



Midterm Evaluation
of
Souqona Project

Report

February 15, 2019



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I. List of Acronyms

ADR	Aggregate Development Result
AMENCA	Australian Middle East NGO Cooperation Agreement
APHEDA	Union Aid Abroad
ARIJ	Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem
AUD	Australian Dollar
CBOs	Community Based Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCED	Donor Committee for Enterprise Development
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
FFV	Fresh Fruits & Vegetables
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HH	Household
ICARDA	International Centre for Agriculture and Research in Dry Areas
MEAL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MEF	Monitoring & Evaluation Framework
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
M4P	Market for the Poor
MSD	Market System Development
MTR	Midterm Review
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
NIS	New Israeli Shekel
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
oPt	Occupied Palestinian Territory
OEDC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PA	Palestinian Authority
PS	Private Sector
PSI	Palestinian Standards Institution
PMU	Project Management Unit
R&D	Research and Development
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SC	Steering Committee
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TST	Technical Support Team
USD	United States Dollar
VC	value chain
VfM	Value for Money
WBG	West Bank and Gaza

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Our appreciation is also extended to the TST, donor, project partners, market actors, as well as all men and women listed in Annex 2, who participated in the individual and group interviews and took serious interest in sharing their project experience with the evaluators.

Evaluation Team;

Muhannad Sandouka & Nahed Freij

II. Executive Summary

Souqona is a five years project that was launched in April 2016, as part of the program “Palestinian Farmers Connecting to Markets” launched by the Australian Government, which constitutes the third phase of the Australian Middle East NGO Cooperation Agreement (AMENCA) programme in the oPt. Souqona aims at increasing income, agency, and market opportunity for Palestinian Farmers through growth in pro-poor agribusiness and market development. The project is seeking to better connect women and men Palestinian vegetables, dairy and seed farmers to markets. It is implemented in 23 locations in three governorates located in the Northern Areas of West Bank (Nablus, Jenin, and Tubas).

Advance Consulting Services was commissioned to undertake a midterm review of the project to determine the relevance, efficiency, achievement of results, and sustainability of the first phase of the project that will end in March 2019¹. *Advance* followed a hybrid methodological approach that integrates theory-based, non-experimental reflexive comparison, and participatory approaches in accordance to OEDC DAC. The evaluation applied a mixture of qualitative evaluation methods that include desk review, first-hand observation, semi structure interviews and focus group discussions with direct and indirect, internal and external stakeholders of the project. The below are the main findings and recommendations of the MTR:

1. Souqona is in line with national agricultural policies and strategies. It has demonstrated a practical solution for the targeted VC constraints particularly; fragmentation of holdings, poor access to quality inputs and best practices, poor coordination in value chains, and women’s poor access to resources and opportunities.
2. Souqona adopts a hybrid MSD approach that is quite appropriate to the turmoil context of oPt. Its interventions are relevant to identified opportunities and needs of targeted market actors. The activities implemented by the project are relevant to achieving the objectives defined by the project and AMENCA 3 programme but not necessarily within the lifespan of the current phase of the project. Also, the project design demonstrates strong understanding and meaningful consideration of gender and social inclusion.
3. Souqona has taken significant considerations to endorse value for money in its work. It is found that the project is cost economic and partly efficient and practically effective according to DFAT framework. The allocated resources are fairly sufficient to achieve the set targets. The project has managed to engage and mobilize relevant market actors to contribute effectively to the VCs upgrading. It was effective in selecting market actors, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.
4. CARE managed the project in consortium with ARIJ and ICARDA through establishing Project Management Unit (PMU) and Steering Committee. Working through such a consortium has enhanced complementarity without necessarily improving efficiency.
5. DFAT has an intensive hands-on oversight, maintains technical advisors support and authentication which are not customary practices by other donors for similar programs in the country. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements are responsive to AMENCA ADRs but not necessarily reflecting the level of change on the ground and inform adaptive management.
6. Souqona is marching steadily towards its outcomes. It is almost overachieving all the set targets by AMENCA 3. Women and youth were well integrated in the interventions through a clear social inclusion strategy developed by the project. The project is supporting women taking up new roles in the value chains and combat gender discrimination in their accessing infrastructure, technology, trainings as evident in some intervention modalities (training of women farmers, their leading farmer to farmer exchange of knowledge, support women’s direct commercial networks between women and private

¹ Phase II is a two years phase contingent on DFAT approval

sector- input providers, processors, amongst others). Souqona's contribution to the identified changes are evident and plausible.

7. Several MSD sustainability elements are found in the project; it has leveraged investments, promoted viability of new practices, supported organizational capacities of services providers, and through increased actors' satisfaction, it promoted their ability to continue beyond the time/ support from the project. Souqona is contributing to improvement in market coordination and crowding in of market competitors as well as non-competing actors.

The project is advised in the remaining period of this phase to:

- Continue its work on its interventions in the selected VCs and particularly the safer produce intervention.
- Better mobilize the private sector to crowd-in and create alternative channels and markets for dairy and safer produce.
- Capture and document changes in market dynamics and generate success stories and lessons to be learned in the next phase.
- Expand dissemination of learning and exchange visits for pilots and successful adapter farmers from demonstration sites.

The project is advised in the next phase to:

- Consider the profitability as a main purpose for the upcoming phase and foster work on reducing the costs of production in dairy VC particularly by increasing productivity (introduce new breed that produces more milk and give more lambs/ twins, feeding and fodder costs, barn management and best practices), and promote collective procurement amongst farmers.
- Develop an engagement and communication plan to better disseminate the acquainted knowledge and researches supported by the project.
- To overcome the shortage in certain seasons of vegetables, increase the number of commodities involved in safer produce basket and widen the geographical coverage in leverage of Palestine's different climate zones.
- Further mobilize the private sector to scale up and sustain the achieved changes in the market.
- Strengthen the voice of farmers through working with dairy council and vegetable council. These bodies should (ideally) later be leading coordination functions amongst market actors and ensure VC smooth governance.
- Support the creation of platforms for female agronomists and veterinarians and support them to enhance scaled reach of women farmers in extension and veterinary services.
- Scale up the promotion of best practices through increasing the number of demonstrations and including more geographical areas. It is highly recommended to follow the same approach in generating data from demos and analyse it. This provide scientific and practice evidence for farmers as well as having sufficient data to compare results between climate/ agricultural zones in order to generate and disseminate it.
- In both current and new interventions, continue mainstreaming of gender in VCs and active inclusion of youth and women. CARE can build on successes and progress to date through continued tackling of constrains related to women rights to resources such as in inheritance, combatting GBV, and strengthening men engagement in advocating for women rights and roles in the VC.
- Develop VC risk management plan with defined markers for monitoring.
- Capacity building and learning should be fostered amongst partner organizations and project staff particularly in MSD approaches. Dedicated actions for this are highly advised.

- In partnership with other AMENCA consortia, develop a learning platform/ webinar to localize the M4P/ MSD framework and create local understanding of its principles and approach in the country.
- In line with the national context, the project and AMENCA are advised to revisit the age range of youth and to extend it at least to 29 years. The Palestinian Council for Youth and Sports defines youth up to the age of 34.
- DFAT should consider revisiting its management approach in AMENCA to become more conducive of MSD requirements and good donorship principles.
- DFAT is highly advised to adopt result-based budgeting and financial reporting and consider technical staff as part of direct (project) costs.

1. INTRODUCTION

The agriculture sector and its value chains (VCs) offer strong market opportunities and employment potential in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt).²They have considerable potential for reducing deep poverty and improving food security of small farmers in the West Bank.

Souqona 'our market' Programme aims to increase income, agency, and market opportunity for female and male Palestinian farmers through growth in pro-poor agribusiness and market development. It was launched in April 2016, as part of the programme "Palestinian Farmers Connecting to Markets" initially launched by the Australian Government, which constitutes the third phase of the Australian Middle East NGO Cooperation Agreement (AMENCA) program in the Palestinian Territory.

The Project works to improve the market system by developing two main value chains; Sheep and goat value chain and vegetable value chain (main commodities are cucumber, tomatoes and eggplants). By working with a wide range of stakeholders to address the production, marketing, and input constraints in the selected value chains, the project has focused its implementation in the Northern Areas of the West Bank covering 23 locations in Nablus, Jenin, and Tubas.

Souqona project is implemented and managed by CARE International West Bank and Gaza in partnerships with the Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ), and the International Centre for Agriculture and Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA).

The purpose of this inception report is to share with the project partners; CARE, ARIJ, and ICARDA the evaluation methodology, approach as well as the evaluation work plan.

1.1. CONTEXT

CARE is a humanitarian and development non-governmental organization which has been delivering lasting change since 1945. It is committed to working with poor women, men, boys, girls, communities, and institutions to have a significant impact on the underlying causes of poverty. CARE seeks to contribute to economic and social transformation, unleashing the power of the most vulnerable women and girls. It works to help Palestinian communities determine their future, realize their rights and live in peace and dignity.

Though the agriculture sector is one of the main pillars of the economy, providing employment to 11.5% of the West Bank population, it has a modest contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reaching only 2.9% in 2017³. Over the past years, interventions, studies and analysis have highlighted major socio political and technical constraints in the agriculture sector that include:

Inefficient Provision of Inputs & Services; encompassing poor access to key inputs in terms of quality, affordability, and availability. The extension services that are currently offered are largely inadequate in terms of frequency, coverage, and content. Extension services suffer from lack of human and financial resources as well as operational and R&D support. Most importantly, extension services are largely organized on the basis of technical assistance delivery and lack holistic and multidisciplinary approaches.

²The sector currently provides employment for an estimated 88,523 workers: 58.0% in the vegetable sub-sector, 37.3% in the fruit sub-sector, and 4.7% in the herb sub-sector. In the West Bank alone, there are an estimated 200 food processing establishments involved in the fruit, vegetable and nut subsector, employing over 1,041 people. Growth trends in the three sub-sectors are divergent with employment in the vegetable subsector estimated to be growing at 12% per year, the herb-sector by 7%, while employment in the fruit sector is declining by 4% per year.

³<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/we.html> accessed on Jan 1, 2010

Agricultural insurance is not in place yet and export services are mediocre. Banks' lending in the agriculture sector fell short of 1% of the total banks portfolio in terms of credit facilities to all sectors. Business Development services are not commercially viable for small farmers and are usually aid-subsidized.

Fragmentation & Marginalization: At national level, 77% of plant farmers hold less than 8% of cultivated area (less than 1 acre⁴). Only 37 % of owners are full-time farmers and farmer production is their main and only involvement in agriculture. Less than 16% of small farmers earn more than 50% of family income from agricultural. Souqona baseline survey results indicated that the average household monthly income for sheep/goat dairy farmers stands at NIS 2,671. Vegetable farmers have greater income on average, with the average household monthly income of those surveyed standing at NIS 3,513. Agriculture is a major contributor to household income among targeted beneficiaries, contributing around two-thirds (65.9%) of the total monthly income of sheep/goat dairy farmers, and around 92% of the monthly income of vegetable famers. On average, each sheep/goat dairy farmer has 43 ewes or nannies, while vegetable farmer holds around 4 dunums on average.

Around 97% of women working in agriculture are unpaid family members. While only 8% of total holdings are owned by women, of these 4% are run by paid managers and 30% by family member. Compared to men, women have less access to productive resources, social services and commercial networks. Gender discrimination in accessing infrastructure, technology, trainings and paid job opportunities persists.

Limited Access to Information & Knowledge: The Palestinian consumer lacks the knowledge in terms of produce sources and quality (quality standard based on sensory factors such as colour, taste, viscosity). Farmers lack access to knowledge & skills⁵without the proper knowledge about new and available farming methodologies and practices. Around 26.2% of agricultural holdings in Palestine do not receive agricultural extension services; 10% received from the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA); 32% from other farmers; 1% from the mass media; and 8.4% from input traders; the remaining receive it from other sources⁶. Women are particularly disadvantaged and are poorly reached by extension, training services, and service suppliers. Farmers rely mainly on traders, input suppliers, and unions for information on price, and demand, thus market information remains to un-institutionalized, or occasionally performed by donor funded projects and not accessible by all farmers.

Weak Regulatory Framework: Agricultural policies are poorly developed and/or executed. The Agriculture Law was issued in 2003 and amended in 2005. While some of the required relevant regulations were issued, they were not put in effect due to lack of both political will and budgetary support from the PA. Governmental support is partial and coordination amongst ministries is poor.

Negative Externalities: The impediments forced by Israeli occupation are also distorting the functioning of agricultural markets and eroding the profitability of Palestinian producers in the West Bank. Political uncertainty, as well as the myriad of restrictions imposed on the Palestinian economy by Government of Israel, continues to constrain market systems. These include restrictions on the movement of goods and people in and out of the West Bank as well as restrictions on natural resources through policies such as discriminatory planning and zoning regime and settlement activity. Israeli restrictions on access to and control over natural resources, including water for irrigation, and restrictions on movement through physical obstacles within the West Bank as well as commercial crossings between Israel and the West Bank, and other trade impediments have artificially raised the transaction and production costs. Around

⁴ 1 acre=10 dunums

⁵22% of farmers are illiterate, lack means of communication in many areas

⁶NGOs, agricultural engineers, bulletins, internet, etc.

36% of the cultivated areas in OPT are constrained by Israeli measures. Around 85% of water reservoir in OPT is controlled by Israeli occupation, and 37% of fresh water is bought from an Israeli water company. Agriculture consumes 70% of fresh water and over 65% of holders purchase water to irrigate their crops.

These impediments have adversely affected the distribution to internal and external markets, hindering the competitiveness of Palestinian producers and leaving the domestic agricultural production in a disadvantageous situation. In addition, Israeli impediments increase the actual and perceived risk of investment in the country, hampering badly needed investment in the agricultural sector. Checkpoints, and other Israeli practices related to access, affect movement of people and goods, degrading produce quality and increasing costs. Women are particularly disadvantaged by this, combined with other social factors. Inputs are subject to Israeli restrictions and are bought mainly from Israeli sources. Israel controls export-import vis-à-vis ports and practice market dumping of surplus or rejected produce and products from Israeli/export markets.

According to Souqona project documents, the project aims to address the following key constraints facing the target value chains;

1. The small-scale scattered manner of production (coupled with a poor cooperative culture) creates low economies of scale. In order to engage the private sector (PS), a solid base of farmers is required so that there is a continuous and consistent supply for both VCs. The proposed intervention aims to scale up the demonstrations.
2. Restrictions on accessing resources and assets (mainly water and land) and poor practices of farmers that affect their productivity, diversity, and sustainability aggravated by limited extension services, lead to non-functioning agribusiness VCs.
3. Lack of incentivised models for how VC actors could better work together. This not only impacts producers but all actors, as well as the sustainability, feasibility, growth, and scalability of VCs.
4. While farming and animal husbandry activities involve all family members, including women and youth, this is not reflected in their access and control of resources and decisions.
5. The poor economic climate and political instability further dampen investment and entrepreneurship. In particular, the lack of access to resources such as land and water and restrictions of movement of people and goods.

