

<b>COMPONENT 1: FARMER ORGANIZATIONS AND FARMER-LED ENTERPRISES IMPROVE TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC SERVICES ALONG THE VALUE CHAINS.</b>	
<b>Planned Activity</b>	<b>Achievement</b>
<p><b>Training of smallholder farmers:</b> Training targeted smallholder farmers on major causes and impacts of climate change and their mitigation strategies including SRI technology and other good agricultural practices such as safe and effective use of agro chemicals. One thousand and six hundred (1,600) smallholder farmers will be trained. This will enable smallholders to understand and have broad knowledge of major drivers of climate change and how SRI technology contributes to adaptation and mitigation of climate change variabilities.</p> <p>The plan is to organize 8 hand-on training workshops each for 2 days in 2022. Furthermore, follow-up training on SRI technologies and practices will be provide to 1,600 through 4 training meetings each for 2 days to fill knowledge gap. Additionally, 120 lead farmers (LFs) will be supported to establish SRI demonstration/learning plots to showcase performance of SRI technologies to farmers and stakeholders as well as providing practical training of SRI principles to smallholders.</p>	<p>A total of four (4) training sessions for smallholder farmers, were organized in Dakawa and Mkindo villages through farmer-to-farmers (F2Fs) extension approach. These training sessions aimed at improving adoption rate of SRI technologies and other related practices to farmers. Additionally, other related components were integrated including Climate Change and its impacts; contribution of agriculture to Climate Change; and agricultural diversification. The training reached 2,921 (1,621 FE, 1,402 Youth) smallholder farmers through 166 (79 FE, 65 Youth) trained lead farmers which is 182.5% and 138% of the overall target for this year respectively.</p> <p>Additionally; after the training a total of 77 (28 FE; 26 youth) Lead farmers were provided with inputs (fertilizer and agro-chemicals particularly herbicides and pesticides) to establish SRI demonstration plots at a farm field of 0.25acres. Further to this, two monitoring missions were organized to ascertain the use of the inputs and application of general Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) on learning plots, number of farmers adopted SRI technology and asses productivity level. The monitoring revealed that, adoption rate has increased from 39% last year to 46% with average farm size of 1.2 acres under SRI, while the average yield of smallholder farmers has increased by 103.7% i.e. from 16.2 bags of 100kg under conventional farming to 33 bags under SRI technology.</p> <p>As part of SRI technology aspects, two (2) training sessions on Post-Harvest Losses Management (PHLM) was organized and successfully conducted to enable smallholder farmers who have adopted SRI technology and benefited from increased yields to reduce qualitative and quantitative losses of paddy during pre and post-harvest which estimated to be 30-40%. The Post-Harvest Losses Management (PHLM)</p>

	<p>is one of the Climate Smart Agriculture interventions that improve resilience of smallholder farmers ensure food security and more incomes. The training sessions imparted PHLM knowledge to a total of 64 (38 FE; 26 male and 34 youth) lead farmers; 6 (3 female; 3 male) extension officers who extend the knowledge to 1,407 (699 FE; 708 male and 777 youth) peer farmers which is 88% of the total target.</p> <p>Overall, this activity has surpassed the annual target of training and reaching out 1,600 smallholder farmers on SRI technology and other related interventions. However, capacity building and changing mindset of farmers is not a one-off activity, it is reiterating process to ensure large number of the targeted farmers adopt and utilize new technologies and innovations. Therefore, for the remaining period of the year; the project will support establishment and monitoring of SRI demonstration plots to increase the adoption of SRI technology.</p>
<p><b>Business linkages:</b> Support and strengthening business linkage of farmers with selected input-dealers in the ecosystem through facilitating four (4) meetings that will target lead farmers and farmer associations, individual farmers, and service providers. One hundred and twenty (120) individuals will participate in these meetings and each meeting will have 30 participants.</p>	<p>Three (3) stakeholder’s linkage meetings of lead farmers and farmer associations with agro-input dealers were organized at Dakawa and Mkindo villages which brought together 115 participants of which 97 (43 FE; 54 male and 31 youth) were Lead farmers; 12 were agro-input dealers and 6 extension officers respectively. This is 95.8% of the annual target of reaching out 120 individuals. The meetings were the vehicle to improve access and availability of inputs to smallholder farmers in the project areas which will stimulate adoption of SRI technologies and practices and ensure increased productivity.</p> <p>During the engagement meeting some of the critical issues were raised by both sides, such as timely availability of inputs especially fertilizer and the increase of input prices within the very short period of time. Some recommendations were put forward to enable smallholder farmers accessing required inputs at appropriate time and affordable price.</p>

