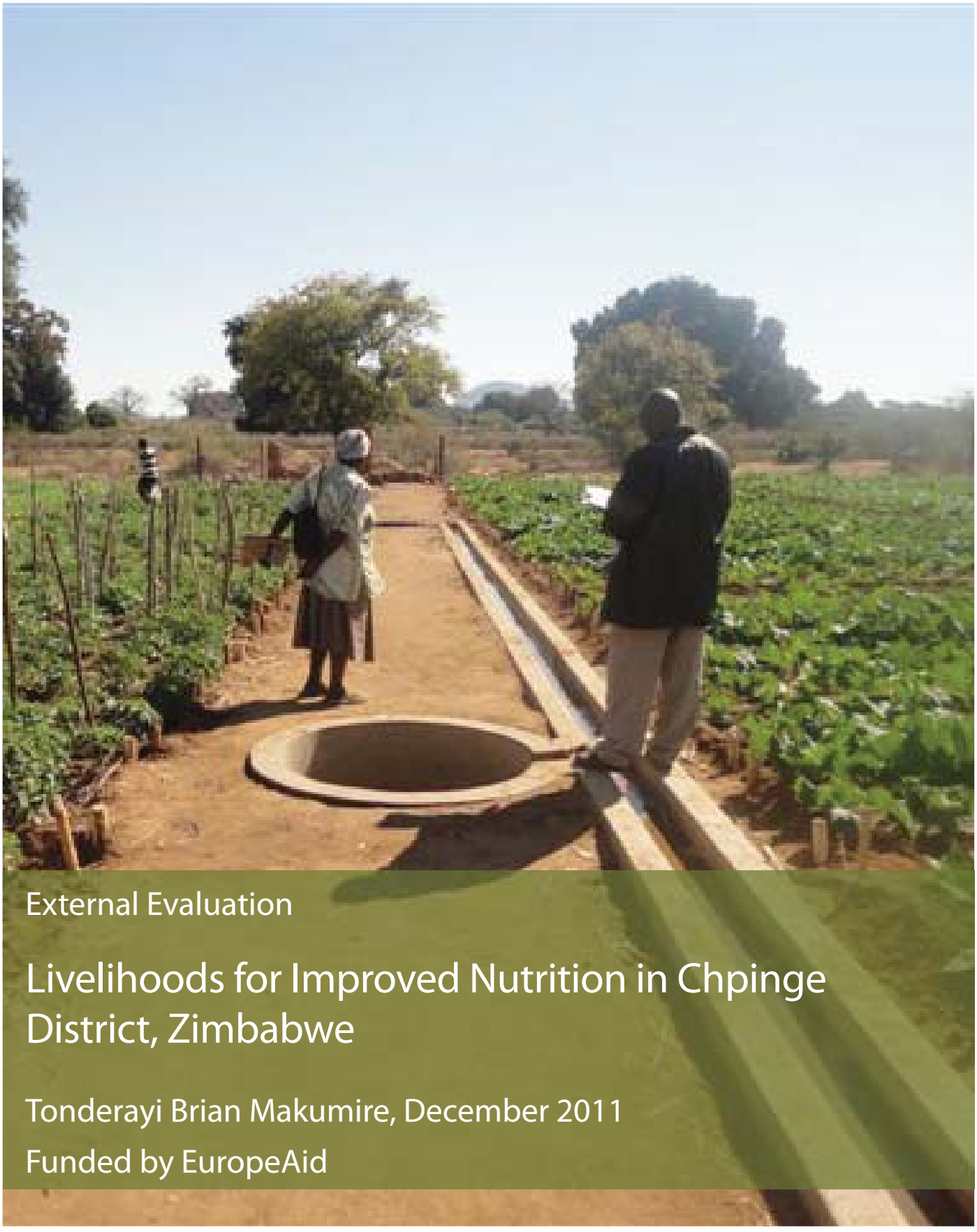

External Evaluation

Livelihoods for Improved Nutrition in Chpinge District, Zimbabwe

Tonderayi Brian Makumire, December 2011

Funded by EuropeAid

This report is commissioned by Action Against Hunger | ACF International. The comments contained herein reflect the opinions of the Evaluator only.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With funding from the European Union ACF Zimbabwe is implementing a 3 year project in Chpinge District of Zimbabwe whose objective is: *To enhance sustainable livelihoods through a coherent range of Food Security, WASH and Nutrition focused interventions for 2,000 food insecure vulnerable households living in the communal areas of Chipinge district.* The project is an integrated food security, WASH and nutrition project, and seeks to address basic causes of chronic and acute malnutrition that have been identified through the ACF/UNICEF malnutrition causal analysis framework. The framework takes into account the complex and combined nature of the causes of malnutrition and therefore seeks to address the basic causes of malnutrition by increasing and diversifying food intake and utilization whilst reducing WASH related diseases and improving child feeding and care practices.

The target groups for this intervention are the rural resource poor households. The project has an overall budget of €1,800,000, with the EU contributing 93% of the budget and 7% co-funding from ACF's own sources. The project planned start date was 1st January 2010 and is expected to come to an end in December 2012.

The review objective was to evaluate the ACF project against the standard DAC criteria, as outlined in the ACF International evaluation policy and to provide recommendations for a clear exit strategy. The evaluation methodology followed the DAC criteria on aid effectiveness and all the three project wards (1, 4 and 22) were covered. Methodologies included meetings and consultations with ACF project staff and management, documents review and analysis, field visits and observations, HH questionnaire surveys with beneficiaries, FGDs and key informant interviews with stakeholders. Further visits were also project sites that had been supported through the recently ended DC1-FOOD 2007/137-912, enabling the valuator to draw lessons on potential sustainability of ACF interventions. In total 7 gardens were visited during the review process (2 in wards 1 and 2 respectively and 3 in ward 22. A further 2 gardens were visited in ward 2 forming part of the project sites for the ended DC-FOOD 2007/137-912 project. The following were key findings following the review process:

Impact: Project contribution towards reducing HH food insecurity (in relation to cereals) is yet to be realised. Despite l beneficiaries receiving inputs (seeds and fertilizers) and planting their crops as expected at the beginning of the 2010/11 season, poor rain fall and subsequent drought in the past season saw most of the crops being weathered and declared a write-off. As a result, no meaningful yields were realised in the last planting season and the beneficiaries are currently facing severe cereal shortages, with a majority of them reporting that they can only afford one meal a day (at the time of the review mission). 87% of the beneficiaries reported that their primary source for food access is through is through purchases (and not own production). The contribution of the LIG towards household food security was assessed by comparing Food Consumption Scores (FCS) for the garden beneficiaries to the baseline. Compared to the baseline figures the number of garden beneficiaries who were in the poor consumption category has drastically reduced whilst those in the adequate consumption category has also increased from a baseline of about 53% to the current figure of about 75%. Income from sale of vegetables is however very low, at an average of only US$27 per year. The distribution of both guinea fowls and goats only took place in 2011 and the animals are yet to go into full reproduction. As a result of these delays full outcomes from the small livestock component are yet to be realised.

Perhaps the most significant impact to date from the project relates to the WASH component. Community wide health education is now bearing results. 100% of all beneficiary HH now have pit latrines at the HH. This is in addition to non-project HH which have also since adopted the practices. Further 100% of the beneficiaries interviewed reported that they had noticed a significant drop in the incidence of WASH related diseases, including cholera and diarrhoea for the under 5s. About 70% of respondents across all three wards covered indicated that their main source of drinking water was now a borehole. These statistics and observations were also backed up by feedback from local authorities and stakeholders, including the District Medical Officer (DMO) and the District Environmental Health Officer (DEHO).

Sustainability: The potential for sustainability of project benefits was felt to quite weak at the moment. The project has provided various trainings to beneficiaries and put in place a number of community based support structures. However these institutional structures (including both the garden and borehole committees) are still weak, with need for further coaching and mentoring. This revolving fund is collected by the RDC and is used for purchase of spare parts. The money collect is insignificant to cover spare parts requirements for the district.

The beneficiaries still have high expectations in relation to receiving support from ACF, especially seeds and tools. To date the objective of increasing incomes has not yet been met and this will affect the ability of beneficiaries to access own resources and be able to fund their own production needs. The participation of local authorities and stakeholders is still rather weak and some of them (like Agritex) rely on the project for mobility and engagement with the target communities. Local actors are being incorporated in the life of the project namely Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health and Child Welfare to mention but a few. There are also plans to strengthen the partners' capacity for instance, in terms of support for mobility and improve community management capacity.

Coherence: The integrated project, focusing on WASH, Food Security and Nutrition, is well coordinated with Government and the donor community's strategy on Poverty reduction in Zimbabwe. The project is well integrated with the work of national stakeholders, including that of Agritex and Ministry of MOHCW**. T**he project components and activities are consistent with ACF's Causal Frame Work Analysis. The approach ensures that root causes to food security and poor nutrition are addressed, whilst taking care of the target communities health needs through WASH related interventions. . Further the project provides synergies with past interventions by ACF, in particular the recently ended DC1-FOOD 2007/137-912 project which also had an integrated approach (including WASH and Nutrition components).This deliberate integration with past activities ensures the project activities benefit from synergies and relationships that had been nurtured with key stakeholders and development partners in the past. .

Coverage: The project covers 3 wards out of a potential 30 wards in Chipinge District. There is space to do more with fund permitting. ACF has a good appreciation of the level of needs in the target wards and there was an active participation of the beneficiaries and stakeholders in both problem and solution analysis. The project directly benefits a total of 2402 HH out of a possible 5771 HH (wards coverage). This excludes other community members who are benefiting through health education, which was targeting whole communities.

Relevance/Appropriateness: Appropriateness and Relevance: The broad project design did fit within the context of Zimbabwe and project assumptions and risks were generally well defined. ACF's entry into the target districts and operational wards was guided by the District authorities and local community leaders and the project implementation strategy was in sync with local organizational structures. The commissioning of the baseline survey provided an opportunity to align the project components and activities with the target population's priority and needs. Through the Project Management Board PMB) and the Beneficiary Accountability System (BACS) there is also an opportunity for the target population to influence implementation processes and decisions affecting their lives

Effectiveness: Significant achievements have been made in reaching the activities targets. A total of 19 boreholes have put in place at the 19 garden sites in the 3 wards. All the gardens are functional and well fenced with beneficiaries fully participating in production related activities. Further the project has also made progress. The project has made significant progress in the achievement of set activities as shown in the APR schedule. There are however still high expectations in relation to support with construction of standard toilets by the target HH. The results from the small livestock component are also yet to be felt by the beneficiaries. All the trainings provided by the project are appreciated by the beneficiaries and found to be very useful.