1.2. PROJECT OVERVIEW

Souqona project is implemented by CARE West Bank & Gaza (WBG) and financed by the Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). The **overall goal** of this Programme is to increase income, agency, and market opportunity for Palestinian Farmers through growth in pro-poor agribusiness and market development. The purpose of Souqona project is to better connect women and men Palestinian vegetables, dairy and seed farmers to markets. To achieve these intended objectives, the project planned to contribute to the following outcomes:

- **Outcome 1:** Women & men farmers are market ready – producing quality, quantity and reliable produce.
 - **Intermediate Outcome 1.1:** Farmers have access to affordable, quality inputs.
 - **Immediate outcome 1.1.1:** Farmers exposed to more efficient and effective agricultural inputs
 - **Immediate outcome 1.1.2:** Market actors are better engaged in the facilitation of innovative inputs & provision of services to farmers
 - **Intermediate Outcome 1.2:** Farmers have skills & resources to increase yield and or profitability.
 - **Immediate outcome 1.2.1:** Farmers exposed on better practices and higher value or profitable production
 - **Immediate outcome 1.2.2:** Rehabilitation of roads.

- **Immediate outcome 1.2.3:** Water management systems constructed.
- **Outcome 2:** Women & men engage more sustainably & profitably in value chains;
 - **Intermediate Outcome 2.1:** Value chains & market systems are better functioning, scalable & able to leverage investments
 - **Immediate outcome 2.1.1:** Market system information & business model's shared with different market actors.
 - **Immediate outcome 2.1.2:** Market actors responding to identified systemic VC constrains & opportunities
 - **Immediate outcome 2.1.3:** Business models for value addition, more inclusive value chains and markets piloted and or/invested in.
- **Outcome 3:** Women & youth more economically empowered;
 - **Intermediate Outcome 3.1:** Women & youth have greater opportunities to better engage throughout the targeted value chains
 - **Immediate outcome 3.1.1:** Capacities/ confidence /choice to identify or pursue economic opportunities for women and youth are improved
 - **Immediate outcome 3.1.2:** Women and youth access/ participation/ control over socio-economic resources and/or opportunities are more respected and enabled

Souqona's intended beneficiaries include: 13,155 farmers i.e. approximately 4,000 farming HH (*Souqona defines farmers as the people engaged in employment or profit-making activities along the agricultural value chain – not just at the farm gate. More than one person per household can be counted so long that they are substantively involved in income generating activities*) with special focus on women and youth (not less than 40% of beneficiaries).

Market actors Organizations across the value chain including producers' groups, cooperatives, packing and processing houses, and other market system actors.

1.3. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION AND TARGETED AUDIENCE

As stipulated in the TOR, the purpose of this evaluation is to provide an independent and objective midterm evaluation against the project and AMENCA 3 programme goals and objectives. This evaluation will also assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the business models and approaches developed through the project, feed into DFAT's Midterm review for AMENCA 3 programme, and provide recommendations and highlight areas of improvement. According to the TOR, the objectives of the MTR are as follows:

1. Assess the overall performance, achievements, and successes of project interventions under the targeted VCs against the project and programme goals and objectives, including addressing the systemic constrains of the VCs.
2. Assess the effectiveness of the business models developed and facilitated by the project and to measure changes at the different levels: the market system actors, farmers, women and youth.
3. To assess the key market factors that affect the business models developed under the project.
4. To provide recommendations, lessons learned and areas of improvement to scale up the interventions and increase their impact. In addition to recommendations and guidance for the future Market System projects in Palestine.

1.3.1. TARGETED AUDIENCE:

Implementing Partners (CARE, ARIJ, ICARDA).

- Donors (DFAT).

2. Methodology & Study Design

2.1. Evaluation Design

AMENCA 3 programme “Palestinian Farmers Connecting to Markets” is supposed to be a market development programme with a pro-poor approach. Souqona project ought to contribute to AMENCA 3 through its different interventions. Therefore, *Advance* reviewed Souqona project within AMENCA 3 programme according to OEDC DAC criteria. Namely; Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Impact, and Sustainability. Furthermore, reflection on social inclusion issues such as gender, human rights, information management systems, market factors and socio-political context are presented. Through each of these aspects the relevant issues are fully addressed in view of generating lessons learned to guide future programming and identification of areas of improvement to scale up the interventions and increase their impact.

Souqona is undertaking multiple interventions at different stages in two VCs focusing on four commodities in three governorates. As such, *Advance* applied a hybrid methodological approach in conducting this review to bring together the intervention based and programme-wide evaluation approaches:

To assess **Relevance**, *Advance* in a **participatory** manner reviewed the relevance of Souqona project by utilizing **Normative approach**⁷ which allows for assessment of Souqona design against criteria of alignment, appropriateness, responsiveness, and coherence in reference to the intended goal and change pathway.

To assess **Efficiency**, *Advance* conducted the assessment in a **Participatory** manner with CARE and further utilized the **Value for Money** approach (VfM) according to DFAT principles.

To assess the project’s **effectiveness and impact**, *Advance* utilized an integrated approach including **Theory-based**⁸ vis-à-vis theory of change approach and **Reflexive comparison**⁹ design. Moreover, to avoid measurements problems, *Advance* relied on the set indicators of stated outcomes that contain no systematic bias for the period of evaluation. To avoid attribution problems and to understand the cumulative changes, the evaluation validated the programme’s Theory of Change (TOC). In assessing the MSD parts of the project, *Advance* reviewed the consortium’s **Facilitative**¹⁰ and **Adaptive**¹¹ role as well as the sustainability and scalability of systemic changes introduced by the project.

To assess **Sustainability**, *Advance* tested different concepts such as the leveraged investment, commercial viability of a new business model, behaviours maintained, continuity of modified relationships, capacity development of service providers after Souqona support is withdrawn.

⁷ Normative always assess against a criterion such as a specified desired or mandatory goal, target, or standard to be reached.

⁸ Theory-based approaches such as process tracing and contribution analysis are based on generative approaches and are found to be very effective for impact evaluation. It helps in establishing a plausible linkage between interventions and intended systemic changes, account for other contributory factors, and capture unintended effects.

⁹ Reflexive Comparison design will be utilized to identify what changes and to what extent these changes had happened. Reflexive comparisons examine the impact through the difference in outcomes before and after i.e. midline and baseline.

¹⁰ Facilitation is the temporary actions of a facilitator to bring about system-level changes and develop market systems. In developing market systems, facilitators actively avoid distorting those systems and must be conscious not to make market players reliant upon their continued presence (remaining outside of the market system they are intervening in).

¹¹ Market systems consist of multiple actors with their own goals and points of view and Souqona project is operating in complex, dynamic and unpredictable situations i.e. it needs to be adaptive. Adaptive management means fast, iterative learning and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances which are critical to market systems approaches.

Through the assessment of each of the above-mentioned DAC criteria, *Advance* sought to identify **lessons learned** and **future opportunities** for scalability and areas of development at VC level.

2.2. Evaluation Process & Methods

The evaluation was carried out in two stages: **Stage one** (Inception -Dec28, 2018 - January31, 2019); included briefing by project team and review of secondary data. The review established a clear baseline situation of the scope and breadth of the project, assessed current progress against plans, scoped and outlined the full review process for stage two. This stage concluded with an inception report that was shared with CARE and modified accordingly. **Stage two** (assessment phase- February 1- 15, 2019). During this stage primary data gathering was undertaken utilizing semi structured and focus group interviews with the various stakeholders as well as observation of the project interventions' sites. The evaluation targeted the key stakeholders of the project to gain inputs and perspectives, including project staff in PMU from CARE and ARIJ, project management (CARE, ICARDA, ARIJ consortium), market actors (input suppliers, investors, extension agents, university, etc.), beneficiaries (men, women and youth), and copier farmers.

The evaluation utilized non-statistical (in-depth) methods and techniques for data analysis. Individual and group interviews were transcribed, coded and analysed using in depth analysis methods. The results and analysis were synthesized and coalesced under various themes, including MSD and social inclusion that address all the questions and issues determined in the evaluation objectives. Data collection and analysis included data disaggregated by sex and age, where applicable, and other gender considerations. Evaluation techniques facilitated validation of data (triangulation) through cross verification from different sources and stakeholders in order to mitigate bias and ensure objectivity in findings to provide evidence-based and utilization-focused report for decision making. This was followed provisioning CARE with this preliminary draft on the overall review in accordance to the outline presented in the TOR. The draft report will be commented on by CARE and comments will be addressed as deemed suitable in the report's final version.

The scope of work entails conducting a mixture of qualitative evaluation methodologies, which were implemented simultaneously, using a complex methodological approach including desk review, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and first-hand observations. For more information see Annex 2- list of people consulted, and Annex 3- interview guides.

2.3. Sampling Framework

In order to obtain a balanced sample of views from different stakeholders, the selection of the main strata of informants based on their role in the project i.e. donor, staff, management, partner, AMENCA consortium, regulatory body, inputs supplier, service provider, technical supporter, investor, and beneficiary (direct and indirect). This was followed by three main parameters in selection/ sampling process:

1. Commodity Value Chain (Vegetables & dairy)
2. Geographic representation (Jenin, Tubas, & Nablus governorates)
3. Demographics (men, women, youth)

Purposeful sampling was applied to focus on informants who were envisioned as qualified to answer research questions. Informants were therefore selected based on the criteria of the nature of their involvement in the project, where those with a higher level of engagement and more knowledge about the project and its progress were prioritized. Moreover, gender considerations were applied to ensure

representative representation of informants by sex and age (when relevant/ possible). See Annex 2 for list of stakeholders consulted.

Human rights and gender considerations were maintained throughout the design, and execution of the evaluation. This included inclusion of women & youth stakeholders, disaggregation of data where possible, and focused on the project's gender mainstreaming and social inclusion efforts.

2.4. Evaluation Limitations

The implementation of the evaluation faced some of limitations that affected the ability to collect primary and secondary evidence to answer the evaluation questions effectively. Four main limitations are listed below along with the mitigation measures to address them.

1. The desk review encountered limitations in data generated by progress report. These sources of data were found to be lacking in terms of comprehensiveness of data on progress at the level of results, activities and outputs performed across all interventions. Understanding that the AMENCA adopted report structure is inconducive to reflect such progress, information was alternatively sought during interviews with Souqona staff to help fill some data gaps.
2. Resources and time were also limited. This influenced the evaluator's reliance on a qualitative approach. The evaluator relied on MEF results and informants' feedback. Nevertheless, only triangulated data obtained from different resources made it in this report.
3. Because the evaluation took place while the project is still ongoing, some of the outputs were still not completed at the time of the fieldwork. This consideration was taken into account in assessing the effectiveness of the project since its inception to the end of December 2018. To the extent possible, focus was therefore maintained on the logic and strategies adopted that provide for its realization.
4. Despite CARE's introductory emails and much-appreciated follow up, the evaluators faced significant challenges in meeting governmental representatives. This is considered in the analysis.

3. Results

3.1 RELEVANCE

3.2.1. Alignment

Key Finding:

Soqouna is in line with national agricultural policies and strategies

Description and Analysis of Findings

Souqona project is in alignment with the policies and strategic objectives of the sectoral strategy “The National Agricultural Sector Strategy 2017-2022”¹², namely;

- The first outcome of Souqona aligns with the third strategic objective of the agricultural strategy “Increased agricultural production, productivity, and competitiveness in local and international market, along with their contribution in gross domestic product and food security” and the intermediate outcome 1.1 with the fourth strategic objective “Female and male farmers and entrepreneurs access quality agricultural services needed for increasing value along agricultural value chains improved”. Moreover, the intermediate outcome 1.1 is also in line with policy 3 & 4¹³ under strategic objective-3. Immediate outcome 1.2.2 in line with policy-2¹⁴ under objective-2 and immediate outcome 1.2.3 with policy-1¹⁵ under objective-2.
- The immediate outcome 2.1.1 is in line with policy-1 under objective-4. The Intermediate outcome 3.1 is also in line with the strategy’s fourth strategic objective “Female and male farmers and entrepreneurs access quality agricultural services needed for increasing value along agricultural value chains improved”. Furthermore, the immediate outcome 3.1.1 is in line with policy 1 & 2¹⁶ of strategic objective-4 and immediate outcome 3.1.2 aligns policy-3¹⁷ of the strategic objective-4.

Respectively, the project is further contributing to increase women economic participation which is one of the priorities identified in the 2014-2016 Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy.

¹²“Sustainable agriculture; capable of competing locally and globally; and effectively contributes to strengthening food security, the bond between Palestinians and their land as well as their sovereignty over resources, towards building an Independent Palestinian State.”

¹³ Policy priorities 3; Improving communication between agricultural extension workers and veterinarians with respect to the transfer and dissemination of agricultural knowledge, proper agricultural planning and commitment in the agricultural calendar. Policy priorities 4; Development of agricultural products, for both plant and animal specifications.

¹⁴Provide the necessary support for land reclamation and agricultural road construction that link all agricultural land or lands that could be cultivated.

¹⁵Establish large water facilities in arable irrigated areas through the transfer of water or water collection or wastewater treatment and increase the efficiency of the available water.

¹⁶Policy Priority 1; Finding mechanisms to ensure access of small farmers, women and youth to funding with the aim of enhancing their current farmers and creating entrepreneurial agricultural businesses. Policy Priority 2; Empowering youth, women, farmers and entrepreneurs to access quality services in the field of agricultural business development and intensification of efforts to support entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector.

¹⁷Highlight the role of women in agricultural work and their contribution to national output and enable them to strengthen their resources resulting from agricultural work and the Gross National Product (GNP), while empowering them to enhance their agricultural resources and income.

3.2.2. Appropriateness

Key Findings

1. Souqona has demonstrated a practical solution for the targeted VC constraints particularly; fragmentation of holdings, poor access to quality input and best practices, poor VC coordination, and women's poor access to resources and opportunities.
2. Souqona Interventions are relevant to identified opportunities and needs of targeted market actors.
3. Souqona hybrid MSD approach is quite appropriate to the turmoil context of oPt.

Description and Analysis of Findings

The project planned to contribute in solving a number of identified constraints in the targeted VCs. The relevance of the project to these obstacles and opportunities is discussed hereinafter per each:

1. The small-scale scattered manner of production coupled with a poor cooperative culture

The project tried to address this issue in the sheep dairy value chain **through activating milk collection hubs** in four locations in northern WB. It is infeasible for milk processors to collect small quantities from individual farmers. Processing factories require milk that meets the quality and hygiene standards. For that reason, the raw milk collection hub acts as a **linking commercial node between farmers and processors** by purchasing milk from farmers, testing it, and preserving it properly (cold) for processing. As such, the expansion of the milk collection hubs experience could help solve the fragmentation challenge for accessing industrial market. This was acknowledged by the interviewed milk processors who see these Hubs as the cornerstone for any investment in sheep dairy. Female farmers are particularly enthusiastic and supportive of the hub selling raw milk instead of making cheese, which is quite an intensive and time/ labour demanding role that conventionally rests on their shoulders. Aside from social/ gender effect, the economic one is thus far showing increasing interest on the level of farmers as more are joining the hub as compared to when it was first starting.