	<p>To enable smallholder farmers accessing required inputs at appropriate time and affordable price, the following were the recommendations presented by both LFs and Agro-dealers;</p> <p><i>i)</i> The Government should strengthen the subsidy system to ensure every farmer can access the subsidized inputs. <i>ii)</i> ACT through the project should also facilitate the linkages between agricultural input companies and hub agro-input dealers with retail input dealers and farmer organizations for input credit and timely accessing of inputs to farmers. <i>iii)</i> The training on both technical side and service provision, should be provided to both the agro-input dealers, machine owners and operators to improve their services to farmers. This will help farmers to access appropriate technologies for accelerated growth in agricultural production. <i>iv)</i> ACT can develop an input-credit scheme to bridge the gaps in the financing of agro-input supplies for farmers. It can start with a pilot of few farmers and later scaled it up to link more agro-input dealers to farmers to boost their production and incomes. <i>v)</i> Agro-dealers should develop and strengthen their association which will help them in different areas including lobbying for policies and regulations that hinder the development of their businesses. <i>vi)</i> To counteract inequitable forces, ACT should continue on enabling environment to influence key policies that promote multi-stakeholder platforms, direct policy dialogues, and capacity building to support agro-input and service supply systems at the local, regional and national, levels.</p>
<p><b>Strengthen business relationship:</b> Organize 4 meetings each meeting participated by 30 FO leaders and representative lead farmers to facilitate strengthening business relationship with mechanization service providers. Farmers will be capacitated to develop and strengthen strategic partnerships with other service providers in the sector. In addition, 8 meetings for 120 participants will be organized in 4 sessions between farmers and off-takers. The target of these meetings are farmer associations that will be linked with off takers/processors.</p>	<p>During this reporting period, the project supported linkage of smallholder farmers with mechanization service providers at Dakawa and Mkindo villages. Three meetings were organized which brought together 119 participants of which 97 (43 FE; 54 Male and 17 youth) were Lead Farmers; 13 were mechanization service providers and 6 were Government extension officers, which is 99.2% of annual target of engaging 120 partners and stakeholders. This linkage platform offered an opportunity to mechanization service providers to market their services and create awareness on farm equipment and</p>

implements that make activities such as land preparation, crop production, harvesting, processing, and transportation more efficient.

During the discussion some challenges that facing smallholders to access of mechanization services were highlighted which include (i) limited number of mechanization service providers which leads to higher cost of services offered to farmers (e.g., the price for cultivating 1 acre was 35,000 in 2020 and raised to 60,000 in this production season of 2022 and (ii) timely access of mechanizations services is still a challenge to smallholder farmers. On the other hand; mechanization service providers were also presented their challenges which include (i) higher prices for equipment and implements; (ii) unavailability of spare parts and higher fuel prices are major direct limitations in mechanization service provision business and these have all caused the price of services offered to farmers to increase even more in recent years; (ii) lack of capital and credit constraints limit the mechanization service providers' ability to adequately use available opportunity of providing services to farmers at optimum performance; (iii) mismatch between machinery capacity and farm size; and (iv) limited knowledge of technical and entrepreneurship skills among mechanization service providers.

In order to provide services to farmers that are timely and cost effective, the following were the recommendations brought forward by participants during the linkage meeting:

*(i)* It is important to continue building the technical capacity of national and local institutions on sustainable agricultural mechanization. Follow-up sessions to reinforce the knowledge of farmers and operators are paramount. Thus, ACT through lobbying and advocacy should continue reinforcing the policies and plans which aim to improve mechanization services particularly to smallholder farmers

*(ii)* Through their associations, ACT should strengthen and help the development of general rules and procedures for the provision of mechanization services which should be participatory and include the views of both parties.

	<p>(iii) Emphasize should also be given to other small mechanization such as dryers, threshers and reapers which have the potential to impact positively on increased resilience of smallholder farmers while creating rural job opportunities and reducing work burden.</p> <p>(iv) Linkage of mechanization service providers with financial institutions/credit providers should be given priority as one of the keys implements towards improving accessibility of machinery services.</p>
<p><b>Training in Marketing:</b> Support organization of eight (8) training workshops with 6 sessions each attended by 30 participants for Farmers' Associations (FAs) to improve their capacity to aggregate for collective marketing. Bearing in mind that most of farmers are smallholder with smaller quantities of produce, one of the most reasonable ways for them to enhance negotiation power with off-takers is through aggregation and collective marketing.</p>	<p>The training workshop was conducted in project areas of Dakawa and Mkindo villages to create awareness and capacitate village extension officers and lead farmers with knowledge and technical know-how on effective aggregation and collectively marketing of farmers' produce. At the end of the training, Lead farmers from both Dakawa and Mkindo villages agreed to act together by formulating groups whereby voluntary action will be taken by the group to achieve common interests, hereby is aggregating and collective marketing.</p> <p>Four (4) meeting workshops, brought together 138 participants drawn from selected lead farmers and extension agents i.e., 132 (72 FE, 43 Youth) Lead farmers and 6 extension officers. The training workshop responds to the growing concerns in many rice producing districts in Tanzania on the need to rethink about current marketing mechanisms, and to devise innovative measures that will ensure that farmers access a wide and secured market. Therefore, the training suggested proactive strategies that are needed to ensure smallholder farmers benefit from new commercial opportunities.</p> <p>During this reporting period, farmers have aggregated and store in the village warehouses, a total of 2,871.7mt i.e., 1,031mt and 1840.7mt; and managed to sale 1,580.7mt and 1,644.6mt in Dakawa and Mkindo respectively. They sold their produce with the price ranges from TZS 115,000/bag to TZS 140,000/bag which is more than 100% price increase compared to the last year.</p>

**Support business linkages:** Facilitate organization of 8 meetings of 125 participants each meeting organized in 4 sessions between farmers and off-takers. The target of the meetings are farmer associations that will be linked with off takers/processors.

