	Wanyama Rose	F	Harvest	WEEB	Kapyanga
22	Namukoma Annet	F	Harvest	WEEB	Nabukalu
23	Katusabe Sylvia	F	Harvest	WEEB	Nankoma
24	Taaka Josphine	F	Marketing	WEEB	Buluguyi
25	Namudoyi Shamima	F	Production	WEEB	Buluguyi
26	Kagoya Mayimuna	F	Harvest	WEEB	Budaya
27	Takuwa Mayimuna	F	Harvest	WEEB	Budaya
28	Nalubanga Mwayiduma	F	Production	WEEB	Budaya
29	Nankya Edith	F	Harvest	WEEB	Iwemba
30	Nasirumbi Felistus	F	Smoking	WEEB	Iwemba
31	Naigaga Hajira	F	Smoking	WEEB	Muterere
32	Ajambo Margaret	F	Smoking	WEEB	Iwemba
33	Nangozi Rovisa	F	Smoking	WEEB	Nankoma
34	Logose Susan	F	Board Member	WEEB	Nabukalu
35	Amoit Hellen	F	Board Member	WEEB	Iwemba
36	Oundo Betty Olive	F	Board Chair	WEEB	Namayemba TC

S/ N	Name	Gender	Title	Organization	
37	Wairaka Faziri	M	Board Chair/LC1	WEEB	Bulidha
38	Ekikyoo Judith	F	Board Member	WEEB	Bulidha
39	Nangobi Agnes Gladys	F	Board Member	WEEB	Nankoma
40	Taabu Moses Mukoya	M	Production/ Farm Manager	WEEB	Wakawaka
41	Namudola Aisha	F	Marketing	WEEB	Municipal
42	Babirye Sarah	F	Marketing	WEEB	Municipal
43	Nandudu Agani	F	Marketing	WEEB	Iwemba
44	Namukoma Jamawa	F	Marketing	WEEB	Bulesa
45	Naigaga Fazila	F	Production	WEEB	Jinja
46	Natocho Margaret Cissy	F	Marketing	WEEB	Municipal
47	Kawala Sofie	F	Harvestor	WEEB	Buludha
48	Namugoza Mariam	F	Marketing	WEEB	Nankoma
49	Alitubeera Gloria	F	Marketing	WEEB	Nankoma
50	Wakiibi Sarah	F	Marketing	WEEB	Municipal
51	Namulondo Fatuma	F	Marketing	WEEB	Nabukalu
52	Achieng Sarah	F	Harvestor	WEEB	Buludha
53	Ndiboogeza Harriet	F	Marketing	WEEB	Nankoma
54	Nankwanga Thabisa	F	Harvestor	WEEB	Buludha
55	Apio Margaret	F	Harvestor	WEEB	Buludha
56	Nawanku Faridha	F	Marketing	WEEB	Muterere
57	Nabirye Saada	F	Member	WEEB	Buludha
58	Nabirye Brenda	F	Member	WEEB	Municipal
59	Akroni Getrude	F	Harvestor	WEEB	Muterere
60	Namukungu Hadijja	F	Harvestor	WEEB	Bulidha
61	Nekesa Josephine	F	Marketing	WEEB	Muterere
62	Kagoya Ruth	F	Harvestor	WEEB	Buwunga
63	Otiyeno Christopher	M	Member Tugemerewala Fisher Association		
64	Mukisa Shaguni	M	Member Tugemerewala Fisher Association		
65	Namasako Godfrey	M	Member Tugemerewala Fisher Association		
66	Shibaba Joshua	M	Member Tugemerewala Fisher Association		
67	Friday Jimmy	M	Member Tugemerewala Fisher Association		
68	Masinde Evans	M	Member Tugemerewala Fisher Association		
69	Edube Jonathan	M	Member Tugemerewala Fisher Association		
70	Naiganga Lydia	F	Member Tugemerewala Fisher Association		
71	Mukisa Kusain	M	Member Tugemerewala Fisher Association		
72	Mirembe Judith	F	Member Tugemerewala Fisher Association		
73	Mwesigwa Harriet Kayanga	F	Stanbic Bank, Iganga branch	Donor Representative	
74	Joyce Nyeko	F	Ag Director Fisheries Resources/Commissioner Aquaculture	MAAIF	Kampala

Annex X: List of referenced documents

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Annex XI: Field data collection schedule- Bugiri Aquaculture project

Proposed Schedule for the field data collection for the evaluation of the CSA project in Bugiri- December 2021				
Date	Time	Activity	Title	Needed support
Friday 3rd December	09:30- 10:30	Patricia Elotu Eiyoy; Joan Babirye	UN Women Project Team/Focal point	Virtual links, telephone, Introduction letter from UN Women
	11:30- 12:30	MAAIF /Fisheries Department Focal Person	MAAIF /Fisheries Department Focal Person	
	14:00- 15:00	Dr Gladys and team	Pearl Aquatics	
Monday 6th December	9:30hrs	Travel to Bugiri DLG for Field Data Collection	Consultant & Driver	Vehicle & Per Diems booking, Advice on Hotel and Health SOPs, Introduction letter from UN Women
Tuesday 7th December	09:30- 10:30	Meet with the CAO debrief about project and the evaluation exercise	Meet with the CAO debrief about project and the evaluation exercise	
	11:30- 12:30	Interviews District- Production team/Immaculate and key team members	Interviews District- Production team/Immaculate and key team members	
	14:00- 15:00	Interviews District- Community and economics team	Interviews District- Community and economics team	
	15:30- 16:30	Interviews key stakeholders at District-/RDC representative or recommended persons	Interviews key stakeholders at District-/RDC representative or recommended persons	
Wednesday 8th December	10:00- 11:00	Interviews with Board members/Company representatives	Interviews with Board members/Company representatives (how many)	
	11:30- 12:30	Interviews with Cluster Leads- Group 1	FGD with 10 Cluster Leads- Group 1	
	13:00- 14:00	Interviews with Cluster Leads- Group 2	FGD with 10 Cluster Leads- Group 2	
	15:30- 16:30	Interviews with Beneficiaries - Group 1	FGD with 10 Beneficiaries – Production Value Chain- 1	
Thursday 9th December	10:00- 11:00	Interviews with Beneficiaries - Group 2	FGD with 10 Beneficiaries – Processing Value chain 2	
	11:30- 12:30	Interviews with Beneficiaries - Group 3	FGD with 10 Beneficiaries – Marketing value chain Group 3	

	13:00-14:00	Meeting and Dialogue with project beneficiaries-		
	15:30-16:30	Conclusion field data collection		
Friday 10th December	9:30 AM	Travel back to Kampala		
Monday 13th December	09:30-10:30	UN Women Head of Programs	Virtual links	If this is deemed necessary, plus follow ups with key persons I left out
	11:30-12:30	UN Women M&E team	Virtual links	
	14:00-15:00	Closure of Interviews		
14th-19th December		Data analysis, crafting report, submit drafts to Evaluation Team Lead; and work with the Evaluation Team Members to finalize report		

Annex XII: Field data collection tools

Key Informant Interview Guide: GoU DLG Staff

Relevance:

1. In your view, to what extent was the CSA project in line with the rights and relevant to the needs of target groups (beneficiaries)?
2. In your view, to what extent was the CSA project in line with the national development policies and strategies, and programmes?
3. To what extent is the CSA project relevant to international and regional commitment, AU Agenda 2063, SDGs, and UN Women strategy?
4. To what extent were perspectives of stakeholders who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, considered during the project design processes?
5. To what extent does the CSA project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment, and the human rights-based approach?

Coherence

6. How does the project align with other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the intervention, and vice versa?
7. How does the project relate with other actors' interventions in the same context? (external coherence). In both the above, how does the project add value while avoiding duplication of effort?

Effectiveness

8. To what extent did the CAS project contribute to economic empowerment of women in Bugiri DLG?
9. To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality, women's empowerment, and realization of human rights?
10. In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
11. In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?

Efficiency

12. Do you consider that the project was efficient? Please elaborate
13. How effective was the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost effectiveness of interventions? To what extent were projects funds delivered in a timely manner?
14. Coherence: To what extent were UN Women and partners working towards a common goal?
15. To what extent were the following principles mainstreamed in the CSA project:
 - HRBA/ Gender equality
 - RBM
 - Sustainability
 - Resilience and sustainability,
 - Accountability,
 - Leave No One Behind,
 - Economic transformations and growth.
16. In your view, how has the COVID-19 pandemic affected project implementation and achievements?

Project Management / Coordination and organization Efficiency

17. Tell us about the project coordination and management structures, do you consider them efficient? Explain
18. Were there any aspects of project management that required to be changed/ done better? Please elaborate?

Impact

19. What are project Impacts? (To what extent was gender equality and women's empowerment advanced as a result of the multi-country CSA project? To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and women's empowerment in the agriculture sector and/or country?)
20. Were there any unintended negative effects, if any, of the project intervention?
21. What are lessons learnt? Good or bad practices? How can the country replicate, scale up the best practices?

Sustainability

22. Do you consider interventions sustainable? If yes, why? If no, why not?
23. What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability?

Recommendations

24. Do you have any additional comments or recommendations you would like to make?

Thank you very much, we have now come to the end of the interview

Tool 2: Focus Group Discussion Guides to Beneficiaries

1. As a beneficiary, how did you engage or what was your role with the UN Women/Standard Bank CSA project?
2. Did the UN Women/Standard Bank CSA project make any difference in your life (Yes/NO?); If yes tell us about these changes a) in your life b) in your household (family)? – probe for specifics examples, before-now? If no, please tell us why it made no difference.
3. Has the project made you access agricultural extension services, and made you a better farmer? If yes, probe for how, when, and proof. if no probe for why, and what could have been done to make you a better farmer.
4. Has the CSA increased your agricultural productivity? If yes, probe for how, quantity (e.g., from X to Y bags), and when. If no, why do you think it made no change to your productivity?
5. Has the project made you have increase access to finance? If yes, probe for how much, when, and proof. If no why, and what could have been done to increase access to finance?
6. Has the project made you have increase access to market of your products? If yes probe for how, what, when, and proof. If no why, and what could have been done to increase access to market and finance?
7. Did the project affect relations in your household, you and your husband or in-laws? Were they positive or negative? Please elaborate on how the project affected household relationships. (unintended effect (impact) in your household/family; probe for gender issues related to tension, GBV, more burden?
8. If you are to redesign the project, what would you like done differently (probe for specifics and areas they would like improved and why?
9. Has the project made you a better farmer, businessperson, who does not depend on all the time for support from another person (probe how specifically promoted women's empowerment?
10. What challenges has you faced when implementing the project: probe (a) related to project design and how it was implemented, and b) related to you as a woman or man beneficiary?
11. What lessons have you learned by participating in the UN Women/Standard Bank CSA project?

12. What recommendations would you like to Give to a) UN Women and the Standard Bank – the donor, and b) the government for the sustainability of the gains from the project?

Thank you very much/ We have now come to the end of the interview.

Annex XIII: Terms of Reference National Evaluation Consultant - Uganda

Background:

UN Women, grounded in the vision of equality enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. In East and Southern Africa Region, UN Women maintains presence in 13 countries with programme presence in Somalia. In 2018, Standard Bank, directed US\$3 million to build the capacity of women farmers in Malawi, Nigeria, and Uganda. The women farmers to be trained on climate-smart agricultural practices and assisted with access to markets and finance. UN Women partnered with development partners and governmental entities in implementing the project to increase the women’s agricultural productivity through climate smart practices and to enhance the ability of women small-holder farmers to participate in the formal markets. The project has been implemented through interventions in various value chains: aquaculture in Uganda. The interventions include, but are not limited to, financial, business and technical trainings; development of local infrastructure to facilitate access to higher value markets; increase of women's access to labor and time-saving equipment and services; linking women to financial institutions and information; and improve legal and normative frameworks in the agricultural sector.

Project Description:

The main goal of the project ‘Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture’ is to strengthen women’s agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture products in Uganda. The project seeks to close the gender gap in agricultural productivity by increasing women’s access to resources. It is expected to reach over 50,000 women across the four countries over three years (2019 to 2021) by providing them with entrepreneurial and financial capacities, affordable technology and value addition, and using information and communications technology (ICT) to increase access to markets and to finance. The project is aligned with UN Women’s Development Results Framework 2: “Women, especially those living in poverty and vulnerability, are economically empowered and enabled to reap the benefits of development”.

The project implementation focuses on four outcomes described in detail below. The outcomes aim to increase women’s agricultural productivity using CSA techniques and approaches; support women in value addition of selected agricultural products and increase access to market and finance. Outcomes Outputs 1. Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate 1.1. Women’s access to labor and time-saving equipment and services increased 1.2. Women’s access to climate-smart non-labour agricultural inputs improved 1.3. Access to climate–resilient agricultural extension services and information for women and men farmers improved 1.4. Socio-cultural barriers (including gender-based violence) reduced through policy and advocacy (including engaging men at household level) to increase agriculture productivity and women’s equal land rights 2. Opportunities for organized women

to move up the value chain are provided 2.1 Women's shift to high value agricultural enterprises (selected crops, fisheries, animal husbandry etc) and inclusion in green agricultural value chains at the national, regional and international levels achieved 2.2 Local infrastructure developed to improve access to markets, reduce labour, and save time for women value chain actors 2.3 Capacity of women value chain organizations for production and marketing is increased 3. Using ICT platforms (BfW) for increased access to markets and finance for women 3.1 Deploy the buyfromwomen digital platform to connect women farmers to large scale buyers of agricultural products 3.2 Information stored in the BfW platform is being used as a form of collateral for women's access to finance 3.3 Link women to financial institutions providing innovative financing in CSA 4: The Multi-Country Project is coordinated and implemented with a focus on 'research for development' and documenting lessons learned 4.1 UN Women Country offices, and agricultural research institutions in the respective countries and at regional level engaged to increase research on gender and CSA in the region 4.2 Regional and national institutional, policy and legal frameworks that will be key enablers to facilitate women's engagement in CSA evaluated for their effectiveness 4.3 South-South cooperation and learning among participating countries of the multi-country proposal and other countries in the region is fostered

Summary of Activities:

The programme activities included: • Situation Analysis and identification of groups/cooperatives, and of adequate technologies; • Strengthening women's positions in producer organizations; • Increasing availability of production resources, processing and storage facilities and agricultural equipment; • Supporting, through trainings and other support services, women farmers' access to entrepreneurial, organizational and technical skills and value addition techniques; • Developing capacity of institutions/private sector organizations involved in providing inputs to women in agriculture; Linking women to markets (BfW) and finance institutions and structures; and • Conducting awareness, sensitization and communication campaigns.

Evaluation Objectives:

The overall objective of this final evaluation is to assess the achievement of programme results and performance of the above-described intervention. The evaluation should measure and provide robust empirical evidence related to the success and results of the CSA interventions (both intended and unintended). The evaluation will assess changes in outcomes observed, the mechanisms that delivered the observed changes, key features of these mechanisms and determine to what extent these can be attributed to the interventions. The specific evaluation objectives are as follows: • Analyze the relevance of the implementation strategy and approaches of the "Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture" project; • Assess organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of the project's results as defined in the intervention; • Validate the project impact in terms of achievements and/or weaknesses toward the outcome and outputs; • Assess the potential for sustainability of the results achieved by the project; • Document lessons learned, best practices, and challenges to inform future work of UN Women on women's economic empowerment; • Assess the implication of COVID-19 in the entire project implementation; • Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the programme's best practices; • Provide actionable recommendations for the implementation of the second phase of the project and maximize ownership by partners in the countries covered by the project in

order to foster sustainability of the intervention; • To assess how the project and its results relate and contribute to commitments and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Uganda.

The evaluation must adhere to the UN Women evaluation policy, the IEAS charter, the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation and Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, and it should apply the criteria of UN Women's Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS) standards to the highest degree possible.

Scope of Work:

This project is focused on aquaculture in Uganda and implemented in Bugiri District. Due to the abundance of freshwater bodies in the district, commercial fishing is actively practiced by many in Bugiri District. The evaluation will cover UN Women's work in Uganda, where the project is being implemented; including in the national capitals and the target project regions to collect data as defined by the agreed evaluation work-plan. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, UN Women does not anticipate any international travel, however local travel may be undertaken by national consultants in the scope of this assignment. The evaluation will examine all the relevant documents of the Project, including results framework/logical framework of the project, its Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, annual work plan, semi-annual and annual reports to the donor, knowledge products produced in the frameworks of the project, etc

Annex XIV: Evaluator's profile

- Dr Harriet Kivumbi (She/Her/Ms.), National Consultant, is an expert on rights for Women, children and marginalized communities in Africa and other low-income countries in the sectors of sexual reproductive health, maternal newborn and adolescent health, gender, nutrition/food security, malaria, gender and HIV/AIDS. She presents proven progressive experience in Complex Program Coordination, Management, Innovation, Program, Technical and Fundraising writing, Policy and Research Analysis, and Evaluations in Sub-Saharan Africa. Harriet is a Medical Doctor with an M.B.A in Project Management and Master of Science in International Health. She has lead Program and Strategy Evaluations for UN agencies: UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, UNHCR, UNECA, the African Union, ECOWAS, USAID, DFID, EU and International and Local NGOs.

**FINAL REPORT OF EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT
CONTRIBUTING TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF
WOMEN IN NIGERIA THROUGH CLIMATE SMART
AGRICULTURE**

PREPARED

BY

PROF. ONWUEMELE ANDREW

April, 2022



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

APC	All Progressives Congress
BfW	Buy-From-Women
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CSO	Civil society organization
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FFAI	Food For All international
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender Based violence
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDI	Gender Development Index
HDI	Human Development Index
IBBUL	Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai
IP	Implementing partner
ILO	International Labour Organization
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGA	Local Government Area
MDAs	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
NDHS	National Demographic Health Survey
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSCEPA	Niger State Commodity Export Promotion Agency
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNSDPF	United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Executive Summary

This report is the product of the Final Evaluation of the project ‘Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture (2019 - 2021)’. The project was implemented in Ebonyi and Niger states in Nigeria by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) from January 2019 to June 2021 under the funding of the Stanbic IBTC with a broad goal to close the gender gap in agricultural productivity by increasing women’s access to resources. The overall objective of this final evaluation was to assess the achievement of programme results and performance of the CSA project interventions. The evaluation measured and provided robust empirical evidence related to the success and results of the CSA interventions (both intended and unintended). The final evaluation applied the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and coherence. The evaluation also took into consideration gender equality and human rights, and disability inclusion, as separate standalone criteria. The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach involving document review, interviews and focus groups discussions to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Respondents included representatives of the cooperatives societies, relevant government ministries including the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Women Affairs, project team and the implementing partners. Respondents in the survey were purposively selected based on their accessibility, level of participation in the project and security context in the intervention LGAs. The primary users of the evaluation will include UN Women, the Federal and State Ministries of Women Affairs, Ministries of agriculture in Ebonyi and Niger states, CSOs and other development agencies

Findings

Relevance

Findings confirmed that the project was relevant to the needs of the targeted beneficiaries. Many of the Shea butter farmers in Niger state who benefited from the CSA project noted that the project was relevant as it opened their eyes to several opportunities available in the Shea butter value chain. For the rice farmers in Ebonyi state, the beneficiaries noted that the CSA project was relevant to their needs as it helped to improve women access to land and improved rice varieties for farming activities in the respective LGAs. The CSA project was also relevant to several international and regional commitments including the Beijing Platform and Declaration for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 as well as several national and State policies such as the Nigerian National Rice Development Strategy (NRDS) (2009-2018), the Federal Government and Central bank of Nigeria (CBN) Anchor Borrowers’ Programme, among others. All these commitments call for elimination of all forms of discriminations and empowerment of women which aligned with the goals of CSA project in Ebonyi and Niger state, Nigeria.

Coherence

The CSA project was coherent and related to government policies, strategies and programmes at the state and national levels. At the national level, the project was coherent with the National Shea Butter Policy and at the state level, it aligned with the Niger state Road Map for the Sustainable Development of Shea Butter in the State. In Ebonyi State, the CSA project was coherent with the USAID Climate Change Adaptation Review Project on rice production and Feed the Future Project on rice production in Ebonyi state. In Niger state, the CSA project was coherent with the GIZ Project on Shea Butter Cosmetic Value Change Development. The CSA project was coherent internally with UN Women and within the UN System in Nigeria. The key specific objectives of the CSA project aligned with key gender equality international agreements and legal instruments which guide the work within the United Nations system. In all, there was no evidence of duplication of efforts as the other projects have a focus on complementing the activities of the CSA project.

Effectiveness

The CSA project made an important contributions in strengthening women's agricultural productivity and access to markets in Niger and Ebonyi state in Nigeria. The CSA project was effective in contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in the targeted states. The project built the capacities of 1,200 women smallholder rice farmers on an improved rice production system including the use of high yielding, short-cycled seed varieties, such as farrow 44 and 52. It also built the capacities of 120 rural women in the development and review of community adaptation plans that address climate risks. The CSA project also provided 3 post-harvest handling facilities which include 3 sets of rice industrial milling machines and one set of shea butter processing and packaging equipment in Ebonyi and Niger state. On policy, the project supported the government of Niger for the production of Gender Action Plan while in Ebonyi state, it supported the review of the state agricultural policy to be more gender-responsive. Overall, the project made significant progress towards the achievement of the expected outputs and outcomes. Some of the reasons for the achievements recorded by the project include appropriate targeting of the project locations in both states, supportive attitude of the government, the collaborative approach in the project implementation and the cooperative attitude of project beneficiaries and the technical support and oversight functions provided by the UN Women project team. (Generally no data figures on Niger State, no of women trained etc)

Efficiency

The evaluation found that available resources were allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes. The project had a total duration of 36 months and 6 months No Cost extension (NCE) with a planned budget of Seven Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$750,000) allocated under two heads in the financial statement: programme implementation costs and projects support costs. Of these, \$626,000 (83.5%) were budgeted for programming activities while actual spending on project activities was unknown due to the unavailability of financial reports at the end of the project closure. Also, about 16.5 per cent of the total budget was allocated to project support. UN Women's organizational structure, managerial support, and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the project objectives. This evaluation concluded that although the human and financial resources were used sufficiently and efficiently, in the mid to long term those resources are not adequate to serve UN Women's mandate regarding the CSA project given the number of resources required for the purchase of equipment, training activities for the project and the large number of women at the community level not covered by the project in this phase.

Impact

The evaluation found several positive effects produced by the project on the target beneficiaries. In Ebonyi state, the improved production technology package introduced by the project has enabled the immediate beneficiaries of 4,907 women and their communities to better adapt and strengthen their resilience to climate change and improve their agricultural productivity. In terms of yield, the improved rice seed varieties produced 40 per cent higher yield (4.67 metric tons of paddy per hectare) as compared to farmers normal varieties, which produced 3.29 metric tons per hectare. The improved seeds of farrow 44 and 52 also matured earlier (90 days) than the farmer's varieties (120-140 days). Relative to the farmers' existing practices, the new production system saved labour by 40 per cent, reduced water requirement (by at least 10%), and generated a better benefit-cost of 1.99 (farmer's existing practices gave a B/C ratio of 1.17). In addition, the targeted cooperatives together produced a total of 60 metric tons of high yielding short-cycled rice seeds at the end of the 2021 cropping season.

In Niger state, the CSA project supported the procurement and installation of shea butter processing machines for women cooperatives and entrepreneurs. The processing machine includes boiler (Steam)Steaming Unit including Shea-nut Bins, Drying Machine/Oven, Shea nutcracker/de-sheller, Crusher with 10 - 15HP electric motor, Roaster with 7HP electric/gas motor, milling machine, Kneader 7HP electric motor - Steam Generator, Oil Expeller, Filtration System, Measuring Scales of 500kg, and a Generator – 50KVa. The result of these supports contributed to increasing the number of Shea Butter derivatives among the women beneficiaries. Before the project, the evaluation found that women shea butter producers/processors were selling direct raw shea butter with few of them into formulating and value addition and limited to only one or two shea butter products. At the participating in the CSA projects, over 90% of the women went into formulating and value

addition with many having up to five shea butter different products for sale. (Generally no data figures on Niger State, no of women impacted etc)

Sustainability

The project has targeted the development of local ownership and capacities as a key strategy for the sustainability of the benefits of the project. The CSA project contribution to the development of Gender Action Plan/framework and review of Agricultural policy in Ebonyi provided an ample opportunity for the institutionalization of the benefits of the CSA project as the policy and Action Plan implementation will provide a sustainable enabling environment for women to access lands and other productive agricultural resources in the state. The various capacity building programmes that targeted women cooperatives in the two states is another element of sustainability built into the project. All these capacity building components of the project contributed to strengthening the capacities of women beneficiaries both in shea butter production and rice production. Since this knowledge will remain with them, it is obvious that the women will continue to apply the knowledge in their economic activities. Another sustainability elements of the project is the fact that the project has targeted women cooperative at the community level and they are already registered with the Cooperate Affairs Commission (CAC) with structures established for the management of the cooperative. The cooperative in Ebonyi state already had a secured 12 hectares of land provided for them for their farming activities which will ensured that their access to land for their farming activities is sustained over time.

