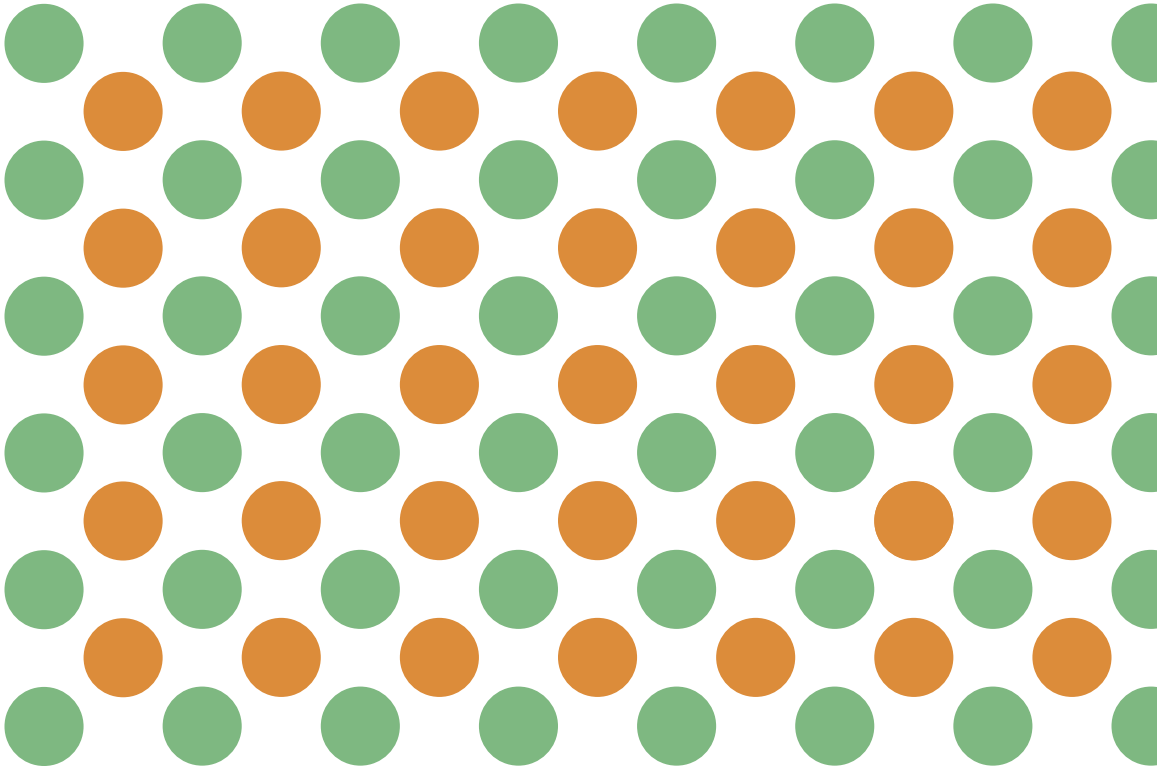
AIRTEA

Strengthening Agricultural Knowledge & Innovation Ecosystem for Inclusive Rural Transformation & Livelihoods in Eastern Africa

Country Level (Kenya) Third-Party Projects Supervisory/Monitoring Mission

Back to Office Report



December 2023

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Countries	Kenya
Dates	24th November – 5th December 2023
Persons representing FARA	Kwaku Antwi and Vesta Nunoo
Persons Met	Mr. Steve Muchiri, CEO-EAFF,
Other Participants in the Mission	Hillary Cheruiyot (AIRTEA Focal Persons at EAFF PIs of all the Third-Party Projects (PIs) in Kenya as well as their Consortium members.
Background	The monitoring mission was necessitated by the observations made and the lessons learned during the monitoring mission to Uganda. Observations from the Uganda mission revealed field visit revealed inappropriate application of guidelines in the use of project funds, and general inadequate knowledge and understanding of the projects by the final beneficiaries of the projects. The need to visit the third-party project under the AIRTEA was thus imperative having in mind that 65% of the total budget of the AIRTEA Project is with the third-party projects, and hence their contribution to the overall success of the AIRTEA Project is enormous. This visit was expected to offer the monitoring team the opportunity to provide technical and financial advice and backstopping to the third-party projects to guide their activities and expenditures to achieve their set goals and objectives. This first monitoring visit is targeted all the six third party projects in both Rwanda and Kenya.
Objective	Generally, this monitoring visit to the third-party projects in Kenya, which will be undertaken with EAFF is to ensure technical and financial adherence to the approved guidelines and workplans to project activities and financial expenditure of the third-party projects as agreed in their contracts. Furthermore, the issues of conflicts that have been brough to the attention of the coordination will be addressed during the monitoring visit.
Specific Objectives	Specifically, the monitoring visits aimed to assess implementation progress against projects targets and the AWPB, using the key indicators as defined in the logframes of the third-party projects. It was further to help identify and discuss actual and potential/emerging problems and constraints, and agree on solutions, changes, or improvements. It also allowed the coordination team to verify achievement reported by the third-party