"When we first started, we were begging women farmers to join the hub. We started with 7 women farmers. Now we are 25 members, and more are on the waiting list to join. Instead of recruiting them, they are now coming on their own, asking to join us". Beit Furik Milk Collection Hub Woman Member

The initiative is stimulating strengthening/ promotion of economic incentive from the collective farmer organization, an aspect that is one of the main weaknesses of the cooperative culture in the country. Farmers (both men and women) are now able to recognize the hubs' market potential if the niche is further scaled.

2. Poor access to (quality/ affordable/ available) key inputs (water/ fertilizers / and pesticides)

As AEMNCA 3 "Definitions and Notes on Indicators" does not include a definition for Access, the evaluation considered access as "the ability to derive benefits from things"¹⁸ which encompasses main dimensions; availability, accessibility, appropriateness, and usage vis-à-vis desired outcomes. In tackling access to inputs constraint, the project a) rehabilitated feeder roads and installed water pipelines/ water networks thus improving access to agricultural land and water and b) introduced inputs such as mono fertilizers, safe pesticides, balanced drip irrigation to farmers as well as high protein ration, milk replacer, breeding hormones, and silage to herders. All these activities are found to have improved farmers' access to inputs whether through increasing their knowledge about the usage and benefits of inputs or through

¹⁸This definition has four main dimensions; availability, accessibility, appropriateness, and usage vis-à-vis desired outcomes

direct support like road and water pipes. Some of the interviewed farmers confirmed that in some cases they were aware about the availability of certain products or services such as artificial insemination, milk replacer (powder), high protein ration, mono fertilizers and so on but they do not have the technical knowledge and were unwilling to take the risk to try it at their expense.

In terms of affordability, water networks reduced the price of cubic meter of water from 5 NIS to less than 3 NIS according to Dair Abu Daif farmers. Fertilizers, safe pesticides, and water-balanced drip vegetable farmers as well as the Demonstrations' figures reveal that there was a decrease in costs. In terms of accessibility, all interviewed inputs suppliers stated that the sold quantities to farmers are increasing and even doubling and that their clientele has been widening. The roads are also increasing access of farmers to their land; Arrenh's agricultural road of 3 km contributed to expanding plantation of an estimated 12 dunums, and the water transfer line from the 7 wells (10-12 cubic meters) is enabling farmers reach more fertile soil. Tammon's two road-sections (600 and 800 meters) are stated by the municipalities and beneficiary farmers to have directly increased access of some 50 families. Farmers state that traders are now accessing them and buy their produce at farm gates.

3. Poor practices of farmers that affect productivity, diversity, and sustainability.

Souqona comprehended the challenge and responded to it through theoretical and practical trainings. In collaboration with input suppliers and sometimes with universities, the project utilized demonstration sites to practically provide farmers the evident knowledge on best practices in mono-fertilizers, safer pesticides, high protein ration, silage, milk replacer, and water-balanced drip-irrigation. Besides, the project hired experts to train and advice farmers and extension agents as evident in the sheep interventions for example. Moreover, the project introduced new varieties such as baby cucumber and encouraged diversify like the usage of silage, selling raw milk and not only cheese and so on.

4. Poor coordination amongst value chain actors, reluctant investment and entrepreneurship.

The project succeeded in bringing different actors together and facilitating the linkage between them. Souqona connected milk producers with processors through milk hubs, input suppliers with herders and farmers, universities with input suppliers (silage), and so forth.

5. Youth and women poor access to resources and opportunities

The project works on different fronts to integrate women and youth and give them the opportunity to become economically and socially rewarded. The project strived to mainstream women and youth in all agriculture interventions such as participating in trainings, managing demo site, participating in exchange visits, etc. to facilitate their access to technical and business knowledge. It also worked hard on promoting milk hubs in communities to alleviate women workload besides increasing farmers income. This was apparent in the women's feedback during focus group discussions. Moreover, the project supported the establishment of women and youth milk collection hub in Beit Fourik.

The project worked also on agency and self-confidence through TAM trainings and awareness sessions. It also created a job enhancement opportunity for young women as animators within the proximity of their residence and for youth as marketeers. It further worked with CCE-Birzeit on entrepreneurship programme (E-filfel in cooperation with Oxfam) in addition to engaging entrepreneur women and youth through community initiatives.

The project is effectively applying several facilitation principles in its approach. Some of the roles of the MSD programme¹⁹ are introducing new business ideas, providing technical assistance to adopt new practices, facilitating coordination amongst market actors, and sharing information. All these roles have been efficaciously played by Souqona project as explained earlier. Despite that Souqona adopts a hybrid approach in its design and implementation, MSD principles are evidently upheld even when some direct delivery interventions are deemed. To elucidate, MSD is not a mechanism or a modality of aid but rather change in market systems. On the different occasions that Souqona delivered inputs or subsidized assets for market actors, it was within the context of risk sharing or practical training like demonstrations. All these activities are undertaken with aim of influencing behavioural change and adoption of new practices. In oPt, farmers are risk averse given that nearly a fifth of Palestinians (75% of farming) rely on subsistence farming to survive²⁰, in the same time, MSD programmes do not work directly with the poor²¹. On different note, MSD supports market actors in fulfilling their role efficiently or take up new ones, whereas water and road should be the PA responsibility, it has no authority to do so in Area C. Therefore, developmental programmes and INGOs should take it up and support vulnerable communities there.

The original design wasn't M4P and MEAL is not according to DCED standards. MSD in the beginning varied and was subject for learning and adoption by all parties. Also, MSD require a shift in the consortia work (agencies experience are mostly in humanitarian projects).

Conclusions

1. Acquiring the technological, institutional and market capabilities means upgrading that allows targeted groups who are resource-poor and scattered to improve their competitiveness and move into higher-value activities. This allows poor people to improve their position in existing value chains and access lucrative markets.
2. Unless markets are inclusive, they will only benefit individuals who are involved in market transactions and not those who need them most. Souqona implemented a variety of interventions and the key distinction made here is that the project adopts both light touch and close engagement approach coupled with poor, women and youth inclusion.

3.2.3. Coherence

Key Findings

1. The activities implemented by the project are relevant to achieving the objectives defined by the Souqona project and AMENCA 3 programme though not necessarily within the lifespan of the current phase of the project.
2. The project design demonstrates strong understanding and meaningful consideration of gender and social inclusion.

Description and Analysis of Findings

Coherence consists of vertical and horizontal dimensions that supplement each other. Vertical coherence entails consistency and connectedness of the project components through its logical model, TOC, and implementation mechanisms. The horizontal dimension calls for capitalization and coordination among

¹⁹Operational Guidance Note: Market Systems Development. DFAT, Nov 2017

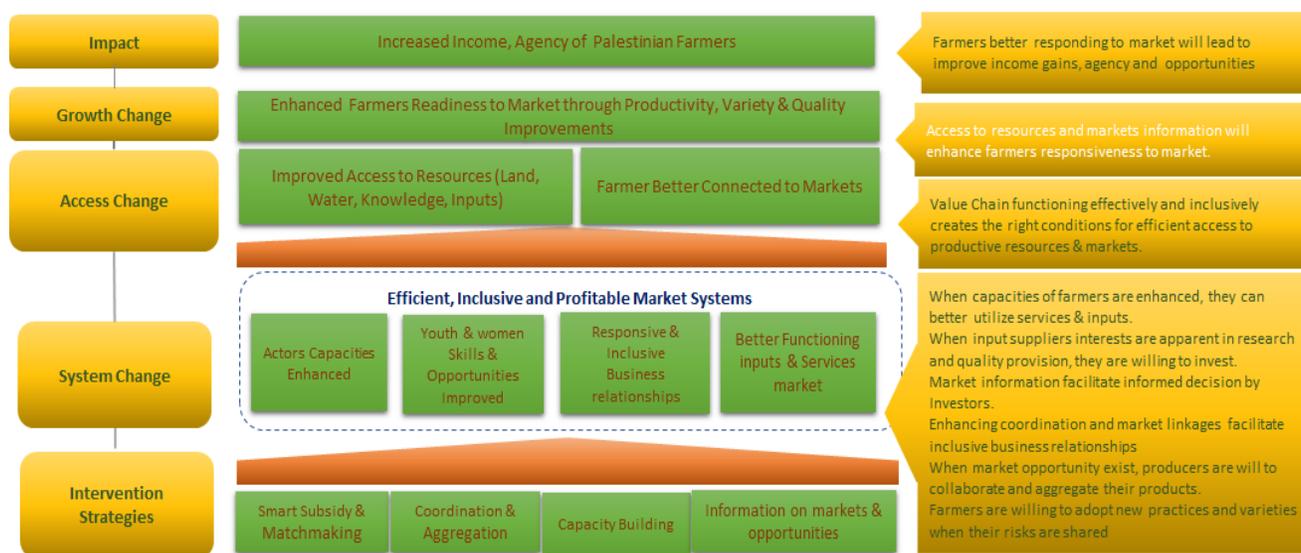
²⁰http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/PSE/index.stm

²¹Poor people tend to adopt livelihood strategies to manage and cope with the risks and vulnerabilities they face. While these strategies are understandable from a survival perspective, they may prevent poor people from fully participating in and benefiting from the opportunities that market offers.

internal and external stakeholders and activities²². Souqona complies with AMENCA 3 TOC and logical framework. The articulated TOC of AMENCA 3 programme does not follow the logical sequence of MSD approach i.e. systemic change, access change, growth change, business/ enterprise level change, and then the intended impact (poverty reduction). Moreover, some of the AMENCA assumptions should be the intended changes such as farmers willingness to adopt new methods and quality inputs can be made available, accessible and affordable. To help assess the consistency of the project, *Advance* rearranged Souqona’s TOC as illustrated below. According to the revised TOC, it is plausible to expect that the project interventions are on the track for achieving the intended objectives, yet not necessarily within the remaining lifespan of this phase. The contextual conditions, the engagement of stakeholders and other actors, and speed of expansion and copying are all influencing the interventions and when the objectives will be achieved.

Gender and social inclusion are robust in the project design starting from choosing VC, selecting impact groups, to include standalone outcome for social inclusion out of three in the project logical framework. Women and youth systemic constraints in targeted VCs were assessed and analysed during the inception phase and social inclusion strategy was developed for Souqona project. While the strategy strives to be in harmony with CARE Gender Transformative approach, several outputs and activities tend to be focused on the individual agency level, leaving room for further mainstreaming of structure and relations dimensions of the framework. The evaluation however finds catalyst example of the women milk hub in partially in these spheres.

Souqona Revised Theory of Change



Conclusions

1. The way the project evolved since its inception indicates continuous enrichment of learning and integration of MSD approaches. The achievement of project objective is more reasonable if a second phase is approved and if other conditions are kept constant.
2. Inclusion of formal, collective, and institutional spheres of the gender transformative approach into the project would enhance the social inclusion aspect of the project.

²²Horizontally there must be a system-wide coherence, across different actors and interventions. In this section, we will discuss the vertical dimension of coherence, leaving the horizontal one to be tackled later under efficiency & effectiveness.

3. AMENCA III design is not adopting MSD approach in design even if some features of facilitation dimensions were included. This could have put additional burden on the adoption of MSD by Souqona as well as affected the consistency and connectivity of the change pathway and the project design.
4. DFAT's support evolved since AMENCA 1 as emergency aid to more developmental one. If we consider AMENCA 3 as a transformative phase of DFAT support towards inclusive MSD, the programme should be planned differently; to include the Technical Support Team (TST) in managing the partners' change process to be more prepared to adopt and manage MSD programmes at different levels including learning (individual and institutional), planning and intervention design, M&E (adopting DCED) and so on i.e. the support can be better planned and more intensive.

3.2 EFFICIENCY

3.2.1. Utilization

Key Findings

1. The project was effective in selecting market actors, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.
2. Souqona has taken significant considerations to endorse value for money in its work. It is found that the project is cost economic and partly efficient and practically effective according to DFAT framework.

Description and Analysis of Findings

The project conducted several studies and analyses; VC analysis of targeted commodities, consumer behaviour, feasibilities and business cases, and export markets. Some of these studies and particularly VC analyses were utilized in designing the project and interventions. Some others could be of value for the private sector to incentivise them to join particular interventions but could have been more focussed once specific strategies are defined along the way.

Value chain selection passed through an extensive scrutinizing process based on high growth potential for vulnerable farmers particularly women and youth, scalability, market actors' readiness, consortium capacities, amongst other factors. Beneficiaries' selection process for taking part in the VC intervention followed a different track from that of participants in community initiatives. The first was more inclusive and participatory (partners and community) with unified criteria for selection. In selecting Input Suppliers, the project conducted private sector engagement analysis that is based on Skill/Will²³ scale. This assessment or analysis was not documented when applied to other market actors who are working with the project e.g. companies like Pinar, Sharakat, and Amr Zakarneh.

Building on the diversity and comparative advantages as well as history of collaboration on previous project; the four partners (Care Australia, Care WBG, ARIJ, ICARDA) brought in their experience and value-add in Souqona. Formulation of consortia was part of AMENCA 3 Call requirement to pool resources and combine national and international experiences. CARE Australia's role is mainly related to compliance due to its in-depth understanding of donor requirements and to a less extent in reporting. On the ground, CARE WBG is responsible for the project management and implementation. It is leading the PMU and SC,

²³ Skill includes Geographical outreach, products/technology offerings, Linkages and connections with innovative technologically advanced manufacturers, Technical resources including agronomy ones, Financial resources to ensure they are sustainable. The definition of Will includes: Incentives (including business oriented and social oriented ones); the will to engage further immediately and for scale-up.

social inclusion and gender mainstreaming, visibility and communication, M&E, documentation & reporting, market facilitation, assessment and knowledge production, procurement and financial management, coordination with other AMENCA 3 consortia and TST. It is also directly implementing the dairy VC work. ARIJ is responsible for the bulk of activities with communities in vegetable VC, agricultural/feeder roads, and water systems, besides data collection to feed MEL framework. ICARDA played the role of technical supporter for the project in agriculture and dry land issues; High yielding forage seeds, technical backstopping and data analysis.

Achieving value for money is a critical consideration for CARE and DFAT. DFAT has developed eight Value for Money Principles spread over four pillars; Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Ethics. In terms of economy CARE's policies and procedures were applied in Souqona procurement including competing methods in selecting the option that offers the optimal mix of costs and benefits. Based on the feedback of input suppliers (the only source that the Evaluation was able to access), the procured goods and services were less than market price. None of the interviewed beneficiaries complained about the quality of procured goods and services but rather praised them. Staff salaries were not accessible to the Evaluator to be compared with market price in the country. In as much as *Advance* has access to data, the project is found to be cost economic.