Gender Equality, Human Rights and Disability Inclusion

The evaluation found that gender and human rights considerations were integrated into the project design and implementation. All objectives, strategies, approaches, and activities highlighted in the project were focused on addressing the root causes of gender inequalities in the shea butter and rice value chain with a clear focus on women in the target states. From the design, the project had targeted women by aiming to improve their capacity to participate in both the shea and rice value chain. The project did not target men but only women which were conceived as a way of addressing the cultural challenges affecting women access to productive resources. However, from the evaluators perspective, involving men in some of the training programmes would have provided opportunities to simultaneously build the capacity of both women and men in gender mainstreaming both in agriculture and other realms at the community level. From the review of the project document, there was no evidence to show that persons living with disability were included in the CSA project. The physical nature of the project activities such as land clearing and preparation for rice planting and also going to the wild to search for the shea butter nuts may have contributed to this omission as noted by some of the women beneficiaries of the project.

Lessons learned

Lesson 1. The design of the CSA of the project targeting areas that are naturally suitable for rice and shea butter production contributed to the effectiveness of the CSA project in the targeted states.

The design of the CSA project took into consideration the natural potentials of the geography of the targeted states in supporting the targeted crops such as shea and rice. Among the most important agricultural activities in Niger State are Shea-nut collection, processing and marketing. In terms of density and distribution of Shea trees as well as the extent of collection and processing of Shea nuts, Niger State ranks among the first in Nigeria. On the other hand, Ebonyi state is one of the highest producers of rice in Nigeria. Therefore, the targeting of these two states by the CSA project was not only suitable but also contributed to the effective utilization of the resources of the state while empowering women economically.

Lesson 2: The selection and utilization of implementing partners with interest and requisite skills in support of project implementation are one of the key strategies of ensuring effective project implementation and attainments of project goals and objectives.

The CSA project selected two key implementing partners whose primary mandates aligned with two focal areas of support of the project. The CSA project selected Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency

(NSCEPA) as the main implementing partner in support of women in the shea butter value chain. The NSCEPA has the institutional mandate in Niger state for the development of the shea butter sector in Niger state. In Ebonyi State, the CSA project selected and utilized Food for All International (FFAI) as the implementing partner. FFAI is a Not-For-Profit Agricultural Development, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) set up to support farmers, enhance agricultural production. This undoubtedly promoted the effective implementation of project activities since the implementing partners have the requisite skills and experience working with the targeted beneficiaries based on the priority focus of the institutions.

Lesson 3: Capacity building activities for project beneficiaries are a necessity both for promoting ownership and sustainability of Programme benefits.

The CSA project implemented several capacity-building activities for beneficiaries in the two targeted states. The capacity building activities were unique for the different categories of the project beneficiaries. The capacity building activities for women rice farmers focus on improved rice production system while in Niger state, the training focused on improving shea-butter production processes for increased efficiency, product quality and market value and strategy for creating value in the shea butter business. The approach of the project ensured that the knowledge gained remained with the beneficiaries after the close of the programme.

Lesson 4: Engaging relevant government institutions and community leaders in the intervention communities are important for successful project implementation

The CSA project team deemed it important to engage relevant government institutions such as the Ebonyi State Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Niger State Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development and Niger State Ministry of Agriculture, NSCEPA as well as community leaders as key stakeholders of the project. This project approach provided the entry points into the targeted states for project activities implementation. Also, working with the various community leaders in the targeted LGAs did not only provide easy access to the local communities but also contributed to the achievement of the project objectives as evident in the provision of land for demonstration farms for rice production in Ebonyi state.

Lesson 5. Policy level interventions are fundamental strategies to addressing both the underlying causes and symptoms of development problems.

Addressing the underlying causes of the problem is one of the shortest parts to arriving at the solutions rather than focusing on the manifestations. When the root causes are addressed the symptoms are eradicated. This is particularly important for interventions focusing on women economic empowerment like the CSA project. The project implementation strategy was underlined by policy-level interventions and capacity building. This approach did not only address the manifestation of the problem of poor access of women to productive resources but also addresses the underlying causes of the problem such as the absence of policy frameworks to bridge the gender gaps that limit women access to productive resources. Thus, while the project was targeting improving women skills in shea butter processing and rice production through capacity building and improving access to land, it was also addressing the improper policy environment such as the absence of gender policy at the state level.

Specific Recommendations

The evaluation has identified 5 recommendations that are critical for UN Women's contribution to the CSA project in Nigeria. They have been sequenced by their importance, as perceived by the evaluation team. The recommendations are based on the evaluation framework, the analysis that informed findings and conclusions. They were validated by key stakeholders during the presentation of preliminary findings workshop with UN Women and other stakeholders.

- ✚ There is a need for the project team to consider designing future CSA project ToC based on established empirical evidence while the assumption and risks envisaged should be clearly stated in the ToC.

- ✦ There is a need for future interventions to consider the implementation of baseline studies across the various sectors and locations covered by the intervention
- ✦ UN Women Nigeria should consider having another phase of the project to cover more LGAs while providing an opportunity for the project team and IPs to support and monitor the utilization of the newly installed processing machines for shea and rice production in the two targeted states
- ✦ There is a need to strengthen the M&E system for the CSA project in the future to ensure proper tracking of activities and project results
- ✦ Consider providing more support for the cooperative in the area of linking them to markets given the availability of high tech processing machines for rice and shea butter production.

1.0. COUNTRY CONTEXT

1.1. Development Context

The Federal Republic of Nigeria, with an area of 923,769 square kilometres is situated between 3° and 14° East Longitude and 4° and 14° North Latitude. The country is bordered on the West by the Republic of Benin and Niger; on the East by the Republic of Cameroon; on the North by Niger and Chad Republics and the South by the Gulf of Guinea. Nigeria operates a three-tier federal system of government made up of 36 states and Federal Capital Territory (FCT), and 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs). The country is divided into six geopolitical zones for political and administrative convenience. With an estimated population of over 180 million and a growth rate of 3.2 per cent, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the seventh most populous in the world¹. The majority of the population is young with 45.7 per cent under 15 years and 31.7 per cent between ages 10-24 years, contributing to the high dependency ratio of 98 per cent.

Agriculture in Nigeria and The targeted States

Economic growth has remained unstable due to the monolithic nature of the economy within the period. The volatility of the global oil prices continues to influence Nigeria's growth performance. Due to the fall in oil price in 2014-2016 and other negative production shocks, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate dropped to 2.7 per cent in 2015. In 2016 the economy entered recession and the economy contracted by 1.6 per cent. Growth averaged 1.9 per cent in 2018 and remained stable at 2 per cent in the first half of 2019. Growth in 2019 was primarily driven by services, particularly telecoms. Agricultural growth remains below potential due to continued insurgency in the Northeast and ongoing farmer-herdsmen conflicts. Agriculture contributed 24.23% to nominal GDP in the fourth quarter of 2020, higher than the rates recorded for the fourth quarter of 2019 but lower than the third quarter of 2020 which recorded 23.38% and 28.41% respectively. The annual contribution of agriculture to nominal GDP in 2020 was 24.45%.² Despite expansion in some sectors, employment creation remains weak and insufficient to absorb the fast-growing labour force, resulting in a high rate of unemployment (23% in 2018), with another 20 per cent of the labour force underemployed³.

Ebonyi and Niger States are two of the states targeted by the UN Women CSA project. Ebonyi State is one of 36 states in Nigeria and is in the southeast. It has a land area of 6,400 square kilometres. It is largely agrarian with a good number of citizens being farmers. Ebonyi State is popularly known for its bagged locally produced "Abakaliki Rice." Women account for 62 % of the Abakaliki Rice Market /Trade-in Ebonyi State, yet they are rarely connected to productive resources, mechanisms and support that are capable of aiding commercial-scale production⁴. The situation is not different in Ebonyi state where rice production is

¹ National Population Commission, 2012 projections

² Nigerian Gross Domestic Product Report

³ NBS (2018). Labor Force Statistics - Volume I: Unemployment and Underemployment Report (Q4 2017-Q3 2018)

⁴ <https://www.researchgate.net/publication> accessed on the 5th of April, 2020 at 12:30pm

dominated by over 71.2 per cent of men compared to 28.8 per cent of women⁵. Evidence shows that climate change poses serious long-term challenges to the achievement of sustainable rice yield in the state; as a consequence of subsistence production and unsustainable farming practices. The prevailing weakness along the value chain relates mainly to productivity, post-harvest management, storage, market access, returns to labour and food security. The fragility of the rice value chain is further exacerbated by the lack of small-scale processing plants for excess perishable farm produce and the absence of all year round farming due to non-operational irrigation facilities and the dysfunctionality of state investments.⁶ Women play little or no role in the decision-making process regarding agricultural development and are largely unrecognized. In the rice value chain, women are hindered by existing formal and traditional rules which enhances gender inequality and puts them at disadvantage in accessing opportunities and the fulfilment of their rights.⁷ Ebonyi experiences low levels of development and higher levels of poverty in comparison to other states in Nigeria and the South East Zone. The Human Development Index (HDI) which measures progress in human development, was 0.434 in 2016.⁸ Ebonyi had the fourth-highest level of poverty in Nigeria in 2019 with 79.76 per cent of the population being classified as poor⁹. Women and girls are also affected by poverty due to the non-inheritance culture in the State.¹⁰ As of Quarter 3 of 2018, Ebonyi State had an unemployment rate of 21.1%, which was the highest in the South East Zone.¹¹

Niger State, one of the 36 states of Nigeria was created out of the defunct North Western state on 3rd February 1976. Niger State is one of the largest states in Nigeria covering about 86,000km² (or about 8.6million hectares) representing about 9.3 per cent of the total land area of the Country.¹² Niger State has the second-lowest cumulative rates of economic empowerment for women ages 15 to 49. Women in Niger State have the lowest rate of education attainment (34.9%) and ownership of a bank account (8.3%), the second-lowest rates of employment (62.1%) and participation in decision-making (22%), and the second-highest prevalence of gender-based violence (45.3%)¹³. Due to its vast landmass and its strategic position in the shea belt, Niger State has the majority of the shea trees in the country – an estimated 54% of the trees¹⁴. With an average shea nut production rate of 361,000 MT, Niger State alone produces about 195,000MT¹⁵. This accounts for 36% of the 548,000MT produced annually in West Africa. Shea trees are available in all 25 local governments in the state.¹⁶ In Niger and Ebonyi states in Nigeria, access to lands, markets, financial services, and relevant agribusiness training are crucial for women farmers to gain greater control of their resources, grow their income and invest in their families and businesses¹⁷. A gender analysis of the agricultural sector in Niger state shows gender gaps in the agricultural value chains in the state across key areas of crop production, processing and marketing. It indicates that the production of crops such as rice, sorghum, cassava and sesame are predominantly 100 per cent dominated by men with women slightly

⁵ Onya S.C., Amah-Jerry E.P. and Iheke O.R. (2020). GENDER PARTICIPATION IN NON-FARM EMPLOYMENT IN EBONYI STATE, NIGERIA, *Journal of Tropical Agriculture, Food, Environment and Extension* Volume 19 Number 3 (July 2020) pp. 1 - 7

⁶ Gender Dimension of Climate Change Impacts & Adaptation in the Agriculture Sectors in Nigeria with special reference to Ebonyi and Niger States

⁷ Ebonyi State CSA baseline Report 2021

⁸ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2018). National Human Development Report 2018: Achieving Human Development in North East Nigeria. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr_2018_nigeria_finalfinalx3.pdf

⁹ NBS. (2019b). Poverty and Inequality in Nigeria: Executive Summary. <https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary>

¹⁰ Bako, M. J., & Syed, J. (2018). Women's marginalization in Nigeria and the way forward. *Human Resource Development International*, 21(5), 425-443. DOI: 10.1080/13678868.2018.1458567

¹¹ NBS. (2019a). Labour Force Statistics – Volume 2: Underemployment and Unemployment by State (Q3 2018). <https://www.proshareng.com/report/Nigerian%20Economy/Q3-2018-Unemploymentby-State/12246>

¹² <https://nigerstate.gov.ng/about-niger/>

¹³ National Population Commission (NPC) [Nigeria] and ICF. 2019. Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2018. Abuja, Nigeria, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NPC and ICF

¹⁴ Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency

¹⁵ (2017 data; FAOSTAT)

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ <https://www.businesswomenconnect.org/nigeria/#about-ng-section>

involved in marketing. However, millet and shea butter production is dominated by women at 100 per cent.¹⁸ Additionally, one of the major constraints that Ebonyi and Niger State agricultural sector face is the unavailability and inaccessibility of trained and qualified agricultural extension agents to provide farmers with needed agricultural information¹⁹. To mitigate the effects of climate change, the farmers adopt different climate adaptation strategies to lessen the effects of climate change; which is regarded as Climate-Smart Agriculture. Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) is an adaptation strategy that helps rural farmers become resilient and cope with the effects of climate change.²⁰ In Nigeria, CSA approach, measures and targets are reportedly envisioned in federal and state level’s policies, plans and actions.

1.1. CSA Project Description

The main goal of the project ‘Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture’ was to strengthen women’s agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture products in Niger and Ebonyi states in Nigeria.²¹ The project seeks to close the gender gap in agricultural productivity by increasing women’s access to resources. It is expected to reach over 50,000 women across the four countries over three years (2019 to 2021) by providing them with entrepreneurial and financial capacities, affordable technology, and value addition, and using information and communications technology (ICT) to increase access to markets and to finance. The project is aligned with UN Women’s Development Results Framework 2: “Women, especially those living in poverty and vulnerability, are economically empowered and enabled to reap the benefits of development”. The project implementation focuses on four outcomes described in detail below. The outcomes aim to increase women’s agricultural productivity using CSA techniques and approaches; support women in value addition of selected agricultural products and increase access to market and finance. Table 1.1 shows the result levels of the CSA project.

Table 1.1: Result Areas of the CSA Project

Outcomes	Outputs
Outcome 1. Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate	1.1. Women’s access to labour and time-saving equipment and services increased
	1.2. Women’s access to climate-smart non-labour agricultural inputs improved
	1.3. Access to climate-resilient agricultural extension services and information for women and men farmers improved
	1.4. Socio-cultural barriers (including gender-based violence) reduced through policy and advocacy (including engaging men at the household level) to increase agriculture productivity and women’s equal land rights
Outcome 2: Opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain are provided	Output 2.1: Women’s shift to high-value agricultural enterprises (selected crops, fisheries, animal husbandry etc.) and inclusion in green agricultural value chains at the national, regional and international levels achieved
	Output 2.2: Local infrastructure developed to improve access to markets, reduce labour, and save time for women value chain actors

¹⁸ Niger state Gender Action Plan in Agriculture (2021-2023)

¹⁹ Merem, E. C., Twumasi, Y., Wesley, J., Isokpehi, P., Shenge, M., Fageir, S., ... & Ochai, S. (2017). Analyzing Rice Production Issues in the Niger state area of Nigeria’s middle belt. *Food and Public Health*, 7(1), 7-22.

²⁰ Alkire S, Meinzen-Dick R, Peterman A, Quisumbing AR, Seymour G, Vaz A (2013). The Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index. *World Development* ;52:71-91.

²¹ UN Women CSA Multi-country proposal

	Output 2.3: The capacity of women value chain organizations for production and marketing is increased
	Output 3.2: Information stored in the BFW platform is being used as a form of collateral for women's access to finance
	Output 3.3: Link women to financial institutions providing innovative financing in CSA
Outcome 4: The Multi-Country Project is coordinated and implemented with a focus on 'research for development and documenting lessons learned'	Output 4.1: UN Women Country offices, and agricultural research institutions in the respective countries and at the regional level engaged to increase research on gender and CSA in the region
	Output 4.2: Regional and national institutional, policy and legal frameworks that will be key enablers to facilitate women's engagement in CSA evaluated for their effectiveness.
	Output 4.3: South-South cooperation and learning among participating countries of the multi-country proposal and other countries in the region is fostered

The key stakeholders of the CSA project involved in the object implementation, including the implementing agency(s) and partners and their roles in the project, are shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Stakeholders in CSA Project in Nigeria

STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY	INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES	Roles in the Implementation of the CSA Project in Nigeria
UN Agencies	UN Women Nigeria	Coordinated all implementation activities and provided all the technical support especially to the implementing partners on the implementation of the CSA project activities.
	FAO	Supported the project in the establishment of demonstration farms using the FAO's Farmer Field School Approach. Using the demonstration farms, FAO supported the training of women smallholder farmers on improved rice production technology and the application of the package
	UNIDO	Supported 6 women smallholder rice farmer cooperatives to establish seed multiplication plots, which also served as technology demonstration and training sites
Government:		
Ebonyi	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Supported in the mobilization of women farmers in the state to participate in the CSA project. Also supported the CSA project with the provision of land for the establishment of the demonstration plots.
	Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development	Supported in the mobilization of women farmers in the state to participate in the CSA project and provided the entry points for the project team to reach out to the government
	Ministry of Human Capital Development	Supported in the mobilization of women farmers in the state to participate in the CSA project and provided the entry points for the project team to reach out to the government
Niger	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Helped in the mobilization of women processors and entrepreneurs in the state to participate in the CSA project
	Ministry of Women Affairs	Supported in the mobilization of women processors and entrepreneurs in the state to participate in the CSA project and provided the entry points for the project team to reach out to the government

STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY	INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES	Roles in the Implementation of the CSA Project in Nigeria
	Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency	This is the main institution that implemented the CSA project activities in Niger state
CSOs	National Shea butter Producers Association,	Supported in the mobilization of members of the association to actively participate in the CSA project.
	Food For All International (FFAI).	This is the main institution that implemented the CSA project activities in Ebonyi state
The Private Sector	Stanbic IBTC	The Stanbic IBTC is the donor of the CSA project and therefore provided the funding used for the implementation of the project activities
Academia	Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai (IBBUL)	Facilitated the Capacity building for women extension workers on climate smart agriculture and shea- butter value chain development in Niger state

2.0. OBJECTIVES OF THE FINAL EVALUATION

The overall objective of this final evaluation was to assess the achievement of programme results and performance of the CSA project interventions. The evaluation should measure and provide robust empirical evidence related to the success and results of the CSA interventions (both intended and unintended). The evaluation will assess changes in outcomes observed, the mechanisms that delivered the observed changes, key features of these mechanisms and determine to what extent these can be attributed to the interventions. The specific evaluation objectives are as follows:

- i. Analyse the relevance of the implementation strategy and approaches of the “Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture” project;
- ii. Assess organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of the project’s results as defined in the intervention;
- iii. Validate the project impact in terms of achievements and/or weaknesses toward the outcome and outputs;
- iv. Assess the potential for sustainability of the results achieved by the project; \
- v. Document lessons learned, best practices, and challenges to inform future work of UN Women on women’s economic empowerment;
- vi. Access the implication of COVID-19 in the entire project implementation;
- vii. Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the programme’s best practices;
- viii. Provide actionable recommendations for the implementation of the second phase of the project and maximize ownership by partners in the countries covered by the project to foster sustainability of the intervention;
- ix. To assess how the project and its results relate and contribute to commitments and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria.

2.1. Scope of the evaluation

The end of project evaluation was conducted for the CSA Programme of UN Women which was implemented for the period 2019 –2021. The evaluation covered four outcomes areas and ten output areas in Ebonyi and Niger state States. The Programme was evaluated through an analysis of the progress towards achieving expected results, measured against the log frames and targets, and through the use of programme indicators. The evaluation identified and documented short-term, intermediate, and long-term results achieved by the CSA project. It also assessed progress towards achieving the CSA project outcomes and potential impacts at the end of the project implementing period. The evaluation examined all the relevant documents of the Project, including the results framework/logical framework of the project, its Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, annual work plan, semi-annual and annual reports to the donor and knowledge products produced in the frameworks of the project.

2.2. Stakeholders of the Evaluation

The evaluation included three main levels of stakeholders. The first category involved stakeholders in the Government Ministries in the two targeted states. These are Ebonyi and Niger States (through the respective ministries of agriculture and Women Affairs), the Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency. The government Ministries supported the implementation of the programme by helping to mobilize the beneficiaries at the community level for their full participation. The Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency was the main implementing partner of the CSA project in Niger state. The second category is the Civil society organization. They include National Shea butter Producers Association and Food For All International (FFAI). The FFAI was the main implementing partner of the CSA project in Ebonyi state. A detailed stakeholder analysis matrix is attached to this report as Annex 2 and highlights the categories of stakeholders, their roles in the intervention, and how the evaluation team involved them in the evaluation process.

2.3. Users of the Evaluation

The CSA final evaluation report will be used to draw lessons learnt based on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the work done and inform the design of future work on CSA by UN Women Nigeria. Specific users will include UN Women Nigeria Country Office and other UN Women offices. Findings from the report will be used for future programming in the area of CSA. The Federal and State Ministries of Women Affairs, Ministries of Agriculture and Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency will also use the findings for their future programming on gender mainstreaming in the CSA programme. The findings will also be useful to the State governments of Niger and Ebonyi states as well as CSOs with interest in CSA.

2.4. Theory of Change

The Project Strategy follows an organizational Theory of Change (ToC) that comprises three interlinked outcomes. The ToC postulate that **If** (1) women have access to climate-smart non-labour agricultural inputs and labour- and time-saving equipment and services; **If** (2) they are supported by climate-resilient agricultural extension services, providing them with relevant CSA information; **If** (3) the relaxation of the socio-cultural barriers to equal land rights and land access is assured; **If** (4) they participate fully in high-value agricultural enterprises with increased access to markets; **If** (5) they can use digital platforms that will connect women farmers to large scale buyers of agricultural products; and **If** (6) national agricultural research institutions in the respective countries and at a regional level are engaged to increase research on women and CSA in the region, **Then** (6) women farmers will be economically empowered and more resilient in a changing climate, **because** (7) the root causes and drivers of gender gaps in agriculture have been removed. The ToC is relevant as it describes how the Programme strategy intended to contribute to the desired changes at the outcome and impact level. However, it did not show any linkage with any credible sources on which the ToC design was based. Also, the assumption and risks; the most relevant envisaged specific changes were not clearly stated in the ToC. Also, there is no evidence to show that the ToC was developed based on a collaborative and participatory process involving multiple stakeholders perspectives, including beneficiaries.

2.4.1 Existing Data Availability

The review of the project documents shared with the evaluator shows the existence result framework with baseline and targets specified for the Nigeria component of the project. Based on the review of the available project document, the theory of change of the CSA project was analytically reviewed. The available documents were generally good and provided a clear picture and road map of the project design and implementation in target states. There was a baseline assessment conducted in Ebonyi state for the CSA project but none for Niger state. There was also a study report on the Gender Dimension of Climate Change Impacts & Adaptation in the Agriculture Sectors in Nigeria with special reference to Ebonyi and Niger States. However, the reports did not focus on the project results framework indicators. The review also reveals the availability of activity reports for the period January 2019 to December 2020 but none from January 2021 to December 2021 which makes it impossible for the evaluation to establish the extent of project activity implementation especially for the period January 2021 to December 2021 from the project documents. To address this challenge, the

evaluator liaised with the project team to provide the data for the achievement of the various indicators in the Results Framework. Also missing the project proposal narrative is sustainability strategy. Overall, few gaps were found in the project documents especially the absence of an activity report for the period January 2021 to December 2021. To address these gaps, the evaluator relied on interviews with beneficiaries and the project team to fill the gaps.

3.0. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Results-Based Management (RBM) Approach: Theory of Change

The CSA project was evaluated against the Results-Based Management (RBM) - Theory of Change Approach. Relevant documents were reviewed and used to derive information for an updated Theory of Change (ToC) Model. This approach enhanced the evaluator's understanding of the CSA project's logic, including inputs, outputs, planned outcomes, risks, and underlying assumptions.

3.1. Evaluation criteria elaboration of key questions

The final evaluation of the CSA project applied OECD/DAC evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and coherence. The evaluation also took into consideration gender equality and human rights, and disability inclusion, as separate standalone criteria. These were used as the main analytical frameworks in line with the UN Women evaluation policy.²² The evaluation questions developed around thematic evaluation areas of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, gender equality and human rights, and disability inclusion are presented in Annex 4.

3.2. Methodological Approach

The evaluation adopted a mixed design relying heavily on both quantitative and qualitative research methods and desk review of secondary data documents. The use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative data was key to the evaluation, as this ensured that the limitations of one type of data were balanced by the strengths of another. Findings of the evaluation were sourced from primary and secondary sources of data.

3.3. Secondary Data Collection

The evaluator carried out a desk review of all relevant documentation on the programme (Refer to Annex X). These were complemented with relevant literature from other sources where necessary. The document review process was conducted in line with key evaluation questions using the content analysis method. This provided useful background information to the evaluation team for understanding the CSA project assessing its implementation. The information was also used to verify and validate (triangulate) data obtained from other sources.

3.4. Data Collection Tools

The main instruments used for primary data collection included key informant interview guides and focus group discussions guides. The data collected using the two tools from stakeholders assessed the relevance of the CSA project in the target states, the effectiveness of the project as well as the efficiency of the project concerning the use of resources. Others captured the impact of the CSA project in the target States as well as the sustainability of the benefits of the project in the target states. The use of interviews and FGDs helped to have a captive audience when collecting information from stakeholders who have been involved in or reached by the CSA project. The key informants and focus group discussants were representatives of the cooperative societies that were targeted by the project as well as the implementing partners and project team. The information obtained consists of both individual and institutional responses to the questions of the evaluation. This approach enriched data management and resulted in a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the CSA project. The approach ensured that the evaluation was utilization-focused, gender-responsive, and explicitly integrated human rights-based approaches to data management. These research methods were chosen

²²<https://genderevaluation.unwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/gender%20evaluation/handbook/evaluationhandbook-web-final-0apr2015.pdf?la=en&vs=4246>

to be complementary and allow for cross-verification, corroboration, and triangulation of evidence collected from different sources, thus enhancing the reliability and validity of the data collected.

