

Oxfam Novib Management Response to the Mid-term Review:

Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security (SD=HS)

of the SeedsGROW Programme (Project number: 61050063); running period: October 2015 until May 2017

This management response of the Oxfam Novib SeedsGROW Steering Committee (Arnold Galavasi, Corporate Director, and Gerard Steehouwer, Manager Thematic Units) was prepared with the advice of the SD=HS Steering Committee on the Mid-term Review (MTR). The MTR Steering Committee is composed of Andrew Mushita (Community Technology Development Trust), Alejandro Argumedo (Association ANDES), Pat Mooney (ETC Group), Bert Visser, Gigi Manicad (Oxfam Novib SD=HS team), and Karen Biesbrouck (MTR commissioning manager). The SD=HS Global Partners Committee (GPC)¹ provided inputs for the recommendations during its meeting on 5th May 2017.

The SD=HS programme has entered its fourth year of implementation of the five-year first phase. The MTR process comes at the right time to review and assess programme outcomes over the first three years and draw lessons for the remaining two years of the first phase. We are confident that the programme has made significant progress in setting the foundations for farmer empowerment in the management of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA) to improve food and nutrition security in the context of climate change. In some crucial aspects, the programme has exceeded its targets, e.g. in the formation of gender-sensitive farmer field schools (FFS). This dedicated effort was developed and tested as a model for implementation across our global programme. The mid-term review was conducted a year after Sida's significant 21% reduction of the total five-year budget. The budget cut and its aftermath implied a significant drop in the level of trust between major actors in the SD=HS consortium, as reflected in the MTR findings. Despite this, all partners have remained committed to ensuring meaningful outcomes to support indigenous people and smallholder farmers (IPSHF). We remain grateful to Sida and our other donors for their continued support and partnership.

The first four sections of this management response convey Oxfam Novib's reflections and actions on the MTR key findings regarding: 1) relevance of the programme; 2) outreach and effectiveness; 3) efficiency; and 4) sustainability. Section 5 assesses the quality of the MTR process and report. Annex 1 summarises action points in reaction to the MTR's findings, and Annex 2 corrects a few factual mistakes.

¹ Composed of the SD=HS consortium: Association ANDES, Community Technology Development Trust (CTDT), Southeast Asia Regional Initiative for Community Empowerment (SEARICE), ETC Group, Third World Network (TWN), GRAIN, South Centre and lead by Oxfam Novib.

The MTR's major findings, lessons learned and recommendations, and Oxfam Novib's response and plan of action

1. Reaction on findings regarding relevance of the programme

Oxfam appreciates the conclusions of the MTR team on the high relevance and strong conceptual foundations and elaboration of the SD=HS programme. In fact, the SD=HS programme is rooted in the long years of expertise of Oxfam Novib and the partners, acquired through earlier global programmes on agrobiodiversity policies and practices that successfully integrated scientific, policy, and developmental approaches and that were implemented in diverse policy fora, agro-ecological systems and socio-cultural settings. The SD=HS programme is particularly geared to scaling up and mainstreaming the innovative approaches towards strengthening people's biodiversity management for food and nutrition security in the context of climate change.

With regards to the **global focus of the programme**, the MTR team voices concerns about what they see as SD=HS being geographically scattered, which supposedly would hamper efficiency, exchange and mutual learning. Oxfam Novib and the Global Partners Committee (GPC) disagree with this conclusion and believe the MTR team has disregarded the importance of a global advocacy agenda addressing a 'broken' global food system. Moreover, climate change requires globally concerted efforts to reform and strengthen global public goods, which are cross-national. Securing these goods requires improved local-to-global governance to which SD=HS can contribute due to its current set-up.

In our view, one of the strengths of the SD=HS programme is its ability to present a global aggregation of evidence from a convincing diversity of experiences world-wide, allowing advocacy for policy change at all levels. For example, in advocating for the establishment of farmers' rights guidelines, the SD=HS programme consolidated evidence from farmers' experiences in climate change adaptation into a policy brief and an information document submitted to the Sixth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) and the ensuing Farmers' Rights Conference in Bali. Similarly, SD=HS partners gathered evidence from farmers around the world to prepare a critique of the impact of seed legislation on farmers rights that facilitated dialogue with the International Union for the Protection of New Plant Varieties (UPOV), where Oxfam presented its official position on reconciling farmers' and plant breeders' rights. Efforts towards gender inclusion in PGRFA management and use, as incorporated in SD=HS work, were included as case studies in the upcoming report of the FAO on the State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture. The lessons from the participatory global comparison and aggregation of evidence and joint development of gender-

sensitive methods and tools were highly praised by the MTR and are being used in reformulating and improving the PGRFA participatory toolkit (FFS curriculum, field guides, and baseline survey tools).

With regards to the **dual role of ON as grants manager and co-implementer**, Oxfam Novib wishes to challenge the view that it lacked experience in this dual role. In fact, Oxfam Novib has played implementing roles in Oxfam global campaigns since 2000, and since 2015 Oxfam Novib has incorporated this role in its core business (see Annex 2). Specifically, the IFAD co-financed programme Putting Lessons into Practice: Scaling up People's Biodiversity Management for Food Security (2012-2015), the foundation on which the SD=HS programme is built, had been successfully implemented and evaluated internally by all partners (ANDES, CTD, SEARICE) and an independent external evaluation commissioned by IFAD on the same principles. Oxfam Novib, ANDES, CTD and SEARICE note that the IFAD evaluation was positive on ON's leadership as grant manager and co-implementer & that the dual role debate focuses mainly on pillar 4 partners which were not used to Oxfam Novib playing that role earlier.

Oxfam Novib appreciates that the MTR report signals **the added value of the Oxfam Novib team** in (a) coordinating the development of training manuals and toolkits, (b) capacity building, and (c) action research, a role much appreciated by the field-based partners.

Oxfam Novib recognises the critique on the **lack of synergy between the pillars**. In fact, a joint advocacy agenda was formulated in early 2016, but this process was disrupted due to the crisis in relationships following the budget cut, although all partners continued their policy work and the Pillar 4 partners collaborated on access and benefit-sharing issues related to the ITPGRFA process. **Action:** This agenda will now be continued and strengthened as originally intended involving partners in all pillars and Oxfam Novib.

2. Reaction on findings regarding outreach and effectiveness

Oxfam Novib welcomes the key conclusion that the **overall programme implementation demonstrates clear progress towards envisaged outcomes with important achievements** via consistent and high-quality implementation of the FFS in PGRFA. This is leading to effective adoption of envisaged changes in terms of food and seed security in view of climate change. Oxfam Novib also welcomes the MTR team's conclusion that the FFS for PGRFA leads to a genuine process of empowerment of FFS members (women and men), leading to increased confidence and autonomy and direct or indirect contributions to gender equality. However, Oxfam Novib disagrees with the MTR's notion that the focus on PGRFA, providing food and nutrition security under conditions of climate change, is a narrow one. Consistent with Sustainable Development Goal 2, Oxfam Novib regards PGRFA as an important livelihood asset of the poor. Nevertheless, Oxfam Novib agrees to further define how PGRFA conservation and use can be optimally directed towards this wider livelihood improvement agenda.

Action: Oxfam Novib will include text on how efforts on PGRFA conservation and use can be optimally directed towards this wider livelihood improvement agenda.

For the **FFS related to nutrition (pillar 3)**, we recognise the MTR team's conclusion that the strong focus on neglected and underutilised species (NUS) enabled the inclusion of nutritious species into the daily diets of the poor. Oxfam Novib agrees that improved nutrition is indeed the overall goal of pillar 3, for which work with NUS and investments in gender balance are instrumental. Our goal is to improve nutrition by providing *access* to diverse, nutritious diets using locally available, biodiverse foods, through increased production and utilisation of food plants including NUS. Empowering women is essential in the pathway from agricultural livelihoods and food systems to household food security and nutrition. Oxfam Novib's opinion is that such adaptation is to a large extent a matter of presentation, rather than a major change in the approaches and activities of pillar 3, and will ensure that its documentation and communication materials on this will be improved.

With regards to the **farmer seed enterprise (FSE) "Champion Seeds" (Pillar 2)**, Oxfam Novib agrees with the MTR that since it has just become operational, it is too early to draw major conclusions. Nevertheless, the fact that this farmer-owned cooperative enterprise is now fully operational is itself a source of pride. Oxfam Novib appreciates the reviewers' concern that farmers' seed production practices could be negatively influenced by the FSE's activities. However, we believe the very fact that the FSE's activities are undertaken by farmers involved in other SD=HS activities will help to observe any undesired side-effects at an early stage. In our analysis, the provision of good seeds of both small grains and maize (open pollinated varieties – OPV – and hybrids) may help to ensure adapted and appreciated diversity in the small-scale farmers' seed systems. The adaptation to local conditions of the produced maize varieties (in the case of maize hybrids, the parental lines are also under the control of the SD=HS partners) is a major condition for their successful uptake.

Action: Oxfam Novib will ensure that the FSE implementation is complementary with the FFS activities and the farmer seed systems as whole. Since a portion of the customer base of Champion Seeds is anticipated to be the CTDT FFS participants, this should be easy to track. This will be observed and documented both in the first and second seasons of the pillar 2 implementations (by Q4 of years 4 and 5 of the project period). SD=HS plans to develop a thorough sustainability plan to ensure continuity after the end of the programme period.

For **pillar 4**, Oxfam Novib agrees with the MTR recommendation that the consortium partners should double their efforts to look for cooperation and synergies in relation to **national and international policy advocacy**. The SD=HS programme will continue to pursue its evidence-based policy advocacy, from local to global experiences of all pillars as agreed and adapted during the 2016 GPC meeting.

Action: All partners agreed to collaborate more closely when the GPC met in 5 May 2017, and discussions are underway to establish a coordinated approach towards the next meeting of the ITPGRFA Governing Body in Rwanda in October 2017. SD=HS will formulate a plan to highlight the policy findings of its grassroots partners as well as the agenda-relevant work of pillar 4 partners, particularly about farmers' rights.

With regards to the **programme outreach**, Oxfam Novib and partners disagree with the MTR team's conclusion that, except for Zimbabwe, it is still relatively limited. Contrary to what the MTR report seems to imply, the scale-up results in Zimbabwe are not an exception, but the product of a deliberate

intervention design that demonstrates the options and conditions for scaling up. This design builds on experiences gained over the last decade through previous programme efforts in the Mekong Delta region, where the 400 seed clubs – which were a direct spin-off by the FFS – currently provide 30% of all rice seed requirements. The earlier successful worldwide adoption of integrated pest management (IPM) approaches through the spread of FFS in the 1980s and 1990s form a reference for this ambition. Because of the continuous efforts of SD=HS partner ANDES, the government of Peru is now adopting policy changes that will allow scaling up along the same lines as in Vietnam and Zimbabwe. **Action:** Oxfam Novib will explicitly report on this aspect in the upcoming annual report to Sida.

Oxfam Novib questions the relevance of the MTR's calculations on the unit cost per FFS. For the SD=HS programme, it is the degree of scaling up reached – rather than a calculation of FFS costs under programme management – that constitutes the real indicator of success. Based on these experiences, Oxfam Novib is confident that the programme is now in a much better position to scale up and thus to significantly increase impact. Oxfam Novib disagrees with the recommendation to work in a more 'quick and dirty' way, as high-quality work leads to greater interest and commitments among farmers and allied institutions, which in turn is resulting in the exponential expansion of FFS in Zimbabwe.

Action: In the last quarter of 2017, Oxfam Novib and CTDI will facilitate a farmer-led assessment of FFS to better understand their needs, successes and potential improvements in implementation. Based on that, ON will reflect on ways to further improve the programme's scale-up pathways and the alliances needed to support this. Oxfam Novib will also conduct a gender-sensitive seeds network mapping, assessing and illustrating the spread of seeds and knowledge beyond the FFS communities, an activity scheduled for the first quarter of year 5. Oxfam Novib will document FFS costings in relation to reach, and annex the calculation to the annual report for Year 4 in March 2018.

Oxfam Novib agrees with the MTR recommendation to develop and implement a strategy to interest and involve young people. All partners have some experience with youth-related activities.

Action: In last quarter of 2017, ON with CTDI, ANDES and SEARICE will consult several FFS for their opinion on how to attract youth, and attempt to develop a concept note which involves youth in FFS by the first quarter of 2018. Oxfam Novib's Youth as Active Citizens' team will be consulted in this process.

Oxfam Novib agrees with the MTR report that gender mainstreaming is an essential component of the SD=HS programme's work. However, Oxfam Novib holds the opinion that the SD=HS programme already addresses gender mainstreaming throughout the programme, as evidenced in the details of its baseline surveys, FFS modules and the assessed participation and empowerment of women. In this context, SD=HS has broken the mobility constraints of women wishing to participate in the FFS, and the FFS programme specifically addresses the identification of women's trait preferences and breeding objectives.

Action: Oxfam Novib wishes to reconfirm its dedication to this essential objective of the SD=HS programme. In that context, Oxfam Novib agrees with the reviewers in noting that effective empowerment of women can be achieved only by the efforts of both women and men, in line with agreed

targets of 50-60% participation by women. It will organise an internal Oxfam gender mainstreaming review to feed into the final year's action plan.

3. Reaction on findings regarding efficiency

With regards to the **accountability of the governance structure**, Oxfam Novib acknowledges that the Sida budget cut, and the non-renewal of the contract of the Centre for Agroecology Water and Resilience (CAWR) created an almost break down in trust among some members of the consortium. However, the GPC agreed on the criteria and process for the absorption of the budget cut, and on the responsibility of Oxfam Novib to make the final decision. Oxfam Novib acknowledges that the other partners initially disagreed with our final decision, which had strained relationships. We do, however, appreciate the MTR team's positive note that – as was the GPC's intention – the grassroots work was not affected by the differences of opinion. During its recent meeting the GPC agreed with the MTR recommendation that the function of the consortium needs to be reviewed, towards becoming an advisory body. In consultation with all implementing partners, Oxfam Novib opts to elaborate the second option suggested by the reviewers, noting that an Advisory Global Programme Committee is indispensable for the proper functioning of the programme in the remaining programme period and the future, and stating that we wish to make optimal use of the expertise and networks of all the partners for the benefit of programme effectiveness. Thus, Oxfam Novib foresees a continued role for the Global Programme Committee in advice on programme content. Contrary to the MTR team, ON and all the partners are convinced that repair of damage to relationships is possible, and discussing the MTR report was part of the process of strengthening these relationships.

Action: ON will present and discuss changes to the text of the SD=HS governance document to better reflect the advisory role of the GPC. This will be conducted at the next GPC meeting in October 2017, at the time of the ITPGR GB7 in Rwanda, or via a conference call.

Regarding the **quality of programme implementation**, Oxfam Novib welcomes the MTR team's finding that this has been good for key activities of pillars 1 and 3, as reflected in the baseline surveys, and particularly in the trainings of trainers for the FFS, which the MTR assessed as conceptually and operationally strong and guaranteed by capable and motivated staff at country level. It is unfortunate that the MTR team has not managed to assess the key roles of the community seed banks in Zimbabwe and Peru, which are designed to be run independently by the communities and form a key approach to realising food security and resilience to climate change. Oxfam Novib has noted with interest the recommendation of the MTR to integrate pillars 1 and 3. Whereas Oxfam Novib appreciates the arguments raised for such integration, Oxfam Novib believes that it is not desirable: it might lead to NUS and nutrition, as relatively new topics, not getting the proper and explicit attention they need; and when gender issues are integrated in wider approaches, the aspects dealing with a more balanced and more gender-sensitive approach may be lost. Therefore, Oxfam Novib wishes to maintain pillar 3 as a separate pillar. Nevertheless, we believe that there is room for adjustment and fine-tuning of the processes and activities undertaken in these two pillars. In particular, pillar 3 work might ideally be preceded by pillar 1 work, and having both addressed in the same communities may increase the cumulative impact.

Action: In the year 4 annual report in March 2018, Oxfam Novib will assess interlinkages between pillars 1 and 3 and the sequence of the related processes and activities, and adjust year 5 planning accordingly.

Regarding Pillar 2, devoted to the development of the FSE, we acknowledge that this was relatively new territory for both Oxfam Novib and CTD, and therefore approached through careful, professional steps. Aside from several consultations with stakeholders in the seed business, both international and in Zimbabwe, the establishment of the FSE involved the recruitment of two dedicated staff: an experienced plant breeder formerly with CIMMYT² and ICRISAT³ as the seed expert, and the former finance manager of Pioneer Seed. The programmes built on Oxfam Novib's experiences in private enterprise development and impact investments since 2014. The SD=HS programme will be more strongly linked to a growing project portfolio Oxfam Novib manages on youth and SME development in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, and the unlimited company Oxfam Novib established on impact investing, called Triple I (Impact).

