



Gender and Agriculture Programme

Mid Term Evaluation

Final Report

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List of abbreviations

ASWAP	-	Agriculture Sector Wide Approach
ADRA	-	Adventist Development & Relief Agency
ADD	-	Agriculture Development Division
AIDS	-	Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome
AEDC	-	Agriculture Extension Development Coordinator
AEDO	-	Agriculture Extension Development Officer
AGRESS	-	Agriculture Gender Roles and Extension Support Services
AGRESSO	-	Agriculture Gender Roles and Extension Support Services Officer
CISANET	-	Civil Society Agriculture Network
DADO	-	District Agriculture Development Officer
DAES	-	Department of Agriculture Extension Services
DAESS	-	District Agricultural Extension Services System
DAC	-	District Agricultural Committee
EPA	-	Extension Planning Area
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organization
GHA	-	Gender, HIV and AIDS
HIV	-	Human immune Virus
MoAIWD	-	Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Water Development
NASFAM	-	National Association of Smallholder Farmers
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
PM	-	Programme Manager
PRA	-	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RNE	-	Royal Norwegian Embassy
TOT	-	Training of Trainers
UN	-	United Nations

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Many people consulted during the fieldwork. They included staff and farmers. Their names are listed individually in the annexes of this report. We do not take their engagement in this assessment for granted. We therefore extend our uttermost thanks to all of them.

It is sincerely hoped that this evaluation report contains minimal misinterpretation of facts and concepts. Should errors occur, it is the sole responsibility of the Evaluation Team and not UN Women and their partners or those that were consulted during the fieldwork.

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Executive Summary

1. Introduction

This mid-term evaluation was undertaken to review the progress of the implementation of a three year Gender and Agriculture Programme that UN Women is implementing in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture and with funding from the Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE) to the tune of USD 2.7 million. The goal is to support and enhance the promotion of women's economic empowerment by making agricultural services more responsive to women's needs. Specific objectives are two:

- (1) Government institutions and selected farmers organizations effectively integrate gender into budgeting, planning and programming;
- (2) Rural women farmers increase their voice and influence policies and strategies on agricultural inputs and support services

Programme implementation involves UN Women funding agreed stakeholder work plans and FAO providing agriculture technical assistance. This three year programme from 2014 to 2017 is a national programme covering all the departments and ADDs and 28 districts. Actual implementation started in January 2014 and focused efforts in three districts of Mzimba North in Mzuzu ADD in the northern region, Salima district in Salima ADD in the central region and Nsanje district in Shire Valley ADD in the southern region.

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to assess progress towards achieving programme outputs, outcomes and goal, and to consider the validity of assumptions made in the logical framework. The evaluation was participatory in nature, focusing on qualitative analysis. It was based on review of programme documents; discussions with UN Women, RNE, DAES, FAO and key partner institutions, and ADD and district agriculture staff and farmers in Mzimba, Salima and Nsanje. Given the complexity of the programme, it was not possible to assess comprehensively all the aspects internal and external to the programme. Nevertheless, the findings represent best judgments of the evaluators based on what was discussed and observed during the fieldwork. It is hoped that the recommendations will be useful in examining programme strategy in the remaining two years of the programme implementation.

2. Major findings and conclusions

This programme represents a seminal contribution to the agriculture sector and provides great opportunity for achieving desired gender outcomes. By building strong linkages through ASWAp which is Malawi's strategic investment plan for the agriculture sector, this programme is well placed to ensure that men and women farmers participate and benefit equally in the agriculture sector. Programme implementation and achievement of planned outputs is commendable given the challenges that the implementation faced (e.g. apparent lack of support from senior management and directors in the ministry, limited number of staff coordinating the activities). The evaluation asked for answers to specific questions and based

on what was discussed and observed during the field work, our analytical responses are as follows.

- (1) The objective of this programme is to support government institutions and selected farmer organizations to effectively integrate gender into budgeting, planning and programming; and to support rural women farmers to increase their voice and influence policies and strategies on agricultural inputs and support services. Through the capacity building activities undertaken in the first year, the programme is demonstrating effectiveness towards achieving the planned objectives. We are nevertheless of the view that the real obstacle in gender mainstreaming is not lack of gender programming capacity per se but rather structural rigidities in policies, practices, systems, culture in which this programme could invest resources and energies to transform. This could represent more strategic programme investment in supporting and enhancing the promotion of women's economic empowerment by making agricultural services more responsive to women's needs.
- (2) The evaluation also asks for assessment of efficiency of the programme. Key partners in the programme (RNE & DAES) are happy with management of the programme resources and the strategic support that UN Women has provided through the programme. We nevertheless observe that UN Women seems to have pursued more costly routes to achieving the programme objectives when less costly but effective routes could have been explored. A great deal of resources and effort has gone into gender training and gender assessments. These are important programme outputs but need to be carefully sanctioned so that the outputs lead into significant gender outcomes. For example, UN Women has done great job in training AEDCs, AEDOs and farmers including helping them to conduct PRAs and formulate workplans. What is the cost of all this vis-à-vis the gender gains, especially when senior management have not been active party to these work plans? What is the value of the gender audits when little is done to address the strategic issues raised e.g. most staff are not aware of key gender policies and strategies for the agriculture sector but the gender trainings are silent on this. Or UN Women has helped to strengthen ASWAP Technical Working Groups but such technical expertise has not been fully used in this programme, preferring agriculture technical assistance provided by FAO only. These are examples of programme efficiency that demand careful reflections in this programme.
- (3) UN Women asks of the evaluation to comment of relevance of the programme. We commend UN Women for the timing and objectives of this programme which provides an opportunity to support the implementation of the GHA. It is the routes/approaches followed which we find less relevant. For example, what is the purpose of the trainings – is it to build capacity for gender mainstreaming or to test PRA data collection tools? What is the opportunity cost to farmers of attending a complicated training for one week? The lack of translation of the materials into major

local languages (Chichewa for Salima and Chitumbuka for Mzimba North) raises particular concern. Many more issues are raised in the main texts regarding relevance issues. We particularly commend UN Women for the training of NASFAM data clerks who immediately after the training, changes started to emerge in the way they collected and processed farmer statistics. This represents an example of programme relevance.

- (4) The terms of reference also ask the evaluation to comment on programme sustainability. The engagement of stakeholders through ASWAP and established agriculture service delivery structures in the country is a positive step towards sustainability of this programme. In Mzimba North, staff are able to undertake the community PRA activities on their own without waiting for resources and technical guidance from UN Women. But overall, the active lead role of UN Women in implementing the programme activities portray to many (e.g. Salima and Nsanje) that this is a UN Women programme and they can only implement the gender activities if UN Women gives them funding.
- (5) The evaluation also requested for an understanding of key challenges in this programme. Based on what was discussed and observed during the fieldwork, the biggest challenge seems to be the inability to define implementation entry points that if tackled through this programme can result in achievement of much more strategic gender outcomes than hitherto planned. This links to the inability to engage in reflections and learning through regular stakeholder review meetings.

Our conclusion is that this is a good programme and has to be maintained. The progress in achieving planned programme outputs is commendable and beyond expectation given the various challenges encountered. It is nevertheless apparent from the stakeholder consultations that the level, speed, quantity and quality of progress achieved so far in this programme reflects mainly the efforts of UN Women and not the national machinery whose capacity international development partners like UN Women should help to build and strengthen. Full implementation responsibility should have been left squarely in the hands of the Ministry of Agriculture while UN Women focused on technical guidance and backstopping. Issues of ownership and sustainability should take centre stage in the programme of this nature.

3. Suggestions for the future programme strategy

A number of insights have emerged from this evaluation and UN Women and its partners can decide how best to manage these insights. We particularly draw attention to the following suggestions.

1. Significant effort in the next phase should be placed on attracting the interest and commitment of decision makers and senior staff not only to support the programme but to take lead in contextualizing and institutionalizing the spirit of gender

mainstreaming in their areas of responsibilities and control. For example, Director of Planning should take lead in defining and over-sighting how gender should be approached in the planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation functions under his/her responsibility. Gender training or ‘telling’ senior management and directors what to do, through DAES, is unlikely going to overturn the gender status quo in the agriculture sector. Their engagement can be in a form of Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) in which directors and heads of farmer organizations are members to provide programme leadership and to own the programme.