3.5 Sampling and Data Collection

Using the stakeholder analysis matrix that defined the roles, and nature of participation of stakeholders in the CSA project, the evaluator was able to purposively select key stakeholders for data collection. The evaluator employed purposive sampling for the cooperative members. It is important to note that all the cooperative members targeted by the project are made up of women. With the assistance of the implementing partners, **10 cooperatives were randomly selected in Ebonyi state out of 30 registered cooperatives while 4 cooperatives were selected out of 7 in Niger state.** . Also, 6 entrepreneurs were randomly selected out of 40 in Niger state for the purpose of data collection. See annexe 4 for a list of cooperatives that participated in the data collection exercise in both states. At the state level, the evaluation sampled key relevant Ministries that participated in the CSA project. They include the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and Ministry of Human Capital Development in Ebonyi state. In Niger State, the relevant Ministries that participated include the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Women Affairs and the Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency which is the implementing partner in Niger state. Two CSOs were also covered and they include the National Shea butter Producers Association and Food For All International (FFAI) who is the implementing partner in Ebonyi state. However, due to logistic and security challenges, selected cooperative beneficiaries from the inaccessible LGAs were brought to the State capital for data collection with the support of the implementing partners. In all 8 FGDs were conducted while 30 KIIs were conducted in the two states. Fieldwork for the evaluation was carried out in Ebonyi and Niger state from the 2nd of August to the 1st of December 2021 to 11th December. Interviews were conducted with IP, beneficiaries and stakeholders in the two states. The team took detailed notes on all interviews and discussions.

Table 3.1: Participants by Category of Respondents

Stakeholders Consulted	KII			FGD		
	Number KII	Female	Male	No. of FGDs	Female	Male
ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Ebonyi state	1		1			
Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development Ebonyi state	1	1				
Ministry of Human Capital Development in Ebonyi state	1	1				
Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency	1	1				
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Niger state	1		1			
Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Niger state	1	1				
National Shea butter Producers Association and	1		1			
Food For All International (FFAI)	3	3				
Cooperatives	20	20		8	8	
Total	30	8		8		

3.6. Gender and Human Rights Considerations

To foster gender and human rights in this evaluation, a full range of stakeholder groups (including duty bearers and rights holders) were carefully analysed, to avoid biases such as gender, distance, power (supporting less powerful interviewees to be able to speak freely by addressing privacy and confidentiality concerns), etc. The evaluation team also explored barriers these groups may face in their participation and devised strategies to address related barriers. Also, some rights-based and gender-sensitive indicators were incorporated in the evaluation questions to ensure the evaluation is gender and human rights responsive.

3.7. Validity and reliability of data

To increase the validity and reliability of data, the evaluators administered different tools containing similar wordings for the same question. More importantly, data collection tools were pre-tested on a group of cooperative members and responses obtained helped to determine respondents' levels of understanding and answering to the questions and led to the rewording of some questions for simplification. These selected groups of respondents used for pre-testing were left out during the main data collection. To increase the ability for the generalizability of findings, representative samples were selected from all stakeholder groups. The use of multiple methods of data collection and analysis (triangulation) allowed for validation of findings from data gathered across the three different methodologies (document review, KIIs, and FGDs) and information collected from different sites through these methods.

3.8. Data Analysis and Reporting

The analysis of data involved a systematic organization, comparison, and synthesis of information and data derived across and through all methods²³ to ensure robust findings based on the evidence. Data was analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to meet the objectives of the evaluation. Relevant tables and columns were developed showing disaggregated data in drafting the various sections of the report. This provided more clarity on the various dimensions of the impact of the CSA project on the target beneficiaries. Thematic coding was used for qualitative data analysis. The codes and themes were determined by the evaluation objectives and criteria to include relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and cross-cutting issues including disability inclusion. The content analysis method was employed in the desk review of all available reports, documents, and collected data sets. All relevant Programme documents were reviewed and findings triangulated by source and methods to obtain descriptive findings and conclusions relevant to respond to the objectives of the evaluation. Findings were finally refined based on the comments of key informants and through cross-checking to ensure factual credibility.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

The evaluation took into consideration key ethics and principles for research and evaluation. The consultant also adhered strictly to the UN Evaluation (Group UNEG) standards for evaluation, UN Women Evaluation policy as well as the ethical Guidelines for evaluations in the UN System. This evaluation adopted the Ethical Guidelines, in particular: 1) respect for dignity and diversity; 2) right to self-determination; 3) fair representation; 4) alignment with codes for vulnerable groups; 5) redress; 6) confidentiality; 7) avoidance of harm. Relevant critical measures taken during data collection included gathering appropriate stakeholder groups in sessions they could express themselves freely. Critical ethical considerations for data collection incorporated in the evaluation design included the following:

- ✚ Data collection tools were designed in a way that is culturally appropriate and does not create distress for respondents;
- ✚ Data collection visits were organized at the appropriate times and places to minimize risk to respondents;
- ✚ Interviewers provided information on how individuals in situations of risk can seek support;

²³ How to manage Gender-responsive Evaluation- Evaluation Handbook, p76

The evaluation team also obtained informed consent from all key informants in interviews and focus group discussions. The team emphasized that all information provided in discussions and interviews would not be linked to any specific person and that all information provided would be kept confidential. Programme team members and IPs were excluded from all meetings with the beneficiaries for maximum confidentiality.

3.10. Limitations to the evaluation

The evaluation was faced with several limitations mostly linked to security. The unpredictable security situation in some intervention LGAs constituted a limitation to the evaluators' visit to the concerned LGAs. The beneficiaries from such LGAs were assembled in the state capital for data collection. The same approach was adopted in both states to address this challenge and it was a useful approach as the evaluation team was able to reach all the planned number of beneficiaries during the data collection exercise. Another key challenge was the limitation in the available project documents shared with the consultant most especially the absence of activity report for the period January 2021 to December 2022. This challenge was addressed by generating relevant data from the project team and beneficiaries through interviews. Reaching out to some high-profile stakeholders also posed some challenges due to their busy schedules and location. Telephone interviews were conducted in this case to ensure their participation at their own convenient time. Overall, these limitations were mitigated and could not compromise the required sample size or quality of findings.

4.0 FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATIONS

4.1 Relevance

Findings 1: The CSA project is relevant to the rights and needs of target groups.

In Nigeria, several challenges have been identified as limiting women participation in the rice and shea butter value chain. Among the challenges are lack of access to land, lack of basic physical infrastructure and essential services, lack of appropriate technology for production and processing and difficulties in accessing credit facilities for investment in the agriculture food value chain²⁴. The UN Women CSA project outcomes focused on addressing these challenges through supporting women collectively to increase their access to appropriate information, technology, inputs that can increase productivity and link women to external markets for sales of their value-added products. Interviews with women farmers in the target states confirmed that the project was relevant to their rights and needs. All the stakeholders in Niger state noted that the project was relevant as it opened their eyes to several opportunities available in the Shea butter value chain. For instance, they noted that they could only produce only one product from the Shea butter but after the training organized under the CSA project, many members of the women cooperative now have different forms of processed Shea butter products in the forms of creams, bar soaps, detergents, balm etc. as shown in Plate 1 and 2. It was also indicated that the CSA project has addressed these needs to a large extent as the women are now exposed and linked to several marketing opportunities as in the case of their participation in the Beauty West Africa Conference and Exhibition which was organized in Lagos and the Women processors and entrepreneurs were taken to the programme to market their products. For the rice farmers in Ebonyi state, the beneficiaries noted that the CSA project was relevant to their needs as shown in this excerpt:

“One of our major problems is the low yield from our rice farm due to our old method of farming and low yield varieties of seeds that we have and this project addressed it for us. The yield was low before now because the method we were using was just broadcasting but now we learnt that even rice has to be ventilated by the spacing of 2cm. We now plant the rice in rows and also apply the fertilizer in rows and these things we learnt has helped us to get an increase in yield and bumper harvest.”²⁵

²⁴ Ejike et al, (2018). Gender Dimension in Agricultural Food Value Chain Development in Nigeria: The Women Perspective. International Journal of Agriculture and Earth Science Vol. 4 No. 3

²⁵ Excerpt from KII with Women Rice farmers in Ebonyi state

Plate 1: Shea Products from Gbaiko Shea Butter Enterprises



Plate 2: Shea Products from Dijmeds Shea Enterprises



Findings 2: The CSA Project is relevant to international and regional commitments and aligned with national policies, UNSDPF (2018 – 2022) and UN Women priorities

Evidence shows that the CSA is relevant to several international and regional commitments including the Beijing Platform and Declaration for Action (BPfA). One of the BPfA's twelve critical areas of concern, 'Women and the economy, provides a stocktake of women's economic inequality and overrepresentation in low-paid jobs with poor working conditions. The CSA project is also relevant to the convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW includes several Articles directly relevant to women's economic empowerment. These include inter alia Article 11 affording women equal employment, remuneration and protection opportunities regardless of pregnancy, maternity and marital status. The CSA project is also relevant to the sustainable development goals (SDGs) 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Evidence from document reviews and interviews with the project team confirmed that the CSA project is also relevant to national and state policies. Concerning rice, the CSA project is aligned with Nigerian National Rice Development Strategy (NRDS) (2009-2018). Two priorities areas set for enhancement by the policy which aligned with the CSA project are (1) post-harvest processing and treatment and input availability, mainly focusing on seeds, fertilizer and farming equipment. Concerning Shea Butter, the CSA project is relevant to the federal government Five-Year Action Plan on the Shea butter sector in the country. The roadmap was designed to address the lack of awareness on best practices, lack of standard Shea processing methods and facilities which is in line with the focus of the CSA project concerning Shea Butter.^{26 27} The CSA project is also well aligned with the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (2016 - 2020) as well as the current Nigeria Economic sustainability plan (2020). The CSA project is also strongly aligned and relevant to the Federal Government and Central bank of Nigeria (CBN) Anchor Borrowers' Programme. The CSA project is also relevant and well in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) 2018 – 2022 for Nigeria, particularly Outcome 9: Environmental Sustainability and Food Security:

²⁶ <https://www.nipc.gov.ng/2019/06/21/nigeria-presents-draft-policy-on-shea-butter/>

²⁷ <https://allafrica.com/stories/201904050167.html>

Finding 3: The design of the CSA project was appropriate to a moderate extent

Evidence from the review of project documents and interviews with the project team and beneficiaries proved that the CSA project design in Nigeria was appropriate to a moderate extent. The project has four spelt out outcomes level results as follows: (1) increase women's agricultural productivity using CSA techniques (2) Support women in value addition of selected agricultural products and (3) increase access to market and finance (4) A focus on 'research for development and documenting lessons learned. Also, the beneficiaries of the project were clearly described and specified in each state. The goal, objectives as well as the targets were viable and realistic. Based on the review of the project documents, the CSA project was anchored on a Theories of Change (ToC) which represent the main hypothesis that this evaluation is attempting to assess against the main questions in the evaluation matrix. While the ToC is relevant as it shows a plausible, clear and logical flow to describe how the project strategy intends to contribute to the desired changes at the outcome level without any knowledge gap, there is no evidence of linkage of the ToC with any knowledge and lessons learnt from credible sources and the key assumptions of the ToC were also missing from the available documents. Also, there is no evidence to show that the ToC was developed based on a collaborative and participatory process involving multiple stakeholders perspectives. Evidence from the document review also shows that there was no established M&E system for the project for the Nigeria component of the project. Also missing are spelt out an exit strategy for the project. From the design of the CSA project, there was a plan for a baseline study to serve as a benchmark for monitoring the project's performance and one mid-term evaluation after Year 2 to guide subsequent implementation. However, this was only conducted in Ebonyi state while Niger state was not covered in the baseline assessment. Also, the issue of sustainability was hardly mentioned in the project design. Overall, the evaluation rated the CSA project design as moderately appropriate due to the above gaps. Note this:

Finding 4: The requirements for Project ownership was satisfied by the project

The evaluation found that the requirements for state ownership were satisfied by the project. The project design recognized that government at state levels more readily assumed ownership when initiatives are built on participation, consultations, and government visions, strategies, and frameworks. During the CSA project implementation, consultations were held with different categories of stakeholders from the launch of the project onwards. Evidence collected in this evaluation shows that relevant government ministries were involved. In Niger state, the main implementing partner was the Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency (NSCEPA). The Agency has the overall mandate for the coordination, development and promotion of the Shea butter value chain in Niger State. The agency has the constitutional responsibility for the management of the Government's Shea butter facilities across the state and registration of women cooperatives in the state as well as women in Shea value chains. This strategy of engaging the NSCEPA as implementing partner to a large extent promoted the ownership of the project in Niger state given the constitutional mandate of the NSCEPA in working with women in Shea value chains.

In Ebonyi State, evidence also shows that the government together with local communities provided 12 hectares of land to the targeted women cooperatives which have been used to establish demonstration and seed multiplication farms to train women rice farmers on modern farming technology²⁸. This also is good evidence of project ownership on the part of the government. The project also has engaged other key Ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Women affairs. While the Ministry of Agriculture has the constitutional mandate for the development of agriculture in Nigeria, the Ministry of Women Affairs is charged with the responsibility of promoting gender equality in Nigeria. The involvement of these Ministries in the implementation of the CSA project contributed to ownership of the project by the state government.

4.2 Coherence

Finding 5: The CSA Project is coherent and related to government policies, strategies and programmes at the state and national levels.

²⁸ CSA Annual Report 2020

Evidence from document reviews and interviews with the project team confirm that the CSA project is coherent and related to government policies, strategies and programmes at the state and national levels. At the national level, the Federal Government's increasing awareness of the importance of Shea butter tree as an important industrial tree crop with high potentials for foreign exchange earnings made Shea tree one of its mandate cash crops for mass production through the national accelerated industrial crops production programme.²⁹ The federal government has also developed the Shea Butter Policy in 2019 which was designed to address the problems associated with shea butter production in Nigeria to maximise the potential of the sector in Nigeria and increase export volume. At the state level, the Niger state government developed a detailed road map for the sustainable development of the Shea butter sector in Niger State. This was followed by the establishment of the Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency (NSCEPA) which was charged with the responsibility of the development of the sector. Evidence also shows that the CSA project is coherent with other partners projects in the intervention states. In Ebonyi State, the CSA project is coherent with the USAID Climate Change Adaptation review project on rice production and the project complemented the CSA project by facilitating the training of the women beneficiaries of the CSA project on climate change adaptation for rice production in Ebonyi state. The CSA project was also coherent with the Feed the Future project on rice production in Ebonyi state. In Niger state, the CSA project is coherent with the GIZ project on Shea Butter cosmetic value change development. In all, there was no evidence of duplication of effort as the other projects have a focus on complementing the activities of the CSA project. For instance, in Ebonyi state, the USAID project built the capacity of women beneficiaries of the CSA project on climate change adaptation for rice production while in Niger state, GIZ supported the CSA women Shea butter producers with market linkages. Please Note:

Findings 6: The extent to which the CSA project is coherent internally in UN Women and within the UN System in Nigeria

Our evidence set confirmed that the CSA project is coherent internally with UN Women and within the UN System in Nigeria. The key specific objectives of the CSA project aligned with key gender equality international agreements and legal instruments which guide the work within the United Nations system. At the twenty-third session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), COP 23, Parties adopted the Gender Action Plan (GAP) to support the implementation of gender-related decisions and mandates under the UNFCCC process (Decision 3/COP.23) which aligned with the CSA objectives. The CSA project is also coherent with the UN women as improving the climate-resilience of women farmers is one of UN Women's Flagship Programming Initiatives. The CSA project also aligns to UN Women's Strategic Plan (2022-2025) Outcome 4 which focuses on creating access to better – and more tailored – public goods, services and resources for all women and girls, which is very coherent with the UN Women Nigeria CSA project-specific objectives.

4.3 Effectiveness

This criterion measures the extent to which the Project's objectives were achieved or are expected / likely to be achieved. The following evaluation questions were used to measure the effectiveness of the CSA project.

Findings 7: Assessing the success of the project in terms of the progress made towards the achievement of the expected results (outputs and outcomes and results achieved)

Progress on results at outcome and output level was measured in line with indicators in the results framework. Progress on outcomes and outputs are discussed below.

Outcome 1: Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate

²⁹ J. O. Olaoye, "Enhancement of oil Extraction of Shea butter using an optimized illusion clarification protocol", *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture and the Environment (JSAE)*, vol. 3, no. 2, (2005), pp. 353-360

Evidence Table 4.1 shows that progress in outcome 1 (**Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate**) has no indicator for measurement of performance. However, output 1.1 under outcome 1 has 5 indicators. Evidence from Table 4.1 shows that all the indicators were achieved by the CSA project.

Table 4.1: CSA Project Accomplishment Under output 1.1 in Outcome 1

Result Level	Indicator (s)	Baseline	Target	Actual Achievement
Outcome 1: Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate				
Output 1.1: Women's uptake of CSA inputs (equipment and finances) and services (extension services and information) increased.	Number of women farmers trained on use of climate resilient technologies	0	5000	6,442
	Number of women farmers trained and facilitate participation of rural women to in the review of community adaptation plans that address climate risks.	0	120	120
	Number of improved and environmentally friendly production equipment and inputs provided to the women cooperatives.	0	12	15
	Number of policy dialogues on the adoption of the Agriculture Promotion Policy organized.	0	4	6
	Number of Trained agricultural extension officers on gender responsive climate smart agronomic practices and providing support to women famers	0	50	50

The first indicator on the number of women farmers trained on the use of climate-resilient technologies with a baseline of 0 and a target of 5000 was achieved by the project with an overall achievement of 6,442. The second indicator on the number of women farmers trained to facilitate the participation of rural women in the review of community adaptation plans that address climate risks with a baseline of 0 and a target of 120 was also met by the project with overall achievement standing at 120. Also, the third indicator under output 1.1 on the number of improved and environmentally friendly production equipment and inputs provided to the women cooperatives with a baseline of 0 and a target of 12 was achieved by the CSA project with overall achievement of 15. Evidence from Table 4.1 also reveals that the fourth and fifth indicator under output 1.1 was not only achieved by the CSA project but their respective targets were exceeded by the CSA project.

There are 4 indicators to measure progress towards output 1.2 under outcome 1 (Table 4.2). The first indicator on the number of regulations/policies that promote women's rights to secure land developed/ updated by line ministries supported by the CSA project with a baseline of 0 and a target of 3 was not achieved by the project with an overall achievement of 2. The second indicator on the number of advocacy meetings with community gatekeepers to negotiate women's access/rights to land organized with a baseline of 0 and a target of 2 was also met by the project with overall achievement standing at 4. Also, the third indicator under output 1.2 on the number of women's access to land network established with a baseline of 0 and a target of 2 was not achieved by the CSA project as the overall achievement was 1 at the end of the project implementation. Evidence from Table 4.2 also reveals that the fourth indicator under output 1.2 has no target and overall achievement values. Thus the opportunity to assess the performance of the project on this indicator was missed.

Table 4.2: CSA Project Accomplishment Under output 1.2 in Outcome 1

Result Level	Indicator (s)	Baseline	Target	Actual Achievement
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Outcome 1: Women have increased their productivity in a changing climate				
Output 1.2: Socio-cultural barriers (including gender-based violence) reduced through policy and advocacy (including engaging men at household level) to increase agricultural productivity and women's equal land rights..	Number of regulations/policies that promote women's rights to secure land developed/ updated by line ministries supported by CSA project.	0	3	2
	Number of advocacy meetings with community gatekeepers to negotiate women's access/rights to land organized	0	2	4
	Number of women's access to land network established	0	2	1
	Number of women farmers trained on framing issues and negotiation skills to engage in land policy and decision-making processes.	0		

There are 4 indicators to measure progress towards output 2.1 under outcome 2 (Table 4.3). The first indicator on the number of women farmers cooperatives/groups organized and supported by the CSA project with a baseline of 0 and a target of 17 was achieved by the project with overall achievement of 37. The second indicator measures number of rural women farmers trained on value addition and quality assurance for certification with a baseline of 0 and a target of 40 was also met by the project with overall achievement standing at 120. Also, the third indicator under output 2.1 on the number of rural women farmers cooperatives supported to register on agribusiness platforms with a baseline of 0 and a target of 17 was achieved by the CSA project as overall achievement stood at 30 at the end of the project implementation. Findings from Table 4.2 also reveal that the fourth indicator under output 2.1 which measures the number of women entrepreneurs facilitated to register on agribusiness platforms with a target of 12 was achieved by the CSA project with an overall achievement of 21. Overall, all the indicators under output 2.1 were achieved by the CSA project.

Table 4.3: CSA Project Accomplishment Under output 2.1 in Outcome 2

Result Level	Indicator (s)	Baseline	Target	Actual Achievement
Outcome 2: Opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain are provided				
Output 2.1: Production by women farmers of high-value agricultural products increased.	Number of women farmers cooperatives/groups organized and supported by the CSA project	0	17	37
	Number of rural women farmers trained on value addition and quality assurance for certification	0	40	120
	Number of rural women farmers cooperatives supported to register on agribusiness platforms.	0	17	30
	Number of women entrepreneurs facilitated to register on agribusiness platforms	0	12	21

Evidence from Table 4.4 shows that there are two indicators under output 2.2. However, there are no targets for the two indicators and thus, the opportunity to assess the performance of the project on the two indicators was missed.

Table 4.4: CSA Project Accomplishment Under output 2.2 in Outcome 2

Result Level	Indicator (s)	Baseline	Target	Actual Achievement
Outcome 2: Opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain are provided				
Output 2.2: Local infrastructure to improve access to markets, reduce labour and save time for women farmers improved.	Number of post-harvest handling infrastructure for high value agricultural products constructed/ upgrade	0	4	
	Number of women farmers trained on use of post-harvest handling infrastructure.	0	24	

There are 6 indicators to measure progress towards output 2.3 under outcome 2 (Table 4.5). The first indicator on the number of women trained in business management and financial literacy skills with a baseline of 0 and a target of 120 was achieved by the project with an overall achievement of 140. The second indicator measures number of women farmers Trained on branding, packaging and marketing skills with a baseline of 0 and a target of 200 was also met by the project with overall achievement standing at 320. Also, the third indicator under output 2.3 on the number of women farmers trained on standards and certification (NAFDAC) with a baseline of 0 and a target of 120 was achieved by the CSA project as overall achievement stood at 120 at the end of project implementation. Also, the fourth indicator under output 2.3 which measures the number of women farmers on Train of trainers (TOT) of extension officers on gender and value chain development with a baseline of 0 and target of 50 was achieved by the CSA project with an overall achievement 65. However, indicator 5 which measures the number of MoUs between women cooperatives and off-takers was not achieved by the CSA project while indicator 6 measuring the number of common facility processing and packaging centre for women cooperatives established with a baseline of 0 and a target of 4 was achieved by the project.

Table 4.5: CSA Project Accomplishment Under output 2.3 in Outcome 2

Result Level	Indicator (s)	Baseline	Target	Actual Achievement
Outcome 2: Opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain are provided				
Output 2.3: Capacities for women farmers to organize along the value chain nodes strengthened.	Number of women trained on business management and financial literacy skills.	0	120	140
	Number of women farmers Trained on branding, packaging and marketing skills.	0	200	320
	Number of women farmers Trained on standards and certification (NAFDAC)	0	120	120
	Number of women farmers on Train of trainers (TOT) of extension officers on gender and value chain development.	0	50	65
	Facilitate an MoU between women cooperatives and off-takers	0	2	0
	Establish a common facility processing and packaging center for women cooperatives.	0	4	4

There is only one indicator to measure output 3.1 under outcome 3 (Table 4.6). The indicator measures the number of women cooperatives and enterprises supported to access the BfW digital platform with a baseline of 0 and a target of 17 was achieved by the CSA project with overall achievement of 37 at the end of project implementation. There is only one indicator to measure output 3.2 under outcome 3. The indicator which measures the number of women in cooperatives supported to have a bank account for their business with a baseline of 0 had an overall achievement of 200. Overall, the two indicators under output 3.1 and 3.2 were all achieved by the CSA project.

Table 4.6: CSA Project Accomplishment Under output 3.1 in Outcome 3

Result Level	Indicator (s)	Baseline	Target	Actual Achievement
Outcome 3: Using ICT platforms (BfW) for increased access to markets and finance for women.				
Output 3.1: Deploy the buy-from-women (BfW) digital platform to connect women farmers to large scale buyers of agricultural products.	Number of women cooperatives and enterprise supported to access the BfW digital platform	0	17	37
Output 3.2: Link women to financial institutions providing innovative financing in CSA.	Number of women in cooperatives supported to have bank account for their business	0		200

Outcome 4: The project is implemented with a focus on ‘research for development and documenting lessons learned

Output 4.1: Capacities for research and knowledge sharing on gender and CSA enhanced.

There is only one indicator to measure output 4.1 under outcome 3. The indicator measures the number of CSA gender studies jointly with research and academic institutions undertaken with a baseline of 0 and a target of 1 was achieved by the CSA project with overall achievement standing at 1.

Overall the project made significant progress towards the achievement of the expected outputs and outcomes. Summarily, the following results were achieved by the project.