Regarding Pillar 4, in stressing the importance of local-to-global policy advocacy, Oxfam Novib agrees with the MTR that some opportunities have been missed, and that collaboration between all pillars and partners in the policy arena needs to be strengthened. In response, Oxfam Novib is eager to discuss: a) how the expected policy outcomes of all pillars for the remaining period meet our agreed programme goals; and b) how the coming narrative reports will clearly describe their achievements and relevance to SD=HS. On the **quality of the programme management**, we welcome the MTR's conclusion that the SD=HS programme and its individual partners use a clear set of management rules, procedures and tools, including financial and content-related planning and reporting, and that it succeeded in ensuring accountability to the donors. We further welcome the MTR team's conclusion that, following the inception year, the human resources at all levels were found to be of good quality. We agree with the MTR team's conclusion that the high staff turnover at ON sometimes appeared problematic. However, this has not affected the programme management as the Senior Programme Manager who became SD=HS Programme Leader in March 2017 has continuously led the programme from proposal writing, inception and implementation up to the present.

ON agrees that the MEAL systems need to be upgraded by incorporating indicators and targets from the methodological workshop. These will be incorporated in ongoing participatory planning and monitoring at the level of the FFS.

Action: See action 12 in response to relevant MTR recommendation

4. Reaction on findings regarding sustainability

The MTR Steering Committee decided that this criterion will not be specifically covered due to the need to limit the scope of the MTR.

² [International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center](#)

³ International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics

Action: Sustainability criteria will be a key focus of the final evaluation in Year 4. SD=HS will schedule development of a thorough sustainability plan to ensure continuity after the end of the programme period.

5. Assessing the quality of the MTR process and report

The Steering Committee of the MTR has given ‘discharge’ to South Research, as the report has sufficiently covered the agreed Terms of Reference (ToR) key points. The ToR originally included an assessment of former SD=HS partner CAWR and its three national partners on issues related to governance, efficiency and contract management. However, as CAWR initiated a legal process in reaction to Oxfam Novib’s non-renewal of its contract, Oxfam Novib decided that it was not possible to include CAWR and its three national partners in this MTR. Oxfam Novib and CAWR are seeking to resolve the contractual issue in amicable manner.

Action: Oxfam Novib remains committed that once the legal issue is resolved, the CAWR part of the MTR will take place and will form an addendum to the current MTR report, involving the GPC.

With regards to the quality of the MTR assessment, Oxfam Novib concludes that the level of participation of partners and beneficiaries in the different stages of the evaluation process is appropriate overall, especially at country level. The MTR team made its own choices when dedicating its time to data collection with the various partners, giving priority to verifying what happened in Southern countries. With regards to managing time allocation, the MTR team at times even went beyond the ToR, particularly with pillar 2. However, while the MTR team paid attention to the achievements of each individual pillar 4 partner from a more general perspective, Oxfam Novib has noted that – although it was complimentary of many specific seed policy initiatives conducted individually and/or collectively by pillar 4 partners – the MTR team has not been able to fully assess the added value of the Pillar 4 partners to the SD=HS programme by reviewing outcomes of their plans.

In a similar vein, Oxfam Novib staff felt that they had not been sufficiently interviewed, especially on the key issue of ON’s dual role as grant manager and implementing organisation. The methods for calculations of the FFS costings were not presented to the MTR Steering Committee or the field-based partners. As explained above, this affects some of the lessons in the MTR. A few key factual mistakes in the MTR report remain; please see Annex 2 for corrections. For the final external evaluation, Oxfam Novib and partners recommend that farmer-led evaluations be fed into an internal review performed by all the programme partners, which could be followed by an external peer review of practitioners per pillar, including due emphasis on the local to global advocacy agenda and its results.

Annex 1: Summary of Oxfam Novib's response and actions per MTR recommendation

	MTR recommendation	ON response	ON action
1	<p>The consortium members should engage in an effort to re-define the consortium foundations and working principles and to act accordingly. In theory, there are two options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SD=HS acts as a “genuine” consortium, which implies that all managerial and substantive decisions are taken <i>jointly, irrespective of the members’ power position</i>. 2. SD=HS becomes unambiguously an ON-chaired and steered structure – a kind of a special purpose vehicle in which ON takes all key managerial and substantive decisions. 	<p>A lesson learned from this MTR is about the intention behind the consortium framework set-up of the SD=HS programme’s governance. The term ‘consortium’ implies like-minded organisations working together with the same level of responsibilities, co-steering progress and sharing risks and opportunities. During the recent GPC meeting it was mutually agreed that the term ‘consortium’ is not valid, as ON has a clear separate role as contract manager, taking full liabilities and therefore overheads.</p> <p>ON and the GPC agree that the functioning of the consortium needs to be reviewed towards becoming an advisory body. In consultation with all implementing partners, Oxfam Novib opts to elaborate the second option suggested by the reviewers, noting that an Advisory Global Programme Committee is indispensable for a proper functioning of the programme in the remaining programme period and the future, and stating that we wish to make optimal use of the expertise and networks of all the partners for the benefit of programme effectiveness. Thus, ON foresees a continued role of the Global Programme Committee in advice on programme content.</p>	<p>Action 1: in October 2017, at the time of the ITPGR GB in Rwanda or earlier via a conference call, ON will present and discuss text changes on the SD=HS governance document to better reflect the advisory role of the GPC. This will be conducted at the next GPC meeting.</p>
2	<p>FFS in all countries have an agenda that is far broader than PGR-related activities. This should be considered as an indicator of the programme’s success in empowering local people. While the programme should preserve PGR and the related empowerment</p>	<p>ON agrees that empowering local people is an indicator of the programme’s success. ON also agrees that – while focusing on the use of PGRFA conservation and use – livelihood improvement entails a much wider agenda, to which the conservation and use of PGRFA is instrumental. ON wishes to note that balancing these more focused and</p>	<p>Action 2: by first quarter of 2018, ON will have included a text in its revised document on scale-up pathways on how efforts on PGRFA conservation and use can be optimally directed</p>

	<p>perspective as its core business, it should embrace these 'other' FFS dynamics. Local staff members in consultation with ON's expert team already support FFS in implementing their broader agenda but are not always sufficiently qualified to do so (e.g. in the case of income-generating activities). The programme should define clearer policy and practice in this regard, also because sustaining gains related to food security and bio-diversity might become possible only when these can go along with income generation and livelihood improvement, which are often the most urgent demands of the programme participants.</p>	<p>wider objectives has been an ongoing concern of all partners and staff from the programme onset, as is also clear from activities and accomplishments of both CTDT and ANDES in the areas of income generation and provision of savings and loans. However, ON disagrees with the notion of the evaluators that the focus on PGRFA, providing food and nutrition security under conditions of climate change, is a narrow one. ON regards PGRFA as an important livelihood asset of the poor. The FFS is an empowering approach and can succeed only with a focus, such as PGRFA. There are no FFS in the world that carry many development and research agendas. The focused empowerment process strengthens the farmer to address other poverty causes: cultural identity, land rights, market access, value addition, human rights, etc. But the FFS must succeed first in contributing to the effort for these issues.</p> <p>Nevertheless, ON agrees to further define how efforts on PGRFA conservation and use can be optimally directed towards this wider livelihood improvement agenda.</p>	<p>towards this wider livelihood improvement agenda.</p>
3	<p>Work on pillar 1 and 3 should become part of one integrated approach whereby the expertise and experience gained with pillar 1 approaches and tools can be used to lay down a solid foundation for subsequent specific pillar 3 actions, the relative importance of which will depend on the local nutritional situation (see also recommendation 10). The process can be facilitated by integrating the principle of nutrition-sensitive agriculture as a key consideration from the start of the implementation of pillar 1 activities, which might imply that competent government</p>	<p>ON has noted with interest the suggestion of the evaluators to integrate work on pillars 1 and 3. While it appreciates the arguments raised for such integration, ON believes that a full integration is not desirable as NUS and nutrition are relatively new topics that need proper and explicit attention, and integrating gender issues in wider approaches risks losing aspects dealing with a more balanced and more gender-sensitive approach. Therefore, it wishes to maintain pillar 3 as a separate pillar. Nevertheless, ON believes that there is room for adjustment and fine-tuning of the processes and activities undertaken in these two pillars. In particular, pillar 3 work might ideally be preceded by pillar 1 work, and having</p>	<p>Action 3: In the year 4 annual report in March 2018, ON will assess interlinkages between pillars 1 and 3 as well as the sequence of the related processes and activities, and it will adjust its year 5 planning accordingly.</p>

	services in the area of nutrition are associated with programme implementation from its early stages (see the experience of Zimbabwe).	both addressed in the same communities may increase the impact of investments in both.	
4	Presently, the unit costs for FFS and participant support are substantial, with the notable exception of Zimbabwe. Ways should be explored to increase cost effectiveness and efficiency, taking Zimbabwe as a study case. Apart from this, and considering the large body of knowledge and expertise gained over recent years and prior to the programme, there should be consistent and continued attempts to alleviate the present approaches in the direction of less comprehensive and more 'quick and dirty' ways of working.	<p>ON appreciates the evaluators' attention to the cost-efficiency of FFS. However, ON believes the figures provided by the evaluators are ill-informed and substantially exaggerated, as for this calculation the total budget of pillar 1 and 3 was used plus pro rata the budget for contract management and 7% ACR (the total was then divided by the number of FFS and the number of FFS participants). A more realistic view of the unit costs for FFS and participants could have been reached by presenting the direct costs of the countries that are managing the FFS and dividing this by the number of FFS and participants.</p> <p>While the MTR seeks to reduce the unit cost for FFS by integrating pillars 1 and 3, ON believes the real gain lies in options to facilitate the uptake of FFS – making use of materials and experience gained in SD=HS by third parties, either in collaboration with SD=HS or independently and autonomously. In this context, the unit costs of the FFS organised by SD=HS is not a relevant indicator; the facilitated and autonomous uptake of SD=HS FFS approaches would be a more important indicator. ON disagrees with the recommendation to work in a more 'quick and dirty' way, as high-quality work leads to greater interest and commitments among farmers and allied institutions, resulting in the exponential expansion of FFS in Zimbabwe.</p>	Action 4: In the last quarter of 2017, ON and CTDI will facilitate a farmer-led assessment of FFS to better understand their needs, successes and potential improvements in implementation. Based on that, ON will reflect on ways to further improve the programme's scale-up pathways and the alliances needed to support this. Oxfam Novib will also conduct a gender-sensitive seeds network mapping, assessing and illustrating the spread of seeds and knowledge beyond the FFS communities (an activity scheduled for the first quarter of year 5). In addition, ON will document FFS costings in relation to reach and annex the calculation to the annual report for year 4 in March 2018.
5	Related to the previous recommendation, the programme should pay more attention to supporting and following up the PGR-related changes promoted (in view of	ON has long since realised that proper scaling up is feasible only through close collaboration with other strategic organisations and government departments. ON also believes that substantial scaling up can be realised	Action 5 and 6: ON wishes to reconfirm its dedication to this approach, as is also evidenced by the

	increased food and seed security and policy interventions), in the first instance at the level of FFS members (on their own fields) and primary beneficiaries (i.e. the SD=HS households in the communities where FFS activities take place). Following up changes at these levels should become part of a comprehensive monitoring system (see recommendation 12 below).	only if other organisations and government departments adopt the SD=HS approaches as their own. ON notes that not only in Zimbabwe but also in Vietnam (Mekong Delta), national to local government departments and authorities and universities have been essential for the successful scaling up that has been achieved. The availability of improved and better-adapted seeds from national and international breeding institutions formed another major condition for the successful scaling up of the FFS approach.	report on scaling up following the preceding IFAD project ⁴ .
6	Related to recommendations 4 and 5, the programme – mainly via its local implementing partners – should explore the possibilities of cooperation with local organisations with a large constituency base and other strategic partners (such as farmers’ organisations or movements and networks, national women’s organisations, government bodies and universities) with a view to integrating these in future scaling-up strategies.	Finally, ON acknowledges the importance of working closely with farmers’ organisations. For example, CTDI has a longstanding formal relationship with the Zimbabwe Farmers’ Union (2 million members) and provides training assistance to La Via Campesina.	
7	All over the world and in most programme areas , young people (men and women) are leaving their communities or have no interest in deriving a livelihood from agriculture as their elders and parents do. Rural communities are often losing their most dynamic actors. While the programme, if successful, can play a role in halting this process, it does not yet have a specific strategy on the inclusion of young people.	ON agrees to develop and implement a strategy to interest and involve young people. ON sees merit in linking the implementation of recommendations 2 and 7, since both deal with wider agendas. However, ON also wishes to note that urban migration has several deep-rooted causes that cannot easily be reversed by the SD=HS programme in isolation.	Action 7: In first quarter of 2018, ON with CTDI, ANDES and SEARICE will consult several FFS for their opinion on how to attract youth in consultation with Oxfam Novib’s Youth as Active Citizens’ team.
8	Gender mainstreaming is addressed to varying degrees in the programme countries.	ON agrees that gender mainstreaming is an essential component of the SD=HS programme’s work. However,	Action 8: ON wishes to reconfirm its dedication to this essential objective

	<p>Particularly in Asia, efforts should be undertaken to ensure a proper understanding of gender mainstreaming, beyond the present approach of only ensuring the participation of women. Also in the other countries, there should be increased attention to particular challenges that relate to gender, such as the adequate inclusion of men in the programme, including when they are not participating in the FFS. Empowerment of women in the context of the programme will always go along with an adequate inclusion of men.</p>	<p>ON holds the opinion that the SD=HS programme already addresses gender mainstreaming throughout the programme, as evidenced in the details of its baseline surveys and in its FFS modules. In this context, SD=HS has broken the mobility constraints of women wishing to participate in the FFS, and the FFS programme specifically addresses the identification of women's trait preferences and breeding objectives.</p>	<p>of the SD=HS programme. In that context, ON agrees with the reviewers in noting that effective empowerment of women can be achieved only by the efforts of both women and men, in line with agreed targets of 50-60% participation by women. The SD=HS programme will consult with appropriate gender experts within Oxfam in this process.</p>
9	<p>The programme should remain constantly aware of the challenges related to the further implementation of pillar 2 (FSE). Besides regular challenges related to the FSE operations, this implies that the programme (within the FSE and besides the FSE) should ensure synergetic co-existence with farmers' seed production practices; bring in innovation in view of increased bio-diversity (hence the crucial importance of the multiplication of small seeds, rather than OPV and hybrid maize); and avoid competition with farmers' practices that might lead to an erosion of their capacities to grow their own seeds, and a disappearance of valuable local seed exchange mechanisms and practices. All this will imply close monitoring of the immediate effects of the FSE operations.</p>	<p>ON acknowledges that implementation of pillar 2 has presented some major challenges. ON appreciates the reviewers' concern that farmers' seed production practices could be negatively influenced by FSE activities. However, it believes the very fact the FSE activities are undertaken by farmers involved in other SD=HS activities taking place in the SD=HS communities will help to observe undesired side-effects at an early stage. ON also wishes to state that in its analysis, provision of good seeds of both small grains and maize (OPV and hybrids) may help to ensure adapted and appreciated diversity in small-scale farmers' seed systems. OPV maize is most important to farmers, and SD=HS needs to support farmers' access to good OPV varieties and seeds. The adaptation to local conditions of the produced maize varieties (and, in the case of maize hybrids, the fact that the parental lines are under control of the SD=HS partners) is a major condition for their successful uptake. In the case of Zimbabwe, hybrid maize that are not appropriate to dry zones are sold or dumped as subsidised seeds to small farmers. The</p>	<p>Action 9: by the final quarter of years 4 and 5, in the first and second seasons of pillar 2 implementation, ON will ensure that FSE implementation is complementary with FFS activities and farmer seed systems as whole. Since a portion of the customer base of Champion Seeds is anticipated to be the CTD T FFS participants, this should be easy to track and document. SD=HS plans to develop a thorough sustainability plan to ensure continuity after the end of the programme period.</p>

		FSE will ensure marketing of drought-tolerant maize hybrids neglected by commercial seed companies.	
10	Pillar 3 has several key objectives (improved nutrition, women's empowerment, promotion of NUS) that do not necessarily reinforce each other. The MTR feels that improved nutrition should be put at the centre of this pillar. This choice will facilitate the development of synergies with pillar 1 (see recommendations 3 and 4 above), but will also imply a partial review of the pillar approach with targeting on the most vulnerable groups as a key consideration. The use of NUS and the empowerment of women should support this central objective.	ON agrees that improved nutrition is indeed the overall goal of pillar 3 work, for which work with NUS and investments in gender balance are instrumental. Our goal is to improve nutrition through providing <i>access</i> to diverse, nutritious diets – using locally available biodiverse foods. As SD=HS is a PGRFA programme, the contribution of pillar 3 to improved nutrition will mostly be through increased production and utilisation of food plants including neglected and underutilised nutritious crops. This will be done in close coordination with nutrition programmes and institutions. Women's empowerment is essential in the pathway from agricultural livelihoods and food systems to household food security and nutrition. ON's opinion is that such adaptation is to a large extent a matter of presentation rather than a major change in the approaches and activities of pillar 3.	
11	The consortium partners should double their efforts to look for cooperation and synergies in relation to national and international policy advocacy . National policy advocacy efforts should preferably be linked to the existing work under pillars 1 to 3 and can be implemented with or without involvement of pillar 4 partners (depending on the added value pillar 4 partners can provide at country level). Partners working mainly on pillars 1-3 and those working mainly on pillar 4 can clearly support each other to pursue pillar 4 objectives. It appears that 'complementarity' can become an important guiding principle	ON agrees with this recommendation, although the pillar 4 partners believe that the current level of issue synergy and practical cooperation has been underestimated, possibly because the MTR team prioritised its data collection among the country partners.	Action 11: All partners agreed to collaborate more closely when the GPC met on 5 May 2017, and discussions are underway to establish a coordinated approach towards the next meeting of the ITPGRFA Governing Body in Rwanda in October 2017. Some partners have been invited to participate in an informal meeting of the ITPGRFA working group in Switzerland in late May/early June. From that meeting, partners in several pillars will formulate a suggestion for the October meeting that will allow SD =

	to define future cooperation within and outside the programme.		HS to highlight the policy findings of its grassroots partners as well as the agenda-relevant work of pillar 4 partners, particularly with regard to farmers' rights, dematerialisation of gene banks, new breeding technologies, agricultural mega-mergers, and technology proposals relevant to responding to climate change.
12	The programme is now entering a phase in which its M&E system needs to be upgraded so it can more systematically monitor and account for its progress towards outcomes. The results of the recent methodological workshop can be used to that effect. In addition, there are clear opportunities to involve FFS and their members in M&E efforts at the grassroots level, which can further enhance local empowerment, learning and exchange processes.	ON agrees that the MEAL systems need to be upgraded by incorporating indicators and targets of the methodological workshop. This will be done in the ongoing participatory planning and monitoring at the level of the FFS.	Action 12: Revised targets for monitoring are already included in the AWPB for year 4.