The linkage meetings of farmers with off-takers/processors were organized in Dakawa and Mkindo villages. The aim was to help smallholder farmers to access market, negotiate for good prices and reduce transaction costs to enhance economies of scale. Participants discussed issues related to market on both sides for win-win business environment. A total of 99 participants i.e., 41 (24 FE, 14 Youth) and 44 (19 FE, 16 Youth) lead farmers, 8 off-takers/processors and 6 Extension officers from Mkindo and Dakawa respectively attended the linkage meeting and discuss with each other on various issues regarding handling of the business and most important the long-term relationship and sustainability of their business; This was activity was achieved by 80.3% from the set target. Through linkages, off-takers explained the basics of their standard requirements and were able to markets their prices and offerings to fetch the supply from farmers.

Below are some of the improvements observed;

- I. Improved capacity for aggregation and marketing; The establishment of the linkages has improved the capacity of the farmers to aggregate their produce, store and market collectively.
- II. Sustainable market; Sustainable market; prior to the linkages, farmers were selling their produce randomly and individually at unfavorable farmgate price to different local traders and middlemen/aggregators as they were not well organized. Through the established linkages, farmers have been able to meet and sell collectively their produce to large off-takers and processors including Wilmer International Rice Millers. Collective marketing of the produce appears to have reduced transaction costs among off-takers and ensured them to get the large rice stock timely.
- III. Competitive prices; Even though produce was lower this season, the establishment of linkages has contributed to an increase in bargaining power among farmers, and on the other hand, the reduction of transaction costs to off-takers has contributed to an

	<p>increase in buying price resulting into improved income among farmers.</p> <p>IV. Production stimulation; The establishment of linkages between farmers and off-takers has also acted as an incentive and opportunity for farmers to produce more as they have the assured market for their produce.</p> <p>V. Improvement in the usage of weight measures; Noncompliance with standard weights and measures is one among the major bottlenecks in agricultural marketing. The establishment of linkages between farmers and off-takers in Mkindo resulted in the agreement to use the weight measures, something that has proved to be beneficial to both farmers and off-takers.</p> <p>So far, aggregation and business linkages that have been facilitated, a total of 1,580.7mt and 1,644.6mt have been sold with a total sale of Euro 741,852 and Euro 822,300 from Dakawa and Mkindo respectively. The largest buyer is Murzah Company limited who in Mkindo alone bought about 1,600mt this season. As mentioned, farmer sold their produce with the price ranges from TZS 115,000/bag to TZS 140,000/bag which is more than 100% price increase compared to the last year.</p>
<p><b>Financial literacy training:</b> Organize 4 training meetings for 90 local farmer associations (FAs) (for each meeting) on financial literacy</p>	<p>Four training workshops aimed at strengthening financial knowledge of smallholder farmers through lead farmer platform were organized in two locations of the project and attended by 152 (81 women; 71 men; 43 Youth) lead farmers and representatives from farmer associations/cooperatives and extension officers.</p> <p>The training was preceded by identification of knowledge gaps and the key findings were that majority of the participants attended the training are currently aware on the concepts of financial knowledge but the challenge is on the implementation of these concepts in their daily lives. And farmer groups/cooperative leaders to prepare their Bankable Business plans and support linkage to financial service</p>

	<p>providers (FSPs); at Mkindo and Dakawa villages in Mvomero district. The selected consultant was working closely with other stakeholders including lead farmers, farmer organizations from public and private sectors with technical guidance from ACT/FO4ACP project.</p>
<p><b>Development of Business Plans:</b> Organize 4 meetings with 90 Farmer Associations in each meeting to develop bankable Business Plan(s) and other processes for financial inclusion. The associations will be encouraged and supported to develop business plans and other financial inclusion processes that will be used to mobilize resources from the private sector players particularly financial institutions.</p>	<p>Similarly, four (4) meetings were organized and attended by 152 (81 women; 71 men, 43 Youth) Lead farmers and representatives from farmer associations/cooperatives and extension officers who were imparted with financial knowledge.</p> <p>The objective of these meetings was to support farm`er association/cooperative leaders to prepare their bankable business plans that will be used to attract loans/credits from financial service providers including cooperate banks. Experience from past linkage activities showed that, the banks need a simple loan write up that introduce individual farmer/member and his/her requirements. The project facilitated farmers to prepare simple template of business plan for individual application to acquire loans from financial institutions.</p>
<p><b>Linkage with financial service institutions:</b> Facilitate 4 business linkage meetings of 40 participants each composed of farmer associations (FAs) leaders and presentative farmers and financial service providers.</p>	<p>Four (4) business linkage meetings of farmer association leaders and representative farmers with five majors cooperate banks operating in Morogoro region were organized and the farmers had the opportunity to obtain first-hand information from these financial institutions. The linkage involved visiting those banks and among the banks visited include National Bank of Commerce (NBC) Ltd, Azania Bank Ltd, Postal Bank Limited, CRDB Bank Limited and Equity Bank Limited respectively.</p> <p>Generally, farmers have started to acquire loans through these linkages; for example, during the previous farming seasons, several members from both Mkindo Irrigation Scheme and Dakawa AMCOs were able to obtain loans from the various financial service providers including banks. A total of 9 farmers from Mkindo village received input/fertilizer loans from Equity Bank Limited Amounting Euro 1,312.24) and 5 farmers from Dakawa Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Society (AMCOS) also accessed Euro 6,032 from Brac Finance Limited, Victoria Finance Limited and CRDB Bank Limited.</p>