- ✚ *Step down training for 1,200 women smallholder rice farmers on improved rice production system including the use of high yielding, short-cycled seed varieties, such as farrow 44 and 52, mechanical land preparation, irrigation, and improved crop management, harvest, field Demo (Smart Agronomic Practices) and post-harvest practices through the establishment of 2 demonstration farms over 15 hectares of land in 2 LGAs), Ezza South and Obozara in Ebonyi State.*
- ✚ *120 Rural women trained in the development and review of community adaptation plans that address climate risks in the targeted Local Government Areas, and 120 members of the women cooperative were mentored on access to the land network.*
- ✚ *In Niger State 140 women processors and entrepreneurs were trained on business development and financial management, branding, packing and marketing skills, and on standards and certification, facilitated by an international consultant.*
- ✚ *Forty Nine (49) beneficiaries from 7 Cooperatives groups across the 4 pilot LGA were trained in soap making techniques*
- ✚ *Forty (40) Entrepreneurs (20 early stage and 20 advanced entrepreneurs) currently formulating shea value added products, were trained on cosmetics formulation techniques with unique formulations developed for each entrepreneur.*

- ✦ *A unique brand identity was created for each of the 7 cooperatives. The early stage and advanced entrepreneurs (40 in total) were rebranded (from logos, labelling, packaging) to ensure increased market competitiveness for their brands.*
- ✦ *Training Of Trainers' Course on Gender and Value Chain Development for Agriculture Extension Workers in Niger State for 25 Women in Agriculture. They were trained on women empowerment through shea butter production, introduction to climate-smart agriculture and shea nut butter value chain development improving shea-butter production processes for increased efficiency, product quality and market value, understanding customer needs, a strategy for creating value in shea butter business, techniques of marketing shea-butter products for women empowerment, modes of financing cooperative society*
- ✦ *Procurement and installation of 3 post-harvest handling facilities which include 3 sets of rice industrial milling machines and one set of shea butter processing and packaging equipment in Ebonyi and Niger state respectively. The industrial rice milling machines imported from China has the capacity to process 1000kg per hour with polishing and de-stoning facilities, including a 50kva generator, electric par-boiling machine for the women cooperatives in the three project local governments*
- ✦ *Procurement and installation of shea butter processing machines for women cooperatives and entrepreneurs in Niger State. The processing machine includes boiler (Steam)Steaming Unit including Shea-nut Bins, Drying Machine/ Oven, Shea nutcracker/ de-sheller, Crusher with 10 - 15HP electric motor, Roaster with 7HP electric/ gas motor, milling machine, Kneader 7HP electric motor - Steam Generator, Oil Expeller, Filtration System, Measuring Scales of 500kg, and a Generator – 50KVa*
- ✦ *Women entrepreneurs attended a national trade fair organized in Abuja and a regional trade fair organized in Lagos during the reporting period, during which their products were introduced to national and international markets. one of the entrepreneurs currently produces and supply toilet soaps made of shea products to a 3star hotel, 'Dongo Koli' in Niger state.*
- ✦ *On policy, the project supported the government of Niger for the production and dissemination of 500 copies of Gender Action Plan/framework for implementation of gender-responsive agriculture policy which has created the enabling environment for women to access lands and other productive agricultural resources in the state.*
- ✦ *UN Women also collaborated with governments of Ebonyi and Niger State for the upgrade of the 4 facilities donated by the governments- 3 in Ebonyi and 1 in Niger state for the installation of the post-harvest 3 milling machines and shea butter processing.*
- ✦ *UN Women during the reporting period conducted a study on The Gender Dimensions of Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation in the Agriculture Sectors of the Niger and Ebonyi States. The study aimed at improving institutional frameworks on CSA in Nigeria and also on different climate-smart agricultural options including the evaluation of new and existing climate-smart and gender-sensitive agricultural options and understanding the barriers to adoption of different climate-smart agricultural options by women among other objectives.*
- ✦ *In 2021, UN Women signed MOU with the Nigeria Agribusiness Register (NAR) to provide the women smallholder farmers and entrepreneurs with complimentary listing on the Agribiz platform which would enable them to have access to premium markets and increases competitive advantage. The digital company will also link the smallholder farmers to offline markets and ensure their sustainability by leveraging their partnerships with Global Shea Alliance (GSA), National Shea Products Association of Nigeria (NASPAN), Small Scale Women Farmers Organization in Nigeria (SWOFON), Rice Farmers Association of Nigeria (RIFAN) and Paddy Rice Dealers Association of Nigeria.³⁰*

Finding 8: Reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of the Programme objectives

Findings from the document's review and interviews with the project team identified several factors that influenced the achievement of intended project objectives and others that constituted challenges for the project implementation. The first positive factor that influenced project objectives achievement was the appropriate targeting of the project locations in both states. For instance, Ebonyi state is one of the highest producers of

³⁰ CSA Annual Report 2020

rice in Nigeria with a high level of women participation. The same applies to Niger state which has the highest number of Shea butter trees in Nigeria. The targeting of these states by the CSA project was therefore apt as it ensures that the targeted beneficiaries already have previous knowledge and interest in both rice and shea butter production respectively. Also, the natural resources needed such as shea butter tree and appropriate climatic conditions suitable for rice production were available in the targeted states.

The second major factor that contributed to the achievement of the project objectives was the supportive attitude of the government in both states. The relevant government Ministries in both states actively participated in the project implementation and also made important contributions to the project. In Ebonyi State, the Government provided 15 hectares of land which was used for the setting up of Demo farms for the women rice farmers. In Niger state, the government provided facilities for the various training workshops held for women shea butter producers in the state. Also in Niger state, the main implementing partner (NSCEPA) is a government agency that ensured full government participation in the programme.

Thirdly, the collaborative approach in the project implementation and the cooperative attitude of project beneficiaries contributed to the project achievements recorded. The project was implemented collaboratively involving multiple stakeholders including the government at the state level, local community leaders, CSOs, academia and implementing partners. This approach brought diverse perspectives and experiences into the project implementation and therefore contributed to the success recorded by the project. Also, the will of beneficiaries to contribute and participate to change their situation relating to increasing their output in both rice and shea butter production in both states was a major enabling factor. The women actively participated in the project activities. This is evident in the enthusiasm demonstrated by the women mediation in the registration of the cooperatives with the Cooperate Affairs Commission. The UN Women CSA project which focuses on Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture was seen by the targeted beneficiaries as an opportunity to tackle the protracted low production in rice and shea butter by the targeted beneficiaries. Hence the project was seen as an opportunity to address the problem. Hence, the CSA project was unanimously accepted which contributed to the successes recorded by the Programme.

The technical support and oversight functions provided by the UN Women project team to the implementing partners throughout the implementation of the various activities were acknowledged by various implementing partners as one major factor that provided the needed technical support necessary for project implementation. It was noted that the consultant that facilitated the training on shea butter production was sourced by the regional office from Senegal while other consultants were sourced locally UN Women country office. This ensured that all aspects of the project were adequately implemented.

The availability of funding for the implementation of project activities is another major factor responsible for the recorded achievement of the projects. Evidence from document reviews and interviews from implementing partners indicate that funds were readily available for the timely implementation of the project activities. All the Programme activities implementation requires funding and nothing would have been achieved without the release of funds from UN Women.

On the other hand, the evaluation also identified several factors that influenced the non-achievement or delayed the achievement of the intended outputs of the project. Interviews with the project team and the review of documents revealed that the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in movement restrictions imposed by the Federal and State Governments delayed the implementation of project activities across the targeted LGAs due to the inability of staff to access beneficiary communities and local participants for almost 8 months. During this period, project teams worked from home while on-site activities were suspended which threatened the delivery of the project within the timeline. Also, the uncooperative attitude of some key Ministries of government at the beginning of the project was identified by the implementing partners. Also, identified by the project team was the low literacy level of the targeted beneficiaries which made it difficult to communicate directly with them with the implementing partners. This challenge was addressed by the use of

local interpreters which ensured that project activities were delivered seamlessly. Despite these challenges, the project was able to meet all the set objectives set by the project to a large extent as planned.

Finding 9: The extent to which beneficiaries have been satisfied with the results and achievements of the CSA project

Findings from document reviews and interviews with beneficiaries show that the beneficiaries were highly satisfied with the results achieved by the project in the area of Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate-Smart Agriculture. Also, key informants participants noted this satisfaction as shown in the excerpts below:

Am satisfied because of the way the organizers use to guide us in everything and if you want me to score them I will give them 95%³¹

I am really satisfied, with the program, because the program thought me how to be social, and our extension worker normally calls us every week to train us on the better & improve the way to manage our rice farm and it has exposed us to know what is happening in the world at large. Perhaps before now we only plant rice for our family consumption but now we plant for business and profit-making and if you ask me to rate them over 10%, I rather rate them over 100% i.e. 95% because there have done well.³²

Am more than happy and If I want to score it over 100% I will give them more than 100% because is have not seen a project that got to the grass root without being hijacked at the state level.³³

I am 100% satisfied, except for the number of training days which I think was not enough for me. So that will be 95% on the whole. I take out 5% for the short days for training. Aside from this, every other thing from feeding to transportation went very well.³⁴

Findings 10: Assessment of the effectiveness of monitoring mechanisms in place to measure progress towards results and the extent to what monitoring data were objectively used to inform management action and decision-making

The monitoring of the CSA project progress towards the achievement of results was rated fair due to the absence of an M&E plan for the project. Starting from the Programme design, the issues of monitoring were mainstreamed. For instance, it was stated in the Project Proposal that one mid-term evaluation will be undertaken after Year 2 to guide subsequent implementation activities but this was not implemented. Also, to benchmark, the project had carried out baseline assessments in Ebonyi state while Niger state was not covered for reasons the evaluation was unable to establish. Evidence from review of programme documents also revealed the absence of a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan. An M&E plan would have helped to define, implement, track and improve the monitoring and evaluation strategy for the project. The absence of an M&E plan for the project is a major limitation to the effectiveness of the project monitoring mechanisms put in place to measure progress towards results. Evidence also shows that there was no M&E staff specifically dedicated to the CSA project by the UN Women Country office which may have contributed to the use of progress report as the main monitoring framework of the CSA project. Despite these challenges, the performance of the project in terms of progress towards outputs and outcomes was tracked to a large extent by the project using annual reports. Two annual reports were produced throughout the project.

³¹ Excerpt From KII With A Member Of Jinu Women Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Uburu, Ebonyi State

³² Excerpt From KII With A Member Young Ladies Multipurpose Farmers Association Ugwulangwu, Ebonyi State

³³ Excerpt From KII With A Member Of The Light Multi-Purpose Co-Operative Amuzu, Onueke Ezza South, Ebonyi State

³⁴ Excerpt From KII With A Member Of Alheri Kodo Women Cooperative , Niger State

4.4. Efficiency

A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) were converted to results.

Finding 11: Assessment of how resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) have been allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes and measures taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used

The review of project documents and interview of the project team confirmed that available resources were allocated strategically to achieve the project outcomes. The project had a total duration of 36 months and 6 months No Cost extension (NCE) with a planned budget of Seven Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$750,000) allocated under two heads in the financial statement: programme implementation costs and projects support costs. Of these, \$626,000 (83.5%) were budgeted for programming activities while actual spending on project activities was unknown due to the unavailability of financial reports at the end of the project closure. Also, about 16.5 per cent of the total budget was allocated to project support. This is quite reasonable given the high-level technical staff (national and international) required for the implementation of project activities across the two states and the number of activities implemented.

Evidence from document reviews and interviews indicates that UN Women's organizational structure, managerial and technical support, and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the project objectives but that there is room for improvement. UN Women could have performed more efficiently and effectively with more staff to deliver on the project objectives. This evaluation concluded that although the human and financial resources were used sufficiently and efficiently, in the mid to long term those resources are not adequate to serve UN Women's mandate regarding the CSA project given the number of resources required for the purchase of equipment and training activities for the project. Evidence from Table 4.1 indicates that over 95 per cent of the project targets were all met. This level of the overall achievement of the project proved that financial resources were adequately allocated and spent to achieve the project outcomes. Technical support was rated good by the evaluation. The State Ministries of Women Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture as well as NSCEPA in Niger state coordinated project activities in their respective states.

Several measures were taken during the planning and implementation phases to ensure that resources were efficiently used. The project team on the part of UN Women was not bloated and were in most cases multi-tasking which ensured that too many financial resources were not spent on personnel but actual project implementation in compliance with the donor requirements. Also, the implementing partners were competitively selected and based on experience and priority focus in the intervention states. This ensured value for money for the CSA project Programme. Given the level of achievement of the targeted outputs by the Programme team, it was apt to conclude that the Programme objectives were achieved economically by the intervention while Programme inputs were efficiently utilized by the implementers.

Findings 12: Assessing the prompt delivery of outputs

Our evidence set including interviews with beneficiaries revealed that the project outputs were delivered promptly to a large extent despite the delays in the delivery of some outputs especially the Rice processing equipment which was imported into the country. Other delays were caused by the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic which delayed the smooth take-off of the project at the beginning of project implementation activities. One key delay was in the area of delivering the rice processing equipment. During the interaction with the project beneficiaries in Ebonyi state, many participants expressed worries about the late delivery of the equipment as shown in the following excerpts.

We have been expecting the delivery of the rice processing equipment in the last six months and as we speak we are yet to receive any good news from the project team concerning that. This is one area the project is lacking and I will be most glad if the equipment is supplied no that the project is ending.³⁵

Yes, because they told us that UN-Women will give the cooperative rice processing machine, but since last year it was announced in my village, women started planting rice and since then the people are waiting for the machine to come. But the mill is not here yet and each time we ask about the mill they normally tell us it's coming³⁶.

However, evidence from interviews shows that the Rice processing machine was delivered to the intervention communities by the project in the months of December 2021. Some of the pictures of the delivered machines are shown in Plates 1 and 2. (The pictures are of the delivered shea butter processing equipment in Kodo, Niger State)



³⁵ Excerpt From KII With A Member Of Jinu Women Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society Uburu, Ebonyi State

³⁶ Excerpt From KII With A Member Of The Light Multi-Purpose Co-Operative Amuzu, Onueke Ezza South, Ebonyi State

Finding 13: How the project utilized existing local capacities of right-bearers and duty-holders to achieve its outcomes?

Findings from interviews with beneficiaries and review of project documents proved that the UN Women project team to a large extent utilized the existing capacities of right holders and duty holders in project implementation. Specifically, the project team drew facilitators from neighbouring universities to lead the training on gender-responsive climate-smart agronomic practices. In this training, participants were drawn from LGAs and the various cooperatives societies in the intervention state. The idea is to allow the locals who had been trained earlier to facilitate in the local dialect to rural women farmers who are mostly illiterates. This was done in the form of town hall meetings with the beneficiary farmers. This approach promoted utilization of existing local capacities as well as the ownership of the project at the local level community level.

4.4.1. Summary of issues emerging from assessment of project efficiency

The key emerging issue has been the absence of the final financial report of the project. The corollary of this has been the inability of the evaluation to establish the absorption rate for the project. However, the high percentage of the total budget allocated to project implementation activities relative to support related costs is highly commendable from the evaluator's point of view.

5.4 Impact

The various effects of the project on the target group and the larger society.

Finding 14: Effects produced, positive and negative, intended or unintended, directly (target groups) and indirectly (larger society)

Probably you need a ride here that it is too early to talk of impact. However, there are positive signs of outcomes making a difference in the medium- and long time.

The improved production technology package introduced by the project has enabled the immediate beneficiaries of 4,907 women and their communities to better adapt and strengthen their resilience to climate change and improve their agricultural productivity. In terms of yield, the improved seed varieties produced 40 per cent higher yield (4.67 metric tons of paddy per hectare) as compared to farmers normal varieties, which produced 3.29 metric tons per hectare³⁷. The improved seeds of farrow 44 and 52 also matured earlier (90 days) than the farmer's varieties (120-140 days). Relative to the farmers' existing practices, the new production system saved labour by 40 per cent, reduced water requirement (by at least 10%), and generated a better benefit-cost of 1.99 (farmer's existing practices gave a B/C ratio of 1.17)³⁸. In addition, the targeted cooperatives together produced a total of 60 metric tons of high yielding short-cycled rice seeds at the end of the 2021 cropping season (Citation).

In Niger state, the result of CSA supports contributed to increasing the number of Shea Butter derivatives among the women beneficiaries. Before the project, the evaluation found that women shea butter producers were selling direct raw shea butter with few of them into processing and limited to only one or two shea butter products. After participating in the CSA projects, over 90% of the women went into processing with many having up to five shea butter derivatives products for sale. All the 6 entrepreneurs interviewed in Niger state noted that their shea butter products increased from one to a minimum of five after their participation in CSA project which represents about 400 per cent increase in shea but derivatives. Interviews with the women shea butter producers in Niger state confirmed that the CSAproject support in shea butter production has enhanced their production. Several of the beneficiaries in the shea butter value chain confirmed that the number of shea butter derivatives have increased as a result of CSA project support in the state. The following excerpt help to confirm this finding:

³⁷ CSA Annual Report 2020

³⁸ Excerpt from KII with the Implementing partner in Ebonyi state

Before now, what we do is sell raw/pure Shea butter, but after this training, we have been able to add value to our Shea butter production. We make varieties of the product like Shea butter oil, rub, Vaseline, and we sell these products in the market.³⁹

The program was fine and encouraging because I achieved so many things attending the program. Because of the training, I can do many things as we were taught how to make four different products. Before the training, I was only making one product which was body balm. We were taught four, but we were asked to do as many as we can. For now, I can make hair products with Shea butter like hair mick, hair oil, hair spray, hair conditioner, body lotion, body cream for adults and children, and soap. This was learnt after the training.⁴⁰

Evidence also shows that the CSA project supported the government of Niger for the production and dissemination of 500 copies of Gender Action Plan/framework for implementation of gender-responsive agriculture policy which has created the enabling environment for women to access lands and other productive agricultural resources in the state. In Ebonyi State, the CSA project supported the review of the agricultural policy in the state. Available evidence shows that women in Ebonyi state confirmed having more access to land for rice than before the CSA intervention as shown in the excerpt below:

The major challenge I have had as a rice farmer before now is poor access to land because in Ebonyi State women are not allowed to collect or get land except through their husband or brother for cultivation. But the support of the CSA project, we have

However, given that the project only covered six LGAs in the two targeted states, it is important to consider another phase of the project. This will also provide an opportunity for the project team to support and monitor the utilization of the newly installed processing machines for shea and rice in the two targeted states. Also, given the availability of high tech processing machines for rice and shea butter production, marketing of the products become an important issue that the UN Women should consider in terms of providing support in the area of linking the women to market to sell their products.

4.5. Sustainability

The likelihood of a continuation of benefits for women from a development intervention after the intervention is completed or the probability of continued long-term benefits.

Finding 15: The likelihood of the benefits from the project to be maintained for a reasonably long period if the project were to cease?

As earlier stated, the CSA project contribution to the development of Gender Action Plan/framework and review of Agricultural policy in Ebonyi provided an ample opportunity for the institutionalization of the benefits of the CSA project as the policy and Action Plan implementation will provide a sustainable enabling environment for women to access lands and other productive agricultural resources in the state. The various capacity building programmes that targeted women cooperatives in the two states is another element of sustainability built into the project. The CSA project provided several training programmes including:

- ✚ Training On Gender-Responsive Climate-Smart Agronomic Practices for Women Farmers' Cooperatives

³⁹ Excerpt From KII With A Member Of Alheri Kodo Women Cooperative in Niger state

⁴⁰ Excerpt From KII With A Member Of Amfeesat Global Venture in Niger state

- ✦ training on improved rice production system including the use high yielding, short-cycled seed varieties, mechanical land preparation, irrigation and improved crop management
- ✦ Training on Governance and Cooperatives Management.
- ✦ Training on improved skills and technologies for processing various shea butter products including high-quality soaps and other varieties of cosmetics, and on enhanced branding of products to meet both the local and international markets standards.
- ✦ Training in improved processing and marketing of shea butter products

All these capacity building components of the project contributed to strengthening the capacities of women beneficiaries both in shea butter production and rice production. Since this knowledge will remain with them, it is obvious that the women will continue to apply the knowledge in their economic activities. Women beneficiaries of the CSA project interviewed maintained that they have plans to sustain the benefits of the project. One of the plans is the registration of the Cooperative with the Cooperate Affairs Commission (CAC). Also, the women have been trained on the operation and maintenance of the processing machines provided by the project. Materials for maintenance have also been provided to the women. This is will ensure that the machines are used continuously beyond the life span of the project.

Finding 16: The extent to which the financial capacities of partners are likely going to maintain the benefits of the projects and what might be needed to support partners to maintain these benefits

While it may be difficult to assess the financial capacities of partners and beneficiaries to maintain the benefits of the project; it is important to state that when the political will is available on the part of the government the financial capacity to sustain the benefits of the project will be available to a large extent. The beneficiaries' capacity to mobilize funds from various sources particularly using the registered Cooperative societies should be strengthened such that they can source funds externally without relying solely on government funding and donors to sustain their production activities. It is also important to consider working with the women beneficiaries for another phase of the project to consolidate the gains and benefits of the project at the state level.

4.6. Gender Equality and Human Rights

Finding 17: Extent gender and human rights considerations have been integrated into the project design and implementation

Evidence from FGDs and KIIs with beneficiaries confirmed that gender and human rights considerations were integrated into the project design and implementation. All objectives, strategies, approaches, and activities highlighted in the project are focused on addressing the root causes of gender inequalities in the shea butter and rice value chain with a clear focus on women in the target states. From the design, the project has targeted women by aiming to improve their capacity to participate in both the shea and rice value chain. The project did not target men but only women which were conceived as a way of addressing the cultural challenge affecting women access to productive resources. However, from the evaluators perspective, involving men in some of the training programmes would have provided opportunities to simultaneously build the capacity of both women and men in gender mainstreaming both in agriculture and other realms at the community level.

4.7. Disability Inclusion

Finding 18: Extent persons with disability were included in the design and implementation of the project

From the review of the project document, there was no evidence to show persons living with disability were included in the CSA project. The physical nature of the project activities such as land clearing and preparation for rice planting and also going to the wild to search for the shea butter nuts may have contributed to this omission. Some of the interviewed women cooperative members in Ebonyi state also supported this by

saying the rice farms were generally too far to be accessed by any physically challenged persons and tedious nature of the farm operations was also highlighted as a key hindrance.

5.0. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overarching conclusion of this evaluation is that the CSA project was successful in promoting women's economic empowerment through climate-resilient agribusiness in Nigeria. The project objectives / or outputs were achieved to a large extent. These happened because of several factors made possible by the CSA project. First, the CSA project contributed to building the skills of women beneficiaries in shea butter and rice production. Secondly, through the review of gender policies and agricultural policies in the target states, the CSA project succeeded in reducing some of the cultural challenges that tend to limit women's access to productive resources. The provision of shea butter and rice processing machine for the project beneficiaries was very helpful as it helped in addressing the challenges of post-harvest losses for rice and improve the quality of derivatives from shea nuts processing. In addition, the provision of improved varieties of rice such as farrow 44 and 52 was very helpful in promoting women's economic empowerment through climate-resilient agribusiness in Nigeria. The findings above provide the basis for the overall conclusions and emerging recommendations resulting from this evaluation. Building on the above findings, these conclusions aim to provide UN Women with actionable suggestions and recommendations to support its ability to deliver on its CSA. The specific conclusions are given below:

Conclusion 1:

The CSA project implemented in Niger and Ebonyi States with the support of UN Women was relevant locally, nationally, and globally in addition to its alignment with national and international agreements and conventions on gender equality and women's empowerment.

The CSA project is relevant to Beijing Platform and Declaration for Action (BPfA), Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) especially Article 11 affording women equal employment, remuneration and protection opportunities regardless of pregnancy, maternity and marital status and the sustainable development goals (SDGs) 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The CSA project is also relevant to Nigerian National Rice Development Strategy (NRDS) (2009-2018), Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (2016 - 2020) as well as the current Nigeria Economic sustainability plan (2020), the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Anchor Borrowers' Programme and United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) 2018 – 2022 for Nigeria, particularly Outcome 9: Environmental Sustainability and Food Security:

Conclusion 2:

The design of the CSA project was appropriate to a moderate extent due to some observed limitations, including.....

The beneficiaries of the project were clearly described and the project design was anchored on a Theory of Change (ToC). While the ToC is relevant, there is no evidence of linkage of the ToC with any knowledge and lessons learnt from credible sources and the key assumptions of the ToC were also missing. There was no established M&E system for the project and also missing are spelt out an exit strategy for the project. Although there was a plan for a baseline study to serve as a benchmark for monitoring the project's performance and one mid-term evaluation after Year 2 to guide subsequent implementation. However, the baseline was only conducted in Ebonyi state while Niger state was not covered in the baseline assessment. Also, no mid-term evaluation was conducted for the CSA project in Nigeria. Overall, the evaluation rated the CSA project design as moderately appropriate due to the above limitations.