Efficiency: Apart from delays to project implementation experienced during the start up phase project activities/milestones are generally being implemented as planned. There we however delays in implementing the small livestock component, with beneficiaries only receiving their animals in 2011 instead of 2010 as had been initially planned. Issues related to procurement and diseases outbreak in (which caused a ban on animal movement) were highlighted as having contributed to this. Delays were also observed in the procurement and distribution of ground nut seeds for the 2011/12 season. The evaluator was also satisfied project funds were used as intended, with no overspends on budget lines. Data collection as part of M&E could be more participatory to include beneficiaries and stakeholders in the monitoring processes.

Conclusions: Project is succeeding (at least in the short term) in improving the nutritional status of beneficiaries but failing to improve incomes of beneficiary HH. The success of the CA component is closely linked to the performance of the rainfall seasons and to date this has not produced positive outcomes (in terms of reducing HH food insecurity). The small livestock component is still in its infancy and framers are yet to benefit from the expected outcomes (that is, improved consumption of proteins and animal products as well as incomes). The WASH component has generated community-wide results, following the health education activities. Notable results include a reduction in WASH related illnesses, more HH having pit latrines and a significant number of beneficiaries accessing fresh drinking water.
Whilst the partners are aware of their current roles and responsibilities, there is need to re-emphasize their role when the project comes to an end. This is because the exit strategy is built in to the implementation of the project and there is a huge risk of overlooking activities that are supposed to continue after the project comes to an end. MoU's with specific partners and line ministries need to be put in place deriving them from the existing ones.

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List of Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
AGRITEX	Agricultural Training and Extension
APR	Activities Progress Report
BACS	Beneficiary Accountability System
BH	Borehole
CA	Conservation Agriculture
CBAHW	Community Based Animal Health Worker
CBM	Community Based Management
CHW	Community Health Worker
CMAM	Community Management of Acute Malnutrition
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAEO	District Agriculture Extension Officer
DCWO	District Community Welfare Officer
DDF	District Development Fund
DEHO	District Environmental Health Officer
DVO	District Veterinary Officer
DW	Dry Well
EU	European Union
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GFPO	Guinea Fowl Pass-on
GPA	Global Political Agreement
GPO	Goat Pass-on
GNU	Government of National Unit
HA	Hectare
HH	Household
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
KAP	Knowledge Attitudes and Practices
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
LIG	Low Input Garden
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MoHCW.	Ministry of Health and Child Welfare
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator
PMB	Project Management Board
RDC	Rural District Council
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WHO	World Health Organisation
WFP	World Food Programme
WPC	Water Point Committee
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)

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1.0. Background

1.1. Target Area

The project was implemented in Chipinge District of Zimbabwe, covering wards 1, 4 and 22. The project target wards fall in agro-ecological regions IV and V where rainfall is highly erratic and too low to sustain any meaningful crop farming and rural livelihoods. With annual rainfall in the range 400-600 mm per year, the target population is particularly affected by environmental and economic 'shocks' as they are situated in environmentally fragile areas with declining soil fertility and biodiversity. As a result, poor households (HH) in Chipinge District hardly harvest enough to see them through to the next harvest and have to rely on food aid (where available), informal trading to meet their household food security needs as well as provide for their families non food item requirements.

Chipinge District therefore comprises of highly vulnerable communities (particularly female members of households) that are characterised by low levels of education, low levels of assets and substantial dependence on subsistence agriculture. This has lead to a situation of 'structural food and livelihood insecurity' resulting in chronic malnutrition rates. As such, poverty has become endemic and widespread.

In addition to food insecurity and poor nutrition standards for its disadvantaged population. Chipinge District experienced a serious cholera outbreak during the period 2008/9, with over 3500 cases recorded by the District Environmental Health Officer (DEHO). Poor sanitation compounded with poor access to clean and safe drinking water was the major cause of the problem. The absence of toilet facilities at most HH meant most of the target population relied on the bush to relieve themselves, triggering widespread cholera at the onset of the rain seasons as rivers and ponds got soiled with human waste. In addition to poor sanitation standards, the target district faces acute water challenges (both for domestic use, irrigation and livestock watering). There are virtually no perennial streams in the district and the situation is particularly serious during the dry season, further limiting communities' livelihoods options.

A map of the project intervention district is shown in Figure 1 below. The map also shows the location of wards that benefited from previous ACF projects.

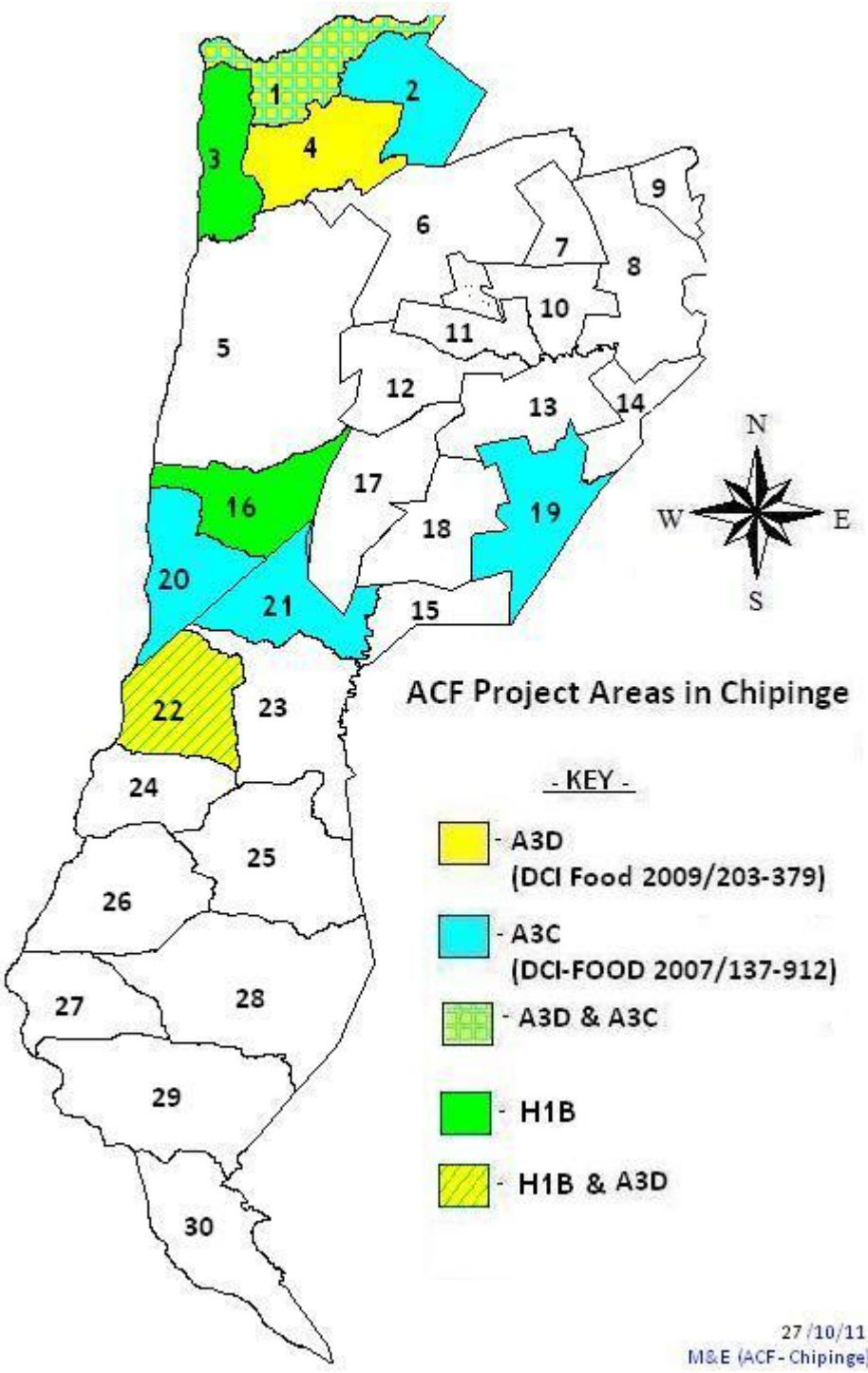

Figure 1: Map of Chipinge District showing locations of Wards 1, 4 and 22.

1.2. Main objective of the project

The overall objective of the project was:

To enhance sustainable livelihoods through a coherent range of Food Security, WASH and Nutrition focused interventions for 2,000 food insecure vulnerable households living in the communal areas of Chipinge district

1.3. Project development processes

Prior to the design and commencement of the project, ACF undertook a baseline survey of the target districts, identifying their priority needs using a questionnaire survey as well as structured interviews and consultations with district local authorities, The project was also building upon past activities that were implemented in the District by ACF in the past, including the recently ended DC1-FOOD 2007/137-912 project.

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2.0. Methodology

2.1 Scope and organisation of the evaluation

The review subscribed to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria on aid delivery and effectiveness as required in the Terms of Reference. The evaluation covered all the 3 target wards of Chipinge District (wards 1, 4 and 22). Table 1 provides an overview of the gardens that were targeted during the review mission. Also shown in the same Table are the gardens visited during the evaluation process in relation to total gardens in each of the intervention district.

Table 1: Project gardens visited during the evaluation process

Province	District	Ward Number	Total number of gardens in ward	Number of gardens visited during the evaluation process	Gardens visited as a %age of total gardens	Name of gardens visited
Manicaland	Chipinge	1	5	2	50	Nyarutsumbe, Matwaranyama
		4	4	2	40	Mudirangebeto, Mbwiro
		22	10	3	30	Mahlafunga, , Marori and Zvesimba
Totals			**19**	**7**	**36.8**	

In addition to the above project gardens, the Evaluator also visited and assessed the condition of gardens that were implemented under the just ended DC1-FOOD 2007/137-912 project. The objective was to assess the sustainability of these gardens as well as draw lessons for the current project, considering the unique similarities of these two projects. In total 2 gardens were visited and both are located in ward 2.

2.2. Data collection processes

De-briefing meeting with ACF Zimbabwe staff: Following the signing of the contract, the Consultant held de-briefing meetings with the ACF Zimbabwe Food Security Coordinator and the ACF Field Coordinator (Chipinge Field Office). The meeting provided an opportunity to develop a common understanding on the Terms of Reference (TORs). Further the meeting provided a platform to discuss feedback and findings from the recent EU Results Oriented Monitoring (ROM) and subsequently agree on the key focus areas for the Mid-Term Review (MTR) mission.

Documents review and analysis: This was an on-going process during the review mission. Key documents for review were collated from ACF Zimbabwe Head Office as well as the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Department in Chipinge. Reviewing the project documents and reports enabled the Consultant to develop a deeper appreciation of the project design and implementation processes.