	<p>Therefore, a total of Euro 7,344.24 which is 91.80% of the annual target which is Euro 8,000 was mobilized during 2021/22 cropping season.</p> <p>To successfully execute the above activities, for the remaining period, together with continuing to provide financial training, it is planned that resources (funds) to be allocated to support technical experts who will closely coordinate the linkage activities. These will either be employees of ACT who will dedicate part of their time to the project or part time experts who will be engaged to ensure farmers receive substantial amount of loans to support their agricultural activities.</p>
<b>COMPONENT 2: ENABLING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<p><b><u>Assess the critical policy issues in the country that affect paddy/rice value chain (input, production, output markets; etc.):</u></b> The study will generate evidence of the gaps identified on any policies and these will be communicated to authorities for their intervention where possible.</p>	<p>Toward the end of last year; ACT under FO4ACP conducted research study to assess efficiency and effectiveness of collection of crops cess for sustainable development of Rice Value Chain; case in Mvomero district. During this time; the project supported organization of stakeholders' validation workshop to review and own the findings of the study. The workshop was attended by 20 representatives of farmer; agro-dealer; mechanization service provider; off-taker and processors; 6 extension officers and 4 district officials including District Agricultural; Irrigation and Cooperative Officer (DAICO); representative of District Executive Director (DED); Cooperative Officer and Crop Officer.</p> <p>The major areas that were highlighted regarding crop cess include; (i) lack of transparency on the use of crop cess collected by responsible authorities which raise concerns and questions about whether the collected taxes are actually being used as intended; (ii) high and double taxation on single crop has resulted in the rice market deflection in Mvomero district due to off-takers shifting to other rice markets; (iii) presence of unskilled tax collectors who have been causing various challenges including delays in transferring produces from the warehouses/machines due to their absenteeism; (iv) even though crop cess is burden to off takers and traders but the farmer is</p>

	<p>the ultimate victim of these levies; where off takers are compelled to purchase produces at a lower price.</p> <p>Moreover; some recommendations were put forward including; (i) Local government authorities should use the cess collected for improvement and maintenance of infrastructures including the roads connecting the scheme and the villages especially the Mkindo irrigation scheme, which would contribute to reduce the transport cost and hence the cost of production; (ii) The government should create guidelines and policies guiding all stakeholders in rice crop value chain to enable them know right from the beginning the requirements for cess charges; (iii) Regular surveys like this conducted by ACT are needed to assess market changes of paddy/rice; (iv) There should be free platforms without any political or economic affiliation where stakeholders will be free to comment on key issues relating to their affairs at that particular time; which can be through various forums and seminars; and (v) Tax (cess) collection should be harmonized across villages; once cess is charged in the source village/district, it should not be levied on the same goods in other village/district while in transit. LGAs should work together through established institutionalized inter-village forum, to establish mechanisms for dealing with multiple payments of cess and other charges.</p>
<p><b>Formulation/drafting of one (1) policy brief:</b> From the results of the study and the outcomes of the stakeholders' validation workshop.</p>	<p>ACT conducted a policy study looking into challenges and opportunities in the rice value chain and the study involved the crop as well as representatives from the Government. In general, after conducting the study, several challenges which are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Unpredictability of rice market, coupled with low prices</li> <li>ii. Limited access to financial resources</li> <li>iii. Inadequate facilitation of extension officers to provide services such as analysis of soil</li> <li>iv. Poor infrastructure; both irrigation and feeder roads in the rice fields</li> </ul>