Conclusion 3:

The requirements for Project ownership was satisfied by the project

The evaluation found that the requirements for state ownership were satisfied by the project. In Niger state, the main implementing partner is the Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency (NSCEPA). The Agency has the overall mandate for the coordination, development and promotion of the Shea butter value chain in Niger State. The agency has the constitutional responsibility for the management of the Government's Shea butter facilities across the state and registration of women cooperatives in the state as well as women in Shea value chains. This strategy of engaging the NSCEPA as implementing partner to a large extent promoted the ownership of the project in Niger state given the constitutional mandate of the NSCEPA in working with women in Shea value chains. In Ebonyi State, the government together with local communities provided 12 hectares of land to the targeted women cooperatives which was used to establish demonstration and seed multiplication farms to train women rice farmers on modern farming technology. This also is a good evidence of project ownership on the part of the government. The project also has engaged other key Ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Women affairs. While the Ministry of Agriculture has the constitutional mandate for the development of agriculture in Nigeria, the Ministry of Women Affairs is charged with the responsibility of promoting gender equality in Nigeria. The involvement of these Ministries in the implementation of the CSA project contributed to ownership of the project by the state government.

Conclusion 4:

The CSA Project is coherent and related to government policies, strategies and programmes as well as UN Women and within the UN System in Nigeria

The CSA project was coherent and related to government policies, strategies and programmes at the state and national levels. At the national level, the CSA project is aligned with the national Shea Butter Policy developed in 2019. At the state level, the project is coherent with the Niger state government road map for the sustainable development of Shea butter in Niger State. The CSA is also coherent with the mandate of the Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency (NSCEPA). The CSA project is also coherent with other partners projects in the intervention states. In Ebonyi State, the CSA project is coherent with the USAID Climate Change Adaptation review project on rice production as well as the Feed the Future project on rice production. In Niger state, the CSA project is coherent with the GIZ project on Shea Butter cosmetic value change development. The CSA project also aligned with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), COP 23, Gender Action Plan (GAP), UN Women's Flagship Programming Initiatives (Women Economic Empowerment) and the UN Women's Strategic Plan (2022-2025) Outcome 4.

Conclusion 5:

The CSA project made an important contribution in strengthening women's agricultural productivity and access to markets in Niger and Ebonyi state in Nigeria.

The CSA project was effective in contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in the targeted states. The project built the capacities of 1,200 women smallholder rice farmers on an improved rice production system including the use of high-yielding, short-cycled seed varieties, such as farrow 44 and 52. It also built the capacities of 120 rural women in the development and review of community adaptation plans that address climate risks. The CSA project also provided 3 post-harvest handling facilities which include 3 sets of rice industrial milling machines and one set of shea butter processing and packaging equipment in Ebonyi and Niger state. On policy, the project supported the government of Niger for the production of Gender Action Plan while in Ebonyi state, it supported the review of the state agricultural policy to be more gender-responsive.

Conclusion 6:

The project resources were allocated strategically and were efficiently utilized to achieve the Programme outcomes.

The CSA project demonstrated efficiency in the allocation of and utilization of both human and material resources which was instrumental to the achievement recorded by the project in the targeted states. The CSA project has allocated 83.5 per cent of the total budget for programming activities while 16.5 per cent of the total budget was allocated to project support. This is quite reasonable given the high-level technical staff (national and international) required for the implementation of project activities across the two states and the number of activities implemented. Also, due to the unavailability of the financial report at the end of the project implementation activities, the evaluation was unable to establish the absorption rate of the project against the planned budget after 30 months of project programme implementation.

Conclusion 7:

The CSA project contributed significantly to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Ebonyi and Niger state by strengthening women's agricultural productivity in the area of shea butter production and rice production

The CSA project contributed to a large extent to increase the economic empowerment of women in Ebonyi and Niger states by strengthening women's agricultural productivity in the area of shea butter production and rice production. This is evident in the number of shea butter derivatives currently being produced by the women and the increase in the yield of rice as a result of the use of improved rice varieties such as farrow 44 and 52. At the individual level, there was a significant change in the knowledge and level of awareness of participants regarding good agronomic practices due to the capacity building of women farmers by the CSA project. At the policy level, the CSA project succeeded in addressing some of the cultural barriers limiting women access to resources through the development of a Gender Action Plan in Niger and review of Agricultural policy in Ebonyi state. However, given that the project only covered six LGAs in the two targeted states, it is important to consider another phase of the project. This will also provide an opportunity for the project team to support and monitor the utilization of the newly installed processing machines for shea and rice in the two targeted states.

Conclusion 8:

The CSA project strengthened the capacities of women rice farmers and women shea butter producers. The project played a critical role in building capacities of women in the areas of gender-responsive climate-smart agronomic practices, good agronomic practices in rice production, Governance and Cooperatives Management as well as skills and technologies for processing various shea butter products.

As part of sustainability measures, the project targeted the development of local ownership and capacities as a key strategy for the sustainability of the CSA project. The CSA project performed well in building the capacity of women rice farmers and shea butter producers. The CSA project has also engaged several stakeholders including relevant government ministries in the implementation of the project which to a large extent contributed to the institutionalization of the benefits of the project in the targeted states. All these capacity building components of the project contributed to strengthening the capacities of women beneficiaries both in shea butter production and rice production. Since this knowledge will remain with them, it is obvious that the women will continue to apply the knowledge in their economic activities. Also, the project has trained women beneficiaries on the operation and maintenance of the processing machines which will ensure that the machines are used continuously beyond the life span of the project. It is also important to consider working with the partners for another phase of the project to consolidate the gains and benefits of the project at the state level.

Gender Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming in CSA project

Conclusion 8:

All objectives, strategies, approaches, and activities of the project are all focused on addressing the root causes of gender inequalities in the shea butter and rice value chain with a clear focus on women in the target states.

From the design, the project has targeted women by aiming to improve their capacity to participate in both the shea and rice value chain. The project did not target men but only women which were conceived as a way of addressing the cultural challenge affecting women access to productive resources. However, from the evaluators perspective, involving men in some of the training programmes would have provided opportunities to simultaneously build the capacity of both women and men in gender mainstreaming both in agriculture and other realms at the community level. There was no evidence to show persons living with disability were included in the CSA project. The physical nature of the project activities such as land clearing and preparation for rice planting and also going to the wild to search for the shea butter nuts may have contributed to this omission.

5.1. Lessons Learnt

Lesson 1: The design of the CSA of the project targeting areas that are naturally suitable for rice and shea butter production contributed to the effectiveness of the CSA project in the targeted states.

The design of the CSA project took into consideration the natural potentials of the geography of the targeted states in supporting the targeted crops such as shea and rice. Among the most important agricultural activities in Niger State are Shea-nut collection, processing and marketing. In terms of density and distribution of Shea trees as well as the extent of collection and processing of Shea nuts, Niger State ranks among the first in Nigeria. On the other hand, Ebonyi state is one of the highest producers of rice in Nigeria. Therefore, the targeting of these two states by the CSA project was not only suitable but also contributed to the effective utilization of the resources of the state while empowering women economically.

Lesson 2: The selection and utilization of implementing partners with interest and requisite skills in support of project implementation are one of the key strategies of ensuring effective project implementation and attainments of project goals and objectives.

The CSA project selected two key implementing partners whose primary mandates aligned with two focal areas of support of the project. The CSA project selected NSCEPA as the main implementing partner in support of women in the shea butter value chain. The NSCEPA has the institutional mandate in Niger state for the development of the shea butter sector in Niger state. In Ebonyi State, the CSA project selected and utilized Food for All International (FFAI) as the implementing partner. FFAI is a Not-For-Profit Agricultural Development, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) set up to support farmers, enhance agricultural production. This undoubtedly promoted the effective implementation of project activities since the implementing partners have the requisite skills and experience working with the targeted beneficiaries based on the priority focus of the institutions.

Lesson 3: Capacity building activities for project beneficiaries are a necessity both for promoting ownership and sustainability of Programme benefits.

The CSA project implemented several capacity-building activities for beneficiaries in the two targeted states. The capacity building activities were unique for the different categories of the project beneficiaries. The capacity building activities for women rice farmers focus on improved rice production system while in Niger state, the training focused on improving shea-butter production processes for increased efficiency, product quality and market value and strategy for creating value in the shea butter business. The approach of the project ensured that the knowledge gained remained with the beneficiaries after the close of the programme.

Lesson 4: Engaging relevant government institutions and community leaders in the intervention communities are important for successful project implementation

The CSA project team deemed it important to engage relevant government institutions such as the Ebonyi State Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Niger State Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development and Niger State Ministry of Agriculture, NSCEPA as well as community leaders as key stakeholders of the project. This project approach provided the entry points into the targeted states for project

activities implementation. Also, working with the various community leaders in the targeted LGAs did not only provide easy access to the local communities but also contributed to the achievement of the project objectives as evident in the provision of land for demonstration farms for rice production in Ebonyi state.

Lesson 5. Policy level interventions are fundamental strategies to addressing both the underlying causes and symptoms of development problems.

Addressing the underlying causes of the problem is one of the shortest parts to arriving at the solutions rather than focusing on the manifestations. When the root causes are addressed the symptoms are eradicated. This is particularly important for interventions focusing on women economic empowerment like the CSA project. The project implementation strategy was underlined by policy-level interventions and capacity building. This approach did not only address the manifestation of the problem of poor access of women to productive resources but also addresses the underlying causes of the problem such as the absence of policy frameworks to bridge the gender gaps that limit women access to productive resources. Thus, while the project was targeting improving women skills in shea butter processing and rice production through capacity building and improving access to land, it was also addressing the improper policy environment such as the absence of gender policy at the state level.

5.0. Recommendations

The evaluation has identified 6 recommendations that are critical for UN Women’s contribution to the CSA project in Nigeria. They have been sequenced by their importance, as perceived by the evaluation team. The recommendations are based on the evaluation framework, the analysis that informed findings and conclusions. They will be validated by key stakeholders in an exit workshop to be carried out during the presentation of the preliminary findings.

Table 5.1: Recommendations with the specification of action and timeframe

Specific Recommendations	Responsibility	Priority
Programmatic recommendations:		
✚ There is a need for the project team to consider designing the CSA project ToC based on established empirical evidence while the assumption and risks envisaged should be clearly stated in the ToC.	UN Women project team	Immediate
✚ There is a need for future interventions to consider the implementation of baseline studies across the various sectors and locations covered by the intervention (Findings 3)	UN Women	Immediate
✚ UN Women Nigeria should consider having another phase of the project to cover more LGAs while providing an opportunity for the project team and IPs to support and monitor the utilization of the newly installed processing machines for shea and rice production in the two targeted states (Findings 4)	UN Women	Immediate
✚ There is a need to strengthen the M&E system for the CSA project in the future to ensure proper tracking of activities and project results (Findings 8).	UN Women	Immediate
✚ Consider making changes to the financial reporting system to ensure that CSA financial reports are generated directly from the UN Women Country office rather than at HQ to ensure timely availability of project financial reports (findings 11)	UN Women	Long term
✚ Consider providing more support for the cooperative in the area of linking them to markets given the availability of high tech processing machines for rice and shea butter production	UN Women	immediate

Annex 1: List of Documents Consulted

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Annex 2: List Of Persons Contacted

COUNTRY/ STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY	INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES	Contact Person		
		Name	Position	Gender
Government:				
Ebonyi	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Chief Moses Nomeh	Hon. Commissioner	male
	Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development	Chief Mrs. Deborah Chinwe Okah	Hon. Commissioner	female
	Ministry of Human Capital Development	Chief Mrs. Ann Aligwe	Hon. Commissioner	Female
Niger	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Alhassan Umar	Director	male
	Ministry of Women Affairs	Mrs. Eyitemi Olley	Director	Female
	Niger State Commodity and Export Promotion Agency	Mrs. Fatima Wushishi	Director General	Female
CSOs	National Shea butter Producers Association,	Mohammed Ahmed Kontogora	President	male
	Food For All International (FFAI).	Mrs. Perpetua Okoro Mr. Obinna Oputa	Project coordinator Operations Manager	Female
The Private Sector	Stanbic IBTC	Mrs. Onyinye Agubuokwu	Manager	Female
Academia	Federal University of technology Minna,			
	Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai (IBBUL)	Dr Mawoli		Female
Bilateral Agencies				
Cooperative Societies				
	Ihechidere Women FMCS	Nwankwegu Agatha	Leader	Female
	Evergreen Women MCS	Ude Joy Sandra	Leader	Female
Ebonyi	Young Farmers Onueke MCS	Agu Sarah N	Leader	Female

COUNTRY/ STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY	INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES	Contact Person		
		Name	Position	Gender
	Ofuobi Women MCS	Nwagu Paulina	leader	Female
	Comprehensive FMCS	Akuma Chinyere	Leader	Female
	Jinu farmers multi-purpose cooperative Society	Abah Janeth Ifeoma	Leader	Female
	De-light farmers multipurpose cooperatives	Uwa Hellen N.	Leader	Female
	Young Ladies MPCS, Ugwulangwu, ohoazara	Eja Josephine	Leader	Female
	Umu Adaeze cooperative Society	Katherine Enigwe N.	Leader	Female
	Unwu-Ebee Women MCS	Orji Patricia	Leader	Female
Niger	Ashmad Skincare	Aisha D Yusuf	Leader	Female
	Ebojin Shea butter Cooperative Society	Fatima Nna Adamu		Female
	Anty J-Shea Butter	Jummai Shekarau	Leader	Female
	DJMEDS V. LTD	Dr. (Mrs) Ladi Shambo	Leaders	Female
	Teerab	Rabi Mohammed	Leader	Female
	Nature's Sleek	Fatima Z. Othman	Leader	Female
	Ekokpara Assanyi Women Cooperative Society	Fatima Ahmed	Leader	Female
	Kodo women	Tabitha Sunday	Leader	Female
	Gbaiko (Shea Bliss) Women's Shea Butter Cooperatives Society -	Eunice Bahago	Leader	Female
	Amfeesat	Salamatu Mukhtar	Leader	Female
UN Agencies	UN Women country office			
		Osalobo Desmond Osemhenjie	Programme Specialist	Female

List of project Activities

List of Project Activities in Nigeria

1. Description of the socio-demographic and production characteristics of project beneficiaries in the target LGAs (UN Women
2. would validate and approve survey methodology and tools to be deployed).
3. Facilitation of access to climate smart agricultural production inputs for 5,000 women farmers through the establishment of 12 hectares of paddy rice multiplication plots in the 3 selected LGAs.
4. Training of Trainers course on gender responsive climate smart agronomic practices for 75 extension officers, staff of MWASD and women farmers' cooperative leaders.
5. Facilitation of step-down training on improved climate resilient crop production practices for 1200 targeted women smallholder rice farmers of the targeted cooperatives
6. Facilitation of training and participation of 120 rural women in the development and review of community adaptation plans that address climate risks in the targeted LGAs.
7. Facilitation of training and participation of 120 rural women in the development and review of community adaptation plans that address climate risks in the targeted LGAs.
8. Collection and dissemination of high value agricultural commodities
9. farmers on improved rice post-harvest processing and handling, including parboiling and quality assurance for certification.
10. Facilitation of training of 1200 women Establishment of 6 sheds and facilitation of the installation of 6 sets of rice post-harvest processing machine.
11. Provision of improved technology (equipment and materials) for rice parboiling to targeted 6 farmer
12. cooperatives.
13. Facilitation of training of eighty-four (84) women farmers to operate and undertake basic maintenance services for the rice post-harvest processing facilities established.
14. Facilitation of training of asset management committee for each of the 6 rice post-harvest processing facilities established.

CONTRIBUTING TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA THROUGH CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE (2019-2021)

EVALUATION REPORT

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April, 2022.



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ACRONYMS

AFASA	African Farmers' Association of South Africa
BfW	Buy from Women
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
DALRRD	Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
SAWID	South African Women in Dialogue
SAWIF	South African Women in Farming
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Standard Bank Group-funded Project "Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA)" was a multi-country programme implemented by UN Women in Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda. The project's goal was to strengthen women's agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture value chains. In South Africa, the project was implemented in Free State and Limpopo Provinces to increase women's agricultural productivity using CSA techniques and approaches; support women in value addition of selected agricultural products and increase access to market and finance.

Objectives of the Evaluation

After three years of implementation, a project evaluation was commissioned. The overall objective of this final evaluation was to assess the achievement of programme results and performance of the above-described intervention. The evaluation measured and provided robust empirical evidence related to the success and results of the CSA interventions (both intended and unintended).

Methodology

The evaluation followed the OECD-DAC Revised Evaluation Criteria (2019) for evaluating projects. The criteria include Project Relevance and Coherence; Effectiveness; Efficiency; Impact; and Sustainability.

The evaluation relied on secondary data from various project reports and documents to assess the achievements under the project. These were then complemented by primary data that were collected through key informant interviews with all the key stakeholders. Since the consultant was based in Malawi, all the interviews were done virtually, with UN Women supporting the process of arranging the interviews.

Key informants were purposively selected and included those stakeholders who participated in the CSA project implementation. Key informant interviews focused on national level partners (UN Women, FAO, SAWID, SAWIF, and DLRRD at the state level, etc); provincial level stakeholders (DLRRD in Limpopo and Free State Provinces); and local level stakeholders (women farmers and women entrepreneurs).

Findings

Relevance:

The evaluation found that the project was highly relevant to address the pressing needs of the target population. The CSA Project was designed to strengthen women's agricultural productivity and promote access to markets in selected agriculture products in South Africa. The project was designed to close the gender gap in agricultural productivity by increasing women's access to resources. The intervention was implemented in Provinces (Free State and Limpopo) where women participation in agriculture is high, but where women farmers face multiple challenges

associated with climate change. Further, The CSA Project was aligned to the international development agenda, and UN Women Strategy.

In terms of the project design and approach, the evaluation found that the project was well designed but some activities had ambitious targets. For instance, there are a number of activities that targeted 10,000 women farmers. behind the relatively low numbers of beneficiaries that the project was able to reach.

Coherence

The CSA Project in South Africa was coherent and related to government policies, strategies and programmes at the state and provincial levels. Further, the evaluation found that UN Women had a Comparative advantage in undertaking Women Empowerment Intervention in South Africa but was constrained by the effects of COVID-19. The evaluation also found that UN Women successfully managed to engage key stakeholders in the implementation of the project to contribute to project local ownership and sustainability.

Effectiveness

The evaluation found that while a few outputs achieved their targets, the majority of the outputs did not meet their targets due to COVID-19 restrictions that affected project implementation.

The evaluation found that the project was granted a no-cost extension by the donor until June 2022. The implementation was delayed due to staffing and COVID lockdown regulations but all the project the outstanding outputs were being implemented at the time of the evaluation. The only exception is the multi country learning exchanges which have not been implemented because of COVID-19 regulations. There was at least two learning exchanges between the implementing countries

Efficiency

The evaluation was not able to undertake detailed efficiency , and value-for-money analyses due to a lack of detailed financial reports. At the time of the evaluation, however, the project had utilized about 64.5% of the funds allocated. While the burn rate in 2019 was 59.2%, it fell to only 31.5% in 2020. The low burn rate of the project can be attributed to the suspension of most of the project activities due to COVID-19 government restrictions.

Further, it was found that the project built strategic partnerships that promoted efficiency. The evaluation identified many efficiency challenges, including allocation of project funds to other activities; delays in procurement processes; staff employment contract challenges within UN Women CO.

Impact

It is difficult to-measure the project impact of most of the interventions because, at the time of the evaluation, some project activities had not yet been implemented due to COVID-19 restrictions. The no-cost extension that the project was awarded until June 2022 would allow it to complete most of the remaining activities . Nevertheless, the project has made some difference for women farmers in terms of increased access to markets; profits and incomes.

Sustainability

In its few years of implementation, despite the various challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the project has built the capacity of various groups to be able to take action to promote agricultural productivity and access to markets for women through climate-smart agriculture in South Africa. These include government extension -service officers; Women Organizations, such as SAWIF, SAWID, and AFASA; Government staff (DALRRD); FAO; and UN Women.

Project Challenges

The evaluation identified key challenges that affected project implementation and outcomes. These include (i) poor M&E system; (ii) COVID-19, which led to delays in some activities and other activities not implemented at all.

Lessons Learned

The following lessons are generated from the evaluation exercise in South Africa to aid the design of future similar interventions:

- i. Without a clear and comprehensive M & E framework, with a clear Results framework to inform baseline survey, and monitoring progress being made and evaluation of achievement of results, it is very difficult to undertake a project evaluation in an objective manner;
- ii. A three-year project needs to have realistic targets. The project seemed to have very ambitious targets (sometimes of up to 10,000 women farmers) without the necessary strategies to reach those farmers within the short duration.
- iii. Without an effective risk management strategy, pandemics such as COVID-19 has the potential to disrupt project activities completely.

Recommendations

Based on the evaluation findings, the following recommendations are provided:

- i. There is a need to strengthen the M&E system for any future CSA project to ensure proper tracking of and reporting on activities and project results. This includes ensuring that a good baseline study is conducted with properly tracked project indicators.
- ii. There is need to ensure that procurement procedures are effective to ensure that the project implementation is not distracted. This includes timely payments to service providers.
- iii. There is need to clearly identify the technical staff needed for an effective implementation of a project such as CSA, and making sure that the needed staff are recruited promptly for smooth project implementation.
- iv. Project staff should be given contracts that are aligned to the duration of the project to avoid delays in project implementation.
- v. There is need to develop an effective risk management plan to mitigate the impact of negative covariate shocks, such as COVID-19.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 National Context

Agriculture is one of the two sectors (along with mining) that has traditionally been at the core of economic development in South Africa (Sihlobo and Kirsten, 2021). The agricultural sector contributed 2.4% of the South African GDP in 2020¹, while agroprocessing contributed another 5% of the country's GDP on its own (Sihlobo and Kirsten, 2021)². According to Arnoldi (2021)³, the agricultural sector remains the star performer amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, the agricultural sector grew by 13% year-on-year in 2020, at a time when most sectors recorded lower or negative growth rates.

With respect to food security, South Africa has focused on addressing key challenges related to ensuring immediate availability of adequate food at present as well as in the future. Thus has meant matching the people's incomes to prices as a way of ensuring that every citizen has access to sufficient food; empowering citizens to enable them to make optimal choices for nutritious and safe food; ensuring the presence of adequate safety nets and food emergency management systems to cater for people who are unable to meet their food needs; and to mitigate the extreme impact of natural or other disasters on people (Integrated Food Security for South Africa (IFFS), 2002). According to Du Toit *et al.*, (2011) South Africa could be deemed food secure at national level, yet, an estimated 20% of South African households have inadequate or severely inadequate food access.

Climate change is causing devastating impact in South Africa, which still depends on agriculture to a smaller extent. The smallholder production system is the most compromised as it is rain-fed. These impacts extend beyond food and nutrition security and can negatively affect the national economy by compromising the country's ability to generate foreign revenue through crop exports, while it has to import food. Poorer farming groups, that experience multiple forms of marginalisation, will be the most adversely affected by climate change impacts, given that they are mostly directly dependent on the natural environment and ecosystem services for their survival and livelihoods. As a result of insufficient knowledge, financial constraints, and poor infrastructure, there is little chance of poverty-stricken farmers switching to other income sources.

In Limpopo province, Maponya and Mpandeli (2012) reported severe ecological and economic consequences as results of the global climate change which leads to drought incidences which have reduced grazing and water availability for both livestock production and irrigation. Although Limpopo Province is known as one of South Africa's most productive agricultural provinces producing most of the agricultural commodities such as vegetables, grains, tea, coffee, fruits, timber, tobacco, livestock, game, sunflower, cotton, and groundnuts, its agricultural potential is reduced due

¹ South Africa's GDP mainly comes from the services sector (61.45% in 2020) and the industry sector (25.2% in 2020).

² Sihlobo, W., and Kirsten, J. (2021) Agriculture in South Africa, In Oquabay, A., Tregenna, F., and Valodia, I. (Eds) The Oxford Handbook of the South African Economy, Oxford.

³ Arnoldi, M (2021) Agriculture Remains a Star Performer in the Economy, but Still Needs Government Support, Engineering News. Available at: [Agriculture remains a star performer in the economy, but still needs govt support \(engineeringnews.co.za\)](https://www.engineeringnews.co.za/news/industry/2021/03/11/agriculture-remains-a-star-performer-in-the-economy-but-still-needs-govt-support/)

to lack of adaptation and mitigation strategies for climate change. This is also the case for other prominent provinces. According to Botai *et al.*, 2016, Free State, Northwest, Northern Cape, North West, and Gauteng provinces were declared as drought disaster areas, with potential to threaten the food and nutrition security of the entire South Africa.

It is widely acknowledged that climate change impacts will not be gender-neutral (UNDP, 2010). Men and women have different coping and adaptive capacities that translate to gender-differentiated vulnerabilities to the effects of a changing climate (UNDP, 2010b). African women are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change because they shoulder an enormous burden of responsibility for small-scale agriculture, whose productivity will be adversely affected by climate change and overexploited soil (Viatte *et al.*, 2009). Women comprise of estimated 60-80% of the agricultural labour force in developing countries (FAO, 2011b). Women and girls are the most affected by the effects of climate change, not only because they are the majority in the agricultural labour force or small-scale farmers, but because of the burden of the unpaid care work and domestic work that they are involved in, which include finding food for the family, water, energy and so on (UN Women, 2019).