Souqona is partly efficient according to DFAT VfM criteria. CARE has its policies and systems but not necessarily guarded by transaction costs and potential benefits measurements²⁴. In a couple of incidents, beneficiaries and project staff complained about the delay in delivery of inputs and lengthy procurement procedures as such the case of safer produce which pushed the implementation of the intervention at least in the agricultural season. Value for money requires also a proportional capacity, project management scope appears more task-orientated than result-oriented and excessively concerned with compliance requirement reporting and paperwork load which could be more related to/ reflective of CARE's organizational requirements and practices. In addition, all the administrative work and partners relationships are managed from Ramallah office whereas several informants including staff, partners, and donor believe that management should spend more time in Tubas and with the staff in the field (50%), which calls for additional human resources for the project.

Continuous improvement and evidence-based decision-making mark the project since its inception. So, it is in line with DFAT requirement to focus on learning from experience to avoid adopting methods and approaches that have not been successful in the past. At a strategic level, organizational learning is practiced but not in a systematic manner. The Impact & Learning Coordinator is responsible for data management and comparison against indicators and targets with close relationships with animators, staff, and partners. Nevertheless, CARE should consider hiring more staff (data mining and analysis, learning) to give more space and time to the coordinator for organizational learning.

In terms of effectiveness, Souqona has shown a robust implementation that ensures the achievement of AMENCA 3 set targets and objectives in a timely and cost-effective manner. Innovation and adaptability were based on clear and logical evidence to maximize impact like when the project moved from mono fertilizers and balanced drip into safer produce. Flexibility in MSD dynamic and turmoil context is deemed necessary. Despite care piloting different schemes within Souqona, it is perceived as 'overly cautious and doing everything by the book'.

²⁴ Care analysis is limited to mainly to compliance i.e. not including cost-efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and cost-benefit analyses.

The risk landscape in oPt is becoming increasingly complex and agribusiness environment is volatile. The complexity and inter-linkages of different risks such as climate change, political instability and conflict, natural resources depletion, as well as market inefficiency. The propagation of risk throughout the value chain does not entail similarity across stages and actors but dependence of large exposure. Souqona developed a risk management matrix without a monitoring plan for risks' markers nor a contingency plan to deal with the potential crisis. This was not required by the donor nor the donor compliance rules to this effect. Yet, in such chaotic context with high uncertainty, it is advised to have a risk management plan in place. Examples of VC operational risks faced by the project are; Sharakat decision to postpone the establishment of FFV marketing company put the Safer produce intervention at risk. Also, the reliance on one input supplier or delays of input suppliers are negatively affecting the much-established and recognized momentum and the buy-in of farmers such as in safer produce. Risk indicators and markers should be developed at each stage of the VC and monitored systematically.

Effectiveness requires the accountability and transparency in CARE's systems and work. CARE International has its accountability framework²⁵, periodically review their performance indicators, provide orientation in the use and implementation of standards, consult with different stakeholders, involve beneficiaries in the planning, implementation, and monitoring. Therefore, it is clear that CARE is held accountable by DFAT and by intended beneficiaries for delivering results.

The Value for Money (VfM) analysis is fairly sound although it is dominated by qualitative analysis rather than quantitative one. Some figures from *Cost-Efficiency* and *Cost-Effectiveness* quantitative analysis indicate that the project is cost efficient and cost effective e.g. the results costs are around 89% of the total project costs²⁶. Insofar, the estimated unit cost per beneficiary is AUD 189 divided into AUD 166 direct costs and AUD 23 administrative and performance management costs. The project spent only 12 cents²⁷ For every USD increase in agricultural production, and 14 cents for each AUD leveraged by private sector. At any rates, VfM is not part of DFAT reporting nor the project is required to include it.

VfM is difficult to be measured, my feeling is AMENCA 3 have quite good VfM. DFAT didn't require us to measure VfM. Also, the consortia contracts and budgets organized very administratively into it and no one budgeted against outcomes.

Conclusion

Palestine faces different risks including economic, environmental, political, and social shocks and stressors. These impediments have hindered the competitiveness of Palestinian producers and hampered badly needed investment in the agricultural sector. longer-term market development necessitates the integration of risk, vulnerability and power relations utilizing political economy analytical tools.

²⁵ CARE defines accountability as explaining, being held responsible for and hearing the perspectives of others about how well we are meeting our commitments - and then actively making changes and improvements based on what we've learned and heard

²⁶ 73% of the total budget if all staff were excluded from calculation

²⁷ The calculated costs are support to communities, technical advice, trainings. Please note that the project budget is not outcome-based, and the evaluator did not have costs per each activity. If all project costs calculated the ratio increase up to 32 cents.

3.2.2. Facilitation

Key Finding

The project has managed to engage and mobilize relevant market actors to contribute effectively to the VCs upgrading.

Description and Analysis of Findings

Souqona first investigated some of the stakeholders and their capacities e.g. investment case studies and private sector engagement analysis. Technical trainings were provided, and applied researches were conducted and shared with relevant stakeholders e.g. trainings on new varieties and techniques of barn management were provided to farmers, women & youth extension agents from MoA and input suppliers as well as PMU staff. Also, mono fertilizer, high protein ration, and water-balanced drip applied researches.

In terms of networks and linkages, Souqona facilitated market linkages between farmers and other market actors (upstream: input suppliers and downstream: processors). The project was very active in mobilizing farmers through Coops and local governance units as well as women and communities through animators. Unprecedentedly, Souqona was able to mobilize number of private sector companies to take part in the interventions like dairy processing companies. The project provided incentives for upgrading in different spheres such as farmers improved practices, support milk collection hubs with test instrument and cooling tanks, support NFC with cold transport vehicle, and upgrading Amr Zakarneh processing unit. All these incentives not only upgrade enterprise operation but the value chain as whole.

Coordination and capitalization on different initiatives were tangible particularly on previous projects managed by CARE and ARIJ such as RAWASI. Moreover, CARE is active in coordinating with other AMENCA consortia and jointly developed priority areas of collaboration agreement. It entails geographical and technical complementarities amongst actors. At target group level, Souqona is found to have capitalized on community resources as was evident in co-investment and risk sharing mechanism with farmers and other market actors. Working with local universities and capitalizing on their capacities was also realized. This is evident in testing new formula of silage as part of students' graduation projects, besides demonstrations that were managed by faculty of agriculture in two universities where most working agronomists and agricultural engineers' graduates prove best examples on capitalization. This was extended to include CCE in Birzeit in E-filfel entrepreneurship incubator.

Although the project didn't aim or work to prompt a shared vision for VC development amongst different actors, it was successful in pinpointing crucial bottle necks in the VCs and creating common understanding around different issues such as mono fertilizers and milk collection hubs. Souqona also succeeded in communicating itself and managing its stakeholder expectations. This task is complex and not easy especially when there are different types of stakeholders that would have different expectations about a project's work. This can be noted by project capacity in maintaining a mix of interventions which achieve different objectives e.g. social inclusion, beneficiary's selection, and consistency with government policy.

Conclusions

Most of the facilitative approach was adopted by the project vis-à-vis building the capacity of existing actors and institutions; supporting the creation of linkages and networks and providing incentives for upgrading. Facilitation is not possible without multi-stakeholder engagement. In market facilitation projects such as Souqona, trust building among various stakeholders such as between farmers and private

companies is crucial. Managing different stakeholders' interests, power dynamics, and potential conflicts all while ensuring that concerned stakeholders move towards shared goals however often requires not only significant facilitation skills but also flexibility and space to improvise and experiment.

3.2.3. Sufficiency

Key Findings

1. The allocated resources are fairly sufficient to achieve the set targets.
2. Working through such consortium is enhancing complementarity more so than improving efficiency.
3. Monitoring and evaluation arrangements, while responsive to AMENCA ADRs are necessarily reflecting the level of change on the ground and inform adaptive management.
4. DFAT has hands on supervision of the project through its intensive oversight maintained technical advisors support and authentication. This is much less observed or found by other programs in the country.

Description and Analysis of Findings

The allocated resources to carry out the project tasks in order to achieve the set targets by AMENCA are reasonable in general. However, to achieve the intended changes in the selected value chains beyond the four commodities (Tomato, cucumber, eggplant, and dairy) and the selected communities (23 locations in Nablus, Jenin, and Tubas), the resources need to be revisited particularly in terms of staff and time. Successful models and piloted interventions need to be replicated and better disseminated as well as up surging existing ones. It should be noted that influencing market player behaviour systems, and practices are time consuming and human-resource intensive process. Market development project usually adds value through intelligence, insight, advice, mentoring and impartial mediation. Staff are therefore an essential part for any market systems development project typically when they are trained on MSD approaches. To that effect, DFAT is highly advised to continue working on the next phase of Souqona, adopt outcome-based budgeting, considering technical team as direct (project) cost and not as administrative or overhead, and to allocate sufficient budget for partners capacity enhancement. CARE is advised to expand its basket of targeted commodities, targeted communities, human resources, and capacity building component especially in M4P and market system development.

Consortium formulation amongst the partners is based on the donor requirement and not necessarily the resources and capacities needed by the intended change or development requirement. At any rate, partnering with local NGO such as ARIJ serve in better coverage, faster response, and wider technical expertise. ARIJ has the local knowledge, networks, connections, and expertise particularly in the targeted subsectors. While the technical capacities of ICARDA are needed, yet it can be contractually outsourced from ICARDA per task. The implementation of the project is totally carried out by CARE WBG and ARIJ. CARE Australia is the main applicant for the project responsible for all strategic and investment decision in the project and ensuring compliance with donor requirements. However, there appears a reserved and risk-averse attitude, potentially influenced by DFAT/ AMENCA that could relegate creativity, innovation and efficiency of investments. Much focus remains on work and adherence to targets (output-based) culture.

Presumably, the consortium members' work is organized thematically, partners don't have much flexibility to adapt to changes without CARE approval and adherence to donor requirements. CARE policies and systems are applied. Structured capacity building of local partner is however not taking place while there are hybridising of ideas and sharing of experiences and burdens as well as pooling of human

resources. Strategically, the role of steering committee was not fully materialized as projected as it narrowed to include CARE WBG and ARIJ only. The SC was constructed from the implementing partners and MoA only. As the project addresses multiple market systems and VCs, the SC should be expanded to include representatives of market actors such as private sector and farmers bodies.

DFAT is managing the project through contractual arrangement with technical advisors and biweekly visits to oversight the progress and challenges with CARE in the project besides the progress reports. Cardno has a dual role in AMENCA programme, to advise DFAT and advise implementing consortia. The project is steered strategically by CARE and operationally by the PMU. The consortium structure and practice are more subcontracting rather than partnering. Leadership of the PMU is the most critical factor in facilitating systemic change. Hence, project culture and management systems should be built to accommodate risk and flexibility; encourage knowledge sharing and staff empowerment accompanied by effective systems for measurement and learning. Even though the technical support team (Cardno) provided orientation and coaching, the PMU staff need to be trained on M4P / MSD and partners to be supported in developing their capacities.

AMENCA III MEF was built to report on DFAT's Aggregate Development Results (ADRs) and its targets. Such framework allows results from individual interventions by consortia to be aggregated across the programme. Therefore, Souqona MEL Framework aligned with DFAT's overarching AMENCA Programme MEL and its ADRs. According to Souqona MEF, M&E roles and responsibilities are shared among all the project team and partners. Where CARE is leading the main M&E activities, and the design of the baseline, end line and evaluation; contribution to the M&E capacity development of partner agencies; knowledge management, documentation of innovation and good practices, and information sharing. ARIJ and ICARDA are responsible for the data collection. Then, part of "Impact & Learning Coordinator" time was allocated to Souqona MEAL and no one else were assigned to support these functions. Project team collect data and analyse it, while the accuracy of data is the project manager responsibility. CARE Australia were involved more in design phase of the MEF and their role now more in reporting.

Partners are not that involved in the monitoring and feel that accountability is Care's responsibility. This could be due to unfunctionally of the SC and project management structure (PMU).

Mirroring AMENCA, DCED standards are not applied in Souqona nor were the staff trained on it, though highly advised. Some of the ADR indicators are process indicators and at output level e.g. "50 kms of feeder roads rehabilitated"; and some couldn't be considered as CREAM²⁸ or SMART²⁹ e.g. "At least three agricultural value chains functioning better" which is an outcome by itself. The applied indicators are not capturing all systemic changes across the impact pathway or market dynamic though the evaluation finds these being materialized often. The Technical Support Team (TST) facilitated the development of MEF, prepared the definitions guide with MEWG³⁰, ensure consistency in applied approaches and instruments, examine the issue of contribution and attribution amongst the consortia, make sure that the targets have been reached, data validation, and annually compiling the consortia report for DFAT.

Conclusions

1. Management systems must be flexible enough to allow a project to be responsive to the dynamism of market systems. Effective facilitation doesn't require CARE only to have the capacity to read and react

²⁸ Clear, Relevant, Economic, Adequate, and Monitorable

²⁹ Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Monitorable

³⁰Monitoring and Evaluation Working Group

to local market signals, but also DFAT to be flexible and supportive. This could be the fine line between facilitating change and directing change. Reports organized around indicators and figures while MSD is about structural and behavioural changes. AMENCA III management and procedures are not conducive for adoptive or facultative role of MSD approach.

2. Learning as a function should be integrated in all project operations. Platforms for it to take place in structured and documented manner is crucial. Souqona should provide enough space for learning (time and opportunity for all staff to learn and reflect on what they are doing), the knowledge (give the staff the proper lens to see things from MSD angle), and the learning system to capture and use knowledge on how market players react to opportunities and threats as well as determining if interventions are progressing in the right direction and at an acceptable pace are needed.

3.3 ACHIEVEMENT OF PURPOSE

3.3.1. Progress

Key Findings

1. Souqona is marching steadily towards its outcomes. It almost overachieved all the set targets by AMENCA 3.
2. Women and youth were well integrated in the interventions through a clear social inclusion strategy developed by the project.

Description and Analysis of Findings

According to the initial plan of the project, CARE consortium targets around 13,125 households (2,540 women and 1910 youth)³¹ to increase their access to services, inputs, and markets. In the first phase (the current one), the project planned to reach 3,200 farmers (700 women & 660 youth). According to 2018 annual report, the project has reached 9,216 farmers (2,677 women/3,783 youth) well exceeding its targets in the selected communities (23 community in 4 governorates).

Overall, the evaluation team found that the majority of Souqona's activities aimed at improving farmers income and access to the market. Establishing whether interventions are effective in achieving the intended objectives the evaluation will rely mainly on the achievement of targets as presented in the MEF, last updated on December 2018.

Souqona Goal: Increased income, agency, and market opportunity for Palestinian Farmers through growth in pro-poor agribusiness and market development.

Project Goal First Indicator (H1): 13,551 farmers (including women Youth) report increased income from Souqona interventions.

The first indicator assesses the impact vis-à-vis increase in income (*poverty reduction level indicator*) with cumulative target (FY 2017 & 2018) of 4,305 farmers. By the end of 2018, the project exceeded the target achieving 9,988 farmers (232%).