Annex 2: Oxfam Novib's factual corrections to the MTR of the SD=HS programme

Factual error	Corrections
<p>1. Page 8: 'Overall, the MTR team feels that, with the exception of Zimbabwe, the program outreach (for pillars 1 till 3; the outreach for pillar 4 is very difficult to estimate) <u>is still relatively limited</u>, leading – at this moment – to a high unit cost per FFS and direct participant.'</p>	<p>FFS is only one indicator for determining the SD=HS programme's outreach. Others would be seeds and knowledge. In the Mekong Delta region of South Vietnam, seed clubs are a key outreach channel to ensure that households beyond SD=HS geographical areas can access good quality seeds. Approximately 400 seed clubs in the Mekong Delta are exchanging and sharing seeds and tools, including the seeds developed, improved and/or distributed by the FFS and seed clubs formed under SD=HS programme. The external evaluation confirmed that FFS participants in the seed clubs provided an impressive 30 percent of the region's total seed requirement in 2014, compared to 17 percent supplied by private seed companies.⁵</p>
<p>2. In relation to the quality of the programme framework, on page 48 and 76: '<u>These frequent and substantial changes</u> coupled to their intrinsic complexity (see e.g. the high number of indicators) have implied that the <u>successive versions</u> of the program framework have not functioned as important reference tools for planning, monitoring/steering and also learning.'</p>	<p>The SD=HS programme framework has been adjusted only once. As noted on page 48 of the MTR, the revision took place in the second year of SD=HS implementation. The MTR report also acknowledges that "<i>the first year was considered as a start-up year in which the planning framework could be adjusted</i>" (see footnote page 47). The adjustment was necessary to reflect inputs received from partners in this start-up year, after discussions with various local stakeholders, and the findings of the baseline surveys.</p>
<p>3. On page 30, in the footnote to table 2: '(°) The figures for Zimbabwe do not include 65 FFS established under the IFAD program but receiving technical support under the SD=HS program after the closure of the IFAD program. The figures for South Vietnam do not include 17 seed clubs that were established under the IFAD program that still got some support in terms of genetic material but were not further supported'</p>	<p>The 17 seed clubs in South Vietnam were established by previous projects and are currently being supported by the SD=HS programme through the distribution of PGR materials. Additionally, as per January 2017, eight more seed clubs have been established by the SD=HS programme, making a total of 25. The report has also not yet included 21 FFS that were established in North Vietnam under the IFAD-ON programme.</p>
<p>4. Regarding pillar 1's contribution to global policy influencing work, page 54: 'The MTR team also wonders to which extent it is wise to use experiences at the ground (FFS level) for advocacy (policy influencing) purposes.'</p>	<p>Local-to-global policy influencing is a key approach of SD=HS, reflected as one of its scaling-up pathways. It also forms the foundation for the programme's evidence-based policy advocacy, which is positively recognised by the MTR team: "<i>The use of an evidence based approach (both at national and international level) is the most</i></p>

⁵ See: Berg, T. 2016. Putting Lessons into Practice: Scaling up peoples' biodiversity management for food security. External programme evaluation of the IFAD-Oxfam Novib program

	<i>distinctive feature of the advocacy efforts undertaken and probably the most effective element among the broad range of advocacy tools used” (page 9). SD=HS is one of few programmes that advocates for IPSHF’s challenges, needs and adaptation strategies to be included in local, national and global policy discussions.</i>
5. Page 62: “in line with its co-implementing role, ONL has also its own lobby and advocacy policy interventions that are not or not well coordinated with those of the Pillar Four partners (and vice versa)”.	ON shares with all SD=HS partners plans and documents that are used or submitted for advocacy purposes to any meeting where other SD=HS partners may be present or active, for their comments and inputs. Shared submissions have been developed mainly with the national implementing partners (ANDES, SEARICE, CTDI).
6. Page 38: ‘The limited involvement of men is an issue of concern but also a conscious choice: women feared that men would take the upper hand in case their involvement would be high; on the other hand, some engagement of men is necessary, as they control the resources to buy food and are the key decision makers at household level.’	ON agrees that without the inclusion of men, the sole responsibility for change is put on women. However, ON does not agree that there has been a ‘conscious choice’ for limited involvement of men (and the MTR did not clarify whose choice this refers to). SD=HS chose to target 50-60% women participation, with the remaining 40-50% being men.
7. Page 58: ‘The TOT was held already after the first part of the baseline (early 2015) and lasted for 10-12 days (Vietnam, Zimbabwe).’	These trainings were not ToTs for the FFS curriculum but trainings of enumerators for the Pillar 3 baseline.
8. Page 27: ‘the finalized baselines were only available at a moment when local dynamics already had taken their final shape, which limited their operational value.’	Consolidation at global level, validation of findings and obtaining input from stakeholders requires time, which is why the final baseline reports were published after local activities started – but the findings of the baseline survey have been used for the development of interventions at local level.
9. Page 37: ‘The FSE has been officially registered in 2016 <u>and is owned by an association of farmers</u> ’; page 55: ‘Measures are taken to ensure farmer ownership (via farmers associations) of the company.’	This not correct: the FSE was registered in 2016 <u>as a cooperative company</u> , and measures are taken to ensure farmer ownership via a shareholder structure of farmer associations .
10. Page 57: ‘In view of the above, there must be clear reasons before opting for a seed enterprise, even a <i>farmer</i> seed enterprise. In view of the program’s principles, it will have to address issues farmers cannot solve at their level, take care of a synergetic co-existence with farmers’ seed production practices, bring in innovation in view of increased bio-diversity (hence the crucial importance of the multiplication of small seeds rather than maize) and avoid competition with farmers’ practices that might lead to an	The FSE is providing farmers with access to varieties suited to their agro-ecological zones and preferences, while ensuring quality seed is injected into their seed systems. It does not replace their local seed exchange, in fact it strengthens it by providing good materials for their PPB.

erosion of their capacities to grow their own seeds and a disappearance of valuable local seed exchange mechanisms and practices. And all thus will have to be done on a continuous basis.'	
11. Page 53: 'only 12,5% of the total program budget goes to the local level activities for Pillar 1, which hampers the scaling up process in quantitative terms.'	Though the calculations are correct, the impression is misleading: in total, 21% of the total programme budget is assigned to Pillar 1, so around 50% of the pillar 1 budget is assigned to the partners – which is the case for the budget division (partners vs ON) over the entire project.
12. Page 45: 'Clearly ON's double role as grant manager and co-implementer has been a major stumbling block with both ONL and the consortium partners lacking experience with how to effectively deal with the consortium set up. While the dual role was discussed and set and its experimental character recognised from the onset, it was never evaluated during implementation.'	ON did not lack experience in this dual role: ON has played implementing roles in Oxfam global campaigns since 2000 (Make Fair Trade) and had set up a special unit to manage large global contracts (on female condoms, edutainment and sustainable palm oil) in which ON simultaneously operated as contract manager, capacity-builder and thematic advisor. Since 2015 ON has incorporated this triple role in its core business: (a) to develop and co-create innovative and impactful multi-country programmes; (b) to ensure quality delivery via contract management, capacity-building, and thematic advice; and (c) to ensure knowledge management for effectiveness and efficiency. ON continues to play this role in programmes such as the strategic partnership on influencing delivery and capacity-building (75m euros), VOICE (50m euros, small grants scheme in 10 countries), and two youth employment projects (35m euros in 7 countries). Indeed, the evaluation of the IFAD co-financed programme "Putting Lessons into Practice: Scaling up People's Biodiversity Management for Food Security (2012-2015)", on which the SD=HS programme is built, was positive on ON's leadership as grant manager and co-implementer. Nevertheless, for the pillar 4 partners in SD=HS this new way of working implied a major shift from the previous, long-standing support they received from ON directly under the Dutch co-financing agreement. ON agreed during the recent GPC to consider the existing reporting requirements, have a stronger output/outcome focus and consider easing the bureaucratic requirements (e.g. move towards six-month reporting for the remaining project period). ON strongly believes that its stronger management role was essential in the starting-up phase of the SD=HS programme, and it will be able to let go where partners' capacity and results allow.

Midterm review of the Seedsgrow “Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security (SD=HS)” programme component

Final Version

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Program/project title /affiliate identification code	<p>Seedsgrow: Harvesting Global Food Security and Justice in the face of Climate Change</p> <p>SD=HS, Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security component (A-03592)</p> <p>Sida grant reference: 61050063</p>
Partner organizations	ANDES, CTD, ETC, GRAIN, SEARICE, SOUTH CENTRE, TWN and Oxfam Novib
Geographical coverage	The review covered global, regional and national levels Including country level work in Myanmar, Laos, Peru, Vietnam, Zimbabwe and The Netherlands
Period covered by the review	The review covered the period 1 October 2013 to 31 December 2016
Programme lifespan	The programme lifespan is 1 October 2013 to 31 December 2018
Programme budget in the period covered by The review	Sida budget to the SD=HS between 1 October 2013 - 30 December 2016 was approximately Euro 6,500,000.
Evaluation budget	Euro 53,000 including VAT and logistics
Sponsor for the evaluation	Maarten De Vuyst followed by Gerard Steehouwer
Evaluation commissioning manager	Karen Biesbrouck (MEAL Specialist)
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List of abbreviations

ANDES	Asociación para la Naturaleza y el Desarrollo Sostenible
ARC	Agricultural Research Centre (Laos)
CAWR	Centre for Agro-ecology, Water and Resilience – Coventry University
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CGRFA	Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTDT	Community Technology Development Trust
ETC	Ation Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FFS	Farmer Field School
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSE	Farmer Seed Enterprise
GPC	Global Partner Committee
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPSHF	Indigenous People and Small Holder Farmers
MDDRRI	Mekong Delta Development Research Institute (South Vietnam)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MSC	Most Significant Change
MTR	Midterm Review
MTR-SG	Steering Group of the Midterm Review
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NUS	Neglected and Underutilized Species
ONL	Oxfam Novib
PGR	Plant Genetic Resources
PGRFA	International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture
PPB	Participatory Plant Breeding
PPP	Public Private Partnership
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRC	Plant Genetic Resource Centre (North Vietnam)
PVP	Plant Variety Protection
PVS	Plant Varietal Selection
SC	South Centre
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEK	Swedish Krona (= 0.104 € mid April 2017)
SD=HS	Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security
SEARICE	South East Asian Regional Institute for Community Empowerment
SG	Steering Group
SR	South Research
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
TWN	Third World Network
UPOV	International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants
VAT	Value Added Tax

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Major findings

Background

This document presents the results of the Mid-Term Review (MRT) of the Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security (SD=HS) programme, which is a global programme building on a legacy of years-long continued and committed involvement of Oxfam Novib (ONL) and partners in biodiversity and/or food and seed security. The programme started in October 2013 and is expected to end in June 2019. It is funded by Sida with a budget of nearly 11.4M € of which approximately 6.5M was spent by December 2016.

The overall goal of the SD=HS programme is *to contribute to uphold, strengthen and mainstream the rights and technical capacities of indigenous and smallholder farmers, and to influence local to global policies and institutions on access to and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and nutrition security under conditions of climate change*. The focus on plant genetic resources, seeds in particular, is at the heart of the programme and constitutes the main element of its uniqueness. The programme has four pillars:

- *Scaling Up Models* aims to strengthen the adaptive capacities of indigenous peoples and smallholder farmers in seed conservation, access and sustainable use by scaling up innovative and engendered models of biodiversity management (Pillar 1).
- *Farmer Seed Enterprises* wants to enhance the livelihoods and seeds security of indigenous peoples and smallholder farmers by producing and marketing a good quality and diversity of seeds through public-private partnerships (Pillar 2).
- *Women, Seeds and Nutrition* envisages the empowering women as catalysts of biodiversity-based diets (Pillar 3).
- *Governance and Knowledge Systems* is aiming to strengthen the capacities and knowledge base of developing countries and their indigenous peoples and smallholder farmers in order to secure national and global legislation and policies for the full implementation of Farmers' Rights and the Right to Food (Pillar 4).

The SD=HS programme is implemented by nine consortium partners that with one exception have a long history of cooperation with ONL and often also with each other. Four partners implement(ed) directly the programme in eight countries and four other partners contribute to global research and policy advocacy. ONL's role as consortium leader implies that it has a central position as grant manager but also as co-implementer of the programme. Despite its high number of members, the expertise in the new partnership concentrated around pillars 1 and 4, and initially included only limited competence related to setup of a farmer seed enterprise and nutrition (pillars 2 and 3). Finally, the valid intention to include long-standing partners worldwide resulted in valuable and diverse country experiences but also in a geographically scattered programme at the grassroots level, which impacted on the efficiency of programme management, exchange and mutual learning.

The preparation of this programme coincided with a period of substantial institutional and financial uncertainty at the level of ONL. These changes put long-term relationships with partners under pressure and obliged ONL to fundamentally reconsider the ways it had worked so far and to also become a (co-)implementer of development projects and programmes. SD=HS is said to be the first major initiative under that new constellation whereby ONL combines the role of grant manager with that of co-implementer.

Preparation, inception and relevance of the programme

ONL and its partners managed to define a well elaborated programme based on strong conceptual foundations. The SD=HS programme is highly relevant as it addresses key issues that are vital in the struggle to safeguard seed security (and, hence, food security) and bio-diversity and to uphold and maintain the rights and capacities of IPSHF (Indigenous People and Smallholder farmers) in general. Furthermore, the inclusion of a nutrition component in the programme constitutes a clear added value compared to other similar programmes. Finally, the programme is considered highly relevant in view of the challenges brought by climate

change, as the use of adequate plant genetic resources (PGR) is a key element in the development of adequate coping strategies.

On the other side part of the consortium partners feel that the institutional challenges and how ONL translated these in the programme implementation structure and budget were not sufficiently discussed during the preparation process, which dealt mainly with substantive issues. These partners initially expected that the relation with ONL would remain very similar to what they were used to and most of them only gradually came to an understanding of the financial and operational implications of the shift in ONL's role and position. As such, the heavy ONL involvement (compared to the past) in management and implementation from the early stages sparked resistance from some consortium partners. In addition, ONL's lack of experience with managing simultaneously the roles of grant manager and co-implementer further weakened the partners' confidence, the more because the combination of these roles was never subject to internal discussion and reflection. Discussions during the inception workshop also dealt only in a limited way with the actual functioning of the consortium, as the need to attach specific attention to this issue was insufficiently recognized by all partners. As such, from the very start of the programme, relations among some of the partners were far from optimal, which however applies mostly to the relationship with pillar 4 partners, and much less or not at all with the other field-based partners.