Consultation meetings with ACF Programme staff and Management: At the beginning of the evaluation process, the Consultant held planning meetings with ACF Programme staff in Chipinge, firming up the field plan as well as ensuring appointments with beneficiary communities as well as stakeholders were made. Key staff involved in this aspect was the Field Coordinator, the Deputy Programme Manager as well as the M&E team. Upon conclusion of the field data collection process, the Consultant undertook a preliminary findings presentation to the key staff (both

programme and management) in Chipinge Field Office. The meeting was a platform to share preliminary findings with regards project progress, implementation processes as well as outcomes. In addition the meeting enabled the project management team to provide clarifications on some of the issues that had been picked up by the Evaluator during the data collection process, including validating and triangulating some of the field observations and findings. Further, the Evaluator undertook a PowerPoint presentation of preliminary findings to ACF Coordination team in Harare. Issues related to project efficiency, procurement challenges as well as CIRAD involvement with the project were discussed. Further the Evaluator Meetings with Senior Programme staff at Head Office further clarified some of the issues related to project implementation processes. ACF Support Departments provided feedback on issues related to project cost-efficiency as well as budget performance.

Questionnaire surveys: A questionnaire tool (as provided in Annex 1) was used to document beneficiary households' (HH) perceptions on the project performance. This was also an opportunity to verify and validate some of the results reported in the project monitoring reports as documented by ACF. The questionnaire was also used to track progress towards the achievement of indicators as outlined in the project proposal. About 5% of the project beneficiaries were targeted in this regard, with both women and men providing insights into the project implementation processes, effectiveness, impact and potential for sustainability (amongst other key attributes).

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries: FGDs were held with beneficiary HH at each garden visited, with each group comprising of between 12-15 participants. The Low Input Gardens (LIG) were used as the sites for conducting the FGDs although discussions and deliberations centred on all the project components, that is issues related to performance of the LIG, Conservation Agriculture (CA), Small Livestock Pass-ons as well as Water and Sanitation (WASH) component. In total 7 FGDs were held during the review process (2 in wards 1 and 4 respectively and 3 in ward 22). FGDs were an important tool in soliciting discussions and feedback from beneficiary HH on issues that could not be effectively handled through the administration of a questionnaire (where individuals are targeted).

Key informant interviews with project partners and stakeholders: Following consultations with ACF Programme staff, a number of key stakeholders and project partners were selected for interviewing. These included the District Environmental Health Officer (DEHO), District Veterinary Officer (DVO), District Medical Officer, District, Health Information Officer (DMO), and District Animal Health Inspector, District Development Fund (DDF) Officers (responsible for water community water provision and maintenance of water points) points as well as the District Community Welfare Officer (DCWO). Further, the Evaluator also interviewed Community Based Animal Health Workers (CBAHW), Community Health Workers (CHW), Agritex Extension staff, Borehole Technicians, Beneficiary Accountability System (BACS) contact persons at ward level as well as members of the Project Management Board (PMB).

Meetings with the District stakeholders providing insights into level of needs in the District (with respect to the project components), the target communities' priority needs, processes informing the design of the ACF project as well as nature of cooperation between ACF and District level stakeholders. Further, these meetings also enabled the Consultant to develop a deeper understanding of the local socio-economic context. Interviews with the DAEOs were important in assessing the capacity of ward level extension officers as well as potential to continue supporting beneficiary HH beyond the project cycle. Further, Agritex officers were particularly helpful in providing 'expert' opinion on the technical design and effectiveness of such project components as CA and the LIG. Community health workers

were important in providing independent feedback on whether the target beneficiaries were showing improved knowledge and practices on (KAP) on nutrition and health diets.

Triangulation, involving community persons external to the project: Community leaders (at both ward and village level) were also interviewed. They were able to provide useful and independent opinion on organisational and group dynamics in relation to beneficiary HH and how they worked together in pursuit of a common objective. Consultations were also meant to solicit insights on issues related to community demands on the productive water points as well as aspects on operations of the borehole maintenance committees and collection of subscriptions towards the establishment of borehole maintenance funds.

Direct field observations: In addition to interviews and consultation meetings, the Consultant made direct field observations on the facilities and services provided to the beneficiary HH and their communities by the project. These included (1) inspections of the productive water points (2) observing garden beneficiaries at work as well as inspecting gardens for pest and diseases incidences. Field observations were also made on CA plots, in particular, the extent to which they adhered to good practice in terms of mulching, condition and readiness for the next season. Further field observations were also made on the CA demo plots and their potential as learning sites for the beneficiaries and the wider community. The Evaluator also made field observations on 3 gardens that were established through the just ended DC1-FOOD 2007/137-912 project, again assessing their condition to draw insights into the sustainability and long-term impact of ACF's LIG in general.

3.0. Findings and Discussions

3.1. Project impact towards meeting its stated goal, specific objectives and indicators.

3.1.1. Project's contribution to the food security and livelihood of the target beneficiaries

An analysis of the project progress towards achieving its specific objectives ***-:*** *To enhance sustainable livelihoods through a coherent range of Food Security, WASH and Nutrition focused interventions for 2,000 food insecure vulnerable households living in the communal areas of Chipinge district)* and indicators as stated in the project proposal is given in the preceding sections.

The project has 3 components that focus on improving the food security and livelihoods of the target beneficiaries. These are (1) Conservation Farming (CA), (2) Low-Input Gardens (LIG) and (3) the Guinea Fowl Pass-on (GFPO) and Goat Pass on (GPO). The CA component seeks to address household food security through improved production and productivity of cereals and legumes (including sorghum, millet, cowpeas and groundnuts). Provided in Figure 2 below is the distribution of target beneficiaries in the various food security and livelihoods components.

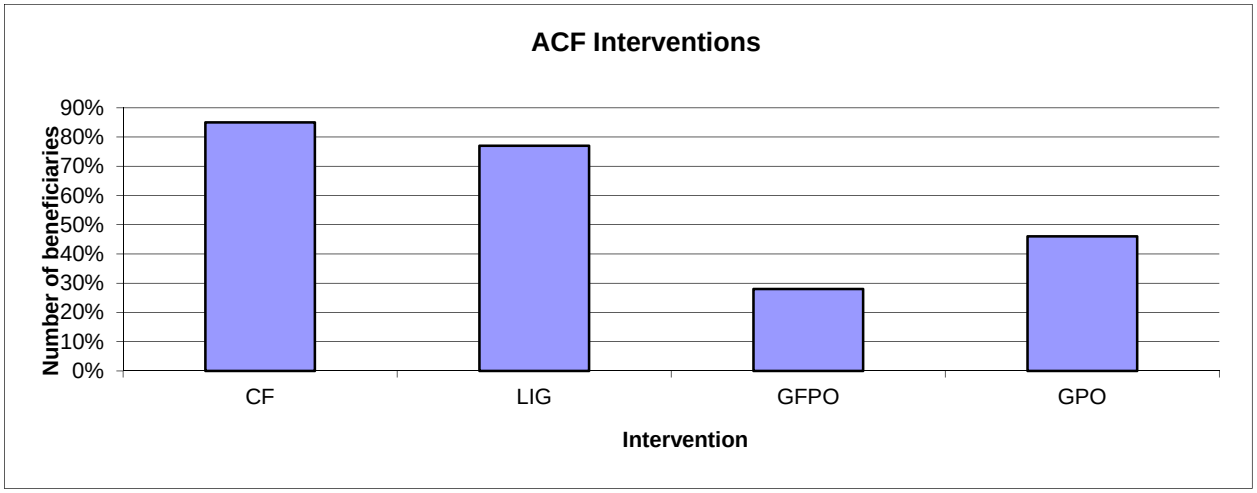

Figure 2: Percentage of beneficiaries participating in the various food security interventions

While the 2010/11 season started on a good footing, with all beneficiaries receiving inputs (seeds and fertilizers) and planting their crops as expected, the mid-season dry spell in January 2011 and subsequent long-dry spell saw most of the crops being weathered and declared a write-off. As a result, no meaningful yields were realised in the last planting season and the beneficiaries are currently facing severe cereal shortages, with a majority of them reporting that they can only afford one meal a day (at the time of the review mission).

Figure 3 below provides an overview of the food sources (cereals) of the beneficiaries at the time of the review mission.

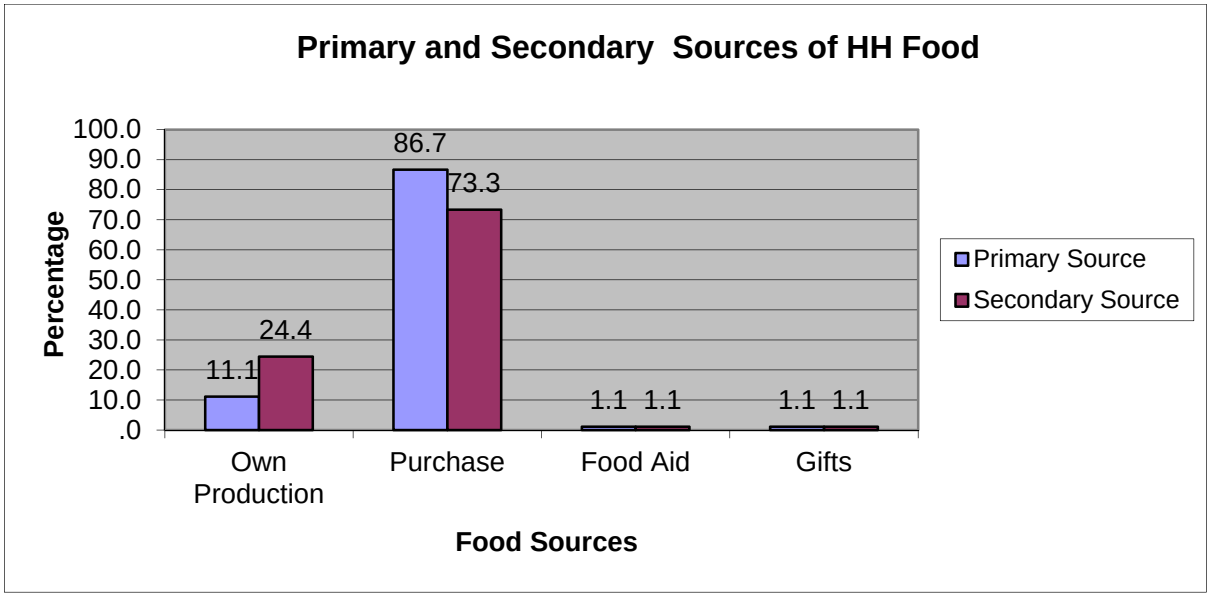

Figure 3: Reported sources of household food by the beneficiaries during the review mission

From Figure 3 above, it can be observed the primary source of food for the beneficiaries is through purchases (at about 87%). Only 11% of the beneficiaries reported their primary source of food at the time of the review was own production. Through FGDs the beneficiaries also revealed that the income used for food purchases was obtained through paid work (in nearby irrigation schemes) as well as through buying and selling produce sourced from irrigation schemes. A few reported that they earned their living through the sale of natural products, such as thatching grass as well as brick moulding.