2. It is apparent that the positioning of gender programmes within DAES is major reason gender in the agriculture sector is registering limited progress. Significant effort should be placed on engagements to define appropriate arrangement for coordinating gender mainstreaming effort in the agriculture sector. In the same view, careful thinking should go into identifying strategic partners that if their capacities were strengthened, would provide greater leverage in terms of achieving and sustaining the desired programme results. We noted the varied institutional participation during the trainings in phase 1.
3. We have noted in this evaluation that a great deal of effort and resources in the first phase have gone into training and community PRAs. These are useful but training can also be expensive, long term in scope and its impact is unlikely to emerge immediately. Trainings in the next should reflect carefully thought-through effort in terms of design, target, methodologies, choice of trainers, etc. The earlier discussion has provided different perspectives of how the trainings can be designed and delivered.
4. In similar way, new gender assessments and data collection exercises need to be treated with caution and advocated only when new understandings are needed. Instead efforts could be refocused on supervision and follow-ups to ensure staff are doing right things and helping them where necessary. Regular programme reviews are also important for reflections and learning.
5. It is a known fact that structural rigidities in policies, systems, culture etc are major reason women farmers in Malawi do not participate and benefit equally in the agriculture sector. For example, women are not able to express their voices to influence policy through farmer organizations because the criteria for selection into leadership structures of the farmer organizations work against women. UN Women through this programme can support strategic reviews in order to help transform the status quo, and provide conducive environment in which the gender mainstreaming capacities and women voices can be increase.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

This report presents findings, conclusions and recommendations of a mid-term evaluation of a three year Gender and Agriculture Programme (GAP) which UN Women is implementing in Malawi from 2014 to 2017. The evaluation was conducted in August-September 2015.

UN Women is a United Nations entity for Gender equality that was established to accelerate progress on the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, empowerment of women, and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development. UN Women's strategic areas of focus are increasing women's leadership and participation, ending violence against women, engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes, enhancing women's economic empowerment, and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. The UN Women country office in Malawi was set up in 2012. The country office supports the government of Malawi to promote gender equality by supporting efforts to remove barriers to women's realization of their rights in all spheres of life, including rural women's rights to socio-economic development.

In pursuant with its mandate and responsibilities, UN Women in 2013 designed the Gender and Agriculture Programme. The programme aims at institutionalizing gender in agriculture services. The goal is to support and enhance the promotion of women's economic empowerment by making agricultural services more responsive to women's needs. Specific strategic objectives of the programme are two:

- (1) Government institutions and selected farmers organizations effectively integrate gender into budgeting, planning and programming;
- (2) Rural women farmers increase their voice and influence policies and strategies on agricultural inputs and support services

1.2 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to assess progress towards achieving programme outputs, outcomes and goal, and to consider the validity of assumptions made in the logical framework. Specific objectives are:

- (1) Assess the relevance of the Gender and agriculture programme to the overall objectives of UN Women Malawi as well as its contribution to the Malawi development goals.
- (2) Assess effectiveness and organizational efficiency in progressing towards the achievement of the Gender and Agriculture programme outputs, outcomes and goals.

- (3) Evaluate progress towards achieving the results, challenges and lessons learnt of the Gender and Agriculture Programme.
- (4) Identify and validate lessons learned, good practices and examples and innovations of work supported by UN Women in the gender and agriculture programme
- (5) Provide actionable recommendations for future use
- (6) Assess sustainability measures of the programme and role of UN Women beyond programme implementation
- (7) Identify and analyze strategic areas for Gender and Agriculture Programme focus areas in the context of the transitional period and making an impact in the gender sector.

The evaluation framework as provided in the TORs focused on four criteria namely Effectiveness, Efficiency, Relevance and Sustainability. Detailed questions under each of the four evaluation criteria are provided in Annex 1. The processes to conduct the mid-term evaluation were guided by the UN Women corporate evaluation framework¹.

2. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation team comprised Dr Dyton Maliro of LUANAR-Bunda Campus supported by Ms Jacinta Nyaika, and Ms Julekha Issat. It was undertaken in August-September 2015 and involved consultations with key stakeholders in Lilongwe, Mzuzu ADD, Salima ADD and Shire Valley ADD and fieldwork in selected communities in Salima, Mzimba North and Nsanje districts. Names of people consulted and the communities visited are provided in Annex 2.

2.1 Evaluation methods

The fieldwork underlying this mid-term evaluation deployed qualitative approaches and methods. These included desk review, stakeholder consultations and focus group discussions with farmers. Checklist questions were formulated to guide the discussions. These guides were applied variably during the consultations. The methods used are discussed briefly below while the data collection guides are available upon request as separate documents.

(a) Desk review

Desk review has been carried out in order to collect information relevant to the Gender and Agriculture programme and gain extensive understanding of the activities that have been done in the programme. As such information on programme design, main activities of the programme, programme outcomes and outputs, baseline figures and indicators of change were collected from programme document, gender audit reports, the baseline reports, and quarterly reports. Part of the desk review involved assessing progress achieved in year 1 in relation to planned activities and targets.

¹ UN Women GERAAS 2014: Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System. Meta Evaluation Report Version 1.2, 30 March 2015, Prepared for UN Women Independent Evaluation Office by ImpactReady LLP.

(b) Stakeholder consultations

The evaluation assignment engaged key departments and partners to provide their experiences and views regarding the design, implementation and management and suggestions for the future of the programme using a participatory approach. This approach drew on in-depth discussion and analysis of issues around the programme. It also helped to build capacity in an evaluation way. The stakeholders that were consulted were identified in consultation with UN Women and FAO and DAES during separate meetings that were held to inform the design of the evaluation methodology. The key partners that were consulted are summarized as follows: UN Women, FAO, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, Department of Agricultural Extension Services (DAES), Gender Directorate in Ministry of Gender, Salima ADD and Salima District Agriculture Office, Mzuzu ADD and Mzimba District Agriculture Office, and Shire Valley ADD and Nsanje District Agriculture Office.

(c) Focus group discussions with farmers

Focus group discussions were conducted in Nsanje, Salima and Mzimba North districts with the farmer groups that were trained on conducting participatory field appraisals around mainstreaming gender in agriculture. Where possible, discussions were conducted with separate groups of men and women. This ensured that women farmers are able to express themselves much freer than in mixed groups. Once in a district, one EPA where the trainings and/or participatory field appraisals were conducted was identified in consultation the field staff (AEDC & AEDOs). The field staff also helped to mobilize 10-25 participants for each focus group. The FGDs were conducted in Ntende Village in Tembwe EPA in Salima District, Mateyu Ndhlovu Village in Zombwe EPA and Right Makwakwa Village in Bwengu EPA in Mzimba North District, and Bombe Vilage in Nyachilenda EPA and Alufandika Village in Magoti EPA in Nsanje District.

2.2 Quality Control measures

In order to ensure reliable results, the evaluation process ensured triangulation by information collected from the different sources discussed above. In addition, the team that collected the data is very experienced in facilitating participatory FGDs and stakeholder consultations to ensure effective engagement of respondent to provide their views and input into the evaluation process.

2.3 Limitations and opportunities of the study

The Gender and Agriculture programme is being implemented in three districts of Malawi, Mzimba north, Salima and Nsanje and involves many stakeholders. Considering time and resource limitations it was only practical to refocus field work in selected communities and stakeholders. So stakeholders, staff and farmers that were involved in this evaluation were mostly those that had closely worked with the programme. It is also mentioned above that qualitative approaches were emphasized in this evaluation. Qualitative approaches can be said to lack statistical rigor. The findings and conclusions in this evaluation can be taken as subjective and subject to further analysis. They, nevertheless, represent ‘best judgements’ of

the evaluation team given the methodology and terms of reference. They provide insights useful in informing examination of a future strategy for the Programme.

3. Summary of the programme context

3.1 The broader programme context – linking gender and agriculture in Malawi

The vision of Malawi government is to achieve at least 6 per cent growth per annum in the agricultural sector, to improve food security, to diversify food production, to improve nutrition at household level, and to increase agricultural incomes of the rural people. The commitment to implementing this vision is contained in the Agricultural Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp)² which represents Malawi's flagship priority investment programme in the agricultural sector, and a means for achieving agricultural growth and poverty reduction goals of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) and regional agricultural development frameworks such as the Common Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The ASWAp has three focus areas which are Food security and Risk management, Agri-business and market development, and Sustainable land and water management. These strategic areas of focus are supported by two key support services which are Technology generation and dissemination, and Institutional strengthening and capacity building. Cutting across all these are two development themes of (1) HIV and AIDS and gender.

The two cross-cutting issues of HIV and AIDS and gender are successively articulated in the Agriculture Sector Gender, HIV and AIDS Strategy: 2012-2017 (GHA), which was developed in 2009.³ The vision of Malawi government on gender as expressed in the GHA is to achieve quality participation of women and other vulnerable gender categories in ASWAp focus areas and key support services, to promote gender responsive technology generation and dissemination and achieve effective coordination, capacity building and resource mobilization. The implementation arrangement of the strategy provides for active participation of relevant stakeholders from key government ministries and department, the private sector, NGOs and Civil Society and Development Partners through a technical working group Cross Cutting Issues which is an apex body that provides gender oversight in the agriculture sector.