1.2 Women Participation in Agriculture⁴

Women's participation in agriculture is a topic of major concern in most developing countries. While it is true that traditionally women are mainly responsible for tasks around the home i.e the care economy, there is enough evidence to support the fact that women also play a very important role in farming. Women make substantial contributions to food production even when they are secluded or involved in male-dominated farming systems. (Sender, 2002), (Jacana, 2006), (FAO, 2007), (Meijrink and Roza, 2007) and (Byene, 2008). Women in South Africa suffer from legal and cultural constraints in terms of land inheritance, ownership and use. Broadly, women constitute 60– 80% of smallholder farmers, yet make up about 15–20% of landholders in sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, women receive less than 10% of available credit and 7% of credit extension services⁵. Many women in agriculture in South Africa lack the necessary empowerment to enable them to either adopt or upscale climate change mitigation and adaptation techniques. This adversely affects their agricultural productivity, resilience, and economic growth. Although some adaptation interventions are being implemented in South Africa, more work still needs to be done to enable rural communities, especially women, to cope with the longer-term effects of climate change. There remains a dearth of local-level understanding of impacts and rural communities' capacity, willingness, and motivation to adapt to climate change. This situation is happening against the backdrop that, while most women are vulnerable, a significant number are agents of change and some have been spearheading the use of CSA technologies and practices. Evidence is through prospering individual farmers and cooperatives in agriculture.

As a result of the lack of resilience to climate change, women in agriculture in South Africa are unable to take advantage of the current procurement opportunities to supply food and inputs to various markets in the public and private sectors of South Africa due to lack of access to finance and production inputs. The impact of the lack of empowerment of the South African women in agriculture is observed by the insignificant, weak, and ineffective value and supply chain of their enterprises.

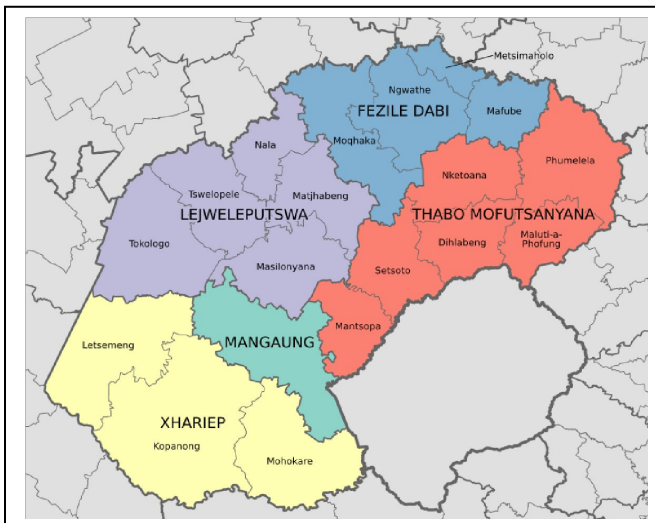
⁴ This section borrows from the Scoping and Baseline Survey Report for the CSA Project.

⁵ Slidaridad: <https://www.solidaridadnetwork.org/solidaridad-stories/linking-women-farmers-to-high-valuemarkets>

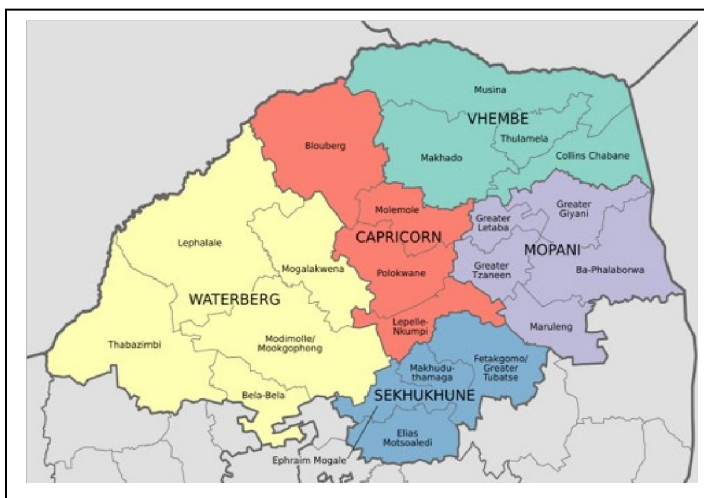
This weakness in value chains increases the vulnerability of women in agriculture to climate change, poverty, and inequalities, thus rendering insignificant contribution of this sub-sector of the economic growth of South Africa.

1.3 Project Description

The Standard Bank Group-funded Project "Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture" was a multi-country, implemented by UN Women in Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda. The goal of the project was to strengthen women's agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture value chains. The project sought to close the gender gap in agricultural productivity by increasing women's access to resources, which often limits women's effective participation in value chains. As a multi-country project, the project targeted to reach 50,000 women in the four countries with entrepreneurial and financial capacities, affordable technology, and value addition, and using information and communications technology (ICT) to increase access to markets and to finance (UN Women, 2019), over a three-year period (2019 to 2021).



The Project was funded by the Standard Bank, with a budget of US\$ 1.2 Million.



In South Africa, the main goal of the project 'Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture' is to strengthen women's agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture products in **South Africa**. The project targeted women farmers, women entrepreneurs and the youth in Limpopo and Free State Provinces. The project implementation focuses on four outcomes described in detail below (Table 1). The outcomes aim to increase women's agricultural productivity using CSA techniques and approaches; support women in value addition of selected agricultural products and increase access to market and finance.

Table 1: Project's Outcomes and Outputs

Outcomes	Outputs
1. Agricultural productivity through climate smart agricultural practices	1.1. Women’s uptake of CSA inputs (equipment and finances) and services (extension services and information) increased.
	1.2. Social and Cultural Barriers on Women’s land rights reduced.
2. Access to diverse high value markets by women through value chain development expanded	2.1 Production by women farmers of high value agricultural commodities increased.
	2.2 Local infrastructure to improve access to markets, reduce labor and save time for women farmers improved.
	2.3 Capacities for women farmers to organize along the value chain nodes strengthened
3. Capacities and trade opportunities by women through ICT platforms strengthened	3.1 Buy from Women (BfW) digital platform to connect women farmers to large scale buyers of agricultural commodities operationalized.
	3.2 Linkages to financial institutions issuing innovative CSA financing strengthened.
4: Institutional coordination and knowledge management through research for development improved.	4.1 Institutional coordination and knowledge management through research for development improved
	4.2 Policy and legal frameworks to facilitate women’s uptake of CSA strengthened.

Summary of Activities in South Africa:

The programme activities included:

- Situation Analysis and identification of groups/cooperatives, and of adequate technologies;
- Strengthening women's positions in producer organizations;
- Increasing availability of production resources, processing and storage facilities and agricultural equipment;
- Supporting, through trainings and other support services, women farmers' access to entrepreneurial, organizational and technical skills and value addition techniques;
- Developing capacity of institutions/private sector organizations involved in providing inputs to women in agriculture;
- Linking women to markets (BfW) and finance institutions and structures; and
- Conducting awareness, sensitization and communication campaigns.

No-Cost Extension

The COVID-19 Pandemic caused significant challenges and delays in implementing the Climate Smart Agriculture Project in South Africa. Since South Africa was one of the countries with the most restrictive COVID-19 prevention measures, the Project was severely affected. South Africa was on lockdown from March 2020 to September 2021. Some of the challenges brought by the Pandemic were interprovincial travelling ban, border control closure, people gathering regulation which limited the number of people allowed to gather in one place and closure of some facilities. As a result, innovative ways had to be devised to continue implementing the project. Some initiatives led to double the planned costs as groups of people had to be divided into small groups to comply with COVID-19 regulations. Where practically possible, virtual training platforms were used to fast-track project implementation despite technological challenges encountered in some areas due to poor or lack of suitable infrastructure. Those projects that required imported components were also delayed due to international border closure and limited cargo coming into the country. Nevertheless, in order to allow the project to complete its planned activities a no-cost extension was awarded until June 2022.

2 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES, APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives of the final evaluation

The **overall objective** of this final evaluation was to assess the achievement of programme results and performance of the above-described intervention. The evaluation measured and provided robust empirical evidence related to the success and results of the CSA interventions (both intended and unintended). The evaluation assessed changes in outcomes observed, the mechanisms that delivered the observed changes, key features of these mechanisms and determine to what extent these could be attributed to the interventions. The specific evaluation objectives were as follows:

- Analyze the relevance of the implementation strategy and approaches of the “Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture” project;
- Assess organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of the project’s results as defined in the intervention;
- Validate the project impact in terms of achievements and/or weaknesses toward the outcome and outputs;
- Assess the potential for sustainability of the results achieved by the project;
- Document lessons learned, best practices, and challenges to inform future work of UN Women on women’s economic empowerment;
- Assess the implication of COVID-19 in the entire project implementation;
- Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the programme’s best practices;
- Provide actionable recommendations for the implementation of the second phase of the project and maximize ownership by partners in the countries covered by the project in order to foster sustainability of the intervention;
- To assess how the project and its results relate and contribute to commitments and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in South Africa.

2.2 Scope of the evaluation

The final project evaluation targeted the CSA Programme, which was implemented by the UN Women, between 2019 –2021 in South Africa. The Programme was evaluated by analysing the progress towards achieving expected results, measured against the project indicators and their targets. The evaluation identified and documented the CSA project’s short-term, intermediate, and long-term results. It also assessed progress towards achieving the CSA project outcomes and potential impacts at the end of the project implementing period. The evaluation reviewed all the project’s reports, including activity reports and the project’s results framework.

2.3 Intended use and users of the evaluation

The evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations will be used by UN Women Country Office, UN Women Regional Office (ESARO), the Standard Bank Group, key collaborating partners (including FAO Country Office in South Africa; the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development); and other development partners, to contribute to evidence-based effective approaches to women’s economic empowerment (WEE), support advocacy, knowledge sharing and learning. This will be in the fuekd of gender equality and women’s economic empowerment, generation of strategic reflections and lessons learnt for UN Women, UN System partners, and donors with respect to effective programming in addressing demand and supply issues and concerns on gender equality/inequality in South Africa.

2.4 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation followed the OECD-DAC Revised Evaluation Criteria (2019) for evaluating projects. The OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria are a comprehensive and complementary set of measures used to assess the extent to which a project has been able to achieve its set objectives. Table 2 describes the dimensions of the OECD-DAC criteria that were employed in this evaluation.

Table 2: OECD-DAC Criteria Used in the Evaluation.

OECD-DAC CRITERION	DESCRIPTION
Relevance	Relevance was concerned with the extent to which the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries’, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies. We assessed whether the project activities were tailored to local needs, increasing ownership and accountability.
Coherence	This criterion assessed the extent to which other interventions supported or undermined the intervention, and vice versa. It Includes internal coherence and external coherence: Internal coherence addresses the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the UN Women and the Government and the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres. External coherence considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors’ interventions within South Africa. This includes complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

Efficiency	This criterion assessed the extent to which the intervention has delivered results in an economic and timely way. The evaluation analysed the project efficiency by assessing the extent to which the project results have been achieved at a reasonable cost. Efficiency assessed the extent to which objectives are achieved economically by the development intervention (Comparison between project outputs and inputs).
Effectiveness	We analysed the extent to which the intervention achieved its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.
Sustainability	Under this criterion, the evaluation assessed the likelihood of continuity of the project activities after it has been decommissioned. To assess sustainability, the extent to which the benefits of the project would continue to accrue to the beneficiaries after funding has been withdrawn were scrutinized.

The evaluation was guided by the UN Women Independent Evaluation Office (IEO)'s Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS). The evaluation ensured that the evaluation process were aligned and were informed by the GERAAS.

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The evaluation relied on secondary data from various project reports and documents to assess the achievements under the project. These were then complemented by primary data that were collected through key informant interviews with all the key stakeholders. Since the consultant was based in Malawi, all the interviews were done virtually, with UN Women supporting the process of arranging the interviews. However, to ensure the independence of the evaluation, UN Women were not part of these online interviews with project stakeholders.

Key informants were purposively selected and included those stakeholders that participated in the implementation of the CSA project. Key informant interviews focused on national level partners (UN Women, FAO, SAWID, SAWIF, and DLRRD at the state level, etc); provincial level stakeholders (DLRRD in Limpopo and Free State Provinces); and local level stakeholders (women farmers and women entrepreneurs (see Table 3).

Table 3: Stakeholders Consulted

Type of Stakeholder	Name of Organization
Government	DLRRD State Level
	DLRRD, Limpopo Province
	DLRRD, Free State Province
Women Organization	SAWID
	SAWIF
UN Agencies	UN Women
	FAO
Beneficiaries	Women farmers
	Women entrepreneurs

The use of purposive sampling in the selection of the key stakeholders ensured that the focus of the evaluation should be placed in understanding how the CSA Project has impacted on the beneficiaries and the work of the key institutions that work to promote women economic empowerment in agriculture in South Africa.

2.4 Ethical issues

This evaluation was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation (March, 2008). The evaluation team adhered to the principles of respect and empowerment, informed consent, cultural sensitivity, privacy and confidentiality and fair representation.

2.5 Gender and Human Rights Considerations

The Evaluation Team followed UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN system and abided by UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct (UN Women, 2019). In particular, the following key principles for gender-responsive evaluation at UN Women were adhered:

1. **National ownership and leadership:** The evaluation was country-driven (in South Africa) and responded to rights holders and duty bearers' need for national ownership and leadership.
2. **UN system coordination and coherence with regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women:** The evaluation ensured the promotion of coordination and coherence regarding gender equality and empowerment of women. Since the CSA Project focused on women economic empowerment, the beneficiaries that were interviewed during the evaluation were women; and the evaluation placed a lot of emphasis on analysing how the various project interventions have promoted the empowerment of women.
3. **Fair power relations and empowerment:** The evaluation was conducted with an understanding of contextual power and gender relations and how these impact on women economic empowerment. It emphasized on the participation of women as a key stakeholder in the generation of knowledge.
4. **Participation and inclusion:** The evaluation promoted the participation of all stakeholders – national-level, district, and community-level stakeholders. It also promoted inclusiveness by ensuring that different socio-economic and demographic groups were consulted.
5. **Independence and impartiality:** The evaluation was carried out independently in order to ensure that it is credible, free from undue influence, and results in unbiased report. The implementing agency (UN Women South Africa CO and UN Women ESARO) did not influence the results of the evaluation in any way.
6. **Transparency:** The evaluation was carried out in a transparent manner with the involvement of all key stakeholders.
7. **Quality and credibility:** The evaluation was conducted in a systematic manner to ensure high quality and credible results.
8. **Intentionality and use of evaluation:** The purpose and use of the findings of this evaluation was very clear from the onset of the evaluation.
9. **Ethics:** All ethical considerations were undertaken throughout the evaluation process

The above ten principles guided the development of the evaluation methodology, including the design of the data collection tools. Further, the choice of interviewed stakeholders and the methodology for the collection of data ensured adherence to these gender-responsive evaluation principles. The project results and lessons learned were analysed in conformity to these principles. In particular, these principles were used to identify the expected outcomes and impacts of its work and measure progress towards the achievement of results. This enabled the evaluation to provide credible evidence-based information to provide lessons to inform the design of future similar interventions.

2.6 Limitations

The following are the limitations of the evaluation. The findings of the study should therefore be used with the following limitations in mind:

- i. The evaluation was done remotely because of COVID-19. The consultant was based in Malawi and could not travel because of the challenges associated with COVID-19. This means that the consultant could not interact with the women beneficiaries to get more detailed information about the project's achievements, except for a few women interviewed virtually.
- ii. The project's baseline study used different indicators from those in the project's logframe, making it difficult for the evaluator to assess the project's achievements. Most of the indicators that were collected at the baseline were not followed up during project implementation and monitoring. Instead, the project was using a set of different indicators during its implementation.

The evaluation process involved reviewing activity reports from various implementers to isolate the achievements registered under each activity to address these challenges. These were then used as endline values for the indicators, whose information was not available in the project's logframe.

3. STUDY FINDINGS

3.1 Relevance

The evaluation criterion of relevance refers to the extent to which the intervention was in line with local needs and priorities of the project beneficiaries and stakeholders. The evaluation considered the extent to which: i) there was a need for an intervention to increase women's agricultural productivity using CSA techniques and approaches and support women in value addition of selected agricultural products and increase access to market and finance; ii) the intervention was attuned to local needs of the targeted project beneficiaries; and iii) the design of the project enabled the intervention to achieve its objectives.

Finding 1: The CSA Project was highly relevant to addressing the pressing needs of women farmers

The evaluation found that the **project was highly relevant to address the pressing needs of the target population**. The CSA Project was designed to strengthen women's agricultural productivity and promote access to markets in selected agriculture products in **South Africa**. The project was designed to close the gender gap in agricultural productivity by increasing women's access to resources. The intervention was implemented in Provinces (Free State and Limpopo) where women participation in agriculture is high, but where women farmers face multiple challenges associated with climate change. The project was designed to address these challenges.

Finding 2: The CSA Project was aligned to the international development agenda, and UN Women Strategy

The CSA project was strongly aligned to international development agenda (Sustainable Development Goals). The evaluation found that the CSA Project was aligned to six of the 17 SDGs. These six SDGs are as follows:

- **Goal 1:** End poverty in all its forms everywhere: The promotion of CSA technologies and business development for women entrepreneurs ensured that women are economically empowered, thereby contributing towards ending poverty.
- **Goal 2:** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture: The whole intervention was implemented in line with this SDG. The promotion of women economic empowerment through CSA was an important strategy to promote sustainable agriculture, in a way that promotes food and nutrition security among women farmers in South Africa.
- **Goal 3:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- **Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- **Goal 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- **Goal 13:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts: The interventions in CSA agriculture, including the various capacity building interventions for beneficiaries and stakeholders ensured that

The implementation of the intervention in South Africa was therefore contributing towards meeting the 6 goals mentioned above.

Further, the evaluation found that The CSA Project is aligned with UN Women’s Development Results Framework (DRF), Goal 2: “Women, especially those living in poverty and vulnerability, are economically empowered and enabled to reap the benefits of development”

In terms of the project design and approach, the evaluation found that the project was well designed but some activities had ambitious targets. For instance, there are a number of activities that targeted 10,000 women farmers. However, a proper arrangement was not done to ensure that these targets could be reached within the three year implementation period.

3.2 Coherence

Finding 3: The CSA Project in South Africa was coherent and related to government policies, strategies and programmes at the state and provincial levels

In South Africa, the project was coherent with the Integrated Growth and Development Plan for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (2011-2031). The Plan aims to position agriculture for the purpose of improving the national food safety and security, and agricultural economic output in a profitable and sustainable manner, through a qualitative and quantitative improvement of South Africa’s agricultural productivity, productive efficiency, trade and regulatory environment for all

commodity groups. Further, the project was supportive of the Agricultural Policy Action Plan (2015-2019). As a CSA Project, the intervention was highly aligned to the Climate Change Sector Plan for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (2012). It was also highly supportive of the National Climate Change Response Policy (NCCRP) of 2011. The Policy presents the South African Government's vision for an effective climate change response, and the long-term just transition to a climate-resilient and lower carbon economy and society. Further, the Climate Smart Agriculture Strategic Framework for Agriculture, Forestry and fisheries (2018) places special emphasis on gender considerations in agriculture in the context of climate change. In particular, one of the five strategic objectives of the Framework is to 'contribute to increasing productivity and growth of agricultural, forestry and fisheries related value chains with nutrition and gender considerations'. The CSA Project therefore was highly aligned to this objective.

Finding 4: UN Women had a Comparative advantage in undertaking Women Empowerment Intervention, but this advantage was not fully exploited in South Africa

The evaluation also found that UN Women had a comparative advantage in this area of work compared with other UN Agencies and key partners. According to the General Assembly Resolution 64/289, UN Women's mandate is "to lead, coordinate and promote accountability of the UN system to deliver on gender equality and the empowerment of women with the primary objective to enhance country-level coherence, ensure coordinated interventions and secure positive impacts on the lives of women and girls, including those living in rural areas". In this regard, UN Women was strategically positioned to implement this intervention in South Africa. Its focus on gender equality; elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development was critical in the implementation of this intervention. Using its role of coordination, UN Women was able to link relevant government stakeholders (including the Ministries of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Reform; Directorate of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management, etc) with women organizations to ensure coordinated effort by all stakeholders in the promotion of women farmers in the context of devastating effects from climate change.

The evaluation found, however, that UN Women South Africa, did not fully exploit its strategic position to deliver on this project to the extent that it achieves its objectives fully because of strict COVID-19 restrictions in South Africa.. Section 3.3 (Effectiveness) provides details of these limitations.

Finding 5: UN Women successfully managed to engage key stakeholders in the implementation of the project to contribute to project local ownership and sustainability

The project, set up a project steering committee (PSC) at the start of the project. The PSC was assembled with the aim to provide advice, ensure delivery of the project outputs and the achievement of project outcomes. The PSC comprised the FAO project implementation team, UN Women project officer, a team from the directorate for climate change and disaster risk management within DALRRD, and DALRRD provincial coordinators. Regular meetings were conducted to discuss project implementation, progress and challenges encountered.

3.3 Effectiveness

The criterion of effectiveness considered the extent to which the Programme's intervention objectives were achieved, taking into account their relative importance. In particular, the evaluation assessed the contribution made by results to achievement of the project purpose. This was done by assessing the status of the project indicators, coupled with qualitative data from FGDs with programme Project participants and key informants.

It was difficult to assess the effectiveness of the project because the M&E system had a lot of gaps, including a results framework that had missing baseline information and targets for many indicators. The logframe also had no annual achievements, neither did they have endline values. Since the evaluation relied on secondary data from the M&E system, it became very difficult to assess the effectiveness of most of the interventions. Further, a number of issues that came during consultations with stakeholders were put forward to UN Women CO (and ESARO) for their response and feedback. Unfortunately, the consultant did not receive the feedback.

The findings are presented for each specific objective.

Finding 6 The evaluation found that a number of key activities under various outputs were still underway at the time of this evaluation. For the activities that were implemented almost all of them missed their targets.

OUTCOME 1: WOMEN HAVE INCREASED THEIR PRODUCTIVITY IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

Output 1.1	Women's access to labour and time-saving equipment and services increased.	
Output Indicator	Indicator Status	Achievement Against Target (%)
Indicator 1.1a Number of women supplied with energy-efficient, environmentally friendly, and improved technologies/inputs increase	2019: 20 Women 2020: 100 women 2021: 450 women Total: 570 women	38%

In 2019, Currently there are 20 women farmers that have been supplied with energy efficient and environmentally friendly technologies (bio-digesters) in Limpopo and Free State. In 2020, about 100 women farmers received tractors and loose tools such as spades, gardening forks and hoes. This was done through the partnership that UN-Women has with the Department of Agriculture Land Reform and Rural Development and the provincial departments. In 2021, 450 women farmers in poultry farming (50 women from each of the 9 Provinces of South Africa) were provided with a total of 2,700 energy-saving bulbs for use in their chicken shelters to save on poultry production electricity costs. This was done through a partnership between UN Women and SAWIF.

The evaluation, therefore, found that during the lifetime of the project about 570 women farmers were supplied with energy-efficient, environmentally friendly, and improved technologies/inputs. These included bio-digesters, tractors and other loose tools, as well as energy-saving light bulbs. The evaluation found that the project did not meet the target of 1,500 since it only achieved 38% of its target was achieved. The low achievement is attributed to the negative effect of COVID-19 which affected most of the project activities.

OUTPUT 1.2 Support capacity of rural women farmers on accessing and utilising climate resilient technologies		
Output Indicator	Indicator Status	Achievement Against Target (%)
Indicator 1.2: Number of women farmers receiving subsidised inputs.	2019: 3,400 Women 2020: 1105 women 2021: 150 women Total: 4,650 women	46.5%

Under Output 1.2, the project planned to facilitate women farmers' access to subsidized input. The project supported women farmers with soybean and sugar bean seeds. A total of 2,000 farmers (1,000 in Limpopo and 1,000 in Free State) received 5 Kgs of either soybean seed or dry bean seed. A total of 10,000 Kg of the seed was procured under the project. UN Women procured 10,000 kilograms of both soya and dry beans to be distributed to women farmers in Limpopo and the Free State at 5,000 Kgs per province with seeds distributed at 50% soya and 50% dry beans.

In 2019 alone, approximately 3,400 women farmers have received inputs subsidies during the current farming period. Further, under the seed distribution, the evaluation found that, in collaboration with FAO, 189 farmers received vegetable seeds (spinach, onion, carrots, cabbage and tomatoes) and organic fertilizers in the two provinces (99 farmers in Limpopo and 90 farmers in Free State). Further, through the collaboration with FAO, maize seed and vegetable with chemical and organic fertilizers were distributed to approximately 1,148 farmers mid-March 2020 with the aim of boosting their production. In particular, 916 farmers received white maize seed and NPK General Fertilizer.

The evaluation found that there was another important activity under the provision of subsidized inputs. This is the purchase of 300 macadamia seedlings to 150 young women from Limpopo Province. The aim behind the activity was to promote their incomes, and reduce unemployment by engaging the women farmers in macadamia production. According to Year 2 Annual Report (December 2021), the (300) macadamia nuts seedlings donated by UN Women to the trainees was to support young women to start their macadamia nuts farming. The expected productivity for a matured macadamia plant is anything between 20 kilograms to 30 kilograms, depending on the plant cultivar. The average revenue from all the 300 macadamia nut seedling plants donated at maturing is expected to generate around R400 000 per year. The collaboration between the two organisations led to SAWIF securing an international macadamia market in the Netherlands, which the beneficiaries will supply with macadamia nuts once the plant bear fruits.