3.1.2. Impact of LIG on household Food Security

The contribution of the LIG towards household food security was assessed by comparing Food Consumption Scores (FCS) for the garden beneficiaries to the baseline. The FCSs were calculated by computing the frequency (number of times in seven days) of the food items consumed by a household. Each food item was multiplied by a weight based on its belonging to that food group. Each food group weight was based on nutrient density as provided in standard WFP reference materials.

The Food Consumption Scores (FCS) for the project beneficiaries were analysed (as part of an assessment to establish whether the project was having an impact on their nutritional well-being) and the following (positive results, provided in Figure 4 were obtained.

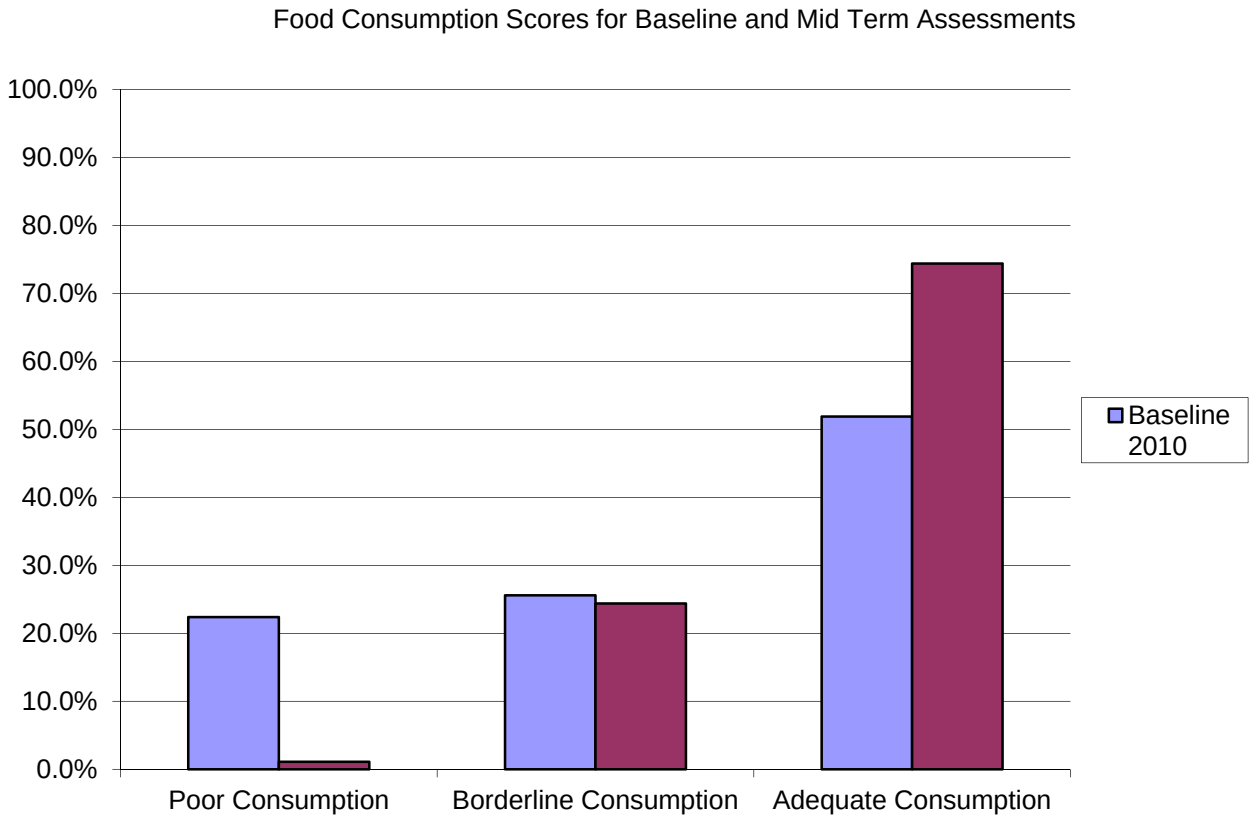

Figure 4: Impact of LIGs on HH FCS

From these calculations it can be concluded that there is apparent evidence that the project has significantly enhanced the nutritional status of the garden beneficiaries (in as far as food consumption score is concerned). Compared to the baseline figures the number of garden beneficiaries who were in the poor consumption category has drastically reduced whilst those in the adequate consumption category has also increased from a baseline of about 53% to the current figure of about 75%.

Despite the current cereal shortages being faced by communities in the target district, beneficiaries from the LIG seem happy with their nutrition, especially consumption of a diversified range of vegetables, legumes and root crops. Even without access to cereals beneficiaries report they consume the vegetables as a stop gap measure and this has enhanced their well-being.

In addition to direct improvements in nutrition, the LIG beneficiaries are also accessing incomes from the sale of vegetables from their gardens. About 66% of the beneficiaries reported that they had sold vegetables. The farmers however rely mainly on the local market for sale of the vegetables, with 70% of those who reported having sold vegetables relying on other community members. Average income from the sale of vegetables (for the year 2011) however stood at only US$27, 00.

By their design, the LIG gardens are limited in their acreage, with each farmer having a total acreage of 37.5 m^2. As farmers try to meet the nutrition objectives, there is emphasis on diversification with a wide range of vegetable crops being intercropped on a small acreage. The result is that the beneficiaries have little product volumes for sale, further reducing their income potential. The low incomes are also a result of limited cash in circulation within the communities and the rural areas of Zimbabwe (following the dollarization of the currency). With no economic activities at a local level, the district population has no cash with which to purchase commodities and a majority rely on bartering. Through FGDs a number LIG beneficiaries also reported that they do exchange their vegetable crops with cereals, suggesting that the gardens are actually (directly) helping towards meeting their HH food security.

Despite the minimal incomes, beneficiaries are making savings as they no longer have to purchase vegetables (which were a major challenge as their traditional gardens were often destroyed by cattle (since they were not well fenced) and elephants. Without borehole water, the traditional gardens were often located in remote places near river banks and these areas form the grazing pastures for elephants at night.

3.1.3. Impact of the small-livestock pass-on component on household food security and livelihoods

Overall there are no results yet from the small-livestock component. The distribution of both guinea fowls and goats only took place in 2011 and the animals are yet to go into full reproduction. As a result of these delays full outcomes from the small livestock component will not be realised during the project period. Further there could be lost opportunities to monitor the pass-on processes as the project is likely to come to an end before pass-on activity takes root. Provided in Tables 2 and 3 below are the goats and guinea fowls distribution profiles.

Table 2: Distribution of Guinea Fowls

Ward	HH reached	Number of birds distributed	No of reported mortalities	%age mortality
1	216	1080	142	13%
4	109	545	60	11%
22	326	1590	214	13.5%
Totals	**643**	**3215**	**416**	**13%**

Table 3: Distribution of Goats

Ward	HH reached	Number of goats	No of reported mortalities	%age mortality
1	195	428	22	5%
4	103	226	14	6.2%
22	315	672	33	
Totals	**613**	**1326**	**69**	**5.2%**

3.1.4. Project contribution towards addressing WASH related diseases.

The project has made significant progress in the establishment of WASH related infrastructure in the target District as shown in Table 6 in section 3.5.1. . 100% of the beneficiaries interviewed reported that they had noticed a significant drop in the incidence of WASH related diseases, including cholera and diarrhoea for the under 5s. About 70% of respondents across all three wards covered indicated that their main source of drinking water was now a borehole. About 25% of the HH in the survey were still relying on rivers as their main source of drinking water.

3.1.5. Potential long-term impact of the project at the individual household level

The integrated multiple food security interventions of the project provide an opportunity for the target population and their communities to sharpen their coping strategies in the face of unreliable weather and a hostile agro-ecological environment. The project is likely to change mindsets of the communities as they realise that they can diversify their livelihoods options. Rather than relying mainly on crop farming, which is seasonal and susceptible to rainfall failures, the HH can also rely on their gardens for a living as well as invest in small livestock (improving their asset base, nutritional status as well as prospects for income generation).

3.1.6. Impact of the Project Management Board (PMB) on the project

Feedback from target beneficiaries and project stakeholders at District level indicate that the PMB is having a positive impact on the project. Being a governance board comprised of beneficiaries, stakeholders and ACF staff, the PMB has instilled a sense of belonging to the stakeholders and the beneficiaries and there is a level of transparency and accountability not seen before in the way the project is being implemented. The fact that the PMB is chaired by persons independent to ACF has also enhanced ACF's image locally, with stakeholders viewing the aid agency as a partner rather than a 'donor' as is normally the norm.

3.1.7. Project progress towards achievement of target indicators as set-out in the logical framework

Table 4 below shows the extent to which the project achieved its set indicators

Expected Result	LFA indicator and targets	Achievements to date
Result 1: 2,000 households will have improved access to and availability of a diversified range of food through increased production and income level	2,000 targeted HH increase by 40 % their production using CA techniques over 3 years	A total of 93% of the respondents viewed the output from the season as bad with only 6 % and 1% saying the season was fair and good respectively (Post Harvest Monitoring report 2011). Sorghum production dropped by 68% from the 2009/2010 season and millet dropped by 73%. Groundnut and cowpeas recorded 68% and 84% drops respectively.
	2,000 targeted HH increase protein consumption from animal production over 3 years	Protein consumption has not yet picked up. Households that benefited from the small livestock pass-ons are still focusing on ensuring that the animals do produce offspring so that the next line of beneficiaries can take delivery of their share. Thus to date there is no reported consumption of animal products (including eggs from guinea fowls) as the animals were only distributed early 2011 and are yet to go into full reproduction.
	10,000 targeted individuals consuming 3 or more food groups per day	This indicator seems a bit vague. The project is targeting 2,000 households not 10,000. From the FCS calculation data, there is however evidence that the targeted beneficiaries are eating at least 3 food groups per day. However, little to none consumption of animal products (meat and eggs).
Result 2: 2,000 households will have access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in addition to improved knowledge on health and hygiene practices	90% of the targeted HH have access to sufficient safe drinking water reaching minimum standards (WHO, national and sphere) over 3 years	At KAP 1, about 72% of target households have access to safe drinking water and at KAP 2 about 83% of the HH have access to safe drinking water. At KAP 1 HH used 80 litres of water per day, which is 13 Litres per day. This however is slightly less than the WHO threshold of 15-20 litres per day. In KAP 2 about 50% of the households were accessing quantities of water below the minimum standard
	60% of the targeted HH have access to adapted sanitation facilities reaching minimum standards (WHO, national and sphere) over 3 years	According to KAP survey results, about 88% of target HH have access to adapted sanitary facilities (broken down as 41% being Blair facilities and 47% being pit latrines)
	60% reduction in WASH related diseases amongst under 5	At KAP survey 1, about 28% of the target HH reported that they had children under 5 who had been affected by diarrhoea whilst at KAP survey 2 this figure had dropped to 15%.

