

Final Evaluation Report for the ProFARM (Promoting Food Access, Rights and Community Mobilization) Project

Sierra Leone

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Acronyms

ACD	Assistant Country Director
CD	Country Director
CDD	Community Driven Development
FFS	Farmer Field School
IVS	In Valley Swamp
Kg	Kilogram
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Farming
RBA	Rights Based Approach
WDC	Ward Development Committees

Executive Summary

The project Promoting Food Access, Rights and Community Mobilization (ProFARM) has operated in marginalised villages of Bo, Moyamba and Tonkolili districts in Sierra Leone from early 2005 to March 2008. The project has two main components channelled through farmer group structures. The first component is support to communities to become increasingly self-reliant in food production and to be more secure in access to food. Secondly, the project has assisted Sierra Leone's transition to sustainable development by enhancing the capacity of community leadership to practice accountable and responsive governance and develop external institutional linkages for future development. The project is funded by the European Union and administered by CARE Netherlands. The project is managed in Sierra Leone by CARE USA. This report represents one output from the projects final evaluation.

Evaluation findings highlight ProFARMs achievements in successfully boosting agricultural food production and crop marketing in target areas. Women have benefited from ProFARM through rising income streams, especially for groundnuts and vegetables. ProFARM has also supported women in leadership roles at community and district level. ProFARMs positive impact has largely been the result of its distributions and infrastructure activities. Training impact is lower and Farmer Field Schools have delivered little that is new in terms of farming practices.

Within the governance section of the project, ProFARM linkage to local councillors is strong and has allowed successful facilitation of market sites. However, community groups, post ProFARM have no avenues for access to future finance. Group linkage to Ministry of Agriculture Farms and Fisheries has been facilitated by the project. This linkage is dependent on project finance and will not continue when these funds end. While community group linkage to Government and NGOs is weak, Private Sector traders commonly enter villages to buy agricultural commodities. Reflecting the balance of results and impact, ProFARM human resource capacity was primarily in agriculture, skills present to address governance issues were low. ProFARM implementation has been significantly impeded by corruption leading to high staff turnover.

To address the evaluations main findings the following recommendations are made.

CARE should consider delivery of more direct community level training. Future programs should avoid the 'word of mouth' system of information distribution from training used by ProFARM. Training Needs Assessment methodologies need to be reviewed as does the use of specialist as opposed to general trainers. Internal M&E of training impact should be emphasised 6 to 12 months post training delivery all future projects.

Future Farmer Field Schools need to be better tailored to farmer's situations. If experimental learning is the intended approach, future projects will require sufficient capacity to deliver this aim. If FFS are intended to demonstrate a farming system or practice then community level small scale demonstration plots are recommended so all community members can see what is happening. To reduce levels of slash and burn farming in the ProFARM area of operation requires further livelihood oriented research considering the many factors that result in this operation. Significant factors currently include analysis of labour and land constraints

CARE should consider working with private sector traders in future similar projects. The private sector traders offer an alternative or supplement to Government Ministries in sustainable agricultural extension delivery, input provision and marketing. Future similar project identification missions should analyse potential crops and processing opportunities

and the actors in the various supply / value chains to seek potential partners and future sustainable service providers.

CARE should review its Human Resources policy to better ensure balance between project design and staff capacity. To address corruption CARE should assess staff motivation, incentives and reward structures. A comparative study should be performed to compare ProFARM with other similar projects; this formal or informal review could include other INGOs. This study would seek to identify key factors or commonalities that result in higher levels of corruption. Findings would then feed into future project design.

Future projects should consider:

- Analysis of the balance between salary and responsibility / resources handled. CARE should compare the ratio of salary to resource levels administered by project staff.
- Salary scales that balance the need for project budgets to be competitive but mean local staff have sufficient incentive to want to keep their job¹. Senior CARE staff should continue and conclude the discussion begun during the Freetown feedback meeting as part of their regular management meetings.
- Potential avenues for future career development²
- Careful explanation of the rationale behind expenses to local staff. Finance personnel need to explain the purpose of expenses to new staff during the first two months of employment.
- Use of high capacity national staff in the Project Manager position as opposed to expatriate staff.
- To motivate field staff CARE should consider greater project / field level input (i.e. 2 to 3 day field trips every quarter) from the CD or ACD. Personal visits build contact. Local staff members feel that if they know the CD or ACD it improves their career prospects within CARE. In addition, field visits with senior managers can build staff prestige within target communities and enhance belief in the fieldworker or field supervisor.
- Where projects continue from a previous distribution focused project CARE should consider changing staff. This should be done to break vendor to staff linkage and meet the different skill requirements that a new project will require.
- Assessing the need for forensic audit skills to detect corruption. CARE should review its audit procedures to see if corrupt practices are detected early enough in the project cycle.

In conclusion, the ProFARM project has succeeded in improving food security and boosted yields allowing crop marketing. Work in governance is more challenging. ProFARM's work to improve governance has been constrained by the assumed development of other support organisations not occurring. In addition, Sierra Leone's local government structures remain weak and under resourced. A long term consistent approach is required to build a sustainable self financing government structures. ProFARM has made an initial contribution to this process.

¹ CARE Sierra Leone has recently performed a salary review which found CARE salary rates to be competitive with other similar INGOs. However, senior national staff members pointed out that Sierra Leoneans with appropriate international experience were dissuaded from applying for CARE jobs in Sierra Leone due to low salaries. While this issue was debated during the final feedback presentation for this evaluation it requires further consideration.

² CARE SL has a staff development policy which has been implemented for one year

1 INTRODUCTION

The project Promoting Food Access, Rights and Community Mobilization (ProFARM) has operated in marginalised villages of Bo, Moyamba and Tonkolili districts in Sierra Leone. The project has two main components channelled through farmer group structures. The first component is support to become increasingly self-reliant in food production and more secure in access to food. Secondly the project has assisted Sierra Leone's transition to sustainable development by enhancing the capacity of community leadership to practice accountable and responsive governance and develop external institutional linkages for future development. The project is funded by the European Union and administered by CARE Netherlands. The project is managed in Sierra Leone by CARE USA.

This report assesses the projects efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact and compliance with Care procedures. The evaluations Terms of Reference, methodology and analysis are presented in Annexes. The main body of the report focuses on the presentation of results, principle findings, lessons learnt and recommendations.

2 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The evaluation used a participatory approach working with CARE ProFARM staff and community members. Stakeholder interviews were held with a focus group comprising local councillors attending a ProFARM workshop and the CARD Managing Director.

Site Selection

Selection of communities where focus groups were to be held was done by the consultant randomly choosing villages from project lists. Three communities were selected from each of the four main areas where ProFarm works. Each of the four main project areas has one ProFarm field supervisor. Site selects allowed three visits to be performed with each field supervisor. One village initially chosen was changed during initial planning due to insufficient time available to travel to the remote location.

Tools Used

In each village a focus group meeting was performed with available group members. Focus groups followed the procedure outlined in Annex 2: Focus Group . Following focus groups a household level interview was conducted with one household in each village Annex 3: Household Interview Checklist. Households for interview were selected by the consultant. Selection aimed to interview those who were among the poorer members of the community.

Implementation

Tools were implemented primarily by the consultant with CARE ProFARM staff acting as translators. The ProFARM M&E Officer attended all interviews and implemented two focus groups independently.

List of villages visited and stakeholders met is presented in Annex 4: Work plan. During fieldwork findings were regularly discussed with project staff to gain their perspective on results.

Following fieldwork initial analysis was performed by the consultant. A feedback presentation was held with ProFarm staff in Bo to review findings, identify lessons learnt and generate recommendations. Following this a presentation of draft findings, lessons learnt and recommendations was made to CARE Head Quarters staff in Freetown. Comments from this meeting were included in a draft report. The draft report was then submitted to CARE for comment. Comments were received, included and a final report delivered.

3 RESULTS

3.1 *Efficiency*

3.1.1 Assessment of log frame activities to results

Log frame activities based around seed and tool distributions have had the most efficient results³. Of the seeds given, rice and groundnuts were most highly ranked by communities. Seed distributions have helped farmers boost yields, particularly of staple crops. Communities report that groundnut and vegetable seed have helped women contribute to family food production and income. Group formation bringing unity to communities ranks highly in Tonkolili district. This district was particularly badly affected by the war which fractured communities.