	<p>From the above findings, ACT recommended the following;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. On the issue of markets; the government to strengthen the business and market relationships with other countries and avoid imposing export ban</li> <li>ii. ON Financial services, the government should strengthen the agricultural development bank (TADB) to enable it provide enough and effective loan with low interest rates to farmers</li> <li>iii. Irrigation and its enabling infrastructure, the government should prioritize in the national budget these enabling sub-sectors</li> <li>iv. The government should provide the extension tools to Government agricultural professionals</li> </ol>
<p><b>Facilitate the organization of 8 “Farmers’ Field Days”:</b> These will be organized to showcase the performance of SRI methodology to smallholder farmers and partners.</p>	<p>Under facilitation of ACT field officer and government extension officers, lead farmers organized localized farmers’ field days (FFDs) in their villages whereby they invited their peer farmers; agro dealers to come and witness the performance of SRI technologies and practices demonstrated in the learning plots. The field days were used as the platform for learning and knowledge sharing and among smallholders and other value chain actors.</p>
<p><b>Organize 2 District Based Stakeholders’ Fora:</b> Each fora will be attended by forty-five (45) farmers. In relation to this they will also facilitate 60 FAs to participate in 3 Zonal and National Agricultural shows (20 farmers per show)</p>	<p>Partners, from both private sector and public sector in the district have all together agreed to establish district-based ‘Food Security Platform’ that will bring together different stakeholders to discuss issues related agriculture; climate change and food security and also to strengthen public-private partnership within the district. This platform will also be used to advocate for enabling environment for public and private sector investments and agri-business development for increased production to ensure food security and poverty reduction among smallholder farmers. Based on its experience; ACT has been entrusted and selected chair for establishing it, including preparation of guidelines. About 2 stakeholder fora have already organized and attended by 40 participants from public sector (District Commissioner; District Executive Officer; district head of departments and technical staff; Sokoine university of Agriculture-SUA; Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute-TARI-Dakawa) and private sector (farmer</p>

	<p>representatives; agro-dealers; mechanization service providers; processors; off-takers; ACT; HELVETAS; etc.)</p>
<p><b><u>Organize five (5) awareness creation meetings on the importance of engaging women and youth in the development activities.</u></b> This will aim to improve inclusivity of women and youth in the project activities</p>	<p>During this reporting period; four (4) workshops were organized to create awareness on importance of Climate Smart Economic Empowerment (CSEE) to women and youth to address climate change; economic shocks and any other variability and consequently contribute towards inclusive and sustainable development by addressing interlinked problems namely food and nutrition insecurity; effects of climate change; and youth unemployment. The awareness creation meetings were attended by 112 individuals i.e., 106 (43% women, 38% youth) lead farmers (LFs) and 6 extension officers which is 112% of the planned target this year.</p> <p>During these meetings participants were able to share their experience with regard to climate change and how it affects their livelihoods. Among of the adverse effects of climate change highlighted include, soil erosion; frequent floods, persistence of short- and long-term drought; change of rainfall patterns, outbreaks of diseases and insect pests like army worms and fall armyworm; animals like rodents and Quelea-Quelea birds and lack knowledge and skills to manage climate change effects. Therefore, many farmers end up getting low output, loosing employment opportunities especially women and youth, malnutrition and ultimately food and income insecurity among households. Furthermore; the participants mentioned other challenges around agricultural value chain including market price fluctuations of paddy/rice and other crops; inadequate and untimely supply of appropriate inputs especially herbicides, insecticides; fertilizers and challenges related to policies such as crop levy and cess, bulk procurement of fertilizer that limit development and transformation of agriculture sector from subsistence to commercial (agribusiness).</p>

<p><b>Organize five (5) awareness creation meetings on the importance of engaging women and youth in the development activities.</b> This will aim to improve inclusivity of women and youth in the project activities.</p>	<p>Two (2) workshops were organized to create awareness on importance of Climate Smart Economic Empowerment (CSEE) to women and youth to address climate change; economic shocks and any other variability and consequently contribute towards inclusive and sustainable development by addressing interlinked problems namely food and nutrition insecurity; effects of climate change; and youth unemployment. The awareness creation meetings were attended by 112 individuals i.e., 106 (43% women, 38% youth) lead farmers (LFs) and 6 extension officers which is equivalent to 112% of the planned target this year. During the meetings participants were able to share their experience with regard to climate change and how it affects their livelihoods. Among of the adverse effects of climate change highlighted include, soil erosion; frequent floods, persistence of short- and long-term drought; change of rainfall patterns, outbreaks of diseases and insect pests like army worms and fall army worm; animals like rodents and Kwelea-Kwelea birds and lack of knowledge and skills to manage climate change effects.</p> <p>Therefore, many farmers end up getting low output, losing employment opportunities especially women and youth, malnutrition and ultimately food and income insecurity among households. Furthermore; the participants mentioned other challenges around agricultural value chain including market price fluctuations of paddy/rice and other crops; inadequate and untimely supply of appropriate inputs especially herbicides, insecticides; fertilizers and challenges related to policies such as crop levy and cess, bulk procurement of fertilizer that limit development and transformation of agriculture sector from subsistence to commercial (agribusiness).</p>
<p><b>Organise 4 meetings to train lead farmers and farmers association (FAs) on gender and youth related issues (20 women and youth each meeting)</b> including household nutrition security to build healthy and productive farming community; women and youth entrepreneurship skills development to enable this marginalized groups to diversify</p>	<p>During this reporting period, two training (2) workshops on Climate Smart Economic Empowerment (CSEE) were organized aiming at imparting women and youth lead farmers and extension officers with knowledge of climate change and its effects; the roles of women and youth to overcome the effects of climate change; how climate change affects women and youth; climate smart agriculture (CSA) as the</p>