Result 3: Target population (2000 HH) will have increased awareness and sensitization of Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), in addition to improved knowledge on diet and healthy food preparation	80% of targeted HH have improved their KAP score related to IYCF over 3 years	At KAP1 about 55.4% of the mothers reported that their under 5 child had a Health Card and this increased to 62% at KAP2 50% of the mothers reported that their children received all the immunisation as scheduled during KAP1 and this figure increased to 58.8% during KAP 2 26% of the mothers reported introducing complimentary feeding to their child after attaining the age of 6 moths (KAP1) and this increased to 35% during KAP2 Overall mean KAP score for all three indicators increased from 43.8% during KAP1 to 51.9 during KAP2
	80% of targeted HH have improved their KAP score related to diet and healthy food preparation over 3 years	58.3% of the target HH reported not having the pot rack area messed up with waste water and matter scattered underneath at KAP1 and the number who said no to this unhygienic practice increased to 63.4% 57% of the target HH reported during KAP1 that their kitchen utensils are normally well arranged and this number increased to 59% during KAP2. During KAP 1 survey, 90% of the target HH reported that the containers for their drinking water were always covered and this figure increased 92% Overall mean KAP score increased from 68.3 during KAP1 to 71.8% during KAP2
	80% of mothers from the targeted HH are or have 'exclusively breast fed' > than 6 months over the past 3 years	At KAP 1 about 27% of target mothers reported have breastfed for 6 months or more whilst this figure had increased to 30% during KAP 2

NB: KAP 1 was commissioned in June 2010 whilst KAP 2 was commissioned in June /July 2011

3.1.8. Adequacy of project indicators

With regards to adequacy of indicators captured by the project, it was observed that at the Results level, the risks and assumptions were not defined and analysed. For instance the indicator on Result 1 (2,000 targeted HH increase income from crop and livestock sales by 30% over 3 years) is not backed with risks and assumptions related to market access for the target farmers in addition to production related constraints (failure of boreholes, pests and diseases). Further there are no pre-defined conditions for activities take-off and implementation.

Perhaps an extra result was necessary for the project log frame, focusing on capacity of the different institutional establishments (for example, the borehole committee, garden committee as well as partnerships with stakeholders and authorities) as a way to ensure due diligence is being done to ensure long-term sustainability of the different project components, Perhaps there should also have been indicators to monitor the effectiveness of the traditional pest control interventions, considering that this was a new technology and hence the need to keep abreast of their efficacy (or lack of), helping inform decision making.

The project LFA provides an opportunity for effective monitoring of project outcomes. However whilst the LFA provides the sources of information for the Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI) it is silent on who has responsibility for collecting such information. At the moment this is all ACF's responsibility without room for involvement of partners, stakeholders and beneficiaries

3.2. **Coverage**

3.2.1. Relevance of the project to the needs of the target communities

Prior to the design and subsequent implementation of the project ACF undertook a comprehensive baseline survey of the target districts. The survey sought to establish the priority needs of the target populations as well as jointly identify solutions to address the issues. Some of the key issues and needs assessed included (1) household size (2) level of education for the HH (3) Presence of chronically ill persons or orphans in the HH (4) land holding size per HH (5) Asset base for HH, including livestock and tools for crop farming (6) crop yields per hectare (7) access to good quality seeds for crop farming (8) General performance of the rainfall seasons (9) HH food security as measured through FCS (10) Coping strategies including garden ownership.

Considering that ACF has a long presence in Chipinge District spanning a couple of years back, there is a good appreciation of the WASH related changes facing the District. This is more so considering that ACF was one of the leading aid agencies working with partners and stakeholders to address and contain the cholera epidemic of 2008/9 in Chipinge District. As a result there is a strong appreciation of the challenges facing the target communities in relation to access to safe drinking water as well as sanitation facilities. The level of need is also constantly being updated through close cooperation with the District authorities who provide up to date statistics on the number of water points in the district (including both functional and non-functional), water coverage for the district as well as sanitation coverage. Provided in Table 5 is an outline of the water coverage in Chipinge District

Table 5: An outline of water coverage in Chipinge District

Ward No.	Ward Name	Ward Population	No. of water points		No. of dry water points		ward totals
			BH	DW	BH	DW	
1	Bangwe/Maungan idze	1575	36	4	6	-	40
2	Ngaone/Masonga	2087	2	3	-	-	5
3	Chisungo/Nyarigir e	2701	36	3	-	-	39
4	Musuni/Birirano	2382	32	2	-	-	34
5	Chipangayi	4556	4	-	-	-	4
6	Mutakura-Rutengeni	2308	7	-	1	-	7
7	Clearwater	2443	4	-	-	-	4
8	Southdown	4152	1	-	-	-	1
9	Paidamoyo	907	3	-	-	-	3
10	Gwayagwaya-Mandikise	698	1	-	-	-	1
11	Madziwa	775	2	-	-	-	2
12	Nyaututu-Redwood	823	10	-	-	-	10
13	Marirangwe	649	2	-	-	-	2
14	Kopera-Tamandai	1022	7	-	-	-	7
15	Muzite-mugondi	1525	10	-	-	-	10
16	Dumisani-Mwaongere	2449	54	38	-	-	98

17	Chikore-Nyagadza	1867	17	13	-	-	30
18	Musirizwi-Tafara	1770	7	8	-	-	15
19	Chirinda-Beacon	2967	1	-	-	-	1
20	Chibuwe-Mushandirapamwe	3286	40	40	-	-	80
21	Chubunji-Tuzuka	1788	30	30	-	4	35
22	Manzvire-Gumira	1814	61	61	-	-	62
23	Chitenderano-Rudo	2005	73	73	-	-	79
24	Checheche-Maduku	2648	72	72	-	-	75
25	Chitepo-Doroi	2080	78	78	-	-	79
26	Chisumbanje-Machona	3397	54	54	-	-	5
27	Mbuya Nehanda	1309	25	25	-	-	25
28	Hondoyapera/Toraizvombo	2909	95	95	-	-	95
29	Mutandahwe	2327	62	62	-	-	62
30	Mahenye	743	15	15	-	-	15

Source: ACF Chipinge M&E Department

3.2.2. Reasons behind the selection of project components

The integrated nature of the project with various components in WASH, Food Security and Nutrition was a designed and implemented as a result of the complex and diverse challenges facing the target population and their communities. Following an analysis of the baseline survey results, ACF consulted with District stakeholders and the target communities to identify solutions to the priority needs of the target communities. As a result the different project components were formulated.

The CA component was formulated upon the realisation that communities faced constant food insecurity and this was made worse by the low asset base (in terms of livestock for providing draft power), high cost of inputs as well as perennial droughts. The LIG component complemented the CA activity, but focusing more on household nutrition through improved consumption of a diverse range of vegetables with a potential to earn income (considering that only about 24% of the target beneficiaries had reported that they owned a garden. From the baseline FCS the nutritional status of the target population was found wanting, hence the importance of this component.

The WASH component was selected consideration the poor sanitation coverage in Chipinge District, which was pegged at 10% by the District authorities. Whilst water coverage was officially pegged at 70% it a number of the water points are non-functional or inaccessible to large sections of the population in the District. There was still a strong reliance on ponds and open water sources for drinking water by the communities, leading to cases of diarrhoea and cholera, particularly affecting the under 5s. A majority of HH relied on the bush to relieve themselves and they had no access to sanitation facilities like toilets.

The project directly benefited a total of 2000 HH out of a total population of 5771 HH in the target wards. This excludes other community members who benefited through health education, which was targeting whole communities. Considering that Chipinge District is quite large, with 30 Wards in total, it could be said that the more could have been done it terms of project coverage if resources permitted

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3.2.3. Comments in relation to the fairness and adequacy of the targeting criteria and beneficiary selection processes

The selection process was community-led, with the communities (including both traditional and religious leaders) identifying the HH that qualified. The focus was on resource poor HH. The key targeting criteria took cognisance of the following key HH features (1) possession of capital assets (2) physical assets (3) HH food security status (4) Presence of children under 5 and (6) presence of

someone chronically ill in the HH. In total, the project registered 2022HH, exceeding the target of 2000HH by 1%. In addition to the above criteria, the LIG beneficiaries were selected based on (1) Within this criteria the selection for LIG beneficiaries was also included (1) Proximity to the garden site and (2) Availability of labour in the HH to manage at least 37.5m2 of vegetable garden.

3.2.4. Degree to which the population and stakeholders were made aware of the activities and able to access project facilities

Prior to embarking on the Action, an official introduction of the project to district stakeholders was done on the 12th of March 2011. Considering that the project was integrated with the WASH facilities the LIG were located at strategic sites that were in close proximity to the productive water points (boreholes) that were being accessed by whole communities and stakeholders. Project beneficiaries do share the water facilities with their wider communities and there is evidence to suggest that as they come to draw water, other community members are also learning about LIG gardens and adopting some of the activities in their own gardens at home. .

Community members in the target wards also have access to the CA technology being implemented by the project. A number of demonstration plots are in place and these are meant to provide learning opportunities to the wider community. The evaluator however noted that the demonstration plots are not marked and they lack visibility boards which would otherwise convey the education message to the wider community. Further some of the demonstration plots are located far away from main roads and as such are not accessible to the wider community.

3.3. **Coherence**

3.3.1. Steps taken by ACF to ensure the integration of the different project components

Consistent with ACF's own integrated approach in aid delivery (Strategy 2009/11), the project components and activities are consistent with ACF's Causal Frame Work Analysis. The approach ensures that root causes to food security and poor nutrition are addressed, whilst taking care of the target communities health needs through WASH related interventions. Further the project provides synergies with past interventions by ACF, in particular the recently ended DC1-FOOD 2007/137-912 project which also had an integrated approach (including WASH and Nutrition components).. Following this deliberate integration with past activities the project activities benefit from synergies and relationships that had been nurtured with key stakeholders and development partners in the past.
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3.3.2. Coordination of the project with initiatives by national and other international agencies

The project is closely coordinated with initiatives by both UNICEF and the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare (MoHCW). For instance, in response to the acute malnutrition in several districts of Zimbabwe (as reported in 2007), UNICEF and MoHCW adopted the community based nutrition and care approach to ensure effective treatment and care for malnourished children. In line with these developments, ACF provided support to the MoHCW, facilitating the implementation of Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) initiatives from around March 2009. By and large, ACF's project is well integrated with the work of national stakeholders, including that of Agritex. In the past ACF has actively supported national efforts to enhance the capacity of Agricultural Extension Officers at ward level, most of who went through the accelerated Government qualifying programme and were not fully skilled by the time of graduation**.** The focus on food security and household nutrition is well coordinated with the donor community's strategy on Poverty reduction in Zimbabwe, recognising the potential of agriculture to lift the poor communities out of poverty.