Forty three Farmer Field Schools (FFS) have been supported by the project and were consistent with national government policy. FFSs have been jointly run with the Ministry of Agriculture. Farmers interviewed as part of this study who had attended FFS identified benefits in use of organic pesticides, use of bunds to control water levels, plant spacing, rotation, planting and cultivation methods. Farmers interviewed individually at a household level identified fewer benefits from FFS. These individuals were less likely to have attended the FFS and relied on participant feedback at community meetings to learn. These FFS feedback meetings were held roughly four times per year, although there was wide variation between difference community groups interviewed. Communities that live closer to FFS sites report higher benefits from these schools. Given these two factors and the type of benefits identified, CARE should consider whether community based demonstration plots would have been a more appropriate activity.

Low ranks are given to ProFARM training activities by communities. This low level of rank could be due to a number of factors including training delivery and dissemination. Dissemination by trainees informing communities at group meetings is seen as contributing to the low results. CARE should review training methodologies and consider delivering training in communities.

3.1.2 Assessment of Work plan

ProFARM Project experience suggests that a three year work plan is not long enough to significantly change the behaviour of people. Food security can be improved but movement towards better governance can only be started. CARE should consider five to ten year planning time horizons with consistent staff and management to achieve more significant progress in improving governance.

ProFARMs work plan started with distribution of rice seed. This was understandable given prevailing food insecurity at the time. These urgent requirements need to be balanced with the need for greater understanding by the project. Community situation analysis and needs

³ See Table 3: Community Ranking of ProFARM Benefits for a community ranking of activities

required more research to enhance programme design and intervention targeting. Project staff members suggest that target groups understanding of the project should have been enhanced through greater sensitisation to allow more effective implementation. Greater emphasis should have been given to the Participatory Learning and Action approach detailed in the project proposal. This would have allowed for initial sensitisation to (i) better research community needs and (ii) build communities understanding about what the project will do.

In a similar manner, the impact of training could be enhanced by a project approach investing more in (i) initial Training Needs Assessment with follow up training and (ii) post event (6 to 12 months) monitoring of what has changed as a result of the training.

3.1.3 Assessment of Monitoring Systems

ProFARM monitoring systems have focused on measuring activities such as infrastructure construction and distributions. The M&E officer has visited sites where building activities were undergone. This has contributed to the soundness of construction and distribution of seed and tools. Training was followed up at the community level by asking trainees their views of training provided. Monitoring at a results and objective level to identify change as a result of training was not performed by the M&E officer. M&E has attempted to include community members by having a person responsible for monitoring at a local level.

A midterm review was performed and this did identify issues at a result / objective level (i.e. concerns regarding local governance). No evidence of 'event monitoring' as mentioned in the Baseline report was found as part of this study⁴. Performance of this 'event monitoring' could have enhanced monitoring, particularly at the objective and result levels of the logical framework.

3.1.4 Approach and methodology of intervention

The projects community level approach has been relief based beginning with group identification and formation and leading to distributions and infrastructure building. The project distributions have had notable success as described in section 2.1.1. Communities frequently reported that they were told what was available from the project and were happy to receive this. Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) as mentioned in the Project Proposal was performed in selected communities to determine what the project would provide. None of the PLA communities were visited as part of this study.

The project approach has struggled to make progress at institutional and district governance levels. The projects local NGO partner CARD has benefited in terms of capacity development from working with CARE. However it is also unlikely that CARD will be able to continue to visit ProFARM groups post project without additional funding⁵. The projects approach of working with local councils and MAFF has had notable success especially in some market site development. However, local council to community group linkage remains

⁴ Baseline Report (Annex 3, page 62) "As indicated in the ProFARM M&E Activity Timetable, effect monitoring will be conducted in June 2006 and June 2007. The timing of this exercise takes into account the agricultural calendar as well as the ProFARM reporting schedule. This data will be used to provide information on effectiveness needed for the six monthly progress report, which is due in July." An abbreviated questionnaire was provided in the Baseline.

⁵ While CARD is reported by its Program Manager as successful in securing additional funding none of this is to work with ProFARM groups. This is common situation. For continuity in provision of agricultural extension services this report recommends CARE explores potential to work with the Private Sector as these organisations are present in the long term.

weak and capacity levels in both of these organisations questions their ability to maintain and build existing connections. The project approach to future group funding through providing training in proposal writing is poorly thought though as communities have no-where to send their proposals. It was intended that proposal should be sent to ward and district councils⁶. However, district councillors reported they had no money to fund any proposals. In addition, eleven of the twelve communities visited during fieldwork said they had no contact with their local council since the last election. Longer term approaches are required that build capacity and institutions to permit community funding. Thus more thought is required regarding how community planning and subsequent proposals can be successfully delivered to government or non government funders.

3.1.5 Community contribution

All communities visited during fieldwork that had received infrastructure from the project had contributed raw materials, unskilled labour and food for labourers to the projects activities. Examples of infrastructure include wells, drying floors, storage buildings, toilets and market buildings.

3.1.6 Participation and the level of local ownership

All communities visited during field work have participated in building and training activities. Levels of community participation in needs identification and in planning how these needs will be met have been relatively low. Participatory appraisals were performed in selected villages in the first year of the project. Project learning outcomes suggest wider and deeper use of Participatory Learning and Action techniques could have better targeted interventions.

Ownership of community assets such as cassava processing machines, wells and stores built by the project is held by the community groups. These community groups are a mix of farmers groups, women's groups and a collective village group. Observation during field work suggested that keys controlling the assets, such as stores and wells, are usually held by wealthier group leaders. Engines for cassava processors were usually held by wealthier individuals. These people are elected by communities and don't hold the keys because they are wealthy. The evaluators concern is that wealthier members of communities will have higher levels of access and control over assets. This could lead to possible exclusion of the poor. The ProFARM project was primarily a rehabilitation project. This was appropriate give Sierra Leones fragile state over the project implementation period. Participation and specific pro-poor community driven development practices were not emphasised in ProFARM as they might be in a more development oriented initiative. To create broader levels of community ownership that better ensure pro-poor access and control a development oriented community driven approach would be required to build and support the appropriate village level organisational structures.

⁶ In addition, the project log frame assumes other development organisations will also be present to receive and potentially find proposals. These organisations are not currently present.

3.2 Effectiveness

3.2.1 Results to Specific Objectives

Result 1.1: Farmers organized in 300 groups have increased knowledge of lowland cultivation techniques and have increased their crop production

Indicator for Result 1.1: Reduction of the period of food shortage – one meal or less a day- in target villages from 4 to 2 months in 50% of households by December 2007

The project has been effective in contributing to a reduction in the period of food shortage in target villages from 4 to 2 months in 50% of households. Fieldwork results presented in Table 4: 12 Month Time Line for Average Meals per Day show that 50% of households interviewed had a hunger period of two months.

The main project contribution to the reduction in food shortage has been increased production of food crops achieved through seed and cutting distribution. Total increases in food crop production based on study findings and 2005 baseline data are presented in Table 1: Change in Food Crop Production. Table 1: Change in Food Crop Production shows significant increases in rice, ground nut and sweet potato production. Data presented in Table 1: Change in Food Crop Production shows growth in production of cassava grew least. This low level of growth could be due to errors in estimating volumes of tubers harvested and because some farmers had not yet harvested, what they saw as their 2007 crop.

Table 1: Change in Food Crop Production

Average Food Crop Production	Baseline Harvested Yield (Kg) 2005	Mid Term Evaluation Kg (2006)*	Final Evaluation Kg (2007)	% Change 2005 to 2007
Rice	352.5	160	663	88%
Ground Nuts	82.8	25	120	45%
Cassava	1248	500	1421	14%
Sweet Potato	216	40	375	74%

Mid Term Evaluation figures are based on production per person. Baseline and 2007 figures are based on Kg per household. No detail could be found of estimates of persons per household in the Mid Term review to make a better comparison. Midterm evaluation figures are also an estimate based in a graph as precise figures were not available at the time of the final evaluation.

Note: Kilograms have been calculated as follows: 1 bushel of rice=25 kg; 1 bag of cassava=65 kg; 1 bushel of groundnut=18 kg and 1 bag of sweet potatoes=60 kg. Source: Page 27 of Baseline Table 28

Result 1.2: Marginalised communities have increased access to markets and market exchange

Indicator for Result 1: 20% increase in number of farmers in target villages who are marketing produce and 20% increase in volume of produce from the target villages marketed by December 2007

Fieldwork results show that the ProFARM project has significantly increased the number of households who are marketing produce. The project baseline study⁷ shows that on aggregate approximately 30% of the producer household's market part of their produce. Final evaluation fieldwork suggests over 80% of households are now marketing produce. Thus the project has contributed to increased numbers of farmers marketing produce by significantly more than 20%.