	projects in their reports, and to interact with final beneficiaries of the various projects to understand the level of their involvement in the project implementation.
Approach Used	The Monitoring Team met with the Managers and Leaders of the Lead Institutions of the third-party project in a consultative meeting to discuss progress of implementation, major challenges inhibiting progress, and potential solutions to ameliorate the challenges. This was done through a PowerPoint presentation made by the various Principal Investigators (PIs) of the TPs. After these consultation meetings, the team together with the project managers embarked on a field visit to meet target beneficiaries, interacted with them, and undertook field inspection of their activities. At the end of each session for a particular TP, debriefing sessions were held, where the monitoring team discussed their observations with the Project Mangers. During the debriefing sessions, the challenges identified and proposed solutions to those challenges were thoroughly discussed with the Mangers of the various projects. The debriefing sessions further created the platform for the project managers to seek clarification on matters of concern.
General Observation.	The monitoring team found out that generally the TTPs were on track in delivering on their respective project objectives. The monitoring team advised the TTPs to start thinking about their sustainability plans, which they are expected to submit to the Project Management at the end of the first year. Specific key observation made include: **Technical Observations:** **TPP_01: Upgrading of silver cyprinid (Rastrineobola argentea) value chain through multi-stakeholder partnerships and novel climate-smart postharvest processing technologies and practices for improved rural livelihoods:** Design, fabrication, and deployment of hybrid solar dryers at the two project sites in Dunga Beach (Kisumu County) and Marenga Omena Beach (Busia County) have been installed, one at each of the project sites. The solar dryers are operational, and the women fish traders have testified to the benefits they have gained from the dryers in terms shortened drying times, hygiene, better sensory appeal, and reduced postharvest loss. Due to the sheer quantity of fish catch, especially in peak seasons, the single dryer at each site is woefully inadequate to make an impact on the omena drying at the two beaches. As such, a meeting of the FARA/EAFF team that visited the sites agreed that additional hybrid solar dryers be constructed, one in

	Dunga and two in Marenga. Therefore, one of the major procurements to be done in the remainder of the project duration is the purchase of the hybrid solar dryer materials, fabrication, and installation of the dryers at the two project sites. This will be accompanied by a complete hands-on training of beneficiaries on the proper use and maintenance of the dryers. **TPP_03: Technology Transfer through Innovation Systems: Enhancing Smallholder farmers' capacity for profitable and sustainable potato production.** The team visited the Nyandaruwa project site and interacted with the final project beneficiaries. Two demonstration plots where TIMPS are being practices were visited. Beneficiaries indicated that they had benefited from training in topics such as farming as a business, good agronomic practices in potato production, and value addition to potato. The beneficiaries indicated that the main constraint that hindered their production was the availability of quality seed which has been addressed through the project. The supply of certified seed was seen by the beneficiaries as very helpful, and they expressed their willingness to buy after the project exit because they had seen the economic importance of using certified seeds. The main challenge facing the beneficiaries was found to be the prevalence of frost due to the high rainfall that was experienced. The Team also observed that the supposed innovation platform was made up of only farmers. The project team advised the PI to ensure that the IP is well composed and undertaking their activities as expected of an IP. **TPP_04: Unlocking productivity within smallholder farming systems through use of geospatial technology (GIS), artificial intelligence and biological technologies in the face of climate change.** A monitoring mission to the project showed that project activities are being implemented as planned though a bit delayed. The baseline studies of the project have been completed and the final report prepared and available. Also, the first phase of an application to determine the status of crop health in the field has been developed and is being tested. Two innovation platforms have been established. An improved drought tolerant maize variety has been developed and supplied to beneficiary farmers to address the drought conditions in the beneficiary communities.