3.3.3. Integration of the different project components during project implementation

The project ensures integration of the different components by having all the components and project activities covered in each of the target Wards. Beneficiaries are able to learn from each other through informal support networks that were created through an enhanced social capital. This also encourages adoption by non-beneficiaries, as they are able to monitor benefits from the different components, enabling them to make decisions on what best suits their circumstances. Each ward is supported by trained Health workers, Agritex Extension staff as well as ACF's own project staff, Community Based Animal Health Workers all providing much needed extension support services.

3.4. **Appropriateness and Relevance**

3.4.1. Project Operational Strategy & Context

It was generally felt that the broad project design did fit within the context of Zimbabwe. The project objective is consistent with Government policies and priorities local authorities at District level. The high food insecurity in Chipinge District, where rainfall is highly erratic and the target communities hardly harvest enough to see them to the next season, is of major concern to national partners and stakeholders. The WASH challenges in Chipinge District are well documented and reports show that Chipinge was one of the rural districts that were hardest hit by the cholera outbreak of 2008/9.

With poor infrastructure (including roads and irrigation) Chipinge District communities face a wide range of challenges and find it difficult to access incomes. The boreholes and other infrastructure being put in place are therefore ideal and commendable.

The following assumptions and risks defined by the project are consistent of the Zimbabwean context:

Continual humanitarian access to project sites: The ZANU PF part of the GNU remains overly suspicious of the operations of NGOs in rural Zimbabwe and there was a period in 2008 when there was a total ban on NGO activity in Zimbabwe. The assumption is therefore valid considering that loss of access to project sites would lead to delays in implementation processes or complete abandonment of the project altogether. The assumption need to be closely monitored considering that there is talk of elections in early 2012.

Beneficiary participation: Unless influenced by political events, beneficiary participation is always a low risk in Chpinge District. Considering ACF's standing in the community and long history, it is highly unlikely that beneficiaries might not want to participate in the project.

Cooperation from local government authorities: Again, unless driven by political machinations, local government authorities in Chipinge are always cooperating well with development partners, including participating in joint planning meetings as well as providing clearance for activities implementation and monitoring. What is however lacking from local authorities and partners is their active participation in development projects, mainly a result of lack of resources and capacity.

Favourable climatic conditions (lack of drought and flood): Chipinge is a drought prone region and considering that the project has a strong agricultural component, this assumption is valid for the success of the project. Indeed the 2010/11 season was affected by drought and target beneficiaries failed to realise any meaningful harvests despite their hard work and efforts.

Availability of inputs, equipment and materials: Unlike the period prior to the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) the economic situation now in Zimbabwe is such that the private sector is

quite active and the issue of inputs availability, equipment and materials is no longer much of a risk. What could be an issue though is finding the right inputs at the right price. Further there are a lot contractors and suppliers on the market whose credibility is rather questionable.

Availability and technical competence of contractors: With proper due diligence and recruitment channels being followed, the evaluator does not feel this assumption is critical.

3.4.2. Degree to which the implementation strategy was adapted to the local community organisation, customs and culture

ACF's entry into the target districts and operational wards, as reported elsewhere was guided by the District authorities and local community leaders. The implementation strategy was in sync with local organisational structures, where community leaders and Agritex extension officers played a key role in helping identify suitable sites for the boreholes and hence community gardens, with the pieces of land donated with the blessing of community elders and key persons.

3.4.3. Degree of involvement of beneficiaries and local stakeholders in the problem and solution analysis

ACF undertook consultations with the District stakeholders in identifying the project need. Furthermore, there were consultations with community leaders and local Agritex extension staff in identifying suitable sites (integrated with WASH facilities) for setting-up community gardens.

To assess the involvement of beneficiaries in the identification and ranking of their needs (a joint exercise that was done with ACF, questionnaire was administered. Through a questionnaire survey 61% of the beneficiaries confirmed that they were consulted during the needs assessment exercise, and all beneficiaries interviewed said their most priority needs were addressed by ACF Interventions

3.4.4. Degree of participation of beneficiaries and stakeholders during project implementation

The project has innovative mechanisms in place to ensure the participation of beneficiaries and stakeholders in the implementation of the project. Through BACS beneficiaries are in a position to articulate their grievances and complaints to the project promoters. Each ward has a BACS focal person who receives complaints and grievances from the beneficiaries and brings them to the attention of ACF project staff. Project staff in turn provides written feedback. The evaluator however recommends that this be improved so that there is proper dialogue between ACF and beneficiaries (in a more participatory way rather focusing mostly on written feedback. In addition to BACS the project has in place the Project Management Board (PMB) which allows beneficiary representatives to participate in project decision making process. Further the PMB enables full participation of stakeholders, including the Rural District Council (RDC).

3.4.5. Relevance of project objectives in relation to the needs

The project objective, '*To enhance sustainable livelihoods through a coherent range of Food Security, WASH and Nutrition focused interventions for 2,000 food insecure vulnerable households living in the communal areas of Chipinge district' is* highly relevant and appropriate to the local context as well as needs of the target populations.

The proposed objective, activities and results are consistent with the key findings from the needs assessment that was done as part of the project design processes. Provided below are some of the target population's priority needs as contained in the baseline report:

- Crop production and yields in the 2009/2010 season was depressed, with cereal production averaging 166kgs per HH and being adequate to meet only 1 and half months of HH requirements
- About 60% of the HH in the target wards were classified as having either borderline or poor food consumption in terms of diversity using the FCS
- A significant (55.3%) proportion of the household heads attained primary level of education and 37.3% attained secondary education. The apparent low level of education amongst the target population called for the need for extension support.
- Land was the primary physical asset in the target wards. Households own land averaging between 1.9ha and 2.6ha across the three wards covered under the project
- In ward 1 and 4, sorghum accounted for more than 50% of the cropped area. Together with maize and millet, cereals in the two wards accounted for about 75% of cropped area.
- Only 24% of the respondents indicated that, they had access to individual gardens. None indicated being part of a community garden
- Feedback from District authorities indicate that sanitation coverage in Chipinge District is only a mere 10%, with HH still using the bush as toilets.
- Access to safe drinking water was also a major issue considering the hostile environment and poor infrastructure in the district (in terms of boreholes and other safe water points)

3.4.6. ' Relevance of the technical approach in relation to the general objective

The activities implementation approach was generally relevant to the achievement of the project objective. The integration of WASH facilities with the Low Input Gardens ensured beneficiaries had ready access to water all year round. ACF also provided fencing materials for the gardens (to ensure crops were not destroyed by animals). The provision of free inputs and fencing materials to the beneficiaries however meant that ACF can only target a relatively small number of beneficiaries and this perhaps is not sustainable, especially that farmers cannot afford their own bought fencing materials. The provision of tools, whilst important in jump-starting the project, does not have an inbuilt

sustainability component and the beneficiaries are likely to face challenges when the tools start to break down.

Whilst the gardens are found to be relevant to improving the food security and livelihood of the populations, there is general consensus that ultimately water availability would be the limiting factor in the long-term, as boreholes start breaking down due to competition for the resource between garden users and the wider communities. To avoid this happening, there is need for more engagement and support to the communities, in terms of group dynamics and organisational structures. With respect to income generation through the sale of vegetables, the activities being implemented are felt to be ineffective to meet this objective. Overall, the gardens are rather small, with each beneficiaries having an allocation of only 37.5 m^2 where they can grow a wide range of vegetables to meet both nutrition and income objectives. The concentration of many types of vegetables per beneficiary reduces the real volumes available for sale, as priority is given to consumption. Focusing on improving incomes could be one sure way of ensuring sustainability of project outcomes. For this to happen there is however need to identify potential interventions and commodities of interest to markets that external to the target district. The local economy is rather small and faces high liquidity constraints and any significant increase in incomes for the target farmers can only come through linkages to vibrant external markets.

Whilst the use of traditional pest and disease control methods were relevant, the total exclusion of chemicals is rather inappropriate. Since this is a rather new approach, there is need for a more long-term strategy to ensure that there is a gradual change in attitudes without disadvantaging the beneficiaries at the same time due to crop loss. Some trial plots could have been initiated as an entry point, data captured on the efficacy and effectiveness of the different traditional control methods, all linked to the local context.

3.5. Effectiveness

3.5.1. Extent to which the project activities were achieved as planned

An analysis of project Activities Progress Report (APR), interviews with ACF programme staff, beneficiaries and stakeholders showed that the project largely achieved its planned activities. Table 9 below shows the extent to which the project managed to achieve the planned activities.

Table 6: Project progress towards achieving planned activities as at 31st October 2011

Activity	**Project Goal**
Training of beneficiaries on CA	14720
Establishment of CA demonstration plots	48
Establishment of Farmer Field Schools	6 (2 per ward)
Distribution of CA handouts training materials	2000
Distribution of tools, seeds and fertilisers to CA beneficiaries	4000
Undertake CA post distribution surveys	2
Undertake CA post planting survey	3
Undertake CA post harvest surveys	2
Undertake CA field days	9
Training of beneficiaries on livestock management	4000
Distribution of livestock kits to beneficiaries	4000
Post distribution monitoring of Livestock Distribution and Pass-on monitoring	6
Training of beneficiaries on LIG techniques	7000
Establishment of LIG's	20
Distribution of hand outs on LIG best practices	700
Distribution of tools and seeds to LIG beneficiaries	1400
Commission LIG field days	6
Post planting surveys for LIG's	6
Post harvest surveys for LIGs	5
Promotion of Health Eating and Infant and Young Child Care Practices	3
KAP surveys	
Village Health Workers trained	18
Communities attend Training sessions	3469
Construction/Rehabilitation of Water Points	37
Construction of latrines	300
Resuscitation or Establishment of Water Point Committees	40
Training of WPC on CBM	40
Participatory Health Hygiene Promotion	44160

3.5.2. Beneficiaries' degree of satisfaction with the training activities provided to them

Overall there was a high degree of satisfaction by the beneficiaries and target communities with the project. There was a strong appreciation of the project activities and non-beneficiary community members were making requests that they be supported too in future. The demand for the project activities was also demonstrated through requests from current beneficiaries for the further expansion of the gardens to ensure maximum impact.