The project has increased access to markets by working with local councils to establish approximately five market sites and roughly fifteen build storage facilities for traders and community members. Two such market centres were visited during field work. The market centre in Dasse 1 was vibrant and well positioned. Local ProFARM group members identified establishment of this local market as helping reduce their transport time and costs. The markets had also increased sales as buyers called on these communities to bring produce to market. Women had particularly benefited in these activities as their sales of vegetables had improved.

Increases in production achieved in ProFARM groups had also stimulated marketing. Average change in product marketed for the groups visited during fieldwork are shown in Table 2: Changes in Average Volumes of Product Marketed. Groundnut sales have increased most significantly since 2005. Cassava sales are flat. Flat cassava sales are due to some farmers not having harvested and sold what they consider to be their 2007 yield. Communities report distribution of cassava processing machines as having helped them increase their processing of cassava into Gari. Gari is a form of grated and dried cassava, which can be packaged and transported.

Table 2: Changes in Average Volumes of Product Marketed

	2005 (Kg)	2007 (Kg)	% Change
Rice	233	275	18%
Ground Nut	45	113	150%
Cassava	1170	1183	1%

Details of produce marketing are presented in Table 5: Breakdown of Product Marketed by Village Group.

Result 1.3: Thirty Farmers Field Schools established and functional

Indicator for Result 1.3: 80% of farmers in target villages exchange information on farming techniques and RBA principles and methodologies at least 4 times a year by December 2007 and promote RBA principles and methodologies across operational areas through organized forums

ProFARM used a system whereby village level farmer group representatives attended regular FFS. Approximately thirty different FFS sites were supported by the project. Fieldwork results suggest two to four representatives attend FFS from each community. To disseminate information from FFS communities call a general meeting and the representative's feedback what they have learnt to participants. Communities informed the study team that these feedback meetings were held following each FFS event. This was done at least four times a year in the communities visited during fieldwork.

No evidence was found during field work of the promotion of RBA principles and methods across operational areas through organised forums outside of individual communities.

⁷ Table 32 section 4.8 page 32

However, project staff report that Environmental Analysis of the Ecosystem workshops were held in all chiefdoms (at least four workshops) which shared information between members from different FFS. ProFARM also supported fifty three Peace and Rights days. Again community members interviewed did not identify these events as leading them to sharing information across operational areas.

Generally communities share information within themselves using village meetings. Meetings between villages are rare and were not reported by communities during fieldwork.

Result 1.4: Women organized in 120 groups have been enabled to grow and prepare healthy food

Indicator for Result 1.4: In 60% of the households in target villages at least 1 dish containing protein is consumed by all members every day by December 2007

All households ate at least one dish containing protein in December 2007. Hunger periods remain in all villages between August and September. Cultural factors dictate that male family members eat first followed by women and then children. While vegetable seed provision and training has increased the availability and access to healthy food, CARE staff report that mothers will still under prioritise the child especially in periods of food insecurity. This was evidenced in the Ngieyhun community household level interview where a relatively food secure household contained a malnourished child.

Lessons learnt during project implementation stress that emphasis must be given to the survival of the child in nutrition based interventions. In addition, interventions should work with all family members especially elders who have significant influence.

Result 2.1 Community leaders adhere to principles of good governance and farmer groups engage in developmental and social activities

Indicator for Result 2.1: 80% of men, women and youth aged 15 and above in target villages participate in developmental and social group activities by December 2007

Eighty per cent of men, women and youth participate in village group activities. ProFARM has provided training in farmer group planning and resource mobilization and provided guidance on developing project proposals. Given groups weak linkage to other organisations and institution (see Table 6: Village Group Linkage to Other Organisations and Institutions) it is difficult to see where groups can send their proposals. All groups visited during fieldwork were inclusive with women and youth present on executives.

While project staff report that PRA activities were held in selected communities, no evidence of participatory organisational capacity assessments was found during fieldwork. These organisational assessments could have formed part of the PRA but this remains unclear.

The ProFARM project has identified and worked closely with community leaders and governance structures. A strong linkage has been formed between the project and local council leaders. Fieldwork also shows that leadership, rights, governance and advocacy training has been provided. At community level leadership remains in the hands of selected elders who advise younger men and women. Community linkage to elected local councillors remains weak, except in communities close to the council head quarters.

The role of women has improved with some communities selecting women in leadership roles. The project has also boosted women's income, helping them contribute to household finances. This contribution to household finance is reported to have reduced intra-household tension.

ProFarm has organized fifty five Peace and Rights Days. Learning from these events has been published and disseminated widely in an attempt to ignite discussion among communities. It is hoped that discussions will also take place at higher levels. Communities' complaining of local councils' absence shows some degree of accountability beginning. Future elections should show if people are voting out absent local councillors. It is hoped that the ProFARM partner TIMAP⁸ will continue work in this area.

Result 2.2: Decentralised governance structures are increasingly representative, transparent, accountable and responsive and communities participate increasingly in decision making processes and development programmes

Indicator for Result 2.2: At least two groups in each target village actively participate in at least one externally promoted development programme by December 2007

No villages were found during fieldwork where groups were actively participating in externally promoted development programmes. Two village communities were being supported by the INGO Plan. Plan was providing support to schools. ProFARM groups were not connected to Plan initiatives. One ProFARM group was found which had approached a mining company and sent the company a project proposal. In all other communities CARE was the only organisation found to be promoting development programmes. Details of linkages found during fieldwork are presented in Table 6: Village Group Linkage to Other Organisations and Institutions.

⁸ TIMAP is an international NGO specialised in the field of governance and rights

3.3 Sustainability

3.3.1 Policy support measures

ProFARM has significantly supported Government policy through its working with MAFF to support FFS. ProFARM funding and extension support has ensured thirty FFS have been implemented. It is probable that these FFS will not continue after the project as MAFF extension agents will not be paid to regularly facilitate these events.

3.3.2 Economic and financial viability

Economic and financial viability is uncertain. Farmers are saving own seed each year hence yields will reduce with time. Vulnerability to shocks remains and one bad harvest could mean seed stocks are lost.

It was not possible to fully analyse the economic viability of cassava processing machines. Communities are saving money together which is loaned out to individual members at times of emergency. It is uncertain if moneys will be saved to pay for repairs and eventual replacement of generators. In the evaluators experience from west, east and southern Africa it is suggested that assets given by ProFARM will not be repaired when they breakdown and require financial expenditure.

The ProFARM project manager comments that while this occurrence is generally true for any rehabilitation based project, the ProFARM project has tried to change this situation. ProFARM has put in place mechanisms where by communities pay small amounts of money for services. They then use this money for managing the facilities including repair and maintenance as required. To this effect ProFARM has many communities who have started to collect service fees. These facilities include market centres like Baja and Mophorobi, Water wells, and seed stores. ProFARM has taken efforts towards addressing the issue.

3.3.3 Socio- cultural aspects including gender issues

Fieldwork showed that ProFARM community groups largely appeared to be controlled by traditional village elders from wealthier, better educated families within the community. This suggests that post-project these traditional leaders will control access to the various assets distributed by the project. ProFARM groups are relatively new and efforts to instil processes of accountancy, transparency and equitable use of assets are fragile. Concern exists that without project involvement traditional village elites will fully control assets and reduce access by the poor.

Cultural aspects continue to influence intra household food distribution. Men take priority at meal times, followed by women and then children. While the project has started to raise awareness of child dietary requirements more work is required to effect change in behaviour.

3.3.4 Appropriate technology

The introduction of cassava processing machines is appropriate to the needs of farmers producing a surplus of cassava. The sustainability of these machines is questioned as all groups will need to make provision for repair and eventual replacement. Stores and wells will also require maintenance. Communities visited during fieldwork continuously requested additional CARE support to repair existing wells and build stores as opposed to looking for ways to do it themselves. Saving for fixed asset maintenance is often talked about, but the study found little change at a village level. As most village assets are still new, a post project

evaluation in two years time would be the best approach to assess maintenance. Further research is required into appropriate methods of grain storage. Use of large wooden boxes and traditional raised (barns on stilts) structures should be reviewed as these may be lower cost alternatives that could be maintained individually by each household.