³¹Up to 2,700 vegetable and 1,900 dairy farming households and 2,400 rainfed farmer. At least 40% of the target group should be women and youth.

To highlight the systemic changes that were not included in the MEF and reporting system, Advance will utilize successes captured from the field.

Project Goal Second Indicator (H2): *USD 21,162,310 additional agricultural production is generated from Souqona*

The second indicator measures increase in productivity of targeted commodity (*Access change type of indicators*). By the end of 2018, the project exceeded the cumulative target by \$1,380,124 (154%). The target is \$2,544,750 and the achieved amount is \$3,924,874

Outcome One: Women & men farmers are more market ready

Market readiness means being able to provide the right product to the right market at the right time i.e. farmers should be aware of consumer preferences & market information, new technology and best practices, and regulatory requirements besides having the access to and ability to attain productive resources³², quality inputs, variety of seedlings, and make linkages. Many of these issues were addressed in this project but not necessarily under this outcome.

Outcome-1 First Indicator: *17 kms of feeder roads rehabilitated.*

While the outcome talks about enterprise/ business level of change, AMENCA indicator is on activity level/ process. At any rate, the cumulative target for this indicator is 10 Km and the project rehabilitated 11.5 Km (115%). For the two other explanatory sub indicators, also the project exceeded its cumulative targets i.e. the target of “*indicator 1.1a Area of farm land with enhanced access as a result of roads rehabilitated through AMENCA 3*” is 5,000 dunum and access enhanced for 11,717 dunums (234%). The target of “*indicator 1.1b Number of farmers with improved access to agricultural infrastructure as a result of rehabilitated roads*” is 1,200 farmers, while the achieved number is more than 1,900 farmers (159%).

Outcome-1 Second Indicator: *3,900 farmers have access to improved water management systems³³.*

In reference to the set targets, the project aimed at improving the access for 1,170 farmers by the end of year 2018, and improved water access to almost 1990 farmers (170%). The same applies for the two explanatory sub-indicators in terms of exceeding the targets as the project is achieving 613% of “*indicator 1.2a 1359 Dunums Increase in area of irrigated land as a result of AMENCA 3 water management interventions reported by farmers*” by increasing the irrigated area of 2,510 dunums instead of 408 dunums by the end of 2018. For “*indicator 1.2c 3,510 farmers reported that improved water management systems are still functional*”, 1,404 farmers reported the continuity of the improvement in water access.

Outcome-1 Third Indicator: *4,200 farmers adopt innovative agricultural practices.*

The cumulative target (1,300 farmers) of this indicator was fully achieved by the end of year 2018 where 3,393 farmers (261%) adopted innovative systems.

Signs of Systemic Changes:

³²Including land, capital, labour, etc.

³³ Water management system is beyond installing water carrier or introducing new technology. It is about optimizing the use of water resources starting from computing the demands to water-distribution planning with defined roles and responsibilities. Therefore, it would be better if AMENCA programme use the term water network or access instead of management systems for this indicator.

3. **Adoption of New practices:** As illustrated under the third indicator of this outcome, farmers adopted new practices such as mono-fertilizers, water-balanced drip-irrigation, silage and high protein ration fodder, milk replacer, amongst others.
4. **Copying:** Despite most of the adopters being targeted farmers, other farmers copied the practices after participating in exchange visits for demonstrations e.g. cases of farmers starting to use water-balanced drip, mono-fertilizer, or planting baby cucumber.
5. **Investing:** Number of farmers invested in safe produce production without waiting for market rewards for that practices since the contractual relation with distributor did not materialize yet in this intervention. In many cases, women who manage the process of collecting milk in hubs do it for free to augment the endeavour.

Farmers who buy water per cubic meter or those whose fields are on slope, are more willing to buy the balanced drip after the current net is consumed. I have a well and I don't buy water but I bought this technology after Souqona introduced it to my neighbour and because it distributes water better and this is good for roots.

Vegetable farmer from Froush

"We learned how to deal with sheep sickness such as pregnancy sickness. We used to give them melted dates or jam but, in the trainings, we learned that instead we were harming the sheep. We learned that they should be injected under the skin. Believe me, we used to lose more new baby lambs than now. I immediately stopped doing that and told my husband about it. We also learned to use dry milk powder and my husband continued to purchase it for our sheep. Most Recently, he also bought the electric breast feeder which is much faster and more efficient" Woman Sheep Farmer

Outcome Two: Women and men engage more sustainably and profitably in selected value chains

Improving the profitability means increasing the revenues and/ or decreasing the costs. To increase revenues, farmers need to increase the sold quantity or/ and the price. Higher price means better quality, new variety, and/ or out of season supply. To reduce the costs, farmers need to improve their productivities and/ or reduce inputs and transactional costs. The project worked with milk producers on getting better prices for milk and partially on improving their farms productivity through introducing high protein ration, silage, and milk replacer. Through linking farmers with milk processors, they sell more quantities of milk and get better prices particularly off- season. This would not have happened without artificial insemination that was introduced by the project to breeders. On the other side, the project enhanced vegetable farmers in reducing their costs through introducing mono-fertilizers, water-balanced drip, and the cold storage. The cold storage for baby cucumber reduces the waste of large quantities of cucumber during holidays and closure where Israeli pickling factories do not work while cucumber farmers have to pick and harvest their crop. So, by contributing to install a cold storage, the project helped farmers keep the produce fresh and to sell it on time as well as reduce the shipment costs by using large lorries.

Outcome-2 First Indicator: AUD 6,583,582 of private sector investment leveraged.

The cumulative target for this indicator is AUD 1,641,791 and the estimated investments in so far is around AUD 8,038,370 (487%). These investments mainly came from the dairy VC.

Outcome-2 Second Indicator: AUD 33,923,889 of additional domestic sales facilitated.

The project outpaced the required additional sales in local market by achieving AUD 10,050,253 while the cumulative target for this indicator is AUD 3,290,004 (305%).

Outcome-2 Third Indicator: AUD 19,650,320 of additional exports facilitated, including new exports.

The cumulative target of this indicator was totally achieved by the end of 2018. The vegetable farmers, particularly baby cucumber ones, exported additional AUD 3,572,000, while the set target is AUD 5,096,802 for the same period.

Signs of Systemic Changes:

1. **Increase in prices:** Herders were able to get better prices for raw milk (4.5NIS/ lt.) and even higher during off-season period (5.3NIS/ lt.). Baby cucumber farmers got higher prices for this variety (average 3.4NIS/ Kg).
2. **Crowding-in:** Sharakat was influenced by the business case developed by the project about the feasibility and the need for a fodder factory in Palestine. In 2018, Sharakat and Palestine Industrial Investment Co. (PIIC)³⁴ declared an investment of \$13 million to establish a new fodder factory in Hebron. Moreover, the increase in the number of dairy processing factories that join and buy milk from collection hubs (Pinar, Hidmi, Al Byara, & Al Saeedi)
3. **Adapt:** One input supplier 'Sharabati' who managed a number of vegetable demonstrations in the project on his cost, adapted this practice in introducing new varieties of seedling to farmers such as the case of potato.
4. **Expansion:** Pinar is considering investing in new production line for cheese from goat and sheep milk. Al Byara (Amr Zakarneh) is expanding his production capacity and producing new dairy items.

Al Nasaryeh Cooperative is incorporated by 48 farmers in the north central region of the West Bank. Daily milk production at Al Nasaryeh is estimated to be approximately 1,000-1,500 liters. In 2013, the Coop was provided with milk collection and processing equipment through the RAWSI Project managed by Care and funded by EU. It possesses milk testing machine, a 500-litter cold milk collection tank, walk-in refrigerator, and processing equipment. Souqona capitalized on the existing resources and provide minor rehabilitation for selected machines to be used as milk collection storage.

Through the facilitation of Souqona, the coop was linked to two milk processors, Al Byara and Hidmi. The monthly amount of milk that is sold to Al Byara is around 2,000 lt. With Hidmi the business relation evolved from increased quantity of milk (from 500 to 1,000 lt. per week) to discuss outsourcing Al Jamid from the coop. As, Al Jamid is one of Hidmi important product and coop has no previous experience in producing Al Jamid, the two parties agree that Hidmi will train the coop on how to produce it.

This advancement in business relation between the two parties was developed without any inducement from the project and reflect the spirit of the project facilitation and business linkages efforts. The coop now will better utilize the space and equipment and sells more milk (processed).

Outcome Three: Women and youth more economically empowered

Economic empowerment³⁵ entails equal access to and control over economic resources, assets and opportunities as well as long-term changes in social norms and economic structures that benefit women, youth and men equally. In order to address these issues, Souqona mainstreamed the inclusion of women and youth in the project activities through facilitating women and youth access to technical and business knowledge (women led demonstrations, support exchange visits, etc.) and access to land through

³⁴the industrial arm of Palestine Development and Investment, Ltd. (PADICO)

³⁵Women's economic empowerment is one of four priority areas for CARE's work. CARE defines women's economic empowerment as the process by which women increase their right to economic resources and power to make decisions that benefit themselves, their families and their communities.

rehabilitation of roads and water networks (as part of agreement with local governorate unit to provide/ rent women and youth parcels of land. In addition to that, separate activities were designed for women and youth including awareness-raising sessions on gender related issues, helping in employment through hiring of female animators and youth marketeers, community Initiatives³⁶ and entrepreneurship program, and agency trainings³⁷.

Outcome-3 First Indicator: *70% of the interventions developed include new opportunities for women and youth.*

One of the VC selection criteria was the inclusiveness and potential to improve women and youth economic opportunities. The project interventions in general are integrating youth and women as well as include new opportunities for them. The project overachieved the target of the explanatory sub-indicator “3.1b Number of women reporting greater mobility within agricultural value” by achieving 170%, 2,042 women have reported greater mobility and economic opportunities within value chains³⁸. This is also true for the other sub-indicator “3.1a Positive changes (during 2018) in attitudes and/or perceptions of women and men towards the economic and social roles of women and youth in agricultural work” since it was overachieved. The evaluation came across several noteworthy examples evidencing this such as women and youth being actors of knowledge dissemination to their peers, and in their households and in the community initiatives; designating a piece of land for a women to apply mixed farming, young man leasing his father’s entire land and managing it while also introducing a new practice of solar energy to which his father was initially unconvinced of, etc.

*Women are thirsty to learn as they have been conventionally overlooked and they want the exposure to learning as well as connecting with their peers including from other villages. The visits had multiple effect). **The visits witness higher participation rate of women than men.** They ask a lot of questions and take **this opportunity very seriously as they are scarce.** In the pre and post technical tests (dairy) women outperformed men with a score of 32% increase as compared to men 7%.*

According to the project annual report, 1,782 families from 13 communities started to show change in perceptions towards women and youth socio-economic roles.

Outcome-3 Second Indicator: *1,480 women and 1,250 youth able to report examples of economic empowerment*

The set target was completely achieved exceeding by far the cumulative one (418%). 3,427 women and youth reported examples of economic empowerment (Target 819).

Outcome-3 Second Indicator: *1,000 women & 270 youth reporting more active or equitable roles in agricultural value chains as a result of AMENCA 3.*

³⁶ These initiatives are not community-based rather they are individual ones almost very similar process of e-filfel. It could be better if the project renames it. Also, the intention was to select relevant initiative to VCs but some drifting was noted.

³⁷ Trainings on leadership, communication, and negotiation skills were conducted in 10 locations for 237 women.

³⁸ engagement of 474 men and boys in awareness raising activities, 316 women attended training sessions and 584 exchange visits under vegetables and dairy, 981 women and youth involved in Souqona activities, 579 women benefited from water networks and roads, etc.

The target of this indicator was overachieved (465%) since 937 women & 792 youth reported more active or equitable roles in agricultural value chains as a result of Souqona. Furthermore, 3,978 Women and youth reporting improvements in the access they have to agricultural services (403% of the target).

even if the hub doesn't have the capacity to take my entire milk production, two days off a week is what I had dreamed of! I can do other social activities and attend to my children's education and raising them better.

"Our village, and especially men were sceptical of our ability to organize the milk collection hub. They first mocked us and tried to keep the initiative for the men. We managed to establish a successful project on the ground for the benefit for over 40 farmers. Now, the men are approaching us to take part"

"The uniqueness of this project compared to all other agricultural projects is that it includes us in everything. In demos, trainings, business models and commercial linkages. They helped put us on the first steps to take matters in our own hands". Such feedback was gathered from almost all interviewed women and youth.

Signs of Systemic Changes:

Early signs of community acceptance of women in non-traditional roles as evident in women's representation was tripled in community-committees. Moreover, these women (114) reported higher decision-making authority in these public platforms, and all targeted community accepted the animators' role within their community.

Conclusions

Not all AMENCA indicators mirror the changes per corresponding outcome nor they capture all intended changes. The project has achieved a number of systemic changes that should be captured and capitalized such as the unique improvement in value chain governance³⁹. This was evident in the safer produce intervention and in dairy intervention. In the safer intervention, farmers produce according to the guidelines developed by PSI; the investor expressed the willingness to buy vegetables from farmers who are accredited for safer produce; and the PSI set the standards, technical specifications and guideline. In the dairy VC, the input suppliers provide silages and high ration protein according to agreed specifications; farmers follow delivered advices and sold milk to the collection hub. Hubs collect milk, test it and store it cold and includes women playing these roles. The farmer accepts the concept that only tested milk will be bought and otherwise it will be rejected. New Farm Company ship the milk in cold tanks to the processors according to agreed schedule. Processers re-test the milk before use.

We in ARZ ice cream company sees high potential of cheese (Nabulseah) in our export markets. We were reluctant to invest in new production line without having the sufficient supply of quality milk. When we learned about Souqona project and collection Hubs we immediately contacted the team. The project opened for us many closed doors including sources for quality milk around the year and also the purchase of processed cheese from NFC instead of investing in new production line.

The social inclusion component is prominent in Souqona focusing more on agency, informal, and individual aspects without undermining other aspects of CARE GTA i.e. there is room to strengthen the

³⁹**VC Governance:** refer to the inter-market actor relationships and institutional mechanisms through which non-market coordination of activities in the chain takes place. This coordination is achieved through the setting and enforcement of product and process parameters to be met by actors in the chain.

power-over and power-with dimensions of the social inclusion component particularly in the formal and institutional spheres.

3.3.1. Attribution

Key Findings

Souqona contribution to the identified changes are evident and plausible.

Description and Analysis of Findings

Changes are occurring in the targeted VCs within the selected communities. Attribution of the project is more obvious at intervention level. Yet, it is indefinite at higher levels in change pathway (growth, access, and poverty reduction) and when external influences increase.

Access to quality inputs and productive resources enhanced: the project facilitated the linkages between input suppliers and men and women producers, rehabilitated agricultural roads, install water networks, etc. That have been said, the project contribution to improve access to inputs and product resources is apparent and plausible.

Farmers Capacities are enhanced: Different theoretical and practical trainings including introduction of new cultivars and best practices for men, women, and youth. The attribution of Souqona in this area is direct and obvious.