Table 7: Beneficiaries' degree of satisfaction with the various trainings provided by the project

Type of Training	%age of beneficiaries who reported they are satisfied by the results of the training
CF principles	97
Micro dosing	98
Harvesting, Processing and storage	94
Garden establishment and management	94
Nutrition	96
Health Hygiene	100

With respect to CA, only 48% of beneficiaries are digging contours in their fields. None of the beneficiaries are however digging any infiltration pits for water conservation, citing the huge labour demands associated with this activity. Whilst the beneficiaries appreciate the importance of mulching, the availability of mulching materials remains a major challenge.

Through FGDs all beneficiaries reported that the natural pest control remedies they are being encouraged to adopt and use are not working as productivity in the LIG is being hampered by pests and diseases. The materials they are encouraged to use are either not easily available and where they are their efficacy is hugely wanting.

3.5.3. Beneficiaries degree of satisfaction with the inputs and tools provided to them

The type and quantity of garden tools distributed per garden member are shown in Tables 8 and 9 below:

Table 8: Tools distributed to individual garden members

Type of Tool	Quantity of tools received
Hoe	1
Mattock	1
Watering can	1
Bucket	1

The type and quantity of tools that were distributed to garden members and used as a group are shown in the table below:

Table 9: Tools distributed to groups

Type of Tool	Quantity of tools received
Shovel	5
Rake	5
Wheel barrow	5
Fence (number of rolls)	3 rolls

Whilst there is a general appreciation of the quality of tools provided to the beneficiaries through the project the beneficiaries reported that the watering cans were of poor quality and none of the LIG beneficiaries could still use the cans that were provided to them by the project. The cans were reported to have been of poor quality, highly brittle. In addition to the watering cans, the hoes distributed by the project were also felt to be of rather poor quality, especially given the rocky terrains in some of the wards. Wheelbarrows were also highlighted to be not so durable and susceptible to breaking (at the axle part). These complaints were mostly raised during FGDs and it was not possible to quantify the exact number of tools that are now broken and unusable and perhaps this needs to be established as part of monitoring by ACF project teams.

3.6. Efficiency

3.6.1. Assessment of general project efficiency

Overall there were delays in project start-up activities. The evaluator observes that the project action plan had no consideration for start-up activities, such as planning, recruitment of key project staff and procurement of necessary equipment, This in the view of the evaluator was the main reason for the reported 'late implementation of the action'.

Despite the delays experienced during project start-up, the distribution of seeds and equipment under the CF component was done on time and farmers were ready to plant by end of October 2010. The major activity that faced delays was the small-livestock pass-on component however. The distribution of goats was only completed in month 2011. Procurement of goats was hampered by the outbreak of the foot and mouth disease which saw a ban on livestock movement being put in place by the authorities, making it difficult for the contractor to supply the goats. The acquisition of guinea fowls was also fraught with delays. The initial contractor who had been identified to supply the birds failed to deliver on his promise. This is also a result of the fact the guinea fowl market in Zimbabwe is highly informal and getting the required volumes for the birds is always a potential challenge. In the end ACF decided to procure the birds on their own but this however was done over a long period of time (lasting over 6 months) in 2011 as the process was now determined by the availability of birds in the target supply district.

There are general concerns by the beneficiaries and stakeholders on the distances the distributed livestock had to cover before they finally reached the target district. Most of the mortalities reported happened just after the animals were handed over to the beneficiaries, with reports that a majority of these animals were in poor condition when they were delivered.

Of major concern to the beneficiaries (in relation to the 2011/2012 season) is the late delivery of ground nut seeds. There were delays in the procurement of ground nut seed but this has now been addressed and ground nut seed is set to be distributed to the farmers week beginning 12th of December 2011. Normally it is recommended that ground nuts be planted as early as possible to reduce the risk of crop failure especially in regions that are drought prone as Chipinge.

3.6.2. Comments on the relevance of tools, inputs and resources used to implement the project

Project tools: The project tools were all reported to be relevant and ideal in efficiency of operations as well as meeting project objectives. . The only issue was with the quality and strength of some of the tools provided, especially watering cans, hoes and wheelbarrows as reported already. In addition beneficiaries reported access challenges with respect to wheel barrows, considering they have to share.

Project personnel: Key positions for local project staff include (1) 1 Field Coordinator (with a supportive function) (2) I Programme Manager (position has been vacant for 2 months has been vacant for about 2 months now but a candidate has been identified to start in January 2012) (3) 1 Deputy Project Manager (4) 2 Project supervisors (WASH and Food security),(5) 6 community based extension trainers for food security (6) 1 Community Based Officer for WASH, (7) I Nutrition Officer (8) 1 Builder's supervisor (9) 1 water quality officer (10) 1 WASH technician (11) 1 Deputy Programme Manager (M&E), (12) 2 M&E officers. In addition, the Food Security Coordinator and WASH Coordinator provide technical advice to the project.

3.6.3. Systems in place of financial and logistical control in relation to standard procedures.

ACF operate a robust and strict procurement and financial control policy. For any procurements of over 10,000.00 euro equivalent at least four valid quotations are required, and authorisation for purchase needs to be approved by the logistician, Head of Mission and the Paris Headquarters. Purchases of between 30,000 to €145,000 go on national tender, with adverts put on national media and ACF internet website. Offers and tender bids are opened by an evaluation committee. The evaluation committee liaises closely with Paris Headquarters before a decision is made. All equipment, including automobiles and vehicles purchased as part of the project assets is properly accounted for, with full records kept and available for assessment when required. Project records are kept for a period of ten years (after project completion) and available for inspection when required.

Through interviews with the Finance Department, there was confirmation that the project budget was being used according to plan, with no undue overspent on budget lines. The budget spent level is also consistent with project timelines and it currently stands at 67%.

3.7. Sustainability

3.7.1. Project strategy with respect to sustainability

An analysis of the sustainability of the project interventions and approaches is provided in Table 10 below. The table analyses the current interventions and institutions in place to ensure long-term sustainability, their strength and weakness as informed by findings from the review.

Table 10 Project sustainability assessment

Project component	Key sustainability issue	Current practice	Observations following the review
LIG	Water supply for beneficiary gardens	Borehole water committees put in place to take charge on issues related to borehole maintenance, including collection of monies from borehole users towards Borehole Maintenance	Borehole committees do not seem to be effective to date. Weak organisational capacity and poor ability to rally water users around the need to contribute towards borehole maintenance. The District Development Fund (DDF) further insists they are the ones with responsibility for purchase of borehole spare parts and require all water users to contribute US$2 per year towards this. The actual labour for repairs is to be provided by water technicians and communities need to pay for their services. Reality is that DDF are not efficient in this role and boreholes once broken, take ages to be repaired (if at all)
	Access to inputs (diversified range of vegetable seeds)	All seeds are currently being provided for through the project. Farmers and local private sector players are not part of the input supply chain.	Beneficiaries not linked to both input and output markets. The approach is creating a dependence syndrome where farmers only see their role as that of making good use of the seeds once they are given to them without having to worry themselves about how much the seeds cost and where can they source them.
	Garden fencing, potential for up scaling and achieve higher impact	Commercial wire fences have been provided by the project. Given the cost of the fences, there is also a limited acreage of the gardens despite farming land being abundant	Beneficiaries realise that the current garden sizes are not ideal for them to achieve both nutrition and income objectives. However they still look to the EU/ACF to provide fencing materials. No consideration is being given to cheaper alternatives, including live fences
	Availability of extension support	Extension advice is being provided	Traditionally the Ministry of Agriculture, through the

		through field officers paid for through the project but this will cease with the end of the project	agriculture extension officers, provides extension advice to farmers in Zimbabwe. However the situation is such they have no capacity and rely on NGOs for their own mobility and ability to reach out to farmers in their wards of operation.
	Availability of tools	All the key tools for use in LIG as well as in the CF components were provided through project funds. Farmers are still unable to purchase own tools and assets	Expectations remain high for the project to provide tools that are said to be inadequate or broken. Farmers' mindsets are still to change in relation to the need for them to take responsibility in the long-term.
CF	Availability of extension support	Same situation as in the LIG component	
	Access to inputs (seeds and fertilizer)	Same situation as in the LIG component.	Where seeds from the project are not adequate, farmers are using own seed (retained from previous harvests). However the quantities are not that much considering the low yields. Virtually no beneficiaries are yet able to purchase own fertilizer.
	Availability of tools	Same as in the LIG component	
Small Livestock Component	Extension support in relation to animal health and management	Project currently provides this through Community Based Animal Health Workers (CBAHW).	The CBAHW are volunteers and get no incentive for their efforts. Further they seem overstretched, with no mobility equipment and receive no back-up support from Animal Health workers (who are government paid) as the latter have no capacity
WASH	Maintenance of water points	Same scenario as in LIG boreholes	
	Community health education awareness	Community Health Workers have been put in place through the project (2 per ward with each of them provided with a bicycle.	Whilst the District is mandated to provide Environmental Health Technicians to provide this service, the authority lack the resources to do so. The CHW are volunteers and would in the medium to long-term, need mentoring and coaching to ensure they continue to be effective

Considering the close similarities between the current project and the recently ended DC-FOOD 2007/137-912 project, the evaluator visited 3 garden sites to assess their condition. This was a good opportunity to model into the future on what the current project sites will be in the long-term.
2 gardens were visited in ward 2, namely Pachedu and Pamberi neKushanda gardens. Provided below are photos showing the condition of these gardens.

Figure 5: Current state of Pachedu garden, which was funded through the just ended DC1-FOOD 2007/137-912 project

Figure 6: State of Kurimakwakanaka garden in ward 2

Both gardens revealed that gardening activities are still on –going despite the project having ended in January 2011. Pachedu garden also had a diverse range of vegetable crops (legumes, roots and leaf vegetables) although this was limited to only a few farmers, showing that most of the farmers were no longer managing. Overall the condition of the gardens was way below those that are currently being funded by the EU. It was also striking in that in all gardens visited there the evaluator did not find a single farmer working in the garden. They were all deserted and it does look like the communities are not giving these gardens priority. Although this can also be taken in the context that it is the beginning of the rain season and perhaps the farmers are busy planting, the situation is different in the current gardens where farmers are finding time to work in their gardens despite the need to provide labour elsewhere.

Figure 7: Current project garden (Mataranyaka Garden) in ward 1 showing a neat and health butternut inter-cropped with spinach

3.7.2. Comments on issues related to smooth exit

The Consultant observed that there was no exit strategy in place by the time of the evaluation. To date there has not been a systematic identification and targeting of local actors and partners with a view to engage in discussions that focus on project exit strategy. The evaluator has however provided practical steps in the recommendations sections which ACF could consider as part of efforts to develop a smooth and effective exit strategy for the project. .

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3.8. Monitoring

3.8.1. Tools

A summary of the tools developed for project monitoring and performance assessment is provided in Table 11.

Table 11: Summary of project monitoring tools.