3.3.5 Environmental protection

ProFARM has contributed to Government of Sierra Leone efforts to protect the environment by encouraging farmers to engage in swamp based farming as opposed to slash and burn agriculture. Farmer Field Schools have been the main approach used to protect the environment. ProFARM support to Environmental Analysis of Ecosystems workshops has also aimed to protect the environment. Fieldwork points to still much more work to do as slash and burn farming remains widespread. Current Farmer Field Schools do not appear to be presenting sufficiently attractive alternatives to slash and burn. CARE with its partners needs to enhance and better adapt the FFS approach to non-swamp farmer's issues.

3.3.6 Institutional and management capacity

CARE institutional and management capacity at the time of field work was good. Senior CARE management had largely corrected the initial problems experienced by the project. Managers had a good understanding of what was happening in the field and were in control of events. Internal monitoring of results and objectives could have been strengthened and the quality of internal monitoring reports submitted to the program manager was questionable in the latter half of the project. The initial M&E Officer was reported as having good reporting skills but was replaced because he was suspected of corruption. There is no indication that this person's work was unreliable and senior managers report his work as very good.

Discussions with staff suggested the project had people with good knowledge of agriculture and governance issues. While some people had good capacity in governance these people were too few and a better balance in human resources was required. Facilitators showed good general facilitation skill although ProFARM staff recognised the need for specialists to train in some subject areas. Fieldwork suggests these areas to be in business / income generating activities and nutrition.

3.4 Results / Effects & Impact

Specific Objective 1: 1. By December 2007, members of 420 farmer groups in vulnerable communities of Bo, Moyamba and Tonkolili Districts will have utilised opportunities to become increasingly self-reliant in food production, have more secure access to food and make the transition to sustainable development.

The ProFARM project has successfully helped farmer groups in vulnerable communities to become increasingly self-reliant in food production and have more secure access to food. This success has strengthened the vulnerable and begun a transition process that could lead to sustainable development.

ProFARM has contributed to a rise in food production of over 30%. Most notably rice production has increased by 88% and groundnuts by 45% over the project timeframe. Improved and sustainable farming practices are evident in some areas with permanent swamps. Sustainable farming practices are not evident in upland areas and less evident in seasonal swamp lands. These latter two areas will require long term investment in soil fertility moving farmers away from rotational slash and burn farming systems. Slash and burn is attractive to small scale farmers as it is quick, requiring less initial investment in labour. Slash and burn is also consistent with traditional land rights. Under customary land law, land is distributed annually by village elders. Individual farmers do not know which plot of land they will farm next year. This system offers no incentives to invest long term in land by small scale farmers. Hence building bunds or terraces to conserve and build soil fertility on uplands does not occur. It is a significant challenge to overcome these constraints and more research is required to provide detailed solutions. Solutions are likely to be found through working with community elders and farmers in selected sites with increasing and recognised population pressure. Current FFS activities are having little impact in generating improved and sustainable farming practices in upland areas.

Fieldwork results suggest Pre and post harvest loss has been reduced to a level of 23% (see Table 9: Estimates for Pre and Post Harvest Loss). This figure is just short of the projects target of 20%. Fieldwork estimates of pre and post harvest loss are notoriously difficult to estimate and caution is advised when looking at results. However, ProFARM stores have improved storage facilities. Farmers report that the project has helped by giving advice on fencing, provision of traps, and advice on poisons and technical knowledge on plant spacing to reduce pre-harvest loss. Post harvest loss remains a problem for some, with theft reported as a significant cause as farmers hire more labour.

ProFARM has successfully contributed to increases in volumes of produce marketed by target groups of over 20%. Rice sales have increased by 18% and groundnut sales by 150% over the project lifetime. Marketing success has largely been through increasing volumes of production. Exceptions to this are the projects facilitation of market sites. The market site in Dasse chieftdom is particularly successful as it is well placed on a main highway junction. This site has significantly reduced transport distances for local communities with selling their produce. It has also increased market information flow as traders are more likely to contact these communities at times of high demand. Cassava processing machines have also allowed communities to process gari, a dried form of cassava chip. Gari market potential appears to differ between communities largely based on geography. Communities in the Dasse chieftdoms reported strong demand and saw strong potential for themselves to profit through cassava processing.

Over 80% of target beneficiaries reported that they now ate improved and healthier diets containing recommended nutrients. Interviewees reported that they ate a balance of

carbohydrate, protein, vegetables, fruit and oil regularly at the time of fieldwork (see Table 7: Typical 24 Hour Food Recall). Dietary balance is good in March but is assumed to remain problematic in households during the hunger gap. An estimate of variety of protein intake is presented in Table 8: Number of Different Protein Components in Diet. Data presented in Table 8 suggest over 80% of households eat two or more types of protein per year. Isolated cases of child malnutrition were found during fieldwork. Women continue to prioritise the male in intra-household food distribution and traditional 'common pot' feeding practices favour larger, stronger individuals. Little evidence was found of improvements in hygiene practices. More work is required to change behaviours with regard to child nutrition and hygiene practices. Nutrition training has created some awareness but not led to impact regarding changes in behaviour.

Specific Objective 2: By December 2007, the capacity of communities to achieve sustainable food security is enhanced as local authorities in the target areas practice accountable and responsive governance and provide institutional linkages for grassroots development.

The ProFARM project has failed to make significant impact in areas of accountable and responsive governance and provision of sustainable institutional linkages for grassroots development. Institutional linkages have been created between communities and MAFF and CARD during the life of the project but these will cease on completion of the project. It is hoped that Timap will continue to address issues of governance and institutional linkage. Current institutional linkages are shown in Table 6: Village Group Linkage to Other Organisations and Institutions. Local councils are linked to one of the twelve communities visited. This community was located close to the council head quarters. Other communities report that they have not seen their councillor since the election. It is hoped that communities will vote out these non-supportive councillors in future elections. However, it is recognised that some councillors are unpaid and hence unable or unwilling to perform their roles. Resources should have been given to councillors as planned in the Local Government Act, 2004.

ProFARM has not failed to make significant impact through lack of effort. Strong links have been made with district councillors who express their disappointment that ProFARM is closing. However efforts have not created the linkages called for in the Baseline study⁹. To address this issue the baseline study recommended (page 37) that "ProFARM field staff are currently interacting with the ward development committeesto realize the potential of CARE Sierra Leone's strong comparative advantage to assist in making the WDC operate as a democratically elected body and attempt to ensure its proper functioning as a vehicle for consultation and participatory development." The midterm review also identified linkage as problematic.

- (i) Identify successful farming groups
- (ii) Facilitate strengthening of bye laws
- (iii) Encourage them to register with the appropriate authorities
- (iv) Train them with simple project proposal writings

⁹ ProFarm Baseline (Point 4.2 page 24) states "The development of external linkages by farmer groups is as yet virtually non-existent; ProFARM has to make a deliberate effort to create these linkages, especially through the partners, MAFFS and CARD. The situation reflects the fact that the ward development committees have not yet developed their capacity to link the communities to organizations and institutions, which would support them. This makes the establishment and training of WDCs an urgent issue for ProFARM."

To address this issue ProFARM decided that the “M&E Officer would increase support to simple project development”¹⁰. The assumption made during project formulation that institutions would be present to receive community project proposals was wrong.

While impact is low, the project has created community groups that are inclusive. Groups were found to be representative and inclusive, having membership from all strata of the community. However, much more work is required. While ProFARM has supported the voice of women, observation of community groups during fieldwork shows they are still dominated by male traditional elders. Addressing governance is complex and needs to be consistent with national government and donor policy. Appropriate staff capacity is needed to address governance issues. Assumptions need to be realistic and planning horizons long term (ten to twenty five years). Expectations of impact over a three year period need to be realistic, especially when working in a fragile state post conflict.

3.5 Compliance

ProFARM project implementation has been significantly impeded by widespread corruption in original programme staff. CARE managers point out that generally, emergency activities such as food and tool distribution have a high risk of miss-use of project resources. Collusion between project staff, vendors and some community members has reduced efficiency and effectiveness. High staff turnover has resulted of corruption with changes in the project manager, assistant project manager, M&E officer and a number of field supervisors. The incoming project manager is to be congratulated for managing to stop corrupt practices and complete implementation.

Corruption resulted from wide spread collusion especially between project staff and vendors. This collusion allowed administrative checks to be circumvented and all necessary paper work to be correctly presented. Compliance with procedures appeared to exist but was false. Since the necessary changes in personnel were implemented staff professionalism, commitment, performance and stewardship have improved. These changes have allowed the project to be successfully completed.

