Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF)
Transforming resources into development solutions
Final report 2014–2018
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Transforming resources into development solutions
Final report 2014–2018

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, 2019
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Foreword

Asserting African ownership and leadership as well as a commitment to mutual accountability for actions and results have been the hallmarks of the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Agriculture and its precursor, the 2003 Maputo Declaration that adopted the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as a framework to guide the transformation of agriculture in Africa. African governments declared their commitment to allocate at least 10 percent of their national budgets to agriculture to demonstrate ownership and leadership and to create the necessary policy and institutional environment for the realization of the agricultural transformation agenda.

The Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF), which was launched in 2013 with generous contributions from Equatorial Guinea (USD 30 million) and Angola (USD 10 million) as well as a contribution from a group of civil society organizations in the Congo, provides an excellent demonstration of such commitment and leadership towards Africa-to-Africa solidarity in supporting strategic initiatives, focusing on combating hunger and malnutrition, strengthening value chains to improve the livelihoods of rural and urban people, and building resilience of vulnerable communities and production systems, among others.

The ASTF has been supporting the implementation of 18 projects/programmes in more than 40 African countries, directly benefiting thousands of people, particularly the youth and women. Its flexible mechanism has facilitated effectiveness in terms of responding to strategic topical issues such as youth and women’s employment, empowerment and migration, as well as to emergency needs (e.g. during the Ebola outbreak). In addition, it contributed to strengthening the capacities of key regional and subregional partners, such as the African Union Commission (AUC), the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and Africa’s Regional Economic Communties (RECs), among others, in promoting intra-African dialogue and collaboration. Further, the ASTF has been instrumental in terms of its catalytic and spin-off effects through leveraging partnerships and substantial additional resources for scaling up successful projects in some countries.

This report provides highlights of the main achievements and lessons learned through implementation of ASTF-supported projects during the past five years (2014–2018). FAO is proud to be associated with this monumental undertaking.

Needless to say, the momentum must be sustained for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the 2025 Malabo commitments. The ASTF has demonstrated concrete examples of how best these could be achieved. There are imperatives to enhance the ASTF through broadening participation by African governments, innovative public–private partnerships and engaging international financial institutions for it to play a more transformative role. With continued African ownership, leadership, and commitment to mutual accountability for results, the ASTF is poised to lead the way for concrete impacts on sustainable agrifood systems and significant improvements in the livelihoods of people in Africa.

Abebe Haile-Gabriel  
Assistant Director-General,  
Regional Representative for Africa
Acknowledgements

First of all, the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF) resource partners, the Governments of Angola and Equatorial Guinea, are thanked for their generous contribution and support to Africa. The civil society organization in the Congo that provided a symbolic contribution is also thanked for its kind gesture.

The conceptualization and production of this narrative report was led by Festus Akinnifesi (Business Development and Resource Mobilization Division – PSR), with support from Lars Thomann (PSR), and in close collaboration with Nyarko-Badolu Kwami-Dzifanu (Regional Office for Africa – RAF) and Herve Sibiri Sylvain Ouedraogo (RAF). The technical production of this report would not have been possible without the hard work of Sileshi Weldesemayat, the FAO Consultant who helped to put the report together, including distilling and summarizing the relevant results from each regional, subregional and country-level individual reports. Appreciation also goes to PSR colleagues who contributed to the production of the report, including Pablo Rabczuk and Irene Pirca Garcia.

The report also benefited from various useful resources, including individual initial project reports, success stories, and knowledge products and publications by RAF, subregional offices and participating countries, for each of the 18 projects. Thanks to all the project implementers for their diligent execution of the projects.
# Acronyms and abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAAA</td>
<td>Addis Ababa Action Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Agricultural Business Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACBF</td>
<td>African Capacity Building Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>AfDB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARC</td>
<td>Regional Conference for Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASTF</td>
<td>Africa Solidarity Trust Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUC</td>
<td>African Union Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAADP</td>
<td>Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGIAR</td>
<td>Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CODEX</td>
<td>Codex Alimentarius</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMESA</td>
<td>Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPF</td>
<td>Country Programming Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA</td>
<td>Climate-smart agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil society organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>DRE</td>
<td>Decent Rural Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>European Commission on Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOWAP</td>
<td>ECOWAS Agriculture Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELRP</td>
<td>Emergency Livelihood Response Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUR</td>
<td>Euro</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUS</td>
<td>Epizootic ulcerative syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>EVD</td>
<td>Ebola virus disease</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAOR</td>
<td>FAO Representative</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBO</td>
<td>Farmer Based Organization</td>
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<td>FFS</td>
<td>Farmer Field School</td>
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<tr>
<td>FNSS</td>
<td>Food and Nutrition Security Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSN</td>
<td>Food Security and Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICP</td>
<td>Indicative Cooperation Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICPALD</td>
<td>Center for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRISAT</td>
<td>International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGAD</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Authority on Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>JFFLS</td>
<td>Junior Farmer Field and Life School</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIMS</td>
<td>Livestock Information Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LoA</td>
<td>Letter of Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIS</td>
<td>Reporting System for Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoA</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAIP</td>
<td>National Agriculture Investment Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAP</td>
<td>National Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>New Partnership for Africa’s Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPCA</td>
<td>NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCHA</td>
<td>Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCC</td>
<td>Project Coordinating Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFS</td>
<td>Pastoralist Field School</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMU</td>
<td>Programme Management Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>Public–private partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAF</td>
<td>Regional Office for Africa (FAO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>REC</td>
<td>Regional Economic Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDC</td>
<td>Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFA</td>
<td>Sustainable Food and Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFC</td>
<td>Subregional Office for Central Africa (FAO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFS</td>
<td>Subregional Office for Southern Africa (FAO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDS</td>
<td>Small Island Developing State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO</td>
<td>Strategic Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPS</td>
<td>Sanitary and phytosanitary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSC</td>
<td>South–South Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCP</td>
<td>Technical Cooperation Programme (FAO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ToT</td>
<td>Training of Trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unicef</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTF</td>
<td>Unilateral Trust Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSLA</td>
<td>Village Savings and Loan Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
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</table>
Executive summary

1. The Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF) is an innovative Africa-led fund to support African development initiatives. The Fund was officially launched in June 2013 at the FAO Regional Conference for Africa (ARC), with initial funding of USD 40 million (USD 30 million from Equatorial Guinea and USD 10 million from Angola). In addition, the ASTF received a symbolic contribution (about USD 200) from a group of civil society organizations in the Congo. The ASTF was established as an Africa-led instrument for pooled unearmarked funding from African countries to support relevant national, subregional and regional priorities, in full alignment with FAO’s revised Strategic Framework. Its main goal is to strengthen food security across the continent by assisting countries and their regional organizations to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, eliminate rural poverty and manage natural resources in a sustainable manner. This report presents key results achieved by the ASTF in supporting Africa–to–Africa initiatives in food and agriculture. The Fund has already financed 18 projects/programmes (Annexes, Table 6.1) in 40 African countries (Annexes, Table 6.2) between 2014 and 2018.

2. All the initiatives funded by the ASTF are consistent with FAO’s Strategic Framework and priority programmes identified by the ARC. They are also in line with the priorities of the Country Programming Frameworks (CPF) agreed between national governments and FAO. The thematic focus and strategic relevance of the ASTF are aligned with national and regional priorities and needs, as well as key reference strategies and policy documents set out by the African Union (AU), such as the results framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Malabo Declaration for 2025 and the AU’s Agenda 2063.

3. The first set of allocations supported six countries, namely, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Niger and South Sudan, which received USD 2 million each to implement projects for a two-year period (totalling USD 12 million). The second set of allocations included selected countries in the four subregions of the continent — Eastern Africa, Central Africa, Southern Africa and Western Africa — with USD 4 million each for three years (totalling USD 16 million). Thirdly, several countries in regional programmes received support through NEPAD (USD 4 million). In addition, allocations were made to three countries affected by Ebola (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone), receiving USD 500 000 each for one year (USD 1.5 million), and a project on short-term South–South cooperation (USD 1 million). With a budget of USD 1.5 million, the ASTF is also being used to technically support the adoption of efficient and climate-smart agriculture practices in African Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritius and Seychelles). The last allocation went to a regional programme on enhancing capacity and risk reduction of emerging Tilapia Lake Virus (TiLV) (USD 779 450) in Angola, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda. A small amount of funds was kept to support resource mobilization efforts in order to sustain such an important funding mechanism.

4. The prioritization of resource allocations from the ASTF was based on the thematic areas identified as priorities, including the following four broad categories: (1) agribusiness, value chains and youth employment; (2) resilience and livelihood supports; (3) food safety, food security and nutrition; and (4) women’s empowerment. Five projects focusing on agribusiness, value chains and youth employment received a total of USD 16 million (42 percent of all funds) (Table 1). Another set of nine projects focusing
on resilience and livelihood supports received USD 11.8 million (31 percent of all funds), followed by three projects focusing on food safety, food security and nutrition, which received USD 9 million (24 percent of all funds), while a project on women’s empowerment received USD 1 million (3 per cent, although all the other projects have integrated aspects of women’s empowerment as well).

Table 1. Allocation of the ASTF according to thematic area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic area</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
<th>Budget (USD million)</th>
<th>Allocation (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agribusiness, value chains and youth employment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilience and livelihood supports</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food safety, food security and nutrition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s empowerment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Regarding thematic coverage, most projects address more than one theme. In terms of funding for thematic areas (Figure 1), the highest allocation (42 percent of all funds) was made to activities focusing on agribusiness, value chains and youth employment, followed by resilience and livelihood support (31 percent of all funds), and food safety, food security and nutrition (24 percent of all funds) in alignment with the Malabo Declaration commitment to end hunger by 2025.

6. Projects under agribusiness, value chains and youth employment, resilience and livelihood supports, and food safety, food security and nutrition received allocations from 2014 to 2016, with some resources carried over to 2018. On the other hand, while a project on women’s empowerment received funds in 2014, it did not receive any further allocations in 2015–2018 (Figure 2).

7. Over the past five years, the results of these projects demonstrated the vital role of the ASTF as an Africa-led initiative that has benefited hundreds of thousands of rural people (including women, youth and children) across the continent through diverse initiatives that sustainably increased productivity, addressed pests and diseases, ensured food security, nutrition and food safety, created jobs and increased incomes. It enabled FAO to assist African countries in addressing agricultural issues linked to food security and
nutrition, natural resources management and climate change, while addressing gender and women’s empowerment as well as rural employment, and resilience and livelihood support. The ASTF initiatives have also strengthened capacity and fostered intra-Africa collaboration in food and agriculture.

8. In Western Africa, the Fund supported rapid-intervention projects during the Ebola outbreak. In addition, decent rural employment opportunities were created for young people through sustainable aquaculture and cassava value chains. In Southern Africa, **4 500 experts from eight Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries** enhanced their capacity to tackle transboundary pests and diseases through training and coordination support, which enabled the region’s successful response to the fall armyworm invasion. Central African countries received support to strengthen food security in urban areas. Nutrition-sensitive agricultural initiatives were promoted in Eastern Africa to combat undernutrition and improve employment opportunities for young people.

9. In particular, the capacity of women’s and youth groups was strengthened in Liberia, Malawi and Mali. This helped them engage effectively in production and marketing activities, and to start up or boost personal businesses. Countries affected by the Ebola virus disease (EVD), including Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, were supported, resulting in doubling their rice and vegetable production through better access to inputs. The ASTF project in Niger enabled more than **160 000 vulnerable households** to improve their agricultural productivity and food security through quality input distribution while child feeding and nutrition were enhanced through investments in livestock recapitalization for women and development of small-scale irrigation infrastructure. Six farmer warehouse complexes, or Maisons du paysan (Farmer Houses), were established in Niger as integrated input and agricultural service centres to strengthen communities’ resilience to drought and other crises.

10. In South Sudan, the ASTF project helped increase food security, benefiting over **200 000 of the most vulnerable individuals**. It improved the nutritional intake among displaced households, and protected rural livelihoods from different shocks by the distribution of fishing and livestock production kits. The pastoral assets of nearly **19 000 households** were protected and the risk of livestock disease outbreaks and mortality was substantially reduced through a countrywide vaccination and treatment campaign. In Ethiopia, a web-based system was established for monitoring, promotion of livelihood diversification strategies, integrated approaches to improving food/nutrition security and poverty reduction. Nearly **12 000 smallholder producers** benefited from access to inputs, and support to beekeeping and poultry production. Their production is projected to generate over USD 7.8 million of gross income, enabling them to meet their food and nutrition needs.

11. At the country level, the ASTF initially focused on humanitarian emergencies in the aftermath of the Ebola outbreak in Western Africa, and various refugee crises following civil conflicts in the Central African

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**Catalytic and spin-off effects**

- In Malawi, the ASTF successfully mobilized EUR 6.8 million bilateral funding from the EU, and an additional USD 32.6 million in a second project.
- In Mali, the ASTF mobilized EUR 1.5 million from Luxembourg and USD 318 085 from UNHCR to support similar interventions in other regions.
- In Liberia, the ASTF raised USD 1.2 million from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for scaling up interventions.
- In Niger, the ASTF mobilized USD 810 300 from the Norwegian Government to scale up activities outside the project area.
- In the SADC countries, the EU provided funding of USD 7 million for the scaling-up of ASTF interventions.
Republic and South Sudan. Subsequently, more emphasis was placed on national and subregional development activities, and the ASTF has funded several activities, some stand-alone and some as part of subregional initiatives, most of which were concluded in 2017.

12. The ASTF has attracted new partnerships and additional funding from bilateral and multilateral partners, clearly attesting to the catalytic effect of the interventions on the ground. For instance, FAO Malawi successfully mobilized additional **EUR 6 875 000** of bilateral funds to replicate the impact of the ASTF project. An additional fund has been provided by the European Union (EU) to replicate the ASTF project approach to 10 other districts of Malawi (out of the national total of 28) with a combined investment of **USD 32 679 000** over the next five years. The regional ASTF project contributing to SADC/Subregional Office for Southern Africa (SFS) work has helped FAO to attract additional **USD 7 million** from the EU to replicate the intervention in all 15 SADC countries.

13. Likewise, FAO Mali attracted additional **EUR 1.5 million** from Luxembourg to replicate the approach in Segou and Sikasso Regions, while the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provided an additional **USD 318 085** to support similar interventions in Kayes Region. At the same time, FAO Liberia raised **USD 1.2 million** from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for scaling up interventions and FAO Niger mobilized **USD 810 300** from Norway to strengthen resilience of rural communities to scale up ASTF-funded activities. These are just a few examples of the spin-off effects and potential of the ASTF as a catalytic fund to create synergies and leveraging.

14. In terms of geographic coverage, the ASTF-funded projects/programmes consisted of five regional programmes, five subregional programmes and nine country-specific projects. One of the regional projects was implemented by NEPAD from its Secretariat, which is based in South Africa. All the subregional projects were implemented by FAO and managed from the respective subregional offices. The activities under the projects in the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Sierra Leone and South Sudan have been successfully completed.

15. The ASTF has an overall positive performance, ranging from upstream policy support to building capacity at institutional and individual levels. The results of projects funded by the ASTF highlight the value of the flexible funding mechanism as a real opportunity to mobilize resources from African countries to support priority activities in the continent and enhance sharing of knowledge on good practices and experiences for capacity development.

16. Both the ASTF evaluation by FAO’s Office of Evaluation (OED) and a senior-level field mission indicated several success stories, and important catalytic and spin-off effects by ASTF projects, leading to the replication and upscaling of the interventions by other donors or governments. The focus on regional and national priorities and the flexibility offered by the ASTF allowed for investments in critical gaps, emerging priorities and rapid interventions in addressing key challenges relevant to the different regions in Africa. The predictability of funding was another important success factor. The flexibility of its governance mechanism ensured timely and effective decision-making by its Steering Committee.

### Success factors

- Alignments with Africa’s priorities
- Predictability of funding
- Flexible governance mechanism
- Cost-effective fund allocation
- Beneficiary contributions
- Transparent selection of beneficiaries
- Decentralized implementation
- Light reporting requirement
- Flexibility of the funding mechanism
The ASTF has also proved to be highly cost-effective; the administrative overhead costs were low (7 percent), thereby allowing most of the funds to reach beneficiaries directly in countries.

17. The ASTF enables an effective synchrony between the priority challenges currently faced by rural Africa and the development solutions deployed to address them. It supported peer-to-peer learning that helped to upscale good practices, knowledge and technology from one African country to another. It has also successfully demonstrated solidarity between African countries through funding several exchange visits and sharing of short-term development solutions.

18. In addition, the ASTF has helped to strengthen partnerships between FAO and its key regional development actors in Africa, including the African Union, NEPAD, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) and SADC. The ASTF also contributed to FAO’s overall corporate results and all the five Strategic Objectives (SOs), namely: Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition (SO1); Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable (SO2); Reduce rural poverty (SO3); Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems (SO4); and Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises (SO5). The ASTF has also been instrumental for FAO in funding emerging and underfunded thematic areas, such as youth employment, food safety and resilience interventions. At regional and subregional levels, the ASTF has helped to facilitate cross-sectoral work that simultaneously addresses the environmental, social and economic dimensions of today’s challenges.

19. In conclusion, the unearmarked pooled funding from the ASTF has helped FAO to complement efforts by African countries and drive integrated and cross-sectoral approaches, as well as facilitate intra-African exchanges of development solutions. Looking forward, FAO has issued a renewed call and new modalities for expanded partnerships in unearmarked funding towards the ASTF. The future thrust of the ASTF will be the renewed commitment and recapitalization of the Fund in order to allow the continuation of this commendable initiative. The new ASTF envisages an expanded financing base with a wide range of African countries and partners contributing to the Fund. It also aims to mobilize national, regional and global capital at scale to accelerate delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other African commitments.
1. **Introduction**

   20. Agenda 2063 envisions Africa’s renaissance, self-reliance, self-determination and a politically united continent; it was launched as an overarching framework for guiding Africa’s development in the next 45 years.¹ It seeks to rekindle the spirit of African solidarity and unity of purpose, and it also encapsulates all other high-level regional and global commitments by Africa. These include the Malabo Declaration on Africa’s Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation,² the Bonn Challenge through “AFR100”,³ the Paris Agreement on Climate Change,⁴ the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) on Financing for Development,⁵ and Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁶

   21. These high-level commitments have called for strong multi-partner financing to achieve more effective and coherent implementation. In particular, the AAAA is a concrete instrument designed to leverage the full potential of financial flows to help guide countries in implementing the SDGs. The Malabo Declaration also includes a recommitment to enhance investment finance in agriculture. The extent to which Africa will succeed in achieving its continental aspirations and the SDGs largely depends on how much of its own resources it actively commits and leverages to address emerging development challenges. This requires strong partnership with diverse development actors and adopting innovative financial mechanisms.

   22. The development finance landscape is evolving and has implications for Africa’s capacity to effectively address key challenges, which are increasingly complex, multifaceted and multisectoral in nature. These include food insecurity, inefficient development of value chains and markets, unsustainable management of natural resources, malnutrition, rural unemployment especially among youth, migration, transboundary diseases, climate change, and the new wave of terrorism, all of which may worsen unless addressed in a timely manner. Despite these challenges, solutions exist that could be effectively deployed. These require innovative approaches, strong partnerships and solidarity among African countries, as no single country or entity can solve all the problems.

   23. In this regard, the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF) was initiated during FAO’s 27th Regional Conference for Africa (ARC),⁷ held in April 2012 in Brazzaville, the Congo. The Fund was officially launched in June 2013 during a side event of the FAO Conference in Rome.⁸ The initial funding of

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³ See [http://af100.org/](http://af100.org/)
⁴ See [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf)
⁷ FAO had proposed to the ARC the creation of an Africa Food Security Trust Fund “financed by contributions from interested member states, especially oil-producing countries.” The Fund was to “allow FAO to better utilize its experience and comparative advantage in the fight against hunger while allowing countries to better manage their development programmes and mitigation of risks that threaten food security, economic growth and sustainable development.” See the report ARC/12/REP Rev.1 of the ARC, [http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/025/md950e.pdf](http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/025/md950e.pdf) and [http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/141707/icode/ on the discussions of the proposal](http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/141707/icode/).
the ASTF amounted to USD 40 million, with contributions from Equatorial Guinea (USD 30 million), Angolan 10 million) and a symbolic contribution from a group of civil society organizations in the Congo. The ASTF has proved to be an innovative, unique financing mechanism that pools resources from African countries to support regional and national initiatives. The ASTF is used as a mechanism for receiving and managing unearmarked pooled funding to support Africa–to–Africa development initiatives.

24. The main goal of the ASTF is to strengthen food security across the continent by assisting countries and their regional organizations to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, eliminate rural poverty and manage natural resources in a sustainable manner. As such, the ASTF constitutes one of the most successful stories of African partnerships in FAO.

25. The ASTF funded 18 programmes/projects in four thematic areas, consisting of five regional and four subregional programmes and nine country-specific projects (Annexes, Tables 6.1 and 6.2). These programmes and projects were aligned with FAO’s Regional Initiatives on: 1) Renewed Partnership for a Unified Approach to End Hunger in Africa 2025 under the CAADP Framework; 2) Sustainable Production Intensification and Commercialization through Integrated Management of Agricultural Landscapes; and 3) Building Resilience in Africa’s Drylands. The regional programme is implemented by NEPAD from its Secretariat, based in South Africa. FAO implemented all the subregional projects, and managed them from the respective subregional offices.

26. With regard to thematic coverage, most projects address more than one area. In terms of funding for thematic areas, activities focusing on agribusiness, value chains and youth employment received the highest allocation (42 percent of all funds), followed by resilience and livelihood supports (31 percent) and eradication of hunger and malnutrition (24 percent), in alignment with the Malabo Declaration commitment to end hunger by 2025.

27. The 2018 evaluation of the ASTF by the Office of Evaluation (OED) concluded that the ASTF is highly relevant, but also an important funding mechanism to support African countries in pursuing their set priorities in accordance with the commitment of the Malabo Declaration to end hunger in Africa by 2025 and achieve food security. The Fund has been successful in highlighting African solidarity and demonstrating the positive effects of this solidarity on the continent’s development. The evaluation also concluded that the ASTF has introduced new implementation modalities for extra-budgetary funding that are both flexible in accommodating country-specific needs and effective in achieving the desired results on the ground.

28. This report presents the progress and achievements, lessons learned and challenges faced during the implementation period (2014–2018), highlights the critical importance of the ASTF as a successful unearmarked pooled funding mechanism based on five years of implementation, and highlights the financial modalities for its recapitalization and expansion.

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2. Progress and achievements for 2014–2018

2.1. Contribution of the ASTF to FAO corporate results

29. All initiatives funded by the ASTF are consistent with FAO’s renewed Strategic Framework and priority programmes identified by the FAO Regional Conference for Africa (ARC); they are also in line with the priorities of the Country Programming Frameworks (CPFs) agreed between national governments and FAO.

30. The ASTF contributed to the overall result-chain of the five Strategic Objectives (SOs) of FAO, namely: SO1 (Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition); SO2 (Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable); SO3 (Reduce rural poverty); SO4 (Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems); and SO5 (Increase the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises). Most of the ASTF programmes and projects contributed to two or more SO outcomes and the Regional Initiatives and respective CPFs at national level ( Annexes, Table 6.3). Those ASTF interventions addressing resilience and emergency support were designed as part of the FAO Regional Response Programme to the Ebola Outbreak in Western Africa 2014–2015.17

31. The eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition requires that states and non-state actors act in a more coordinated and focused manner to address the root causes of hunger. In that regard, the ASTF supported seven programmes and projects that contributed to SO1 directly or indirectly. Those that directly contributed to SO1 fall under Thematic Area 1 (Food safety, security and nutrition), which contributed a total of USD $9 million to the SO1 portfolio ( Annexes, Table 6.1).

32. The transition towards sustainable food and agriculture is essential to increase food production and productivity, and address climate change and environmental issues. This requires integration and synergies between agricultural sectors (crops, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture) and further integration of social, economic and environmental issues. SO2 provides an important entry point for more coordinated and effective actions in support of the 2030 Agenda at country level. FAO provides support to countries across the four outcomes of SO2, using the five interconnected principles of Sustainable Food and Agriculture (SFA).18 A total of nine ASTF programmes and projects contributed to SO2 directly or indirectly ( Annexes, Table 6.1).

33. Decent Rural Employment (DRE) is an important area of work under FAO’s SO3. While the DRE portfolio covers several thematic areas, youth employment dominates the other themes, with a footprint of over 33 countries (including 12 in Africa). In Africa, FAO has positioned itself strategically, partnering with the key regional players — NEPAD, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) — and has supported Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia in the formulation of national policies, strategies, investment plans and programmes for youth employment in agriculture. Out of FAO’s total

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18 See http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3940e.pdf
delivery of USD 63 million under DRE promotion, nearly USD 40 million was funded from FAO’s regular budget. Of the extra-budgetary support of USD 23 million, the ASTF contributed USD 16 million for rural employment themes between 2014 and 2017. A total of seven ASTF projects/programmes contributed to SO3 (Annexes, Table 6.1).

34. FAO and its Member States have a key role to play in shaping agrifood systems to ultimately achieve a world without hunger. In that regard, FAO is working towards ensuring the transition to inclusive and efficient food systems through the sustainable use of available resources and the engagement of smallholders. This also enhances the inclusiveness of the agrifood systems in economically small countries. In total, six ASTF programmes and projects contributed to SO4 outcomes.

35. Increasing the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises, and reducing loss from natural and human-made disasters, requires protecting, restoring and improving livelihood systems in the face of threats that impact agriculture, food and nutrition and related public health. Based on the foundation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005–2015),19 and in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030)20 and the SDGs, FAO harnesses multidisciplinary technical and operational expertise in agriculture, food and nutrition to support its Member States in: (a) adopting and implementing legal, policy and institutional systems and regulatory frameworks for risk reduction and crisis management; (b) producing and communicating early warning against potential, known and emerging threats as well as promoting standards for analysing structural causes of food and nutrition crises; (c) reducing risks and vulnerability at household and community levels; and (d) preparing for and managing effective responses to disasters and crises, bridging the humanitarian and development divide.