Outreach and effectiveness

The programme presently works directly with about 170 Farmer Field Schools that have around 4,200 members (direct participants) of which 62 % are women. The programme has not undertaken specific efforts to address the specific needs and position of the youth and include these in the FFS. In addition to the direct participants,, there is an important number of primary beneficiaries (households living in the communities where the programme is active) that however cannot be estimated precisely as no systematic and rigid recording at this level was conducted so far. Overall, the MTR team feels that, with the exception of Zimbabwe, the programme outreach (for pillars 1 till 3; the outreach for pillar 4 is very difficult to estimate) is still relatively limited, leading – at this moment - to a high unit cost per FFS and direct participant. This can partially be explained by the choice for the FFS approach that is a highly demanding in terms of human resources and by the fact that the programme is presently only midway. But other factors also play a role: the strong focus of – in particular – the ONL implementation team on assuring high quality implementation using approaches that allow global interpretation and comparison; the relative inexperience with two of the four pillars leading to slower implementation; an imbalance in terms of human resources funded and/or trained by the programme, with on the one hand a strong ONL implementation team and on the other hand, at the local level, a relatively small number of local staff dealing directly with programme implementation; (linked to the previous point) the relatively limited budgets earmarked for the actual work on the ground. Factors that allow up-scaling in Zimbabwe seem to relate, among others, to the strong anchorage of the local partner at the local and national level, its excellent cooperation with strategic partners (including the agricultural and health department) and the capacity building of a substantially bigger number of extension staff at the local level.

A key finding from the MTR is that programme implementation demonstrates, overall, clear progress towards its envisaged outcomes. Not surprisingly, this is most obvious for the first programme pillar where important key achievements are noted, in particular via the consistent and high quality implementation of the FFS approach leading to effective adoption of envisaged changes in terms of food and seed security in view of climate change. It is thereby noted that PGR related changes go along a genuine process of empowerment of FFS members (women and men), leading to increased confidence and autonomy and direct or indirect contributions to gender equality. As such, in all countries the supported FFS engage in an agenda that is far broader than envisaged (and directly supported) by the programme. The MTR considers this an evolution that should be dealt with more consistently, the more because the need for income increase is fairly outspoken everywhere and needs to be addressed if the progress achieved is to be sustained.

The progress with regard to second pillar has been hampered by a broad range of factors, including a few setbacks that could not be foreseen. At the moment of this MTR, the FSE has just become operational in Zimbabwe so that it is too early to assess its performance. Important characteristics of the approach followed include the farmers' ownership and control over the enterprise, the ambition to focus on small grains that are increasingly crucial to address climate change challenges but for which so far no strong seed multiplication facilities exist, the co-existence of the FSE and informal mechanisms of seed production and exchange of the members and the compatibility with government policies and strong collaboration with other key stakeholders.

Major challenges include the (for the key stakeholders) innovative character of the FSE both in terms of its technical and/or institutional set-up, the challenge to strike a fine balance between economic, social and ecological considerations and the need to ensure continued support for the post-programme period as by the end of this programme period, even when the company would become profitable from 2019 (as is forecast in the business plan).

Also in the case of the third pillar, there are clear signs of progress towards the envisaged outcomes despite some initial difficulties in working out the pillar approach and initial analyses which implies that, among others, the linkage with policy advocacy activities is still less developed than for pillar one. Key changes include the empowerment of women allowing them to developing stronger seed systems whereby neglected or underutilized species (NUS) constitute an important element. The strong focus on NUS has allowed the inclusion of nutritious species in the daily diets. A major issue for consideration under this pillar is the interplay between the three key constituents of the pillar approach: women empowerment, the promotion of NUS and improved nutrition. If the latter is to be considered as the final aim, a more focused and targeted nutrition approach (with a special focus on vulnerable sections of the population) could have been considered (in Zimbabwe some steps are taken in that direction).

The key achievements under pillar four are the result of either direct efforts undertaken by the ONL programme implementation team, either by local implementing partners, or by the Pillar 4 consortium partners. These efforts have been undertaken either individually, or in cooperation with other consortium or local implementing partners and related to both capacity building of local partners and other stakeholders, and to policy changes. The programme has come across numerous examples where programme stakeholders, in different configurations, either join forces to pursue similar policy advocacy initiatives, either individually target key events and actors with different advocacy agendas (that are, however, never really opposing each other). In all countries visited excepted for Laos where the programme started only recently, implementing partners have also been able to influence national policy agendas, mostly directly but thereby intelligently using the evidence gained at the grassroots level and involving smallholder representatives in actions at the national level. At the international level, policy change processes are most often going slower as a very broad range of stakeholders, many of them extremely powerful, advocate for changes. As such, it is difficult to attribute specific changes to the programme, but there are nevertheless clear indications of programme partners *influencing* important policy discussions and change processes in the framework of (among others) the ITPGRFA, the FAO CGRFA and UPOV. The use of an evidence based approach (both at national and international level) is the most distinctive feature of the advocacy efforts undertaken and probably the most effective element among the broad range of advocacy tools used.

Efficiency

Effectiveness and accountability of the programme's governance structure. The governance structure of the programme is relatively complex but this is to a major extent unavoidable in such a complex programme as SD=HS. The programme governance system has been tested early in the preparation phase and later on when it had to decide on how to deal with an unexpected budget cut and when the cooperation with one of the partners was halted. In these situations of crisis, the Global Partner Committee (GPC), the most important governance structure of the programme, has not well functioned for a number of reasons related, among others, to ONL's double role as grant manager and co-implementer and because all consortium partners lacked experience with how to effectively deal with it within a consortium set-up. As such, the GPC has never been able to comprehensively take up the role it was meant to play, despite the fact that at several occasions it worked well as a forum for exchange and reflection that was highly valued by all consortium partners. At this moment, the GPC's functioning as a governance body is minimal but members, each from their side, stay committed to make the best out of it and stick to their commitments with regard to programme implementation.

Quality of programme implementation. Overall, the quality of implementation of key activities has been good. Pillar 1 and 3 key activities are very similar (baseline survey, TOT (training of trainers) and broader capacity building efforts, actual implementation via FFS support. Baseline surveys, TOT and actual implementation via FFS form a conceptually and operationally strong triangle that is backed by continuous tool development and refinement in close cooperation with local communities. In many cases however, the (initially) too complex nature of these tools made their direct use difficult at the local level and substantial adaptation efforts by local partners a condition; language problems were a key additional constraint in Asia. Capable and motivated staff guarantees good implementation quality in all countries. Local stakeholders (implementing partners, extension

services, communities) highly value the programme approach, in particular the practical and participatory nature of the TOT and FFS activities; the success of the FFS contrasts often with the (relative) failure of other development programmes in the area. The implementation choices imply however that (quantitative) up-scaling of the programme is difficult without additional resources and, most of all, without allies in the public sector. Support from government offices, extension services and breeding institutions is absolutely essential to allow up-scaling as foreseen, as is demonstrated by the positive experience in Zimbabwe.

The experiences so far with the set up of a FSE (pillar 2) illustrate clearly the challenges of engaging in a domain in which the key partners involved lack in-house competence and experience. However, experience has learned that the design and implementation of business initiatives almost by definition brings along particular challenges that can only to a partial degree be foreseen. The MTR nevertheless wonders whether the preparation could not have been conducted following a more experiential approach and states further that specific considerations (such as the articulation of the FSE with traditional seed production and exchange, the relation between CTDT and the enterprise, the attention of the position of women in the management structure of the enterprise) will need continuous attention in the future.

The broad range of initiatives under pillar 4 is obviously a consequence of the particular set-up of the programme and its antecedents. Pillar 4 is the program area where the difficulties related to the double role of ONL in the programme (as grant manager and co-implementer) are most felt. The fact that Pillar 4 partners are further well established organisations with a broad range of activities and agendas that are not necessarily entirely confluent and are sometimes of a substantially different nature than the bulk of the work under the three other pillars is another challenge. Efforts under pillar 4 have however clearly led to capacity building of local actors and other stakeholders, and to policy advocacy results (see above) and these are both the consequence of the consortium partners' individual efforts and of concerted action by the programme consortium. All partners agree however that opportunities to generate more influence and even impact via joint action have been missed.

Quality of programme management. The programme disposes of a clear set of rules, procedures and tools related to programme management and implementation and those are adequately shared with the partners and, overall, well adhered to, despite the fact that many partners consider them as too heavy in view of the relatively small budgets. Considering the complex programme set-up, financial and content-related planning and reporting are of good quality and succeed in ensuring accountability to the donor. The human resources used at various levels of programme implementation are of good quality, among others thanks to the substantial capacity building efforts conducted. HRM seems to meet the standards at all levels.

Over the 3.5 years of programme implementation several versions of the programme framework were developed; as such, it has been difficult to define a coherent programme-level M&E framework and M&E implementation plan. While planning documents and progress reports contain an important number of data relating to indicators at different levels, which gives to some extent a picture of the progress made, the lack of uniformity implies that (aggregated) comparison over time and with the initial baseline remains difficult. The recently conducted methodological workshop constituted an attempt to deal with this constraint and might allow to set a step further towards alignment and harmonization to allow meaningful internal comparison of results, aggregation (for internal and external purposes) and structured learning.

Lessons learned

This MTR allowed generating an important number of lessons learned that can not be presented here in extenso. A few interesting lessons include:

- A clearly delineated and strategic programme focus (e.g. on PGR) is defensible from a programme management point of view, but it conflicts with a participatory and empowerment approach. This is recognised by programme staff, but finding a satisfactory way on how to deal with it is not easy. Further, the empowerment approach introduced in FFS itself contains an important “capacity building” dimension with a high potential for outreach to other communities and inclusion in other projects/programs and activities.
- In economically depressed areas in particular, a focus on PGR preservation and bio-diversity – that can be justified in itself - is not necessarily compatible with the grassroots' main needs and priorities, but can only

be reached if such activities contribute at the same time to the livelihood enhancement of the communities involved (e.g. via income generating activities -both within and outside the agricultural sector- and, often, the corresponding need to small loans).

- The FFS approach is adequate to introduce important changes related to PGR practices in view of promoting food and seed security and biodiversity, and increase resilience against agro-climatic changes. The unique experiential learning approach of FFS is at the same time its major strength and a major constraint for up-scaling the intervention outreach.
- There do not seem to be easy solutions to up-scale the programme's outreach but the success in Zimbabwe with up-scaling suggests that good linkages with and inclusion of key government institutions and breeding organisations is a preliminary requirement.
- Working out quality approaches at field level can benefit substantially from the use of an in-depth 'scientific' (as opposed to a more 'developmental') approach, particularly in the early stages. Once the approaches are worked out and fine-tuned, a transition should however be made to simplified approaches and tools that allow expansion at a lower cost. Ensuring such transition might need the development of adequate tools and imply the involvement of specialists with another profile and the inclusion of extension services and development organisations (including CBOs and mass organisations) in programme implementation.
- Adequate gender mainstreaming is a key requirement for success and sustainability but requires the adequate involvement of men and an understanding of their role in decision-making around issues that are important for the programme (such as changes in the diets). In addition, there is a need to adequately take into account the constraints of women FFS members (workload, ...).
- Development actors easily accept to become member of a consortium because well functioning consortia provide much substantial advantages and support in reaching key objectives. The same actors often forget however that consortia need to be taken care off and nurtured and, hence, require a substantial effort from their members to become and remain effective. Substantial member contribution is at the heart of each consortium but often difficult to combine with regular tasks and activities.
- The combination, in a programme, of the role of grant manager and co-implementer inevitably will generate conflicts of interests that are difficult to manage without external neutral facilitation. In addition, a consortium set-up might prove an inadequate structure when one of the partners takes up such a double role while the others are solely or mainly implementers.

Main recommendations

1. While it will be impossible to entirely repair the relational damage that occurred during implementation of the programme, consortium members should engage in an effort **to re-define the consortium foundations and working principles and to act accordingly**. In theory, there are two options:
 - either SD=HS acts as a "genuine" consortium, which implies that all managerial and substantive decisions are taken *jointly, irrespective the members' power position*. This requires more specifically that each consortium partner puts aside to the extent possible the grievances of the past or, at least, ensures that their influence is contained and that via an internal consultation process the governance modalities are reviewed whereby ONL takes rather a position of 'primus inter pares' (the first among the equal) and internally takes care of clearly situating at different instances its role of grant manager and of co-implementer.
 - SD=HS becomes unambiguously an ONL chaired and steered structure – a kind of a special purpose vehicle in which ONL takes all key managerial and substantive decisions. This second option implies actually the abandonment of the consortium model for the purpose of joint decision making, but does not exclude joint consultation, learning and exchange, and the search for synergies and opportunities for joint or coordinated activities.
2. FFS in all countries have **an agenda that is far broader than PGR-related activities**. This should be considered as an indicator of the programme's success in empowering local people. While the programme should preserve PGR and the related empowerment perspective as its core business, it should embrace these 'other' FFS dynamics. Presently, local staff members in consultation with ONL's expert team already support FFS in implementing their broader agenda but are not always sufficiently qualified to do so (e.g. in the case of income generating activities). As such, the programme should define a clearer policy and practice in this regard, also because sustaining the gains related to food security and bio-diversity might

only become possible when these can go along with income generation and livelihood improvement which are often the most urgent demands of the programme participants.

3. **Work on pillar 1 and 3 should become part of one integrated approach** whereby the expertise and experience gained with pillar 1 approaches and tools can be used to lay down a solid foundation for subsequent 'specific' pillar 3 actions of which the relative importance will much depend on the local nutritional situation (see also recommendation 10). The process can be facilitated integrating the principle of 'nutrition sensitive agriculture' as a key consideration from the very start of the implementation of pillar 1 activities, which might imply that competent government services in the area of nutrition are associated to programme implementation from its early stages (cfr. experience of Zimbabwe).
4. Presently, the unit costs for FFS and participant support are very substantial, with Zimbabwe as a notable exception. As such, ways should be explored to increase cost effectiveness and efficiency, taking Zimbabwe as a study case. The increased level of integration of pillar 1 and pillar 3 should allow creating efficiencies in terms of conducting baselines, TOT, tools development and the set-up and support of FFS. Apart from this and considering the large body of knowledge and expertise gained over the past years and prior to the programme, there should be **consistent and continued attempts to alleviate the present approaches** in the direction of less comprehensive and more 'quick and dirty' ways of working.
5. Related to the previous recommendation, the programme should pay more attention to supporting and following up the PGR-related changes promoted (in view of increased food and seed security, and policy interventions), in first instance at the level of the FFS members (on their own fields) and by the primary beneficiaries (i.e. the SD=HS households in the communities where FFS activities take place). Following up changes at these levels should become part of a comprehensive monitoring system (see recommendation 12 below).
Even so, the programme should engage more consistently in promoting the adoption of its approach and tools by third parties (e.g. government agencies adopting the FFS model for PGR changes) so that the SD=HS approach and tools develop into 'common goods' at provincial and even national level. The programme should, to the extent possible, support these agencies in adopting the envisaged change process in an adequate way and thereby attempt to get an understanding of the quality of the process and propose adjustments where necessary.
6. Related to the recommendations 4 and 5, the programme, via its local implementing partners mainly, should **explore the possibilities of cooperation with local organisations with a large constituency base and other strategic partners** (such as farmer organisations or movements and networks, national women organisations, government bodies, universities, etc.) with a view of integrating these in future up-scaling strategies.
7. So far, the programme has not paid specific attention to which age groups involving in its activities. All over the world and also in most programme areas, **young people (men and women)** are leaving their communities and/or have no interest to further engage in agriculture to ensure their livelihoods, as their elders and parents do. Rural communities are so often losing their most dynamic actors. While the programme, if successful, can play a role to halt this process, it does not yet dispose of a specific strategy to focus on the inclusion of young people.
8. **Gender mainstreaming** is addressed to varying degrees in the programme countries. Particularly in Asia, efforts should be undertaken to ensure a proper understanding of gender mainstreaming (beyond the present approach of only ensuring the participation of women). But also in the other countries there should be increased attention for particular challenges that relate to gender, such as the adequate inclusion of men in the programme, also when they are not participating in the FFS. Empowerment of women in the context of the programme will always go along an adequate inclusion of men.
9. The programme should remain constantly aware of **the challenges related to the further implementation of pillar 2 (FSE)**. Besides the regular challenges related to the FSE operations, this implies that the programme (within the FSE and besides the FSE) should take care of a synergetic co-existence with farmers' seed production practices, bring in innovation in view of increased bio-diversity (hence the crucial importance of the multiplication of small seeds rather than OPV and hybrid maize) and avoid competition

with farmers' practices that might lead to an erosion of their capacities to grow their own seeds and a disappearance of valuable local seed exchange mechanisms and practices. All this will imply close monitoring of the immediate effects of the FSE operations.