¹⁰ Source: ProFARM Mid Term Review Workshop Report page 2

4 PRINCIPLE FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNT

1 ProFARM has achieved significant success in agricultural food production and marketing

The ProFARM project has significantly contributed to increases in production volumes. Increasing yields have allowed farmers to increase market volumes and more farmers have been able to sell produce and generate income. Interviewees report that this has helped them pay school fees and meet medical expenses.

2 Women have benefited from ProFARM. Women's income has risen particularly through Groundnuts and Vegetable Seed distributions. ProFARM has supported women in leadership roles at community and district level.

Provision of vegetable and groundnut seeds has increased female income and improved diets. Women have been able to increasingly contribute to household income and school fees. Some interviewees report that this has decreased levels of stress within households and contributed to a fall in domestic violence. ProFARM has also actively supported women as chairwomen, treasures and secretaries in community groups. Female councillors have also been strongly supported and encouraged by the project.

3 The impact of distributions and infrastructure has been greater than that from training

Communities consistently ranked the benefits from training as lower than that from distributions and infrastructure. The system of information distribution by trainees informing community meetings of what they learnt is weak. Much of the training was provided outside of communities by general trainers as opposed to within communities by specialist trainers.

While some success has been achieved with regard to gender, the system of information dissemination at community level has not led to desired changes in farming practices, nutritional / cooking practices and group / business planning.

4 Farmer Field Schools have delivered little that is new in terms of farming practices and individual farmers are not adopting many of the farming practices proposed in FFS.

FFS impact is highest in communities close to the FFS site with permanent swamp land. Many of the techniques proposed in FFS have not been adopted in seasonal swamp land. Slash and burn agriculture remains common in upland areas. Individual farmers are not adopting the plant spacing and cultivation techniques proposed in FFS due to proposed techniques requiring higher labour input. Challenges exist for conservation farming. Traditional land distribution systems do not allow one farmer to farm one upland plot consistently over the long term. This limits incentives to invest in long term soil fertility. FFS are not being run as experimental learning whereby farmers research potential solutions to the challenges they face. By promoting plant spacing and soil cultivation techniques Farmer Field Schools are achieving what could be achieved using straight forward demonstration plots

5 ProFARM linkage to Local Councillors is good and has allowed successful facilitation of market sites

ProFARM has cultivated good linkages between itself and local councillors. This linkage has allowed ProFARM to establish successful market sites for communities to sell produce.

6 Community groups post ProFARM have no avenues for access to future finance

Community groups have no feasible linkage to future donors. Funding of future group activities is unlikely. Local council linkage is rare and no other international or national funding organisations were found to be linked to target groups. No Microfinance institutions were found to be active in areas where ProFARM works.

7 While community group linkage to Govt and NGOs is weak, Private Sector traders commonly enter villages to buy agricultural commodities

Traders regularly enter ProFARM villages to buy commodities. Palm oil and rice are the main traded commodities found during fieldwork. World commodity prices are currently rising. There is increased interest in the development community for support projects to work with the Private Sector particularly in areas on agricultural extension, input provision and output marketing.

8 ProFARM human resource capacity was primarily in agriculture, skills in addressing governance were low

Less than ten percent of ProFARM staff had exposure or training in governance before joining ProFARM. Staff training in this subject area after joining the project was questionable. Human resource capacity reflects the projects results as more success has been experienced in agriculture where the majority of staff are skilled.

9 ProFARM implementation has been significantly impeded by corruption leading to high staff turnover

ProFARM has had two project managers, three assistant project managers, two M&E officers and many field supervisors. Corruption has been collusive between project staff, vendors and community members. The project has implemented detailed accountancy and administrative controls. The collusive nature of the corruption has allowed these controls to be circumvented. ProFARM had hired most of its initial staff from a previous similar project. Project staff to vendor relationships had been formed during this initial project. Breaking these relationships by changing staff succeeded in reducing corruption.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1 CARE should consider delivery of more direct community level training

Future programs should avoid the system of information distribution from training used by ProFARM. To learn and change behaviour people need to experience training messages first hand. CARE should consider methods of training that take place at village level. These could include use of community level demonstrations, use of cadres that practice what is to be taught in the community and greater use of Training of Trainers.

2 Training Needs Assessment methodologies need to be reviewed as does the use of specialist as opposed to general trainers

Participatory Learning and Action methods have been underutilized during initial project phases. Methods including Training Needs Assessments need to be reviewed and enhanced to better ensure training is tailored to the needs of communities.

In future similar projects, CARE should consider use of specialist trainers. One method of doing this is for projects to contribute to a CARE fund which is used to hire Regional specialists. These regional specialists are then used to provide specialist training where in-project or in-county capacity is deficient.

3 Internal M&E of training impact should be emphasised 6 to 12 months post training delivery

ProFARM internal monitoring focused on activities. Monitoring of effects and impact was insufficient to detect low levels of adoption of training messages by target beneficiaries. In future similar projects, training should be followed up after trainees have had enough time to either adopt or not adopt training messages. Results can then be fed back into program planning while there is enough time to enhance programmatic training methodologies.

4 To better disseminate FFS messages small scale community level demonstration plots should be considered in future projects

Future FFS practices need to be better tailored to farmer's situation. If experimental learning is an objective or intended approach, future projects will require sufficient capacity to deliver this. If FFS are intended to demonstrate a farming system or practice then community level small scale demonstration plots are recommended so all community members can see what is happening.

To reduce levels of slash and burn farming in the ProFARM area of operation requires further livelihood oriented research considering the many facets that result in this operation, including analysis of labour and land constraints.

5 CARE should consider working with Private Sector traders in future similar projects.

The private sector traders offer an alternative or supplement Government Ministries to address areas of sustainable agricultural extension delivery, input provision and marketing (quality and processing, as well as volume). Future project identification missions should analyse potential crops and processing opportunities and the actors in the various supply / value chains to seek potential partners and future sustainable service providers.

6 CARE should review its Human Resources policy to better ensure balance between project design and staff capacity. Governance skills were under represented.

7 Addressing Corruption, CARE should perform a comparative study to compare ProFARM with other similar projects; this formal or informal review could include other INGOs and donors

Corruption is widespread in Sierra Leone. Multiple causes of corruption exist and a comparative study would allow similarities to be identified that would then determine future action and influence project design. Other INGOs experience corruption and are assumed to be interested in finding solutions. Donors should be informed and possibly engaged in such a study as it could have implications for project design and implementation.

8 CARE should review staff motivation, incentives and reward structures to further address corruption

Future projects should consider:

- Analysis of the balance between salary and responsibility / resources handled. CARE should compare the ratio of salary to resource levels administered by project staff.
- Salary scales that balance the need for project budgets to be competitive but mean local staff have sufficient incentive to want to keep their job¹¹. Senior CARE staff should continue and conclude the discussion begun during the Freetown feedback meeting as part of their regular management meetings.
- Potential avenues for future career development¹²
- Careful explanation of the rationale behind expenses to local staff. Finance personnel need to explain the purpose of expenses to new staff during the first two months of employment.
- Use of high capacity national staff in the Project Manager position as opposed to expatriate staff.
- To motivate field staff CARE should consider greater project / field level input (i.e. 2 to 3 day field trips every quarter) from the CD or ACD. Personal visits build contact. Local staff members feel that if they know the CD or ACD it improves their career prospects within CARE. In addition, field visits with senior managers can build staff prestige within target communities and enhance belief in the fieldworker or field supervisor.
- Where projects continue from a previous distribution focused project CARE should consider changing staff. This should be done to break vendor to staff linkage and meet the different skill requirements that a new project will require.
- Assessing the need for forensic audit skills to detect corruption. CARE should review its audit procedures to see if corrupt practices are detected early enough in the project cycle.

¹¹ CARE Sierra Leone has recently performed a salary review which found CARE salary rates to be competitive with other similar INGOs. However, senior national staff members pointed out that Sierra Leoneans with appropriate international experience were dissuaded from applying for CARE jobs in Sierra Leone due to low salaries. While this issue was debated during the final feedback presentation for this evaluation it requires further consideration.