36. The ASTF supported nine projects under SO5, contributing a total of USD 11.8 million to its outcomes (Annexes, Table 6.1). Most of the projects are integrated and complemented FAO’s ongoing emergency response in a particular country, and provided flexible resources to upscale and replicate the previous and/or existing interventions. Three projects related to the Ebola virus disease outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone aimed to address post-Ebola challenges, including shortages in the supply of goods and services due to restrictions on movement in and out of affected communities, agriculture labour shortages due to the same restrictions as well as the loss of lives and the vulnerability of the workers due to the outbreak, and high commodity prices as a result of market disruptions. In the Central African Republic and South Sudan, the ASTF complemented other FAO projects working on strengthening the resilience of rural communities that were affected by the armed conflicts of 2012.

37. In summary, the ASTF interventions constituted an integral part of FAO’s overall response to key challenges in Africa. The ASTF has also been one of the most important sources of extra-budgetary funding for FAO’s work in Africa. The ASTF has been instrumental for FAO in funding emerging and underfunded thematic areas, such as youth employment, food safety and resilience interventions. It has also proved to be instrumental in the delivery of several high-level results in four thematic areas.

2.2. Key achievements by thematic area

38. The projects/programmes implemented under the ASTF had different priorities, and most addressed more than one thematic area. Notably, four broad thematic areas were supported: (1) Agribusiness, value chains and youth employment; (2) Resilience and livelihood support; (3) Food safety, security and nutrition; and (4) Women’s empowerment.

19 See https://www.unisdr.org/files/1037_hyogoframeworkforactionenglish.pdf
20 See https://www.unisdr.org/files/43291_sendaiframeworkfordren.pdf
2.2.1. Agribusiness, value chains and youth employment

39. Inadequate public and private investments continue to hinder the development of inclusive and efficient agribusinesses and value chains in Africa. The lack of financial services and products adapted to the rural and agricultural sector and low financial literacy continue to limit investments and the development of agribusiness and agroindustry on the African continent.

40. With more than 50 percent of the population under 25 years of age, Africa is the world’s youngest continent. The high unemployment rate among rural youth has already been identified as a major challenge by most countries in Africa. Unleashing the capacity of young women and men to effectively participate in the modernization of the agricultural sector is crucial for creating employment, reducing poverty and improving food security.

41. Against this background, the ASTF funded five projects aimed at stimulating local investment in agribusiness, value chains and youth employment: (a) Promoting Decent Rural Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship in Agriculture and Agribusiness;\(^{21}\) (b) Promoting Agricultural Diversification to Fight Malnutrition and Enhance Youth Employment Opportunities in Eastern Africa;\(^{22}\) (c) Creating Agribusiness Employment Opportunities for Youth through Sustainable Aquaculture Systems and Cassava Value Chains in Western Africa;\(^{23}\) (d) Creating Agribusiness Employment Opportunities for Youth through Sustainable Aquaculture Systems and Cassava Value Chains in Mali;\(^{24}\) and (e) Enhanced Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction through Economic Diversification and Decent Work Opportunities for Rural Communities in Ethiopia.\(^{25}\) Three out of the five projects are primarily addressing youth unemployment.

42. Fish farming (aquaculture) and poultry production were envisaged as potential areas of employment and income generation for the youth and as a way of contributing to gender-equality outcomes. The short production cycle in fish farming (less than five months) and availability of livelihood opportunities along the value chain — pond/cage preparation, seed and feed production, grow-out ponds, post-processing and retail — provide a menu of employment and self-employment opportunities for youth at different stages of the value chain. There are also some niches in the value chain such as hatcheries, post-processing and marketing in which women tend to perform very well.

43. Even a small aquaculture pond (100–300 square metres) can offer full-time employment for two to three people, besides the short-time induction of paid labour in pond construction/preparation, harvesting and transportation. A similar justification can be made for poultry farming, with the added advantage of lower capital costs and potential for daily income from egg sales.

44. Models for sustainable and decent jobs for youth in aquaculture and cassava value chains were developed in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal, with a “mentorship” model in Côte d’Ivoire and vertical integration in Ghana, in addition to start-up activities driven by a good professional environment and market dynamism in Nigeria and Senegal. Côte d’Ivoire and Burkina Faso are now completing the establishment of cluster sites, coupled with model farm designs. Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal have completed all technical studies and are ready to install the aquaculture clusters. In total, 310 youth candidates have been accepted to benefit from the project support and 12 employment opportunities have been defined along the aquaculture and cassava value chains.

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\(^{21}\) GCP/RAF/494/MUL
\(^{22}\) GCP/SFE/001/MUL
\(^{23}\) GCP/RAF/254/MUL
\(^{24}\) GCP/MLI/040/MUL
\(^{25}\) GCP/ETH/085/MUL
45. In Eastern Africa, youth micro-enterprises and out-grower schemes were established to produce seeds for poultry and aquaculture value chains. A combination of contract farming and public–private partnership (PPP) models were used in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda to offer beneficiaries a way out of subsistence into commercial agriculture. The PPP model and contract farming were designed to increase investments in the aquaculture and poultry sectors.

46. In Mali, the capacity of youth groups was strengthened to effectively engage in the production and marketing of rice, milk, poultry, fish and vegetables. The Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS) approach adopted in the project has also generated widespread enthusiasm and the project has had a strong impact in mobilizing additional resources from other funding partners. In summary, significant strides have been made in creating employment for the youth in specific countries (for details, see Annexes, Table 6.3). There have also been several success stories (Box 1).

**Box 1. Transforming lives in Uganda**

The area of Lira in Acholi in eastern Uganda continues to face specific challenges as a legacy of the civil war, which came to an end in 2006. The ASTF-supported activities built on a long history of FAO engagement in the district, focusing on youth groups.

Before being enrolled in ASTF project activities, the beneficiaries did not have any sources of income or capital for investment in agriculture activities other than subsistence. Some of the youth involved in the project are orphans who are in school and who needed support. One youth group has combined several activities to provide a regular income stream involving aquaculture, rabbit rearing, producing tree seedlings and poultry. Initially, the youth group leaders had to organize travel to Kampala to buy fish seed (fingerlings) and transport them back overnight. These can now be obtained in the district, as a result of the project.

Apart from the commercial aspect, the project has provided direct support to the 750 students of the Lira integrated school. School feeding includes 150 of the youngest children, and the children now eat fish once a week. According to the beneficiaries, “The ASTF project has helped to change life in the community; people can now do things differently … Investment in aquaculture is better than investment on the same portion of land for crop production or rearing livestock.”

In the area, the programme also created PPPs supporting small-scale private businesses with a focus on youth. One such business is the New Harmony Farm, which now serves as a form of social enterprise. The farm is economically self-sustaining but with social objectives working with young orphans, for vocational training, independence and development of youth employment prospects.


47. In all the projects, the design included policy dialogue components at subregional and national levels. Accordingly, several countries have already formulated policies and action plans for youth employment, especially for aquaculture and livestock development, as part of their overall development strategies. Therefore, the ASTF interventions provided opportunities to strengthen linkages between policies to enable a stronger youth employment focus in national programmes, especially with the use of value-chain approaches.

48. The ASTF continues to contribute to national-level agriculture development and poverty reduction, including the National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP) and youth employment priorities in the

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beneficiary countries as well as to the implementation of the ECOWAS Agriculture Policy (ECOWAP)\textsuperscript{27} and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)\textsuperscript{28} in Western Africa.

### 2.2.2. Resilience and livelihood support

49. Under this theme, eight country-specific projects and one regional programme were implemented with the overall objective of enabling affected households to regain their key role in the rural economy. The projects supported include: (a) **Support to the Resilience of Ebola Affected Households in Guinea**\textsuperscript{29} (b) **Emergency Response to Mitigate the Impact of Ebola Virus Disease on Food Security and Agriculture Based livelihoods** in Liberia\textsuperscript{30} (c) **Post-Ebola Recovery of the Agribusiness Sector in Sierra Leone**\textsuperscript{31} (d) **Livelihoods Resilience Opportunities for Conflict Affected Rural Communities in Central African Republic**\textsuperscript{32} (e) **Support to South Sudan Emergency Livelihood Programme**\textsuperscript{33} (f) **Building the Capacity of Most Vulnerable Households to Meet their Basic Needs and Withstand Shocks in Malawi**\textsuperscript{34} (g) **Support au processus d’appui aux Communes de Convergences in Niger**\textsuperscript{35} (i) **Adoption of Efficient and Climate-smart Agriculture Practices in African Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**\textsuperscript{36} and **Enhancing Capacity/Risk Reduction of Emerging Tilapia Lake Virus (TiLV) to African Tilapia Aquaculture**.\textsuperscript{37} The country-specific projects were designed as short-term interventions to mitigate the impact of emergent challenges such as disease epidemics, civil conflicts and climate change impacts on food security and agriculture-based livelihoods.

50. Three of the country-specific ASTF-funded projects under the resilience and relief theme addressed the Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. EVD first broke out in Guinea and then spread to other Western African countries. The gravity of the EVD outbreak had forced the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare it an international public health emergency on 8 August 2014.\textsuperscript{38} On 18 September 2014, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2177, requesting immediate action and stressing the need for a coordinated response of the United Nations.\textsuperscript{39} On 21 September 2014, the Secretary General established the UN’s emergency response mission to curb the spread of the disease.\textsuperscript{40}

51. In addition to the tragic human losses caused by the disease, the Ebola outbreak had negative impacts on the food security and livelihoods of the affected communities in the affected countries. Assessments of the food security situation post-Ebola conducted by development partners working on food security-related issues in the three countries have predicted a reduction in agricultural production, an increase in food prices and the depletion of household savings.

\textsuperscript{27} See \url{http://araa.org/sites/default/files/media/ECOWAP%202025%20Strategic%20Policy%20Framework%20ENG.pdf}
\textsuperscript{28} See \url{http://www.nepad.org/caadp}
\textsuperscript{29} GCP/LIR/019/MUL
\textsuperscript{30} GCP/LIR/019/MUL
\textsuperscript{31} GCP/SIL/046/MUL
\textsuperscript{32} GCP/CAF/015/MUL
\textsuperscript{33} GCP/SSD/010/MUL
\textsuperscript{34} GCP/MLW/064/MUL
\textsuperscript{35} GCP/NER/056/MUL
\textsuperscript{36} GCP/RAF/506/MUL
\textsuperscript{37} GCP/RAF/510/MUL
\textsuperscript{38} See \url{https://www.who.int/csr/don/2014_08_08_ebola/en/}
\textsuperscript{39} See \url{https://undocs.org/S/RES/2177%20(2014)}
\textsuperscript{40} See \url{https://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2014/ebola-2nd-ihr-meeting/en/}
52. Through the ASTF, a timely and effective emergency response to the EVD outbreak on agriculture and food security-related matters was ensured through direct ASTF support to the affected populations. This was achieved through swift action by holding extraordinary meetings of the ASTF Steering Committee to approve national projects to support the stricken countries.

53. In Guinea, 95 percent of the households in the project area benefited from agricultural inputs distribution, training and supervision to strengthen their resilience. Rice production among beneficiary households reached 1,214 tonnes, achieving a 133 percent increase in yields. The ASTF Fund provided significant assistance to the Government of Guinea to raise awareness and prevent the spread of the disease.

54. In Liberia, the ASTF provided improved seeds, hand tools, agrochemicals and cash for labour. Through a revitalization of loan schemes, women have resumed income-generating activities and commenced cross-border trade. Community food stocks have increased, thereby positively affecting food security.

55. In Sierra Leone, the ASTF supported nearly 3,000 farming households in eight districts through access to critical agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, etc. As a result, vegetable production increased by over 40 percent and yields doubled when compared to production during the EVD period. Household earnings increased from zero to about USD 50–100 per week, which enabled them to meet their needs and make savings for reinvestment in the next agricultural season. Through a lending scheme, USD 250,000 was spent on establishing 20 farming groups and Agricultural Business Centres (ABCs) as recapitalization for petty trading. At least 60 percent of the recipients later reported improvements in their businesses both in terms of volume and sales turnover.

56. In the Central African Republic, a total of 16,074 households received assistance in agricultural inputs to improve access to and the production of groundnuts and rice. The capacities of 60 members of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) were also strengthened.

57. In South Sudan, the ASTF contributed to the Emergency Livelihood Response Programme adopted by FAO to respond to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the country.

58. The projects built the technical capacities of affected rural communities (particularly women’s associations), and provided them with cash transfers, quality seeds and agricultural equipment so they can boost their agricultural production as well as engage in other off-farm income-generating activities.

2.2.3. Food safety, security and nutrition

59. Despite the considerable development efforts, food insecurity and malnutrition remain a concern in Africa, and a large share of the population has limited access to adequate nutritious food. One of the main characteristics of malnutrition in Africa is deficiencies in animal protein and micronutrients. Fish and fishery products represent a very valuable source of protein, with one portion of 150 g of fish providing about 50–60 percent of the daily protein requirements for an adult. Livestock products, especially eggs and milk, are crucial to the growth of children and youth, and eggs have been described by nutritionists as nature’s large vitamin pill — a nutritious cocktail that contains many of the essential vitamins and minerals required for a healthy diet. Hence, increased production and consumption of eggs and fish can substantially improve the nutritional status of poor rural households.

60. Across Africa, the falling output of capture fisheries is causing high import dependency to meet protein requirements. With the capture fisheries sector suffering from overexploitation and climate change impacts, aquaculture can be considered as a sustainable source of fish protein. It is thus becoming strategically important in many countries, not only for domestic consumption but potentially also for export. Besides promoting domestic availability, small-scale aquaculture has the potential for local employment creation, especially for youth. Sustainable, integrated and innovative practices and support mechanisms are needed to enhance entrepreneurship by young women and men, and to enable them to produce nutrient-rich foods.

61. Against this background, the ASTF was conceived as a mechanism to achieve the objectives set by the African Union in relation to ending hunger and achieving food security in Africa. Although a number of projects/programmes have a food security component, three projects focused specifically on issues of food safety and security: (a) *Africa’s South–South Cooperation Facility for Agriculture and Food Security*; (b) *Food Security in Urban Areas in Central Africa through Better Availability of Locally Produced Food*; and (c) *Strengthening Controls of Food Safety Threats, Plant and Animal Pests and Diseases for Agricultural Productivity and Trade in Southern Africa*.

62. Africa’s South–South Cooperation was set up to support the Renewed Partnership to End Hunger in Africa by 2025 and in close collaboration with regional stakeholders, including the African Union Commission (AUC), the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA) and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). The ASTF initiated the conceptualization and establishment of an African Centre of Best Practices, Capacity Development and South–South Cooperation. The centre aims at identifying, packaging and disseminating Africa’s best practices in agriculture and food security. To that end, a range of South–South Cooperation and knowledge exchanges have been facilitated through organizing study tours and exchange visits among African technical staff as well as farmers.

63. In the context of building resilience in Africa’s drylands, an exchange visit was facilitated for farmers from Rwanda to visit Uganda to observe new initiatives in small-scale irrigation. Participants from Kenya, Uganda and Zambia visited Zimbabwe to share experiences in climate-smart agriculture and conservation agriculture. Similarly, participants from Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo visited and gathered experiences from cooperatives in the cassava value chain in Cameroon. Technical officers from Niger went on an exchange visit to Tunisia to improve awareness on good practices in establishing a Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) policy-enabling environment. Technical officers from the government ministries and civil society in Ghana conducted a study tour in Ethiopia.

64. In Western Africa, the capacity of project beneficiaries was strengthened in Cameroon, Chad, the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe on good agricultural practices in vegetable farming. The project provided a three-week Training of Trainers (ToT) course for technicians from all the Subregional Offices for Central Africa countries. As a result, Central Africa now has a group of qualified trainers in the field of Farmer Field Schools (FFS), thereby reducing its dependence on resource persons from other subregions.

42  GCP/RAF/495/MUL
43  GCP/SFC/001/MUL
44  GCP/SFS/001/MUL
65. In Southern Africa, the ASTF has made major contributions to an appreciation of the importance of meeting the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures to improve opportunities for trade within and outside the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. Communication, coordination and the synergistic relationship between the SADC Secretariat, regional stakeholders and technical committees have greatly improved. In addition, ASTF interventions have significantly raised the profile of the SPS measures in the region through various visibility activities. The appreciation of the ASTF project’s contribution to SADC SPS work has also resulted in FAO’s being designated to implement a replication of the intervention funded by the EU with USD 7 050 000 and covering all 15 SADC countries.\footnote{46}

### 2.2.4. Women’s empowerment

66. Women and girls play crucial roles in rural economies, where the fight against hunger and poverty is most pressing. Yet they have less access than men to productive resources such as land, skills, services and employment opportunities. Women and girls often face significant gender-based constraints, and gender inequalities prevent them from reaching their full potential, thus weakening the agricultural sector and undermining rural development. Structural inequalities, gender discrimination and power relations mean that women are often the hardest hit when disasters strike and they take longer to recover or may not recover as fully as men.

67. Gender is a cross-cutting issue in FAO’s Strategic Objectives, and it remains one of the five principles of the FAO approach to Sustainable Food and Agriculture, with gender equality considered a key ingredient in sustainability. FAO works to eliminate gender-based barriers in access to productive resources, technologies, knowledge and markets by supporting the design of gender-sensitive rural development policies and programmes that increase women’s economic empowerment and decision-making in agriculture and rural development. This includes strengthening women’s organizational capacities and collective action to enhance their leadership, decision-making and bargaining power within the household and the community, and in policy processes. FAO also helps countries to enhance women’s entrepreneurial skills and business planning capacities, while ensuring that more women can access and benefit from gender-sensitive extension and rural advisory services, social protection and inclusive finance.

68. Against this background, the \textit{Rural Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Programme}\footnote{47} was implemented in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia and Swaziland (now Eswatini). This programme had a relatively small budget of USD 1 million. Therefore, the project focused on countries where FAO was already implementing other similar interventions. As such, the ASTF funding was a complementary source of financing to existing programmes. Therefore, ASTF support represents a continuation of these efforts towards addressing some of the challenges identified previously, namely access to feeds to enhance the profitability of women’s poultry farms.

69. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the project is working in synergy with another ongoing project\footnote{48} on gender-based violence in the same areas of intervention. The project activities consist of replicating successful participatory approaches using the Dimitra Clubs\footnote{49} as an entry point to promote rural women and men’s socio-economic empowerment and consolidate the resilience of their livelihoods.

\footnote{46}{See the project, \textit{Support Towards the Operationalization of the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP): GCP/SFS/004/EC}}
\footnote{47}{GCP/RAF/504/MUL}
\footnote{48}{OSRO/DRC/402/CEF}
\footnote{49}{For more on FAO’s work on Dimitra, see \url{http://www.fao.org/dimitra/home/en/}}
70. In Swaziland, the project is complementing the activities of another ongoing Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP). ASTF funds supported the commercialization of sweet potatoes, expanding FAO’s work thus far by increasing rural women’s access to productive resources such as improved seeds, and advancing women’s agricultural know-how and entrepreneurial skills in order to enhance their role in the sweet potato value chain.

71. In the Gambia, FAO has supported the government in developing a national programme on women’s empowerment, which recognizes the opportunities available in the poultry sector for economically empowering women and identifying the key challenges and obstacles they face in this industry, including access to inputs (poultry feeds) and advisory services. The ASTF focuses on poultry feed production at village level, supporting the establishment and management of small enterprises led by women, by building poultry feed mills, providing equipment and teaching women’s groups how to operate the mills.

2.3. Achievements in regional and subregional programmes

72. In this section, the results achieved in regional and subregional ASTF programmes and projects are presented.

2.3.1. Africa’s south–south cooperation facility for agriculture and food security

73. South–South cooperation is now recognized by the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on the Financing for Development as a crucial element of international cooperation for sustainable development. In that spirit, the regional project entitled Africa’s South–South Cooperation Facility for Agriculture and Food Security was set up to support the Renewed Partnership to End Hunger in Africa by 2025 in close collaboration with regional stakeholders, including the African Union Commission (AUC), the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA) and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). The objective of the project was to strengthen food and nutrition security in Africa and in particular support the delivery of the Regional Initiatives agreed by Member States.

74. This regional programme was hosted in the Regional Office for Africa (RAF) and implemented in Angola, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Niger and Zimbabwe.

75. The programme initiated the conceptualization and establishment of an African Centre of Best Practices, Capacity Development and South–South Cooperation. The centre aims at identifying, packaging and disseminating Africa’s best practices in the realm of agriculture and food security.

76. The programme has also organized study tours and exchange visits among African technical staff as well as farmers to share successful experiences and benefit from the existing knowledge in different countries through peer-to-peer learning (Box 2).

77. The programme also supported studies and the production and dissemination of policy briefs, communication and advocacy materials for other ASTF projects in selected countries. For example, policy briefs and recommendations were produced on transboundary livestock management with

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50 TCP/SWA/3503
51 GCP/RAF/495/MUL
the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD)’s Center for Pastoral Areas and Livestock Development (ICPALD). A study on the contribution of livestock to the economies of IGAD countries was also completed. The final regional report was endorsed by IGAD Member States in April 2016 in Kampala, Uganda.  

**Box 2. Intra-African south–south cooperation through peer-to-peer learning**

South–South Cooperation (SSC) is an expression of solidarity that promotes two-way learning and cooperation based on the principle of equality and a genuine desire for mutual development. It has boosted the sense of confidence, self-development and interdependence amongst the countries of the South. In order to nurture that self-development, the ASTF has supported peer-to-peer learning mechanisms, including study tours, exchange visits, and the production of information and communication materials.

A peer-to-peer SSC exchange of experiences was organized through a study tour for Ethiopians to Ghana. The tour focused on agricultural mechanization, including animal traction, tractor-based mechanization, intermediate mechanization and post-harvest mechanized equipment. The exchange of experiences and lessons learned helped Ethiopia to elaborate and implement its mechanization strategy. In return, technical officers from the government ministries and civil society in Ghana went on a study tour in Ethiopia to learn about the web-based e-Monitoring and Evaluation and Reporting System.

Similarly, technical officers from Niger went on an exchange visit to Tunisia to improve awareness at country and regional level of good practices in establishing the Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) policy enabling environment. Exchange visits held between Rwanda and Uganda enabled 11 participants from Rwanda to learn from good practices in small-scale irrigation in Uganda. Around 30 participants from Kenya, Uganda and Zambia visited Zimbabwe to share experiences in climate-smart agriculture and agricultural conservation practices. Exchange visits were also organized on a sustainable cassava value chain for Cameroon, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo for 11 participants in Cameroon.

A study tour for 25 Western and Central African Farmer Field School facilitators from 11 countries in Kenya focused on learning from climate change adaptation practices in Pastoralist Field Schools.

78. Training and mentoring for facilitators of the Pastoralist Field Schools (PFS) has been conducted in the Sahel, and the outcomes have been reviewed to focus on support for refresher training of Master Trainers in Niger.

79. Information and publicity materials were also produced to increase visibility of the ASTF. These include a field reportage in Angola on fish transformation and the Farmer Field School model, multimedia reportage on resilience in Chad and Rwanda, and a video-documentary produced in Zimbabwe. The Communication Network of FAO’s Regional Office for Africa (RAF) has provided support for the design and implementation of a communication strategy for visibility in countries. Side events have also been organized during the Africa Regional Conference to increase the visibility of the ASTF. In addition, comprehensive information packages were prepared and distributed to the conference participants.

53 For individual IGAD country reports, see [https://icpald.org/library/policy-briefs/](https://icpald.org/library/policy-briefs/)
56 See [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXjI3zFDIN8&index=6&list=PLzp5Ngj2-dKStyibSF110DdjGRGfu53WLO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXjI3zFDIN8&index=6&list=PLzp5Ngj2-dKStyibSF110DdjGRGfu53WLO)
57 For example, during the 30th Session of the Africa Regional Conference in Khartoum, Sudan, 19–23 February 2018, a side event focused on the replenishment of the ASTF. See [http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/arc30/side-events/en/](http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/regional-conferences/arc30/side-events/en/)
2.3.2. Promoting decent rural youth employment and entrepreneurship in agriculture and agribusiness

80. This is a programme of the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA) under the Rural Futures Programme, forming an integral part of FAO’s support to NEPAD. This programme was designed towards the operationalization of NEPAD’s Rural Futures Operational Action Plan and implemented in Benin, Cameroon, Malawi and Niger with a total funding of USD 4 million. The overall responsibility of implementation rests on NEPAD, with FAO’s role being backstopping by technical units at FAO headquarters and the RAF.

81. The main deliverables for the implementation phase of the project are: (1) preparation and implementation of National Action Plans; (2) vocational training; (3) facilitation of enterprise development for potential and emergent young entrepreneurs in rural areas; and (4) policy dialogue, knowledge management and communication.

82. National Action Plans and work plans for training institutions for youth were produced in the four countries. A total of 178 youths (44 in Benin, 91 in Cameroon and 43 in Malawi) were capacitated with skills to engage in agricultural value-chain enterprises. In addition, 20 business plans on agricultural value-chain entrepreneurialships were produced by youth in Benin, Cameroon and Malawi for funding. The project also provided a platform to build synergies and partnerships with ongoing programmes at the country level.

83. A stocktaking exercise of existing and ongoing country-level programmes was conducted to identify the opportunities, gaps and challenges in Benin, Cameroon and Malawi. The project has also conducted capacity assessments and financial and procurement appraisals of the training institutions (using AU/NEPAD Procurement and Financial Management Rules and Procedures) in Benin and Malawi. Harmonized criteria for the selection of direct beneficiaries were also developed in the four countries.