10. Pillar 3 has several important key objectives (improved nutrition, women empowerment, promotion of NUS) that do not necessarily reinforce each other. The MTR feels that '**improved nutrition**' should be put at the centre of this pillar. This choice will facilitate the development of synergies with pillar 1 (see recommendations 3 and 4 above), but will also imply a partial review of the pillar approach with targeting on the most vulnerable groups as a key consideration. The use of NUS and the empowerment of women should support this central objective.
11. The consortium partners should double their efforts to look for cooperation and synergies in relation to **national and international policy advocacy**. *National* policy advocacy efforts are preferably linked to the existing work under pillars 1 to 3 and can be implemented with or without involvement of pillar four partners (depending on the added value pillar four partners can provide at country level). Partners working mainly around pillars 1-3 and those working mainly around pillar 4 can clearly support each other to pursue the pillar 4 programme objectives. Using an evidence based approach should remain at the core of the lobby and advocacy strategy.
The implementation of this recommendation is very much linked to the follow up of recommendation 1 and, more concretely, to a redefinition of the terms under which ONL and the other consortium partners can collaborate and coordinate their lobby and advocacy efforts. It appears that 'complementarity' can become an important guiding principle to define future cooperation within and outside the programme.
12. The programme now enters into a phase where its **M&E system needs to be upgraded** so that it can more systematically monitor and account for its progress towards outcomes. The results of the recent methodological workshop can be used to that effect. The implementation of this recommendation implies also reconciling the need for a certain level of uniformity (in view of aggregation) with taking into account the specificity of the local situation and (in some cases) existing sound M&E practices. The improved M&E should also assess the multiplier effects of the programme at the level of its direct participants and primary beneficiaries and where possible at the level of third parties (see recommendation 5). In addition there are clear opportunities to involve FFS and their members in M&E efforts at the grassroots level, which can further enhance local empowerment, learning and exchange processes. These on their turn can generate stronger evidence based findings that can be used for policy advocacy purposes.

I. INTRODUCTORY PART

1. INTRODUCTION

This document presents the draft synthesis report of the implementation of the midterm review (MTR) of the Seeds GROW SD=HS (Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security) programme component that is funded by Sida, started in October 2013 and is expected to end in December 2018. This MTR covers the period from the programme start till the end of 2016 but in practice also includes developments that took place early 2017; as such it took place halfway the programme implementation period, allowing to look back and reflect on performance so far, to learn and look to the future. The review covered the programme's global, regional and national levels, including country level work in Laos, Peru, Vietnam, Zimbabwe and The Netherlands. An MTR steering group accompanied the MTR implementation process.

The TOR (p. 2-3) state that the purpose of the MTR is to review and assess the program implementation process, to show progress towards outcomes over the last three years (2013-2016), and to derive lessons to be learned. As such, the MTR results will be used to strengthen the programme implementation by informing decisions on possible redirection of the programme in the remaining period May 2017 to December 2018. The review is to serve various stakeholders of the programme: Sida (the main programme donor, to take stock of the progress made), the Seeds GROW steering committee (to account for the progress made and decide on how to optimize future implementation and results) and the programme's Global Partner Committee (GPC, for further learning about programme implementation and carrying forward the lessons learned). Furthermore, the specific object and objectives of the evaluation have been formulated as follows (p. 3-4 of the TOR):

- Overall, the evaluation should answer the question: how well has the SD=HS programme progressed and in what ways towards the outcomes of each pillar, and to what extent is it feasible to reach the overall SD=HS objective?
- Further, the MTR should:
 - take stock of the accomplishments so far,
 - assess to what extent SD=HS contributed to these accomplishments,
 - appraise the efficiency of Oxfam Novib (contract manager) and of the implementing partners,
 - assess the added value of each of the programme's consortium members to SD=HS and vice versa, how synergies are created, and
 - draw lesson on how SD=HS can be most efficient and effective at achieving its objectives.

The MTR's object and objectives have further been operationalized in a set of key questions (chapter 3 of the TOR) covering all major evaluation criteria. These questions have provided the basis for the development of an evaluation framework that constituted the basis for the MTR's data collection and analysis (see chapter 2).

This synthesis report has been drafted on the basis of the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the review that state, under chapter 6, that a first draft of the MTR is to be drafted on the basis of the data collection efforts undertaken, in line with the methodological proposal and evaluation framework developed during the inception phase.

This report contains the following parts and chapters:

- the introductory part is composed of three chapters :
 - this introductory chapter
 - chapter 2 that presents shortly the programme and its context;
 - chapter 3 that elaborates the methodology of the review ;
- the second part presents the MTR's main finding and analysis related to :
 - the programme's relevance and appropriateness
 - the programme's efficiency
 - the programme's effectiveness
- the third part presents the MTR's main conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations.

Five annexes complete the report.

2. THE SD=HS PROGRAMME AND ITS CONTEXT

SD=HS is a global programme that builds on the results and lessons learned from several integrated donor funded programmes including Oxfam Novib's Global Programme, the Oxfam-HIVOS Biodiversity Fund and IFAD co-financed programme 'Putting Lessons into Practice: Scaling up People's Biodiversity Management for Food Security'. The current SD=HS programme is the major component of the dual programme "*Seeds GROW: Harvesting global Food Security and Justice in the Face of Climate Change*" funded mainly by Sida with funding from other donors including IFAD, the Dutch Postcode Lottery and the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹.

The overall goal of the SD=HS programme is *to contribute to uphold, strengthen and mainstream the rights and technical capacities of indigenous and smallholder farmers, and to influence local to global policies and institutions on access to and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and nutrition security under conditions of climate change*. The focus on plant genetic resources, seeds in particular, is at the heart of the programme and constitutes the main element of its uniqueness as is outlined convincingly in the programme summary²: Without seeds we cannot grow our food. Seeds are the part of biodiversity that feed most people. Seeds are self-replicating and a resource which farmers can own and control to adapt to their needs. Seeds are unique in resource economics – for most cereals and legumes, seeds are simultaneously the "means of production" and also the "end product" for consumption. Worldwide, most smallholder farmers use their own farm-saved seeds (seeds harvested directly from farmers' fields). In Africa, this is as much as 80–90%.

Against this background, the programme's rationale is also strongly embedded in contextual developments, ranging from the local to the global level, that include important challenges for seed security³. While small farms play a major role in the global food system with smallholder farmers growing 60–70% of all food crops, most of these farmers live in poverty and have very little access to the formal seed system comprising public and private research and breeder companies, who largely do not cater to the needs of smallholder farmers. Most plant-breeding programmes do not consider women's preferences, or even recognize women as farmers. Smallholder farmers mostly engage in a dynamic and flexible "informal" seed system, actively exchanging seeds with each other. However, they face problems such as seed purity, health and degeneration, and relatively lower yield potential. They lack the continuous access to breeding materials, good quality seeds and markets, which is necessary to adapt to ever changing agro-ecological and market conditions.

In contrast, private seed companies have access to high-quality breeding materials including varieties, and to the technical and commercial expertise, and have access to and control over markets. The world's 10 top seed companies control about 75% of the USD \$34.5 billion global commercial seed market; the leading three (Monsanto, DuPont and Syngenta) control about 54%. Most seed companies work only on crops with large markets and of high commercial value such as rice, maize, and wheat. However, the seeds developed by formal systems are often not the varieties preferred by poor farmers as they are geared to wide-scale adaptation for mono-cropping. Neglected and Underutilized Species (NUS), which are very important to the culture, nutrition and diverse diets of the poor, generally have weak seed systems and are of little or no interest to large seed companies.

Since its inception, SD=HS is working in several countries and aims to aggregate these diverse experiences into a coherent global agenda. Its niche and credibility stem from the agenda and evidences that are bottomed up. Vice versa, global development and policies are discussed at local and national levels and used for policy advocacy for compliance to international binding agreements. The SD=HS programme has four Pillars:

- *Scaling Up Models* aims to strengthen the adaptive capacities of indigenous peoples and smallholder

¹ The other programme component, the GROW programme, seeks to build an international movement of stakeholders who recognize the urgency of the broken global food system and take action to adopt and implement policies to address local to global food system injustices.

² Seeds GROW programme proposal, September 2013, p. 15.

³ Ibidem.

farmers in seed conservation, access and sustainable use by scaling up innovative and engendered models of biodiversity management (Pillar 1).

- *Farmer Seed Enterprises* wants to enhance the livelihoods and seeds security of indigenous peoples and smallholder farmers by producing and marketing a good quality and diversity of seeds through public-private partnerships (Pillar 2).
- *Women, Seeds and Nutrition* envisages the empowering women as catalysts of biodiversity-based diets (Pillar 3).
- *Governance and Knowledge Systems* is aiming to strengthen the capacities and knowledge base of developing countries and their indigenous peoples and smallholder farmers in order to secure national and global legislation and policies for the full implementation of Farmers' Rights and the Right to Food (Pillar 4).

SD=HS programme implementation started with 9 consortium partners, including Oxfam Novib (ONL) that leads the programme and is responsible for the overall management / administration of the consortium, programme and funding⁴. Four partners implement(ed) directly the programme in eight countries: ANDES (Peru), CTDI (Zimbabwe), Searice (Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar), and CAWR (India, Mali, Senegal)⁵. Four partners contribute to global research and policy advocacy (ETC, GRAIN, South Centre, TWN). Oxfam Novib's role as consortium leader implies it has a central position as grant manager⁶ but also as co-implementer of the programme, in charge, among others, of the development of common frameworks, concepts and tools, which subsequently are discussed with and agreed by the respective partners. ONL also provides technical support for in-country field implementation and aggregates findings at global levels.

⁴ In March 2016 ONL programme management has decided to stop the cooperation with CAWR, one of these partners. As a result, the programme components in India, Senegal and Mali that were implemented under CAWR's responsibility were also halted. The TOR request the MTR to include "former partner CAWR in data collection on issues of governance, efficiency and contract management". As such, the MTR included a discussion on the role of CAWR in its document analysis and interviews that were conducted in the inception phase.

However, following Oxfam Novib's decision to stop the cooperation with CAWR, the latter initiated a legal action that reached ONL early March, i.e. roughly one month after the start of the MTR process. Consequently, the MTR's sponsor stated that under such conditions it was not possible to have CAWR and its local partners further included in the MTR-process. It was also stated that Oxfam Novib will explore with the Steering Committee of the MTR and the Consortium on other ways to review this part of the programme. At the moment of submission of this final draft, there was not yet clarity on this issue.

⁵ Administrative constraints made that the Myanmar component of the programme started with a delay of one year approximately.

⁶ As will become clear later in this report, the term of 'grant manager' covers actually several relational qualities between ONL and the consortium partners that are not the identical for all partners and have also changed over time.

3. THE APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY OF THE REVIEW

3.1 Approach

The TOR (see annex 1) foresee four phases for the implementation that have been roughly followed:

- A relatively long **inception phase** of four weeks that started with a briefing meeting early February 2017, and a discussion with key programme staff and the evaluation commissioning manager. The evaluation team also attended a small part of the programme's methodological workshop followed by a write-shop (that was actually changed by a planning meeting), held in February and attended by representatives from the partner organizations, other implementing partners and the programme team. These events provided an excellent opportunity for the MTR team members to get in touch with the partner representatives, to discuss the key characteristics of the programme in their respective countries and to prepare the field visits. In addition, the MTR team leader also took part as a resource person in part of the SG meeting that took place on February 15. The meeting among others discussed the MTR team's proposal to limit the visit to Asia to two countries. Other important activities of this phase included a first analysis of key documents of the programme and of the programme's website. At the end of this phase, an inception report was drafted and discussed with the MTR Steering Group early March 2017. This report included among others the draft evaluation framework for the MTR, which was subsequently modified to ensure a better concordance with the initial evaluation questions included in the TOR and to better highlight key elements of the programme's approach such as the farmer field schools (FFS). In view of the broad area covered by the MTR and the relatively limited resources, it was decided to skip the sustainability analysis.
- The second phase of **data collection** overlapped to some extent with the previous phase. Initial data collection activities were started early in the inception processed and continued after the submission of the inception report along the data collection methods proposed. Field visits were conducted in March. The consultants proposed to start in Asia, test out some tools, and start the Zimbabwe and Peru visits later thereby using the experiences from Asia. This approach inevitably extended the period of data collection, but contributed to the MTR's quality. The data collection phase was then continued with specific activities related to pillar 4, which among others included interviews with the pillar 4 consortium partners and with the programme's main advocacy targets. The drafting of the first draft of the MTR report and its submission to the SG were the concluding activities of this phase.
- The third phase dealt with the **feedback and consultation** on the report by the MTR SG. The SG members and consortium partners provided their feedback on the first draft in writing. The MTR team then worked out a second draft that was commented upon by the consortium partners, among others via a debriefing meeting with the SG early May 2017.
- Based on this feedback the MTR team prepared its third and **final draft of the MTR report**. This phase was concluded by the MTR SG signing of the MTR report and the drafting of a management response.

3.2 Methodology of the review

The evaluation framework that was elaborated in the inception phase and discussed with the SG has guided the implementation of the review. As such it constituted the basis of the research approach implemented. Both instruments and their actual use are shortly explained below.

3.2.1 Evaluation framework

The evaluation framework is based on several building blocks, the MTR's objectives and key questions (see TOR p. 3-5) being the most important. The key questions have been organized along four of the five DAC criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency and Sustainability – Impact has not been included as a criterion for obvious reasons); in addition a specific section on learning was included. The questions included in the TOR are further of a different nature, some aiming to get basic information on particular aspects related to the implementation

of the programme, others asking for a value assessment of the MTR team and still others referring to further analysis, learning and recommendations. In view of these different types of questions, the MTR team rearranged the evaluation questions along the different categories and grouped as follows:

- questions referring to basic information and value assessments have been organized along the evaluation criteria; where feasible and desirable, efforts have been undertaken to further operationalize (i.e. 'break down' these questions in judgment criteria and indicators – sometimes formulated as questions); the results are laid down in the most important section of the evaluation framework; this part of the evaluation framework is meant to structure, along the evaluation criteria, the key findings in terms of the programme performance – in MTR research terms **'the variables to be explained'**;
- questions related to further analysis and (connected) learning that were addressed using a distinction between (1) *contextual factors*, which are 'given' to a major extent and cannot be influenced by the project, at least not in the short run; (2) *project characteristics*, which are determined during the project preparation, but can hardly be changed later on, and (3) *project design and management factors* that, in principle, can be changed throughout the entire implementation period. In MTR research terms, these elements are labelled **'the explanatory factors/variables'** as they provide the (possible) explanations for the project performance.

Schematically, the research design can be summarized as follows:

Table 1: Research design

Variables to be explained	Explanatory variables/factors
<p>Project performance as measured on the basis of its:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevance and appropriateness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ level of inclusion of beneficiary needs in project design ○ level of inclusion of beneficiary needs in project implementation • efficiency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ performance of the project's governance structure ○ quality of the project's implementation structure ○ quality of project management and implementation (content wise) ○ quality of project management and implementation (management activities) ○ quality of the consortium set-up and functioning ○ learning • effectiveness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ key achievements related to pillar 1 ○ key achievements related to pillar 2 ○ key achievements related to pillar 3 ○ key achievements related to pillar 4 • sustainability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ sustainability of major pillar 1 benefits ○ sustainability of major pillar 2 benefits ○ sustainability of major pillar 3 benefits ○ sustainability of major pillar 4 benefits 	<p>Project performance might be influenced by the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contextual factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ agro-ecological factors ○ agro-economic factors ○ socio-economic factors ○ institutional factors ○ social factors ○ unexpected events • project characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ nature and capacity of partners ○ key characteristics of major beneficiaries ○ scale and scope of the project ○ project duration ○ level of innovation/duplication • project design and implementation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ quality of project preparation ○ level of ownership by key stakeholders ○ clarity and quality of TOC and intervention logic ○ level of inclusion of sustainability considerations in design and implementation ○ quality of adjustment mechanisms (to initial plans) ○ quality of human resources ○ quality of implementation mechanisms (including M&E) ○ quality of local participation and ownership ○ level of (immediate) benefits generated for different stakeholder groups ○ ...
<p style="text-align: center;">↓ ↓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lessons learned and recommendations</p>	

A closer look at the ‘**variables to be explained**’ learns that:

- the evaluation criteria have been further operationalized in judgment criteria that have been mainly (but not exclusively) derived from the evaluation questions in the TOR; the MTR team has added some additional judgment criteria related to aspects that the team considers crucial for their analysis;
- the number of judgment criteria differs substantially among the evaluation criteria:
 - two judgement criteria related to relevance and appropriateness;
 - five judgment criteria related to efficiency; considering the mid-term nature of this evaluation, it is not a surprise that the efficiency evaluation criterion is the most important;
 - four judgment criteria related to both effectiveness and sustainability, in line with the four pillars of the project; note that the assessment at these levels was rather qualitative and focused on ‘key achievements’ (effectiveness) and ‘key sustainability issues’. With the aim of further delineating the scope of the evaluation, it was eventually decided not to include the analysis of sustainability in the MTR.