<p>economic activities to generate more income as well as how the women and youth are impacted by climate change and their roles in adapting and mitigate climate change.</p>	<p>strategy to build resilience; adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change; SRI; Conservation Agriculture; Crop Diversification and Intensification as CSA components; entrepreneurship skills; etc. A total of 112 (43% women, 38% youth) lead farmers (LFs) and 6 extension officers participated the training which is 112% of the target this year. Lead farmers and extension workers were supported to prepare action plan to cascade the knowledge gained to peer farmers organized in groups of 20-25 members.</p>
<p><b>COMPONENT 3: BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES</b></p>	
<p><b>Resources will be allocated to cover the cost of permanent and part-time technical staff that are working and supporting implementation of the project.</b> The part-time staff will provide training to smallholder farmers in various aspects of their business as well as technical backstopping to the management. Overall, the staff are contributing towards the technical and administrative tasks of the project.</p>	<p>The support was successfully provided</p>
<p><b>An audit will be supported and conducted at the end of the year</b> as a requirement for the transparency and accountability of the organization to their members and partners.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Resources will also be allocated to cover the cost of office utilities and contribution towards payment of office rent for the organization.</b></p>	<p>The support was successfully provided</p>
<p><b>Contribution for the organization of Annual General Meeting (AGM)</b> that will validate the budget and work plan as well as assessing the achievements of the organization in the previous year</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Support organization of four (4) executive board meetings that will discuss specific issues following on implementation of day to day activities of the organization.</b> Management will present progress reports of the project at these meetings</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Provide support to office communication through subscription to internet service providers</p>	<p>The support was successfully provided</p>

<p><b>Participate in agricultural fair to showcase farmers produce and link them to other stakeholders (consumers, customers, other producers, other partners, etc.)</b></p>	<p>In 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2022, a total of 12 stakeholders (7 farmers, 1 Agro-dealer, 2 Processors and 2 Government extension officers) from Dakawa and Mkindo villages were successfully hosted and participated in National Farmers’ Agricultural show which was conducted in Mwakangale ground, Mbeya region. They were showcasing to other farmers/stakeholders their ideas, discoveries, and alternative solutions regarding climate change especially, Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) i.e., SRI technology, Good Agricultural Practices, Post-Harvest Losses Management (PHLM), and Rice Value Addition (RVA).</p> <p>ACT also, facilitated four (4) individuals (2 farmers, 2 processors) to participate in Agritech East Africa from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 at the Diamond Jubilee hall, Dar es salaam. During the agricultural show which was officiated by minister of Agriculture, Hon Hussein Bashe, ACT together with farmers had opportunity to demonstrate their work and showcase their products. The event attracted 200-plus international exhibitors from different parts of the continents.</p> <p>Correspondingly, they were equipped with different knowledge from other farmers, organizations, institutions, and companies including, YARA, SAGCOT, AGRA, and financial institutions such as Equity and STANBIC banks; Machinery companies such as Agricom for their future plans and implementation.</p>
<p><b>COMPONENT 4: COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY</b></p>	
<p><b>Prepare stickers, leaflets, newsletters, flyers</b> that will be distributed to various stakeholders in the country including farmers.</p>	<p>Five (5) articles of success story of the project were published in four different famous newspapers (FO4ACP/IFAD Online platform, Dailly News; the Guardian; Nipashe and Mwananchi).</p>
<p><b>Support mass media programs in the local radios and televisions.</b></p>	<p>Not done yet</p>
<p><b>Documentation of at least ten (15) best practices</b></p>	<p>A total of 12 success stories such as Increase in productivity through SRI; Cooperation between ACT and Government in project area; Diversification of income to farmers; Gender equality practices;</p>

	Improved business relationship between farmers and agro-service providers; and others were successfully documented.
<p><b>Facilitation of five (5) peer to peer learning visits and publishing at least five (10) publications in various media outlets.</b></p>	N/A
<p><b>Support the MID-TERM REVIEW (MTR)</b></p>	<p>ACT was selected among the nine NFOs to undertake physical Mid-Term Review (MTR) which was conducted by IFAD. The purpose of the review was to assess progress of implementation of the FO4ACP project to help in providing guidance on how best to improve implementation and measure success of the activities. The review also included the recommendations and suggestions for future implementations.</p> <p>The review was conducted on the basis of criteria that considers effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability and benefits/impacts on both short- and long-term basis. The review methodology comprised presentation/document review, stakeholders' interviews (farmers, agro-input dealers and farm mechanization service providers), physical visits to beneficiaries' farms and homes.</p> <p>The main objectives of the review mission were to;(i) measure the progress against the FO4ACP implementation plan milestones:- (a) measure the effectiveness of meeting a three-year milestone (2019-2022); (b) measure the progress towards meeting the five-year milestones (2019-2024); (c) validate the effectiveness at levels including local, national and regional level; (ii) review early benefits and expected long term benefits (sustainability) of the project; and based on the assessment above, to provide recommendations for areas of improvement, and to advise on appropriate actions to ensure positive benefits/impacts and sustainability of the interventions.</p> <p>The MTR was conducted by Mr. Thierry Lassalle-Lead Consultant; Ms. Jackie Nna-M&amp;E and Knowledge Management Consultant). The SACAU was represented by Mr. Benito Elias while FFD and AgriCord</p>