84. As part of the vocational training initiative, regional youth training institutions were also identified. These included the Regional Multi-purpose Youth Empowerment Centre at Buea, the Rural Training Centre of Mbanga (RTC) and the Practical Agriculture School of Binguela, all in Cameroon; the Centre Régional de Dosso and Centre Incubateur des PME au Niger in Niger; and the Songhai Training Institute in Benin. The first intake of students has been launched at the Buea Multi-purpose Youth Training Centre in Cameroon.

85. The project is unique in that it is a major step towards building and reinforcing the institutional partnership between FAO and NEPAD, as the project is embedded in NEPAD’s Rural Futures Operational Action Plan, and integral to the CAADP Results Framework. Overall, the project has received a high level of political support and ownership in the four implementing countries.

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58 GCP/RAF/494/MUL
59 See http://www.nepad.org/programme/rural-futures
60 See https://www.nepad.org/file-download/download/public/115097
2.3.3. Rural women’s empowerment in agriculture programme (RWEAP)\textsuperscript{61}

86. It is believed that initiatives which focus on processes that bring changes both at community and households levels (e.g. the Dimitra Clubs) will be essential for achieving lasting results in empowering women.

87. In that spirit, this programme was designed to specifically empower women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia and Swaziland. The programme was envisaged to strengthen the ability and commitment of beneficiary countries to design and implement agriculture-related programmes that benefit women and men equally. The objective of this programme was to contribute to rural women’s empowerment (Box 3) in order to enhance the productivity and efficiency of the agricultural sector.

\textbf{Box 3. The ASTF empowering rural women}

Traditionally, rural women do much of the agricultural work in Africa. Women are also taking on more of this work as men migrate to urban areas for casual labour and to generate off-farm incomes. The increasing role that rural women play in smallholder agriculture provides an important opportunity to positively impact food production and security in a changing climate. It has been estimated that if rural women had the same access to agricultural resources as men, yields could increase by 20–30 percent and the total number of hungry people around the world could be reduced by 12–17 percent.\textsuperscript{62} Therefore, empowering rural women is a critical step in achieving Africa’s aspirations in terms of food and nutrition security.

The ASTF programme activities consisted of replicating successful FAO participatory approaches, using the Dimitra Club model as an entry point, which promotes rural women and men’s socio-economic empowerment and consolidates the resilience of their livelihoods. The Dimitra Clubs approach was employed based on its successful results in earlier projects, which include behavioural changes, improved food and nutrition security, better access to information and to opportunities, and women’s participation in decision-making and leadership.

The programme instilled the use of gender-sensitive participatory approaches to contribute to more equitable access to and control over resources and to gender equality, through the functioning of the clubs and training provided. The programme is also expected to have an impact at the household level through more equitable distribution of incomes and gender roles within households, as well as impacts at the community level through spill-over effects.

88. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the ASTF funds complemented and scaled up successful participatory interventions of another project\textsuperscript{63} that promoted rural women and men’s socio-economic empowerment. This was based on the Dimitra Clubs approach that uses solar-powered radios as a means to share best practices between local communities. The Dimitra Clubs have demonstrated outstanding results in the areas of rural women and men’s socio-economic empowerment, improved food and nutrition security, and better access to information.

89. The programme components include training in improved farming techniques, village loans and savings associations, and the introduction of small irrigation equipment to reduce the work burden. The training aimed at improving the capacities of Dimitra Club members to grow and market good-quality vegetables and fish farming. Training in vegetable farming, agriculture techniques and

\textsuperscript{61} GCP/RAF/504/MUL


\textsuperscript{63} OSRO/DRC/402/CEF
pest and disease control using biopesticides has been provided by extension services and FAO to 14 Dimitra Clubs. The programme also distributed treadle pumps to each of the 14 Dimitra Clubs engaged in vegetable gardening, thereby reducing the time and effort needed from the farmers, particularly women, to water the gardens. In addition, the programme strengthened capacities of 445 people (243 women and 202 men) through training on gender, informal organizations, participatory communication and collective action for 20 Dimitra Clubs. It also strengthened entrepreneurship skills for both women and men engaged in business.

90. The programme has also improved access to credit and savings opportunities through training by FAO, government extension services and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) using Village Savings and Loan Associations. A total of 54 people (30 women and 24 men) have received this training.

91. In Swaziland, the programme was designed to complement the activities of an ongoing Technical Cooperation Programme, which focused on the commercialization of sweet potatoes. Its activities included distribution of improved seeds, fertilizers and processing equipment; capacity building in good agricultural practices; and entrepreneurial and business management skills. A total of 36 women’s groups (with a total of 603 beneficiaries) were trained in sweet potato processing and preservation to diversify the utilization of sweet potatoes at household level. This activity was implemented in all 17 rural development areas in Swaziland, with the Home Economics offices of the Ministry of Agriculture taking the lead in implementation.

92. In the Gambia, the programme is building on the results of FAO’s earlier work under the Technical Cooperation Programme, through enhancing the agricultural component of the Gambia Women’s Empowerment Programme. The specific focus of the intervention is on improving access of women’s groups, specifically through the Rural Poultry Farmers’ Association (comprising over 450 family poultry farms) to quality poultry feed at village level. A workshop on “Gender Mainstreaming for Inclusive Agricultural Growth” was organized and training was offered for 50 participants, including government officials and members of women’s networks and civil society organizations (CSOs) on the linkages between women’s economic empowerment in agriculture and achievement of Zero Hunger, import substitution and inclusive agricultural growth.

2.3.4. Adoption of efficient and climate-smart agriculture practices in African SIDS

93. It is widely accepted that climate change poses a major threat to international efforts to end hunger and poverty. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) generally struggle with high levels of unemployment and poverty and rely heavily on food imports. Because people’s livelihoods in SIDS depend heavily on fisheries, tourism and crop production, climate change has the potential to increase vulnerabilities and derail the development progress made over recent years. Recognizing the disproportionate burden that climate change places on SIDS, a regional programme entitled Adoption of Efficient and Climate-smart Agriculture Practices in African Small Island Developing States (SIDS) supported African island nations in their efforts to make their agriculture more resilient to climate shocks and boost economic development.

66 GCP/RAF/506/MUL
94. The funding from the ASTF was a way to show solidarity in tackling the many challenges facing the African SIDS in the wake of climate change and environmental degradation. The project aimed at helping these countries to adopt efficient and climate-smart agricultural (CSA) practices, with a focus on Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Seychelles. The project builds on the commonalities between SIDS to strengthen intraregional collaborative approaches, whilst recognizing the particularities of each country such as their economic status.

95. The project is developing CSA country profiles for the beneficiary countries as an entry point to bring CSA at scale. The project is also preparing technical notes on specific CSA practices to support knowledge sharing that spearheads the mainstreaming of CSA into the agricultural development plans of those countries. Although the project activities are mainly implemented in Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Seychelles, all six African SIDS (which also include Comoros, Mauritius and Sao Tome and Principe) will benefit through intraregional exchange and knowledge-sharing activities.

96. The final report on country CSA profiles is in preparation with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), and is expected for late 2018 after a validation workshop of the country CSA profiles has taken place.

2.3.5. Creating agribusiness employment opportunities for youth through sustainable aquaculture systems and cassava value chains in West Africa

97. The increasing trend of youth unemployment and underemployment in Western Africa, and the threat it poses to overall socio-economic growth, peace and stability, is now prominent on the continent’s development agenda. Many countries in the region, together with development partners such as FAO, are increasingly committed to promoting employment opportunities for rural young women and men. In that spirit, this subregional programme was implemented in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal with the aim of formulating integrated models for agribusiness development and providing employment opportunities for young people through sustainable aquaculture systems and cassava value chains.

98. Through the ASTF support, models for sustainable and decent jobs for youth in aquaculture and cassava value chains were defined in the six countries with the specificity of a “mentorship” model in Côte d’Ivoire and vertical integration in Ghana, in addition to start-up activities driven by a good professional environment and market dynamism in Nigeria and Senegal. The development of structures is ongoing in Burkina Faso and Guinea-Bissau. Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire are now completing the establishment of cluster sites, coupled with model farm designs. Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal have completed all technical studies and are ready to install the aquaculture clusters.

99. In each country, the project targeted 250 individual youths for the aquaculture value-chain operations (fish producers/farmers, hatchery operators, fishmeal dealers, fish processors and marketers) and 50 individual youths for the cassava value-chain operations. With an average of three persons per household, the project directly targets 900 beneficiaries per country. In addition, close to 50 individuals from Ministries of Agriculture and Fisheries, Decent Youth Employment as well as the private sector and civil society organizations were targeted for capacity development to be able to formulate and implement decent youth employment policies and programme interventions.

67 See http://www.fao.org/africa/events/detail-events/fr/c/1039672/
68 GCP/RAF/254/MUL
Box 4. Smart fish farming in Guinea-Bissau

In the village of Pitche in the very east of Guinea-Bissau, the project introduced floating cages for fish culture and cassava farming to attract unemployed youth to venture into agribusiness. So far, villagers had only engaged in subsistence fishing, but none had ever engaged in aquaculture. A special business model was designed with so-called “core” farmers and landowners, who then collaborated with young “satellite” farmers.

FAO provided all the materials — construction materials, nets, tools — and the fingerlings and fish feed. The fish cages were designed to be deployed either in a river or in an estuary and filled with tilapia fingerlings from Senegal: two species, according to their natural habitats. The selected youth were trained by consultants from Senegal in cage assembly, mooring techniques, cage management and record-keeping on the growth performance of fish.

The youth were left on their own to feed the fish and maintain the cages. Then the day arrived for the first big harvest. The cassava had performed well and harvests of between 1 and 4 tonnes were recorded, a great success for the cassava farmers. On one fine day, half of the villagers had appeared on the riverbank to watch the fish harvest. Appreciation was expressed for FAO’s role in the project to rear fish and grow cassava. Amid all the fish talk, however, an elderly lady said that FAO, through the cassava and fish project, had stopped migration from the village. That was a sobering moment and a real eye-opener for project staff.

During each cycle, the young people farm about 90 000 fish (about 22.5 tonnes). Per year, this amounts to about 45 tonnes of fish. The fish and cassava initiatives led to people seeing life in their village in a different way. Those who have been dreaming about “escaping” their village have started seeing the advantages of staying. “I gave up the idea of migrating when the project started. Some of our friends who had unsuccessfully attempted to migrate to Europe have now returned and joined the project,” said Abbas Embalo, who is part of the cassava-growing initiative. The young fish farmers are keen to continue to broaden their knowledge and learn from their experiences, and save enough money so that they can expand their fish farms.


100. In total, 310 youth candidates have been accepted to benefit from the project support and 12 employment opportunities have been defined along the aquaculture and cassava value chains.

101. The first set of studies on value-chain appraisals and identification of beneficiary youths, targeted at youths’ needs assessments, have been completed in all countries as regards aquaculture.

2.3.6. Enhanced food security in urban areas in Central Africa through Improved availability of locally produced food

102. This subregional programme was implemented in Cameroon, Chad, the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe. The capacities of project beneficiaries were strengthened in four countries on good agricultural practices in vegetable farming. Three-week training of trainers’ course were provided for technicians from all the Subregional Office for Central Africa (SFC) countries. As a result, Central Africa now has a group of qualified trainers in Farmer Field Schools (FFS).

103. The programme supported the creation of a FFS Support Network for Western and Central Africa, a professional forum that provides technical support and quality control of FFS services, and facilitates the institutionalization of FFS as an extension delivery method in countries of the two

69 La sécurité alimentaire renforcée en milieu urbain en Afrique centrale grâce à une meilleure disponibilité de la nourriture produite localement, GCP/SFC/001/MUL
subregions. More than 1 000 project beneficiaries have been organized into groups to facilitate training, supervision and the collective management and sharing of certain equipment. Some of the beneficiaries of the programme highly appreciate the interventions (Box 5).

104. Studies on land-use planning and irrigation systems are on course. The results will be used to propose better use of available land in peri-urban settings as well as affordable options for small-scale irrigation.

105. The programme has also trained technicians in the use and maintenance of the horticultural database to contribute to enriching its content through inputs from Central African countries that are currently poorly represented in this database.

106. With the involvement of mayors and presidents of Departmental Councils, a strategic plan for the development of green cities was drawn up in a participatory process by each participating country. For Cameroon, it was an update of the national horticultural development strategy already available. Based on its national strategies, a subregional strategy is now being developed.

Box 5. Promoting urban and peri-urban agriculture in Central Africa

Mr Madzou is a farmer and the president of the Agri Espoir cooperative of the Mingara District of Gabon. He grows eggplant, okra, chilli, parsley, celery, chives and lettuce, and supports 11 dependants through the products of its activity. In 2014 Mr Madzou became a beneficiary of the ASTF-supported subregional programme. He learned new techniques such as crop rotation, spacing and alignment of plants, disease control and pests. Mr Madzou appreciated the provision of agricultural equipment, seeds, pesticides and fertilizers, and he is grateful to FAO in particular for the training provided.

All products are sold at the local market of Potos in Franceville. Despite the competition, Mr Madzou can sell everything he produces, and he has established commercial relations with many resellers. With the project, he believes that his financial gains have tripled. He has been able to buy land and materials to build a house, which he plans to rent in order to diversify his sources of income. This increase in income allows Mr Madzou to provide for the needs of his six children, his two nephews and his grandson.


2.3.7. Promoting nutrition sensitive agricultural diversification to reduce poverty, fight malnutrition and enhance youth employment opportunities in Eastern Africa

107. Most Eastern African countries consider rural youth employment as a major priority in the region. Fish farming (aquaculture) and poultry production are two areas that countries have identified for the youth to contribute to food production, diversification and income generation.

108. Accordingly, this subregional programme was implemented in Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda with the aim of: (a) creating decent employment opportunities for young women and men in the agricultural sector; (b) improving incomes and access to food specifically for vulnerable children through school feeding programmes; and (c) increasing the overall productive capacities of both poultry and aquaculture value chains. The ASTF support has contributed to fish production to fulfil local and regional demands, and in so doing has created decent employment opportunities for young women and men (Boxes 6 and 7).

70 For more on the regional FFS network, see http://www.fao.org/farmer-field-schools/regional-activities/westandcentralafrica/en/
71 GCP/SFS/001/MUL (Baby01-04)
109. The project established or enhanced youth micro-enterprises and out-grower schemes in the aquaculture and poultry value chains. Small-scale producers, with a focus on youth, were supported in increasing poultry and aquaculture products, accessing group cooperation, and training in production systems and management. Market opportunities were enhanced for small-scale producers (including youth) of fish and eggs through school feeding programmes.

110. The programme also established public–private partnerships to support youth inclusion in producers’ associations. In addition, the programme provided support to the local seed and feed manufacturing sectors to increase the availability of quality and standardized seeds and feed. The combination of contract farming with the public–private partnership model aimed to create a conducive environment for decent employment in the participating countries.

111. The programme also built capacity in the various segments of the supply chains, as well as in group dynamics for better functioning of small-scale producer groups. By the end of the project, youth and other farmers knew how to value their work and establish a minimum cost of their services, as well as the commodities to be produced. Regarding the sustainability of gender-equality efforts of the project, women purchased or rented tracts of land from the proceeds of project activities. These additional lands are being used to produce crops and livestock for income and for livelihood diversification purposes.

112. A series of ten-day training sessions were organized in each country, culminating in a five-day subregional training organized for the best performers selected from direct and indirect beneficiaries, government officials and FAO country staff. The training sessions covered “Aquaculture as a Business” and aimed to help participants understand the technical and scientific basics of aquaculture, together with economic and financial business principles.

### Box 6. Fish farming in Kenya

Joyce Makaka is from Lurambi, Kakamega County, in western Kenya, a region where land is traditionally controlled by men. When her husband passed away in 2014, Joyce had to overcome many challenges to develop a thriving tilapia and catfish farming business. Through the ASTF, FAO provides training and support to improve production at all stages in the aquaculture value chain (e.g. fish hatcheries, nursing farms, grow-out and marketing).

Joyce received training on her fish farm, and learned about catfish and tilapia fingerling production. For Joyce, the support she received from the ASTF was extremely important, but she says, “Most of all, the programme has given me the morale that I can do it.” Joyce’s fish-farming business has become successful thanks to the training she received and she is creating employment opportunities for several youth working in pond and hatchery construction.

![Joyce with her staff members drain out a catfish pond as they seek for fertile individuals for propagation at her Jafi Enterprises fish farm](https://www.fao.org/)

© FAO/Tony Karumba
113. A user-friendly spreadsheet tool called “Tool for Investment Decision-Making in Aquaculture” was also developed to support scenario analysis, investment and financial decision-making for practitioners. The tool analyses nursery operations for Nile tilapia and the North African catfish using cage culture and integrated systems.

114. Value-chain studies were prepared for fisheries and aquaculture in Kenya and Uganda, and for poultry farming in Burundi and Rwanda. These technical reports provide invaluable information for programmes and governments. Several training packages and manuals (in both English and French) covering handling, post-harvest and marketing manuals, the principles of aquaculture and aquaculture as a business were drawn up.

115. Overall, the project contributed to reducing rural poverty and increasing food security through decent youth employment, entrepreneurship generation, and sustainable production intensification in targeted areas of the four recipient countries. Substantial achievements were made in creating employment opportunities for the target groups, as well as in improving the nutritional status of schoolchildren by implementing a value-chain strategy that looked at developing fish seed (fingerlings), the fish feed industry, table fish production technologies and marketing opportunities.

116. Hatcheries that were supported by the programme are now experiencing 85 percent survival of fingerlings per batch, making fingerlings more available to a region where access had been chronically limited.

Box 7. Supporting young rural entrepreneurs in Africa

The ASTF project distributed layer chicks to beneficiaries in Bugesera, Gakenke, Gisagara and Ruhango Districts with the aim of diversifying agriculture, reducing poverty and improving nutrition in rural Rwanda. The project is directly supporting 225 beneficiaries, including unemployed rural youth.

Eric Hakizimana, a resident of Bugesera District, is one of the beneficiaries of the project. Eric had been unemployed for a year since completing a course in computer science and management. After being trained by the project in business management and poultry farming skills, in December 2015 he received 330 layer chicks and a well-built poultry house with feeds. When the hens began laying eggs, he earned RWF 150 000 per month. He then sold the chickens when they stopped laying eggs, fetching RWF 700 000 that he used to restock his poultry farm with 630 chicks. Hakizimana said, “I restocked in January this year. After five months, I now sell eggs worth RWF 400 000 per month. I look forward to expanding my poultry to 10 000 birds by 2021.”

Jeanne Aurore Umuhoza (aged 27), another beneficiary of the project in Gisagara District, was also supported. She now has 627 layers, which lay 3 150 eggs per week, generating at least RWF 130 000 per month. She now employs two young people, and she hopes to employ more when the business expands. Jeanne says, “I plan to purchase an incubator and shift from importing chicks. I want to have at least 5 000 layers by the end of this year.”

See:
http://news.trust.org/item/20181019055859-gvrgf/
https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/advertorial/1019

©Peterson Tumwebaze

72 The tools can be found at http://www.fao.org/fishery/statistics/software/utida/en
2.3.8. Strengthening controls of food safety threats, plant and animal pests and diseases for agricultural productivity and trade in Southern Africa

117. About 70 percent of the population in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, estimated at 257 million people, depends on agriculture for food, income and employment. Crop production, fisheries and aquaculture (along inland lakes, rivers and coasts) are important for food and nutritional security. In addition, forests and forest products contribute to livelihoods in terms of providing fuel, fodder, medicine and shelter, and carbon sequestration. Although all these resources have the potential to make the region food-secure and economically prosperous through regional and international trade, there are several constraints limiting this potential. These include prevailing pests and diseases, insufficient knowledge at producer and consumer level, and inadequate capacity to conduct risk analysis, implement risk-mitigation strategies in a coordinated fashion, and meet international standards.

118. Therefore, this subregional programme aimed at assisting Angola, Botswana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and other SADC Member States, to address food safety, plant and animal health issues to increase agricultural productivity and facilitate regional and international trade.

119. The main goal of the programme was to enhance the capacity of the participating countries to address food contamination, animal and plant pests and diseases and their impact on the productivity of food crops, livestock, fisheries and forest resources. In pursuing this objective, the project has worked at the regional level to strengthen the SADC sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) coordination mechanisms to support detection, early warning and rapid response to transboundary pests and diseases among Member States, as well as to improve coordination and information sharing.

120. The programme has made tremendous contributions to the appreciation of the importance of meeting the SPS measures to improve opportunities for trade both within and outside the SADC region. The ASTF built capacity and supported networking and coordination among the SADC technical committees and subcommittees covering the areas of animal health, plant health, food safety, forestry and fisheries. It also supported collaboration with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

121. SADC’s SPS capacity-development activities were successfully implemented, targeting the priority needs identified in the baseline surveys and assessments (Box 8). During the first year of implementation, the project exceeded the targets set for training in animal health, food safety and plant health issues at a regional level, thus setting a firm basis for expansion on a national level. A total of 4,493 participants benefited from the capacity building.

122. SADC’s SPS committee has started supporting the establishment and improvement of national SPS committees in participating countries. Communication, coordination and the synergistic relationship between the SADC Secretariat, regional stakeholders and technical committees have greatly improved. Interventions have significantly raised the profile of the SPS measures in the region through various visibility activities. The awareness created in the region on transboundary pests through the project enabled the region to successfully organize and implement an immediate response to the fall armyworm invasion. Lessons and strategies adopted in the SADC region are now being referenced for an all-Africa strategy on the pest.

73  GCP/SFS/001/MUL
123. In Botswana, Madagascar and Zambia, governments have prioritized — with FAO support through the ASTF project — the implementation of Livestock Information Management System (LIMS) models in support of their livestock industries, which included the provision of training and equipment. In the fisheries sector, countries reviewed and updated their national pathogen lists to include imminent threats, enhancing the diagnostics and management of different pathogens available and not yet present, at country level.

124. In the food safety sector, a pilot study for the FAO self-assessment tool for national food control systems enabled its fine-tuning, to the benefit of other Member States. Action plans have also been developed at country level for tomato leaf miner (*Tuta absoluta*) and fall armyworm in all the participating countries, including other SADC Member States.

125. The programme has also enabled the region to begin the identification of strategic commodities that need to receive support along the value chain. Overall, the programme has played a key role in strengthening FAO’s partnership with SADC. The inclusive and participatory implementation modalities used in the project during thematic selection, design and implementation translated into a high degree of national ownership and commitment, which resulted in higher utility of the project’s results. The appreciation of the ASTF project’s contribution to SADC’s SPS work has also been translated into the designation of FAO to implement a replication of the intervention funded by the EU and covering all 15 SADC countries.74

**Box 8. Strengthening SPS capacity in Southern Africa**

The southern Africa region lacks capacities for monitoring of transboundary pests and diseases, and the implementation of national obligations under the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The ASTF programme conducted baseline surveys and assessments on the national status of SPS capacities in the target countries, to identify gaps and constraints within the five technical sectors for SADC, namely plant health, animal health, food safety, fisheries and forestry. SPS capacity development was implemented, targeting the priority needs identified in the baseline surveys and assessments. On average, over 25 technical staff members were trained per country on several aspects of SPS measures representing plant health, animal health and food safety. Because of the improved surveillance skills, targeted surveillance programmes were established in several countries in the region.

This has improved regulatory frameworks to enhance communication and coordination at national level and within the region. This greatly improved the implementation of the WTO–SPS agreement, which establishes how governments can apply food safety and animal and plant health measures in their countries.

The programme has also contributed significantly to enabling countries in the region to respond promptly to outbreaks of transboundary pests by strengthening capacities for surveillance and reporting obligations of transboundary pests and raising governments’ awareness of emerging pest problems.

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74 The project, Support Towards the Operationalization of the SADC Regional Agricultural Policy (RAP) (GCP/SFS/004/EC) is funded by the EU with a total of USD 7 050 000 through the 11th Economic Development Fund for 2014–2020. The EU and SADC identified FAO as the lead implementing agency for two of the three components in the project. The two components are: 1) Enhancing information on agricultural production, sustainability and competitiveness for evidence-based decision-making; and 2) Improving access to markets through implementation of plant and animal pest and disease control strategies at regional level. The third component is facilitating implementation of some components of the Regional Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (FNSS) in SADC member states and is implemented by the SADC Secretariat.
2.3.9. Enhancing capacity/risk reduction of emerging tilapia lake virus (TiLV) to African tilapia aquaculture

126. Tilapia, the second-most important cultured finfish worldwide (next to the cyprinids), is farmed globally by many smallholders. Tilapia fishing provides employment and livelihoods for both women and men at diverse levels in many African countries. In the Tilapia value chain, men invest in fishing vessels, nets and pond construction, while women devote more time to the processing equipment and often focus on tilapia purchasing, processing and retailing. The export business of tilapia and other fish types is dominated by men.

127. Unfortunately, tilapia stocks are now threatened by an emerging disease caused by Tilapia Lake Virus (TiLV). The effects of this disease are likely to jeopardize the livelihood and economic situation of fisherfolk (both women and men) whose livelihood depends on tilapia cultivation and fishing. There is a significant risk of TiLV being translocated between African countries through the movement of infected live tilapias in the absence of appropriate biosecurity measures. Capacity building is therefore essential to assist tilapia-producing countries in Africa to enhance biosecurity governance and knowledge to deal with TiLV in terms of diagnostics, surveillance, emergency preparedness, contingency plans and good tilapia husbandry practices.

128. The project Enhancing Capacity/Risk Reduction of Emerging Tilapia Lake Virus (TiLV) to African Tilapia Aquaculture is being implemented in Angola, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda. The main beneficiaries are the competent authorities and relevant stakeholders, including producer and academic sectors of the participating member governments.