The ‘**explanatory variables**’ have been grouped in three sets of factors (see above), each being operationalized at one additional level. Not surprisingly, ‘project design and management’ is the largest section. Note that the explanatory factors elaborated here are indicative in the sense that other factors (explanations for performance) might be identified further in the process, while some of the factors included now might prove not to generate influence.

A more detailed elaboration of the research design is presented in annex 3 that presents the evaluation framework and other evaluation tools. The evaluation framework also includes the **data collection sources and tools**. These are outlined on the horizontal axis of the framework. Considering the limited timeframe and resources for this MTR, the team could not resort to rather complex and demanding data collection approaches and in general had to use rather conventional methods:

- *study of key documents*: as in most evaluations, study of key documents is the first and most obvious data collection approach.
- *observation*: ‘observation’ is the most obvious form of data collection and can be adopted in varying circumstances (during meetings in the North and the South, during field visits, ...).
- *interviews from the North (face-to-face, phone, Skype)*: these interviews were conducted in the North and concern key stakeholders of the project: ONL project implementation staff and advisors, consortium partners involved in pillars 1 till 3, consortium partners involved in pillar 4;
- *specific data collection efforts in the South*: these included to an important degree face-to-face interviews, in particular at the level of the leadership and staff of consortium partners and (where possible) representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders. Conscious efforts were undertaken to use diverse data collection methods, in particular methods that facilitate group interaction such as focus group discussions;
- the team intended to use *policy or FFS case studies* but this did not fully materialize due to a lack of time;
- *use of expert panels*: efforts were undertaken to include the advice of external experts related to the performance with regard to key dimensions of the project, in particular under pillar 4 (work of the international consortium partners) and also for pillar 3 work. For pillar 4 this implied mainly discussion with advocacy targets of the programme.

3.2.2 Actual implementation of the research approach during the field visits

As could be foreseen, during the field visits the MTR team had to make hard choices in finding an adequate trade-off between breadth and depth, as the MTR team would have loved to conduct a more in-depth analysis. Key considerations underlying the choices made included:

- the availability of good documentation on the programme, which implied that programme dimensions that were well documented got relatively less attention during the field visits;
- the desire to firmly reach out to the communities (women and men) targeted by the programme at the grassroots level and to spend considerable time to grasp the realities at field level;
- the need to triangulate information (use of at least two and preferably more data collection tools for each component of the framework);

- the expectations of the programme key stakeholders, in particular the implementing partners.

Further and in line with the above, the MTR field visits were characterized by:

- giving much importance to learning (a.o. by including briefing and debriefing sessions);
- using a mix of data collection methods;
- optimizing the mission time available by avoiding that too much timing had to be devoted to travel, even when this implied (in some countries/areas) that the beneficiaries contacted do not constitute a truly representative panel;
- taking into account prevailing gender relations (meetings with groups of varying compositions);
- optimizing the learning effects of the Asia field visit that was considered as a pilot.

At field level, the MTR team members further used data collection sheets (one sheet per judgment criterion) that summarized their key field visit findings (see annex 3). These sheets constituted an important building block for this synthesis report and allowed a smooth comparison between countries and aggregation of country-level findings. They also constituted the main foundation for the internal workshop of the MTR team that determined the key findings, lessons learned and recommendations to be included in the synthesis report.

3.3 Limitations to the validity and reliability of the MTR findings

As most evaluation exercises, the MTR has faced the challenge to use its budget in the most adequate way so as to address the evaluation questions with the required depth and breadth thereby using data collection methods that allow triangulation and avoid biases to the maximum extent possible. A major challenge thereby was the limited budget available for this MTR, hardly 0,47% of the initial overall programme budget and 0,67% of the budget for the three first years, whereby it should be noted that the programme has a complex set up including 9 consortium partners and activities in 8 countries and further builds on results acquired in the past (and as such already had a considerable outreach from the start in some programme countries) and further.

While the lack of resources is a recurrent complaint of evaluators and increasingly becoming a major constraint in view of fulfilling key evaluation objectives related to accountability and learning, it should never become an excuse for below-standard work. As such, the evaluators have done there very best to come up with valid and credible findings and are convinced that they have achieved this ambition to a major degree. An important advantage in this regard was that key evaluation criteria related to impact and sustainability did not need to be addressed. This being said, the key limitations related to the validity and, above all, the reliability of the MTR findings, in particular those obtained via the field visits, can be summarized as follows:

- the triangulation of the data collected could only be conducted to a limited degree;
- the sample of grassroots actors visited was too small and not representative as important parameters (e.g. level of accessibility) could not be integrated as sample selection criteria ;
- only limited data collection efforts took place at the level of stakeholders that are entirely independent of the programme ;
- the effects of pillar 4 of the programme, related to lobby and advocacy, were difficult to assess, partially because of the inherent challenges of evaluating advocacy that are related to the importance of the (often rapidly changing) environment, the need to often changes strategies, the (virtual) impossibility of attributing change to a particular advocacy effort (over even of demonstrating how such an effort contributed to the change observed). These challenges were exacerbated by the fact that the advocacy efforts funded by SD=HS and implemented by the pillar 4 partners were often part of broader advocacy efforts of these partners and of the networks they are associated with.
- the MTR team had difficulties to openly discuss, with some consortium partners, some important events that affected programme implementation (the budget cut, the stop of the cooperation with CAWR, the working relationship with the ON co-implementation team). Some partners did not want to be reminded on the role they have played related to these issues and/or questioned findings of the report that were based on their previous inputs, while others had no problems with discussing openly their role with the MTR team.

II. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4. RELEVANCE AND APPROPRIATENESS

4.1 Inclusion of beneficiary needs in programme design

4.1.1. Key findings

As described in chapter two, the SD=HS programme is one of the two major parts of the Seeds GROW programme, the other being the GROW programme. The SD=HS programme summary (p. 15-18) is a short yet well formulated section of the programme proposal that clearly describes the key role of seeds in agriculture and maintaining biodiversity and in ensuring food security. The key role that small farmers play in the global food system and, particularly, in using and developing farm-saved seeds is also well described, as is the Indigenous People and Small Holder Farmers (IPSHF) disadvantaged position as seed growers, compared to (among others) private seed companies.

The proposal is on the other hand very concise in describing *more specifically* the situation of the beneficiaries in the (initial) eight programme countries. There is no clear socio-economic demarcation of the programme beneficiaries (richer versus poorer, youth versus older people, men versus women), neither specific country-related contextual analyses, nor are there indications on how local partners and beneficiaries have been associated to the programme formulation process. A few specific indications are provided on the inclusion of women (but not of other socially excluded groups) but these remain also rather general. There are further references to the challenges of climate change without however geographically specifying their nature and gravity. Furthermore, only limited attention is paid to the overall situation in rural areas where often it becomes increasingly difficult to ensure a decent living, leading to important migration to urban areas, most often of the most productive age groups.

The proposal further presents a four-pillar approach that was developed on the basis of ON's experience gained via various programmes undertaken in the past with partners all over the world. Each of these interconnected pillars addresses a particular dimension of the programme's aim to ensure seeds for food and nutrition security. The first three pillars address in a direct way vital beneficiary needs including strengthening the adaptive capacities of IPSHF in seed conservation, access and sustainable use with a strong biodiversity focus (pillar 1), the production and marketing of good quality and diversity of seeds (pillar 2) and the empowerment of women as catalysts for biodiversity-based diets for improved nutrition (pillar 3). Pillar 4 has a more global focus and addresses the more strategic needs to secure national and global legislation and policies for the implementation of farmers' rights, thereby targeting local, national and global policy makers.

The proposal further shortly describes approaches, such as the farmer field schools (FFS), that have been developed worldwide to support farmers' seeds systems and are planned to be used in the programme, whereby specific efforts will be undertaken to ensure women's involvement, participatory plant breeding (PPB), community seed banks and farmer seed enterprises (FSE). Furthermore, the programme proposal does not further work out the programme methodology in detail, with the exception of the plan to conduct baseline surveys using a set of predetermined indicators which were developed and tested during the IFAD phase of the programme. According to the proposal, the actual definition of the programme and its refined framework is part of the workplan for year 1.

4.1.2 Further analysis and assessment

The MTR team's visits at the grassroots level have largely confirmed the relevance of the overall programme analysis and rationale as put forward in the proposal. There is no doubt that SD=HS addresses key issues that are vital in the struggle to safeguard seed security (and, hence, food security) and biodiversity and to uphold and maintain the rights and capacities of IPFHS⁷ in general: seeds are recognized everywhere as a key element

⁷ We will use in this report the term IPSHF as the generic term to describe the programme beneficiaries in the programme countries. This term covers however different realities in the sense that the approaches on the ground differ among the

of food (and seed) security, while the focus on seeds is also considered relevant in view of biodiversity and the empowerment of smallholder farmers, including women, whereby no further distinction (e.g. in terms of age) is made within the group of 'smallholder farmers'. Finally, the programme is considered highly relevant in view of the challenges brought by climate change, as the use of adequate PGR is a key element in the development of adequate coping strategies.

In addition, the objectives of the programme are in line with the key objectives of the NGO partners but - with the exception (in some cases) of the programme's unconditional choice for Farmers Rights - also with those of government implementing partners who play themselves as government institutions a key role in implementing seed policies and practices that should ensure the IPSHF rights to seed. On a broader page, it appears that, overall, the SD=HS objectives are compatible with government policies that often refer to regional and international policies⁸. There might however be tensions in the sense that many policies are actually not implemented but rather formulated for window dressing purposes; in many countries, there is a major gap between policies and the actual situation on the ground.

Some further nuance should be added in relation to the Pillar 4 partners who, certainly, share globally the conviction of the importance of the programme's focus on seeds and bio-diversity, but in their policies and practice might follow other pathways to the envisaged changes. These partners may choose to focus on different targets i.e. different international forums (e.g. SC and TWN working more on WIPO and UPOV, and ETC on CBD), but their work overall is complementary in view of achieving the programme goals. These differences in approach were felt from the very beginning of programme implementation; none of the partners however considered them so substantial that cooperation within the same programme would not be possible; partners rather viewed them as healthy tensions.

The MTR team understands that the programme proposal does not contain detailed information with regard to the situation of the beneficiaries in the programme countries. Including this information in the proposal would have implied a very heavy formulation phase and entailed the risk to make the proposal *de facto* difficult to use and decrease its strategic focus. As such, more detailed information on the local situation has been gathered mainly via the baseline surveys conducted in the early stages of programme implementation in all programme locations⁹. This implies that a *deductive approach* was followed whereby the key programme components – in terms of the pillars to focus on - were formulated first to determine subsequently the outline and scope of the country-level analyses.

Such a deductive approach is rather unusual in the sense that most logically the results of the analysis will determine the programme strategy and priorities, not the other way around. One might argue that in the case of SD=HS such the approach followed can be justified in view of the substantial body of knowledge and expertise that ONL and their partners had already gained over more than a decade in the domain of seed and food security in most programme countries¹⁰. While this might be true, one should also note that ONL and the other consortium partners were still relatively inexperienced with regard to pillars two and three (set-up of FSE and the promotion of nutrition via (a.o.) a focus on NUS), that some countries were entirely new and that ONL and their partners only disposed of a relatively short period (six weeks) to draft the proposal. Nevertheless already in the early stages (i.e. before validation via country-level analyses) decisions were taken on where (i.e. which countries) to focus on pillar 1 and where on pillar 3.

While the findings above refer to a classic dilemma faced in the preparation of numerous development programmes, the fieldwork has allowed identifying some important consequences of the deductive approach followed:

countries. ANDES, for instance, places its approach within bio-cultural territories where it cooperates with entire communities.

⁸ For instance, in Vietnam, contacts with the MARD at the national level have learned that their policy and programmes include the promotion of high quality nutritious plants and medicinal plants to combat the loss of bio-diversity. Similar policies are found in other countries.

⁹ In Zimbabwe and Peru, no pillar 1 baseline surveys were conducted; instead the baselines made as part of the similar IFAD project were used. In both countries, baselines were however implemented with regard to pillar 3.

¹⁰ See also below, in particular chapter 6.1

- the relevance of the decision to focus, in some (not all) geographical areas covered by the programme, on one of the pillars 1 and 3 *only*, could not be validated via the corresponding baselines that by design focused on one pillar only ; whether or not IPSHF had important needs in *both* pillar areas (and actually also in the area of seed production - pillar 2) could, hence, only partially be assessed, be it that previous work in some areas (e.g. North Vietnam) allowed having an overall understanding of the situation on the ground;
- the *ex ante* choice to focus the baselines on a particular pillar entailed specific risks as it induced biases in the analytical work on the ground, as was illustrated in North Vietnam where the choice for pillar three has implied a baseline approach that focused on dietary diversity and NUS that were put upfront as the programme choice before the actual analysis was conducted. Important developments related to the loss of rice and corn bio-diversity were not identified or, at least, not addressed in the analysis (and neither during implementation, see below). In Laos, the analysis focused on pillar 1 issues, whereas, according to the Global Hunger Index, the country belongs to the group of countries where the nutritional situation is defined as ‘serious’¹¹; the situation in this domain in the programme areas in the country has not been assessed in-depth. This being said, it is obvious that pillar 1 work also contributes to the improvement of the nutritional status of the population¹²
- related to the two points above, it is important to underline that the focus on ‘seeds’ (or PGR) – actually on PGR only (and not on other IPSHF needs) - in itself includes a substantial delimitation of the programme’s focus and its capacity to address beneficiary needs; as will be discussed below, this choice is understandable from a programme management perspective, but the IPSHF and local implementing partners have nowhere maintained this narrow focus on seeds during implementation.

On the other side it should not be forgotten that, ONL and the local partners have acquired substantial experience with the implementation of programmes centred around PGR. In addition, the NGO partners dispose of a long-standing experience working with the local communities and the required methodological skills to ensure that programmes will address key beneficiary needs in a broader area than PGR.

4.2 Inclusion of beneficiary needs in programme implementation

4.2.1. Key findings

The programme has showed a clear desire and commitment to include beneficiary needs (of men and women) during implementation. Key elements in this regard are:

- *the implementation of baseline surveys using a participatory approach during actual survey implementation and subsequent discussions with the local population.* While the surveys accorded priority attention to issues related to future programme implementation (related to a specific pillar), they adopted to some extent a broader scope that allowed identifying other issues that were important for the local population. The discussion of the baseline results has led in several cases to a broadening or adaptation of the focus the programme implementers had initially in mind; this broadened focus has however not always been consistently integrated in subsequent programme implementation (e.g. in the training of trainers, see below);
- *the experiential approach followed in the farmer field schools (FFS) using approaches such as participatory varietal selection, (rather exceptionally) participatory plant breeding and the use of field trials, etc.;* local needs and perceptions constitute a key parameter in these processes;
- *the inclusion of measures to ensure that small farmers, vulnerable families and other marginalized groups could effectively participate in the project;* this is particularly the case with regard to women who often constitute the majority of the FFS members. Potential barriers to inclusion related to age were however not considered. Even in areas where women were not the majority of the FFS members, several resource persons stated that the participation of women (both in quantitative and qualitative terms) is higher than in other comparable development programmes;

¹¹ It is not clear what the situation is in the districts covered by the programme.

¹² See also below, when we will elaborate the idea of integrating pillars 1 and 3 in one approach.

- *a genuine empowerment process at the FFS level* whereby women often were participating in equal terms (even if they were a minority¹³). As such, FFS are developing their own dynamic and, hence, deal with many issues that go beyond the initial programme focus (e.g. plant diseases, soil fertility, shifting cultivation, focus on a broader range of crops);
- *the lack of data on the socio-economic status of those effectively reached*: while there is a focus to involve the poor and marginalised, partners working at the grassroots do not always dispose of specific data related to the socio-economic status of those being effectively reached, mostly because in their eyes sufficient attention has been devoted to select intervention areas on the basis of socio-economic considerations. Furthermore, membership of the FFS is often (e.g. in Laos, Zimbabwe and Peru) open to all members of society.

More specifically, in Zimbabwe, CTD and Agritex officers were well informed about the socio-economic status of FFS members and used this information in their work. This knowledge is however not systematised in documents. In Peru, a participatory exercise to discuss (and rank) community members according to their socio-economic position was considered inappropriate (after consultation with local leaders and FFS local technicians – community members that take up a role of lead farmer). The approach in Peru differs actually in several aspects from that in other countries (see box).