The evaluation found that over the implementation period, the project supported around 4,650 women to access subsidized inputs. The intervention was aimed to supporting women farmers with seed inputs to mitigate challenges caused by COVID-19 and the general challenges women face with agricultural inputs. The evaluation found that the project was able to achieve 46.5% of its target of 10,000 women. Since, the project was granted a no-cost extension, it is expected that the achievement will increase.

However, the evaluation also found that a number of factors should have been considered to increase the impact of the interventions under Outcome 1. These include the fact that the project did not provide a comprehensive package of support to the women farmers. For example, the farmers who were provided with soybean seed did not get any support in the form of fertilizer (inoculant), which are critical in improving productivity. The quote below illustrates this point:

“Women farmers received seeds under the project. We cannot expect huge impact when the farmers only receive seeds but not other inputs, such as fertilizers. There is need to provide a comprehensive package if farmers are to fully appreciate that the knowledge that they gained under the project can really transform their agricultural production” (Key Informant, Free State Province).

Output 1.3		Access to climate-smart agricultural extension services for women and men farmers improved.	
Output Indicator	Indicator Status	Achievement Against Target (%)	
<p>Indicator 1.3a: Number of Extension practitioners trained on Climate Smart Agriculture improves.</p>	<p>2019: 100 extension workers 2020: 50 extension workers 2021: 35 extension workers Total: 185 extension workers</p>	185%	
<p>Indicator 1.3b: Number of women farmers with access to market information, inputs, and agroclimatic updates increased.</p>	<p>2019: 1000 women 2020: 3105 women 2021: 1000 women Total: 5,105 women</p>	170%	

Output 1.2 was concerned with promoting access to agricultural extension services among women and men farmers in the two Provinces. This was done in order to enhance the awareness of government extension workers on climate smart technologies and climate change among women farmers. The Output had two indicators. Indicator 1.3a was *'Number of extension practitioners trained on Climate Smart Agriculture improved'*. Under this indicator, the project trained agricultural extension officers on gender responsive climate smart agronomic practices. The evaluation found that this activity was led by FAO in partnership with DALRRD. The training was in the form of a training-of-trainers (ToT), so that once trained, the extension workers would then train their respective women farmers. The training was aimed at strengthening their capacity on climate smart technologies, empower them with methodology and approach to support the farmers in the province during and beyond the project cycle

The evaluation found that a total of 185 extension workers were trained under the project. This represents an over-achievement of 185% against the set target of 100 extension workers

Another important activity under Output 1.3 was to train the women farmers on the use of climate resilient technologies. According to discussions with key stakeholders of the project, these trainings were led by FAO, in partnership with DALRRD. In order to reach the targeted farmers, the project trained government extension workers on climate smart agriculture and climate change. The extension workers then delivered the trainings to their respective women farmers. According to discussions with UN Women project staff, a total of 1,420 farmers were trained on CSA technologies under the project.

Prior to the trainings, FAO developed a training curriculum suitable for smallholder women farmers, Agricultural Extension Personnel and other value chain actors in specific agricultural value chains at different sites. The curriculum that was developed offered farm and agricultural business management, including value adding, pricing, branding, packaging and target marketing. After this, training manuals for both farmers and extension officials were developed on both climate smart agriculture and inclusive value chains on the specific and identified agricultural commodities.

Another indicator under Output 1.3 was the *"Number of women farmers with access to market information, inputs, and Agroclimatic updates"*. The evaluation found that the project made significant progress under this Output. In 2019, about 1000 women farmers were introduced to an Application that will give them live updates on agro-climatic updates, inputs process and market information.

For example in 2020 alone, approximately 3105 women farmers accessed information on key indicators through UN Women (SAMCO) which led and facilitated collaborative initiatives such as webinar sessions on gender responsive CSA. Further, UN Women in collaborations with African Agri-Council on the Investment Food Forum, Solidaridad-network on Roundtable on Agroecology and UNEP organized a seminar on South-South Cooperation Forum on Food Security and Agrobiodiversity in Times of COVID-19 and Climate Change.

Overall, the project reached 5,105 women between 2019 and 2021. This represents an achievement of 170% against its set target of 3,000 women.

Output 1.4:		
Socio-cultural barriers (including gender-based violence) reduced through policy and advocacy (including engaging men at household level) to increase agriculture productivity and women's equal land rights.		
Output Indicator	Indicator Status	Achievement Against Target (%)
Indicator 1.4a: Number of women's organization in Land consultative forums.	2019: 7 women organizations 2020: 4 women organizations 2021: 4 women organizations Total: 7 women organizations	185%
Indicator 1.4b: Number of women engaged in land policy and decision-making processes.	2019: 600 women 2020: 883 women 2021: 0 women Total: 1,483 women	170%
Indicator 1.4c: Number of Traditional Leaders and men trained on the importance women's rights to land.	2019: One (1) consultation with the National House of Traditional Leaders NHTL) and two (2) meeting with traditional leaders and men at a village level were held on the importance of women's rights to land. 2020: None 2021: None Total: 1	-

Output 1.4 was concerned with addressing socio-cultural barriers on women land rights in South Africa. Under this output, a number of project activities were planned to reduce social and cultural barriers on land rights for women farmers in South Africa. These include: (i) training women farmers on advocacy and negotiation skills to engage in land policy and decision-making processes; (ii) convening advocacy forums with community gatekeepers to negotiate women's access/rights to land; and (iii) facilitating acquisition of land title deeds by women farmers.

The evaluation found that the activities on reducing social and cultural barriers on women's land rights were led by a number of women organizations, including with South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID), South African Women in Farming (SAWIF) and African Farmers' Association of South Africa (AFASA). In particular, according to the CSA Project Annual Report of 2019, UN Women facilitated access for women farmers to land networks for them to voice their concerns and needs for access to secure land tenure. Five (5) farmers and women organizations and their members (SAWIF, SACONO, AFASA, WARD, and Intsika) participated in land reform and rural development discussions with the government and through Landnex and NGO advocating for land rights for rural women and the Voluntary Guidelines on Governance of Land Tenure (VGGT) Forum supported by the FAO.

The evaluation found that under this Project, UN Women worked with South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID), South African Women in Farming (SAWIF) and African Farmers' Association of South Africa (AFASA) to assist women farmers to apply for land leases on state land. This was in response to the Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, Minister Thoko Didiza, through her department's State Land Lease and Disposal Policy, which invited all eligible South African applicants to submit applications to lease 529,014 ha of the 700 000 ha agricultural land available. UN Women was eager to support women farmers in all provinces to access this opportunity. Through this initiative, the project supported a total of 883 women farmers from the seven provinces of South Africa to submit their applications. At the time of the evaluation, the results of the application were not yet out. If the applications are all approved, it means that the project will surpass its target of 10 farmers. According to the results framework, the project had a target of 10 women farmers owning title deeds for their land.

Indicator 1.3c was concerned with engagement with men and traditional leaders on the importance women's rights to land. The evaluation found that one (1) consultation with the National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL) and two (2) meetings with traditional leaders and men at a village level were held on the importance of women's rights to land. This was done in 2019. No further engagements were made in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

OUTCOME 2: OPPORTUNITIES FOR ORGANISED WOMEN TO MOVE UP THE VALUE CHAIN ARE PROVIDED.

Under the Project, UN Women worked with FAO and DALRRD to promote women farmers' access to high value markets. According to discussions with FAO project staff, one of the key objectives of their collaboration with UN Women was facilitate women farmers' access to inputs, promote market linkages, and facilitate value chain upgrading for women.

One of the key activities under Output 2.1 was to develop and roll out an information system on high value agricultural commodities. According to discussions with FAO staff, FAO was able to roll out a

market support development tool for women farmers under the project. In particular, the project developed a profiling tool for all the women farmers, which is able to identify and analyse capacity gaps in their high value market access. The project was then able to use this tool to develop tailor-made solutions for each farmer.

Output 2.1:		
Women shift to high value agricultural enterprises and inclusion in green agricultural value chains at the national, regional, and international levels achieved.		
Output Indicator	Indicator Status	Achievement Against Target (%)
Indicator 2.1a: Number of women reached with information on high-value enterprises.	2019: 2,500 women 2020: 10,000 women 2021: 500 women Total: 10,000 women	100%
Indicator 2.1b: Number of women enrolled in Cooperatives.	2019: 400 women 2020: 400 women 2021: 100 women Total: 500 women	10%

Indicator 1.2a tracked the number of women reached with information on high-value enterprises. Under this indicator, UN Women collaborated with farmers associations and Agri-Council in disseminating information to women farmers on high value crops and enterprises. According to the 2019 CSA Project's Annual Report, Information was shared through the existing web-based applications, websites, participation in agricultural sector expos and indaba's where women farmers were supported to participated. UN Women supported the participation of 10 Women farmer representatives to participate in the 2019 Annual Agricultural Investment Indaba from different farmers groups and co-operatives, where they also had an opportunity to exhibit their agricultural products, It is important to note the targeted women were reached through their cooperatives. In 2019, for example, 10 women farmers representatives, representing more than 2500 members were reached with information on high value enterprises and crops.

The evaluation found that over the three year period, the project was able to reach 10,000 women with information on the high-value enterprises. The project was able to achieve its target of 10,000 women.

The second indicator under Output 2.1 is *'the number of women enrolled in cooperatives'*. The evaluation found that over the three year period of implementation, the total number of women that were enrolled in cooperatives was 500. **The project was able to achieve only 10% of its target of 5,000, and the low achievement is attributed to the negative effects of COVID-19 restriction in South Africa.** Since the project was granted a no-cost extension, it is expected that the figure of women in cooperatives will increase.

Output 2.2:	Local infrastructure developed to improve access to markets, reduce labour and save time for women farmers value chain actors.	
Output Indicator	Indicator Status	Achievement Against Target (%)
Indicator 2.2a: Number of infrastructure projects undertaken.	2019: 0 projects 2020: 0 projects 2021: 2 projects Total: 2 projects	33%
Indicator 2.2b: Number of women representatives consulted on types of infrastructure to be constructed.	2019: 2 women FOs 2020: 2 women FOs 2021: 2 women FOs Total: 2 Women FOs	170%

Output 2.2 focused on Climate Smart Post Harvest Handling Infrastructure. Indicator 2.2a focused on facilitating the construction/sourcing of climate smart post-harvest handling infrastructure. According to discussions with key stakeholders the project was supposed to construct greenhouses and set up hydroponic systems – to allow for the cultivation of plants without using soil. At the time of the evaluation, one greenhouse had just been completed in the Free State Province and the construction of a greenhouse in Limpopo Province was only starting. Further, at the time of this evaluation, the internal installations of the hydroponic system in Free State were yet to be done. This means that once the greenhouse in Limpopo is completed, the project will have constructed two greenhouses. The results framework has a target of 6 climate smart post-harvest handling

infrastructure to be constructed (4 greenhouse hydroponics and 2 post-harvest facilities). This means that the project was not yet able to meet its target at the time of the evaluation. However, since the Project was accorded a no-cost extension, it is possible that some of the infrastructure will be completed.

The second indicator was “Number of women representatives consulted on types of infrastructure to be constructed”. The evaluation found that throughout the project, wo women farmer organisations and provincial government officials were consulted, namely SAWIF and AFASA. The number of woman farmers consulted through farmer organisation is 150.

Further, Output 2.2 was also concerned with creating awareness to women farmers on alternative high value agricultural crops. Discussions with staff from FAO showed that the project worked with 780 women farmers to create their awareness of climate smart agricultural technologies. From the 780, a total of 100 women farmers (50 from Limpopo and 50 from Free State) were further trained and mentored on value chain development. These farmers have been working together to promote their own access to high value markets. Using modern technology, include social media tools (especially WhatsApp), the farmers communicate and share information on marketing, branding and other activities to promote their access to high value markets.

Under this output, another key activity was to facilitate affirmative procurement of goods and services within public and private institutions for women farmers. To this end, UN Women worked with Small Enterprise Development Agency) SEDA to provide business mentorship and coaching to the women farmers. SEDA is an agency of the South African Department of Small Business Development, with a mission to promote entrepreneurship and facilitate the development of small enterprises by providing customised business support services that result in business growth and sustainability in collaboration with other role players in the ecosystem, including global partners, who make international best practices available to local entrepreneurs⁶.

This pilot programme was aimed at improving women's access to public and private procurement of goods and services in general, linking women through business value chains. The pilot project in Limpopo Province included mentees who were members of the South African Women in Farming (SAWIF). The collaboration between SEDA and UN Women includes the following support services Business Plan training and development of bankable business plan; Marketing (corporate identity); and Record keeping.

⁶ UN Women- SEDA Project Status Report, July 2021.

Output 2.3:	Capacity for women value chain organizations for production and marketing increased.	
Output Indicator	Indicator Status	Achievement Against Target (%)
Indicator 2.3a: Number of women trained in business management, digital and financial literacy skills.	2019: 0 women farmers 2020: 982 women farmers 2021: 200 women Total: 1182 women farmers	11.8%

Output 2.3 focused on promoting the capacity of women value chain organizations in production and marketing. One of the indicators under this output was Indicator 2.3a: *“Number of women trained in business management, digital and financial literacy skills”*. Most of the activities under this indicator were done in 2019 and not in the subsequent years due to COVID-19 restrictions.

According to the CSA Project Annual Report for 2019, UN Women partnered with Vodacom Foundation to strengthen women farmers digital literacy skills. 780 women farmers and 30 trainers were trained on digital literacy skills in both Limpopo and Free State Provinces. Through the ToT that was conducted by UN Women in 2018 on financial literacy an additional 130 women farmers have been trained in Limpopo province by the trainers. Further to the digital literacy training, Vodacom have trained an additional, 10 women farmers (trainers) in using the Connect the Farmer App which is aimed at connecting the farmers to agricultural inputs, products, and market information by collecting data on their farms.

Against a target of 10,000 women, the evaluation found that it only managed to achieve 11.8% of its target. Nevertheless, the project is still in its no-cost extension phase and the total number of beneficiaries might increase at the end of the intervention.

Output 2.4:	Provision technical support to insurance companies to create tailored climate-smart agricultural insurance packages/solutions for rural women.	
Output Indicator	Indicator Status	Achievement Against Target (%)
Indicator 2.4a: Indicator: number of financial institutions engaged.	2019: 0 financial service providers 2020: 3 financial service providers 2021: 2 financial service providers Total: 3 financial service providers	-%

Output 2.4 was aimed at providing technical support to insurance companies to create tailored climate-smart agricultural insurance packages for rural women farmers. The evaluation found that three financial institutions (Gro Bank, Makwande Capital and Maia Debt Impact Fund) were engaged on gender responsive financial solutions. In 2020, Makwande Capital pledged to make available R90 million for small scale farmers over a three-year period.

The evaluation found that among the other activities under this indicator, 21 businesses, represented by 24 women, were trained and mentored on business development. The number of women who were trained was far much lower than the project target. According to the project’s results framework, the targeted number of women farmers pre-qualified as vendors through affirmative procurement initiatives was 5,000. The endline value for this indicator was 895 women. This means that the project did not meet its target.

OUTCOME 3: USING ICT PLATFORMS (BFW) FOR INCREASED ACCESS TO MARKETS AND FINANCE FOR WOMEN.

Output 3.1:	Deploy the buy-from-women digital platform to connect women farmers to large scale buyers of agricultural products.	
Output Indicator	Indicator Status	Achievement Against Target (%)
Indicator 3.1a: Number of women farmers linked to the BfW platform.	2019: 895 women registered 2020: 895 women registered 2021: 895 women registered Total: 895 women registered	9.0%

One of the key activities under Output 3.1 was to support the development of a web-based BfW platform to link buyers to women producer groups. As part of developing the BfW digital platform, the project was supposed to support the data collection process to populate the BfW database. To this end, a number of activities were done to collect data on the project beneficiaries. First, the project through FAO, conducted a farmers profiling and registration in selected sites and finalize inventory of farmers and their groups' (farmer register) and aggregators (aggregator inventory) to be included in the intervention. It also supported the profiling of selected value chain, and adopt an upgraded business model. Finally, the project conducted a farmers' needs assessment within the upgraded business model.

Second, for the mentorship programme, a Needs Analysis was conducted by the Business Development Coaches in November and December 2020 to identify challenges amongst women owned businesses (WoB).

At the time of the evaluation, there were 895 women entrepreneurs including farmers that have been uploaded into the platform. **This represents an achievement of only 9% against the set target of 10,000 women.**

OUTCOME 4: THE MULTI-COUNTRY PROGRAMME IS IMPLEMENTED WITH A FOCUS ON RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT AND DOCUMENTING LESSONS LEARNED.

Output 4.1:	UN Women Country Offices and agricultural research institutions in the respective countries and at a regional level engaged to increase research and knowledge sharing on gender and CSA.	
Output Indicator	Indicator Status	Achievement Against Target (%)
Indicator 4.1a: With partners, jointly collaborate on annual events such as the International Day for Rural Women, and a CSW side event on rural women and postharvest technologies.	<p>2019: 1 event</p> <p><i>One international Day of Rural women celebrated in collaboration with Rural Women’s Movement in South Africa, and one knowledge sharing workshop co-hosted with the UN Women HQ where lessons and knowledge were shared on both the RWEE and CSA programmes.</i></p> <p>2020: 2 events</p> <p>2021: 2 events</p> <p>Total: 5 events</p>	166%

Output 4.1 was aimed at promoting regional-level engagement to increase research and knowledge sharing on gender and CSA. The evaluation found that the project had a target of four policy dialogues convened. The evaluation found that at least one forum was convened. This was the Women’s Day in South Africa which was celebrated 9th August 2021 under the theme “Generation Equality: Realizing Women’s Rights for an Equal Future”. As part of the celebrations, the project provided 2,700 energy-saving lighting bulbs to 450 chicken farmers from all the 9 Provinces.

During the Women’s Day in South Africa Celebration, UN Women partnered with SAWIF and VODACOM to host over 600 women farmers drawn from all the provinces. According to the 2021 Annual Report, the gathering provided an opportunity for information sharing and knowledge transfer amongst farmers on best fresh produce marketing practices, positioning agribusiness for market access, climate-resilient inputs available in the market, macadamia nut processing and unfavourable climatic conditions posed by climate change.

Further, the evaluation found that a total of 5 activities (indicated in the Table above) were undertaken. The target under this indicator was 3 (i.e. 2 annual events that promote women farmers economic empowerment; and 1 regional agricultural institutions meetings to share results and successes). The evaluation therefore found that the target was surpassed, i.e. an achievement of 166%.

One of the key activities under Outcome 4 was to undertake a situational analysis on WEE CSA and a study on gender pay gap. These studies were not done. Instead, the evaluation found that The Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) conducted a baseline scoping study for the CSA Project in South Africa on behalf of UN Women. The study aimed broadly to deepen the understanding on CSA practices and technologies in South Africa particularly in the Limpopo and Free State provinces and the opportunities and constraints faced by stakeholders and women farmers in adopting particular CSA technologies and practices along agricultural value chains.

Further, in 2021, UN Women, in partnership with the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development, embarked on developing the Women Empowerment Strategy, 2021/22 – 2027/28 to enhance women's empowerment in agriculture. To develop this Strategy, there were consultations with relevant stakeholders to collectively assess the national agricultural systems, identify policy gaps and the potential approach to influence national policy direction in the thematic areas of inclusive agricultural value chains, agricultural land rights and tenure with special focus to women land access challenges. The women empowerment strategy through agriculture is envisaged to influence the agricultural policy direction, such that it incorporates techniques that address agricultural land hunger amongst women smallholder farmers. At the time of the evaluation, the Draft Strategy had been prepared.

Overall, the evaluation has found that while some of the indicators were able to achieve their targets, the performance under the majority of the indicators was below target. However, with the no-cost extension phase that the project is in, it is expected that most of the targets will be achieved.

3.4 Efficiency

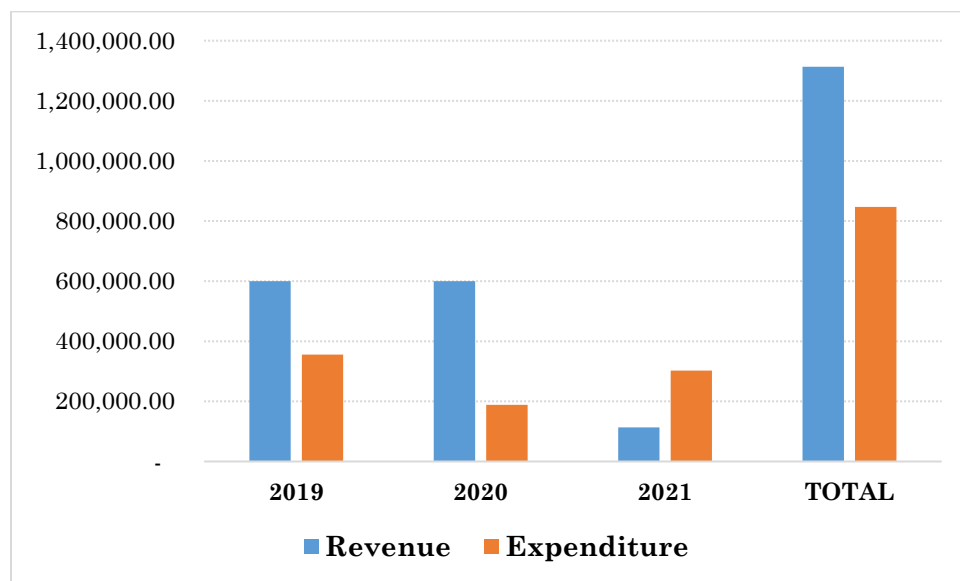
Efficiency refers to how well a programme uses its resources to meet its objectives. The OECD DAC defines efficiency as “a measure of how economically resources/inputs such as funds, expertise, time, etc. are converted into results.” Like in many programmes and projects, in the UN Women CSA Project the type of data required to conduct an analysis of efficiency is unavailable. Such data would include information on the costs of inputs (such as project staff time, travel and logistics, materials, workshops etc.) by country required to produce the services that comprise the first level in results chain.

Finding 7: The evaluation was not able to undertake a detailed analysis of absorption rates, and value-for-money analyses due to a lack of detailed financial reports.

The project in South Africa was allocated US\$1.2 million dollars, with US\$600,000 allocated for Year 1 and the remaining funds for the second year. Due to lack of detailed financial reports, the evaluation was not able to determine the extent to which the project funds were allocated to various activities;

and the value-for-money analysis. All these have not been done due to lack of comprehensive and detailed financial reports.⁷

Figure 1: Revenues and Expenditures under the South Africa CSA Project (US\$)



Source: Data from Project Financial Reports

Figure 1 shows the revenues and expenditures for the three years under implementation. At the time of the evaluation, the project had utilized about 64.5% of the funds allocated. While the burn rate in 2019 was 59.2%, it fell to only 31.5% in 2020. The low burn rate of the project can be attributed to the suspension of most of the project activities due to COVID-19 government restrictions. It should also be noted that at the time of the evaluation, the 2021 revenue was in form of an advance, amounting to US\$113,199.

Since the project was accorded a no-cost extension, it is expected that the remaining funds will be utilized when finalizing the implementation of the remaining project activities.

Finding 8: The project built strategic partnerships that promoted efficiency

The evaluation, however, found that the project built strategic partnerships with key stakeholders that promoted efficiency. In South Africa, the project worked with key partners including: FAO; Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (Limpopo and Free State); Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (National Level); Directorate of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management; African Farmers’ Association of South Africa (AFASA), South African Women in Farming (SAWIF), South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID), and VODACOM, among others. This is one of the best practices of the project in South Africa. The relevant

⁷ The National Evaluation Consultant made many requests to UN Women CO, but such data was not forthcoming. A summary of Incomes and Expenditures for the three years (2019-2021) were the only financial data that were provided

partners came into the project with their own strengths and capacities that promoted project efficiency.

3.4.1 Efficiency Challenges

Finding 9: The project encountered a few efficiency challenges, including project funds being used for other activities outside the CSA Project; delays in procurement processes; and some project staff's contracts not aligned to the project duration.

There were a number of challenges that evaluation identified that affected the efficiency of the project:

1. Project Funds used for Other Projects within the Country Office

The evaluation found that within the UN Women CO, funds for the CSA project were borrowed and used for other projects. This means that funds for the CSA Project were used to pay for activities that were not related to the CSA Project. At the time of the evaluation, it was found that the funds that were borrowed to finance activities for other projects had not been repaid.⁸

This affected the implementation of outstanding activities, such as the construction of cold rooms.

2. Delays in procurement processes

The project implementers faced a lot of challenges with procurement. The evaluation found that procurement procedures were tedious, with a lot of paperwork. The quote below by key informant demonstrates this issue further:

“The procurement system is not geared towards implementation of projects that involve construction. The construction of the greenhouses faced significant challenges from the procurement front. It is therefore not surprising that the project is coming to an end, but the construction of the second greenhouse is just beginning” (Key Informant, 2022).

Procurement is a big challenge in this project. Service providers face significant delays to have their invoices processed. This negatively affected project implementation, and has negatively affected how project implementers work with service providers in other projects. The quote below from one of the implementing partners, sheds light on this issue:

“We have always faced significant delays in the processing of invoices for service providers for services that were already rendered. For example, invoices for services that were provided in September 2021 faced huge delays in their processing to the extent that those invoices were honoured only in January 2022. These delays have spoiled the reputation of our organization because the service providers are engaged by our organization and not UN Women” (Key Informant, Implementing Partner, Free State Province).