129. Engagement with stakeholders occurred when the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System on Food and Agriculture Special Alert was released in May 2017, when several members raised their concerns about the disease. The issue was again strongly raised during the Committee on Fisheries/Subcommittee on Aquaculture Ninth Session in October 2017 in Rome.

130. Implementation of this programme began the same year, with the inception workshop held in October 2018. A total of 34 delegates from Angola, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda, together with officials from Kenya’s Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation, academia and producer-sector representatives, officials of FAOR and FAOHQ and experts attended the project inception workshop. Participants’ knowledge of TiLV was enhanced about its emergence and current distribution, pathology and diagnostics, prevention, risks and risk management, aquatic animal disease surveillance and requirements. The participants also learned some aspects of socio-economic impact assessment methods and the FAO Emergency Management Tools.

2.4 Country-specific projects

2.4.1. Guinea

131. The outbreak of the Ebola virus disease (EVD) in Guinea in December 2013 has severely affected the country, causing the tragic loss of human lives and adversely effecting agriculture and the food security of vulnerable populations. EVD affected 3 814 people, and in late March 2016 caused 2 544 deaths.

75 GCP/RAF/510/MUL
76 See http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/newsroom/docs/GIEWS%20Special%20Alert%20338%20Global%2017326EN.pdf
77 For the report of the subcommittee meeting, see http://www.fao.org/3/i8886t/i8886t.pdf
78 The full programme of (and background information on) the workshop can be found here: http://www.fao.org/fishery/static/news/TiLVProject/listoflinks.html
in 25 of the 33 prefectures of Guinea and Conakry area. An in-depth evaluation of the impact of the epidemic on food security conducted in June 2015 by the Government of Guinea, the World Food Programme (WFP), FAO and IFAD found that approximately 1.9 million people were food insecure (18 percent of Guinean households) and 59 000 in severe food insecurity (1 percent of Guinean households). 79

132. A project entitled Support to the Resilience of Ebola Affected Households 80 was implemented from February 2015 to April 2016 through financial contributions from the ASTF. 81 The goal of the project was to mitigate the impact of EVD on food security and livelihoods associated with agriculture in the communities affected in Guinea.

133. The project carried out sensitization campaigns on EVD, and enhanced capacities of the staff within the network of participative and integrated monitoring of wildlife. Sensitization campaigns were conducted to convey three key messages: (a) social integration of EVD-affected households; (b) hand washing as a prevention method; and (c) informing and declaring EVD cases. Capacity was developed for 24 health staff, forestry and livestock officers as well as hunters.

134. A total of 3 600 vulnerable households (including 1 450 women) were identified to benefit from the project support. Rice production kits were distributed to 1 000 beneficiaries and livestock kits to 1 200 households. Land management involved 485 hectares (ha) for a production of 1 213 tonnes of paddy rice.

135. Cash transfers of USD 90 000 through the Rural Credit of Guinea benefited 1 200 households by helping to strengthen their livelihoods and enable them to undertake income-generating activities. The distribution of unconditional cash has allowed households to purchase various goods essential to family well-being, including, among others, the purchase of agricultural inputs, food, health care, payment of schooling for children, house rent and clothes or investment in small businesses.

136. Over 95 percent of households in the project area benefited from agricultural inputs distribution, and training and supervision to strengthen their resilience. A total of 1 400 households also received cash totalling USD 127 400 to procure breeds and livestock inputs such as 1 400 roosters, 12 600 hens and poultry feed.

137. A total of 896 rice producers were trained in crop management practices through Letters of Agreement with NGOs. Rice production among beneficiary households reached 1 214 tonnes through a 133 percent increase in yields. This is enough to feed 1 000 households and their 8 000 dependants for 14 months, thus fulfilling their need in terms of food availability.

138. Overall, the ASTF Fund provided significant assistance to the Government of Guinea in its fight against EVD, by raising awareness and preventing the spread of the disease, and strengthening the resilience of affected rural households.


80 GCP/GUI/021/MUL

81 For more on Ebola, food security and FAO’s response, see http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/270716/icode/
2.4.2. Liberia

139. In Liberia, the first EVD outbreak occurred in the counties of Lofa and Bong, and then Nimba, Montserrado and Margib. By 5 November 2014, the total number of cases stood at 6,697, with a death toll of 2,789. Based on a fact-finding mission by FAO in September 2014 and the WFP, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and FAO's Ebola security impact assessment held in October/November 2014, the main impacts were the reduction in agricultural production, an increase in food prices and the depletion of household and women's savings associations.

140. Another outbreak occurred in March 2016. The outbreak in Lofa County was controlled from March to June 2016, when the disease returned, having spread from Sierra Leone to 8 of Liberia's 15 counties. The rapid spread of the disease led the Liberian Government to declare a State of Emergency and to take extraordinary measures to control the outbreak, including the closure of borders and schools, and the suspension of major food markets in the most affected areas. In addition, restrictions of movement and quarantine have compounded the impacts on already affected communities. All sectors of the Liberian economy were heavily impacted. EVD caused a severe deterioration in the food security level and livelihoods of the population in affected rural counties that mainly rely on agricultural crop production. During the EVD crisis, Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAS) and financial clubs also became inactive and depleted.

141. In response, the ASTF supported a project entitled Emergency Response to Mitigate the Impact of Ebola Virus Disease on Food Security and Agriculture Based livelihoods in Liberia from 1 February 2015 to 31 July 2016. The overall objective was to enable women's associations to regain their key role in the rural economy and social mobilization in EVD-affected areas in Liberia. This project reached beneficiaries in the three most affected counties.

142. The first component of the project addressed the integrated production of lowland rice and vegetables while the second engaged selected women's associations in VSLAs. A total of 50 women's associations (covering 1,500 households) were selected for lowland rice and vegetable production as well as VSLA activities.

143. The project strengthened beneficiaries' food security by increasing availability and access to rice and vegetable seeds, and encouraged livelihood restoration through cash transfers into VSLAs. Thanks to the dedicated support, cooperation and collaboration with local and national implementing partners, farm tools (shovels, rain boots, measuring tapes, regular hoes, rakes, twine, etc.), quality rice and vegetable seeds and post-harvest equipment were successfully distributed to beneficiaries.

144. The availability of and access to food in those communities through bumper harvests have positively impacted consumption and nutrition. Over 25 ha of rice were planted and 62.7 tonnes were harvested, an average of 2.51 tonnes per site, which demonstrates that rice production in the targeted communities increased from 1.12 tonnes/ha pre-EVD to 2.5 tonnes/ha post-EVD.

145. VSLA activities strengthened unity among community members. Household expenditures on food, medicine, construction materials (zinc) and education have risen sharply and consumption has improved from one meal to two meals a day, particularly for female-headed households.

83 A detailed impact assessment of the EBV outbreak on market chains and trade of agricultural products in Western Africa can be found here: http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5641e.pdf
84 GCP/LIR/019/MUL
2.4.3. Sierra Leone

146. Following its outbreak in Guinea and Liberia in March–April 2014, EVD was confirmed as having arrived in Sierra Leone in May 2014 and it spread rapidly through villages, towns and cities. The distinct characteristics of the pandemic made it a concern for agriculture and food security, particularly in rural areas. The sheer novelty of the disease, and its high fatality rate, disrupted both farming and marketing activities. The combination of movement restrictions, the ban on periodic markets and the presence of many checkpoints led to a critical disruption of the flow of food commodities from the farm gate to markets, and eventually to end consumers. Many traders were discouraged from moving to farmers and buying crops, because they had to pass many checkpoints, where they were delayed, and often had to pay a fee to pass.

147. In response to this emergency, the project entitled Post-Ebola Recovery of the Agribusiness Sector in Sierra Leone was implemented between 1 February 2015 and 31 January 2016 with financial support from the ASTF. The overall objective of the project was to provide immediate short-term measures, and measures focusing on the coming cropping seasons, in order to boost incomes and agricultural production, and to secure and stabilize livelihoods through support for production, post-harvest activities and marketing.

148. The project targeted 64 women’s Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) from a total of eight districts working with over 16 Agricultural Business Centres (ABCs) covering approximately 1 600 households (9 600 people). The project implementation also considered the micro level (ABCs/FBOs), where Ebola had had impacts or resulted in “coping strategies”.

149. Nearly 3 000 farming households, in eight districts, were supported through access to critical agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizer, etc. As a result, vegetable production increased by over 40 percent and yields doubled when compared to production during the Ebola period. Household earnings also increased from zero to an average of USD 50–100 a week, which enabled families to meet their needs and make savings for reinvestment in the next agricultural season.

150. Through a lending scheme, up to USD 250 000 was injected into 20 farming groups and ABCs as recapitalization for petty trading. At least 60 percent of the recipients reported that their businesses increased in volume and sales turnover. Proceeds from the recapitalization were used to contribute to VSLA funds and to pay school fees and hospital bills among other needs.

151. The project supported agricultural processing units and trained machine operators, which allowed the processing of agricultural products to resume. This approach saved labour and has also enabled the ABCs to earn more resources, and many communities’ members will continue to benefit from it. Social cohesion that was lost during the outbreak of EVD, as a result of quarantine measures instituted by the government, is being re-established.

152. In total, 16 seed banks have been established across the districts supported. A total of 68 FBOs also benefited from the project through input supply, revolving capital and refresher training.
2.4.4. The Central African Republic

153. In December 2012, a political-military crisis erupted in the northern part of the Central African Republic, rapidly spreading throughout the whole country and resulting in a dramatic humanitarian crisis. The waves of violence among the population included rapes, loottings, setting fire to food-processing stocks and cattle thefts, and the consequent internal conflicts worsened the already alarming food situation. This led to displacement of the population and to disruption of economic and agricultural activities in the affected areas, severely impacting economic and agricultural production. More than 800 000 people have been separated from their sources of livelihood. In rural areas, more than 500 000 people were displaced and now live in improvised camps in the bush far away from their original villages. Such a situation, combined with extreme poverty, bad hygiene conditions and minimum food reserves, has had a negative impact on food security, nutrition and households’ fundamental right to nutrition. The non-displaced persons lost their livelihoods as well.

154. A joint assessment carried out in September 2013 by WFP, FAO, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the NGO Action Against Hunger and the Institute Central African Republic of the Statistics and Economic and Social Sciences (ICASSES) revealed that 30 percent of the rural population (1.1 million people) are food insecure. It also found significant loss of productive assets (seeds, agricultural implements, livestock, infrastructure, etc.) in the agricultural sector, a decline in market prices due to the weakening of households’ purchasing power and a reduction in stocks by traders and small-scale farmers because of fear of looting.

155. The project Livelihoods Resilience Opportunities for Conflict Affected Rural Communities in Central African Republic was implemented between March 2014 and February 2016 to consolidate the resilience of affected and vulnerable farming communities by empowering them to restore their basic capacities for production and develop diversified livelihood opportunities.

156. The project aimed at: (a) facilitating access to basic productive inputs, such as agricultural materials and tools for the affected families; (b) offering groups of mainly women the opportunity to strengthen their resilience in the long term through social support (women’s leadership for good nutrition, plus money transfers), technical support (in horticulture, staple crops, quality seed multiplication, animal protein production and post-harvest management) and financial support (creation of groups for improved saving and credit tontines); and (c) strengthening the coordination and information system to support the food security cluster so as to better plan emergency actions.

157. Initially, the project targeted between 10 000 and 11 000 households according to the input costs, which can differ considerably due to the high demand and the time of purchase. The project also supported 2 000 women-headed households with a more comprehensive approach focusing on technical and social assistance. The distribution of agricultural inputs targeted 16 174 households.

158. Thanks to the project’s support, 8 842 ha were planted, producing approximately 11 372 tonnes of food — enough to ensure at least 4–5 months of food availability to beneficiary households.

159. Savings were mobilized for groups internally during weekly meetings by 4 292 members; the total value of loans within groups was USD 32 235.

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87 GCP/CAF/015/MUL
2.4.5. South Sudan

160. In December 2013 armed hostilities erupted in Juba and spread quickly across the country, seriously affecting six out of the ten states of South Sudan. The conflict exacerbated an already fragile food security situation as a result of massive displacements, high levels of insecurity and the disruption of livelihoods among vulnerable groups such as livestock owners, fisherfolk, farmers and the urban population. The crisis increased market fragmentation, insecurity along commercial supply corridors, food and fuel price hikes, and the risk of cattle rustling, thus hindering livestock mobility, fishing and hunting migrations, and conflict-related displacements. The government, already in austerity mode, has been further weakened by the crisis, including through looting of offices, accommodation, vehicles and warehouses and the diversion of line ministry resources to security priorities.

161. As the crisis unfolded, more than 740,000 people were displaced. By June 2014, 7.2 million people were estimated to be at some level of risk, with over 1 million people in situ estimated to be in the "emergency" phase category and an additional 2.2 million in the "crisis" phase, and a total of 3.2 million at risk of severe food insecurity. Ongoing violence and instability meant that livestock migrations were not following traditional routes, leading to new and unexpected concentrations and commingling of vaccinated and unvaccinated herds, thus increasing the risk of disease transmission and outbreaks. Immediate action was therefore needed to enable rapid preventive vaccination campaigns as well as a timely response to outbreaks of pandemic diseases.

162. In response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation, FAO adopted a light, flexible and multidimensional operational strategy called the Emergency Livelihood Response Programme (ELRP).\(^{88}\) Within that framework, the project \textit{Support to South Sudan Emergency Livelihood Programme}\(^{89}\) was implemented to help protect vulnerable populations affected by the ongoing crisis from hunger, malnutrition and destitution.

163. The project was able to achieve its expected outcome through implementing activities that contributed to three outputs: (a) rapid emergency livelihood support provided to most affected areas; (b) effective emergency livestock response mechanisms in place and operational; and (c) food production and food availability protected in less affected areas.

164. ASTF funding has helped increase food access and availability and protected the livelihoods of over 200,000 of the most vulnerable individuals in both conflict-affected and less-affected areas of South Sudan. More beneficiaries were reached than planned, owing mainly to increased access to emergency livelihood fishing and vegetable kits because cost per input was significantly cheaper than anticipated. In addition, interventions were redirected towards an emergency livestock response in 2015, which reached large livestock populations in areas where no other credible partners were present.

165. The project also promoted the uptake of locally produced food items, and in turn, improved the nutritional intake among displaced households as well as stimulating local markets within the host community. Monitoring of the kit distribution indicated that recipients were able to cover household food needs for up to six months while the catch of recipients of the fishing kits exceeded consumption, allowing them to access other commodities every month.

\(^{88}\) For detailed information on the ELRP in South Sudan, see \url{http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/emergencies/docs/Emergency%20Livelihood%20Response%20Programme%20December%202014.pdf}.

\(^{89}\) GCP/SSD/010/MUL
166. The livelihood assets of 18,743 pastoral households were protected, and the risk of livestock disease outbreaks and mortality for 560,000 animals was reduced, with contributions to countrywide vaccination and treatment campaigns. In addition, South Sudan’s veterinary cold chain was re-established through procurement of 800 livestock treatment kits, a refrigerated container, cold boxes and solar fridges, and capacity building of 16 community-based animal health workers.

167. In the Greater Bahr el-Ghazal, 3,430 households were supported with enough quality seed to prevent them from slipping into higher levels of food insecurity. Seed suppliers were also supported to sustain local seed production and marketing. More specifically, the project collected over 48 tonnes of local groundnut seed, generating the income of 21 progressive seed producers who were able to reinvest the funds in their farms. The project also contributed to Input Trade Fair schemes, which generated income for 21 seed suppliers and enabled 3,430 farming households to access crop seed for the 2015 agricultural season.

168. The livelihoods of 1,000 fisherfolk in Central Equatoria were diversified by providing them with different avenues to generate income. The project constructed 80 fish ponds, supplied with 242,016 fingerlings, and 24 poultry households stocked with 1,207 chickens. It also supported the cultivation of 36 feddans (15.1 ha) of vegetable gardens and promoted integrated aquaculture activities supporting 24 fish farmers’ groups.

2.4.6. Ethiopia

169. Over 29 percent of the total population in Ethiopia lives below the national poverty line, with poverty being higher in rural (30 percent) than in urban areas (25.7 percent). Agricultural production performance is affected by high population growth rates, which have led to declining farm sizes and fragmentation, and high rates of soil erosion and land degradation. In addition, limited access to improved farm inputs and technologies contributes to low agricultural production. Household food security challenges are aggravated by weather-related shocks, including recurrent droughts, which have plagued the country for centuries. Levels of chronic food and nutrition insecurity resulting in malnutrition remain high throughout the country. In recognition of its importance to rural welfare, agriculture is at the forefront of the government’s policies and strategies designed to alleviate poverty and hunger.

170. Accordingly, the project Enhanced Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction through Economic Diversification and Decent Work Opportunities for Rural Communities was implemented between May 2014 and February 2016. This project has demonstrated remarkable successes by promoting an integrated approach to improving food/nutrition security and poverty reduction through livelihood diversification and capacity development.

171. In order to address institutional weaknesses, increase capabilities for agricultural policy analysis and monitoring and evaluation (M&E), the project supported the development of web-based M&E and Reporting System for Agriculture (MIS). In total, 452 agricultural experts were trained in application of the MIS in four regions. In addition, 500 government staff were trained and effectively involved in harmonizing the Federal Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries’ Five-Year Plan at regional and federal levels. The capacity of nearly 3,000 extension staff and beneficiaries was also strengthened in sustainable and nutrition-sensitive agriculture.

90 GCP/ETH/085/MUL
172. The project supported 290 youth to engage in beekeeping. Moreover, 1,050 vulnerable women and rural youth have benefited from income-generating activities such as dairy, poultry production, and kits for small-scale irrigated agriculture. Nearly 12,000 rural smallholders benefited from integrated production of cereals, legumes, and vegetables. Food-insecure households were able to meet their food and nutrition needs through the production of 8,301 tonnes of food, which is projected to generate an income of USD 7 million for the beneficiaries.

2.4.7. Malawi

173. Malawi is perennially susceptible to various natural and economic shocks, including prolonged dry spells, floods, pests and diseases, and high food price volatility. These have eroded the resilience of most rural households and compromised their ability to sustain their livelihoods. With that background, the project Building the Capacity of Most Vulnerable Households to Meet their Basic Needs and Withstand Shocks[92] was implemented between May 2014 and November 2016 in Phalombe District in southern Malawi.

174. The objective of the project was to increase the resilience of around 8,000 households who were vulnerable to disasters in one specific district through an integrated approach that brought together food/cash for work, nutritional education, disaster risk reduction (mainly early warning and preparedness systems) and sustainable agriculture activities.

175. The project was delivered as a joint UN action, bringing together three UN agencies (FAO, the United Nations Children’s Fund [Unicef] and WFP), in partnership with the Malawi Government through the Department of Economic Planning and Development and Phalombe District Council.[93]

176. The project increased the capacity of the most vulnerable households in the district to meet their basic needs and withstand climatic and economic shocks through: (a) building community/livelihood assets of targeted households and communities; (b) supporting and implementing resilience programmes in coordination with humanitarian assistance; (c) strengthening the capacity of agricultural extension service providers, vulnerable households and communities; and (d) implementing community-based nutrition education and communication programmes.

177. The project involved participatory understanding of the different shocks and hazards specific to the targeted villages, using the Farmer Field School approach; as well as the identification and implementation of practical actions required to mitigate the problems through an integrated resilience approach at community level.[94] As such, it helped to create linkages and synergies among the different social support interventions implemented by the government and other partners, such as NGOs in the district. Targeted interventions, like the Public Works Programme and Village Savings and Loans scheme, were vital to improving the quality of life, nutrition, well-being, safety and self-sufficiency of target beneficiaries.

178. In order to contribute to acceptable behavioural change among the beneficiary groups and the wider community, the project developed a customized communication and visibility strategy that was used to guide the development and dissemination of messages, as well as the sharing of information on food preparation, antenatal care attendance for pregnant women, and optimal complementary feeding.

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[92] GCP/MLW/064/MUL
179. Through the implementation of different, but well-integrated interventions, the project made significant contributions to building the resilience of the targeted communities and households, registering key achievements at household, community and district levels. Key impacts included: (a) farmers' skills development through hands-on learning, and the adoption of climate change adaptive and sustainable agriculture practices and technologies; (b) increased and diversified crop production; (c) livelihood diversification through engagement in both farm and off-farm businesses; (d) a reduced culture of dependency on external assistance; (e) an increased culture of saving and assets accumulation; (f) instruction in appropriate water, sanitation and hygiene practices, resulting in increased sanitation coverage; and (g) improved nutrition practices for participating households, culminating in increased resilience to climatic shocks among the beneficiary families.

180. In addition, the project acted as a platform to showcase the Farmer Field School approach, and is now being replicated through two different projects in other districts through USD 32 million and EUR 6 million investment made by the EU to FAO.

2.4.8. Mali

181. In Mali, the project entitled Creating Agribusiness Employment Opportunities for Youth through Sustainable Aquaculture Systems and Cassava Value Chains was implemented between July 2014 and September 2016. The objective was to improve farming methods through Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS).

182. The capacity of youth groups was strengthened to effectively engage in the production and marketing of rice, milk, poultry, fish and vegetables. Fifty trainers were trained on the JFFLS approach, and a pool of trainers has now been established at national and regional level. Similarly, 80 youth facilitators were trained and they formed groups of five to ensure the animation of JFFLS and provide technical assistance to beneficiaries in farming. These trainers have now trained facilitators in the target localities. They contributed to the adaptation of the JFFLS approach in the agricultural sectors chosen by young people.

183. In terms of job creation, the project assisted 417 youth (including 168 women) who are now ready to engage in economic activities. A study tour in the United Republic of Tanzania was organized, with 13 participants from public services, NGOs and beneficiaries. Over 400 new jobs were created, and 1,000 others improved, with an average of five young per activity set up.

184. The project has also had catalytic effects. For example, the JFFLS approach has generated widespread enthusiasm and the project has had a strong impact in mobilizing additional resources from other funding partners. In one example, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kayes funded the FAO intervention with USD 209,950 in support of 50 young Mauritanian refugees in...
Mali together with 50 young residents among the host communities.\textsuperscript{100} Similarly, under Luxembourg’s Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP) III,\textsuperscript{101} FAO Mali received EUR 1.5 million to replicate the approach in the regions of Segou and Sikasso.\textsuperscript{102}

### 2.4.9. Niger

185. The frequent recurrence of droughts and other natural disasters to which rural communities are subjected in Niger increases their vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity. The project *Support au processus d’appui aux Communes de Convergences*\textsuperscript{103} was implemented in Niger between March 2014 and June 2016.

186. The project supported over 160,000 vulnerable households to improve their agricultural productivity through the distribution of quality inputs. Over 20 ha have been managed for vegetable growing. A total of 700 households have also been supplied with 90 pumps to enable all-season vegetable production for families to diversify their diets. Over 300 tonnes of maize seeds and 1,500 kg of onions were distributed to 100,000 vulnerable households.

187. Child feeding and nutrition were enhanced through investments in livestock recapitalization for vulnerable women.

188. Furthermore, six farmer warehouses, or *Maisons du paysan*, were built, providing supplies of agricultural inputs, animal feed, phytosanitary products as well as farm equipment and technical advice. These centres are now fully operational and able to support hundreds of thousands of farmers over the coming planting seasons.

189. A total of 4,320 members (including 2,880 women) of Dimitra Radio Listening Clubs, which disseminate technical information and good practices, were impacted through capacity-building activities. In addition, 93 technicians were trained in nutrition issues.

190. The ASTF project has thus contributed to the establishment and development of an integrated service system to improve the performance of agropastoral activities and strengthen the resilience of over 700,000 potential farmers and pastoralists against future drought or other crises.

191. In terms of catalytic effects, newly developed partnerships led to the mobilization of additional USD 810,300 from Norway to scale up ASTF-funded activities in the communities.

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\textsuperscript{100} The joint project between UNHCR and FAO supports 50 Mauritanian refugee youths and 50 host community youths. It aims to reduce rural poverty, improve food security, and reinforce peaceful coexistence between host and refugee communities. So far, the project has distributed kits to 10 refugee groups in four communes of Guidimakan Kéry Kafo, Sahel, Karakoro and Djelebou to support activities related to cattle and sheep fattening, as well as dairy milk production from cows and goats. The construction of stables to provide shelter for livestock is ongoing in some of these refugee sites. Six groups pursuing cattle-fattening activities sold their cattle and collectively earned 8,550,000 CFA (approx. USD 14,532). These groups are now in the process of reinvesting their proceeds to buy new cattle. See [https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/577a0c6d4.pdf](https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/577a0c6d4.pdf).


\textsuperscript{102} ICP III (2015–2019) specifically targets rural development, training and professional integration, as well as decentralization and governance. It operates in the south of the country in the Ségou Region and the Yorosso Circle as well as in the north in the Kidal and Gao Regions. This ICP with Mali was developed, and is implemented, in close coordination with local authorities, involving bilateral and multilateral (WFP, ILO, FAO and UNDP) executing agencies, as well as NGOs and the Universities of Luxembourg and Bamako. See [https://cooperation.gouvernement.lu/en/partenaires/pays-partenaires/mali.html](https://cooperation.gouvernement.lu/en/partenaires/pays-partenaires/mali.html).

\textsuperscript{103} GCP/NER/056/MUL
3. General experiences, lessons and spin-off effects

3.1. Technical experiences and lessons

3.1.1. Catalytic effects and leveraging

192. Several projects had important catalytic effects leading to replication and upscaling of their interventions by other donors. In Rwanda, for example, building on the youth employment project’s results, the government has invested a similar amount of resources to replicate the poultry model in two other locations.

193. The youth employment project implemented in Mali also led to the mobilization of an additional EUR 1.5 million from Luxembourg to replicate the same approach in two other regions, and an additional USD 318 085 from UNHCR to support similar interventions in a third region. In Liberia, following the ASTF intervention, FAO raised USD 1.2 million from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation for scaling up the project’s interventions in other counties.