¹² CARE SL has a staff development policy which has been implemented for one year

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Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for Final Evaluation of ProFARM (Promoting Food Access, Rights and Community Mobilization) Project

Introduction

The project Promoting Food Access, Rights and Community Mobilization (ProFARM) intends to support farmer groups in marginalised villages of Bo, Moyamba and Tonkolili districts of Sierra Leone to become increasingly self-reliant in food production and more secure in their access to food. At the same time the project seeks to support Sierra Leone's transition to sustainable development by enhancing the capacity of community leadership to practice accountable and responsive governance and develop external institutional linkages for future development.

Background

CARE will provide relevant documentation to the consultant at the outlet of the consultancy. The following description summarizes the present context and project information.

CARE Sierra Leone has been implementing a wide array of development interventions in Sierra Leone over the past decades focusing primarily on food security, building road infrastructures, water and sanitation and preventive health care. During the civil war, interventions were mainly relief oriented.

Since the official end of the war in 2002, CARE Sierra Leone has successfully transitioned its programmers from relief oriented to developmental focus. The country office long range statements to address the root causes of poverty and suffering through capacity building, advocacy and partnership in order that vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized people are empowered to participate effectively in achieving livelihood security and realizing their rights to live with dignity. Achieving this end involves understanding of social and cultural issues, and a shared commitment to transparency, accountability, teamwork and gender equity, applying participatory processes that enable people to analyze and voice their own problems and promote and protect their rights and livelihoods.

The current CARE Sierra Leone portfolio is programmatically organized around three crosscutting themes- health and HIV/AIDS, livelihoods and assets creation, and good governance/civil society strengthening focusing on four key areas, outlined in CARE Sierra Leone's strategic plan and aimed at beginning to address some of the underlying causes of conflict and poverty in the country's poverty reduction and reintegration; human rights and reconciliation; good governance, peace and security, and economic recovery.

CARE Sierra Leone annual operation plans for 2005 and 2006 emphasize the need to continue to develop and build partnership with civil society organizations, the government of Sierra Leone and community- based organizations in all of the theme areas, as a more sustainable approach.

The Country Office's long range mission statement is to: address the root causes of poverty and suffering through capacity building, advocacy and partnership in order that vulnerable, disadvantaged and marginalized people are empowered to participate effectively in achieving livelihood security and realizing their right to live with dignity. The mission present staffing is approximately 280 people with a head office in Freetown and three regional sub offices in Bo, Kabala and Makeni.

The project: Promoting Food access, Rights and Community Mobilization (ProFARM), started operations in Gbonkolenken, Gbo and Dasse Chiefdoms in the Tonkolili, Bo and Moyamba districts of Sierra Leone respectively in February 2005. Fieldwork for the baseline was conducted in April and May 2005. The first progress report was issued in July 2005 and Mid-term evaluation was conducted in March 2007.

The project is designed to harness individual energy and build social capital in an effort ultimately leading to more food secure, self-sufficient communities. The project makes use of participatory learning and action techniques to ensure that activities address issues and opportunities in a sustainable manner.

In the context of linking food security and long-term rural development, ProFarm's activities are grounded in the use of a reflective household livelihood assessment methodology. Appropriate livelihood assessment tools are used to understand the needs and rights of vulnerable people and how these needs are met in order to improve livelihoods.

Overall, the project aims at achieving the following two specific objectives:

1. By March 2008 members of 420 farmer groups in vulnerable communities of Bo, Moyamba and Tonkolili Districts will have utilized opportunities to become increasingly self-reliant in food production, have more secure access to food and make the transition to sustainable development. The indicators, which will show the improved state of sustainable food security include: (1) improved and sustainable farming practices adopted and food production increased by at least 30%; (2) pre- and post-harvest losses of produce reduced to 20%; (3) processing of produce resulting in improved preservation and trade; volume of produce marketed increased by 20%, and; (4) improved and healthier household diets containing recommended nutrients adopted, increased by 15%.

2. By March 2008, the capacity of communities to achieve sustainable food security is enhanced as local authorities/opinion leaders in the target areas practice accountable and responsive governance and provide institutional linkages for grassroots development. The achievement of this objective will be measured by the following indicators: (1) farmer groups are representative and inclusive, having membership from all strata of the community, and; (2) farmer groups initiate and participate in development programmes supported by various institutions.

Results and indicators:

Intermediate results and Indicators, Project Log Frame, monitoring plan or any other relevant information is provided up on request or at the outset of the consultancy.

Implementation Progress:

By employing rights base approaches, methodologies mentioned above and the associated activities, the project aimed to achieve the objectives as set in the revised log frame of the project proposal, monitoring plan and necessary data collection tools have been developed to aid measurement of impact of activities on the intended beneficiaries.

A mid-term review was undertaken in March 2007, after which ProFarm reviewed its activities in order to expand its services to more people (see mid-term report and mid-term review follow up points).

Currently the project is coming to its end and therefore CARE will hire an external consultant (evaluator) in order to undertake ProFram's final evaluation.

The Final Evaluation

Objective:

The objective of this final evaluation is to evaluate the results and impact of the project interventions. Lessons will be used in future program design initiatives.

The evaluation will assess whether set targets and anticipated results were achieved and gauge the level of efficiency, effectiveness, impact on the target communities.

Issues to be evaluated:

The evaluation will appraise problems being addressed by the project and partners and specifically look at:

Efficiency: Based on the project logical framework assess activities that have been undertaken in order to achieve the results and draw observations as to whether the means applied are consistent with the proposal and that they efficiency transform into results. The analysis will include the work plan, the monitoring systems applied, the approach and methodology of intervention, including community contribution and participation to gauge the level of local ownership.

Effectiveness: Assess whether project results are contributed to the achievement of the project purpose. Interviews with beneficiaries should be analysed to inform the evaluation. In relation to this, it is expected to assess the level of professionalism, commitment, performance and stewardship of project staff to achieve project objective.

Sustainability: Taking in consideration the principal sustainability factors (policy support measures, economic and financial viability; socio- cultural aspects of gender issues, appropriate technology, environmental protection, institutional and management capacity, ownership.) the evaluator will assess the sustainability prospects of the project.

Effects & Impact: This final evaluation should assess prospects for desired impacts and effects of project interventions towards the achievement of project objectives as stated in ProFarm logical framework.

Compliance: The study is expected to assess the procedures inputs have been distributed (compliance with donor, government & CARE procedures)

NB: In order to facilitate the process, the program staff will have updated and made available all data on project's indicators (activities, results and specific objectives). Besides, all project documents will be made available for the consultant, mainly:

Project proposal and agreement with EU

Project's baseline study

Project annual reports

Project's mid-term review report

Other special studies (market surveys, ad-hoc studies, etc.)

Proposed Evaluation Methodologies:

The consultant develops the assessment methodology in consultation with the project manager but expected to include the following steps:

An in-take discussion with the ACD, the sector coordinator, DM&E advisor, the project manager and other relevant project staff.

Work closely with ProFARM's M&E Officer and ensure that he understands well the methodology and the tools used. The ME Officer can act as an assistant to the consultant during the whole final evaluation process.

Ongoing update and discussion with the PM and M&E officer about the progress of the evaluation,

Exit de-briefing,

Evaluation Outputs (deliverables):

The evaluation will produce a comprehensive report detailing the assessment of ProFARM results/achievements (Effects & Impact) based on the logical framework, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations for future consideration by the CO. For each conclusion there should be a corresponding operational recommendation, for future similar programs. A draft report should be submitted within one week of field work completion.

The report should include all annexes such as evaluation methodologies and tools, additional data, list of people met, etc.

In short, "The evaluator will provide her/his findings on the overall results (effect & Impact) of the project on target communities. Conclusions and recommendations will be provided for both intermediate results and overall objective".

Location: In three Chiefdoms in the districts of Bo, Moyamba and Tonkolili.

Time Frame: The total time frame of this consultancy period will be 17 days (12 for field work and 5 days travel and writing) and to be completed before by the mid March 2008.

Costs: CARE SL will provide payment of travelling costs (road or air-fare) and guesthouse facilities. In addition to this remuneration, the consultant will be entitled to usual per-diem, lodging and transportation cost as per CARE SL policy, if applicable. A consultancy fee will also be agreed, to be paid in US\$, for each day of the consultancy.

Qualifications: Community Development Specialist, with at least 10 years experience in development work, preferably in Africa/West, well versed in Community Empowerment programmes, experience in post conflict assistance programmes, human rights, gender, and good governance speciality in either rural development with emphasis to integrated agricultural development related to development in agriculture based livelihood security. At least three prior and recent monitoring and evaluation consultancies of development projects is required; preferred previous working experience in Sierra Leone.