Monitoring tool	Report generated
1. Baseline survey questionnaire	Baseline survey report
2. Activities Progress Monitoring (APR) Tool	Project progress reports
3. Post distribution monitoring questionnaire	Post distribution monitoring report
4. Pre-harvest monitoring questionnaire	Report is yet to be made available to the Consultant
5. Garden monitoring tools	
6. Post planting monitoring questionnaire	Post planting monitoring report
7. Post harvest monitoring questionnaire	Post harvest monitoring reports
8. Participatory Health Hygiene monitoring	KAP survey reports

3.8.2. Comments relating to the quality of monitoring tools and effectiveness in impact monitoring

Baseline survey: The baseline survey report contained detailed information with regards to need levels of the beneficiaries and their target communities. Unfortunately the survey was delayed by three months. The baseline process however seems to have used wrong food density scores in the calculation of FCS and this needs to be amended.

APR Tool: The Activities Progress Tool is being used to monitor activities implementation and is updated on a monthly basis. The latest issue is that of 31st of October 2011.

*Quality of monitoring reports**:*** Whilst the quality of monitoring reports is felt to be good, there is a tendency to report more on the narrative, including activities implementation but with less on the analytical side include outcomes monitoring. There is no attempt to document lessons learned, feedback from beneficiaries and stakeholders to guide project implementation processes and hence project performance. For instance feedback from the BACS system is not being documented and profiled to draw lessons and guide implementation processes in a more strategic way.

Mechanisms to deal with complaints and dissatisfaction about the project: The project has a Project Management Board that is independent and composed of both beneficiaries and stakeholders. This together with the BACS system provides an opportunity for the project to deal with grievances and complaints. The Beneficiary Accountability System (BACS) is innovative. However the BACs representatives (within the wards) need coaching and mentoring so that they are more proactive in t their engagement with both ACF and their members. Focus should now move towards more dialogue and meetings between ACF project staff and the beneficiaries to discuss issues raised and identify solutions. The current situation where issues are responded to by writing is not felt to be cost-effective and participatory.

4.0. Gender

More women participated in the project than men. The number of females in the project was consistent with observation following the baseline survey were it was found that a significant number of HH in the target District are female headed, standing at 27%. Table xx below shows the distribution of beneficiaries by gender, with women constituting about number 80% of the beneficiaries.

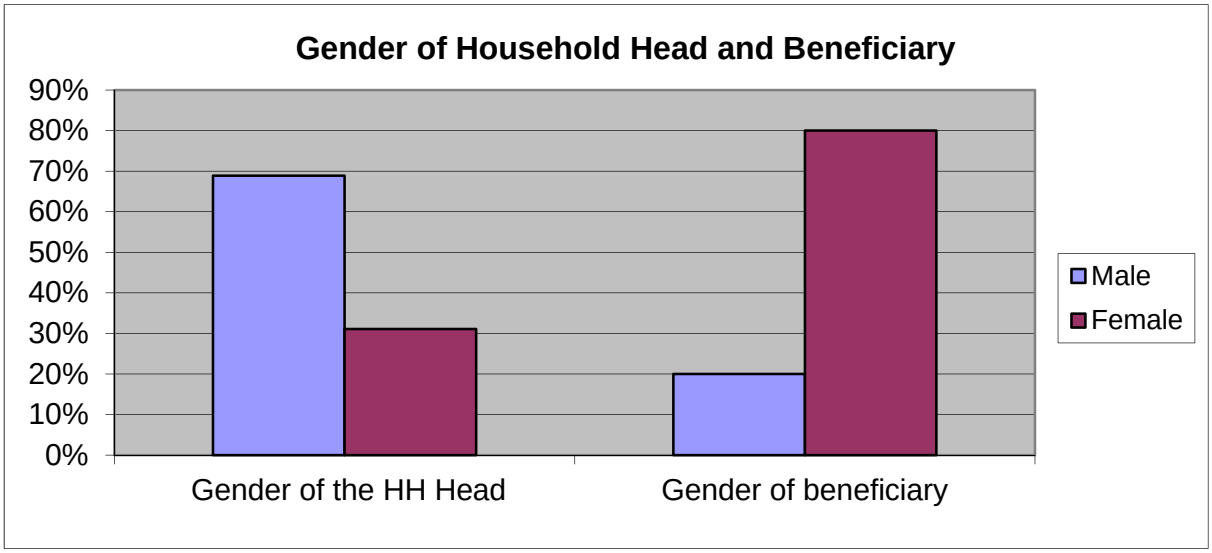

Figure 8: Distribution of project beneficiaries by gender

Perhaps the programme team could be more balanced in terms of gender as all key positions are male headed.

5.0. Conclusions

By and large the project is running smoothly although it is rather too early to observe significant impact, especially at the overall objective level. Activities are being implemented according to plan although delays were experienced at the beginning. The delays were however avoidable if more planning had been done, especially with respect to factoring in time for recruitment of staff and procurement, which are basic start-up activities.

The 2010/11 season was a bad one and despite all the efforts made by the farmers and project teams to ensure a good harvest (timely provision of seeds and tools) as well training, the farmers' yields were very low and currently a majority of the beneficiaries are relying on food purchases (in relation to cereals). The benefits of CA are however well appreciated despite the poor season of last year and many HH have adopted the technology and this could be seen in a number of cases were production has moved beyond the 0.25 Ha supported by the project.

The LIG are showing results although benefits are more related to consumption and hence nutrition and not much to show for incomes. Small-livestock component is now in place although major delays were faced during procurement and beneficiaries only managed to get their animals this year (2011). Risks related to this activity had also been overlooked and perhaps this could have further contributed to the delays. The pass-ons are yet to take place and this is likely to take effect from 2012.

The WASH component is perhaps the most effective (so far) of all the project components. A majority of the households in the target communities now have in place pit latrines and they no longer have to rely on the bush to relieve themselves. Despite the pit latrines being basic, they are the first step on the ladder to good sanitation. A significant number of the target beneficiaries and their communities also have access to safe drinking water, with confirmed reports from stakeholders that cholera cases have significantly reduced, including outbreaks of diarrhoea for the under 5s.

The major weakness of the project hinges on sustainability, considering that there is no clear exit strategy and clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the different local partners and actors to sustain the outputs. The MTR has provided practical steps that could be considered to address this, in addition to strengthening the institutional capacity of the various committees that were put in place to ensure sustainability of the outcomes.

6.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Highlight	Recommendation
Absence of an exit strategy to promote long-term sustainability of project benefits	
Borehole maintenance	. ACF needs to hold meetings with the District authorities, in particular DDF to try and understand their clear role and challenges in relation to water points maintenance. It is important that an MOU be signed before the project ends, with clear roles and responsibilities for monitoring borehole water maintenance clarified. Perhaps ACF could consider providing some bicycles to key staff in DDF to ensure they are mobile and constantly in touch with the Water Technicians. ACF could also facilitate discussions between DDF and the Garden Committees so that that garden beneficiaries are allowed to directly control their budgets for purchase of borehole spare parts, instead of the current situation where this is first passed on to DDF.
	ACF needs to consider the hiring of a short-term institutional Capacity Building Advisor, to provide technical support in the capacity strengthening of the garden committees as well as the borehole maintenance committee. Relevant indicators for monitoring the performance of these institutions should also be reflected in the LFA
Access to seeds for LIG/CA beneficiaries and extension support	ACF could work to change the mindsets of the beneficiaries through: Piloting an inputs/ tools consignment stock scheme, involving local agro dealers. Through this scheme, inputs (tools, fertilizers and seeds are provided to the agro-dealers as consignment stock and the agro-dealer will then sell them to the target community on commission. Focus would be on creating demand for these inputs and eventually move to a situation where the agro-dealers would see a business opportunity in the scheme. ACF could also train the selected agro-dealers to provide extension services to the farmers as they purchase their inputs and tools. The scheme is already being rolled out by other development partners in Zimbabwe, including SNV and ACF could tap into this.
	To avoid market distortions and sending the wrong signals, it is suggested that provision of free inputs be stopped from year 2012 (but farmers need to be told way in advance and perhaps only provide free inputs to those that are considered extremely vulnerable.
	Beneficiaries could also be ranked so that those who can qualify to get inputs and tools on credit be allowed to do so, the focus being to change mindsets and start to address the donor dependence syndrome which is quite high in Chipinge District.
	With funds permitting, ACF could consider providing mobility equipment to Agritex (bicycles) so that they can improve their engagement with the target beneficiaries and their communities
Apparent lack of incentives for CBAHW	Consideration needs to be made to move to a situation where livestock owners are asked to pay a small fee towards the treatment of their animals. This could be introduced from next year but more importantly the project team need to start working

	to change mindsets of the farmers, so that they appreciate the importance of investing in their small stock. In the short-to medium term ACF need to consider provision of bicycles to the CBAHW. This is more necessary considering that their counterparts, the CHW were given bicycles by the same project and the CBAHW are in a more needy position as there is only one person covering more than one ward.
Lack of incomes to ensure independence and sustainability of outcomes ensure sustainability of project outcomes	Perhaps one of the key issues affecting sustainability of development outcomes in the target district is the absence of living incomes, with focus being on subsistence type of interventions. ACF could be more ambitious (in future interventions) in the objective of increasing incomes. The following steps are suggested: (1) Undertake a market analysis, improving understanding on the demands of buyers (in terms of volumes, quality and consistency of supply). (2) Identify one key enterprise that can be supported to market standards (for instance, Chipinge farmers already keep pigs on a subsistence scale and there is a huge demand for pork in Zimbabwe (3) Create the critical mass of smallholder suppliers that will make it possible to get the attention of renowned buyers and market actors in the country.
Apparent ineffectiveness of the traditional pest and disease control methods	Where new technologies are introduced in communities there is need to consult widely with stakeholders on pros and cons, ensuring that ultimately beneficiaries are not negatively affected by such technologies.
Project management and design issues	There is a general consensus amongst project staff that the value addition of CIRAD to the project is not being felt. The evaluator also holds this view and could not identify practical ways in which CIRAD are adding value to the implementation processes and project results. It is recommended that ACF do explore this further.
	BACS could be more effective by providing more coaching and mentoring to the BACS community focal persons so that they start to be more confident in their engagements with both ACF and their beneficiary counterparts. Further there are opportunities for closer interaction between ACF project staff and the beneficiaries, through monthly or quarterly meetings were key and pertinent grievances and complaints are discussed (moving away from the current practice where this is done by writing and from a distant)
	The risks and assumptions in the LFA need to be revisited and firmed up, including pre-conditions at activities level. Further there is an opportunity to incorporate indicators that relate to performance of garden and borehole committees. The LFA also needs to incorporate responsibilities for monitoring of performance, involving the participation of beneficiaries and stakeholders as much as possible.