The ASWAp is coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture through the ASWAp secretariat in the Planning Division while the Gender and HIV and AIDS strategy for the agriculture sector is coordinated by DAES through the AGRESS. ASWAp operates through technical working groups comprising government, development agencies, NGOs/Civil Society and key stakeholders. We noted in the earlier section of this report that UN Women through this programme has been able to strengthen ASWAp TWG on Cross Cutting Issues and ASWAp

² Government of Malawi (2010), The Agriculture Sector Wide Approach (ASWAp): Malawi's prioritised and harmonised Agricultural Development Agenda. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security

³ Government of Malawi (2009), Agriculture Sector Gender, HIV and AIDS Strategy: 2012-17. Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security.

TWG on Monitoring and Evaluation. Based on what was discussed during the fieldwork, at the time of establishing the UN Women country office in Malawi in 2012, there was little progress regarding implementation of the Agriculture Sector Gender, HIV and AIDS Strategy (GHA). The UN Women country office in Malawi has through this Programme become a key facilitator of dialogue between the government, Civil Society Organizations and development partners on enhancing a coordinated and more effective implementation of Malawi's gender equality and women's empowerment policy frameworks and commitments.

Through the Programme, UN Women has been able to support the implementation of the ASWAP and the GHA. For example, Un Women has supported gender assessments (e.g. gender audits, gender profiles, gender baselines surveys); strengthened ASWAp technical working groups; supported the development of gender responsive checklists on the gender review of the ASWAp indicators, facilitated stakeholder linkages. UN Women also chairs the UN Gender Technical Working Group (UN-GTWG) where it facilitates the coordination and joint implementation amongst the UN agencies in order to benefit from the different comparative advantages and mandates for sustainable and effective development results. UN Women has also forged technical working relationship with FAO to implement programme. Detailed discussion on the achievements is provided in the next sections.

3.2 Summary of programme implementation arrangement – key issues

Actual programme implementation started in January 2014. The focus in the first year of the programme (2014-15) has been on Programme Objective 1 (building the capacities of government and partner staff to integrate gender into planning, budgeting and programming processes). In terms of district and community coverage, programme implementation in the first year concentrated on Nsanje district in the southern region of Malawi, Salima district in the central region and Mzimba district in the northern region. Programme Objective 2 (build the capacities of rural women farmers to influence the formulation and implementation of gender responsive agricultural policies and strategies on agricultural extension and services including inputs that work for and benefit the women) will be the focus of implementation in the remaining two years of the programme (2015-17).

The programme is national in scope involving all departments of the Ministry of Agriculture, all the 8 Agricultural Development Divisions (ADDS) and all the 28 districts of Malawi. The Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE) is funding programme to the tune of USD 2.7 million. In the Programme Document dated December, 2013⁴ the Collaborating Agencies are WE Effect, Development Fund of Norway, FAO and WFP while the Implementing Agencies are UN Women, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, NASFAM, CISANET. We note limited involvement of WE Effect, Development Fund of Norway, Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, NASFAM and CISANET. Instead, the implementation arrangement in the first phase has involved UN Women managing and accounting for the resources while Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation

⁴ UN Women Malawi – Gender & Agriculture Programme Document – December, 2013

and Water Development through Department of Agricultural Extension Services (DAES) implementing the activities. FAO has provided agricultural technical assistance. The other agencies (e.g. We Effect, NASFAM) have participated more as beneficiary institutions than as implementing institutions. Of course based on what was discussed with UN Women, farmer organizations such as NASFAM and Farmers Union of Malawi will be lead implementing agencies in the next implementation phase when the programme implementation will specifically focus on Programme Objective 2 (Rural women farmers increase their voice and influence policies and strategies on agricultural inputs and support services). We nevertheless are of the view that effective engagement of the farmer organizations in the first implementation phase should have been useful to prepare the farmer organizations for their expected role in the next implementation phase.

We would like to particularly comment on the implementation structure in the first phases that involved UN Women, FAO and DAES jointly developing workplans. In this arrangement, three programme staff can be said to be behind coordinating activities of this programme. These are a full time programme officer within UN Women, a Gender Technical Assistant/Consultant based in UN Women and a programme officer based in FAO but with divided time and effort between this programme (located within UN Women) and FAO activities. Of course, by design this programme is closely supports activities of ASWAp in which senior management are updated of this programme through ASWAp Executive Management Committee that comprises Principal Secretaries for Agriculture, Water Development, Local Government, Nutrition, HIV, AIDS,) Finance, Economic Planning and Development, MOF, MOEPD and Industry and Trade and technical working groups (TWGs).

It is noted that there is no intention in this programme to create new structures but to use existing structures. This is appreciated but based on what was discussed and observed during the fieldwork, using the existing structures, the first year of implementation has not been successful in attracting the interest and support of senior staff (Directors in the Ministry). A programme of this influence could in the next phase consider an innovative implementation arrangement that aims to solicit the interest, commitment and support of the senior management. The new arrangement would involve a Programme Advisory Committee comprising all the 8 directors and director of the farmer organizations with the principal secretary for agriculture as the chair to provide strategic programme leadership. The role of DAES would be secretariat and UN Women and as funds managers. In this arrangement, the PAC could be more empowered to make decisions and own the programme than is currently the case where DAES takes the lead and senior management is expected to be 'told' what is already decided for them. Many staff that were consulted during the fieldwork held the view that this programme is a DAES programme – the PAC arrangement could help to dispel this view. In other words, mere attendance of the decision makers (directors) at gender trainings is unlikely to transform current systems, frameworks and cultures to become gender responsive. Meaningful engagement with senior management to make decisions and to own the programme is useful for achieving the desired outcomes. In particular, DAES as coordinating unit on gender matters in the agriculture has not been able to exercises enough clout to influence change due to its positioning in the ministry especially on matters to do with

planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of key programmes of the ministry. For example, ASWAP TWG on cross cutting issues provides great opportunity for informing and influencing gender direction in the agriculture sector. Reality on the ground however is that the TWG can gender issues for consideration but are not taken on board at the time important documents are finalized by planners because gender specialists are not part of the team to finalise the documents and the planners do not see gender as a priority. DAES and partners is very well aware of this challenge, based on consultations conducted in December 2014.⁵

UN Women develops work plan jointly with DAES. UN Women pays directly to suppliers. One allegation that emerged during the fieldwork is that this joint planning process lacks transparency in that it is only UN Women and not the partners who are aware of the budgetary allocations to various programme activities. It was claimed that there have been circumstances when work plans have been developed but not implemented because they are considered within UN Women to be outside the programme budget. The tone of discussion during the fieldwork portrayed the picture that the work plans, while jointly prepared, are being implemented at discretion of UN Women. This could be well minimized if the partners, especially DAES had full information about the programme budgets and allocations although an ideal situation would be for DAES to have autonomy in managing the programme funds. Understandably, currently there are no modalities to transfer funds to DAES or field staff given the recent cash-gate experiences within the government.

3.3 Summary of progress in the achievement of planned outputs

The programme development results framework can be summarized as below in terms of outcomes and outputs.

Outcome 1: Government institutions and selected farmer organizations effectively integrate gender issues into budgeting, planning and programming.

Output 1.1 Increased knowledge and skills of Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security on gender and women access to agricultural services.

Output 1.2 Agriculture SWAP integrates gender monitoring systems.

Output 1.3 Increased coordination and networking among all stakeholders working on gender and agriculture.

Outcome 2: Rural women farmers have increased voice to influence policies and strategies on agriculture service delivery and improved access to inputs and services.

Output 2.1 Women advocates increase their knowledge and skills in policy advocacy on gender responsive agricultural service delivery and

⁵ According to Mr Kenneth Chaula from DAES during country consultations with Dyton Maliro in December 2014 at DAES offices in Lilongwe to inform development of gender and youth strategy for the CAADP process, gender issues are raised for consideration in the CAADP process but are not taken on board at the time the important CAADP investment documents are finalized by planners in the ministry.

effective representation of women in decision-making committees of agriculture platforms

Output 2.2 Advocacy platforms are created to promote dialogue on issues affecting women rural farmers' access to agricultural inputs and services

Year 1 (2014-15) of the programme implementation has focused on Programme Outcome 1 while Programme Outcome 2 will be the focus for remaining Year 2-3 (2015-17), details of which can be found in Annex 3. Based on what was discussed with UN Women information of which is presented in Table 1, all planned outputs for Outcome 1 have been achieved. This progress is commendable given the programme contexts discussed above. The focus of mid-term evaluation is normally on management of the project, and the balance of inputs and outputs. It may be timed to take place mid way through the project life to see what has happened so far and to make necessary adjustments for the next stages.⁶ It is with this understanding in mind that we hereby make some observations for consideration.