Market linkages and coordination are enhanced: Souqona facilitated several backward and forward linkages as well as horizontal coordination including milk collection hubs formulation, contractual farming agreements, MoUs and agreements between producers and input suppliers as well as with traders and processors. Moreover, In many cases, the project gave certain incentive to expediate the process e.g. cold storage. As such, the contribution of Souqona in market coordination and linkages is strong and obvious.

Women and youth are better engaged in VCs: Souqona intervened directly and indirectly in improving women and youth active participation in target VCs. The changes achieved by Souqona in terms of social inclusion is directly linked to its support and contribution. It is evident that Souqona's commitment to include women and youth across all these, aside from focussed actions to them was never wavered.

Also, the project contributed to changes in actors' behaviours and attitudes. This was clear in investors and private sector companies who started business relations for the first time with small farmers; farmers adoption of new practices and to accept the idea of selling milk instead of cheese; and community acceptance of non-traditional roles of women and youth.

Conclusions

Though the chain of causality in AMENCA is not based on a clear strategic framework, it is reasonable for Souqona to claim contribution in catalysing some changes in market systems. Some of Souqona interventions capitalized on pervious projects such as RAWASI or existing ones such as working with other AMENCA consortia. Souqona operates within wider system where all actors and influencers interact to achieve the intended results.

3.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Any sustainable change in society cannot be achieved without sustainable organizations and individuals. As such, during its inception Souquna conducted a private sector engagement assessment utilizing will-skill framework. For sustainability, this means considering incentives and capacities to better aligning key market functions and players with the incentives and capacities to work more effectively. Hence, for change to sustainable it should integrate equitable economic growth, inclusive social progress, and balanced ecosystem. Souquna project strived to adapt to this concept of sustainability by increasing farmers income through pro-poor market system development, developing and applying social inclusion strategy, and protecting environment in its interventions e.g. the usage of plant waste in producing Silage, saving of water by using balanced drip, reducing pesticide usage and fertilizers as in safer-produce initiative and so on.

Key Findings

There are number of signs that indicate the sustainability of Souquna interventions; leveraged investments, viability of new practices, organizational capacities of services providers, actors' satisfaction and ability to continue, improvement in market coordination, and competitors and non-competing actors crowding-in.

Description and Analysis of Findings

The sustainability of any change determined by many factors depending on the type of change and its scope. The following captured indicators on the expected sustainability of main results and activities;

- **Leveraged investment:** This is one of AMENCA indicators that gauges financial and non-financial investments made by partners, investing in a new way of working and business models. The significant contributions in this phase demonstrates the level of partners, commitment and the degree of their ownership.
- **Viability and demonstrative benefit of new practices:** the economic viability of mono-fertilizers, silage, high protein ration, and safer pesticides usage as well as selling the raw milk to collection hubs are evident. The viability of these changes was direct and immediate, therefore continuity of such practices in the future are vivid at least for commercially-motivated farmers.
- **Capacity development of service and input providers:** the adoption and expansion of demonstration experience by Al Sharabati as well as the reasonable organizational capacity they have, the intended changes are more likely to be sustained and expanded.
- **Market Actors satisfaction and positive intentions:** Farmers were satisfied with the trainings and results achieved after joining the project. Milk processors and input suppliers as well are satisfied with the results from the piloting phase and showed interest in continuity and expansion. Most of the participants in piloting business models are willing to incur all associated costs and plan to invest in it.
- **Market Actors ability to continue:** Private sector enterprises have the organisational, financial, and human resources capabilities needed to maintain the achieved changes as the project demonstrated positive incentives to all those concerned. Some herders however may not have the financial capacity to continue buying high ration protein or sell milk directly to collection hub. Some give cheese for traders in return for sheep fodder.
- **Better Horizontal and Vertical Coordination:** Actors form facilitated business model expressed their satisfaction from the outcomes of mutual partnerships. Processors are satisfied with the level of change in farmers practices and farmers believe that the benefit of this business relationship are going

to continue. The win-win relationships experience will lead to greater trust and continued incentives to cooperate.

- **Competitors crowd-in:** Sheep fodder suppliers start to promote their ration of protein ¹⁸for less prices to attract herders. This is a positive outcome for farmers and sign of influence and spread.
- **Empowerment of women and youth:** Target women and youth's access to opportunities and resources has led to increased mobility and engagement in some interventions and increased agency for their continued engagement and transformation of their roles in the VCs and in their communities to a lower extent. Individual agency landed so far is a strong sustainability element amidst a rather complex social system.

Conclusions

In developing this project, CARE thought about the incentives and interests that encourage market actors to take part in the change process. Sustainability is not just about maintaining the status quo achieved by a project intervention, but the resilience of systems changed in response to unavoidably changing external factors. Despite that Souqona improved sustainability of farmers' economic gains by changing and strengthening market systems, it should consider reducing vulnerability of famers from market shocks by improving coping mechanisms within market systems e.g. explore alternatives, diversify commodities, and promote farm/ barn management.

4. Recommendations

The project is advised in the remaining period of this phase to:

- Continue its work on its interventions in the selected VCs particularly the safer produce.
- Capture and document changes in market dynamics and generate success stories and lessons to be learned for the planning of the next phase.
- Targeted mobilization of the private sector to crowd-in and create alternative channels and markets for dairy and safer produce. This can include cheese commodities and potential catalyst produce distribution/ Marketing of the safe produce. This can be operationalized through dissemination of the project results and activities as well as existing capacities (such as the credible collection hubs) of the local producers to create and demonstrate market incentives for such investments.
- Expand dissemination of learning and exchange visits for demo sites. This can concentrate on already targeted locations but expanded amongst same village farmers, etc.

The project is advised in the next phase to:

- Consider the profitability as main purpose for the upcoming phase and fostering work on reducing the costs of production in dairy VC particularly by increasing productivity (introduce new breed that produce more milk and give more lambs/ twins, feeding and fodder costs, barn management and best practices), and promoting the collective procurement amongst farmers.
- Develop a communication plan to better disseminate the acquainted knowledge and researches. Ideally, such plan should be conducive of farmers, private sector and other actors.
- Increase the number of commodities targeted in safer produce basket and the geographical coverage to overcome the shortage in certain seasons of vegetables (utilize different climate zones of Palestine).
- Strategize the project's engagement with current private sector actors. Prioritize the engagement and incentivise-based actions that have potential to widen the reach/ linkage with more farmers/ producers and explore alternative modalities with other PS.
- Strengthen the voice of farmers through working with dairy council and vegetable council. These bodies already exist according to the Palestinian Law and should later be coordinating amongst market actors and ensure VC smooth governance.
- Encourage female agronomists and veterinarians and create the proper platform for them to better reach women farmers in extension and veterinary services.
- Continue in promoting best practices through increasing the number of demonstrations and including more geographical areas. It is highly recommended to follow the same approach in generating data from demos and analysed it. This provide scientific and practice evidence for farmers as well as having sufficient data to compare results between climate/ agricultural zones in order to generate and disseminate it.
- Continue mainstreaming of gender in VCs and actively include youth and women in any future work. It is also recommended to build on successes and increase the work on women rights in inheritance, GBV alleviation, and strengthening men engagement in advocating to women rights.
- Develop VC risk management plan with defined markers for monitoring.
- Foster capacity building and learning for partner organizations and project staff particularly in MSD approaches.
- In partnership with other AMENCA consortia, develop learning platform/ webinar to localize the M4P framework and create local understanding of its principles and adaptation of the approach.
- The project and AMENCA are advised to revisit the age range of youth and to extend it up to 29 years.

- DFAT should consider revisiting its management approach in AMENCA to become more conducive of MSD requirements and good donorship principles. This could encompass adaptation of the monitoring and reporting framework and the respective reports, capacity building especially in MSD, etc.
- DFAT is highly advised to adopt result-based budgeting and financial reporting and consider technical staff as part of direct (project) costs.

5. Annex

5.1. Evaluation TOR



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5.2. List of Consulted People

No.	Informant	Organization	Role	Location
1	Ali Al Qassim	Care	PS facilitator	Ramallah
2	Jaffar Nuirat	Care	Dairy VC lead	Tubas
3	Othman Maslamani	Care	Animal Specialist	Tubas
4	Firas Badran	ARIJ	Vegetable VC lead	Tubas
5	Awni	ARIJ	Agronomist	Tubas
6	Shireen Sawafta	Care	Social inclusion Specialist	Tubas
7	May Abdul Haddi	Care	Impact & Learning Coordinator	Ramallah
8	Awni Samoudy	Al Waha feed factory	High Protein Ration Supplier	Tubas
9	Amr Zakarneh	Al Byara	Dair Processor	Jenin
10	Tawfeq Rad	DEFAT	Donor (Program Manager)	Ramallah
11	Tariq Shamieh	Cardno	Program Advisor	Ramallah
12	Mustafa Ismail	Oxfam	Amenca III- Project Manager	Ramallah
13	Hiba Tibi	Care	Gender Advisor & Technical Lead	Ramallah
14	Ahmad Musleh	Pinar Dairy Co.	Dairy Processor (CEO)	Ramallah
15	Saeed Anabtawi	ARZ Ice Cream Co.	Potential Buyer of Milk (Manager)	Nablus
16	Ayman Shuaibi	Care	Area Manager	Ramallah
17	Anan Kittaneh	Care	S. Director of Economic Empowerment & Innovation	Ramallah
18	Mike Freeman	Cardno	Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor	Brisbane, Australia
19	Tareq Bremer	ICARDA	Implementing Partner (Grants Officer)	Cairo, Egypt
20	Nader Herimat	ARIJ	Implementing Partner	Bethlehem
21	Khaled Hardan	Sharakat	Investor (Agriculture Supervisor)	Ramallah
22	Suheir Farraj	Women Media and Development (TAM)	Partner (General Director)	Bethlehem
23	Olga Batran	Birzeit University (CCE)	Partner (Director of Consulting Unit)	Ramallah
24	Hasan Atyani	NFC	Dairy Transporter (General Manager)	Ramallah
25	Hasan Abdeljabbar	Care	Souqona Project Director	Ramallah
26	Bassem Aref	Care	Financial Manger	Ramallah
27	Ahmed Za'za'	Al Najah University	Faculty of Agriculture (Animal production)	Tulkarm
28	Taghreed Shehadeh	PSI	Safer Produce	Ramallah
29	Mohamed Abu Mtawia	Al Sharabati Co.	Input Supplier (Agronomist)	Tubas
30	Amar Malhees	Afaq Vet Services	Veterinarian	Tubas
31	Usama Abu Mansour	Natural Alternatives Co.	Silage Supplier	Nablus
32	Ahmad Midraj	Al Midraj Co.	Seeds Input	Tubas
33	Ala'a Salameh	Farmer	Mono Fertilizer Copier	Froush
34	Ameed Mohamed	Farmer	Safer Produce Copier	Froush
35	Saed Shakir	Farmer	Balanced Drip Copier	Froush
36	Rashad Nasir	Farmer	Safer Produce Copier	Froush
37	Zaid Munier	Farmer	Safer Produce Demo site	Dair Abu Daif

No.	Informant	Organization	Role	Location
38	Mahmoud Al Sharief	Al Riyadian Co.	Baby Cucumber Aggregator	Dair Abu Daif
39	Ibraheem Yassen	Farmer	Water & Road Beneficiary	Dair Abu Daif
40	Mahmoud Abdol Basit	Farmer	Water & Road Beneficiary	Dair Abu Daif
41	Munier Abdol Salam	Farmer	Water & Road Beneficiary	Dair Abu Daif
42	Muhannad Alli	Farmer	Water & Road Beneficiary	Dair Abu Daif
43	Abdol Aziz Mahameed	Farmer	Water & Road Beneficiary	Dair Abu Daif
44	Basim Abdol Rahman	Farmer	Water & Road Beneficiary	Dair Abu Daif
45	Mohamed Mahmoud	Farmer	Safer Produce Beneficiary	Dair Abu Daif
46	Shouja Fayeq	Farmer	Safer Produce Beneficiary	Dair Abu Daif
47	Mahmoud Hatem	Farmer	Safer Produce Beneficiary	Dair Abu Daif
48	Fayez Abdol Hay	Farmer	Safer Produce Beneficiary	Dair Abu Daif
49	Faeda Fouqaha	Farmer	Woman-led Demo Safer produce	Kardala
50	Amerah Fouqaha	Farmer	Women group	Karrdala
51	Nour Fouqaha	Farmer	Women group	Karrdala
52	Amanieh Fouqaha	Farmer	Women group	Karrdala
53	Mayson Fouqaha	Farmer	Women group	Karrdala
54	Maleka Fouqaha	Farmer	Women group	Karrdala
55	Rana Arayshi	Farmer	Women group	Karrdala
56	Itedal Fouqaha	Farmer	Women group	Karrdala
57	Feda Fouqaha	Farmer	Women group	Karrdala
58	Rawda Fouqaha	Farmer	Women group	Karrdala
59	Reema Fouqaha	Farmer	Women group	Karrdala
60	Mohamed Abu Zahair	Herder	Dairy Farmers	Himeh
61	Hasan Abu Zahair	Herder	Dairy Farmers	Himeh
62	Nidal Daraghme	Herder	Dairy Farmers	Al Dair
63	Rasmi Ayoub	Herder	Dairy Farmers	Himeh
64	Iyad Zamil	Herder	Dairy Farmers	Al Dair
65	Mnaoir Khaled	Herder	Dairy Farmers	Bardala
66	Hilala Hamad	Herder	Dairy Farmers	Bardala
67	Ala'a Sawafta	Herder	Dairy Farmers	Bardala
68	Derar Sawafta	Herder	Dairy Farmers	Bardala
69	Ibraheem Sawafta	Herder	Dairy Farmers	Bardala
70	Wisam Darnakha	Vet Services	Veterinarian	Bardala
71	Ahmed Rabayah	Herder	Dairy Farmers	Bardala
72	Anas Sayeh	ARIJ	Agronomist	Bardala
73	Hind Malytat	Women Group	Dairy Hub	Beit Fourik
74	Faheida Manasra	Women Group	Dairy Hub	Beit Fourik
75	Fatima Adel	Women Group	Dairy Hub	Beit Fourik
76	Khetam Faris	Women Group	Dairy Hub	Beit Fourik
77	Wesam Malytat	Women Group	Dairy Hub	Beit Fourik
78	Lina Hanni	Women Group	Dairy Hub	Beit Fourik
79	Tahreir Khatatbeh	Women Group	Dairy Hub	Beit Fourik
80	Majeda Khatatbeh	Women Group	Dairy Hub	Beit Fourik
81	Yasmin bani Udeh	Women Group	Baby Cucumber Woman Farmer	Tammoun
82	Fouzia Abu Shama	Women Group	Baby Cucumber Woman Farmer	Tammoun
83	Najah Bani Udeh	Women Group	Baby Cucumber Woman Farmer	Tammoun
84	Ruba Abdol Kareem	Women Group	Baby Cucumber Woman Farmer	Tammoun
85	Nawal Mustafa	Women Group	Baby Cucumber Woman Farmer	Tammoun
86	Afaf Bani Udeh	Women Group	Baby Cucumber Woman Farmer	Tammoun
87	Shereen Ahmad	Women Group	Baby Cucumber Woman Farmer	Tammoun
88	Lubna Fouqaha	Care	Animator	Tubas
89	Lubna Itraiq	Care	Animator	Tubas
90	Hala Sawafta	Care	Animator	Tubas
91	Samah Awad	Care	Animator	Tubas
92	Arwa Abu Henaish	Care	Animator	Tubas