	TPP_08: Strengthening Cassava Innovation Ecosystem and Knowledge Transfer for inclusive rural livelihoods development in Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda: Activities of the project are being implemented according to the workplan. Key among them is the conduct of inception meeting and identification of beneficiary groups in Kenya. Furthermore, laboratory activities of the project in Rwanda and Uganda are also ongoing. New improved varieties of cassava have been identified and selected in Uganda and Rwanda for multiplication and distribution to beneficiary farmers. Also, the project has established a formal relationship with Kenazi Cassava Processing Factory in Rwanda and another processor in Kenya to supply produce from beneficiary farmers. The project has also established demonstration plots in beneficiary communities. The established demonstration fields were doing very well at the time of visit. Also cassava knowledge hub had been established where farmers learn best practices in cassava value addition to increase the income of local women and youth. **TPP_09: Digital Connectors for farming communities:** All the digital connectors have been identified in Kenya and Uganda. The digital connectors had been trained on module-based training programme which supports them to develop a business plan for their activities. The project had procured tablets for the beneficiary DCs to support them in the extension and advisory services using ICT. The team visited 2 of the DCs who had developed their businesses and were operating their business. The businesses include the establishment and management of an agrochemical shop, and establishment and management of a nursery for the supply of seedlings to local farmers. Both DCs had received a start-up capital from KeFAS to kickstart their projects. **TPP_10: Leveraging the Benefits of Multi Stakeholders Partnership to Support Rural Women and Youth in Dairy Sector in Kenya:** For this project, the monitoring Team had a meeting with all the consortium partners to resolved internal project management issues. Prior to the field monitoring, there had been issues raised with the membership of the consortium. A partner had left the consortium and a new partner had been brought on board to replace to departed partner. The lead institution, which is the Cooperative Alliance of Kenya was advised to officially write to inform the project coordinator about the appointment of the new partner to allow for the amendment of their grant agreement with FARA. Also, all the financial issues raised including poor financial reporting was addressed. The finance manger of the project at CAK was taken through her financial report where

	issues identified were addressed. She was expected to send a revised financial report to the project coordination. **Financial Observations:** It was generally observed that there are different financial reporting and management challenges. The common financial issues observed include inadequate knowledge in financial reporting, unavailability of supporting documents, use of different and varied rates of computing staff time, and non-understanding of the financial reporting template and wrong classification of transaction in the transaction listing template. No financial malfeasance or embezzlement was detected. We also observed strong commitment to resolve all transaction issues by third partners and the need to build capacity on financial report among all partners.
Key Lessons Learnt form the Workshop	1. Most of the 'IPs' we visited could be identified as farmer groups. 2. There is the need to organize routine meeting with the TPs to ensure that they are on track inn delivering on their objectives. 3. The Lead institutions need to bridge the gap between the consortium partners both technically and financially. 4. The MSP approach being used in the implementation of this project offers an opportunity for the TPs to learn from each institution. 5. There is the need to organize financial training for the Third-party project teams to enhance the preparation and reporting of the finances and technical report, which must always speak to each other. 6. TPPS need regular backstopping and coaching in the implementation of the activities.

The Third-Party Projects visited during the mission, and the date of visit is found in the Table below:

SR No.	Activity	Third Party Project	Dates	Responsible	Institution	Region to be visited
1	Office Meeting Field, Field visits and Debriefing session	TP 004	27th-28th Nov	Geoffrey	Koppert	Migori/Homabay
2	Office Meeting Field, Field visits and Debriefing session	TP 001	29th-30th Nov	Prof Ojijo	JKUAT	Busia/Kisumu

3	Office Meeting Field, Field visits and Debriefing session	TP 008	1st-2nd Dec	Dora	UoN	Taita and Kilifi
4	Office Meeting Field, Field visits and Debriefing session	TP 010	4th Dec	Judith	CAK	Nyeri/Embu
5	Office Meeting Field, Field visits and Debriefing session	TP 009	5th Dec	Peter	KeFAAS	Muranga

Annex 1: Photos of the Mission