Strategies to reach beneficiaries and strategies to let beneficiaries participate:

- The project works with different communities (focus on bio-cultural **territories instead of individual farmers**), to be able to work in that community ANDES has invested in the process of building up trust (for example during previous projects), the **communities themselves** can choose whether or not they want to participate through a discussion at the level of their **"general assembly"**.
- The project works with **local technicians that are selected by the communities themselves** and belong to these communities.
- During the project, **FFS participants present in their general assembly** meetings of the community what is going on in the project in the FFS and discuss together with the community members whether they are satisfied with how the project evolves
- Parque de la Papa and Parque Chalakuy are "managed" by a **Junta Directiva** consisting of representatives from the different communities involved in the parks.
- **In all parts of the projects, the voices/opinions of participants/communities are considered** (for example: informed consent for baseline research, monitoring of satisfaction after every FFS meeting, close contact of ANDES staff with local technicians (weekly meetings) and FFS participants, tools adapted to local context, decision making together and/or mostly in hands of the FFS participants as part of participatory selection and breeding processes)
- **Culturally appropriated**: to incorporate 3 objectives to be culturally appropriate and make sense in the context of the Andean indigenous communities (Runa Ayllu program component, Salka Ayllu program component, Auki Ayllu program component).

4.2.2 Further analysis and assessment

The findings above provide much evidence with regard to the inclusion of beneficiary needs in programme implementation. In addition, a few remarks can be formulated, which to some extent are linked with the approach that has been followed in the programme formulation phase:

- the good performance during implementation with regard to participation and inclusion of women is related to consistent efforts of the implementing partners and ONL (and also Searice in the case of the Asian countries) to operationalize 'participation' and 'inclusion of women' in a realistic manner and to accordingly design and implement capacity building measures for local implementing staff (district-level extension staff mainly)¹⁴;
- many stakeholders at the local level, particularly in Asia, consider the start-up period of the programme (i.e. the baseline surveys) as solid and valid, but unnecessarily heavy and time consuming. While particularly the participatory approach used during the baseline has sparked interest and enthusiasm, and created a momentum at the grassroots, its results mostly confirmed knowledge that communities and partners already largely disposed of and, hence, produced little added value. In their opinion, it would have been better to conduct a (lighter) baseline and to conduct it *before* the actual programme start. Furthermore, in some cases the high level of requirements related to the baseline

¹³ Laos is an exception in this regard. It was stated that socio-cultural barriers are often very strong and that it will take more time to ensure balanced participation of women and men.

¹⁴ In Zimbabwe, the programme is 'helped' by the fact that for various reasons there are more women than men in the villages; cultural factors make also that women are more open to group approaches than men.

has implied that the local partner has outsourced (part of) the work to third partners, which not only had negative consequences on local ownership but also has created additional difficulties in the subsequent processing of the baseline results. In Peru, on the contrary, the baseline was considered to produce an added value, be it that its focus was broadened; ANDES in particular welcomed the 'participatory research' approach;

- related to the previous point, the baseline surveys seem in some countries to have initiated *two parallel tracks* with, on the one hand, the SD=HS expert team working hard to process, complete and validate baseline data and write them out comprehensively in (single and/or multiple country) baseline reports - a process requiring considerable time, energy and resources. On the other hand, local partners wanted to capitalize on the momentum gained via the baseline surveys and therefore started with actual programme implementation on the ground without waiting for the global baseline analyses to be finalized. This implied that the finalized baselines were only available at a moment when local dynamics already had taken their final shape, which limited their operational value¹⁵, although it is fair to say that the local partners already had absorbed much of the information stemming from the baselines during the early stages of the implementation process. Again, this does not apply for Peru where programme staff played a key role in the baseline survey;
- the consistent focus on the inclusion of women is a strength of the programme, but should not be equated with a gender approach (while this is the way local partners approach gender in the Asian countries). The inclusion of women is rather a preliminary condition for a genuine gender approach than its result ... The lack of a gender approach implies among others that the potential to contribute to more balanced gender relations via the programme is not fully tapped. On the other side, in Zimbabwe for instance (but also in Vietnam in areas of seasonal migration of men), the inclusion of women in FFS contributed to their empowerment and increased gender equality, with women members taking key decisions related to crops to be grown.
- as will be worked out more in detail further in this report, it has not always been easy for the programme to find the right balance between, on the one hand, its focus on PGR and, on the other hand, managing the consequences of a rather open-ended participatory and empowerment approach. FFS have indeed engaged in dealing with a broader set of issues than the programme intended to address initially. When FFS and/or communities at large gain in confidence, they gain also in ambition and want, for instance, to engage in income generating activities (noticed in all countries). One might state that the programme could have been stricter in this regard, but this might not always be the best option in view of the local situation. Entirely negating such aspirations might indeed have severe consequences on the relation between programme and beneficiaries. In addition the focus on improved food security via maintaining or further promoting bio-diversity might only be sustained when it can be combined with other activities, e.g. related to income generation, an issue that is de facto addressed in many FFS.

¹⁵ In addition they needed to be translated in local languages, which has not always happened or taken additional time.

5. PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS

5.1 Overall programme set up

5.1.1 Key findings

The SD=HS programme has a unique yet complicated set-up that, among others, is an illustration of its high level of ambition. Initially, it included nine consortium partners based in nine countries (four in the North, five in the South) spread over four continents; in addition, it had four implementing partners in Asia and three implementing partners in Africa that are coordinated by one consortium partner. The programme endeavoured to work on both the global, regional, national and local levels, including country-level work in eight Southern countries (one in South America, two in West Africa, one in Southern Africa, one in South Asia and three in South East Asia). ONL leads the consortium and occupies a unique position in the sense that it acts, towards the other partners, as grant manager (with Sida as its main back donor) but simultaneously takes up a role as a co-implementer of the programme. ONL disposes to that purpose of an expert programme team that is coordinated by a Senior Programme Manager. The programme has a Global Partners Committee (GPC) that is its main body to ensure governance and steering. All consortium partners are represented in the GPC that on average has met two times yearly; the last GPC meeting dates however of March 2016 (see more details on the GPC below under chapter 6.2).

Within this broad institutional and geographical configuration, the programme is organizing its work along four pillars. The three first pillars have a strong local focus (but include policy and advocacy work from the local till the national and global levels). Southern consortium partners play a key role in implementation of these activities whereby it should be noted that the key implementation partners in six of the eight countries are not considered as 'consortium partners' but supported by one or more consortium partners (including ONL) during implementation. Pillar 4 deals with broader lobby and advocacy work and is implemented mainly via four consortium partners (three based in the North, one in the South) that are not involved in the implementation of the first three pillars.

After 2.5 years of implementation the cooperation was halted with one consortium partner in the North and the three associated implementing partners in the South (based in India, Senegal and Mali). Since then, the programme set-up is spread over less partners and countries, with work in the South being limited to five countries.

5.1.2 Further analysis and assessment

In various ways, the exceptional set-up of the programme (compared to most other 'regular' development programmes) calls for further analysis. The SD=HS project builds on a legacy that has been constructed over years-long continued and committed involvement of ONL and other consortium partners in biodiversity and/or food and seed security. Furthermore, while some of the key actors in pillars 1, 2 and 3 have a long history of cooperation with ONL (among others via a similar IFAD programme that finished in December 2015), pillar 4 partners also have their history of cooperation on policy issues with ONL; some of these partners actually also cooperated with each other prior to or in parallel with their partnership with ONL. Additionally, partners including Searice, CTDI, GRAIN and ETC for many years worked together on a similar initiative called CBDC (Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Program), that started in 1996 and lasted until 2003. Lastly, local implementing partners in Asia cooperated with Searice before this programme and the local partner in Senegal was also an ONL partner in the past. Not surprisingly, the key figures in these organisations that come to the forefront in SD=HS implementation know each other since long and have acquired over the years substantial knowledge and expertise on the seed sector. Such key figures are also found in the ONL implementation team, either as regular staff, either as advisor.

Without any doubt, this long history of cooperation in various forms has to an important extent determined the present programme set-up. On the one hand, it expressed the desire of ONL to work with solid and well known partners, an argument that was also used in the dialogue with Sida around the programme proposal¹⁶. Thereby, it is important to note that the preparation of this programme coincided with a period of substantial institutional and financial uncertainty at the level of ONL brought about by the substantial changes in the funding mechanisms of Dutch development cooperation, in particular at the level of non-state actors. These changes obliged ONL to stop among others with its long standing Global Partnership Programme in which many of the consortium partners had been integrated. Last but not least the changing development cooperation context triggered (or even obliged) ONL to fundamentally reconsider the ways it had worked so far. Among other changes, ONL decided to also become a (co-) implementer of development projects and programmes. SD=HS is said to be the first major initiative under that new constellation whereby ONL combines the role of funder/grant manager with that of co-implementer.

All these elements seem to have played a role in the definition of the programme configuration. SD=HS seems at least to be partially designed to safeguard the partnership with long-term allies. As such, for a majority of these long-term allies, the programme was rather a new formula to continue the partnership than a new set-up that would require substantial operational changes.

Some observers stated that while there is nothing against continuing long standing effective partnerships, one wonders whether ONL hasn't gone too far in wanting to preserve these relations at a moment of major internal and external changes. These uncertainties implied that key issues that are part of regular programme formulation were only partially addressed. These include questions such as: are the consortium partners (and local-level implementing partners) the right partners to implement the various programme components (notably the relatively new pillars 2 and 3) and reach its envisaged outcomes (e.g. in terms of up-scaling, reaching out to broader networks and alliances); does the geographic spread of the Southern partners allow for efficient programme management, exchange and learning; is the division of responsibilities and tasks in the programme well chosen? How can ONL reconcile the roles of grant manager and co-implementer? Is a consortium set-up the right formula in that case and are governance regulations adapted to this particular set-up?

Consortium partners shared different opinions with regard to how ONL wanted to fill in its double role in the programme implementation structure and budget. Some state that the double role of ONL was clear from the onset, whereas others feel it was not discussed in-depth during the preparation process that dealt mainly with substantive issues. Most partners initially expected that the relation with ONL would remain very similar to what they were used to and only gradually come to an understanding of the financial and operational implications of ONL's co-implementation role. The (compared to the past) heavy ONL management and implementation structure (initially with different layers which subsequently disappeared partially after the budget cut), already from the early stages sparked resistance from most partners. *In addition*, ONL's lack of experience with managing simultaneously the roles of funder representative and co-implementer further weakened the partners' confidence and hampered smooth programme implementation (see below, sub-chapter 6.1 in particular).

5.2 Programme outreach and inclusion of women

The programme uses different definitions with regard to its beneficiaries, which were recently redefined, depending on the type of relationship they have with the programme¹⁷:

- *direct participants* : people that are active members of the FFS formed (= number of FFS participants)
- *primary beneficiaries* : households in the communities where FFS activities take place (aiming at improved seed security, food security, policy changes)

¹⁶ On the other hand, ONL had to work hard to convince Sida of the importance of the inclusion of the pillar 4 partners in the programme.

¹⁷ Our discussion below uses these definitions for easy reference.

- *secondary beneficiaries* : households in other geographical areas than areas with SD=HS communities, but benefiting from the programme through (e.g.) seed exchanges, policy work, barter markets, seed clubs, sharing of tools)
- *indirect beneficiaries*: other communities benefiting from SD=HS' global outreach, tools, policy intervention work
- *FFS formed*: farmer field schools that are organized with specific communities

The MTR found that these definitions (and earlier, similar definitions) have so far not been systematically applied at the field level, which might have been the reason to discuss them again during the March 2017 methodological workshop. The MTR team was informed also that the number of primary beneficiaries was so far estimated by multiplying the number of direct participants by six; for the future this multiplier would become nine.

The table below provides an overview of the number of FFS formed and the direct participants, as covered by Sida funding via SD=HS¹⁸. Note that some of these FFS might already have been established and supported via other projects (e.g. IFAD) in periods prior to the start of SD=HS or during the overlap period of IFAD and SD=HS implementation; the Myanmar component of the programme is still in its inception phase.

Table 2: Overview of direct participants under Sida funding

Country	Number of FFS (°)	Total number of members (°°)	Total number of women members (°)
Zimbabwe	112	2,800	1,680 (60%)
Peru	12	247	172 (70%)
Laos	10	270	180 (67%)
North Vietnam	24	648	518 (80%)
South Vietnam	12	240	78 (32%)
Total	170	4,205	2,628 (62%)

(°) The figures for Zimbabwe do not include 65 FFS established under the IFAD programme but receiving technical support under the SD=HS programme after the closure of the IFAD programme. The figures for South Vietnam do not include 17 seed clubs that were established under the IFAD programme that still got some support in terms of genetic material but were not further supported

(°°)The figures in italics are estimates

The data presented in the table above allow also elaborating a rough cost-effectiveness estimate. On the basis of the adapted (i.e. after the budget cut) programme budget, the average cost of per FFS and per direct participants for the first three years of the programme can be estimated as follows:

Table 3: Cost effectiveness estimate at programme level (years 1 till 3 included)

Item	
Total budget Pillars 1 and 3 (°)	4,585,419 €
Total number of FFS	170
Average expenses per FFS (year 1-3)	26,973 €
Total number of FFS participants	4,205
Average expenses per FFS participant (year 1-3)	1,090 €

(°) This figure was calculated as follows: total budget for years 1 till 3 (included) minus total of pillar 2 for these years minus total for pillar 4 for these years minus total budget for contract management for these years (pro rata) minus total administrative costs for these years (pro rata).

For different reasons **the figures in the table above should be dealt with carefully:**

¹⁸ Note that in the case of Zimbabwe in particular, the local partner supports a substantial number of additional FFS; see below.

- first, the pillar budgets include also provisions for activities and products/services that are not, or not entirely, meant for the FFS and their members. For instance, field guides, studies, videos, ... reach a broader audience. In addition, some of these products are to be considered as 'investments' on which agreement needs to be reached first and that will pay off on the medium and long term when they might eventually become public goods;
- further, the fact that work in the CAWR countries was stopped (but the expenses in these countries included in our calculations) and that the work in Myanmar is only about to start also has an important effect on the figures ;
- FFS to some degree can also be considered *as pilots* that are essentially meant as a means (and not as an end) to convince others, i.e. to facilitate adoption on a broader scale (via the set-up of FFS outside the programme, via policy changes, via spontaneous adoption of FFS promoted changes, ...) and, hence, contributing to impact on the longer term. Reaching a substantial level of outreach will be, in other words, a *consequence* of the approach followed and cannot yet be fully assessed in this mid-term review
- on the other side, , it should be remembered that the overview does not include the expenses at the level of extension services that cooperate with the programme and at the level of the FFS members themselves.

Having these important considerations in mind, a few important remarks can nevertheless be made. While the substantial expenses per FFS and participant need to be put in perspective, in the view of the MTR, they still constitute a matter of concern and should become a serious issue of attention for the future. In addition, it should be remarked that the figures in table 3 hide substantial differences among the different programme areas as Zimbabwe alone stand for roughly two thirds of the number of FFS and direct participants, whereas the budget that country receives is average. An important issue in this regard is that work in Zimbabwe could benefit, more than elsewhere, of the achievements of previous actions (in particular the IFAD programme).

The analysis above with regard to the *direct participants* points to the importance for the programme to further reach out to other categories of beneficiaries *beyond* the FFS members. As such, the following can be said with regard to the number of *primary and secondary beneficiaries* and the planned increase of FFS:

- *In Zimbabwe*, the total number of FFS supported under the SD=HS umbrella/programme approach amounts to 341; support to the 238 additional FFS uses other funding sources and is partially implemented by two local partner NGOs. Furthermore, the total number of direct participants and primary beneficiaries under Sida funding is estimated at 8.124 (these include the FFS participants and farmers participating in outreach events such as seed and food fairs and all households of the villages where a FFS is active).
- *In Peru*, ANDES is working in the Potato Park (6 communities organized in 1 FFS with 8, all male, participants) and in Chalakuy Park. In the latter, 6 communities are involved, each of them having an FFS organized around Pillar 1 and Pillar 3 (except for Ñusta Pakana where only Pillar 3 related FFS have been established till now). Regarding the number of participants in the different FFS, it has to be mentioned that these are not unique participants, there is a substantial overlap between participants in Pillar 1 FFS and participants in Pillar 3 FFS. In the Pillar 3 related FFS, the proportion of female participants is on average 84% (ranging from 49% to 100%). 5 more FFS are planned for the next year (3 in pillar 1 and 2 in pillar 4).
- *In Laos*, the outreach of the programme beyond the FFS is still limited, as the programme areas are new (no prior activities via other programmes). In addition, quality of implementation of the programme differs substantially among the districts covered. In the district visited the programme was clearly successful, among others because of dynamic local extension staff. In the villages visited, there was a process of wider adoption of FFS practices, in particular related to vegetable cultivation. In a neighbouring district covered by the programme, extension staff also have undertaken initiatives to promote the FFS approach via a local publication and aim to lobby for inclusion of the FFS approach in the local development plan. Further, a 'Farmer Technical Conference' has been held with major support from the ONL team, to share the accomplishments of the programme in the northern districts with other stakeholders. In addition, the FFS model has been copied by the Salakham district agricultural extension service that has taken the initiative to set up one additional FFS. The target of FFS for Laos is 30 for year 5.