No.	Informant	Organization	Role	Location
93	Hanna Bani Udeh	Care	Animator	Tubas
94	Hanna Abu Hannash	Care	Animator	Tubas
95	Latifah Abu Farha	Care	Animator	Tubas
96	Najah Awaysa	Care	Animator	Tubas
97	Asama Melhem	Care	Animator	Tubas
98	Amal Shaban	Care	Animator	Tubas
99	Awni Hameid	Community Member	Road & Water Network Beneficiary	Arraneh
100	Mohamed Alawneh	Community Member	Road & Water Network Beneficiary	Arraneh
101	Mohamed Omary	Community Member	Road & Water Network Beneficiary	Arraneh
102	Hana' Omary	Community Member	Road & Water Network Beneficiary	Arraneh
103	Sameira Omary	Community Member	Road & Water Network Beneficiary	Arraneh
104	Sajeda Omary	Community Member	Road & Water Network Beneficiary	Arraneh
105	Ashraf Saadi	Community Member	Road & Water Network Beneficiary	Arraneh
106	Wasfeha Shaban	Community Member	Road & Water Network Beneficiary	Arraneh
107	Suhad Shaban	Community Member	Road & Water Network Beneficiary	Arraneh
108	Ahmad Abdolla	Community Member	Road & Water Network Beneficiary	Arraneh
109	Raed Zuhdi	Community Member	Road & Water Network Beneficiary	Arraneh
110	Mohamed Shareif	Community Initiative	Youth Beneficiary	Arraneh
111	Muhannad Yaseen	Community Initiative	Youth Beneficiary	Arraneh
112	Naeem Taha	Community Initiative	Youth Beneficiary	Arraneh
113	Imad Abu Khamees	Community Initiative	Youth Beneficiary	Arraneh
114	Suhail Hanani	Community Initiative	Youth Beneficiary	Arraneh
115	Hussien Nazal	Community Initiative	Youth Beneficiary	Arraneh
116	Mohamed Taqawi	Community Initiative	Youth Beneficiary	Arraneh
117	Mohamed Shaban	Community Initiative	Youth Beneficiary	Arraneh
118	Bahajat Shaban	Community Initiative	Youth Beneficiary	Arraneh
119	Ahmed Khaledi	Community Initiative	Youth Beneficiary	Arraneh
120	Abdolla Zuhair	Community Initiative	Youth Beneficiary	Arraneh
121	Abdolla Judalla	Community Initiative	Youth Beneficiary	Arraneh

5.3. Sample Data Collection Tools

Donor Interview Guide

1. What are the criteria DFAT used to select/ partner/ work with Care in AMENCA III programme? (please detail the criteria and tools you use to decide who, where and what to fund)
2. Do you co-operate with other relevant donors? And if so, what for and to what extent is it effective in our case (the project under review)? How do you integrate information on funding from other donors and burden-sharing considerations into your funding allocation decisions?
3. To what extent do you think that the donors' contributions to the agricultural sector are balanced across the sub-sectors/ interventions and/ or regions and responding to the MSD necessities?
4. How do you ensure that the implementing partners are accountable for their results and are actively engaging all relevant stakeholders, including youth, women, and marginalized farmers/ areas?
5. What instruments and mechanisms do you use to support the effective implementation of the programme in accordance to AMENCA III goal and purpose?
6. To what extent are the applied MEF instruments and reporting system sufficient and up to your standards?
7. Do you believe that your funding and monitoring mechanisms and practices are flexible enough to deal with market dynamics?
8. To what extent do you think that Souqona is going to achieve its intended impact and results within its lifespan?

9. How do you assess the project overall? What do you consider to be its main areas of achievements and successes? Where do you believe it has underperformed (if any) and why?
10. How do you assess Souquna's work in social inclusion? Please elaborate.
11. How do you see the capabilities of the implementing partners (Care Consortium), project governance, and project efficiency vis-à-vis V4M?
12. To what extent has Amenca III synergized interventions and areas of collaboration amongst consortia?
13. What are the immediate outlooks for Amenca III?

Extension Agents Interview Guide

During actual interviews, the evaluator will ensure that only questions relevant to the specific stakeholders interviewed are being used.

INTRODUCTION

- Explain background and objectives of the evaluation and how the evaluation findings will be used. (give intro of the project)
 - Describe briefly your own background, experience, and mandate in the evaluation.
 - Outline confidentiality of interview, as necessary.
1. Have participants give a brief introduction about themselves and specializations, mandate/ work scope incl, coverage load, etc.
 2. On average, what is the rate of extension support you offer to farmers. In your view is the support sufficient to the needs; quantitatively, qualitatively, sectoral (livestock, plant, etc) and geographically?
Evaluator to probe for coverage of women farmers.
 3. What are the main challenges facing you in offering extension support to farmers? What are your most pressing needs to support the development of the sector and farmers?
 4. Is there a capacity development program that is in effect at the level of the ministry? Please describe the capacity building program and efforts that are applied to keep you updated and offering relevant/ responsive support based on market needs and your capacities. If not, please describe your own efforts (if any).
 5. How do you assess the trainings (and if engaged in demos) offered through the Souquna programme?
Evaluator to probe for:
 1. Content and quality of the training and relevance to the needs.
 2. Time sufficiency
 6. Did you have any role in the development of training?
 7. In your view, to what extent do these activities support addressing challenges in the sector systemically?
 8. In your experience, what are the main achievements and results that you observed through the project.
Evaluator to probe for
 1. New knowledge and Learning
 2. Application of new skills
 3. Dissemination to other farmers (get examples)
 4. Policies at the level of MoA and/ or directorates
 9. For those the disseminated knowledge, to what extent were you able to do so effectively? Please describe the approach you took. Did you have sufficient information, skills and resources? Did you face any challenges? Please describe your experience and reflect on how farmers received this support and if there were variances.
 10. What major effect and changes did this experience influence on your mandate?
 11. How likely is that the results achieved so far can last beyond Care's facilitation? Which ones are likely to sustain and what are your plans for further capitalization, expansion and dissemination?
 12. Overall, what do you believe this experience has landed in terms of impact on farmers and yourselves (if not earlier covered).

13. If this experience is to be scaled up, replicated elsewhere (other areas, new groups of beneficiaries, etc.) would you recommend that? why? what would you keep or change/ do differently? What would you add/ include? Why?
14. Final remarks and recommendations

Financial manager Interview Guide

1. How do you develop project budget i.e. what are financial planning processes you follow to develop a project budget?
2. What tools and instruments you utilize in;
 - a. Analysing project costs throughout the project lifecycle to ensure the most cost-effective options are pursued? (*cost-economy, competition, procurement procedures, cost allocation, etc. Business processes, policies and systems should be designed with a clear understanding of transaction costs, measured against the potential benefits.*)
 - b. Communicating financial and cost analyses to decision makers and contributing to organisational learning, continuous improvement and overall effectiveness.
 - c. Managing quality⁴⁰, risks⁴¹ and to prevent fraud and corruption and ensure resource allocations reach the intended targets.
 - d. Managing differences in systems applied by donor and other implementing partners (*procurement procedures, reporting, etc.*). How do you describe your relationship with partners?
3. Do you have enough capacities (proportional) in terms of staff and organisational system to manage the operations including partners, results and/or deliver better outcomes and be calibrated to maximise efficiency?
4. DFAT holds partners accountable and demands transparency at all levels. In your opinion, to what extent Care was able to fulfil DFAT's requirements and what is needed to improve the accountability towards beneficiaries and targeted groups?
5. What are your recommendations to the project team, project partners, and donor for the remaining time of this phase of Souqona project?

Input providers Interview Guide

During actual interviews, the evaluator will ensure that only questions relevant to the specific stakeholders interviewed are being used.

INTRODUCTION

- Explain background and objectives of the evaluation and how the evaluation findings will be used. (give intro of the project)
 - Describe briefly your own background, experience, and mandate in the evaluation.
 - Outline confidentiality of interview, as necessary.
1. Have participants give a brief introduction about themselves and their businesses; age of business, products and services, coverage, marketing practices, and sales performance if possible).
 - A. Evaluator to probe for their clientele including women and youth clientele.
 2. From your experience, what constraints are facing farmers in the WB with regards to accessing inputs in the VC (sheep and goats, vegetables) and farming practices?
 3. Respectively, what are the main challenges facing your business as an input supplier?
 4. When and how did you get introduced to Care's Souquna project? Who approached who?
 5. What opportunity did you see in participating in it? what motivated you to participate?

⁴⁰ to ensure that they are meeting their objectives and delivering maximum impact

⁴¹ to maximise the likelihood of achieving objectives and thereby contribute to overall effectiveness

6. Please describe the relationship agreement and what your role entails; in terms of implementation and management (of demos, etc.), cost-sharing, etc.
 - a. Please elaborate on the agreement process (negotiations, roles, etc.) from the initial talks to now.
 - b. How much of an investment was initially leveraged through this relationship/ project? Obtain Rationale for quantifying it.
 - c. If and it entailed in terms of developing or refining the market offering by the company?
7. How do you assess the experience overall?
 - a. Were the undertakings successful in your opinion? Why? please give examples
 - b. how did farmers receive the relationship and interact with you at first? now?
 - c. How did it reflect on their farming practices, quality and productivity? How do you know? please specify.
 - d. were there differences between them (women and youth vs. men, etc.) or according to location? Why?
 - e. did you face any challenges? What were they and how did you and the project deal with them?
8. What major effect and changes did this experience influence on your business?
 - a. What opportunities and linkages were formed since then and with who?
 - b. How has it influenced your position in the market; Competition and market dynamics?
 - c. Uptake and copying by other farmers?
 - d. Their role in *dissemination and capitalization* on it?
 - e. What were the main Change in company's outreach and sales performance? attempt to quantify.
9. In your view, would you have considered striking such experience on you without Care's facilitation? Why or why not?
10. How likely is that the results achieved so far can last beyond Care's facilitation? Which ones are likely to sustain and what are your plans for further capitalization, expansion?
 - a. To what extent do you believe the inputs are affordable and accessible to the wider farmer clientele. (get prices, etc).
 - b. Reflection on the profitability for the input provider.
11. Overall, what do you believe this experience has landed in terms of impact on farmers and your company (if not earlier covered).
12. If this project/ experience is to be scaled up, replicated elsewhere (other areas, new groups of beneficiaries, etc.) would you recommend that? why? what would you keep or change/ do differently? What would you add/ include? Why?

Investor Interview Guide

1. When and how did you get introduced to Care's Souquna project? Who approached who?
2. What opportunity did you see in signing LOC with Care? what motivated you to participate?
3. Can you tell me please where do you stand nowadays in Animal feed factory and Safer produce marketing & Distribution?
4. How do you assess the experience overall?
 - a. Were the undertakings successful in your opinion? Why? please give examples
 - b. How did you assess the utility and quality of Souqona relevant studies and analyses?
 - c. did you face any challenges? What were they and how did you and the project deal with them?
5. What major effect and changes did this experience influence on your business?
6. What were the main challenges you face in investing in agriculture?
7. In your view, would you have considered striking such experience on you without Care's facilitation? Why or why not?
8. How likely is that the results achieved so far can last beyond Care's facilitation? Which ones are likely to sustain and what are your plans for further capitalization, expansion?
9. Overall, what do you believe this experience has landed in terms of impact on farmers and PIF/ Sharakat?

Final remarks:

PMU/ Management Interview guide

Relevance

- Do the assumptions that underlay AMENCA 3/ Souqona theory of change hold true in each implementation context and amongst the project target beneficiary group?
- How well is the intervention strategy addressing the root causes, as opposed to symptoms of why markets are not serving target groups? How the selected interventions can stimulate changes in market systems? To what extent the expected changes are sustainable?
- The extent to which Soqouna project is relevant to the identified obstacles, opportunities, and needs of women and youth?
- To what extent Soqouna interventions are relevant to market actors' priorities and plans?
- The extent to which the project design demonstrates meaningful consideration of gender and social inclusion, and to what extent were these considerations carried through to implementation.
- What gender-based constraints have been tackled? How the project interventions planned to improve women decision-making regarding income, productive assets, and expenditures within the household?
- How does the project address the underlying causes of women and youth disempowerment which are deeply rooted in gender norms, attitudes and behaviours, power relations and social institutions? How does the project address economic empowerment for women and youth?
- To what extent have the principles of the market systems development approach been applied in project implementation? What factors helped or hindered the MSD application?
- To what extent is the hybrid market system approach relevant and appropriate to the needs of the beneficiaries and other market systems actors involved in Souqona?
- AMENCA is targeting the poor, Why the project did not assess the vulnerability of farmers across VC and at community levels?
- To what extent was the project flexible in responding to market dynamics and changing context?

Efficiency

- How effective was the project in selecting/ targeting beneficiaries and appropriate market actors?
- Are the resources and capacity adequate to achieve the project purpose?
- Is the remaining timeframe of the project adequate to achieve the intended impact and results/targets?
- There were many changes in the project interventions without sufficient documentation to clarify/ justify such changes. To what extent this affects institutional learning, risk management, resource management and tracking of change?
- How the consortium partners were selected and what is the value-added for each? How well did they have played a key role as facilitators?
- Do you think the value for money has been achieved and how? Can you please explain to me how do you integrate Value for money in your processes and work?
- Has the common DCED results measurement standard been utilised in Souqona monitoring and reporting?
- Did you provide any capacity enhancement for staff and partners of Souqona? Have the capacity building measures been adequate?
- Is the project governance (PMU & SC) functioning appropriately for project steering? How do you know? To what extent partners are involved in terms of project strategies, progress, financials, coordination, etc.?
- Has the project managed risks at all levels effectively? What are the mitigation measures and how has it been dealt with?
- Do you consider the project indicators and targets are CREAM? To what extent the Monitoring and evaluation arrangements deliver clear evidence of project results and inform adaptive management?
- Are you aware of other interventions and other actors' projects? To what extent you managed to coordinate with other actors and capitalize on available resources and initiatives?
- How the project utilised the studies, monitoring data to inform ongoing project learning, continuous improvement and adaptation of the project?

- What factors appear to promote or challenge the activity operations or effective collaboration and cooperation among the various stakeholders?
- How do you describe your experience working within a consortium in terms of efficiency, timeliness, V4M, governance, MEAL, Reporting, etc.?
- To what extent has the project delivered (V4M) particularly in terms of utilizing resources, capitalizing on available resources?
- To what extent has project management and governance been efficient in relation to DFAT's contract management, oversight, adviser and governance arrangements?