⁸ The evaluation team sought feedback from ESARO on this issue, but at the time of the compilation of the draft report, there was no feedback from ESARO.

3. Contracts for UN Women Project staff and Capacity within UN Women

The evaluation found that key project staff were given short-term employment contracts, which negatively affected project implementation. For instance, it was found that some key positions would sometimes be given three-month contracts, instead of medium-term and long-term contracts. As a result, the project did not have key staff to coordinate the project forward during the time when contracts had expired and new contracts were being prepared.

Further, the evaluation found that UN Women did not have all the required expertise in-house which negatively affected the efficiency of the project. For example, discussions with key informants showed that UN Women did not have its own engineers to manage the greenhouse construction. Instead, UN Women relied on government engineers who were often busy with their own activities. This affected the implementation of the project.

3.5 Impact

Finding 10: It is difficult to measure the project impact of most of the interventions because some of the project activities were yet to be implemented due to COVID-19 lockdown in South Africa. Nevertheless, the project has made some difference for women farmers in terms of increased access to markets; profits and incomes.

- **Impacts under Outcome 1: Agricultural productivity through climate smart agricultural practices by women farmers increased.**

The main interventions under this outcome related to increased access to CSA inputs. Through the project 980 women farmers have been trained to use CSA technologies. The provision of improved seeds was very important to promote their productivity in the face of climate change. Although the project did not track the extent to which the interventions have increased the productivity of the targeted women farmers, discussions from project implementers indicate that productivity has increased, as the quote below shows:

“The provision of seeds to the women farmers provided them with an opportunity to practice what they learnt in CSA technologies training that the project provided to them. The seeds have allowed the farmers to increase their productivity” (Key Informant, 2022.)

Further, the targeted farmers have benefitted from the knowledge transfer through the lead farmers and extension officers as well as financially through upstream and downstream economic activities and employment benefits. The training of extension officers on gender and value chain development.

- **Impacts under Outcome 2: Access to diverse high value markets by women through value chain development expanded.**

Under Outcome 2, women were trained on business management and financial literacy skills. They enhanced their skills in branding, packaging and marketing. They were also trained on value addition, standards and certification. The evaluation found that the women entrepreneurs that were trained on business development and offered mentorship support reported an increase in the sales volumes and improved market share, as the quote below illustrates:

“I underwent a life-changing training organized by UN Women and FAO. This training has helped me to understand the importance of branding, advertising and marketing. After the training, I developed a logo for my poultry products. In the face of COVID-19 restrictions and up until now I am using WhatsApp to advertise my poultry products and am getting lots of customers” (Women Entrepreneur doing Poultry Farming, Limpopo Province, South Africa).

The capacity building provided has also led to an increase in revenues and profits from their various enterprises. For example, women that were part of the mentorship programme have business management skills enhanced, which have led to increased profits. The quote below illustrates this point:

“Women under the mentorship programme in one municipality who were doing piggery as individual farmers have now started working as a group. The farmers are now able to work together and do bulk purchases for their feed. They also pull resources to hire a vet to provide veterinary services to all the farmers. These have cut down on their costs and increased their profits. When farmers see mutual benefits from working together, the cooperative model works” (Key Informant, 2022).

The intervention has promoted access to information for the women farmers which has promoted their access to viable markets for their products. Women that have been part of the mentorship programme and those that were part of the value chain development activities under this project have been able to access market information which is critical for the growth their businesses, as the quote below indicates:

“I am able to communicate regularly with my fellow mentees on WhatsApp. There we share information on markets, places where we can get cheap supplies for our businesses. This is helping us in the marketing of our products” (Women Entrepreneur, Polokwane, Limpopo Province, South Africa).

- **Impacts under Outcome 3: Capacities and trade opportunities by women through ICT platforms strengthened.**

The evaluation was not able to identify direct impacts under Outcome 3 because most of the interventions were not finalized. Since the BfW platform was not rolled out, the evaluation was not able to assess how the project has been able to strengthen the capacities and trade opportunities by women farmers and entrepreneurs that were part of the CSA Project.

- **Outcome 4: Institutional coordination and knowledge management through research for development improved.**

The final evaluation did not find any substantive research activity in the project, except for the scoping and baseline study that was done at the start of the project. Unfortunately, the baseline survey collected baseline information on baseline indicators, most of which are different from the indicators in the project’s results framework.

The evaluation found that no CSA gender studies were done with any research and academic institutions. This is a missed opportunity as such studies would have provided important

knowledge to strengthen women’s agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture products thereby Contributing to the economic empowerment of women in South Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture.

3.6 Sustainability

The OECD – DAC defines sustainability as ‘*the continuation of benefits from a development interventions after major development assistance has been completed*’. The evaluation notes that there were several aspects of the project that would ensure that the benefits of the intervention are secured for the rights holders.

Finding 11: The CSA Project built the capacity of various groups, including women farmers, entrepreneurs and government extension workers in the field of climate smart agriculture, and business management to promote sustainability.

3.6.1 Capacity to Ensure Sustainability of Efforts and Benefits

In its few years of implementation, despite the various challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the project has built the capacity of various groups to be able to take action to promote agricultural productivity and access to markets for women through climate-smart agriculture in South Africa. Table 4 shows a summary of some of the key capacity development initiatives undertaken under the project, which promote project sustainability:

Table 4: Capacity Development Initiatives Undertaken by the CSA Project

Target Group	Capacity Developed
Government extension workers	Trained on gender, value chain development and climate smart agriculture, to allow them to impart this knowledge to farmers
Women Organizations, such as SAWIF, SAWID, etc.	<p>Capacity built on promotion of business management; procedures for applying for government land; participate in collaborate projects for women empowerment.</p> <p>Members of SAWIF/SAWID (women farmers and women entrepreneurs) have their capacity built in business management, branding, advertising, market identification; and access to financing.</p>

Women farmers trained in partnership with VODACOM	Women farmers were trained on ICT in partnership with VODACOM.
Government staff (DALRRD); FAO; UN Women	Capacities of institutions to develop and deliver CSA and gender trainings were enhanced. The project has developed training materials and manuals that can be used for CSA, gender and value chain development.

The various capacity development initiatives that have targeted different project stakeholders including the women farmers themselves (as Table 4 shows) have imparted knowledge and skills on CSA and business management. These skills will continue to be utilized well beyond the life of the CSA Project.

3.6.2 Accountability and Oversight Systems Established

The evaluation notes that there were several aspects of the project that would ensure that the benefits of the intervention are secured for the rights holders. These include:

- i. The use of existing and highly effective women organizations, such as SAWIF and SAWID in South Africa. The engagement of these women bodies will ensure that the benefits of the intervention will be secured for the rights holders beyond the life of this project.
- ii. The involvement of key government stakeholders (DALRRD, Directorate of Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management) at the central and district levels is an important way of ensuring sustainability.

3.7 Project Challenges

Finding 12: The project faced key challenges that affected its implementation, including poor M&E system, and the prolonged effects of restrictive COVID-19 measures.

The evaluation identified a number of challenges that negatively affected project implementation and progress made towards results. These include:

1. Poor M&E System

A scoping and baseline report that was done at the start of the project was implemented to provide a basis for measuring and monitoring the project’s progress against the set indicators over the course of project implementation. However, the indicators that were used at the baseline are different from the indicators in the project’s results framework (see Table 5). The outputs and indicators in the Baseline Study (Table 5) are different from the outputs and indicators in the results framework

(which have been discussed under the Effectiveness Section). This made it difficult for the consultant to undertake the evaluation effectively.

Table 5: Outputs, Indicators and Targets in the Baseline Report

Output in the Baseline Report	Indicator in the Baseline Report	Target in the Baseline Report
CSA Women Digital Platform created	Number of women farmers belonging to digital platform	Zero women in the CSA digital platform
Drought mitigation system established	Percentage increment of women using drought resistant cultivars	10% of drought resistant seed distributed
Water resource management system established	Percentage increase of women farms using drip irrigation and rain water harvesting	15% increase of women farms using drip irrigation and rain water harvesting
Solar energy system established	Number of women farms run on solar system	Zero women farms run on solar system
Organic farming systems for women established	Percentage increase of organic farming systems for women.	15% increased of organic farming systems for women

Further, the majority of the impact, outcome and output indicators in the project’s results framework did not have baseline values. Neither did they have targets. Without these, it was not possible for the project team to track the progress being made during implementation. Therefore, it was not possible for the evaluation team to comprehensively assess the progress the project has made.

2. COVID-19 affected project implementation

The evaluation found that COVID-19 distracted the project implementation in South Africa significantly. South Africa is among the few countries within Africa that implemented very strict COVID-19 preventive measures, including lockdowns that lasted for long periods of time (March 2020 to September 2021). Due to COVID-19, the project implementation was hampered by the following key challenges:

- i. *Gatherings were limited to funerals* in most of the restriction levels for COVID-19. As a result, it become impossible to legally hold training meetings and advocacy events. Even virtual

trainings were difficult to hold as a majority of South Africans do not have access to ICT infrastructure or services.

- ii. There was also limited access to government services at the time. This also had an impact in the processing of applications (e.g business registration, state land applications etc)

Some of the challenges brought by the COVID-19 Pandemic were interprovincial travelling ban; border control closure; people gathering regulation which limited the number of people allowed to gather in one place and closure of some facilities. As a result, innovative ways had to be devised to continue implementing the project. Some initiatives (especially on capacity building) led to doubling the planned costs as groups of people had to be divided into small groups to comply with Covid regulations. Where practically possible, virtual training platforms were used to fast-track project implementation despite technological challenges encountered in some areas due to poor or lack of suitable infrastructure. Those projects that required imported components were also delayed due to international border closure and limited cargo coming into the country.

In order to allow the project to finalize these outstanding activities, a no-cost extension was awarded until June 2022.

3. Some key Activities were not implemented or have been delayed

The evaluation found that many activities that were earmarked to be done were not done or have been delayed. These include the construction of greenhouses. At the time of the evaluation, the greenhouse in Free State was completed with only internal installations remaining to be fitted. However, the construction of the greenhouse in Limpopo Province was yet to start, with only the land being allocated and the contractor on site to kick-start the construction.

Further, most of the activities under Outcome 3 and 4 were not done. The delays or non-implementation of the activities are attributable to COVID-19 (as discussed above) or efficiency challenges (as discussed in Section 3.4.1).

4.0 LESSONS LEARNED

The following lessons are generated from the evaluation exercise in South Africa to aid the design of future similar interventions:

- i. Without a clear and comprehensive M & E framework, with a clear Results framework to inform baseline survey, and monitoring progress being made and evaluation of achievement of results, it is very difficult to undertake a project evaluation in an objective manner;
- ii. A three-year project needs to have realistic targets. The project seemed to have very ambitious targets (sometimes of up to 10,000 women farmers) without the necessary strategies to reach those farmers within the short duration.
- iii. Without an effective risk management strategy, pandemics, such as COVID-19 has the potential to completely disrupt project activities.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The CSA Project was implemented in South Africa by UN Women with the goal of strengthening women's agricultural productivity and access to markets in selected agriculture products in South Africa. The project was designed to close the gender gap in agricultural productivity by increasing women's access to resources.

The evaluation has found that the project was **highly relevant** in addressing the critical needs of women farmers in South Africa in the context of the negative effects of climate change on productivity of women farmers. The evaluation has also found that the project was highly aligned to the international development agenda, the regional policy frameworks and national policies on agriculture and climate change in South Africa.

On project **effectiveness**, the evaluation has found that the project did not meet most of its targets, with 10 out of 31 activities not implemented at all, due to efficiency challenges and strict COVID-19 preventive measures in South Africa that affected project implementation. Further, the evaluation did not have access to detailed financial data to undertake a range of **efficiency** analysis, including value-for-money analyses. Nevertheless, the evaluation found that the project faced a number of efficiency challenges.

The evaluation has found that the interventions that were implemented are registering positive **impact**. These include increased productivity for women farmers, improved access to markets, and increased profits for women entrepreneurs. On **sustainability**, the project has built the capacity of a range of stakeholders, including women farmers, government extension workers and women organizations to ensure that the benefits of the interventions will continue to accrue to the rights holders even after the project has phased out.

Although the South Africa CSA Project was relevant to the needs of the women farmers and the country's sustainable development, the implementation of project activities and effectiveness are average or below average. It is not clear to the evaluation team, why the indicators that were used at the baseline are different from the indicators in the project's results framework. UN Women CO could not convincingly explain this anomaly. UN Women CO could have alerted UN Women ESARO of the challenges and gaps the project is facing, even asking for more time – project refocusing and extension.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evaluation findings, the following recommendations are provided:

- i. There is a need to strengthen the M&E system for any future CSA project to ensure proper tracking of and reporting on activities and project results. This includes ensuring that a good baseline study is conducted with all the project indicators properly tracked. *(This is in line with Finding 12).*
- ii. There is need to ensure that procurement procedures are effective to ensure that the project implementation is not distracted. This includes timely payments to service providers. Lengthy approval processes require streamlining such that if the a procurement document is not signed within 7 working days it goes to the next level to avoid delays in project implementation. *(This is in line with Finding 9).*

There is need to clearly identify the technical staff needed for an effective implementation of a project such as CSA, and making sure that the needed staff are recruited promptly for smooth project implementation. *(This is in line with Finding 9).*

- iii. Project staff should be given contracts that are aligned to the duration of the project to avoid delays in project implementation. *(This is in line with Finding 9).*
- iv. There is need to develop an effective risk management plan to mitigate the impact of negative covariate shocks, such as COVID-19. *(This is in line with Finding 9).*

ANNEX 1: EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation Objectives:

The **overall objective** of this final evaluation is to assess the achievement of programme results and performance of the above-described intervention. The evaluation should measure and provide robust empirical evidence related to the success and results of the CSA interventions (both intended and unintended). The evaluation will assess changes in outcomes observed, the mechanisms that delivered the observed changes, key features of these mechanisms and determine to what extent these can be attributed to the interventions. The specific evaluation objectives are as follows:

- Analyze the relevance of the implementation strategy and approaches of the “Contributing to the Economic Empowerment of Women in Africa through Climate Smart Agriculture” project;
- Assess organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of the project’s results as defined in the intervention;
- Validate the project impact in terms of achievements and/or weaknesses toward the outcome and outputs;
- Assess the potential for sustainability of the results achieved by the project;
- Document lessons learned, best practices, and challenges to inform future work of UN Women on women’s economic empowerment;
- Assess the implication of COVID-19 in the entire project implementation;
- Identify strategies for replication and up-scaling of the programme’s best practices;
- Provide actionable recommendations for the implementation of the second phase of the project and maximize ownership by partners in the countries covered by the project in order to foster sustainability of the intervention;
- To assess how the project and its results relate and contribute to commitments and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in South Africa.

The evaluation must adhere to the [UN Women evaluation policy](#), the [IEAS charter](#), the [United Nations Evaluation Group \(UNEG\) Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#) and [Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation](#), and it should apply the criteria of [UN Women’s Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System \(GERAAS\) standards](#) to the highest degree possible.

Scope of Work:

The assignment will employ a holistic approach to support 10,000 rural women farmers through their farmer groups and cooperatives in Limpopo and Free State Provinces in the production and promotion of maize and bean value chains.

The evaluation will cover UN Women's work in South Africa, where the project is being implemented; including in the national capitals and the target project regions to collect data as defined by the agreed evaluation work-plan. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, UN Women does not anticipate any international travel, however local travel may be undertaken by national consultants in the scope of this assignment.

The evaluation will examine all the relevant documents of the Project, including results framework/logical framework of the project, its Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, annual work plan, semi-annual and annual reports to the donor, knowledge products produced in the frameworks of the project, etc.

Under the overall leadership of the Regional Policy Specialist, Women's Economic Empowerment (ESARO) and the guidance of the Lead International Evaluator and the Women's Economic Empowerment Evaluation Consultant, the national consultant will provide national context inputs to the evaluation including: inputs to the evaluation methodology; leading the data collection and country specific analysis and the drafting of the country specific chapters.

Duties and Responsibilities:

The National evaluation consultant will:

- Provide technical and methodological support to the evaluation team lead and, the International WEE Evaluator in designing and delivering appropriate evaluation design and methodology;
- Provide information relevant to the national context to guide the evaluation;
- Lead in country specific data collection for the evaluation;
- Support the team leader in ensuring the quality assurance of all documents submitted to UN Women including ensuring the quality of the evaluation; • Ensure evaluation standards are met to the extent possible.

Deliverables and Work Schedule:

Deliverables **Timelines** **Allocated**

Percentage		
<p>Inception Report including Evaluation Matrix and Methodology: Consultant will support the team leader in the development and submission of the Inception Report where the evaluation team will present a refined scope, a detailed outline of the evaluation design and methodology, evaluation questions, and criteria for the approach for in-depth desk review and field work to be conducted in the data collection phase. The report will include an evaluation matrix and detailed work plan.</p>	<p>22 November 2021</p>	<p>30%</p>
<p>Data collection and analysis: The consultant will lead the national data collection (including document review) for the evaluation with support the team leader and International WEE Evaluator.</p> <p>Presentation of Preliminary Findings The consultant will support the team leader in the presentation of the preliminary of the findings to UN Women and partners for feedback to be incorporated into the Draft Evaluation Report</p>	<p>5 December 2021</p>	<p>leader</p>
<p>Draft evaluation report: the consultant will support the team to develop the draft report covering the evaluation 2021 background, methodology, limitations, four-country chapters conclusions, lessons learned, and</p>	<p>12 December 2021</p> <p>including findings,</p>	<p>leader</p>
<p>recommendations following the <u>UN Women Evaluation Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System (GERAAS)</u> guidelines.</p>		<p>70%</p>

Final evaluation report: The consultant will support the team leader to consolidate and finalize the evaluation report 22 December 2021 addressing comments and feedback from UN Women and partners. The report length will be a maximum of 65 pages, including four country chapters (approx. 10 pages/ country chapter). In addition, the report will include a concise Executive Summary and annexes detailing the methodological

approach/analytical products developed during the course of the evaluation.		
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Competencies:

Core Values:

- Respect for Diversity
- Integrity
- Professionalism

Core Competencies:

- Awareness and Sensitivity Regarding Gender Issues
- Accountability
- Creative Problem Solving
- Effective Communication • Inclusive Collaboration
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Leading by Example

Functional Competencies:

- Strong technical knowledge of the different components of evaluation, including evaluation design, data collection and analysis, and reporting;
- Substantive knowledge of gender-responsive evaluation, respective methodological approaches;
- Ability to synthesize evaluative information and to write clear, concise, and logical evaluation reports;
- Excellent ability to communicate with a diverse range of stakeholders;
- Ability to plan and manage tasks and supervise evaluation teams;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills with ability to produce well written reports in English;
- Knowledge of UN system, practices, procedures, including UN Women and UNDP programme modalities will be an asset.

Required Skills and Experience:

Education:

- At least master's degree or its equivalent in one or more of the following: economics, social sciences, development studies, gender and agricultural studies;

Experience:

- At least five years' experience of conducting evaluations in the area of GEWE and development;
- Experience conducting complex evaluations and/or multi-stakeholder evaluations preferably on WEE;
- Knowledge and experience of gender-responsive and human rights-based approaches to evaluation;
- Experience in designing and leading/participating in gender-responsive evaluations and/or applied research utilizing a wide range of approaches and methods;
- Experience working on participatory approaches and demonstrated ability to negotiate amongst a wide range of stakeholders;
- Experience in working with the UN/multilateral/bilateral institutions.

Language Requirements:

- Fluency in English;
- Fluency in Sepedi and Sesotho is desirable.

ANNEX 2: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Tool 1: Key Informant Interview Guide:

Relevance:

1. In your view, to what extent was the CSA project in line with the rights and needs of target groups (beneficiaries)?
2. In your view, to what extent was the CSA project in line with the national development policies and strategies, and programmes?
3. To what extent is the CSA project relevant to international and regional commitment, AU Agenda 2063, SDGs, and UN Women strategy?
4. To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant projects considered in the CSA project's design?
5. To what extent is the project aligned to UNDAF/UNSDCF (year during the launch)?
6. To what extent were perspectives of stakeholders who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, considered during the project design processes?
7. To what extent does the CSA project contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment, and the human rights-based approach?
8. Was the project design appropriate and coherent vis a vis the goal and multi-country nature and scope?
9. To what extent was the project owned by a (UN Women, b) UN system and c) Government?

Coherence

1. How does the project align with other interventions (particularly policies) support or undermine the intervention, and vice versa?
2. How does the project relate with other UN Women programmes (internal coherence)?
3. How does the project relate with other actors' interventions in the same context? (external coherence).
4. In both the above, how does the project add value while avoiding duplication of effort?

Effectiveness

1. To what extent did the CAS project contribute to economic empowerment of women in the targeted regions/country?
2. To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality, women's empowerment, and realization of human rights?
3. To what extent were the project outputs achieved?
4. What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended project outputs and outcomes?
5. To what extent has the UNWomen partnership strategy been appropriate and effective?
6. In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?
7. In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?
8. To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
9. Was there a monitoring framework for the Project? To what extent was the project monitoring effective?

Efficiency

1. To what extent have the UN Women project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and effective?
2. To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
3. Was there a monitoring framework for the Project? To what extent was the project monitoring effective?
4. Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
5. How effective was the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost effectiveness of interventions? To what extent were project funds delivered in a timely manner?
6. Were there changes to fund allocations because of budget revisions? What was the rationale for these changes, and were such revisions appropriate and relevant?
7. To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
8. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in an economic and timely manner?
9. Coherence: To what extent were UN Women and partners working towards a common goal?
10. To what extent were the following principles mainstreamed in the CSA project:

- HRBA
 - Gender equality
 - RBM
 - Sustainability
 - Resilience and sustainability,
 - Accountability,
 - Leave No One Behind,
 - Economic transformations and growth.
11. In your view, how has the COVID-19 pandemic affected project implementation and achievements?

Impact

1. To what extent was gender equality and women's empowerment advanced as a result of the multi-country CSA project?
2. To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and women's empowerment in the agriculture sector and/or country?
3. What were the unintended effects, if any, of the project intervention?
4. What are lessons learnt? Good or bad practices?
5. How can the country replicate, scale up the best practices?

Sustainability

1. To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?
2. Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to economic empowerment of women in the country and region?
3. To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights, and human development?
4. To what extent do stakeholders support the project's long-term objectives?
5. What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability?

Project Management / Coordination and organization Efficiency

1. To what extent was the project coordination and management structure efficient and effective?
2. To what extent was the CSA multi-country project coordinated and collaborated with other UN Women Gender and Women's empowerment programmes and/or projects
3. What is the gender balance of the CSA project staff?

4. To what extent have the UN Women project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and effective?
5. To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation?
6. Was there a monitoring framework for the Project? To what extent was the project monitoring effective
7. Does the project have the appropriate financial controls, including reporting and planning, that allow management to make informed decisions regarding the budget and allow for timely flow of funds?
8. How effective was the financial management of the project, with specific reference to the cost effectiveness of interventions? To what extent were projects funds delivered in a timely manner?
9. Was there changes to fund allocations because of budget revisions? What was the rationale for these changes, and were such revision appropriate and relevant?
10. To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?
11. To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in an economic and timely manner?
12. Coherence: To what extent were UN Women and partners working towards a common goal?
13. To what extent were the following principles mainstreamed in the CSA project:
 - HRBA
 - Gender equality
 - RBM
 - Sustainability
 - Resilience and sustainability,
 - Accountability,
 - Leave No One Behind,
 - Economic transformations and growth.
14. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected project implementation and achievements?
15. What are lessons learnt? Good or bad practices?
16. How can the country replicate, scale up the best practices?

Tool 2: Focus Group Discussion Guides to Beneficiaries

1. As a beneficiary, how did you engage or what was your role with the UN Women/Standard Bank CSA project?
2. Did the UN Women/Standard Bank CSA project make any difference in your life (Yes/NO?); If yes tell us about these changes a) in your life b) in your household (family)? – probe for specifics examples, before-now? If no, please tell us why it made no difference.
3. Has the project made you access agricultural extension services, and made you a better farmer? If yes, probe for how, when, and proof. if no probe for why, and what could have been done to make you a better farmer.
4. Has the CSA increased your agricultural productivity? If yes, probe for how, quantity (e.g., from X to Y bags), and when. If no, why do you think it made no change to your productivity?
5. Has the project made you have increase access to finance? If yes, probe for how much, when, and proof. If no why, and what could have been done to increase access to finance?
6. Has the project made you have increase access to market of your products? If yes probe for how, what, when, and proof. If no why, and what could have been done to increase access to market and finance?
7. Did the project affect relations in your household, you and your husband or in-laws? Were they positive or negative? Please elaborate on how the project affected household relationships. (unintended effect (impact) in your household/family; probe for gender issues related to tension, GBV, more burden?
8. If you are to redesign the project, what would you like done differently (probe for specifics and areas they would like improved and why?
9. Has the project made you a better farmer, businessperson, who does not depend on all the time for support from another person (probe how specifically promoted women's empowerment?
10. What challenges has you faced when implementing the project: probe (a) related to project design and how it was implemented, and b) related to you as a woman or man beneficiary?
11. What lessons have you learned by participating in the UN Women/Standard Bank CSA project?
12. What recommendations would you like to Give to a) UN Women and the Standard Bank – the donor, and b) the government for the sustainability of the gains from the project?