One comment relates to the balance between the programme funding level and the outputs. Of course programme funding of USD 2.7 million for a three-year programme represents significant gender investment in the Malawi agriculture sector. We have not seen the distribution of the budget but we are of the view that this magnitude of programme funding could support additional strategic outputs. We particularly are of the view that the Programme could also support review of policies, procedures and systems to make them gender responsive. For example, the Programme has trained planning, monitoring and evaluation staff to be able to mainstream gender but this may require to be matched with reviews of the current planning, monitoring and evaluation frameworks for the gender mainstreaming effort to be effective. In particular, the Programme can help to introduce framework for monitoring progress of achieving desired gender outcomes in the agriculture sector. We have noted earlier that most strategic agriculture programmes are weak on gender despite most planners in the ministry being oriented on gender mainstreaming because at the planning level, the planners may not consider gender as priority unless the planning frameworks demand gender consideration as matters of policy requirement.

Significant resources in year 1 have gone into gender training, reviews and audits. These are good outputs but we are of the view that additional supportive outputs could be introduced. For example, many extension workers have been trained to conduct gender responsive PRAs but they has not been any follow-ups or supervision to monitor that they are doing the right thing and helping them where necessary. This is so because currently, the Programme relies on DAES and UN Women to implement the activities including supervision and follow-up. Possibility could be explored to engage members of TWG on Cross Cutting Issues to undertake this backstopping role. In other words, additional supportive outputs could be introduced e.g. follow-ups or supervision or monitoring that right thing is being done and helping them where necessary.

⁶ Rubin, F (1995) A Basic Guide to Evaluation for Development Workers: Putting Evaluation into Practice. Oxfam. London

Table 1: Progress in achieving of planned outputs, indicators and activities Year 1 (2014-15)

Planned Output 1	Planned Activity	Planned targets for Year 1	Achieved targets for Year 1	Comments on achievements or challenges
Increased knowledge and skills among ministry of agriculture, Ministry of Gender officials and field extension workers on gender dynamics and women access to agricultural inputs	1. Conduct project baseline survey	1 base line survey	Baseline survey conducted	The document have been edited and are being formatted for printing
	2. Conduct gender audit of the Ministry of Agriculture and ASWAp	Conduct 1 gender audit	Gender audit of the ministry of agriculture at central level and district and community levels conducted	The document have been edited and are being formatted for printing
	3. Produce a gender profile for agriculture sector	I gender profile	Gender Profile conducted	The document have been edited and are being formatted for printing
	4. Capacity building of the Ministry's planning and budgeting officers at national level	50 planning and budgeting officers trained in gender responsive planning and budgeting	73 officers trained	The training surpassed the planned target as we found it necessary to train all than a few of them
	5. Capacity building of the ASWAp and the Gender HIV and AIDS TWG.	Support all CCI TWG meetings	6 meetings supported in 2014	Capacity strengthening sessions took place during these meetings

Planned Output 3	Planned Activity	Planned targets for Year 1	Achieved targets for Year 1	Comments on achievements or challenges
Ministry of Agriculture Monitoring systems effectively integrate gender within agricultural programming	1. Train a pool of experts within Gender and Agriculture sector for Gender Responsive M&E in the agriculture sector.	25 officers from the M&E TWG trained in gender responsive M&E		
	2. Provide technical assistance to M&E ASWAP Technical Working Group, in collaboration with FAO, to ensure analysis and periodic publication of sex-disaggregated data for policy, advocacy, planning, programming, monitoring.	At least 2 meetings are conducted to provide technical backstopping to the ASWAp M&E TWG.	Technical support provided to review the data collection and reporting tool for the ministry of agriculture	
	3. Develop gender sensitive indicators and checklists for monitoring gender responsiveness of agriculture programs at sector and district levels.	Indicators and checklists for gender responsiveness produced	2 checklists developed and feedback provided to ASWAp on the gender review of the ASWAp indicators	
	4. Develop training materials on gender responsive extension services.			

Planned Output 3	Planned Activity	Planned targets for Year 1	Achieved targets for Year 1	Comments on achievements or challenges
Increased coordination and networking among all stakeholders working on gender and agriculture	1. Establish a lessons learnt/good practices knowledge management platform	Platform for sharing lessons and best practices in agriculture sector established by 2014. At least 3 best practices in the implementation of Gender and HIV Strategy identified and shared by end 2014.	The platform called Kuwala is established and documents on gender are being uploaded and accessed. 5 best practices were documented through the national gender and agriculture symposium in December, 2014	
	2. Conduct annual conference on rural women (October 15, 2014)	1 per year	UN Women and its partners also supports the International rural women's day each year	
	3. Integrate gender and agriculture in the agriculture fair	1 agriculture fair /year	UN Women supports the agriculture fair each to ensure rural women's participation and ensure	
	4. Strengthen the role of the Agriculture SWAP CCI TWG.	Support 4 meetings in 2014	All CCI TWG meetings have been supported by UN Women through the Gender and agriculture programme	
	5. South to South exchange expertise		Rwanda and Malawi exchange took place and the Gender and Agriculture programme was implemented with support from an expert from Rwanda	
	6. Facilitate linkages with regional networks working on agriculture and commodities such as COMESA, SADC and NEPAD	UN Women and Partner Organizations attend at least 1 regional meeting on agriculture	UN Women and partners participated in the development of the NEPAD/Malawi government project on Climate Support programme	

The focus in the remaining two years of programme implementation is on Programme Outcome 2 (Rural women farmers have increased voice to influence policies and strategies on agriculture service delivery and improved access to inputs and services). We commend UN Women for envisaging working with farmer organizations (e.g. NASFAM, FUM, CISANET) that are already working towards this objective. These farmer organizations (e.g. NASFAM, FUM, CISANET) are already engaging farmers in increasing their voices to influence policy and demand better services that work for and benefit them. What may be lacking are capacities to undertake an effective gender advocacy role for the benefit of women farmers.

We acknowledge that the farmer organizations have been part of the trainings in year 1 of the programme implementation but we are of the view that they required special orientation and training regarding their expected roles in this Programme. We also recognize that the second phase of the programme will aim at building these structures on gender advocacy. In the earlier discussion, we have noted limited engagement in year 1 of the programme implementation in preparing the farmer organizations for their expected role in the Programme. In this section we particularly note limited linkages with institutional structures of the farmer organizations through which farmers channel their voices to influence policy. For example, the institutional structure of Farmers Union comprises farmer clubs, farmer associations, district farmer unions, and executive board while that of NASFAM comprises farmer clubs, associations and board of trustees. We feel the programme design should have clearly reflected on this and develop clear strategies to address gender gaps in the farmer organizations for women to exercise their voice. Instead, significant emphasis in the programme document is placed on the use ASWAp coordination mechanisms (e.g. Village agriculture committee, Area stakeholder panel, District stakeholder panel, and District agriculture coordination committees). And during the community PRAs, emphasis has been placed on ‘model villages’, based on what was discussed with AEDCs and AEDOs in Nsanje.⁷

Gender assessments of the leadership structures of these farmer organizations in Malawi⁸ reveal structural gaps in advancing women’s voices. For example, women’s numbers in the farmer organizations are largest at the lowest levels of leadership (e.g. in clubs) where women are a significant presence in leadership (e.g. committees) but remain under-represented relative to men. At all leadership levels, the most powerful post of chairperson is almost always occupied by a man (except in all-female group). This pro-male bias disadvantages women in exercising influence in the farmers’ organizations and hence the inability of the farmer organizations to articulate and influence policy on gender matters. For the great majority of women, the highest ambition they can achieve is Treasurer/Secretary but most have to be content with being just simple members of the farmer organization, with

⁷ According to AEDCs and AEDOs in Nsanje, the selected communities for the PRAs are ‘model villages’ that have been bypassed by development for a long time.

⁸ Maliro D.D (2013) Gender and Agriculture in Malawi - A Report on Gender Visibility in Structures of Farmers’ Organizations: A Case of Farmers Union of Malawi and NASFAM. Southern Africa Confederation of Agricultural Unions (SACAU), Pretoria, South Africa, 2013

elevation to ordinary member of a committee. Reasons for women being kept in low positions and out of top leadership include (a) Culture and stereotype views on men as leaders and women as followers, b) Women's lesser empowerment through education or societal arrangements that often deny them material assets (land, access to finance etc); (c) dispersal of women's efforts from the farming itself to so many other family responsibilities as wives/mothers for raising/managing households. In many clubs, elevation to high office requires demonstrated high farming performance or dedication to organizational duties and women may be disadvantaged; (d) Weak policies in farmer organizations to promote women's empowerment; where policies exist, lack of enforcement mechanisms to ensure adherence to the policy guidelines, and (e) Inadequate information to draw attention to glaring gender gaps: these farmer organizations rarely keep good gender monitoring data and records to highlight strategic need for a gender intervention. Tackling such issues and dimensions in this programme would represent a strategic entry point for advancing women voices to influence policy.

4. Evaluation findings

In the foregoing sections, we have presented and discussed the context in which this programme is being implemented in the agriculture sector of Malawi and progress that has been made so far in terms of achieving planned outputs. In this section, we focus on the specific questions that this evaluation seeks to provide answers to in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and challenges and opportunities of the programme.