Annex 2: Focus Group Guidelines

Introduction

Focus groups were introduced to the objectives of the evaluation which were to:

- Appreciate what has been achieved so far by the ProFARM project
- Learn how improvements can be made to similar future projects

Method

Initial planning requested that focus groups should be made up of six ProFARM group ordinary members comprising three men and three women. Focus group composition tended to be determined by which group members were present at the time of the visit. Communities selected focus group members in Tonkolili district. These communities tended to select people who had attended training sessions.

The following questions were presented to focus groups:

Questions

1 How has the community here benefited from the ProFarm project – what has changed?

Use Cards or Paper. Request groups to think of the benefits they have received as a result of the project and write these on cards / paper. These benefits are then prioritised by the group by ordering the cards / paper with the most beneficial item placed first, second, third etc. The facilitator then probes for the reasons why cards are placed as they are.

2 Which organisations or institutions are your group connected too?

3 What activities does your group perform? Who performs each of these activities – divide according to men, women and youth.

4 Who do you share information with about farming practices? How do you do this?

5 How has the marketing of produce changed over the last three years? Why?

6 If ProFarm was repeated what could have been done differently to increase positive impact to communities?

Annex 3: Household Interview Checklist

Specific Objective 1: Improved and sustainable farming practices adopted and food production increased by at least 30%

Piling Exercise 1:

The interviewee was asked to pile the amount of food production in 2005 and 2007 using locally available material (Stones, leaves etc). Interviewer probed for the reason for any change.

Question: How have your farming practices changed over the last 3 years? Why?

Specific Objective 1: Pre- and post-harvest losses of produce reduced to 20%

Piling Exercise 2:

The interviewee is asked to pile the amount of pre and post harvest loss in 2005 and 2007. Interviewee probes for reasons for change.

Specific Objective 1: Processing of produce resulting in improved preservation and trade; volume of produce marketed increased by 20%

Piling Exercise 3:

The interviewee is asked to pile the volume of produce sold in 2005 and 2007. The interviewee probes for reasons for change.

The interviewee is asked to pile the volume of produce preserved in 2005 and 2007. The interviewee probes for reasons for change.

Specific Objective 1: Improved and healthier household diets containing recommended nutrients adopted by 80% of targeted households

24 hour food recall:

The interviewee is asked what they ate in the last 24 hours. This is recorded on flip chart paper. The interviewee is then asked how this has changed over the last three years and why. Seasonality is considered in probing questions.

Specific Objective 2: Farmer groups are representative and inclusive, having membership from all strata of the community

The household is asked which members have joined and are active in the farmer group and what they do.

Expected Result 1: Reduction of the period of food shortage – one meal or less a day- in target villages from 4 to 2 months in 50% of households by December 2007

12 Month Timeline:

Draw out months of the last year (Jan to Dec 2007) and ask the interviewee in which months they ate one meal a day or less.

Annex 4: Work plan

Date		Activity
Tues	04-Mar	Background reading, review of Log frame
Wed	05-Mar	Flight to Freetown
Thu	06-Mar	Initial Meetings in Freetown, Travel to Bo.
Fri	07-Mar	Fieldwork Planning
Sat	08-Mar	Fieldwork - Ngolala & Kosa Villages
Sun	09-Mar	Analysis and Report writing
Mon	10-Mar	Fieldwork - Hiima and meet District Councillors and CARD Director in Bo
Tue	11-Mar	Fieldwork - Kabiama 1, Benduma & Forty-Five Villages
Wed	12-Mar	Fieldwork - Ngeihun & Kenema Villages
Thu	13-Mar	Fieldwork - Nitty Kori and Non –Project Operational communities
Fri	14-Mar	Fieldwork - Teko Loll & Mabero villages
Sat	15-Mar	Fieldwork - Mafunk
Sun	16-Mar	Presentation and report writing
Mon	17-Mar	Presentation in Bo to ProFARM staff, travel to Freetown
Tue	18-Mar	Presentation in Freetown to CARE senior management team, Report writing
Wed	19-Mar	Report writing
Thu	20-Mar	Return flight

Annex 5: Resource People

Resource Person	Organisation	
Sagestine L Gandi	CARD –SL	Program M
Tedla Assefa	CARE Bo Office	ProFARM P
Abu Bakarr Fofana	CARE SL 35 Wilkinson Road PO Box 744 Freetown SL Mob: +232 76 602 751	Finance a

Amani M'Bale Poveda	CARE SL 35 Wilkinson Road PO Box 744 Freetown SL Mob: +232 76 563 182	Youth and
Ahmed Ag Aboubacrine	CARE SL 35 Wilkinson Road PO Box 744 Freetown SL Mob: +232 76 563 181	Design, M
Various Local Councillors	Local Councillors were met during a focus group discussion	

Annex 6: Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 3: Community Ranking of ProFARM Benefits

District	Gbo	Gbo	Gbo	Dasse	Dasse	Dasse	Dasse 2	Dasse 2	Dasse 2	Tonkolili	Tonkolili	Tonkolili	
Village	Ngolala	Kosa	Hiima	Kabiama	Mile 45	Benduma	Kenema	Ngieyhun	Nitty Kori	Tekololl	Maberoh	Mafunk	
Date	08-Mar	08-Mar	10-Mar	11-Mar	11-Mar	11-Mar	12-Mar	12-Mar	13-Mar	14-Mar	14-Mar	15-Mar	Rank
Benefits													
Group Formation / Creating Unity	2									1	1	1	1.3
Seed Rice			2	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	2	2	1.6
Provision of seeds and cuttings	5	2											3.5
Water Well						2	1	4				9	4.0
Provision of tools	1	1	1	6	6	3	3	5	5	4	6	8	4.1
Cassava processing machine	4				4	6		2	2		9	3	4.3
Ground nuts			3	5	2	5	5	7	4	3	4	5	4.3
Cassava cuttings			4	8	3	6	6		2	6	3	3	4.6
Vegetable Seed				2	5	4	8	6	8	5	7	7	5.8
Farmer Field Schools			5	7			7	1			9	10	6.5
S Potato vines			6	3	7	10		8	7	7	5	6	6.6
Training in Marketing				4	8	9							7.0
Training Human Right and Govt					10		3	9	6	8	8	11	7.9
Training in Nutrition				9	9		9	11				12	10.0
Training in Business / IGA						8		10				13	10.3

Key: Training based initiatives

Table 4: 12 Month Time Line for Average Meals per Day

	2007	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bo	Ngolala	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	3	3	3
Bo	Kosa	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	3	3	3
Bo	Hiima	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	3	3	3
Dasse 1	Kabiama	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	3
Dasse 1	Mile 45	3	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	3
Dasse 1	Benduma	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	0.5	0.5	2	2	2
Dasse 2	Kenema	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	3
Dasse 2	Ngleyhun	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	3
Dasse 2	Nitty Kori	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	3
Tonkolili	Tekololl	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2
Tonkolili	Maberoh	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	3	3
Tonkolili	Mafunk	3	3	2	2	1	1	0.5	0.5	2	3	3	3

Key: Shaded squares show the months the household interviewed ate less than two meals per day.

Note: A meal is defined as having a protein, carbohydrate and vegetable component.

Table 5: Breakdown of Product Marketed by Village Group

District	Village	Crop	2005	2007	% Change
Bo	Ngolala	All crops	5	8	60%
	Kosa	All crops	12	37	208%
	Hiima	Rice	5	10	100%
		G Nut	5	10	100%
		Cassava	10	10	0%
		S Potato	5	5	0%
		Total	25	35	50%
Dasse 1	Kabiama	Rice	7	5	-29%
		Cassava	20	20	0%
		Total	57	65	-14%
	Mile 45	Rice	8	4	-50%
		Cassava	19	25	32%
		Pepper	8	7	-13%
		Veg	3	4	33%
		Total	38	40	1%
	Benduma	Rice	0	2	100%
		G nut	0	2	100%
		Cassava	11	0	-100%
	Total	11	4	33%	
Dasse 2	Kenema	Rice	0	0	0%
		G nut	2	0	-100%
		Total	2	0	-50%
	Ngieyhun	Rice	0	9	100%
		Cassava	0	6	100%
		Total	0	15	100%
	Nitty Kori	Rice	0	0	0%
		Cassava	0	0	0%
		Total	0	0	0%
Tonkolili	Tekololl	Rice	3	4	33%
		G nut	1	0	-100%
		Total	4	4	-33%
	Maberoh	Rice	17	25	47%
		G nut	0	10	100%
		Total	17	35	74%
	Mafunk	Rice	16	29	81%
		G Nut	2	3	50%
		Cassava	30	30	0%
	Total	48	62	44%	

Note: Rice and Groundnuts are measured in bushels, cassava and sweet potatoes are measured in bags.