194. In Malawi, the project mobilized additional EUR 6 875 000 from the EU to replicate its activities using the same approach in three other districts. The EU is now replicating the results at an even larger scale with a funding of USD 32 million.

195. In Niger, the Norwegian Government has contributed USD 810 300 for strengthening the resilience of rural communities based on the ASTF project’s results.

196. The SPS project in the Southern African region has led to the mobilization of an additional USD 7 million from the EU to continue the project work covering all 15 SADC countries.

3.1.2. Partnerships

197. The ASTF has established and strengthened a range of partnerships at regional, subregional and national levels, including traditional and non-traditional FAO partners. At the regional level, the ASTF has helped FAO to reinforce its partnerships with key regional development actors in Africa, such as the African Union, NEPAD and SADC. As soon as the ASTF was launched, the African Union Commission (AUC) became a key player within the governance structure of the ASTF. The AUC is a member of the Steering Committee represented by a designated staff member. This representation was intended to directly involve the AUC in the decision-making process of the Fund and ensure coherence and alignment of the funded projects and the continent-wide priorities set by the African Union.

198. Similarly, the project entitled Enhancing Employment Opportunities for Rural Youth in Africa/NEPAD Rural Futures stands out as a major step towards reinforcing the partnership between FAO and NEPAD.
At the national level, ASTF projects have strengthened the engagement with FAO’s usual government partners, including Departments of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. In addition, the ASTF has helped in engagements with less traditional government ministries such as Ministries of Labour, Social Affairs, Economics and Trade, and Local Development, in total alignment with the revised FAO Strategic Objectives. This was the case with youth employment projects, for example, where partnerships were built with non-traditional government entities, including the Ministry of Labour in Mali and the Youth Employment Authority in Ghana. The level of engagement with government partners has been particularly high in most of the ASTF interventions. There was a very specific motivation and commitment to effectively use the funding to achieve good results through these partnerships.

3.1.3. Capacity development

Capacity development has been one of the core elements of the ASTF. For instance, the project *Africa’s South–South Cooperation Facility for Agriculture and Food Security* created an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning to share good practices, knowledge and technology among African countries. The ASTF has also successfully demonstrated solidarity between African countries through funding several exchange visits and sharing of short-term development solutions such as capacity, experience and knowledge among African countries.

The ASTF has also helped strengthen capacity and technical expertise in new areas to help the youth, women and men in rural communities to respond to emerging challenges. In almost all countries involved, the capacity of women and youth groups has been strengthened to effectively engage in production and marketing activities, and to start up or boost personal businesses.

3.1.4. Policy support

The ASTF has supported the development of the National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agriculture in Uganda, which was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries in October 2017; and the subregional platform to discuss youth employment strategies in sectors such as aquaculture and the poultry industry. Similarly, in Mali the ASTF has supported district-level coordinating committees for policy dialogue on youth priorities, and national-level multi-stakeholder consultations to mainstream youth employment in agricultural policies.

The ASTF has facilitated the development of a national horticulture development strategy in Cameroon, Chad, the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe. These national strategies later contributed to the subregional strategy for horticulture development.

In Ethiopia, the ASTF supported the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in the development of a web-based planning, monitoring and reporting system to improve agricultural data collection, quality assurance and usefulness for decision-making in relation to national development plans, including the Growth and Transformation Plan.

Although the NEPAD project is qualified as a “policy project”, institutional challenges have impeded engagement in National Action Plans, which is a key outcome for the project.


3.1.5. Gender

206. Initially, gender was not at the forefront of the ASTF interventions. Only one project (*Rural Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Programme*), representing a small portion of ASTF total funding, has been designed specifically to empower women. According to the OED evaluation, most of the ASTF projects are “gender blind” in the sense that they do not specifically target women in their design. However, some projects have made deliberate efforts to focus on more female beneficiaries during the implementation phase. In general, the ASTF gender disaggregated data showed that women represented 30–40 percent of total beneficiaries across the ASTF portfolio.

207. In some interventions, women proved to be more suitable for some specific activities and the projects were adjusted to take that particularity into consideration for the remaining activities. For example, the three Ebola response projects implemented in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have particularly targeted women beneficiaries. The food security project in Central Africa has also supported women entrepreneurs in Cameroon, Chad, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe to commercialize their horticulture produce better through transformation and marketing techniques.

3.1.6. Innovation and success factors

208. The ASTF introduced some innovative operational modalities for extra-budgetary instruments, which were highly appreciated by FAO staff implementing the projects, but also by government counterparts. The OED identified the following key innovations that differentiate the ASTF from other initiatives.

209. **Alignment with priorities:** The ASTF is a response to national and regional priorities emerging from regional consultations and the Country Programming Frameworks. The scope for funding was based on a few broad priorities: resilience to crises and threats, food security and livelihoods, with an emphasis on national governments’ and regional organizations’ capacity development.

210. **Predictability of funding:** Unlike typical donor-funded proposals with no *a priori* funding envelopes, the ASTF began with a clear visibility and predictability of funding.

211. **Cost-effective fund allocation:** The idea of an “African Fund for Africa” was internalized in ASTF projects to reflect high cost-effectiveness in programming, with an emphasis on reducing administrative overheads and a high share of budgets spent on building assets and skills on the ground.

212. **Beneficiary contributions:** Many projects, especially the more capital-intensive aquaculture projects, included beneficiary co-financing or in-kind contributions as selection criteria, which enabled a wider spread of the grant components. In some cases, the revolving fund concept was explored in the design, to enable plough-back of funding to serve other beneficiaries.

213. **Transparent selection of beneficiaries:** The design of elaborate selection criteria, drawn up in consultation with counterparts and communities, and a transparent selection of beneficiaries through a competitive process, as well as a community endorsement of credentials, enabled a merit-based selection of beneficiaries.

214. **Decentralized implementation:** Implementation was decentralized to ensure delegation of ownership, accountability and administrative management, high flexibility for adaptation to local context, improved backstopping, and greater involvement of national counterparts’ rights from project design to implementation and monitoring.
215. **Light but periodic reporting**: ASTF projects also had to comply with lighter although more frequent (quarterly) reporting of progress, which enabled close monitoring and course corrections without creating the burden of preparing voluminous reports. In the future, less frequent but more quality reporting will be emphasized.

216. **Flexible governance**: An important aspect of the ASTF was the ease of convening the Steering Committee at short notice, and on a needs basis.

### 3.1.7. Alignment and sustainability

217. All the projects were well-aligned with the priorities of the African Union. In fact, the ASTF was conceived as a mechanism to achieve the objectives set by the AU in relation to ending hunger and achieving food security in Africa. The projects were also carefully aligned with FAO’s regional and country priorities (see sections on “Regional Priority Areas” and “Country Programming Framework Outcomes” of individual project reports in Annexes, Table 6.3).

218. The ASTF used innovative operational modalities for extra-budgetary instruments. These brought in higher levels of ownership and commitment of stakeholders. The solidary factor, funding “by Africa for Africa”, also brought both pride and high responsibility for implementing partners and was well internalized in the projects. This was reflected in an active involvement of government partners at all stages of the project cycle, including the design, beneficiary selection and targeting, implementation and monitoring.

219. Unlike many traditional donor-funded initiatives, which are often driven by donor priorities, the ASTF is a response to regional and national priorities emerging from FAO’s Regional Conference for Africa and national priorities under the Country Programming Frameworks (CPF)). The scope for funding under the ASTF was based on a broad set of priorities, including resilience to crises and threats, food security and livelihoods, with an emphasis on capacity development for regional and national organizations.

220. According to the evaluation conducted by FAO’s Office of Evaluation (OED) on the ASTF portfolio, many results are sustainable and were partly achieved thanks to the successful completion of multiple production cycles, enabling the generation of regular incomes, and the end of external crises, including civil war and disease outbreaks. This is particularly the case for the Ebola projects in Western Africa and the employment projects in Eastern Africa. Similarly, the inclusive and participatory implementation modalities adopted by the ATSF project have been highlighted as the main success factor of the SPS project in SADC countries. The involvement of technical officers from beneficiary countries in the selection of the thematic areas of intervention, in the design of the intervention and then throughout the implementation phase has translated into a high degree of national ownership and commitment, resulting in higher utility of the project’s results.

221. In terms of sustainability in human capital, the capacities built for technical officers are irreversible as they are largely in the form of knowledge and skills training. The principal recipients of the training sessions have shown a successful absorption of the knowledge. Likewise, essential capital goods

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106 The priorities of FAO’s work in the Africa region for the biennium 2014–2015, coinciding with the implementation of most of the ASTF projects, were decided during the 28th Regional Conference for Africa, held in Tunis, Tunisia, from 24 to 28 March 2014; see http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/030/mj777e.pdf. The priority areas of work for the biennium 2016–2017 were adopted during the 29th Regional Conference for Africa, held in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, from 4 to 8 April 2016; see http://www.fao.org/3/a-mp578e.pdf

107 CPFs for FAO member states can be accessed through the respective country website at http://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/en/
provided by the projects for early warning, detection and control of plant and animal diseases in the case of the SPS project, and for monitoring and backstopping support in the case of the employment projects, are likely to remain in use, as they are now anchored in the existing institutional setup. Furthermore, the uptake of the projects’ interventions by national governments, regional bodies and other donors will also create a demand for these capacities and ensure their relevance in the future.

222. In terms of financial sustainability, there is sufficient evidence reflected in the low levels of attrition, and the high reinvestment rates into businesses and the accumulation of assets and savings in youth projects such as the poultry and aquaculture enterprises. Some countries have planned large youth employment programmes and begun allocating substantial national resources for these aimed at large-scale employment in the agriculture sectors. However, there is a need to align projects with existing infrastructure, literacy levels of the target group, the countries’ priority value chains and existing policy environments with regards to youth employment, entrepreneurship and agribusiness. The value of project learnings can be immense in upscaling and sustaining replicable models.

3.2. Programme experiences and lessons

223. FAO has learned from experience and the OED evaluation report on ASTF projects. One of the key lessons is that the performance of the ASTF and the quality of engagement with resource partners and beneficiaries have generally improved throughout the implementation of the ASTF. This section draws on key programmatic experiences, lessons and challenges faced during the period.

3.2.1. Governance, management and resource allocation

224. The ASTF is governed through a Steering Committee and the Fund Assembly. These two bodies decide on priorities and approve proposed activities, based on a set of criteria. The Steering Committee provides strategic guidance and sets priorities for activities to be financed by the Fund, and approves the work plan and project proposals submitted by the Programme Management Unit (PMU).

225. The Steering Committee members include representatives of the ASTF donors (Angola and Equatorial Guinea), Chair of the Regional Africa Group, Chair of the Regional Conference for Africa, a Representative of the African Union, the Deputy Director-General for Programmes, the Deputy Director-General for Natural Resources, and the PMU, which acts as the Steering Committee Secretariat.

226. The implementation of funded activities is coordinated and directed by the PMU. The PMU is also responsible for the coordination of project activities and is based at the FAO Regional Office for Africa (RAF), under the oversight of the Assistant Director-General/Regional Representative. The Fund Assembly serves as a consultative forum where members share information on achievements, lessons learned and emerging issues to advise the Steering Committee on future development of the Fund.

227. Unlike typical donor-funded projects with no a priori funding envelopes, the ASTF began with a clear visibility of funding. A corpus of USD 40 million was in place before proposals were invited. In addition, clear funding criteria and budgetary ceilings were set in advance, with USD 4 million for subregional projects (a maximum of USD 1 million per country) and USD 2 million for single-country projects. This enabled FAO country offices to formulate pragmatic proposals that matched the available budget ceilings.
228. Proposal requirements for the ASTF were much simpler than most donor funds, and called for less documentation and due diligence — as FAO was the key implementer of projects. Approvals were also expeditious, as the Steering Committee could be convened frequently and flexibly. The Steering Committee could be convened at short notice, including through the use of remote participation (e.g. tele-conferences). As a result, the Steering Committee cleared proposals and issued decisions expeditiously.

229. In order to achieve high cost-effectiveness in programming, administrative overheads were set at a 7 percent cap, with a directive to spend at least 70 percent of the programme funds on beneficiaries on the ground. Thus, most ASTF projects spent a higher share of their budget on building assets and skills on the ground than on official study tours, seminars and conference events. This resulted in the highest possible coverage of beneficiaries.

230. From the outset, elaborate criteria were designed for selecting projects in consultation with counterparts and communities. In addition, beneficiaries were selected in a transparent manner through a competitive process. A community endorsement of credentials also enabled a merit-based selection of beneficiaries, which reduced resistance and elicited community ownership of the initiatives.

231. An important aspect of the resource management is the decentralized budget holding and national implementation modalities. For example, the Eastern Africa employment project was not only managed by the subregional office in Addis Ababa, but subdivided the budgets into five “baby” projects, which were managed by the FAO country offices. The other three subregional projects were managed out of the Regional Office for Africa (RAF) Ghana and FAO headquarters.

232. According to the OED evaluation, this decentralized arrangement had important advantages, including: (a) delegation of ownership, accountability and administrative management; (b) high flexibility and local context adaptation (i.e. projects were better structured with greater involvement of country staff, and budgets could be adapted to local requirements and used national procurement processes; (c) improved backstopping quality; and (d) greater involvement of the national counterparts right from project design to implementation and monitoring, which led government partners to accept outsourcing some of the extension services delivery to the private sector.

3.2.2. Operational challenges

233. One of the key operational challenges faced was the complexity of administrative procedures and the slowness of recruitment and procurement procedures. This was particularly the case when the project’s Budget Holder was not in the same country office. This has caused some delays and in some cases undermined the projects’ results.

234. Another key challenge highlighted by the OED is the fragmentation of technical leadership. For example, in the case of employment initiatives, the role of FAO headquarters’ support is of crucial importance in terms of technical leadership as the core technical expertise and knowledge products reside entirely in FAO’s Decent Rural Employment (DRE) unit in Rome. However, the fact that the overall leadership of implementation of the ASTF initiative is at RAF left some gaps in the quality of technical backstopping, with the DRE team playing a minor advisory role only when sought. This gap was felt most in the NEPAD project, which hinges on the technical assistance provided by FAO.
235. The DRE team is directly implementing several youth employment projects in Africa, including some countries that are part of ASTF interventions (Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda), with a focus on policy mainstreaming. However, linkages between these DRE projects and the ASTF projects (especially in Nigeria and Senegal) remained weak.

236. The absence of these linkages affected upstream policy uptake from the ground, and deviated from the ASTF principle of strengthening policy and institutional capacities of governments. At the same time, the involvement of DRE teams from FAO headquarters adds another layer of costs that reduce the magnitude of funds to be spent on beneficiaries, which was another guidance directive for projects.

3.3. Spin-offs from the ASTF

237. The ASTF evaluation by OED, also complemented by a senior-level field visit, documented several spin-offs and important catalytic effects leading to the replication and upscaling of their interventions by other donors or governments. A number of projects have motivated national governments and development partners to invest in similar projects to scale up successful models such as youth employment (see 4.1.1, “Catalytic effects and leveraging”).

238. The flexibility offered by the ASTF allows for investments in critical gaps, emerging priorities and rapid interventions in addressing key challenges in the region. It also enables the development of capacity and technical expertise in new areas to help women and men in rural communities to respond to emerging challenges effectively.

239. Analysis of the common lessons and challenges is based on a high-level field mission to Cameroon, Malawi and Uganda in January 2018. All three countries face different challenges, but a number of common themes emerged. There is high degree of ownership due to the unique nature of the ASTF. The catalytic use of ASTF money was seen in the three countries. A conscious planning for catalytic synergies in all future initiatives can help snowball and scale up ASTF impacts. The use of Farmer Field School approaches was a common key delivery modality. Future efforts should be geared towards embracing or integrating innovative approaches and holistic food systems, including digital innovation, agroecology and climate-smart approaches. There is a need to ensure greater engagement and ownership and a high level of buy-ins by local and national authorities. To ensure more value for money, the number of supporting groups of producers and beneficiaries should be scaled up. There is a need for common approaches to Monitoring and Evaluation across ASTF initiatives.
4. Conclusions and the way forward

240. In conclusion, the ASTF has proved to be highly relevant, but also an important funding mechanism to support African countries in pursuing their set priorities and objectives. The Fund has been successful in showcasing African solidarity and demonstrating the positive effects of this solidarity on the continent’s development. The ASTF has also introduced new implementation modalities for extra-budgetary funding that are both flexible to accommodate country-specific needs and effective to achieve desired results on the ground. The majority of ASTF projects have achieved the expected results. More specifically, the interventions have helped improve food security and nutrition in the target areas, while also providing capacity development and knowledge sharing in different contexts.

241. Within FAO, the ASTF has also proved to be instrumental in funding emerging thematic areas and underfunded areas, such as youth employment, food safety and resilience interventions. In addition, the good results of the interventions showcased FAO’s expertise in these areas and had an important catalytic effect in some countries. The ASTF has helped FAO reinforce its partnerships with key regional development actors in Africa, which include the African Union, NEPAD, ECOWAS, the European Commission on Agriculture (ECA) and SADC. These strategic partnerships need to be nurtured properly to allow for a stronger collaboration between FAO and its partners.

242. Although the ASTF, as a funding mechanism, has its fair share of challenges that the management, resource partners and project implementers were concerned about, the lessons learned show that there is room for improvement. The evaluation by OED indicated key areas that need to be strengthened in order to realize the full potential of the ASTF as a flexible funding mechanism. The recommendations on necessary improvements by the OED evaluation are summarized in Box 9. Based on the successes and lessons learned to date, the ASTF will be redesigned with a renewed and focused vision and calls for expanded partnerships. Well-structured programmatic funding by the ASTF can reduce fragmentation and duplication, create synergies and reduce transaction costs, and foster cross-sector integration.

243. Looking forward, the SDGs and the AU’s Agenda 2063 are key to overcoming development challenges in Africa. This calls for less earmarked, less fragmented and more integrated funding instruments for the ASTF. FAO can complement African countries’ efforts through providing unearmarked pooled funding from the ASTF. This will help drive integrated and cross-sectoral approaches, as well as facilitating intra-African exchanges of development solutions, through South–South and triangular cooperation instruments.
Box 9. Recommendations from the Office of Evaluation

The ASTF Steering Committee should strengthen efforts to communicate the relevance of the ASTF and its contribution to Africa’s strategic documents via the preparation of an exhaustive background document on the Fund, its objectives and funding strategy. This reference document should be widely distributed to increase awareness among FAO staff about the Fund, and disclosed to resource partners during a side event at any relevant conference, including the Regional Conference for Africa and the African Union summit.

The ASTF Steering Committee should earmark funds to develop and implement a communication and resource mobilization strategy aimed at the replenishment of the Fund. Given the urgency to mobilize additional resources, a Finance Committee under the Steering Committee could be created to ensure clear guidance and leadership for the resource mobilization efforts, as well as hiring a dedicated fundraising expert to support the process.

The ASTF Steering Committee should establish a cross-learning component within the ASTF to ensure cross-fertilization among the different interventions, and also to replicate successful experiences in other countries pursuing similar themes, particularly in gender and youth employment.

The ASTF Steering Committee should ensure all ASTF interventions give adequate consideration to gender-related issues, including women’s economic empowerment.

FAO should continue to invest in strengthening the partnerships with the African Union and NEPAD in particular in the context of the ongoing NEPAD project. FAO should also leverage on the regional presence of NEPAD and explore its involvement in resource mobilization.

FAO should consider assigning dedicated staff to the management of the ASTF, ideally based in the Regional Office for Africa (RAF), especially in the context of increased funding. In addition to administrative responsibilities, the staff will be responsible for transversal functions of the management of the Fund, including liaison with government donors and regional partners, communication, cross-learning and resource management.

244. One of the key areas highlighted by the ASTF Evaluation by OED in 2017 is the need to undertake more effective resource mobilization aimed at recapitalization of the Fund. Accordingly, FAO has issued a renewed call and new modalities for expanded partnership in unearmarked funding towards the ASTF. The main thrust of the ASTF is the renewed commitment and recapitalization of the Fund in order to allow the continuation of this commendable initiative. This includes broadening the Fund to attract resources from more countries and resource partners. The renewed ASTF strategy includes three interrelated components briefly described below.

(a) Support actions for accelerating the SDGs

245. SDGs’ capacity development, cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder policy dialogue and facilitation, monitoring and data support are areas in which most countries need support. At the current pace, African countries still have major challenges in mobilizing domestic resources and investments needed to effectively implement the SDGs.

246. Focusing on the marginal expansion of normal sectoral work is insufficient to deliver the SDGs. Instead, a more coordinated support from FAO through the ASTF will enhance a transformative pathway to actions designed to implement the SDGs, including: (a) monitoring SDG indicators and data support; (b) cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder policy dialogue and investment planning; and (c) integrated

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108 By 2021, FAO will have significantly scaled up its activities and partnership model to effectively address 40 targets of 15 SDGs, as measured by 53 indicators.
policies and partnerships to leverage investments, and mobilize resources and capacity development. This requires increased levels of unearmarked funding through the ASTF.

(b) Intra-Africa exchanges and knowledge generation and sharing

247. Part of the objectives of the ASTF are to foster intra-African and South–South collaboration, documentation of good practices and the mobilization of African institutions of excellence in food and agriculture. The new ASTF will support platforms for generation of innovation and sharing development solutions among countries. In particular, the ASTF will mobilize African research centres and think tanks towards SDG solutions.

248. The new ASTF also provides a good opportunity to better tap into African Centres of Excellence and their expertise, through identifying and strengthening these institutions and using the South–South Cooperation instrument to connect existing institutions and promote knowledge sharing and the exchange of development solutions.

(c) Innovative financing modalities

249. The new ASTF envisages an expanded financing base with a wide range of African countries and partners contributing to the Fund. It also aims to mobilize national, regional and global capital at a scale to accelerate on the delivery of the SDGs and other African commitments.

250. African countries will be able to contribute to either of the following two streams: (i) Africa’s Enabler Stream; and (ii) Africa’s Two-way Funding Stream. The central premise of the ASTF is that this pool of unearmarked funds will bring additional gains that would otherwise not have been possible with individual projects, such as the Fund’s agility and responsiveness to emergency situations, capturing emerging opportunities, leveraging and removing barriers to other initiatives. This not only reduces fragmentation, duplication and transaction costs but also creates synergies and coherence, leading to better outcomes.

251. Although the ASTF is a single basket portfolio of unearmarked funds, it also has a window for multi-partner participation at the country, regional or global level. Therefore, motivated development partners within and outside Africa will be able to contribute to the ASTF through: (i) Africa’s Funding Window, including Africa–to–Africa support and additional in-country support for the contributing countries’ Unilateral Trust Fund (UTF); and (ii) the Partners’ Funding Window.