4.1 Effectiveness of the programme

According to DAC evaluation criteria, effectiveness of a programme refers to the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance.⁹ It is recalled here that the ultimate goal of this is to support and enhance the promotion of women's economic empowerment by making agricultural services more responsive to women's needs. Specific strategic objectives of the programme are:

- (1) Government institutions and selected farmers organizations effectively integrate gender into budgeting, planning and programming;
- (2) Rural women farmers increase their voice and influence policies and strategies on agricultural inputs and support services

The programme objectives are very good and represent the right direction towards gender mainstreaming in the Malawi agriculture sector. They support in addressing key challenges faced by the sector in Malawi emanating from inadequate capacity on part of policy makers, planners and service providers to take into account needs, circumstances and expectations of different farmer categories leading to structural gender disparities that particularly put women

⁹ See OECD (2010) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management

at a peripheral despite being the major providers of agricultural labour and producers and managers of food in Malawi.

The programme is built on the premise that women in Malawi are the majority of those engaged in agriculture sector but mainly under subsistence agriculture and not effectively accessing productive resources and other opportunities in the sector. In addition the patriarchal system of marriage discriminates women farmers in the country. By building capacities of women farmers to increase their voice and influence policies and strategies on agricultural inputs and support services, the programme wedges great potential for fostering positive changes in that services to the agricultural sector will not be only demand driven but also meet special needs and expectations of men and women.

In the earlier sections of this report, we have noted commendable achievements of planned outputs for programme outcome 1 so far made in Year 1 of the implementation. We have no doubt about achievement of the remaining planned programme outcome and outputs in the remaining phase. These achievements can be attributed to the strategic positioning and role of UN Women in advancing and influencing strategic gender changes. First, UN Women is better placed to foster networking and partnerships among UN and donor agencies to support the national gender agenda and to deliver as one. The collaboration with FAO and RNE in this programme is one of the progress indicators in this direction. This collaboration is likely to feature highly in the multi donor trust fund for the agriculture sector which is under formulation with the leadership of the World Bank and in partnerships with RNE and UN Women among other agencies. The coordination and technical oversight on gender in the agricultural sector in Malawi is placed in a unit under the DAES which, by its placement within the agriculture structure of Malawi, can be said to lack the necessary clout to influence policy. UN Women is able to explore its positioning in the country to side step various structures in order to penetrate and reach any desired decision making structure in the agriculture sector (including PSs and politicians) with the relevant gender information and agendas. The support that UN Women has provided through this programme has lead to revitalization of serious gender efforts within the framework of ASWAp and in the implementation of the GHA.

We nevertheless are of the view that beyond building capacities of government and farmer institutions to offer gender responsive agricultural services, the programme could also focus supporting reviews of strategic policies, systems, frameworks, procedures or practices in the agriculture sector. Of course, the programme has provided inputs into the National Gender Policy and the draft reflects UN Women's contributions. The programme has also recently finalized the gender analysis of the agriculture budget, and also the gender analysis of the Farm Input Subsidy Programme (FISP) the advocacy of which will be implemented in the second phase. But the suggestion in this evaluation is that, for example, the Programme could support review of the budgeting frameworks or the FISP frameworks in order to make them gender responsive. This done, the capacities that are being built can find conducive environment in which to facilitate the achievement of the desired gender outcomes. For example, Monitoring and Evaluation Officers have been trained to collect and report on gender disaggregated data but if the existing M & E framework is gender blind, then little

progress could be expected despite presence of the gender mainstreaming capacities. We have noted limited programme outcomes, outputs and activities towards this direction.

Many planned outcomes in year 1 have been achieved but we have noted the inability in this programme to pursue strategic routes that provide greater leverage in terms of achieving desired gender outcomes. For example, it is apparent that the slow progress in achieving desired gender outcomes in the agriculture sector revolves around inadequate management support and interest, preferring to transfer the gender mainstreaming responsibilities to DAES. Those that were consulted during the fieldwork, including UN Women, are well aware of this challenge. We commend efforts in this programme to train lower level structures (AEDCs and AEDOs), including engaging them in formulating gender work plans and commitments. But we are of the view that much more effort could have gone into attracting and sustain the interest and support of senior management to make the gender commitment and formulate the gender action plans for their sectors/departments.

We also note differences in understanding of the programme between key stakeholders. Ministry of Agriculture has decisively taken a position to tackle gender issues alongside HIV/AIDS issues by focusing on men, women, boys, girls and vulnerable groups such as people living with HIV/AIDS at implementation level of this programme. On the other hand, UN Women in this programme has taken a decisive position to emphasize issues of women economic empowerment. Of course there are valid reasons why this programme should also emphasize HIV and AIDS issues, given the programme's linkage to the GHA. But then, the Gender and Agriculture Programme document is silent on HIV and AIDS issues. Further stakeholder discussion is needed on this and if the majority are in favour, then outputs and activities on HIV and AIDS need to be developed and clearly reflected in the programme. Our view is that gender and HIV and AIDS are two big developmental themes that if not carefully managed in a jointly programmed arrangement can result problems of balancing allocation of time, effort and resources. This problem has started to emerge in terms of resource allocation to gender and HIV and AIDS activities in the ASWAp. For example, ASWAp has Gender and HIV/AIDS budget allocation in the national agriculture budget. Crude analysis for the years 2011-2015 suggests that out of the approved budget allocations to agriculture, 0.05-0.14 per cent has been allocated to Gender and HIV/AIDS activities. Typical activities under the gender and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming budgets are (a) developing capacity of public, private and civil society organizations to mainstream HIV and AIDS, (b) disseminating the mainstream guidelines to all stakeholders, facilitating a review of public policies and strategies to mainstream HIV and AIDS, (c) improving coordination mechanisms, (d) intensifying provision of technical services required by farmers, planning monitoring and (e) evaluation of programmes and promoting transfer and adoption of improved technologies. However, the share of gender budget in the consolidated gender and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming budget is somehow low. For example, government in 2013-14 released 58.3 per cent of the approved Gender and HIV/AIDS budget. Out of this budget, only 26 per cent went to gender activities while the rest went to support HIV/AIDS activities.

In broad terms, when there is need for budget cut in the agriculture budget, gender activities are one of the priority candidates.¹⁰

4.2 Programme efficiency

Again, the DAC evaluation criteria look at programme efficiency as a measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results. It is recalled that this programme is funded to the tune of USD 2.7 million and this represents substantial gender investment in the agriculture sector. Based on what was discussed with key stakeholder institutions, there is efficient use of funds especially for DAES.

As noted earlier, DAES has gender programme activities which fail to be implemented with funding because the major funding for DAES (through ASWAP and ORT) are normally low, intermittent and sometimes completely not provided. The programme funds have presented a great opportunity for DAES to implement the gender plans. By supporting implementation of GHA in which different stakeholders are involved through the gender TWG, the programme has enhanced partnerships and linkages in advancing the gender in the country. The equipment (e.g. laptops, cameras) procured through the programme would not be readily possible through the normal government resources. This has allowed DAES to work efficiently including documenting gender practices because normally before this programme DAES used borrowed cameras and other essential equipment from Agricultural Communications Branch (ACB) of the Ministry which led to delays and other inconveniences. The programme is using existing staff expertise and experiences within DAES and not specifically recruited staff and offices for this programme. This arrangement alone represents rational use of the programme resources since overhead costs (e.g. staff salaries, office space) are already borne by government and the programme funds are left to support the intended programme activities for the benefit of the rural women.

The funding agency (RNE) expressed great satisfaction in the way UN Women manages and accounts for the programme funds. And given the potential risk of trusting the government with huge resources of this programmes magnitude (USD2.7 million for 3 years) portrayed through the national cash-gate scandal and the apparent low absorptive/spending capacity within DAES, the arrangement to have UN Women manage the programme funds was the best for efficiency use of the resources. However, most agriculture staff that were consulted hold a different view. They would have preferred DAES as an implementing partner to exercise its clout through equally resource management roles. Examples were cited organizations which disburse funds directly to partners (e.g. Development Fund of Norway to Mzuzu ADD) to implement agreed activities while the funding agency only provided technical and resource management oversight roles.

