

# FINAL EVALUATION OF THE USDA-SUPPORTED LOCAL AND REGIONAL PROCUREMENT PROJECT IN RWANDA

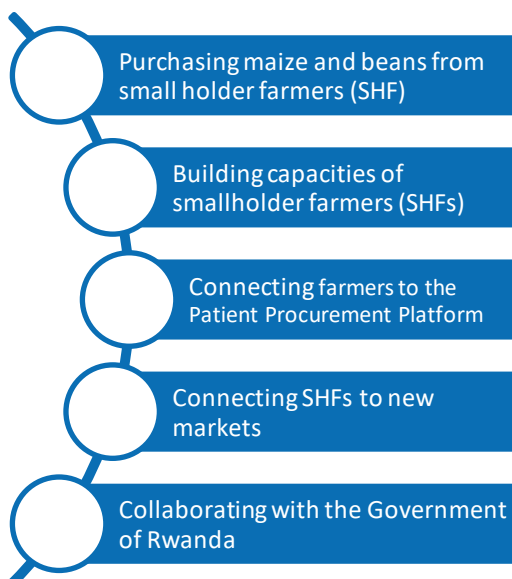
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## BACKGROUND CONTEXT

### Subject of the Evaluation

The Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Programme (LRP) was implemented by WFP Rwanda from 2017 to 2019 and was funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The LRP covered four districts (Huye, Gisagara, Nyaruguru and Nyamagabe), with a total budget of USD two million. The objective of the LRP project was to strengthen farmer cooperatives to promote increased use of locally purchased food. Expected outcomes included improving access to loans and markets and enhancing cooperative capacity to be reflected in increased sales, improved quality of produce, and reduced commodity losses.

LRP main activities included:



### Purpose of the Evaluation

The endline evaluation was commissioned by the WFP Rwanda Country Office and follows a baseline assessment conducted in November 2017. The purpose of the endline was to compare the situation at the start and end of the project. The endline data was collected in June 2019. The evaluation served the dual objectives of accountability and learning.

### Methodology

The evaluation was designed to assess the LRP's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

The evaluation covered the LRP cooperative activities and outcomes. The main limitations included the limited availability of cooperative executives and members, the limited specific reporting and lack of documentation existing at cooperative level.

The evaluation used a mixed method- before and after approach to examining the effects of the intervention. It was combined with a contribution analysis approach to identify whether changes can be attributed to LRP.

## KEY RESULTS

### Relevance

The evaluation team concluded that the project's design was relevant and well aligned with the government's and WFP's policies. The project targeted some of the most important constraints that SHFs face in developing agricultural activities in a profitable way (access to inputs, credit, capacity building and development of marketing).

## Effectiveness

The evaluation examined the cooperatives' capacity under four dimensions:

- Ability 'to be' was found to be relatively good, though ownership and existence of a common vision among cooperative members remained low.
- Abilities of cooperatives 'to do' was found to be limited, especially as it related to management tools.
- Ability 'to relate' - cooperatives developed business partnerships with buyers, however, they remained dependent on the LRP to make the linkages with these partners.
- Ability 'to perform' improved over the project period but remained fragile. Aggregation of products increased, and some cooperatives demonstrated a business mindset. However, cooperatives were still unable to demonstrate whether they were making profit.

SHFs behaviour was driven by the need to secure household food consumption, the lack of funds to invest in production, and a focus on minimizing production risks. Agricultural knowledge and practices improved over the project period. Exposure to market information increased but remained limited. Access to credit was still very limited at endline.

At the endline, buyers considered cooperatives as business partners. Quality of maize improved, and cooperatives managed to aggregate bigger volumes of products. Cooperatives were not selling directly to schools at endline and the model did not allow for this. However, the up-coming pro-SHF school feeding strategy should create new opportunities for cooperatives in the future.

At endline, maize was contributing to both farmers' income and food security (increase in production and sales, less post-harvest losses).

The LRP benefited women in several areas. Overall, maize planting improved significantly for female participants, while it did not for men. Women increased marketable surplus and access to markets through a more efficient supply chain. The purchase of maize and beans for family consumption

significantly reduced at the end line compared to baseline for females, but not for males. Women's access to extension services increased. Equal number of male and female SHF were found to be members of cooperatives, however, decision-making structures remained male-dominated.

## Efficiency

With the improved quality and with the post-harvest equipment that was supplied by the project, farmers were able to store their maize for longer periods. At endline SHFs were providing good quality and nutritious food that can be included in a school feeding program.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Operational Recommendations

1. WFP to prepare a short learning document on LRP's implementation and results for dissemination and organize an FTMA global evaluation in Rwanda.
2. WFP to work with RWARRI to prioritize cooperative capacity building activities.
3. WFP to continue working with ICCO Terrafina to strengthen the access to the finance component of the project.
4. WFP Rwanda to work with the WFP Regional Bureau and the Government, to develop a proposal and raise funding for a second phase of the LRP.

### Strategic Recommendations

5. WFP to liaise with relevant stakeholders to integrate a climate smart approach.
6. WFP to conduct a precise assessment of the different marketing options for small holder farmers.
7. WFP to continue to liaise with value chain actors and relevant ministries to continue to strengthen and formalize the maize value chain dialogue platform.
8. WFP to develop a market-oriented approach for the supply of post-harvest equipment to farmers.
9. WFP to conduct a study to assess the diversity of crops grown by SHFs to identify potential opportunities to supply a diversity of products for a school feeding programme.
10. As capacity and time constitute major constraints on the participation of women in cooperative decision making, WFP to tailor its intervention strategies to consider these constraints and seek to address them.

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### Reference:

Upon approval, full report of the evaluation is available at [www.wfp.org/publications](http://www.wfp.org/publications)

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