were represented by Ms. Tiina Huvio and Ms. Katja Vuori respectively. The mission was started at ACT offices and followed by field visit at Dakawa and Mkindo villages in Mvomero district council. At ACT office the mission started by opening remarks from the Executive Director; Mr. Timoth Mmbaga followed by presentation of the project implementation progress which was done by Mr. Hendry Mziray (ACT/FO4ACP Project Coordinator). After the **presentation**, the MTR team had an opportunity to ask questions, applauded and provided suggestions and recommendations in order to improve performance of the FO4ACP project and ACT at large. Some key questions were:

(i) Why supporting commercial rice farmers instead of family farmers as per objective of the project?

**Response:** ACT through the project wants to groom rice farmers to be commercially oriented so that they can be able to not only sell in internal market but also export.

(ii) It shows that the project has reached more than the targeted number of beneficiaries, was the set target underestimated?

**Response:** No. The approaches used to include demonstration plots and farmer-to-farmers (F2F) system that are being used to promote SRI technology and other project's interventions are very feasible and attracts many smallholder farmers

(iii) How do you share information to your members?

**Response:** ACT share information through various methods including website, mailing list, social Medias, newsletters, magazines, newspapers, radio and TV programmes.

The teams applauded ACT by performing well in different areas of;

(i) Lobbying and advocating for issues that enhance agricultural development such as the increase of national agricultural budget in fiscal year or 2022/23, improvement of agricultural extension services e.g., through lobbying by ACT and others, on 4th April 2022 the government provided motorcycles, soil testing kits and tablets to 7,000 extension officers to easily servicing farmers.

(ii) Reaching out 2,960 farmers compared to the target of 1,600 farmers on SRI technology and other GAPs. This indicate the approaches that were

used to promote the technology and other interventions were attractive to farmers and other actors in the rice value chain.

- (iii) Cross-cutting gender in all project's activities and targets i.e., there was good balance between women and men, also the inclusion of youth was well observed and maintained.
- (iv) The collaboration created between rice value chain actors (farmers, inputs-dealers, off-takers/processors) that enable them to share information and transact easily.
- (v) Lobbying for the Government to include the SRI technology in the National Research Agenda (NARA) which can help to further develop the technology so that it can be renovated while considering local environment.

Some of the suggestions and Recommendations provided after the presentation were;

- (i) ACT should develop a project that aim to provide and share information to its members who are now estimated to be 4.5 million farmers.
- (ii) ACT should continue lobbying to reinforce the construction of infrastructures especially irrigation infrastructures and 'last mile' roads from farms to warehouses-market/main roads which seems to be among the biggest challenge's farmers are currently facing.
- (iii) ACT should look at the possibilities of expanding to other areas to promote SRI technology and other GAPs.
- (iv) ACT may increase the collaboration with other National Farmers Organizations (NFOs) to share the knowledge, information and experience in implementing their activities.
- (v) ACT should document and share their success stories that are not only at impact level but also at the processes, tactics, and approaches used e.g., approaches used to reach out many farmers and how do ACT influence policies.

The mission visited and met with farmers and other rural based entrepreneurs; extension officers; SMEs at Dakawa and Mkindo villages where the project is being implemented. The field mission started with a curtesy call at the district office (District

Executive and District Commissioner offices). Key Findings at the Field level/the project's achievements included;

- (i) Overall, the project proved to be effective and successful. The MTR team and SACAU program manager applaud ACT that, both the quantitative data presented in the presentation and field qualitative data indicated that the project interventions are being implemented and achieving its outputs, outcomes and objectives as planned and hence leading to significant positive outcomes.
- (ii) The positive outcomes of the project are increasingly visible and felt by target groups. The most dramatic outcomes relate to the SRI technology which is increasingly being well received by farmers and have been quite transformative when it comes to agricultural production and productivity. For example, on productivity, smallholder farmers witnessed to harvest up to 45 bags per acre compared to 15-18 bags per acre under conventional farming system. Some key realizable outputs include;
- (iii) SRI principles (transplanting of single young seedlings at a wider spacing, alternate wetting and drying irrigation, mechanical weed control using hand hoe or push weeders and the application of organic fertilizers and agro-chemicals) are being appreciated and adopted by smallholder farmers;
- (iv) Linkage of farmers with agro-service providers which enable them to timely get the inputs and mechanization services.
- (v) Linkage of farmers with off-takers e.g., During the mission the Murzah Wilmar (MW) rice millers was buying paddy at Mkindo village at their warehouse at prevailing market price.
- (vi) Capacity building of farmers on financial literacy that enabled them to understand the loan conditions and ask all the necessary questions before taking the loan, such as application fee and process, interest rate, payback period and other costs attached to the loan payment.
- (vii) Awareness creation on gender mainstreaming and engagement of women and youth in all project interventions.
- (viii) Enabled farmers to diversify to other income generating activities e.g., Livestock keeping, fish husbandry, poultry business and producing and selling of rice seeds (QDS)
- (ix) Employment created to both youth and women e.g., labors for planting SRI farms, ferrying of produce from the fields to the warehouse.