We have already noted that effort in the first phase of programme implementation focused on training but we are of the view that some efficiency gains might have been compromised. The purpose of the training is to impart knowledge and skills that would be applied in day to day work to change things and achieve desired outcomes. It is too early to decipher changes

¹⁰ Maliro D.D (2014) Draft Regional Framework on Gender and Youth Inclusion in the CAADP Implementation Process, COMESA, Lusaka, Zambia. June 2014

attributable to the training that was provided to the AEDCs and AEDOs but what was apparent during the fieldwork is that the field staff appear to grasp what the tools used in the training were and not necessarily how the tools could be used to mainstream gender. This was clear especially from discussions with farmers that had been oriented to the PRA tools – they were able to mention the tools but not how they would use them in a gender mainstreaming context. On the other hand, we commend the training for NASFAM data entry clerks that UN Women supported as an example of efficient use of programme resources. The NASFAM training yielded the desired outcomes in the sense that now the clerks are able to do things differently in terms of capturing and reporting on gender statistics, according to what was discussed with senior staff within NASFAM. The lesson here is that may be instead of drawing participants from different institutions and disciplines, training in the second phase of programme implementation could be organized in such a way to be linked to a known activity to achieve desired changes. For example, in the case of NASFAM, the clerks were already capturing farmer statistics but were unable to provide gender disaggregated data. The training was designed specifically to impart knowledge and skills in capturing gender responsive farmer statistics. In other words, training is very costly exercise and it has to be cautiously linked to achievement of desired changes. For example, training could be organized to help researchers on how to generate gender responsive technologies (choice or prioritization of research agendas, management of on-farm demonstration, etc) instead of offering generic training on gender mainstreaming that includes directors from different department and institutions.

We have also already commented that the level of funding in this programme is adequate enough to support additional interventions such as reviews of policies, frameworks, procedures, etc that act as impediments to gender mainstreaming. We have also raised concerns around the PRAs that were conducted in selected communities. Instead, we are of the view that efforts would concentrate on structures and operations of farmer organizations (e.g. NASFAM, FUM or CISANET) that are already working with the farmers to strengthen the way through which women farmers could effectively participate and benefit through influencing policy and demanding services.

We have also commended the efforts to strengthen TWGs and to conduct assessments (e.g. gender audits) but these would represent more relevance if the programme made effective use of them to shape this programme. For example, the TWGs would be useful in providing technical assistance on agriculture issues in this programme, the role currently provided by FAO. The TWO would be useful in monitoring and following up to ensure those trained on gender mainstreaming are doing the right thing and helping them where necessary. The gender audits would be much more relevant if the outputs were effectively used to inform programme implementation, for example, the audits reveal little awareness of gender policies and instruments among staff. Gender IEC strategies could emerge out of the audits.

4.3 Relevance of the programme

In programme evaluations, relevance involves examining the extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies. Retrospectively, the question of relevance

often becomes a question as to whether the objectives of an intervention or its design are still appropriate given changed programme circumstances.¹¹ We have in the earlier discussion commended the timing and objectives of this programme which provides an opportunity to support the implementation of the ASWAp and the GHA.

We also commend the cascade training model in which national level staff train AEDCs who in turn train AEDOs who in turn train farmers and this needs to be maintained subject to some refinements. We are of the view that a future arrangement should entail expert consultants training a national level trainers (possibly directors) who in turn train ADD level trainers (possibly SMSs) who in turn train district level trainers (SMSs) who subsequently train their EPA trainers (AEDOs) to train section level staff (AEDOs) to train farmers. In this way, there is potential for institutionalizing the training as part of formal staff duties as well as contextualizing it to suit the local relevance. We find the current arrangement of engaging high level consultants, UN Women and DAES staff to train AEDCs or to supervise training of AEDOs and farmers inconsistent with the decentralized agriculture service delivery arrangement. It does not promote ownership and continuity.

We nevertheless make some observations for consideration in the next phases. We have noted that the same training content is delivered regardless of target group and location. One would expect the duration, content and depth of coverage to suit the target group. The lack of translation into major local languages (Chichewa for Salima and Chitumbuka for Mzimba North) raises particular concern. Of course reference materials were provided and trainers worked in teams but most AEDCs/AEDOs that were consulted admitted limited knowledge and skills to train competently in tools such as gender balance trees. We also hold the view that the duration of the trainings especially community trainings were too long- one week although most AEDCs/AEDOs thought it was too short to cover all the PRA tools. What is the opportunity cost to farmers of attending the training of such duration? There were claims during the field visits that most men shunned the trainings preferring engagements that gave quick moneys.

Notwithstanding our earlier observation that training can be costly and needs to be cautiously delivered in the second phase, our understanding is that gender training can fall into different categories.

- (1) Gender sensitization training is meant to create awareness, to dispel misconceptions and to influence changes in attitude. It was apparent during the fieldwork that staff and farmers have heard about gender but may have misconceptions or negative attitudes. We repeat here that the gender audits reveal that most agricultural staff at ADD and district level are not conversant with key gender policies and strategies. Sensitization training could serve the purpose of laying foundations for subsequent gender mainstreaming effort.

- (2) Gender capacity training is a form high level training meant to building the desired knowledge, skills and experiences to be able to mainstream gender in own specialized

¹¹ See OECD (2010) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management

sector. For example, economists would require gender programming training to be able to undertake gender responsive planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation of programmes. Researchers would require specialized gender training to gain knowledge, skills and experience in developing technologies that meet different needs of men and women (e.g. choice of on-farm demonstration trials). Extension workers would require specialized training on how to organize and deliver services to men and women. This is the kind of training where complicated tools such as gender balance trees, Harvard frameworks, etc can be trained and applied. This is not a kind of training that would suit participants with limited literacy levels. It was apparent from the fieldwork that even some AEDOs struggled to understand and apply these analytical tools on their own without the help of their counterparts.¹²

- (3) Gender advocacy training is meant to impart knowledge, skills and experiences in lobbying for implementation of gender agendas. The training content requires going beyond gender terms and terminologies to include appropriate IEC and lobbying/negotiation tools. Again, this is a highly specialized form of gender training suitable for those passionate about communication and related disciplines and 3-5 days is ideal. Almost everyone agrees that there is a general lack of interest and support of senior management and directors in matters of gender. It is not so much about them not knowing what gender and its importance is. Special advocacy engagements are needed to understand their areas of concerns and build a common platform of understanding regarding supporting the agriculture gender agenda.
- (4) Gender trainers training aims to build a strong and readily available apex team of trainers who can be engaged to offer different types of training. The content goes beyond gender terms and terminologies to include design of training programmes, teaching methods or training methodologies, training needs assessments, training assessments, etc. The aim is to create a pool of resource persons conversant not only with gender but also to the delivery of training at various levels. This type of training can even take one month and involve a formal certificate that recognizes the trainee as an approved entity to offer gender training competently. This kind of training can be provided at different levels – national, ADD, district, community, department, sector, etc.

4.4 Sustainability of the programme

Sustainability of a programme refers to the continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. It involves the

¹² After training, the AEDOs organised community meetings where these tools were put to use to generate gender, HIV and AIDS issues at community level. These were not community trainings in strict sense.

probability of continued long-term benefits and the resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.¹³

It is recalled that the programme supports implementation of the GHA which is the overarching strategy guiding mainstreaming of gender in the agriculture sector. By design it is supposed to be embraced by all actors in the agriculture sector and not just government. The engagement of DAES in this programme is a way of building capacity to sustain implementation of the gender activities under the GHA once the programme support is phased out. Of course there are views that DAES, due to its positioning within the Ministry, is unlikely to influence significant change around gender thinking in the Ministry. This challenge seems to be beyond the scope of this programme but UN Women can influence things to have gender coordination placed at the rightful decision making level within the agriculture sector.

By engaging active participation of key stakeholders through TWG on Cross Cutting Issues and directly through specific programme interventions is a good arrangement to ensure shared vision and responsibility towards advancing the gender agenda in the agriculture sector. It is learnt from the fieldwork that the TWG on Cross Cutting Issues has since spearheaded the development of gender mainstreaming guidelines for all agricultural programmes including research projects in the country. Through the gender audit, the programme has allowed stakeholders to view and embrace gender issues in the agriculture sector from a holistic and long term perspective that can help explore alternative resource mobilizations for tackling gender issues beyond where this programme stops.

Some sustainability elements have already started to emerge at community level, based on what was discussed and observed during the community visits. After the gender trainings, Mzimba and Nsanje have gone ahead on their own to undertake the community trainings using own resources as part of ongoing day to day activities (although Salima is waiting for UN Women to provide the resources). The training in particular is a strategic step in the right direction especially among those involved in the planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation in the agriculture sector. There were reports of commendation during the fieldwork that, for instance, the 2014/2015 budgets have seen a remarkable positive change in terms of budgeting for gender activities. If efforts were taken to review the frameworks and approaches to incorporate gender, the gender programming capacity so far built through the trainings should have been accompanied by a conducive planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation environment to sustain the programme benefits.

It is nevertheless important to emphasize here that the apparent lack of interest or support from the senior level managers in the agriculture sector poses a potential risk to sustainability of the programme. Beyond this, we feel the programme objectives seem not to have been clearly publicized. At all levels of the fieldwork consultations, the impression that emerged is one that looks at the programme as UN Women's or DAES activity suggesting programme challenges. This seems even more re-enforced in the implementation arrangement that

¹³ See OECD (2010) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management

emphasizes the DAES structure at grassroots leaving out of the trainings equally important extension workers such as livestock field staff. During the trainings, AEDCs/AEDOs were tasked to formulate action plans which they did not have an idea how to implement and sustain. We hold the view that for sustainability, such strategic tasks were better undertaken by senior staff and decision makers and not the field extension workers.