252. The renewed ASTF will be open to contributions from stakeholders such as the bilateral and multilateral donors — referred to as “Friends of Africa” — in the form of in-kind contributions, financial contributions or technical assistance. This will offer the opportunity for partners operating in African countries, and global partners, to contribute unearmarked funds directly to the development of Africa through the ASTF, including initiatives to replicate or scale up proven practices and initiatives within a country or elsewhere in Africa. Contributions can be made through donations and/or co-financing agreements.
5. Annexes

5.1. List of ASTF-funded projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project code</th>
<th>Project title</th>
<th>Relevant SO</th>
<th>Start date</th>
<th>End date</th>
<th>Total budget (USD)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thematic Area 1: Food safety, security and nutrition</strong></td>
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<td>GCP/RAF/495/MUL</td>
<td>Africa’s South–South Cooperation Facility for Agriculture and Food Security</td>
<td>SO1, SO2,</td>
<td>19 Mar 2015</td>
<td>31 Aug 2017</td>
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<td>GCP/SFS/001/MUL</td>
<td>Strengthening Controls of Food Safety Threats, Plant and Animal Pests and</td>
<td>SO2, SO4,</td>
<td>15 Oct 2014</td>
<td>13 Oct 2017</td>
<td>4 000 000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Diseases for Agricultural Productivity and Trade in Southern Africa</td>
<td>SO5</td>
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<td>GCP/SFC/001/MUL</td>
<td>La sécurité alimentaire renforcée en milieu urbain en Afrique centrale grâce</td>
<td>SO2, SO4</td>
<td>15 Sep 2014</td>
<td>31 Dec 2017</td>
<td>4 000 000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>à une meilleure disponibilité de la nourriture produite localement</td>
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<td><strong>Thematic Area 2: Resilience and livelihood support</strong></td>
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<td>GCP/NER/056/MUL</td>
<td>Support au processus d’appui aux Communes de Convergences</td>
<td>SO1</td>
<td>1 Mar 2014</td>
<td>30 Jun 2016</td>
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<td>GCP/SSD/010/MUL</td>
<td>Support to South Sudan Emergency Livelihood Programme</td>
<td>SO5</td>
<td>1 Apr 2014</td>
<td>30 Sep 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCP/CAF/015/MUL</td>
<td>Livelihoods Resilience Opportunities for Conflict Affected Rural Communities</td>
<td>SO5</td>
<td>4 Mar 2014</td>
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<td>GCP/MLW/064/MUL</td>
<td>Building the Capacity of Most Vulnerable Households to Meet their Basic Needs and Withstand Shocks</td>
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<td>1 May 2014</td>
<td>30 Nov 2016</td>
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<td>GCP/SIL/046/MUL</td>
<td>Post-Ebola Recovery of the Agribusiness Sector in Sierra Leone</td>
<td>SO1, SO4,</td>
<td>1 Jan 2015</td>
<td>31 Dec 2016</td>
<td>500 000</td>
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<td>SO5</td>
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<td>GCP/GUI/021/MUL</td>
<td>Support to the Resilience of Ebola Affected Households</td>
<td>SO5</td>
<td>1 Feb 2015</td>
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<td>GCP/LIR/019/MUL</td>
<td>Emergency Response to Mitigate the Impact of Ebola Virus Disease on Food Security and Agriculture Based Livelihoods in Liberia</td>
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<td>1 Feb 2015</td>
<td>31 Jul 2016</td>
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<td>GCP/RAF/506/MUL</td>
<td>Adoption of Efficient and Climate-smart Agriculture Practices in African Small Island Developing States (SIDS)</td>
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<td>30 Oct 2018</td>
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<td>Enhancing Capacity/Risk Reduction of Emerging Tilapia Lake Virus (TLV) to African Tilapia Aquaculture</td>
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<td>1 Apr 2018</td>
<td>30 Sep 2019</td>
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<td>GCP/RAF/504/MUL</td>
<td>Rural Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Programme (RWEAP)</td>
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<td>1 May 2016</td>
<td>31 Oct 2018</td>
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<td>GCP/ETH/085/MUL</td>
<td>Enhanced Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction through Economic Diversification and Decent Work Opportunities for Rural Communities</td>
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<td>19 May 2014</td>
<td>29 Feb 2016</td>
<td>2 000 000</td>
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<td>GCP/RAF/254/MUL</td>
<td>Creating Agribusiness Employment Opportunities for Youth through Sustainable Aquaculture Systems and Cassava Value Chains</td>
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<td>15 Oct 2014</td>
<td>13 Oct 2017</td>
<td>4 000 000</td>
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<td>GCP/MLI/040/MUL</td>
<td>Creating Agribusiness Employment Opportunities for Youth through Sustainable Aquaculture Systems and Cassava Value Chains</td>
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<td>16 Oct 2016</td>
<td>17 Oct 2019</td>
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5.2. List of beneficiary countries and projects from which they benefited

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<th>Subregional project code</th>
<th>Country project code</th>
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<td>Liberia</td>
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<td>Rwanda</td>
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</table>
## 5.3. Summary of individual project reports

### Regional programmes

**South–South Cooperation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROJECT NAME</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROJECT NUMBER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **OUTCOMES**                         | 1.1: Member states and their development partners make explicit political commitments in the form of policies, investment plans, programmes, legal frameworks and the allocation of necessary resources to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.  
2.2: Stakeholders in Member States strengthen governance — the policies, laws, management frameworks and institutions that are needed to support producers and resource managers — in the transition to sustainable agricultural-sector production systems.  
5.1: Countries and regions adopt and implement legal, policy and institutional systems and regulatory frameworks for risk reduction and crisis management. |
| **IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES**          | Regional: Angola, Burkina Faso, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Zimbabwe |
| **REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVES** | RI 1, RI 2, RI 3 |
| **PROJECT DATES**                    | 19 Mar 2015–31 Aug 2017 |
| **BUDGET**                           | USD 1 000 000 |
| **BENEFICIARIES**                    | Food-insecure populations in the recipient countries |
| **PROJECT RESULTS**                  |  
• The project provides strategic guidance and an oversight role to establish the African Centre of Best Practices, Capacity Development and South–South Cooperation (SSC).  
• Supports the FAO/NEPAD framework for cooperation within the CAADP and Malabo frameworks.  
• An exchange visit held between Rwanda and Uganda enabled 11 participants from Rwanda to be exposed to good practices of small-scale irrigation in Uganda.  
• 30 participants from Kenya, Uganda and Zambia visited Zimbabwe to share experiences in climate-smart agriculture and conservation agriculture.  
• Exchange visit on sustainable cassava value-chain practices for Cameroon, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo for 11 participants in Cameroon.  
• Policy briefs, policy dialogue and recommendations on transboundary livestock management in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) subregion.  
• Study on the contribution of livestock to the economies of IGAD countries (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda). The final regional report was endorsed by IGAD Member States in April 2016 in Kampala, Uganda.  
• Training and mentoring facilitators of the Pastoralist Field Schools (PFS) in the Sahel. The outcomes have been reviewed to focus on support for refresher training of Master Trainers in Niger (instead of the four countries, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Niger).  
• Field reportage in Angola on fish transformation and Farmer Field Schools.  
• Multimedia reportage on resilience in Chad.  
• Multimedia reportage on Rwanda.  
• Video-documentary produced in Zimbabwe for ASTF visibility.  
• RAF Communication Network has provided support for the design and implementation of a communication strategy established for visibility in countries. Project results posted on FAO website and national media websites and ministries.  
• Side event organized during the Africa Regional Conference to increase visibility. Comprehensive information package prepared and distributed to the Conference’s participants.  
• Support to the organization of the ARC 2016. |
| **CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS**      |  
• The project contributes to three of FAO’s five Strategic Objectives: SO1, SO2 and SO5. |
GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS

• The project established partnerships with the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA) and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). This supports the Regional Initiative on the Renewed Partnership to End Hunger in Africa by 2025, which intends to facilitate South–South cooperation both at national level between participating focus countries and at regional level in partnership with AUC, NPCA and Institute Lula.

• In terms of capacity development, the project develops capacity through training, mentoring facilitators and exchange visits. The capacity for implementation of PFS has been strengthened in four countries in the Sahel. Capacity for strengthening resilience among vulnerable farming households has also been enhanced through value-chain development and market-oriented production. Institutional capacity for resilience in IGAD and SADC has been strengthened through policy dialogue and learning visits.

• Gender is at the heart of this initiative through ensuring that resilience policies and strategies at regional, national and local levels promote equal access to and control over resources and incomes.

CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

Challenges

• Delays in completion of work plans and implementation

Lessons

• Lessons learnt on the need to use the SSC to contribute to the Regional Initiatives implementation at country level.

• The project has received high level of political support and ownership in the four implementing countries.

NEPAD

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

PROJECT NAME
Promoting Decent Rural Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship in Agriculture and Agribusiness

PROJECT NUMBER
GCP/RAF/494/MUL

FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
SO1, SO2, SO3, SO4

OUTCOMES
1.1: Member states and their development partners make explicit political commitments in the form of policies, investment plans, programmes, legal frameworks and the allocation of necessary resources to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

2.2: Stakeholders in Member States strengthen governance — the policies, laws, management frameworks and institutions that are needed to support producers and resource managers — in the transition to sustainable agricultural-sector production systems.

3.2: The rural poor have greater opportunities to access decent farm and non-farm employment.

4.2: Agribusinesses and agrifood chains that are more inclusive and efficient are developed and implemented by the public and private sectors.

IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES
Regional: Benin, Cameroon, Malawi and Niger

REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE
Youth employment

PROJECT DATES

BUDGET
USD 4 000 000

BENEFICIARIES
Rural youth in Benin, Cameroon, Malawi and Niger
## PROJECT RESULTS

- Stocktaking of existing and ongoing country-level programmes was completed to identify the opportunities, gaps and challenges in Benin, Cameroon, Malawi and Niger.
- Harmonized criteria for the selection of direct beneficiaries in the four countries.
- Regional youth training institutions were also identified. These included the Regional Multipurpose Youth Empowerment Centre at Buea, the Rural Training Centre of Mbanga (RTC) and the Practical Agriculture School of Binguela in Cameroon; the Centre Régional de Dosso and Centre Incubateur des PME au Niger in Niger; and the Songhai Training Institute in Benin.
- Conducted capacity assessments and Financial and Procurement appraisals of the training institutions (using AU/NEPAD Procurement and Financial Management Rules and Procedures) in two countries (Benin and Malawi).
- Draft reports for the National Action Plan (NAP) for youth in the four countries were produced.
- The work plans for four training institutions (Songhai in Benin, SMEDI in Malawi, EPAB in Cameroon, Multipurpose Youth Training Centre in Cameroon, CIPMEN and Doso Regional Centre in Niger) were drawn up.
- 44 youth capacitated with skills to engage in agricultural value-chain enterprises in Benin.
- 43 youth capacitated with skills to engage in agricultural value-chain enterprises in Malawi.
- 91 youth capacitated with skills to engage in agricultural value-chain enterprises in Cameroon.
- 20 business plans on agricultural value-chain entrepreneurships produced by youth in Benin, Cameroon and Malawi for funding.
- Facilitated attendance of eight students from the first cohort of the FAO Regional Conference as part of advocacy for the ASTF project.
- Facilitated attendance of eight students from the first cohort to agricultural vocational and education training workshop in Senegal in March 2018.

## CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS

- The project contributes to four of FAO’s five Strategic Objectives: SO1, SO2, SO3 and SO4.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS

- In terms of partnerships, the project strengthened partnerships between FAO, NEPAD and government ministries in each country. The ASTF project is also setting the platform to build partnerships with ongoing programmes in the proposed countries. The project works across different government ministries and other actors to promote youth employment and entrepreneurship in agriculture and agribusiness.
- In terms of capacity building, the project has provided vocational training (formal and informal) and has capacitated 178 youths in the four countries in agricultural value-chain enterprises.
- The project is also supporting policy dialogue as a key element. The NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency is also mainstreaming FAO’s capacity-development tools to support country policy formulation and implementation.
- In terms of catalytic effects, the Global African Agribusiness Accelerator Platform has indicated an interest in working with NEPAD to engage entrepreneurs from the project to benefit from the start-up fund. This is aimed at advancing the skills of entrepreneurs as well as exposing them to more funding opportunities.
- This project has a strong gender focus and it specifically targeted rural youth.

## CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

### Challenges

- Due to changes of high-level officials and personnel in some of the implementing countries, the coordination of activities was delayed in those countries.
- Implementation responsibility rests primarily with NEPAD and depends on requisite staffing and technical capacities for backstopping countries. The NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA) has very limited staff, and in this regard the need for FAO to play a more frontline role should be examined in case the project is extended.
- The focus of the project is not to provide start-up funds for all graduates from the programme. The concern is that some of the graduates who intend to engage in agricultural enterprises might be frustrated if they are not able to raise start-up funds elsewhere.

### Lessons

- Engagements with the Country Project Coordinating Committees (PCCs) in the four countries, as well as the site visits to potential training service providers, have revealed the need to align the project with existing infrastructure, literacy levels of the target group, the countries’ priority value chains and existing policy environments with regards to youth employment, entrepreneurship and agribusiness in the four countries.
- It is anticipated that the strengthening of NAPs on youth in the four countries could unlock constraints to accessing funds by the youth.
Rural women’s empowerment

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<td><strong>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>OUTCOMES</strong></td>
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<td><strong>IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES</strong></td>
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<td><strong>REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK OUTCOME(S)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROJECT DATES</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BUDGET</strong></td>
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<td><strong>BENEFICIARIES</strong></td>
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**PROJECT RESULTS**

Democratic Republic of the Congo
• Strengthened capacities of 445 people (243 women and 202 men), through training on gender, informal organizations, participatory communication, access to information and collective action, for the 20 Dimitra Clubs.
• 28 club leaders participated in the training, which they replicated for their own members, reaching around 350 farmers.
• Women’s and men’s work burden has been reduced through the distribution of 14 treadle water pumps to the 14 Dimitra Clubs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
• Improved capacities of the governmental extension services (SNV) to deliver more gender-responsive participatory services in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This was achieved through their participation in the Dimitra Clubs training (gender, participatory communication).
• Improved capacities of Dimitra Club members to grow and market good-quality vegetables.
• Improved use of gender-sensitive participatory approaches to contribute to more equitable access to and control over resources and to gender equality.

Swaziland
• 36 women’s groups (making a total of 603 beneficiaries) were trained in sweet potato processing and preservation.
• 39 farmers from the Nsenga group and six extension officers from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) benefited from a two-day study tour designed to expose group members to the various functional farmer business organizations and farmer initiatives.
• 25 technical officers from the MoA and other ministries, women’s networks and CSOs were trained in “Gender Mainstreaming for Inclusive Agricultural Growth”.

Gambia
• Fifty technical officers from the MoA and other ministries, women’s networks and CSOs were trained in “Gender Mainstreaming for Inclusive Agricultural Growth”.

**CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS**
• The project contributes to one of FAO’s five Strategic Objectives: SO3.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS**
• The project developed the capacity of women and men in good agricultural practices, food processing, gender, informal organizations, participatory communication, access to information and collective action.
• The project has also capacitated governmental extension services and CSOs to deliver more gender-responsive services.
• The project was designed to specifically empower women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia and Swaziland.

**CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED**

Challenges
• In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the activities have been implemented under the supervision of FAO with two different partners: SNV (extension services–state) and GAP NGO that were supposed to work in the same communities with their own area of expertise. This situation has created some coordination difficulties and confusion since the facilitators were not always working with the same mindset and with the same guidelines. Even close to the capital city of Kinshasa, access to the neighbourhood is difficult. The project funds do not permit flexibility in the work plan and related budget.
• In Swaziland, some delay in implementation was occasioned by cumbersome administrative and procurement procedures.
• In the Gambia, project implementation was delayed due to the political situation. Soon after the launch of the project in August 2016, preparations for the elections led to slow implementation of the planned activities. The elections and the political crisis that followed led to significant delays in implementation of activities.

Lessons
• Provision of training and coaching to the governmental services (agriculture, rural development) on innovative gender-sensitive methodologies that empower rural people are needed.
Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PROJECT NAME</strong></th>
<th>Adoption of Efficient and Climate-smart Agriculture Practices in African Small Island Developing States (SIDS)</th>
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<td><strong>PROJECT NUMBER</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE</strong></td>
<td>SO2 and SO4</td>
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</table>
| **OUTCOMES** | 2.1: Producers and natural resource managers adopt practices that increase and improve agricultural-sector production in a sustainable manner  
2.2: Stakeholders in Member States strengthen governance — the policies, laws, management frameworks and institutions that are needed to support producers and resource managers — in the transition to sustainable agricultural-sector production systems.  
4.1: International agreements, mechanisms and standards that promote more efficient and inclusive trade and markets are formulated and implemented by countries  
4.2: Agribusinesses and agrifood chains that are more inclusive and efficient are developed and implemented by the public and private sectors. |

**IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES:** Regional: Cabo Verde, Seychelles

**REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE** RI1: Africa’s 2025 Zero Hunger Challenge

**PROJECT DATES** 1 Oct 2017–30 Oct 2018

**BUDGET** USD 1 500 000

**BENEFICIARIES** Communities vulnerable to climate change in Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Seychelles

**PROJECT RESULTS**

**KEY RESULTS**
- The inception workshop held in September 2017 with the participation of the SIDS countries.
- The Signature of LoA with the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) to promote the adoption of efficient and climate-smart food production practices in the three-targeted SIDS countries.
- A detailed work plan was developed and shared with FAO. This serves to guide concrete implementation.
- Completed about 45 percent of the work on developing an overview of the agricultural sector and current and potential future impacts of climate change for Seychelles, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau as part of the CSA profiling.
- Completed about 25 percent of the work in identifying and analysing CSA practices and technologies in Seychelles, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau as part of the CSA profiling.
- Initiated the development of a stakeholder database for Seychelles, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau as part of the CSA profiling.
- The final report on country CSA profiles are in preparation by ICRISAT, and is expected in December 2018 as plans for the validation workshop of the country CSA profiles are set to take place in November-December 2018.

**CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS**
- The programme directly contributes to FAO’s Strategic Frameworks 2 and 4 (SP2 and SP4), and two of the five Strategic Objectives (SO2 and SO4).

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS**
- In terms of partnerships, the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA), the University Consortium of Small Island States (UCSIS), UN agencies (IFAD, UNEP), CGIAR centres, NGOs, CBOs and farmers’ associations and cooperatives were proposed as the implementing partners.

**CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED**

**Challenges**
- Delays in implementation due to various constraints.

**Lessons**
- With the many changes within RAF in terms of staff movements, there is a need to revise the project Task Force as well as the project coordination arrangement and communicate these changes to all project-implementing partners.
# Tilapia Lake Virus

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<td><strong>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</strong></td>
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</table>
| **OUTCOMES** | 2.1: Producers and natural resource managers adopt practices that increase and improve agricultural-sector production in a sustainable manner.  
2.2: Stakeholders in Member States strengthen governance — the policies, laws, management frameworks and institutions that are needed to support producers and resource managers — in the transition to sustainable agricultural-sector production systems.  
5.1: Countries and regions adopt and implement legal, policy and institutional systems and regulatory frameworks for risk reduction and crisis management. |
| **IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES** | Regional: Angola, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda |
| **REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE** | RI 1: Africa’s 2025 Zero Hunger Challenge  
RI 3: Building resilience in Africa’s drylands |
| **COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK OUTCOME(S)** | Angola: CPF Priority Area 3, Outcome 3, 3.3  
Egypt: CPF Priority Area B-4, Outcome B; Output B.4  
Ghana: CPF Priority Area 2, Outcome 2.1, 2.2  
Kenya: CPF Priority Area 3, Outcome 3, 3.1, 3.2  
Nigeria: CPF Priority Area B, Outcome B2; Output B2.1  
Uganda: CPF Priority Area 1, Outcome 1, 1.4; Outcome 3, 3.2 |
| **PROJECT DATES** | 1 Apr 2018–30 Sept 2019 |
| **BUDGET** | USD 779 450 |
| **BENEFICIARIES** | The competent authorities (Ministries of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry and Fisheries and Trade and Wildlife — especially the fisheries/aquaculture and veterinary authorities within the ministries) in each country. |

## PROJECT RESULTS

- A total of 34 delegates from Angola, Ghana, Kenya (and officials from Kenya’s Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation), Nigeria and Uganda, academia and producer-sector representatives, officials of FAOR and FAOHQ and experts attended the Project Inception Workshop.
- Participants’ knowledge of TiLV was enhanced on its emergence and current distribution, pathology and diagnostics, prevention, risks and risk management, aquatic animal disease surveillance and requirements. The participants also learned some aspects of socio-economic impact assessment methods and the FAO Emergency Management Tools.
- Strengthening biosecurity governance capacities of competent and other relevant authorities through regional training workshops. A ten-day intensive Training Course on TiLV is scheduled to be held in December 2018.

## CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS

- The project contributed to two of FAO’s five Strategic Objectives: SO2 and SO5.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS

- The key partners are the National Directorate of Aquaculture and National Directorate of Infrastructure and fisheries Industry and Ministry of Fisheries in Angola; Aquaculture/Fisheries and Veterinary Services and Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation in Egypt; Aquaculture/Fisheries and Veterinary Services and Ministry of Fisheries in Ghana; Aquaculture/Fisheries and Veterinary Services and Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in Kenya; Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Nigeria; and Aquaculture/Fisheries and Veterinary Services and Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries in Uganda.
- In terms of capacity development, the project strengthens the capacity of local-level and national-level institutions and stakeholders, working with small-scale producers, the academic sector and governmental and non-governmental entities and creating a mechanism for sharing responsibility.
- In terms of gender equality, this project provides equal participation in the various capacity-development areas. Gender analysis is being deployed to understand the distinct needs and realities of women and men.

## CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

- Since the project has only just started, the challenges and lessons are yet to be documented.
Subregional programmes

Western Africa

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROJECT NAME</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROJECT NUMBER</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **OUTCOMES**                         | 1.3: The decisions of Member States and their development partners regarding food security and nutrition are based on evidence and high-quality, timely and comprehensive food security and nutrition analysis that draws on data and information available in the network of existing sector and stakeholder information systems.  
2.1: Producers and natural resource managers adopt practices that increase and improve agricultural-sector production in a sustainable manner.  
3.3: Social protection systems are strengthened in support of sustainable rural poverty reduction.  
4.2: Agribusinesses and agrifood chains that are more inclusive and efficient are developed and implemented by the public and private sectors. |
| **IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES**          | Subregional (Western Africa): Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Senegal |
| **REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE** | RI 2: Sustainable Productivity and Value Chain in Africa |
| **PROJECT DATES**                    | 15 Oct 2014–13 Oct 2017 |
| **BUDGET**                           | USD 4 000 000 |
| **BENEFICIARIES**                    | Youth (directly) and communities (indirectly) in recipient countries |

**PROJECT RESULTS**

**KEY RESULTS**
- A total of 310 youths are engaged in 12 employment opportunities in aquaculture and cassava value chains. The number of candidates accepted to benefit from the project are 18 in Guinea-Bissau, 92 in Ghana, 150 in Nigeria (where 38.67 percent are women) and 50 in Senegal.
- In Nigeria, generalized training sessions in aquaculture and cassava value chains benefited 150 youths in the three states.
- The first set of studies on value-chain appraisals and identification of beneficiary youths, targeting youth needs’ assessments, has been completed in all six countries as regards aquaculture.
- Models for sustainable and decent jobs for youth in aquaculture and cassava value chains are now defined in each of the six countries, with the specificity of a “mentorship” model in Côte d’Ivoire, vertical integration in Ghana, and start-up activities driven by a good professional environment and market dynamism in Nigeria and Senegal, while development of structures is ongoing in Burkina Faso and Guinea-Bissau.
- Cluster sites established, coupled with model farm designs, in Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire.
- Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal have completed all technical studies and are ready to install the aquaculture clusters.

**CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS**
- The project contributes to four of FAO’s five Strategic Objectives (SO1, SO2, SO3 and SO4) but, more importantly, to Decent Rural Employment.

**GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS**
- The project had good collaboration with CIRAD, a French research organization. This partnership also had a catalytic effect in that CIRAD financed a workshop providing an opportunity to share lessons learned for future aquaculture projects.
- The project focuses on developing the capacity of the youth, helping over 310 young women and men to be engaged in employment opportunities.
- In terms of policy advice, the results of the studies on value-chain appraisals show that the baselines of aquaculture development and decent job creation opportunities for young people in the aquaculture and cassava value chain are mainly favourable to the achievement of youth employment targets in the beneficiary countries.
- In terms of cross-sectoral work, each beneficiary country set up a national task force dedicated through a Steering Committee (SC) composed of the Project National Coordinator(s), appointed by the project Line Ministries (Agriculture and Fisheries), the representatives of the Employment Line Ministry and the FAO Representative (FAOR) Focal Point; it includes the Agricultural Research Line Ministry in Burkina Faso.
- The project has a good gender focus as it focused on increasing national capacity to implement gender- and age-sensitive approaches for decent job creation for rural youth (girls and boys).
### CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

**Challenges**

- The identification of appropriate sites for project implementation.
- The lack of youth motivation and interest in the agriculture sector is another major challenge militating against project progress.
- The socio-political context in Burkina Faso and Guinea-Bissau delayed implementation.
- The project also had two design challenges in Western Africa. First, the aquaculture component could not accommodate 250 beneficiaries per country with the current budget, leading to a steep reduction in coverage. Second, since the cassava component was more a public good, it resulted in high levels of indirect benefits rather than direct employment in the cassava-processing centres. However, these could not be implemented as designed, and lacked sufficient interest of stakeholders.
- The turnover of national project coordinators was quite high in some countries, but very constant in others.
- Reliable access to inputs, feed and fingerlings is one of the major challenges faced by the project. For example, Burkina Faso needed to source fingerlings from Benin.

**Lessons**

- The aquaculture development and decent job creation opportunities for young people in the aquaculture and cassava value chains are, on the whole, favourable to the achievement of project objectives in the beneficiary countries.
- The results differed from country to country: in some countries, jobs were created and skills taught; in others, where the business environment was not conducive, progress was slow. For instance, in countries where aquaculture was introduced early, in the beginning the purchase of feed and fingerlings was relatively easy with project support. Business plans need to be prepared, through coaching, and project duration should be sufficiently long to turn beneficiaries into independent entrepreneurs who can in turn recruit youth for business expansion.
### Central Africa

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

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<tr>
<th>PROJECT NAME</th>
<th>Enhanced food security in urban areas in Central Africa through improved availability of locally produced food.</th>
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<td>PROJECT NUMBER</td>
<td>GCP/SFC/001/MUL</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>SO2, SO4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| OUTCOMES | 2.1: Producers and natural resource managers adopt practices that increase and improve agricultural-sector production in a sustainable manner.  
4.1: International agreements, mechanisms and standards that promote more efficient and inclusive trade and markets are formulated and implemented by countries. |
| IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES | Subregional: Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe |
| REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE | RI 2: Sustainable Productivity and Value Chain in Africa |
| PROJECT DATES | 15 Sept 2014–31 Dec 2017 |
| BUDGET | USD 4 000 000 |
| BENEFICIARIES | Food-insecure populations in urban areas |

#### PROJECT RESULTS

**KEY RESULTS**

- In total, 3,700 growers/producers were involved in the project in Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe.
- Beneficiaries were organized into groups and trained in horticultural production. A total of 1,020 beneficiaries have received training in improved production.
- In Chad, 75.1 ha were established in Ndjamena. In Cameroon, beneficiaries have increased their productivity by about 12 percent with the project support. Production has increased by 58 percent (750 tonnes with the support of the project against 476 tonnes before the project intervention).
- Beneficiaries have received training in composting and non-chemical control of pests and diseases. Green spaces were created in Sao Tome and Principe and Moundou in Chad, following the concept of “Green Cities”.
- Value-chain analyses of horticultural products have been completed in Cameroon, Chad and Gabon.
- Women’s groups have been organized into a network called National network of processors of agricultural products of Gabon (RENATAG). This network brings together ten groups/associations involved in the development of agricultural products.

**CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS**

- The project contributes to two of FAO’s five Strategic Objectives: SO2 and SO4.

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS

**PARTNERSHIPS**

- Awareness creation and subregional meetings have facilitated public awareness of local authorities on the need to create green spaces in cities, following the concept of “Green Cities”.
- The project has strengthened capacity of beneficiaries through training in improved production methods, composting and non-chemical control of pests and diseases.
- In terms of policy advice, the ASTF has supported all six beneficiary countries in developing a national horticulture development strategy. These national strategies also contributed to the subregional strategy for horticulture development.
- The ASTF supported women entrepreneurs in Chad, Cameroon, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe to better commercialize their horticulture produce through transformation and marketing techniques. The project organized a study tour to Burkina Faso for ten women entrepreneurs from Gabon to learn about sanitary standards and processing techniques.

#### CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

**Challenges**

- Implementation was delayed due to administrative challenges. Activities experienced delays in Equatorial Guinea due to delays in appointment of the national coordinator. In Cameroon, the replacement of the national coordinator slowed the pace of implementation. In Chad, the change in the management team at the town hall in Ndjamena slowed implementation. In Sao Tome and Principe, the focal point of the Autonomous Region of Principe resigned, and the replacement took too long.
- Collection of the field data for the HORTIVAR database was also severely constrained due to low staffing numbers at the site level.
- The slump in sales of crops — observed especially in Chad and the Congo — remains a challenge.

**Lessons**

- Although processing activities are developing gradually in Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe, their level is not enough to absorb the produce. Organization of the marketing system and the promotion of self-consumption are ways to explore in finding a solution to this problem.
- It is necessary to engage governments and local communities, including city councils and local councils, to agree on an exit strategy and consolidation of gains made during the project. The development of national strategies for the HUP and the creation within the town halls of the HUP cells could be used as reference tools for this reflection.
## Eastern Africa

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<tr>
<td><strong>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</strong></td>
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</table>
| **OUTCOMES** | 2.1: Producers and natural resource managers adopt practices that increase and improve agricultural-sector production in a sustainable manner.  
3.1: The rural poor have enhanced and equitable access to productive resources, services, organizations and markets, and can manage their resources more sustainably.  
3.2: The rural poor have greater opportunities to access decent farm and non-farm employment. |
| **IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES** | Subregional: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda |
| **REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE** | RI 1, RI 2 |
| **PROJECT DATES** | 1 Nov 2014–31 Dec 2017 |
| **BUDGET** | USD 4 000 000 |
| **BENEFICIARIES** | Rural young women and men unemployed or underemployed in the age cohorts 15–35 years; agricultural line ministries; local government authorities; and feed manufacturers’ and producers’ organizations involved both in the aquaculture and poultry development programmes targeting youth employment and the school-feeding programme. |

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<th>PROJECT RESULTS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>KEY RESULTS</strong></td>
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</table>
• In Burundi, 340 beneficiaries were supported through the establishment of poultry farm units for egg production, while in Rwanda, the project supported 225 beneficiaries to establish poultry farm units for egg production. An average of 6 500 eggs/month/farmer were produced, translating into an average gross income of USD 6 440, and a net average income of USD 239/month/farmer in Burundi and USD 245/month/farmer in Rwanda. Producers were also able to generate income from the byproducts of chicken manure, for an average of USD 400/farmer, after removing the share for their own or family needs.  
• Through the introduction of new technologies in Kenya and Uganda, an average of 1 012 642 fingerlings per month were produced by 26 hatcheries.  
• In Uganda, a total of 490 youths directly benefited from the project intervention (35 percent females and 65 percent males).  
• In Kenya, the project had 454 beneficiaries (46 percent women) on 85 farms, with an average of 300 square metres of water surface across 552 ponds in six counties. In Uganda, youth groups were supported (a total of 490 youths) with 800 000 fingerlings to stock their ponds and cages over a period of three years.  
• Beneficiaries learned hands-on techniques through intensive group and individual training sessions, and exchange field visits on safe poultry production and management, a training workshop in aquaculture and poultry production as a business, and training in poultry feeds formulation and feeding systems, among other things. After the post-harvest training course, more than 45 traders started using drying racks for fish drying, and over 15 traders began using fish-smoking ovens in Kenya.  
• Beneficiaries (young entrepreneurs and women’s associations) were regularly trained in poultry rearing and health through Farmer Field Schools and exchange visits, in order to meet and learn from companies producing feeds and chicks in the country or furnishing veterinary supplies.  
• In Uganda, the project supported six commercial hatcheries with new technologies and/or improved traditional techniques by providing equipment for five mini-hatcheries, as well as 2 500 kg feed for seeds (hatchery), nursing facilities and hormones.  
• Baseline and mid-term studies on egg and fish markets were conducted, and some of the recommendations were adopted by the “baby projects”, based on the specifics of each country. |

**CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS**  
• The project contributes to three of FAO’s five Strategic Objectives: SO1, SO2 and SO3.
GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS

• In terms of partnerships, the project has established public-private partnerships (PPPs) to support the inclusion of young women and men in producer associations. In Burundi, a contract was signed between FAO and a consortium of NGOs for the provision of technical services, including the training and monitoring of beneficiaries, and the supervision of the distribution of inputs. In Rwanda, under the Youth and Women’s Employment programme, and supported by the Government of Rwanda through the Ministry of Youth, the Ministry of Public Service and Labour and the UN (“Delivering as One”), UNDP, ILO, UN-Habitat, the project built a partnership with the Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF) in order to help young entrepreneurs sustain their businesses. Two partnership agreements were signed with Kirinyaga and Kakamega county governments on the establishment of a fish feed mill. In Uganda, the project signed 28 partnership agreements with private firms (for the purpose of this project, called nuclear farms).

• Capacity was built on the various segments of the supply and value chains, including group dynamics for better functioning of small-scale producer groups. In countries, beneficiaries acquired hands-on and intensive group and individual training sessions and an exchange field visit was organized.

• In terms of policy and mainstreaming, there were several lessons learned from this project. The project has supported the development of the Youth Employment Policy in Uganda, which was launched by the Minister of Finance in October 2017. The project has also supported the subregional platform to discuss youth employment strategies in the aquaculture and poultry industries.

• The project has also had catalytic effects. For example, building on the project’s results, the Government of Rwanda invested a similar amount of resources to replicate the poultry model in two other locations.

• The project has a component on creating an enabling environment and gender-sensitive mechanisms. In the poultry component, women were enabled to purchase or rent tracts of land from the proceeds of project activities. These additional lands are being used for the production of crops and livestock for additional income and for livelihood diversification purposes. In the aquaculture sector, women adhered to fingerling production, nursery and growout, independently of the efforts required by each subsector. The financial empowerment of these women in beneficiary communities will sustain the gender-equality approach undertaken during the project period.

• Among the innovations was the use of a combination of the contract farming and PPP model.

CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

Challenges

• Implementation of project activities was delayed as a result of administrative constraints, as well as slow procurement processes. The inability of selected suppliers to deliver materials and equipment as specified, and within the time limit, continues to affect project implementation negatively.

• Social instability in Burundi led to an economic crisis, which also affected the project.

• The tendency of suppliers to deliver expired materials, especially hatchery supplies, affected the quality of some of the planned training sessions.

• Data collection for aquaculture components: the income generated from the beneficiaries running their farms as community groups and by feed producers is still unknown.

Lessons

• The project moved beneficiaries from aid to trade, and oriented farmers to become commercial entrepreneurs. This orientation created business opportunities for young women and men in the aquaculture and poultry value chain.

• Technical training provided to the beneficiaries will enable them to work effectively across the value chain.

• Mainstreaming and the production of policy guidance derived from projects are very challenging, as the practical application of “mainstreaming” requires information, institutions and investments.
## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT NAME</th>
<th>Strengthening Controls of Food Safety Threats, Plant and Animal Pests and Diseases for Agricultural Productivity and Trade in Southern Africa</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT NUMBER</td>
<td>GCP/SFS/001/MUL</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>SO2, SO4, SO5</td>
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</table>
| OUTCOMES | 2.1: Producers and natural resource managers adopt practices that increase and improve agricultural-sector production in a sustainable manner.  
2.2: Stakeholders in Member States strengthen governance — the policies, laws, management frameworks and institutions that are needed to support producers and resource managers — in the transition to sustainable agricultural-sector production systems.  
2.3: Stakeholders endorse/adopt international (including regional) instruments and support related governance mechanisms for sustainable agricultural production systems.  
4.1: International agreements, mechanisms and standards that promote more efficient and inclusive trade and markets are formulated and implemented by countries.  
4.2: Agribusinesses and agrifood chains that are more inclusive and efficient are developed and implemented by the public and private sectors.  
5.2: Countries and regions provide regular information and early warning against potential, known and emerging threats. |
<p>| IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES | Subregional (Southern Africa): Angola, Botswana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe |
| REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE | RI 1: Africa’s 2025 Zero Hunger Challenge |
| COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK OUTCOME(S) | Enhanced capacities to address food contamination, animal and plant pests and diseases and their impact on the productivity of food crops, livestock, fisheries and forest resources, as well as enhanced safe intraregional trade. |
| UNDAF OUTCOME | 2.5: Improved mechanisms to protect the environment, ensure sustainable management of natural resources, and mitigate and/or adapt to the impacts of global climate change on social, economic and ecological systems. |
| PROJECT DATES | 15 Oct 2014–13 Oct 2017 |
| BUDGET | USD 4,000,000 |
| BENEFICIARIES: | Smallholder farmers and other communities in Southern Africa |</p>
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<th><strong>PROJECT RESULTS</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KEY RESULTS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• A total of 4,493 individuals participated in capacity-building activities, of whom 880 took part in 43 regional activities, and 3,613 participated in 183 national ones.</td>
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<td>• A fisheries bivalve sanitation programme was formulated and capacity developed for 23 participants (including 10 women) from Angola, Madagascar, Mozambique and Namibia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The aquaculture section has completed the epizootic ulcerative syndrome surveillance plans and identified locations for sampling; the surveillance activities started in May 2016.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• FAO collaborated with SADC to develop an action plan for Food Safety Awareness.</td>
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<td>• The animal health sector has initiated discussions with the regional office of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and the SADC Secretariat to spearhead joint regional activities on surveillance and capacity building.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In the forestry sector, capacities were developed on the biological control of Eucalyptus insect pest for four countries (Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe).</td>
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<td>• Training of trainers (TOT) for Highly Hazardous Pesticides’ eradication initiatives and the Panama disease (Tropical Race 4), including initiatives on harmonized seed regulations in the SADC region, were organized.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The ASTF supported the SADC region in preparing for the Codex Meeting on Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) held in Australia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The national sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) infrastructure capacities were assessed in all the countries through baseline studies in the different sectors related to Plant Health, Animal Health, Food Safety, Fisheries, Forestry and Bivalve Sanitation Status. Angola and Namibia submitted outstanding reports to identify gaps and constraints.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In Zambia, an awareness workshop on measures to control harmful tomato pests, following the invasion of Tuta absoluta, was held in Chipata for farmers, traders and processors. A website is activated by the NPPO to enable the value-chain operators to interact with the NPPO in a much easier and quicker fashion and it enhances information dissemination in the process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In Zimbabwe, capacities were built on foot and mouth disease and “Peste des petits ruminants” (PPR).</td>
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<td>• In Madagascar, the plant health training of trainers’ workshop included seven farmers and two operators for SPS implementation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In Namibia, 37 participants attended in-country ToTs for Plant Health, Food Safety and Forestry.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• National implementation plans were created for surveillance of diseases and pests, e.g. epizootic ulcerative syndrome (EUS).</td>
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<td>• Capacity assessments of various national institutions on plant health and animal health were undertaken.</td>
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<td>• Successful advocacy with the SADC Sanitary and Phytosanitary Committee were supported to establish and improve national SPS committees in participating countries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Capacity development on Animal Health, Food Safety and Plant Health was undertaken at regional level.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The project contributes to three of FAO’s five Strategic Objectives: SO2, SO4 and SO5.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• In terms of partnership, the project worked with a wide range of stakeholders, including CABI, CCARDESA, CODEX, COMESA, FAO, OIE, SACCAU and SADC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The project built capacity through training sessions in food safety at the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa Food Safety Reference Laboratory in Mauritius in 2017 with the aim of enhancing the implementation of SPS measures in monitoring food systems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• In terms of policy support, the project supported policy advocacy, targeting Ministers of Agriculture in the region through the SADC Secretariat. Ministers are currently aware of the imminent pest threats to the region’s crop productivity, and have realized their impacts as they invade the region. Policy briefs for the emerging pest problems were also produced and circulated to ministers from the SADC Member States. The project strengthened interaction with privatesector stakeholders in the policy formulation process. There was effective engagement with producers’ associations and private-sector bodies to discuss compliancy problems, and to encourage the enforcement of SPS standards, particularly for production serving local markets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The SPS project in the Southern Africa region has led to the mobilization of an additional USD 7,050,000 (EUR 3.6 million) from the European Union to continue the project work covering all 15 SADC countries.</td>
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</table>
### CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

**Challenges**

- At regional level, the involvement of SADC was delayed and this delayed the implementation of some activities.
- The delayed nomination of National Project Coordinators in turn delayed the project's being launched at country level.
- The buy-in by government departments was not the same in all countries and this affected the implementation process.
- There was policy fragmentation at national level (where quarantine issues are not coordinated) in addition to shortages of trained staff and expertise to work at border posts.
- The monitoring of expenditures has been challenging as tracking countries' expenditures is not easy. As a result, the project overspent on consultancy and travel budget lines.
- The procurement process by the national project teams at country level took longer than expected, delaying the implementation of activities.

**Lessons**

- The project was targeted at eight countries in the region. However, it is now clear that capacity building on transboundary pests is critical in all countries in the region for effective management.
- Multisectoral projects facilitate the breaking of barriers and improve communications among the sectors in agriculture.
- Technical Officers involved in a multisectoral project need to provide maximum and extensive well-coordinated technical support to the national project teams for technical and administrative guidance.
Country-specific projects

Guinea

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<td><strong>BENEFICIARIES:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>KEY RESULTS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The project improved the food security of 1 000 households (over 8 000 dependants) affected by the Ebola virus disease (EVB).</td>
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<td>- A total of 3 600 vulnerable households (including 1 450 woman) were identified to benefit from the project support.</td>
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<td>- Rice production kits were distributed to 1 000 beneficiaries and livestock kits to 1 200 households.</td>
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<td>- 1 400 households also received cash totalling USD 127 400 to procure breeds and livestock inputs (in total, 1 400 roosters, 12 600 hens and poultry feed).</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Land management involved 485 ha for a production of 1 213 tonnes of paddy rice and 12 000 poultry.</td>
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<td>- Cash transfers of USD 75 per household was made to 1200 households (a total of USD 90 000) through the Rural Credit of Guinea to strengthen their livelihoods and enable them to undertake income-generating activities.</td>
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<td>- Capacity was developed for 24 health staff, forestry and livestock officers as well as hunters.</td>
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<td>- There was a 100 percent increase in rice yields (over yields before project implementation) among beneficiary households. Over 1 214 tonnes of rice was produced — enough to meet the needs of 1 000 beneficiary households in terms of food availability.</td>
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<td>- 95 percent of households in the project area benefited from agricultural inputs distribution, training and supervision to strengthen their resilience.</td>
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<tr>
<th>CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>- The project contributes to one of the five FAO Strategic Objectives: SO5.</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Partnership with the World Health Organization facilitated the identification and selection of project beneficiaries through access to its database while national relevant public services provided technical support to beneficiaries in the fields. The project also worked with the World Bank-funded project, <em>Agricultural Emergency Assistance to the Victims of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Guinea</em>. The project built partnerships with six NGOs and four Rural Radio Stations for sensitization activities in affected communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In terms of capacity development, over 24 health staff, forestry and livestock officers were trained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In terms of cross-sectoral work the project built on the lessons learned from the <em>Rapid Impact Assessment of Ebola Outbreak</em>, and two earlier projects, namely, <em>Emergency Assistance to Build Capacities to Respond to Ebola Virus at Human–Human Interface and Human–Wild Life Ecosystem (TCP/GUI/3504)</em> and <em>Agriculture Assistance to Populations Victims of Floods in the Préfectures of Kindia, Tougué, Siguiri, Dinguiraye et Kankan (OSRO/GUI/401/JPN)</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In terms of gender considerations, women and women’s groups were particularly targeted in several sub-components of the project. Women’s role in the project was discussed at the project preparation stage and is recognized by all the project partners. Women have a higher risk of exposure to EVD, particularly in the agricultural activities of daily living and other social activities, as well as in the preparation and sale of bushmeat. Women were often consulted during the project so that gender issues and women’s participation in capacity building are treated appropriately.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenges</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The project experienced delays in the effective provision of the budget on the FPMS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The project faced difficulties in finding professional suppliers of poultry. As a result, funds were transferred directly to the beneficiaries through the Rural Credit of Guinea. Due to non-availability of the inputs in some districts, the cash received was spent on inputs for crop production. This also faced difficulties because the lists of beneficiaries had been established between July and October 2015 and payments were only made several months later.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Lessons** |
| - Operationally, the application of the results of the calls for tenders launched during an earlier project facilitated the project. On the institutional level, the good collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, and the commitment of all authorities at all levels, helped to overcome the difficulties and achieve the expected results. The lessons learned in the cash transfer will help improve efficiency in the implementation of future monetary transfer operations. |
**Liberia**

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT NAME</th>
<th>Emergency Response to Mitigate the Impact of Ebola Virus Disease on Food Security and Agriculture Based Livelihoods in Liberia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT NUMBER</td>
<td>GCP/LIR/019/MUL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>SO3, SO5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>3.1: The rural poor have enhanced and equitable access to productive resources, services, organizations and markets, and can manage their resources more sustainably. 5.3: Countries reduce risks and vulnerability at household and community level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES</td>
<td>Liberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE</td>
<td>RI 3: Building resilience in Africa’s drylands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK OUTCOME(S)</td>
<td>Priority 3: Sustainable national resources management and utilization: sustainable management of forests, land, water and genetic resources and improved response to global environment challenges affecting food and agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT DATES</td>
<td>1 Feb 2015–31 July 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUDGET</td>
<td>USD 500 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BENEFICIARIES</td>
<td>Ebola affected districts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### PROJECT RESULTS

**KEY RESULTS**

- Over 60 percent of the targeted women’s associations (WAs) developed a Strategic Business Plan, including loan disbursement to members with interest payment.
- Over 70 percent of the WA members engaged in petty trading, small businesses and entrepreneurship, to rebuild livelihoods and community resilience.
- 50 WAs were capacitated with Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) management, bookkeeping, financial management, peace building and record-keeping. Regular monitoring is in place.
- A total of USD 50 000 (1 000 USD per WA) was given as lending and borrowing from VSLA. The loan servicing is punctual and start-up cash value has increased. Household expenditure on food, building materials, school fees and medicine has also increased.
- The project supported farmers, especially women, to adopt improved farming methods following the provision of improved seeds, hand tools, agrochemicals, cash for labour and development of lowlands.
- Rice productivity doubled to 2 248 kg in the post-EVD period. The income-generation capacity and income of about 32 WAs are likely to increase as members are now fully engaged in diversified livelihood activities, including vegetable production.
- Through a revitalization of the loan schemes, women have resumed income-generating activities and commenced cross-border trade.
- 50 lowland sites were identified for the cultivation of rice. An estimated 35 percent of these sites were rehabilitated while the rest were developed. Lowland agriculture production was boosted during the dry season to produce seeds for food and income generation.

**CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS**

- The project contributes to two of the five FAO Strategic Objectives: SO3 and SO5.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS

- In terms of partnerships, implementation of the project has improved coordination among partners and key stakeholders, including Ministries of Agriculture (MoA), Ministries of Gender and Development (MoGD), community leaders, county officials, beneficiary women’s farmer groups, rural women’s structures as well as other implementing partners, including NGOs (African Development Corporation, Liberia Environmental Care Organization, Green Revelation Promoters and Agriculture Relief Service). A strong partnership was built with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).
- The project has also developed the technical capacity of women’s associations to manage savings and savings and loan schemes, especially the VSLAs.
- In terms of catalytic effects, partnership with the SDC led to a contribution of USD 1 179 245 towards scaling up interventions to boost integrated lowland development, and promote high-yielding rice and vegetable production, as well as small businesses and other entrepreneurship in other counties. The SDC intends to provide an additional 60 000 Swiss Francs to allow for consolidation of gains made in support of WAs in the targeted areas.
- In terms of gender considerations, although project beneficiaries were mostly women, both women and men participated equally in electing officials of VSLAs and every tool or piece of equipment procured and purchased took gender into account. Marginalized women are now recognized and can speak freely in community meetings.
### Challenges

- Access to land posed an issue for WAs. To mitigate the problem, letters of agreement (LOAs) were signed between WAs that did not have access to land and their communities. The LOAs will be valid for two years.
- Some of the lowlands put forward by the WAs for lowland development could not be selected according to the selection criteria, so meeting the lowland development target of 25 groups became a challenge.
- The majority of lowlands selected are virgin swamps, and therefore require more time and labour for development.
- Due to the heavy rain, activities in lowland areas were not managed as planned.

### Lessons

- Collaboration with WAs is important for coordination, unity and community mobilization.
- Cash transfers can generate community labour in support of community activities like lowland development, which is extremely labour-intensive.
- Empowered communities, in particular WAs in diversified livelihood activities, can enhance local economic development, restore livelihoods and build resilience.
- Women’s participation in the decision-making of agriculture programmes will enhance production.

### Sierra Leone

#### Background Information on the Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT NAME</th>
<th>Post-Ebola Recovery of the Agribusiness Sector in Sierra Leone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT NUMBER</td>
<td>GCP/SIL/046/MUL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>SO1, SO4, SO5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>1.2: Member states and their development partners adopt inclusive governance and coordination mechanisms for eradicating hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. 4.2 Agribusinesses and agrifood chains that are more inclusive and efficient are developed and implemented by the public and private sectors. 5.3: Countries reduce risks and vulnerability at household and community level. 5.4: Countries and regions affected by disasters and crises prepare for and manage effective responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES</td>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE</td>
<td>RI 2: Sustainable Productivity and Value Chain in Africa  RI 3: Building Resilience in Africa’s Drylands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK OUTCOME(S)</td>
<td>Priority 1: Increase production and productivity of crops, livestock and fisheries, which is also in line with Component 1 of the national scheme for smallholder agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDAF OUTCOME(S)</td>
<td>Economic Diversification to Promote Inclusive Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT DATES</td>
<td>1 Jan 2015–31 Dec 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUDGET</td>
<td>USD 500 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BENEFICIARIES</td>
<td>Ebola affected communities in Bo, Bombali, Kailahun, Kambia, Kenema, Koinadugu, Moyamba and Port Loko Districts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROJECT RESULTS

KEY RESULTS

- The project directly benefited 2,900 farming households through the provision of agricultural inputs, refresher training in the use and management of agricultural machinery, and revolving capital.
- Nearly 3,000 farming households from 68 women’s Farmer Based Organizations (FBOs) benefited from the project through other means, such as revolving capital, refresher training courses for machine operators, and coaching in financial management and record-keeping.
- 20 farming groups/Agricultural Business Centres (ABCs) were recapitalized through cash-based transfers amounting to USD 250,000, in preparation for the first and second cropping seasons.
- Vegetable production increased by over 40 percent and yields doubled compared to production during the Ebola period.
- The earnings of 1,600 households (9,600 people) increased from zero to an average of USD 50–100 per week.

CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS

- The project contributes to three of the five FAO Strategic Objectives: SO1, SO4 and SO5.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS

- In terms of building partnerships, the project revived and strengthened collaboration among the regional technicians of the service providers and the ABCs, for future service that may be needed. This partnership developed and deepened a better understanding among the ABCs on the use and management of the available machines, using the business lens to generate more funds for their communities. To increase the involvement of the implementing partner and also improve accountability, the project organized a joint monitoring with the extension division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security to monitor the utilization of resources provided in the first and second phases of resources/inputs to the targeted beneficiaries.
- In terms of capacity development, the project supported training courses related to the maintenance and management of agricultural machinery. Young people in the affected communities benefited greatly from the training, and were gainfully employed. The direct beneficiaries also benefited from coaching related to financial management and accountability.
- In terms of promoting gender equality and women’s rights, and other related cross-cutting issues, these were captured during the implementation process, at all levels. Most importantly, equal opportunities were provided for women to benefit from the project activities, particularly on VSLAs and vegetable production. The project collaborated with sister projects to disseminate nutrition-sensitive messages to farmers at district level (e.g. the Mainstreaming Food and Nutrition Security and the Right to Food into the Smallholder Commercialization Programme), using the draft food-based dietary guidelines.

CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

Challenges

- Delays in finalizing the implementation modalities between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security and FAO.
- Fear of contracting EVD by staff members when visiting some quarantined targeted districts (Kambia and Port Loko) to perform project operations.
- Inadequate technical support within the country to support the cash transfers programme.
- In almost all the EVD-affected areas, the available resources were limited to a few districts. There were also many unmet needs of farmers, which would require an integrated approach in support of the 13 districts.
- There were still high expectations from the target beneficiaries for additional resources, in order to address the existing gaps.
- The weak business infrastructure, and limited cash among the population, made some businesses move very slowly and they were not as profitable as expected.