Progress/ Results

- The extent to which Souqona is making progress toward its intended outcomes? To what extent can Souqona targets within AMENCA 3 be achieved?
- The extent to which the project has met the targets agreed with DFAT so far, as measured by the AMENCA 3 MEF, what have been areas of over-achievement and under-achievement and why have these occurred?
- To what extent have gender and social inclusion aspects been effectively integrated in the project's delivery?
- To what extent the implemented activities in the given period are consistent with and relevant to achieving the objectives defined by the Souqona project and AMENCA 3 programme?
- To what extent the project has managed to engage and mobilize relevant market actors to contribute effectively to the VCs development?
- What are the likely long-term impacts of the program in terms of meeting its goal? Have there been any unintended outcomes, either positive or negative?
- What are the most impactful areas of project support? What are the key factors that may enhance or constrain scalability and replicability of the achieved changes?

Sustainability

- Does Souqona have an exit strategy? If not, how you plan to do it and exit from the sub-sectors?
- Since Care has been working in agriculture for years, can we assume that Care has a medium-term vision/ strategy for sector development?
- To what degree have we learnt from this experience and shared the learning with others and ourselves? What will we now do differently, or what will we do more of?
- What are the key strengths and challenges in achieving the project goals, including the dynamics of the market, market actors' behaviours, engagement of women and youth? What has/has not worked well and why?
- Which project achievements will be sustainable in the longer term and to what extent? What factors are enhancing or constraining sustainability?
- The extent the project has adopted facilitative approaches in bringing about changes in the market systems (e.g. R&D, promoting a shared vision among stakeholders, defining roles and responsibilities based on incentives and capacities of actors, supporting the creation of linkages and networks, identifying business opportunities and supporting mutual learning processes).
- Can you please give example on systemic change indicators such as crowing in, copying, backward-foreword linkages, etc.

Recommendations

- Based on your experience in the project, what are the future opportunities for expanding consortium support in agriculture?
- What would be the missed opportunities for scalability if the project were to be phased out at this stage?
- How market systems methodologies might be further developed or adapted in the future?

MEF Interview Guide

- Can you please tell me about Cardno role in AMENCA 3?
- Did you provide any capacity enhancement for staff and partners of Souqona? Have the capacity building measures been adequate?

- To what extent have the principles of the market systems development approach been applied in programme and implementation? What factors helped or hindered the MSD application?
- Do you consider the project indicators and targets are CREAM? To what extent the Monitoring and evaluation arrangements deliver clear evidence of project results and inform adaptive management?
- Has the common DCED results measurement standard been utilised in program monitoring and reporting?
- Is results measurement being effectively used to inform ongoing program learning, continuous improvement and adaptation of the program?
- Did the project sufficiently documented the changes in the project interventions and market dynamics? To what extent this affects institutional learning, risk management, resource management and tracking of change?
- To what degree have AMENCA 3 consortia learnt from each other and shared the learning with others? What will AMENCA 3 now do differently, or what will you do more of?
- Do you think the value for money has been achieved and how? How is value for money being assessed on Souqona/ AMENCA 3 interventions?
- To what extent the project has met the targets agreed with DFAT so far, as measured by the AMENCA 3 MEF, what have been areas of over-achievement and under-achievement and why have these occurred?
- Has the program managed risks at all levels effectively?
- What are the overall recommendations for any significant adjustments?

Partners Interview Guide

- Are the project's goal and objectives in line with your goals and strategies? To what extent is the project aligned to the national objectives in NDP priorities, MoA strategy and policies?
- Do the consortium/Partners have the capability to pursue the market systems development approach?
- Are the intended changes in the selected VCs are feasible? Do the selected interventions have the most potential to markets and farmers?
- Would the intended changes significantly benefit large numbers of youth and women? How?
- Did the project assess performance of market actors, their incentives and capacities as well partners need and potentials?
- Are the implemented activities relevant to the needs of the target beneficiaries and their communities?
- Is social inclusion, gender equality and needs clearly and explicitly identified?
- Is there a process that ensure enough flexibility for partners to revise strategies and targets as the project progresses?
- Do goal/outcomes remain relevant throughout the duration given changes in context? Why was coherence lacking or present? Does the pattern of results and links validate the results chain?
- Are the assumptions underlying the theory of change plausible?
- Are the identified constraints the cause of under-performance system-wide? Are they feasible to address? Are they the most important constraints?
- How likely that the project is going to benefit large numbers of farmers beyond the project's direct sphere of interaction?
- How many farmers have been reached directly and indirectly?
- How many women & youths received different trainings?
- Were there any unintended changes resulting from the interventions, and if so, which ones or to whom?
- Did any of the project interventions make a difference and How?
- To what extent the MSD approach was adapted?
- What kind of monitoring mechanisms were in place for the project interventions at different levels?
- To what extent did the intervention mechanisms foster or hinder the achievement of the outputs?
- To what extent were budgeting/ spending decisions guided by Value for Money principles and good donorship practices? Are activities cost-efficient?
- Can you please describe to me your organization role in the project? How do you describe the work within a consortium in terms of efficiency, governance, and workload?
- To what extent has project management and governance been efficient?

- How many successful partnerships were facilitated by the project?
- Were plans for coordination with other interventions and actors in place, and followed? What were the main constraints and supports to coordination?
- What was the community involvement in intervention implementation and support?
- Are the planned activities carried out on time? Are the planned outputs achieved on time?
- How appropriately and adequately are the available resources (budget, time, technical knowledge, staff, etc.) used to carry out activities?
- How resilient are the achieved changes in Palestinian context?
- How many and what are the good practices adopted and by whom?
- How sustainable are the linkages/ networks created during the life of the interventions?
- Has an exit strategy been defined and how the facilitation might be sustained after the end of the intervention?
- Did the interventions improve producers' competitiveness, positioning in the market, and/ or long-term profit margins? How viable could be the changed practices for farmers?
- How likely are farmers to assume all recurrent costs by the end of the project? Did they show interest and ownership over learning emerged during the project implementation?
- How many new services got available, new responsibilities assumed, streamlined procedures, amended produce-specification, etc.?
- Were the incentives for change positive for all actors in the new models? Is the number of market players directly engaged by a project's interventions and adopting a change, sufficient to expect sustainable change in the market system?

PS Interview Guide

During actual interviews, the evaluator will ensure that only questions relevant to the specific stakeholders interviewed are being used.

INTRODUCTION

- Explain background and objectives of the evaluation and how the evaluation findings will be used. (give intro of the project)
- Describe briefly your own background, experience, and mandate in the evaluation.
- Outline confidentiality of interview, as necessary.
- Have participants give a brief introduction about themselves and activities in which they participated in the project.

Historical background

1. Please familiarize me with your organization and brief me on history of your cooperation with Care in general. More specifically, how did your partnership with Care's Souquna project come about? (evaluator to find motive for partnership)
2. What does the partnership entail in terms of objectives, roles and cooperation scheme etc.?
3. How was the work between the two organizations designed and planned? Evaluator to find out about their participation in the design, planning and implementation, and monitoring.
4. In light of the objectives you mentioned, how do you assess your experience.

Evaluator to probe for:

- 1- Relevance of cooperation to the needs of the different groups and farmers incl W/ Y.
- 2- Satisfaction with the activities, sufficiency and quality of support and resources (time, quality of support, financial, etc.

- 3- Relationship amongst the partners and responsiveness during implementation and follow up
5. What are the main achievements reached thus far? Please elaborate and give examples.
 6. Did you face any challenges in the project? Please describe the. How did you and the project partners/ or others, deal with them? was it sufficient in your view?
 7. What has been the major affect that was made on farmer community (inc. W and Y)? on your own organization? What was so particular about this experience?
 8. In your view, what are the main sustainability elements/ which of the named changes (above) are likely to last beyond the project? Why?
 9. Does your organization have any plans to build on the work done? What are they and how do you plan to build on it?
 10. If this project is to be scaled up, replicated elsewhere (other areas, new groups of beneficiaries, etc.) would you recommend that? why? what would you keep or change/ do differently? What would you add/ include? Why?
 11. What other recommendations do you have for us so that programming in the sector remains relevant and responsive to farmers needs and increase their opportunities in the market?

Final remarks:

Copier Farmers Focus Group Interview Guide

During actual interviews, the evaluator will ensure that only questions relevant to the specific stakeholders interviewed are being used.

INTRODUCTION

- Explain background and objectives of the evaluation and how the evaluation findings will be used. (give intro of the project)
 - Describe briefly your own background, experience, and mandate in the evaluation.
 - Outline confidentiality of interview, as necessary.
 - Have participants give a brief introduction about themselves (name, age, educational/ economic background (educational attainment, employment, etc.), activities in which they participated in the project. (Note to the evaluator: **Ensure that ALL participants sign the sign-up sheet**)
1. Please describe the situation of farmers in your community. What are the main challenges facing them that constrain their income (production, profitability, etc), access to market, identifying and taking up potential opportunities in the sector?
 - Evaluator to look for constraints related to:
 - 1- Political
 - 2- Access issues (inputs, resources, services example; trainings and extension, market information, etc.)
 - 3- Gender specific and Cultural constraints; mobility, control of resources, youth participation, voice, etc.
 - 4- Relationships with other market actors; input providers, marketing channels, etc.
 - 5- Regulatory
 - 6- Environmental,
 - 7- Others...
 2. Background: What economic/ agricultural activities did the group participate in prior to the project. (historical background of the group and their formation (if collective), their engagement in economic activities (plant or dairy, etc.) and in which functions of the VC, preexisting relationship with market actors such as input suppliers, processors, previous marketing activities and channels, profitability situation, Women and youth engagement, etc.).
 3. How frequently and what type of inputs and extension services do you receive or buy? through who?
 4. How do you assess the quality and your access to these inputs and services?

5. Through the MoA, you have received extension support in inputs mono- irrigation. What is new about these to you? what were your previous irrigation and fertilizing/ pesticide practices? Why?
6. How do you assess the extension services through this project? What new learning did you gather from these extension agents? Was it sufficient? Do you have the resources/ manuals, etc.
7. Have you applied it? why? why not? Did you encounter any challenges? What were they?
8. For those who applied it, has it made any significant results on your farm? Please elaborate
 - a. Results on yield and productivity
 - b. Income
 - c. Other areas...
9. Do you intend to continue application of these? Why?
10. Have you shared learning with members of your household that participate in farming? How? Have you shared it with other farmers? What was their reaction?
11. What other recommendations do you have for us so that programming in the sector remains relevant and responsive to farmer’s needs (incl. wider farmers’ access to quality and affordable inputs, extension services, etc.), and increase their opportunities in the market?

Final remarks:

Farmers Focus Group Interview Guide

During actual interviews, the evaluator will ensure that only questions relevant to the specific stakeholders interviewed are being used.

INTRODUCTION

- Explain background and objectives of the evaluation and how the evaluation findings will be used. (give intro of the project)
 - Describe briefly your own background, experience, and mandate in the evaluation.
 - Outline confidentiality of interview, as necessary.
 - Have participants give a brief introduction about themselves (name, age, educational/ economic background (educational attainment, employment, etc.) , activities in which they participated in the project. (Note to the evaluator: **Ensure that ALL participants sign the sign-up sheet**)
1. Please describe the situation of farmers in your community. What are the main challenges facing them that constrain their income (production, profitability, etc), access to market, identifying and taking up potential opportunities in the sector?

Evaluator to look for constraints related to:

- A. Political
 - B. Access issues (inputs, resources, services example; trainings and extension, market information, etc.)
 - C. Gender specific and Cultural constraints; mobility, control of resources, youth participation, voice, etc.
 - D. Relationships with other market actors; input providers, marketing channels, etc.
 - E. Regulatory
 - F. Environmental,
 - G. Others...
2. Background: What economic/ agricultural activities did the group participate in prior to the project. (historical background of the group and their formation (if collective), their engagement in economic activities (plant or dairy, etc.) and in which functions of the VC, preexisting relationship with market actors such as input suppliers, processors, previous marketing activities and channels, profitability situation, Women and youth engagement, etc.).

3. How did you become aware of and got engaged in this project? How did you hear about it ? motive for participation? How were you selected to participate?
4. Evaluator to also find out about their participation in the design and implementation.
5. Please describe what activities you participated in (demo sites, aggregation hub, etc.) and the project support to them. (connect to question 1 and 2)
 - A. Why did you participate? What were your expectations at first? what opportunities did you think it will bring to you/ your community?
 - B. Did you have and skepticism, concerns? What were they?
 - C. Did you face any challenges, resistance to participate (especially women and youth), from who? Why?

*****Evaluator to understand the specific role of the participants in the project according to intervention

6. How would you assess your experience with Soukona? Why? please elaborate.

Evaluator to probe for:

- A. Relevance of actions to the needs of the different groups
 - B. Satisfaction with the activities, sufficiency and quality of (time, resources, activities, trainers) etc.
 - C. Accessibility to the action
 - D. Relationship with partners and responsiveness during implementation and follow up
7. Did you encounter any challenges? What were they? How did you and the project partners/ or others, deal with them? was it sufficient in your view?
 8. Looking back on your experience, what has changed insofar as a result of your participation? Why? Could you have achieved this without participating? What was so particular about this experience?

Note: Ask the question in general at first and then probe for the following in details as suitable:

- Change in access to quality inputs and application of practices (validate if they are affordable, quality, and why)
 - Change in attitude, skills and application of new practices (validate why)
 - Change in income? Yield? Resources? Name them , try to quantify them and elaborate why.
 - Farmers taking different roles in the MS? (especially women and youth including workload, and participation in the VC functions, etc)
 - Spillover- replication and diffusion to others, if so, who and why?
 - Change in market relationships and connections with market actors? What new relationships were forged?
 - Relationship between market actors and women and youth?
 - Change in investments being made, and by who?
 - Distinguish level of change; at individual vs. group level; gender and youth? Look for change in perceived economic empowerment and examples.
9. In your view, which of the named changes (above) are likely to last beyond the project? Why?
 10. Which ones won't last and why? what is needed to enhance the likeliness of their continuation?
 11. (For youth and women) How did your household and surrounding community (especially male members) perceive your participation? Was it different at first? has this changed now? please elaborate.

Evaluator to look and probe for:

- Perception and behaviour of family members (especially male members, husbands, etc)
- Perception and behaviour of community members (extended family, relatives, neighbors, etc).
- Gauge for change in decision making (at household and the VC). MUST give examples.
- If others are copying
- If other investments are being leveraged (not necessarily by the project)
- Other areas of change.

12. If this project is to be scaled up, replicated elsewhere (other areas, new groups of beneficiaries, etc.) would you recommend that? why? what would you keep or change/ do differently? What would you add/ include? Why?
13. What other recommendations do you have for us so that programming in the sector remains relevant and responsive to farmers needs and increase their opportunities in the market?