Finally, this programme is not the only gender initiative in the ministry or the agriculture sector. We are aware of other (e.g. gender efforts by Development Fund of Norway in Mzuzu ADD) but with which this programme needed to explore working synergies and support each other. We commend UN Women in forging partnerships with institutions such as NASFAM which already has very strong gender programmes in place that have the potential continue even when the programme support is phased out.

4.5 Key opportunities and challenges in is programme

The opportunities that exist through this programme for UN Women to advance the gender agenda in the agriculture sector for the benefit of rural women farmers have been mentioned in the previous sections. To reprise, UN Women through this programme can exploit its advantaged positioning in the country to penetrate any decision making layer (politicians, policy makers) in order to secure the required support to ache desired gender outcomes. UN Women through this programme can garner the support of the UN agencies and development partners for resources (technical and financial) to support the transformation of the agriculture sector. Through its international perspective, UN Women through this programme is able to help to advise on what can work well and what cannot work well regarding gender and agriculture from the international gender development discourse. Based on what was discussed and observed during the field work, UN Women is yet to effectively explore these opportunities in through this programme. Two key challenges are worthy highlighting here.

UN Women and stakeholders through this programme are well aware that lack of interest and support among senior management is major reason the gender agenda in the agriculture sector is apparently stalled. Instead of engaging this level, UN Women has opted for a lesser difficult layer to penetrate by focusing efforts on AEDCs and AEDOs, including engaging them into formulating action plans and commitments that clearly lack legitimacy of implementation if not sanctioned by the senior management.

UN Women in this programme engages stakeholders in joint work-planning although the process requires some adjustments in view of the stakeholder concerns discussed in the earlier sections of this report. We commend this and should be maintained. We nevertheless note the inability to engage in reflections and learning through regular programme review meetings. These meetings would provide an opportunity to reflect on what is working well and what is not working well and adjust things.

4.6 Major lessons

It is apparent from the stakeholder consultations that the level, speed, quantity and quality of progress achieved so far in this programme reflects mainly the efforts of UN Women and not the national machinery whose capacity international development partners like UN Women

should help to build and strengthen. Full implementation responsibility should have been left squarely in the hands of the Ministry of Agriculture while UN Women focused on technical guidance and backstopping. Issues of ownership and sustainability should take centre stage in the programme of this nature.

5. Major recommendations

This programme represents a seminal contribution to the agriculture sector and provides great opportunity for achieving desired gender outcomes. By building strong linkages through ASWAp which is Malawi's strategic investment plan for the agriculture sector, this programme is well placed to ensure that men and women farmers participate and benefit equally in the agriculture sector. A number of insights have emerged from this evaluation and UN Women and its partners can decide how best to manage these insights. The following could form priority for the next phase.

(1) Balance of inputs and outputs in the **Programme development results framework**

This programme is funded to the tune of USD2.7 million which is big enough resource base to support additional outputs. UN Women and partners can decide areas that can be introduced but we suggest the following:

- (a) Support review of systems, procedures, etc with a view of making them gender responsive. It is a known fact that structural rigidities in policies, systems, culture etc are major reason women farmers in Malawi do not participate and benefit equally in the agriculture sector. UN Women through this programme can support strategic reviews in order to help transform the status quo, and provide conducive environment in which the gender mainstreaming capacities built through this programme can find useful application. For example, many staff in the planning division have been oriented to gender training but gender progress is still slow because the planning frameworks are yet to accommodate gender integration. Another example relates to gender visibility and participation in farmer organizations in order to advance women's voices. For farmer organizations such as Farmers Union of Malawi, one needs to be chairperson of a lower level leadership structure (e.g. Association) to qualify for a position in a next higher level leadership structure (e.g. District Farmers Union). And the empirical evidence is clear that the position of chairperson at all hierarchy level of leadership structure in farmer organization is occupied by a man, implicating barring women from aspiring for positions in higher level leadership structure in the hierarchy.
- (b) Introduce system to monitor gender progress and outcomes - One of the expected outputs of this programme is that Agriculture SWAP integrates gender monitoring systems. This expectation also appears in the UN Women Malawi Strategic Note 2014-2016 as **Outcome 5.2: Mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of Gender Equality commitments and regularly generate analysis and evidence on gaps and performance.** Care should however taken when interpreting this – the gender monitoring being suggested here is not same as integrating gender in the existing

monitoring and evaluation frameworks and neither is it a monitoring system for this programme. This is a unique system of monitoring how much gender progress is being achieved in the sector and can be done periodically while the other two can be done regularly.

(2) Direction of the programme – defining strategic entry points

This programme has very good conceptual objectives but may require to be pursued from entry points different from ones tested in the first phase. For example in the first phase, the first objective to build capacity of government officers has involved pooling officers from different departments to attend gender training. After the training, there has been little in terms of actual practice. In the next phase, an innovative approach could be tried in which a department (e.g. Research or Planning Division) or a farmer organization (e.g. FUM) is helped to build gender programming capacity and to apply the skills (and reviewing systems etc) until desired gender outcomes are achieved before moving on to another department. We have noted as an innovative approach whereby UN Women supported the training of NASFAM data clerks to capture, process and report on gender disaggregated data and tremendous positive tangible changes have already started to occur within NASFAM. This contrasts with the changes expected from the other trainings offered for the directors and field extension staff in Mzimba, Salima and Nsanje

In terms of the second objective to increase women's voices to influence policy, effort in the next phase should be directed supporting farmer organizations that are already doing the agriculture policy advocacy roles. Effort in the first phase has gone into community gender PRAs but which may not directly contribute to this strategic objective.

We have noted salient different stakeholder stances in this programme in which DAES emphasis is on gender and HIV & AIDS issues while the emphasis on UN Women and the farmer organizations is on women economic empowerment. If consensus agrees on the gender and HIV & AIDS emphasis, then the programme design needs to reflect this with clearly spelt out development results framework. Otherwise, our recommendation is to focus the emphasis on women economic empowerment because combining the two developmental themes has a potential risk of relegating the women economic issues to the peripheral in favour of HIV and AIDS issues – we have given examples in the earlier sections how gender aspects suffer in terms of budget allocations in the ASWAp.

Gender training, and gender assessments (gender audits, baselines, and profiles) are good intentions but can also be very costly with limited impacts if not carefully implemented. Training can only be useful if offered to achieve well assessed capacity gaps. Four types of training can be offered (gender awareness, gender programming, gender advocacy, gender training of trainers) and which can achieve different outcomes. It should be clear regarding the purpose, content, audience, language, etc of a given training. We noted that in the first phase trainings were offered to different audiences with little regard to these curriculum design and delivery aspects. Turning to baseline studies, their conceptual role is to help challenge/improve programme design and to set out bench mark

values for monitoring and evaluation indicators. We have noted limited linkage between the programme objectives and the scope of the baseline studies and the gender audits.

(3) Implementation arrangement

Significant effort in the next phase should be placed on attracting the interest and commitment of decision makers and senior staff not only to support the programme but to take lead in contextualizing and institutionalizing the spirit of gender mainstreaming in their areas of responsibilities and control. For example, Director of Planning should take lead in defining and over-sighting how gender should be approached in the planning, budgeting and monitoring and evaluation functions under his/her responsibility. Gender training or 'telling' senior management and directors what to do, through DAES, is unlikely going to overturn the gender status quo in the agriculture sector.

It is apparent that the positioning of gender programmes within DAES is major reason gender in the agriculture sector is registering limited progress. Significant effort should be placed on engagements to define appropriate arrangement for coordinating gender mainstreaming effort in the agriculture sector.

In the same view, careful thinking should go into identifying strategic partners that if their capacities were strengthened, would provide greater leverage in terms of achieving and sustaining the desired programme results. In particular, we noted the varied institutional participation in the first phase – e.g. FUM, NASFAM, CISANET

We recognize the existence of implementation structures of ASWAp which can be useful in guiding the implementation of this programme but we also note that this arrangement has not been very effective on gender matters. This being a very big programme, a Programme Advisory Committee comprising all the 8 directors of the ministry and heads of the farmer organizations and chaired by Secretary for Agriculture can represent an innovative way of implementing and owning this programme. The role of DAES could be secretariat while UN Women would focus on managing the funds. Agriculture technical support could come from the respective directors and heads of institution based on their line of responsibilities as advised by respective technical experts. Effective use could be made of TWG on cross cutting issues to help in monitoring the programme as well as gender progress and outcomes in the agriculture sector.