Table 6: Village Group Linkage to Other Organisations and Institutions

District	Gbo	Gbo	Gbo	Dasse	Dasse	Dasse	Dasse 2	Dasse 2	Dasse 2	Tonkol ili	Tonkol ili	Tonkol ili		
Village	Ngola la	Kosa	Hiima	Kabia ma	Mile 45	Bend uma	Kene ma	Ngiey hun	Nitty Kori	Tekol oll	Mabe roh	Mafu nk	No of Villages	%
CARE/CARD/MAF Plan	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	12	100%
Local Council					1			1					2	17%
						1							1	8%
Private Sector Buyers for:														
Oil Palm			1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	9	90%
Rice			1	1		1				1	1	1	6	60%
Banana			1					1	1				3	30%
Cassava tubers or flour					1			1			1		3	30%
Gari (Processed cassava product)					1			1				1	3	30%
Beans				1									1	10%
Ground nuts											1		1	10%
Oranges								1					1	10%
Cola Nut								1					1	10%
Vegetables												1	1	10%

Table 7: Typical 24 Hour Food Recall

7:00 AM	Rice, Sweet Pots leaf, beans, fish, palm oil, magi, salt, onion, okra
10:00 AM	Pineapple
1:00 PM	Boiled cassava, salt, palm oil
7:00 PM	Rice, cassava leaf, fish, onion, palm oil, beans, magi, salt, okra

Note: The above diet is an average or typical diet for the household level interviewee. The diet represents what the interviewee ate the day before the interview. Hence this is a typical diet during March.

Table 8: Number of Different Protein Components in Diet

Number of Different Protein Components	Number of People	% of Sample (n=12)
1	1	8%
2	5	42%
3	5	42%
4	1	8%

Note: The table shows the number of different protein components for the person interviewed in the 24 hour food recall.

Table 9: Estimates for Pre and Post Harvest Loss

	Estimated Post Harvest Loss (Kg)		Estimated Rice Production (Kg)		2005%	2007%	Average Reduction
	2005	2007	2005	2007			
Ngolala	100	62.5	750	1875	13%	3%	-10%
Kosa	100	50	625	925	16%	5%	-11%
Hiima	375	50	375	750	100%	7%	-93%
Kabiama	250	175	425	500	59%	35%	-24%
Mile 45	125	75	325	225	38%	33%	-5%
Benduma	100	50	75	250	133%	20%	-113%
Kenema	75	75	250	250	30%	30%	0%
Ngieyhun	25	50	200	500	13%	10%	-3%
Nitty Kori	50	25	175	200	29%	13%	-16%
Tekololl	37.5	75	250	300	15%	25%	10%
Maberoh	50	100	625	1025	8%	10%	2%
Mafunk	300	375	650	1150	46%	33%	-14%
						Average	-23%

Annex 7: Comments on the Draft Report of ProFARM final evaluation

Generally the report came up with no surprise. All of the things comments, strengths and weakness are those which have been discussed during the feedback review after the field work.

However I still found few things that need to be revisited. Please find below. For convenience I have done it on page by page bases,

1. Overall, based on project last reports, we need to have more precise quantitative information in the narrative. How many FFS, how many communities? How many groups? How many local councils? Etc. That will determine the scope of the work done by the project during its timeline.

I have added numbers where I have the information. I have to rely on project data for much of the data you request. So, I suggest Tedla checks the numbers and puts through any corrections.

2. Have you visited a community out of project area? If so, try to make a small comparative analysis (somewhere in the report!).

I did visit a non project community during the field work. However, I am reluctant to use the findings from the visit in the report. I felt responses were heavily biased showing the respondents desire for ProFARM to enter their community and distribute seeds, tool and infrastructure. Ideally we would have visited more non project sites for a better comparison but time was against us.

3. Include the study methodology in the report body and keep the tools as annexes
Done

4. Add the list of the resource person met as well as the resource organizations and groups

Done

5. If necessary, add a conclusion for the donor either in the executive summary or after the recommendations.

Done in Executive summary

6. Page iv under executive summary 2nd paragraph last page it says “**Individual farmers are not adopting many of the farming practices proposed in FFS**”. I don't agree on this generalization. I do agree that not all farmers are adopting the practices as we would have liked to. But to say they are not adopting at all is wrong. My argument is based on simple fact that I know many farmers who have adopted the practice and we have been reporting on this. I'm sure the consultant would also agree that this general statement doesn't reflect the reality.

I have removed this sentence. I do feel that most (if not all) of the individual farmers plots visited during field work had not adopted many of the farming practices proposed in FFS. However I only managed to visit two or three farmer's fields and it was the wrong time of year to see planting and cultivation practices. It was suggested that groups were necessary

to adopt FFS practices, (such as bunds) as they required more labor. I did see evidence of this.

7. Page 2 under 3.1.3 paragraph one last sentence, it says **“Monitoring has been interrupted by the original M&E officer being replaced. The original M&E officer was removed due to corruption suggesting initial M&E was unreliable.”** My comment here is that, since this report is an official document we have no strong ground to say the M&E monitor was terminated because of corruption. I think he was terminated because he was suspected (this is important) of corruption. The second point I would like to make is that there wasn't any indication that, what this guy has done wasn't reliable (see above underlined); rather he was very good in his work. So John may need to look at this fact.

Changed text

8. Page 3, section 3.1.5 under community contribution it says **“Communities have contributed raw materials, unskilled labor and food to many of the projects activities”**. Yes communities contributed local materials and unskilled labor but never food. I think there must be misunderstanding so, it needs to be re-phrased. Even during the PRD we have never asked communities to contribute food.

I have changed the wording to say food for laborers. Communities said they had given food during building work. I don't know if the project necessarily asked for food but I think it was given. ProFARM fieldworkers (and myself) were given food during this study by communities.

9. Page 3 section 3.1.6 under participation and the level of local ownership last sentence says **“Ownership of community assets built by the project is held by the community groups. Keys are usually held by wealthier group leaders for assets such as stores and wells”**. I don't think this is so. May be some of them are the better off but they are elected by communities and they are community representative. But they don't own these keys because they are wealthy. Here I think the sentence needs to be re-phrased to reflect the reality on the ground.

I think this is an interesting point relating to what they call in the jargon 'elite capture' i.e. the wealthier members of the village get the most benefit. I have added your point and discussed it more fully in the text.

10. Page 4 section 3.2.1 results to specific objectives and many other related places it talks about the low result of cassava production being as a result of **“This low level of growth could be due to errors in estimating volumes of tubers harvested and because some farmers had not yet harvested, what they saw as their 2007 crop”**. Well as discussed, the 2007 cassava was not yet harvested. Unfortunately the timing of the evaluation for this particular crop is wrong but it isn't the fault of the consultant. However I also think the report should at least clearly say why the result for 2007 is so low. Remember it isn't only for some farmers but all.

Noted. I think I have clearly said why the growth in cassava is less than rice, groundnuts and sweet potato i.e. – “This low level of growth could be due to errors in estimating volumes of tubers harvested and because some farmers had not yet harvested, what they saw as their 2007 crop.” End of second paragraph section 3.2.1

11. Page 8, section 3.3.2 under economic and financial viability last line says **“Experience suggests that assets given by ProFARM will not be repaired when they breakdown and require financial expenditure”**. While this is generally true for any project, the ProFARM project has tried to change this situation and had put in place mechanisms where by communities pay small money for services they get and use this money for managing the facilities including repair and maintenance as required. To this effect we have many communities who have started to collect service fees. These facilities include market centres like Baja and Mophorobi, Water wells, and seed stores. So, what I’m trying to say is the report doesn’t reflect this reality. Though the comment on the same page section 3.3.4 is generally true again there were efforts towards addressing the issue and as I have said above there are practical results towards this. Especially cassava processing machines are money making machines and I don’t believe communities will ask for repair assistance.

Text included in the report.

Comment on section 3.3.1

Is that mean that the FFS could not continue without MAFF agents’ support? I think No. It’s probable that the MAFF assistance will stop but some FFS may continue????

My perception is that the FFS will not continue without some form of facilitated support

That is all from my side,
Thanks,
Tedla & Ahmed