**Observed challenges**

The participants shared some key challenges that they are currently facing in which some of them limit the efficiency of the SRI technology, including those related to input supply and high price of inputs; climate change effects such as prolonged droughts; poor irrigation and road infrastructure, weak farmers' groups/associations, unavailability reliable market, low offering price to the available markets, limited participation of LGAs; over-regulation of input business (about 5 licenses are required to operate agro-dealer business)

**Conclusion**-Overall, the evaluation has shown the FO4ACP project to be performing reasonably well. The project has good qualities considering all the assessed dimensions: relevance, extent of implementation, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The evaluation has also generated a lot of good lessons for improving the implementation of the project and sharing with other National Farmer Organizations (NFOs) in the Southern region and beyond. The FO4ACP project increasingly being appreciated and useful for the beneficiary in the district, communities and stakeholders. It is very well implemented despite some challenges. The evaluation has also found it to be relevant to the needs of the agricultural sector and targeted communities and in line with the national priorities.

**Recommendation**-These are main general recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of project during its remaining period. *They directly stem from the findings of the assessment.* They are complementary to the project intervention.

Recommendations from SACAU Program manager (Mr. Benito Eliasi)

- (i) ACT should continue come with doable and attractive solutions like farm demonstration plots and Farm to Farmers (F2F) extension approaches that have proved to perform well and attract many smallholder farmers
- (ii) ACT has the highest adoption rate but can think of expanding SRI and other GAPs to other areas as there are still so much potential.

	<p>(iii) ACT should develop the platform that will amplify the collaboration between government (LGAs), farmers and other rice value chain actors in many areas.</p> <p>(iv) ACT should not only focus on SRI trainings but also market of the produce and financial accessibility which showed to be the biggest challenge that farmers are currently facing.</p> <p>Recommendations from M&amp;E consultant (Ms. Jackie Nnam)</p> <p>(i) ACT should do things that can influence visibility and share not only success stories but also approaches and processes for other organizations to learn.</p> <p>(ii) ACT should consistently segregate beneficiaries into gender and age in all of the project interventions.</p> <p>(iii) ACT should redesign a way to increase ACT and SACAU visibility (she referred to logos and the logo of ACP should be included in all project's communication materials)</p> <p>(iv) ACT should increase its interaction with its members especially farmers associations and individual farmers (public) by increasing promotion of social medias, website scrollers, and ACT's magazine/newsletter.</p> <p>(v) ACT should recheck the targets and see if they can be reset; that goes with share with other NFOs about approaches and tactics that was used and helped ACT to exceed the targets.</p> <p>Recommendation from IFAD Consultant (Mr. Thierry Lassalle)</p> <p>(i) ACT should increase interaction with farmers at deeper level <i>"they should feel they're ACT and ACT is them"</i>. It can think of organizing rural civil societies where by different actors of the value chains (e.g., smallholder farmers; agro-dealers; mechanization service providers off-takers' processors; SMEs, extension; policy makers; projects, etc.) interact.</p> <p>(ii) ACT should continue involving government agricultural extension officers in SRI trainings, GAPs and other project's interventions since it helps to increase their knowledge (technical know-how) and build their capacity to improve extension services to smallholder farmers.</p> <p>(iii) ACT through the project should assist beneficiary farmers by leading them to donors' community and government to solve various challenges that are currently hindering development such as irrigation and road infrastructure.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(iv) ACT should design and develop new approaches and strategies that aims to bridge the gap between producers and the market by bringing the market to the project areas through infrastructure development particularly the 'last mile' infrastructures. This can be done achieved through undertaking assessment to establish bottlenecks that hinder availability of markets and their associated costs.</li><li>(v) ACT should see how it can empower smallholder farmers and rural based entrepreneurs <b>economically</b> with regard to what has been done in production side (increasing yields)</li><li>(vi) ACT should associate with the rice sub-sector authorities and share their experience and opinions on how SRI and other GAPs from the project areas of Dakawa and Mkindo could be expanded to other areas where rice is produced.</li><li>(vii) ACT should organize farmers exchange visits to other areas where they performing best in either production, aggregation, marketing, lobbying etc. Also, this can help to educate others especially those who are struggling with low productivity that our model is working and impacting; which can influence farmers, institutions and the sector as a whole to adopt.</li><li>(viii) Whenever, funds are limited, ACT should use its members and partners to promote best practices (e.g. SRI, farmer-to-farmers; forward-and-backward linkages; policy influence) to the wider communities</li><li>(ix) Otherwise, ACT has done a wonderful work to register the achievements as compared to other NFOs participating in the implementation of FO4ACP programme.</li></ul>
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