(4) Regular reviews and learning

Effort in the next phase should be placed on supervision and follow-ups to ensure staff are doing right things and helping them where necessary. Regular programme reviews are also important for reflections and learning and changing course where necessary. This aspect has not been given priority in the first phase.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Scope of the Gender and Agriculture Evaluation according to TORs

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent were the objectives achieved/are likely to be achieved; • To what extent has the programme approaches been effective in achieving its intended objectives as well as objectives of UN Women. • Are programme activities being implemented effectively to achieve maximum benefit within the context; including delivery process, among others? • What are the factors that hindered/assisted the effectiveness of the program? • Are there adequate and effective systems in place to ensure accountability and transparency in management implementation of the programme? Are these systems being adhered to? Why or Why not? • To what extent is programming informed and influenced by situational and policy context, in relation to attainment of results? • Are the partnerships formed by the programme effective in helping the programme achieve its objectives? Why or Why not? What are the lessons learnt on partnerships? • To what extent is the programme communication strategy effective and why? • Is the programme M&E systems effective and why? How can they be improved • Have the institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the programme?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What measures have been taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used? • Did the programme adopt the most efficient approach in implementation? • How well does the programme management structure support/facilitate program implementation? • Were there any constraints (e.g. political, practical, and bureaucratic) to efficient programme implementation? What level of effort was made to overcome these challenges? • Is programme management responsive to changing conditions on the ground? • To what extent has UN Women worked in partnership with MOAFS, MoGCDSW contributing to greater efficiencies in the delivery of the programme? Was the programme implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives? • Are the objectives going to be achieved on time?
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent are the Outcome and objective areas of the programme relevant to targeted beneficiaries, UN Women priorities as well as country priorities? • Was the program in line with local needs and priorities, targeting the right areas, people with the right interventions? • Did the process of designing the program or programme adequately enlist the participation of all key stakeholder groups? • What measures were put in place to ensure that the programme stakeholders were adequately informed of the programme interventions and their roles in it? • To what extent did the key stakeholder groups (disaggregated by age, sex and livelihood group) participate in the management and implementation of the programme? • Did the activities implemented contribute to the outcome and the objective of the programme and the overall programme logic? Were there gaps, if yes, what are they and what can be done to address this problem? • Are the risks/assumptions identified during programme design still valid? How are they being managed? Are there any new risks emerging? • To what extent is the institutional framework including the roles of the various committees and programme structures at all levels appropriate to the programme
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the likelihood that the programme results will be sustainable, in terms of systems, institutions, and financing? • Are planned exit/handover strategies appropriate and timely? • Is there an added value role for UN Women to play beyond programme completion? • Assess the degree of commitment of all the programme parties to continue working with the Gender and Agriculture programme or replicate it

Annex 2: List of people consulted

NAME	ORGANISATION	POSITION
Adreck Benati	Salima ADD	Programme Manager
Greno Wanda	Salima ADD	Principal AGRESSO
Aaron Kachimera	Salima Agriculture office	District Agriculture Development Officer
Boyce Ziba	Salima Agriculture office	AGRESSO
Martha Nhonjera	Salima Agriculture office	AEDO Katelela EPA
Cornelio Katsache	Salima Agriculture office	AEDO Makande /Mwankhundi North West Section
Chimwemwe Kanyoza	Salima Agriculture office	AEDO Makande EPA, Mtonga East
Sellina Masimbe	Salima Agriculture office	AEDO Tembwe EPA, Ngolowindo South
Nelece Mkupatira	Salima Agriculture office	AEDO Katelela EPA
Mercy Kapesi	Salima Agriculture office	AEDO Katelela EPA
S.M. Gabriel	Salima Agriculture office	AEDO Tembwe West
Christina Masoalenganji	Salima Agriculture office	AEDC Tembwe EPA
Robert H Bai	Salima Agriculture office	AEDC Makande EPA
Macwin Mhango	Salima Agriculture office	AEDC Matenje EPA
Gresham Chayeza	Malawi Lake Basin(MLBP)	Farmer Organization Facilitator
Priscilla Zimba	Malawi Lake Basin(MLBP)	Business Development Officer
Mercy Chakoma	Adventist Development & Relief Agency(ADRA)	Food Security & Nutrition Officer
G. Moyo	Mzuzu ADD	Programme Manager
M.Vumbwe	Mzuzu ADD	Deputy Programme Manager
Beatrice Mbkaya	Mzuzu ADD	Chief Agriculture Extension Officer
Gilbert Kupunda	Mzimba North Agriculture	Chief Land Resources Officer
Edith Mithenga	Mzimba North Agriculture	AGRESSO
Batson Tembo	Mzimba North Agriculture	Land Resources Conservation Officer
Miriam Gondwe	Mzimba North Agriculture	AEDC Zombwe EPA
Samuel Kalima	Mzimba North Agriculture	AEDO Zombwe EPA
Allen Mhango	Mzimba North Agriculture	AEDO Bwengu EPA
Adam Mzembe	Mzuzu ADD	Human Resources Officer
Gordam Yiwombe	Mzuzu ADD	Principal AGRESSO
Masikini	NASFAM	M&E Coordinator

Andrew Namakhoma	NASFAM	Community Programs Officer
Joseph Kazima	Ministry of Gender	Deputy Director
Pamela Mkwamba	UN Women	Programme Officer
Alice H Shackelford	UN Women	Country Representative
Jerome Nkhoma	Shire Valley ADD	Programme Manager
Wanangwa Banda	Shire Valley ADD	Nutrition Education Officer
Steven Chikwakwa	Shire Valley ADD	Communication Officer
Noel Nangwale	Shire Valley ADD	M&E Officer
Prince Shaibu	Nsanje Agric. Office	Food and Nutrition Officer- Ag AGRESSO
Francisco Chavula	Nsanje Agric. Office	AEDO Nyachirenda EPA
Maxion Siyin	Nsanje Agric. Office	AHESA Nyachirenda EPA
Fredo Nyondo	Nsanje Agric. Office	AEDO Nyachirenda EPA
Richard Manyanga	Nsanje Agric. Office	AEDO Nyachirenda EPA
Thomas Msowa	Nsanje Agric. Office	AEDO Nyachirenda EPA
Agatha Khamayi	Nsanje Agric. Office	AEDO Nyachirenda EPA
Joseph Katungwe	Nsanje Agric. Office	AEDO Magoti EPA
Mathew K.W Misomali	Nsanje Agric. Office	AEDO Magoti EPA
Lugede Chiume	Royal Norwegian Embassy	Programme Officer
Grace Malindi	UN women	Senior consultant
Norah Mwamadi	FAO	Programme Officer
Stella Kankwamba	DAES	Director of Agricultural Extension Services
Frieda Kayuni	DAES	Deputy Director of Agricultural Extension Services
Anderson Chikomola	DAES	
Boaz Mandula	DAES	
Kenneth Chaula	DAES	

Annex 3: Summary of planned outputs, Indicators and activities Year 2 (2015-17)

Outcome 2: Rural women farmers have increased voice to influence policies and strategies on agriculture service delivery and improved access to inputs and services.

Planned Output	Planned target indicators	Planned Activity for Year 2
Women advocates increase their knowledge and skills in policy advocacy on gender responsive agricultural service delivery and effective representation of women in decision-making committees of agriculture platforms.	60 women advocates from each of the selected districts are trained in lobby and advocacy	1. Conduct mapping of agriculture and women associations and regular updates
	Community level, district and national level advocacy forums have been created by end of 2015	2. Work with NASFAM and farmer cooperatives, women associations, to ensure that, women association and cooperatives rules and procedures are gender sensitive.
	At least 4 national policy dialogue sessions conducted by 2016	3. Develop community, district and national level advocacy platforms to increase women and gender advocates participation in advocacy on gender responsive service delivery in the agriculture sector.
	At least 3 policy review meetings conducted by 2016	4. Hold community level dialogue through study circles and farmer club meetings on women access to resources issues.
	At least 200 community level policy dialogue sessions conducted in all the selected target program districts	5. Facilitate district agricultural stakeholders panels to discuss women access to agricultural services
Advocacy platforms are created to promote dialogue on issues affecting women rural farmers access to agricultural inputs and services	3 stakeholder district panel meetings are conducted in each district on access to services by women farmers by 2016	
	20 advocacy sessions have been held with decision makers by 2016.	1. Organize national advocacy forums around gender and agriculture with special emphasis on legal and policy barriers to accessing productive resources
	8 exchange visits have been conducted by 2016	2. Support advocacy sessions with MoLPL, MoA, MoG, parliamentarians and political leaders for passing on specific legal and policy issues related to access to productive resources.
	2 regional network meeting have been conducted on policy and women participation in agriculture	3. Conduct national and regional exchange programs to promote learning and exchange of ideas on gender responsive service delivery in agriculture sector.
By end of project rural women farmers attend 4 international rural women days		4. Regular spaces for dialogue and mainstreaming gender into agricultural policies, including international rural women day (15 October) and others.