Lessons

- Smallholder farmers are sometimes underestimated due to their low level of education. This project was a case study that demonstrated that although these farmers have a limited level of education, they can handle their livelihood activities to make an impact in the communities when given equal opportunities to educated graduates.
- There was a clear manifestation that rural farmers have limited access to finance when undertaking economic activities. It was learned that cash-based transfers can help smallholder farmers to be involved in economic activities. It was also learned that this approach involved minimal administrative costs and reached beneficiaries directly (without any intermediaries).
Background Information on the Project

**Project Name**
Livelihoods Resilience Opportunities for Conflict Affected Rural Communities in Central African Republic

**Project Number**
GCP/CAF/015/MUL

**FAO Strategic Objective**
SO5

**Outcomes**
5.4: Countries and regions affected by disasters and crises prepare for and manage effective responses

**Implementation Countries**
Central African Republic

**Regional Priority Area/Initiative**
RI 1: Africa’s 2025 Zero Hunger Challenge
RI 3: Building Resilience in Africa’s Drylands

**Country Programming Framework Outcome(s)**
Area 2: Support to the resilience of livelihoods.

**Project Dates**
4 Mar 2014–1 Mar 2016

**Budget**
USD 2,000,000

**Beneficiaries**
Households and groups of farmers affected by the interruption of the normal agricultural production cycle due to instability in 2013

**Project Results**

**Key Results**
- The project targeted 10,000–11,000 households. In order to allow the best start to the agricultural campaign, households received agricultural inputs (seeds, tools) and processing units (groundnut milling machine, groundnut decorticator machine, manioc milling machine). Agricultural inputs included 165,525 kg of maize, 70,675 kg of groundnuts, 109,425 kg of rice and 32,348 hoes, distributed to 16,174 households identified.
- Over 8,843 ha were planted (5,518 ha of maize, 589 ha of groundnuts and 2,736 ha of rice), and approximately 11,372 tonnes of food (6,621 tonnes of maize, 648 tonnes of peanuts and 4,103 tonnes of rice) were produced, enough to ensure at least 4–5 months of available food to beneficiary households;
- The project also supported some women’s groups (2,000 heads of household) with a more comprehensive approach focusing on the technical (training, equipment, etc.) and financial (savings/loans) pillars, as well as on social assistance (nutrition, funds transfer, HIV/AIDS counselling, etc.).
- Strengthening of social cohesion among the inhabitants of one village through the redistribution to non-beneficiaries and mitigation of household food needs.
- Savings mobilized groups internally during weekly meetings attended by 4,292 members trained in this new approach.
- The total value of loans within groups amounted to USD 32,235, demonstrating that the diversification of livelihoods strengthens resilience.

**Contribution to FAO Results**
- The project contributes to one of the five FAO Strategic Objectives: SO5.

**General Principles and Effects**
- In terms of partnerships, the project strengthened working relationships among the implementing partners, namely, FAO, WFP, NGOs and government ministries.
- The project promoted the CdR approach, which not only allowed capacity building, but also improved people’s resilience in the face of the crisis.
- In terms of catalytic effects, beyond the direct impacts for the agricultural communities, the development of a more global approach by food security actors is expected. Such an approach would speed up the recovery phase in a well-coordinated manner.

**Challenges in Project Implementation and Lessons Learned**

**Challenges**
- The volatile security situation impeded the delivery of inputs and the implementation of project activities; this also prevented supervision of the beneficiaries at the right time.

**Lessons**
- The regular organization of meetings of the APF represented an appropriate framework for the exchange of information on the strategies to be developed to ensure the follow-up of activities on the ground.
- The capacity building for agents of the structures of support and advice (ACDA, ANDE and NGOs) has provided a network of facilitators, ensuring the sustainability of the project.
- The participation of these structures in the implementation of this approach is an asset for the development of a national strategy to support and advise based on the CdR approach.
- Establishing a common and operational platform for analysis and response.
- Improving the effectiveness of the coordination mechanism for CSA, and strengthening the partnership between actors, has enabled an urgent response to the food needs of vulnerable populations and the restoration of livelihoods for saving lives.
- Support to CPI analysis, and the production of maps of food insecurity, have been instrumental in guiding interventions in vulnerable areas.
- Regular information sharing at the cluster and inter-cluster meetings on food security of the population helped to put in place appropriate mechanisms for provision of emergency humanitarian aid.
- The establishment of a mechanism for joint assessment (FAO, WFP, NGOs and Government of the Central African Republic) for the needs of vulnerable people, and to provide multifaceted assistance to the identified beneficiaries, was also decisive for the rest of the responses to vulnerable households.
# South Sudan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT NAME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT NUMBER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE | RI 1: Sustainable Production and Productivity for Food and Nutrition Security  
RI 3: Resilient Food and Nutrition Security |
| UNDF OUTCOME | 1. Economic development pillar |
| PROJECT DATES | 1 Apr 2014–30 Sept 2015 |
| BUDGET | USD 2 000 000 |
| BENEFICIARIES: | Vulnerable smallholder farmers and fisherfolk in conflict-affected areas |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KEY RESULTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 209 635 beneficiaries of the most vulnerable individuals were supported in both conflict- and less-affected areas of South Sudan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The livelihoods of 1 000 fisherfolk in Central Equatoria were diversified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 80 fish ponds were constructed and supplied with 242 016 fingerlings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 24 poultry households were stocked with 1 207 chickens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Veterinary cold chains were re-established with 800 livestock treatment kits, 1 refrigerated container, cold boxes and solar fridges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The project collected 48.36 tonnes of local groundnut seed, generating the income for 21 progressive seed producers to reinvest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The project restored the livelihoods of 11 366 households by distributing 14 689 emergency livelihood kits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Training of 16 community-based animal health workers, procuring 800 livestock treatment kits, vaccinating 550 000 livestock and strengthening the cold chain. Through these activities, the project directly protected the livelihood assets of 18 743 pastoral households and reduced seasonal outbreaks of common animal diseases and livestock mortality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Towards sustaining local seed production and improving the fisheries sector, the project collected 48.4 tonnes of local groundnut seeds, enabling 21 progressive seed producers to generate income and reinvest in their farms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultivation of 36 feddans (15.1 ha) of vegetable gardens.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The project contributes to one of the five FAO Strategic Objectives: SOS.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PARTNERSHIPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Partnerships were built with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries; NGOs participated in the implementation of activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries attended training sessions and participated in various workshops on aquaculture, fisheries, aquaculture emergency response and a review of national standards for fish and fish products. The workshops helped build the knowledge and skills of the ministry staff and other key stakeholders by enabling them to respond more effectively to threats and crises within the emergency context, as well as review food safety measures and procedures against regional standards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Challenges in Project Implementation and Lessons Learned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Lessons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Inability or delay of suppliers to deliver goods owing to transportation challenges and import clearance</td>
<td>• Future emergency response programming should scale up sustainable support through shifting from international to local procurement and from direct distribution to input trade fairs where conditions allow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inaccessibility of kit distribution sites due to security risks, poor road networks and high transportation costs</td>
<td>• Along with this transition, early recovery activities in fisheries, vegetable and crop production should be emphasized, with more robust capacity-development components.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prolonged drought caused fewer demonstration plots to be established in Greater Equatoria.</td>
<td>• Animal health services should be made more durable through the introduction of an improved cost-recovery system. For the vaccination and treatment of animals, FAO found direct implementation to be the best means of reaching livestock-dependent households in remote areas where no partners were operating, and this approach will be replicated in future projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Delayed completion of aquaculture ponds due to heavy rains.</td>
<td>• Exit strategies for nutrition voucher schemes should look at ways to establish longer-term linkages to markets for food producers, as well as ways to support vulnerable households in producing their own food, such as negotiating with local leaders to lease land for cultivation. To minimize deforestation, future interventions that integrate small ruminants and aquaculture should include an agroforestry component.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Abnormal migration patterns due to insecurity escalated the threat of livestock disease outbreaks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Ethiopia

**Background Information on the Project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT NAME</th>
<th>Enhanced Livelihoods and Poverty Reduction through Economic Diversification and Decent Work Opportunities for Rural Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT NUMBER</td>
<td>GCP/ETH/085/MUL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</td>
<td>SO1, SO2, SO3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>1.1: Member states and their development partners make explicit political commitments in the form of policies, investment plans, programmes, legal frameworks and the allocation of necessary resources to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3: The decisions of Member States and their development partners regarding food security and nutrition are based on evidence and a high-quality, timely and comprehensive food security and nutrition analysis that draws on data and information available in the network of existing sector and stakeholder information systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2: Stakeholders in Member States strengthen governance — the policies, laws, management frameworks and institutions that are needed to support producers and resource managers — in the transition to sustainable agricultural-sector production systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2: The rural poor have greater opportunities to access decent farm and non-farm employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES</td>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE</td>
<td>RI 1: Africa’s 2025 Zero Hunger Challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RI 2: Sustainable Productivity and Value Chain in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK OUTCOME(S)</td>
<td>Core Function 1: Agricultural policy and regulatory farm work, which includes capacity-building national agricultural institutions and support to agricultural policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT DATES</td>
<td>19 May 2014–29 Feb 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUDGET</td>
<td>USD 2 000 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BENEFICIARIES</td>
<td>All regions of Ethiopia (Amhara, Oromia, SNNP and Tigray), especially targeting rural youth and women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## PROJECT RESULTS

### KEY RESULTS
- The ASTF project supported the development of a web-based M&E and Reporting System for Agriculture (MIS) through training of experts in planning and monitoring to cascade the MIS to the regional and Wereda levels.
- 452 agricultural experts in four regions were trained in application of the MIS.
- 500 government staff (100 from the region) were trained and effectively involved in harmonizing the Five-Year Plan of the Federal Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries at regional and federal levels.
- Experience sharing and learning events helped develop the capacity of 110 participants from four emerging regions and federal government offices in coordination, leadership, and harmonization of initiatives and management.
- The capacity of 63 experts, 206 development agents and 2,640 farmers was developed in nutrition-sensitive agriculture.
- A total of 11 cooperatives were established.
- 1,050 vulnerable women and rural youth benefited from income-generating activities (dairy, poultry and irrigated agriculture).
- Overall, 11,686 rural smallholder households were supported by the project through crop intensification and diversification. These have now met their food and nutrition needs by production of over 8,301 tonnes of food in the intervention areas.
- 290 youth were supported in beekeeping and were able to generate an income of USD 420/youth/year.
- 1,050 women were supported in poultry farming.
- Forage production was improved through the introduction of improved forage seeds and cuttings. The forage seeds include elephant grass cuttings (2,500 kg), Sudan grass (200 kg), vetch seed (1,000 kg), cowpea (1,000 kg), pigeon pea (1,400 kg), alfalfa (100 kg) and Desmodium (60 kg).

### CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS
- The project contributes to three of FAO’s five Strategic Objectives: SO1, SO2 and SO3.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS
- In terms of strengthening partnerships, the implementation of the project was led and coordinated by the government bodies at various levels.
- In terms of capacity building, the project addressed some weaknesses in institutional and human capacities for agricultural policy monitoring and analysis with the development of a sector-wide web-based M&E system. Training was provided to federal and regional staff, focusing on agricultural policy analysis and project M&E.
- It also strengthened the capacity of development agents and farmers.
- In terms of policy advice, the project has an explicit policy-focused component, supporting the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in developing a web-based policy M&E system to improve agricultural data collection, quality assurance and usefulness for decision-making purposes and in relation to national development plans, including the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP). The policy M&E system is highly appreciated by local and national authorities and is being scaled up nationwide by the government. The project facilitate policy dialogue and raised the level of commitment for developing sectoral and cross-sectoral policy and programmes at national and regional levels.
- In terms of gender consideration, the project specifically targeted women and youth. The gender aspect was considered in such a way that activities were designed to address both women and men, while the project also addressed female-headed households in specific activities.

### CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

#### Challenges
- Delivery of remaining inputs at some sites.
- Drought in some target areas.

#### Lessons
- A positive lesson learned is the targeting mechanisms and the identification of appropriate enterprises for beneficiaries. During implementation, an emphasis was placed on the integration of interventions and the targeting of households. To this effect, simple guidelines were prepared for geographic and beneficiary targeting, to be used during the implementation of project activities. The project gave priority to poor smallholder farmers/pastoralists/agropastoralists, rural women and jobless youth.
Malawi

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

PROJECT NAME
Building the Capacity of Most Vulnerable Households to Meet their Basic Needs and Withstand Shocks (by Resisting or Adapting their Livelihoods)

PROJECT NUMBER
GCP/MLW/064/MUL

FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE
SOS

OUTCOMES
S.3: Countries reduce risks and vulnerability at household and community level.

IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES
Malawi

REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE
RI 3: Building Resilience in Africa’s Drylands

COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK OUTCOME(S)
Pillar 4: Resilience and Disaster Risk Management

UNDAF OUTCOMES(S)
Outcome 1.1: Targeted vulnerable households are resilient (capable of meeting their basic needs and withstanding shocks) by 2016

PROJECT DATES
1 May 2014–30 Nov 2016

BUDGET
USD 2 000 000

BENEFICIARIES
Disaster-affected and most vulnerable households in Traditional Authority Chiwalo and Jenala in Phalombe District

PROJECT RESULTS

KEY RESULTS
• A total of 18 Village Action Plans (VAPs) were developed, and these were complemented by a comprehensive catchments and hotspots mapping exercise.

• A Food for Assets (FFA) approach was used to support targeted communities in the development of productive assets. A total of 1 000 beneficiaries (647 women and 353 men) were targeted for a period of 5 months (December 2015–May 2016), which coincided with the lean period. Each targeted beneficiary received a monthly food ration of 50 kg of maize grain, 10 kg of pulses and 1.84 kg of vegetable cooking oil.

• Through the FFA public works, 70 370 tree seedlings were planted on degraded catchments, and 10 000 agroforestry trees in farmlands; 71 developing gullies were reclaimed, and about 20 km of contour ridges were constructed.

• Other public works supported include construction of 6 water drinking points for livestock, drilling of 15 wells and excavation of canals in 5 irrigation sites, the construction of a 4-km dyke for flood control, and the training of 160 members from 16 committees in catchment rehabilitation and management.

• Over 2 606 farm families were empowered through Farmer Field Schools to diversify and increase their household incomes.

• Establishment and capacity development of 56 Village Savings and Loans Associations. Savings grossing about USD 17 600 were mobilised, allowing 1 232 members to access credit facilities and farm inputs, and to start up or boost businesses.

• 8 500 producer households were supported during the state of disaster after the 2018 floods.

• As part of the strengthening of community institutions, the project organized various training courses for Area Civil Protection Committees (ACPCs), Area Executive Committees (AECs), Village Natural Resources Management Committees (VNRMCs) and Village Civil Protection Committees (VCPCs).

• The project trained a total of 16 District Environmental Sub-Committee (DESC) members in catchment management and hotspot mapping.

CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS
• The project contributes to one of the five FAO Strategic Objectives: SOS.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS
• The project built strong partnerships among the implementing partners, including the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development; local government authorities through the District Council; Adventist Relief Agency in Malawi; Catholic Development Commission in Malawi; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef); and World Food Programme (WFP).

• The project built the capacities of local institutions, such as the FFS and care groups, which form a pool of community-based change agents. The beneficiary groups were also linked to the Agriculture Commodity Exchange. As part of the exit strategy, the project was officially handed over to the District Council for continued monitoring and supervision by the relevant decentralized government departments, such as the District Agriculture Office and the District Health Office. The project was also linked to the respective Area Development Committees for further integration into future development initiatives.

• In terms of catalytic effects, the project mobilized additional resources and is now being replicated in three other districts with EUR 6 875 000 funding from the European Union (EU), and will be replicated at a larger scale with an additional USD 32 679 000 programme. The fact that the EU has decided to build on this project and continue funding its activities once the ASTF is completed is a clear signal of the importance of the approach and a recognition that building resilience is something that cannot happen overnight.

• As part of learning in the FFS, the project introduced special topics on different life skills and rights issues, including the right to food and children’s rights. This contributed to reducing child labour cases in the areas. Through the VSL schemes, the project trained all members in business management, thus empowering the participating members with appropriate skills for doing business.

• In terms of gender considerations, the project specifically targeted women and men participating in agricultural production within the targeted communities. Through the group learning in FFS groups, both women and men acquired important skills and knowledge in adaptive and sustainable agriculture practices, nutrition, VSLs and business management.
CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

Challenges

- The target communities in particular experienced severe El Niño-driven dry spells throughout the season. The most devastating of these dry spells came at a critical stage of maize flowering, resulting in widespread failure of the main staple crop and other crops. Most FFS groups are relying on water from boreholes and thus facing competition with other domestic water uses.
- Community expectations for handouts and relief.
- With the introduction of the Village Savings and Loans component in the FFS, there is a need to re-elect more credible leadership in most of the groups to safeguard the savings.
- Delayed collective action by government players on single registry and Common Coordination Committee establishment.

Lessons

- Through the project implementation approach, which emphasized that the beneficiaries and community members carry out practical actions in place of receiving handouts, the project increased self-reliance.
- The joint implementation of health and nutrition, and agriculture-sensitive interventions, achieved good results. The integration of the FFS approach and the care-group model ensured that the FFS groups were readily provided with available food items for nutrition and cooking demonstrations by the care groups.
- The care group model of implementing community-based nutrition interventions is key in obtaining community commitment, support and ownership of the intervention.
- Resilience building involves changing people’s attitudes and behaviour with regard to how they do certain things.

Mali

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT NAME</th>
<th>Creating Agribusiness Employment Opportunities for Youth through Sustainable Aquaculture Systems and Cassava Value Chains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT NUMBER</td>
<td>GCP/MLI/040/MUL</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>SO3</td>
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<tr>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>3.2. The rural poor have greater opportunities to access decent farm and non-farm employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES</td>
<td>Mali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE</td>
<td>Priority 1: Support for production, competitiveness in the sector and food security. Priority 3: Prevention and management of disasters and food crises and strengthening the resilience of the people affected by the food and nutrition crises and conflicts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK OUTCOME(S)</td>
<td>The food security and nutrition of populations (particularly vulnerable groups such as pregnant or lactating women and children under 5) improved sustainably.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT DATES</td>
<td>1 Jul 2014–30 Sept 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUDGET</td>
<td>USD 2 000 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BENEFICIARIES</td>
<td>Youth in Kayes, Kita and Mopti regions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PROJECT RESULTS

KEY RESULTS

- 417 youth (including 168 women) were supported and ready to be inserted in economic activities.
- 913 beneficiaries (429 female) have access to employment.
- 50 trainers were trained in the Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS) approach. A pool of trainers has been established at national and regional level. These trainers have trained facilitators in the localities concerned (Kayes, Kita and Mopti). They contributed to the adaptation of the JFFLS approach in the agricultural sectors chosen by young people.
- 78 youth facilitators were trained. They formed groups of 5 to ensure the animation JFFLS and providing technical assistance beneficiaries in farming.
- Distribution of 150 cattle, 60 sheep, 94 sprayers, 87 motor pumps, 46 carts and donkeys, 5628 kg of vegetable seeds, 4 000 chicks (Leghorn breed), 4 harvesters, 4 hullers and 4 tillers.
- 28 sheds were built.
- 24 ha of land has been secured for producing vegetables.
- The capacity of youth groups is being strengthened to effectively engage in the production and marketing of rice, milk, poultry fattening, fish and vegetables, and to assure their socio-economic integration.
- 417 youth (including 168 women) were supported in terms of employment creation.
- 13 participants from public services and NGOs benefited from a study tour to the United Republic of Tanzania.

CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS

The project contributes to one of FAO’s five Strategic Objectives: SO3.
GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS

• In the framework of public–private partnerships (PPPs), meetings and workshops were held with farmers’ organizations, NGOs, and technical and financial partners. Through this process, three umbrella farmers’ organizations were identified to support the youth in the PPP model. The farmers’ organizations were the Standing Assembly of the Agricultural Chambers of Mali, the National Rural Youth Federation and the Association of Professional Farmers’ Organizations.

• Capacity building was achieved through the Junior Farmer Field and Life School (JFFLS), which created a network of trainers and facilitators with a good knowledge of the approach and further development in-country.

• In terms of policy advice, district-level coordinating committees have been created for policy dialogue on youth priorities, and national-level multi-stakeholder consultations have been conducted to mainstream youth employment in agricultural policies.

• In terms of catalytic effects, the JFFLS approach has generated widespread enthusiasm and helped the project to mobilize additional resources from other funding partners. Thus, UNHCR has provided USD 318 085 in support of 50 young Mauritanian refugees in Mali together with 50 young residents among the host communities. Similarly, under Luxembourg’s Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP) III, FAO Mali has received EUR 1.5 million to replicate the approach in Segou and Sikasso regions. A total of 400 new jobs are expected to be created and 1 000 other youth will be supported.

• In terms of gender considerations, this project has a strong focus on young women and men.

CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

Challenges

• The project started three months late due to administrative challenges, including recruitment of the project team and appointment of the national coordinator by the counterpart.

• Adaptation of the JFFLS and PPP models are new in Mali.

• Selection of facilitators in the 18–35 age bracket in the area of refugees.

• Security problems in the area of Mopti.

• Failure in the follow-up of recipients.

Lessons

• The participatory identification of beneficiaries with local authorities, technical services, NGOs and farmers’ organizations allowed involvement of the youth willing to act as rural professionals in the areas where they were living.

• The selection of the value chains to be considered with all the actors involved allowed identification of those responding to the insertion needs of the rural youth.

• The institutional organization/framework set in place at national and local levels facilitated the implementation of the project and contributed to the sustainability of the activities.

• The umbrellas farmers’ organizations are very interested in the capacity development of the young rural people which will reinforce their organizations in the future with well-trained young professional farmers.

• There was a short time period for consolidating all the activities of a project of this nature.

Niger

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT NAME</th>
<th>Support au processus d’appui aux Communes de Convergences</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PROJECT NUMBER</td>
<td>GCP/NER/056/MUL</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE</td>
<td>SO1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OUTCOMES</td>
<td>1.1: Member states and their development partners make explicit political commitments in the form of policies, investment plans, programmes, legal frameworks and the allocation of necessary resources to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTATION COUNTRIES</td>
<td>Niger</td>
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<tr>
<td>REGIONAL PRIORITY AREA/INITIATIVE</td>
<td>RI 1: Renewed Partnership to End Hunger in Africa by 2025 RI 3: Capacity Building for Adaptation in the Drylands of Africa and the Sahel</td>
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<tr>
<td>COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK OUTCOME(S)</td>
<td>Priority 1: Building resilience of vulnerable people to food and nutrition insecurity Priority 2: Growth, diversification and development of agroforest-pastoral and fishery production</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROJECT DATES</td>
<td>1 March 2014–30 June 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>BUDGET</td>
<td>USD 2 000 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BENEFICIARIES</td>
<td>Communities in Maradi, Tahoua and Zinder regions</td>
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</table>
### PROJECT RESULTS

#### KEY RESULTS
- In total, 20 ha are being managed for vegetable gardens, bringing the total area managed by the project for beneficiaries at Bagaroua, Bilma, Dogo, Gafati, Jiratawa and Koleram to 25 ha.
- 700 households are using 90 pumps purchased for all-season vegetable production for families.
- 160,000 vulnerable households improved their agricultural productivity from quality input distribution throughout village input shops. A total of 180 tonnes of improved seeds, 45 tonnes of fertilizer and 260 tonnes of animal feed were stocked and distributed.
- A documentary movie has been produced to increase the visibility of the project. Brochures have also been produced and disseminated.
- Child feeding and nutrition were enhanced through investments in livestock recapitalization for 1,000 vulnerable women. Small-scale irrigation infrastructure was developed on 20 ha of vegetable gardens, enabling 700 households to produce vegetables and diversify their diets. In total, 300 tonnes of corn seeds and 1,500 kg of onions were distributed to 100,000 vulnerable households.
- 8 local input shops and 6 farmer warehouse complexes, or *Maisons du paysan*, were built.
- Capacities of 93 technicians developed.
- 4,320 members (including 2,880 women) of radio listening clubs to disseminate good practices.

#### CONTRIBUTION TO FAO RESULTS
- The project contributes to one of the five FAO Strategic Objectives: SO1.

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EFFECTS
- In the municipalities of intervention in Niger, the High Commissioner to the 3N, the UN agencies and other stakeholders agreed to adopt an approach based on the principle of a programmatic, thematic and geographic synergy to enhance the resilience of vulnerable communities. The ASTF project is being implemented within that framework for partnership. Synergistic actions such as land reclamation (WFP) and support for malnutrition (Unicef) have therefore been conducted jointly with the project activities. In the same vein, FAO has approached other donors, including the Government of Norway, which contributed USD 810,300 to help strengthen the resilience of rural communities.
- The action of the project contributed to the development of beneficiaries’ economic and technical capacities. The support to input suppliers and the strengthening of the network of common storage infrastructures has enabled better supply of agricultural inputs. The project has also strengthened the capacities for abstraction of water through provision of irrigation facilities for market garden production, and the rehabilitation of 25 ha of irrigated land in 12 municipalities.
- The project mobilized additional funding of USD 810,300 from the Norwegian Government to strengthen resilience of rural communities.
- Synergy between the 3N, FAO, Unicef and WFP.
- The project is actively promoting recognition of women in all its activities. It is supporting the adoption of appropriate technologies and techniques to decrease women’s workload and increase the time they can devote to social and income-generating activities. In order to encourage communities and vulnerable groups to adopt appropriate risk-prevention practices and measures in anticipation of the disasters related to climate change, the project appealed to Dimitra Clubs. The tool used for this purpose has been participatory communication to improve gender equality as well as the active participation of populations, while giving priority to vulnerable social groups (women, young people and children) in accessing useful information.

#### CHALLENGES IN PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

**Challenges**
- The project had planned to construct warehouses to serve as input shops, to store animal feed and to act as warrantage banks in villages. However, there were delays as it took a long time to identify the sites, draw up plans for the buildings, and prepare and launch tenders. As a result, the project had to revise its original plan of operations in the towns of convergence and abandon certain activities.
- The difficulties of programmatic synergy between the different partners in the communes of convergence led to the relocation of some facilities in neighbouring areas (in the municipalities of Djjiratawa and Sarkin-Yama on the one hand, and Guidan Amoumoune and Mahayi on the other), where construction of the CCAAB had already been initiated by the government. This operation certainly allowed to increase the number of municipalities covered by the project and therefore the number of beneficiaries, but it had financial consequences for the project.
- On the other hand, the initial duration of the project was reduced by two months (from 24 to 22 months).

**Lessons**
- The establishment of storage infrastructure for (and distribution of) inputs in the municipalities and the strengthening of the technical capacity of actors helped to start the process. The warehouses created the conditions for an improvement in agricultural production, and thus the food coverage of beneficiaries, reinforcing their capacities of resilience in the face of climate change.
The ASTF has been supported by the Governments of Equatorial Guinea and Angola.

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