- *In North Vietnam*, the programme is also still at its early stages so that outreach beyond the present FFS is rather limited. In the district visited, local FFS leaders confirmed however that fellow villagers showed much interest in the FFS activities (in particular vegetable cultivation in home gardens) and that some of them have started growing vegetables also. So far, there are no signs of policy adoption of the programme's approach, but there is a clear potential in this regard (compatibility with government policy; local policy makers' interest in programme success in terms of women involvement). The target for North Vietnam is to support 68 FFS by year 5.
- *In South Vietnam*, a positive evolution is the adoption of the FFS approach by local government services that have initiated another 50 FFS; it is not known to which extent the approach followed in these FFS is similar to that of the programme. In addition the programme has organised or participated in farmer field days, but attendance to these events has been rather limited. A specific feature in South Vietnam is the careful selection, with help of the local authorities, of the FFS members; each FFS is composed by members of one or a few villages, that are considered capable and influential so that they can spread the improved practices within their villages. The target of number of FFS for year 5 is 50.
- *In all countries with the exception of Peru*, the programme works in various districts that are spread over the country and often are located in different agro-ecological zones. As such, a broad range of experiences can be gained, but on the other side, this choice makes programme implementation more demanding and increases operational costs substantially. In Peru different agro-ecological zones are represented by communities, relatively close to each other, but located in different altitude-zones.

A few additional indications can be provided with regard to the process of spreading knowledge, skills and practices from 'direct participants' to 'primary and secondary beneficiaries':

- the programme's focus (PGR) implies a sequence of activities that often lasts over several planting seasons and brings about change in terms of the farming practices applied, varieties used, ... related the four 'indicators' consistently applied by the programme (see 5.2.1) above¹⁹. In the meanwhile however, FFS most often also deal also with other issues considered important by their members. As such, adoption of new practices by non-FFS members might relate both to PGR *and* to these other issues. Furthermore, the FFS approach is experiential and concerns a broad range of learning elements and processes, which makes comprehensive adoption very challenging; as such adoption on the FFS members' own fields cannot be taken for granted and will mostly be partial and mostly concern a few specific elements of the changes introduced. This will – a fortiori – apply for primary and secondary beneficiaries. There is nothing wrong with this, as it should not be expected that non-FFS members acquire the same skills and adopt the entire package of practices promoted. On the other hand, being informed about a new farm practice (e.g. via a radio programme, WhatsApp or a visit to a farmers fair does) not tell much about *actual adoption* of new practices. "Benefitting from the programme" implies in our view 'adopting' one or more practices promoted by the programme, whereby one should be aware of the fact that the quality of this adoption might be less;
- specific constraints can hamper the process of adoption of new practices, even at the level of FFS participants : both in *Laos and in South Vietnam* FFS members had no access to seeds of the rice variety/varieties that came out the PVS process as the most preferred²⁰ ; they might need to wait for a few cropping seasons before this constraint is resolved. In *Zimbabwe* the PVS and PVE processes are hampered by the severe drought period last year; this year also some districts suffered from heavy rains and flooding. Nevertheless, on their own fields farmers apply diversification of crops: an example from the UMP district learns that coming from only cultivating maize at their own fields, farmers now opt for more diversification: one-third maize, one-third sorghum and one-third millet, groundnuts, finger millet, cowpeas. The option to go for "small grains" is not only attributable to the programme but also (and particularly?) to the droughts (and climate change). While a change to small

¹⁹ The FFS on PGR follow a particular approach that starts with addressing the broad range of issues related to agro-biodiversity and the bottlenecks of the farmers' cultivars and varieties. When some of these problems are solved, and varieties are developed or identified against these problems, these varieties spread. Then, farmers also learn from FFS participants how they are able to improve varieties.

²⁰ The varieties that came out as the most preferred were provided in small quantities via the local partners (NAFRI, MDDRRI)

grains can be observed beyond the FFS communities, the FFS play nevertheless a major role in promoting this shift;

- adoption by non-members depends also on the type of crops and, for obvious reasons, seems easier for vegetables than for staple crops (*Laos and North Vietnam*);
- in Asia, there was no clear strategy demanding FFS members to spread their learning and experience to other farmers ; FFS and their members were not requested to engage in a structured effort to share their skills and knowledge with other farmers (which does not exclude spreading via extension services, as evidenced in *South Vietnam*). In *Zimbabwe* on the contrary, FFS members were required to actively share their experiences with other farmers and stimulate farmers to start a new FFS. Also in *Peru* there is no comprehensive strategy for spreading the FFS experience to other farmers; however FFS participants share their experiences and the process of the project during the community assembly, but it is unsure whether that will result in adaption of FFS experiences by other community members. In some sparsely populated communities many community members participate in the FFS, for example there are about 50 households in Rosaspata, with 35 FFS participants, mostly from different households;
- to our knowledge, so far systematic (and methodologically rigid) steps to assess the number of beneficiaries and understand the factors that hamper or facilitate multiplication, have nowhere been undertaken. As such, the use of a multiplier of 6 or 9 or ... (from direct participants to primary beneficiaries) has little empirical ground as has the recent decision to go from a multiplier of 6 to a multiplier of 9) when one wants to assess outreach in terms of changes in practices related to the four key indicators used consistently by the programme²¹;
- looking at the table above, a major difference can be noted in terms of coverage between *Zimbabwe* and the other countries. The excellent cooperation with government agencies and breeding institutes and the relatively high number of staff that followed a TOT training seems to constitute the major explaining factor in addition to the large experience of CTDI with rural development;
- In *Asia*, programme planning for the remaining 1.5 years includes ambitious targets with regard to the number of additional FFS to be created, numbers that outscore the number of FFS presently supported under the programme. Partners in Asia feel they are put under high pressure in this regard and that the targets proposed are not realistic:
 - in *Asia* but also in *Peru* (not in *Zimbabwe*) the number of people that has undergone in-depth training (mainly via TOT and follow-up sessions, a.o. by ONL and Searice staff) is limited; in addition many of these staff (mostly government extension workers in *Asia* and *Zimbabwe*) or local community members (in *Peru*) have also other duties and can only partially work for the programme. As such (and also in view of the high level of labour intensity of the FFS approach) there are serious constraints related to the human resources needed for expansion of the FFS (note that the existing FFS still require support also)²²;
 - even so, the expansion and continued support to existing FFS is to be realized with roughly the same financial resources; local partners state that they are ready to look for additional contributions (in kind) locally, but their options are limited;
 - investing heavily in the creation of new FFS can only be meaningful when the newly created FFS can be included in a follow-up phase of the programme or in as far the exit strategy foreseen is well implemented and achieving its expected results.

Conclusion

Overall, the MTR team feels that, with the exception of *Zimbabwe*, the programme outreach *in terms of adoption of promoted practices related to the programme's key indicators* (for pillars 1 till 3; the outreach for pillar 4 is very difficult to estimate) is still relatively limited, even when the present stage of programme implementation is taken into account. This can partially be explained by the choice for the FFS approach that is highly demanding in terms of human resources. Other factors have however also played an important role and include in our view:

²¹ In Laos and North Vietnam, FFS leaders estimated the multiplier at 2 to 4.

²² ... even when in the future each FFS will focus on one crop and one research/breeding objective only, as recently has been decided.

- the strong focus of the ONL programme team on 'depth' and 'quality' has led to huge investments in the development of tools, instruments, ... to be used at the local level by local actors and meant to eventually allow autonomous spreading of concepts and instruments;
- while such a focus is certainly justified in the early stages of the programme, at a certain moment (i.e. when the programme approach has proven its effectiveness²³) the approach should become more balanced by a search for more 'quantity'; the planned considerable increase of FFS goes in that direction but might face important constraints (see below);
- in most countries the programme has started in new areas where activities to a major extent had to start from scratch so that the expertise and experience acquired earlier could only partially be used;
- related to the previous point, the relatively low level of experience and expertise related to pillars 2 and 3 implied that the programme had to engage in a learning cycle that – inevitably – required time;
- another factor is the imbalance in terms of human resources funded and/or trained by the programme, with a strong ONL implementation team with, at the local level, a relatively small number of partner staff dealing directly with programme implementation; the budgets earmarked for the actual work on the ground are relatively limited in view of the overall programme budget and obviously constrain further expansion; the fact that – despite the small budgets – the intervention areas are geographically scattered is an additional constraining factor;
- local staff has played an adequate role in training local extension agents and farmer leaders that have spearheaded the change process at the local level, but the number of these staff (and sometimes also the time they could devote to the programme) has been relatively limited (with, again, Zimbabwe as an exception).
- a final factor is the absence, in some countries, of a clear and coherent strategy to support outreach efforts and processes, in particular from the 'direct participants' to the 'primary beneficiaries'. Further, the programme so far did not invest in following up adoption levels beyond the FFS (at the level of direct participants and primary beneficiaries). The MTR feels that the programme should at least gain evidence on the quality of adoption on these levels.

Concluding, while the programme has clearly the ambition to scale up, the MTR think that this ambition will face important constraints that might need a reconsideration of present approaches. We will come back to these challenges under chapter 6.

5.3 Key accomplishments related to pillar 1 (Adaptive capacities of IPSHF in seed conservation, access and sustainable use by scaling-up innovative and engendered models of biodiversity management)

The pillar 1 outcome of the programme contains an important number of indicators (see the logical framework), but data with regard to these indicators have so far not been systematically reported on in the implementation reports, so that the MTR could not assess aggregated progress over time²⁴. The same applies for the four 'key indicators' (which we have labelled above as key areas). As such, our assessment below is of a rather qualitative nature²⁵.

Overall, it is found that the programme has been effective with regard to the change process envisaged under this pillar, be it that in some areas trends that go against the programme's aims have been noticed (e.g. decrease of biodiversity); furthermore, there are substantial differences depending on the local situation. The achievements noted below are mostly the result of the combined efforts and cooperation of the ONL expert team, the local partner and local extension services. The following 'progress to outcome' **key achievements** merit to be mentioned in this regard²⁶:

²³ ... which is the case in SD=HS, see below, in particular chapters 5.2 till 5.4.

²⁴ In some countries, local partners were not able to provide us with detailed information in this regard.

²⁵ The same applies to varying degree for the other pillars.

²⁶ The assessment of the programme's key achievements under this and the following sub-chapters follows the outcomes as presented in the logical framework of the programme that is attached to the MTR TOR.

- *Development and implementation of innovative PGR adaptation strategies, concepts and tools:*
 - consistent and high quality implementation via the FFS approach with clear successes within the FFS framework; effective change at the individual level sometimes hampered (e.g. by lack of inputs) or not yet fully materialized because of long production cycles ;
 - successful efforts to develop adaptive strategies in view of climate change (in Vietnam, Zimbabwe, and Peru; the effects in Laos are so far less clear) by introducing and facilitating the access to varieties (or focus on native varieties in Peru) that better cope with unpredictable climate conditions (drought resistance, shorter growing cycle, tolerance against diseases, ...); individual farmers often indicate as the main programme achievement their capacity to take informed decisions on which varieties to grow; the ONL team (including the advisor) have in many cases played an important role in designing and applying effective approaches in this area;
 - adequate introduction of specific measures to increase labour productivity and income via adapted measures (*South Vietnam* and *Laos*). In *Peru*, ANDES supports income generating activities in the Potato Park via associations/collectives organized around crafts, tourist guides, gastronomy, medicinal plants and beauty products... which fall outside the scope of the SD=HS program and in Chalakuy Park work has started to set up such kinds of viable associations;
 - introduction of a broader variety of staple crops and/or minor crops leading to increased crop diversity and with a high potential to increase resilience and food and seed security ; most farmers of the FFS are now growing more crops on their fields;
 - a few observations are to be made against the background of these successes:
 - reaching out to a major portion of the local population remains a challenge (also in Zimbabwe where e.g. FFS member households constitute only 5.3% of the population in UMP district, despite the considerable number of FFS); this figure is far below what is generally considered a threshold for spontaneous adoption;
 - it is still difficult to assess the programme's contribution to the reduction of scarcity (hunger) periods (because of methodological difficulties to measure impact on the basis of a few years data only);
 - in North Vietnam the situation is complex with the programme being successful in increasing bio-diversity (via the promotion of NUS) whereas there are indications that because of external factors at the same moment bio-diversity related to staple crops (rice, maize) is decreasing²⁷;
 - also in Peru, the number of some varieties is decreasing, so that a strategy might need to be developed on how to rescue less preferred varieties, thereby accepting farmers' preferences and their limited human and land capacities. Community seed banks can play a role in such a setting. Farmers will only maintain biodiversity if it can improve their livelihoods (BTOR of October 2013 of scientific advisor).
- *Mainstreaming of gender sensitive PPB and IPSHF adaptation strategies in key relevant institutions:*
 - *Overall* : limited effects in terms of mainstreaming a gender sensitive approach at the level of other institutions, but clearer progress with regard to *IPSHF* adaptation strategies, in particular in areas where activities were implemented prior to SD=HS (e.g. via the IFAD programme) ;
 - *In Zimbabwe*, CTDT and, hence, SD=HS have a strong position and a nationwide recognition, which facilitates its capacity to enter into partnerships with other stakeholders such as Agritex, facilitated by a win-win situation (need of support at Agritex level). In addition, there are notable successes in liaising with other key stakeholders such as breeders, local NGOs, the Ministry of Health (see also pillar 3) and international research institutions (ICRISAT, CIMMYT);
 - *In Peru*, ANDES played a key role in the design of a multi-sectorial cooperation plan and in the regulation on the recognition of agro-biodiversity zones;
 - *In South Vietnam* the FFS approach has been taken over by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development that has initiated itself an important number of FFS. It is not clear to which extent they function along the same lines and principles as the FFS supported by SD=HS, nor

²⁷ Finding related only to the area visited, but also observed in other programme areas according to the local partner. Note that the programme does not deal with staple food crops in North Vietnam; the local partners feel this should be reconsidered.

whether the FFS approach has been integrated in the policies. The latter might be unlikely in view of the presence of other international cooperation projects that work in the same areas and have their own approaches and policies that are not necessarily contradictory to the programme approach but not identical either.

- *In North Vietnam* the programme is still in its early stages. District authorities (in the district visited) showed high interest in the programme approach related to the inclusion of women. Furthermore, the introduction of NUS is an element that is also included in agricultural policies, which offers the opportunity for policy mainstreaming.
 - *In Laos* also the programme is still in its early stages, but the national level partner has been involved in similar programmes before. The programme is institutionally well embedded with different key departments involved at national level; at local level, the cooperation with agricultural extension services opens perspectives for gender mainstreaming in some districts, but less in other districts.
- *Level of contribution of IPSHF to relevant policy institutions to relevant policy changes at local, national and global level*
 - The main changes have been presented under the previous point; so far the number of contribution by *IPSHF* to actual policy changes remains limited. There are clear examples of *IPSHF* having brought their demands to the policy level, but in all these cases, the role of local partner staff (in the case of CTDT and ANDES) or Searice/ ONL staff has been instrumental to 'uplift' local demands; e.g. in *Peru*, the FFS increased capacities in terms of PGR research and seeds production, made that district and provincial authorities allow the sale of farmers bred varieties and certify farmers' seeds.
 - The previous finding can be explained by the time needed to develop the level of political capacities and skills and influence so as to be able to influence policies. In addition, FFS are not federated into representative higher-level bodies (which is not always possible either, e.g. in *Vietnam and Laos*), nor are they strongly associated to national farmer movements or (in the case of *Asia*) existing mass organisations with whom cooperation possibilities could have been explored ²⁸. The experience in *Peru* with the Potato Park shows that over time these communities can be empowered and are able to bring their demands to policy level, nationally and internationally. These experiences are to be replicated in the Chalakuy Park but as was the case for the Potato Park this will be a lengthy process.
 - *Gender and social inclusion:*
 - The programme has undertaken conscious efforts to include socio-economically disadvantaged areas where smallholders are the majority. The inclusion of women is facilitated by a conscious selection of participants (specific measures to include women) and a localised approach (allowing women to easily participate). Further, the timing of FFS meetings as a rule takes into account the chores of women so that they can attend the meetings. Gender considerations are equally included in the tools and instruments developed and applied (baseline survey, FFS curriculum, ...) and by including women preferences in (for instance) breeding objectives. This overall approach for gender and social inclusion works however out differently in the programme areas. In *Asia* no specific efforts have been undertaken to ensure the participation of more vulnerable groups. In *Peru*, the participatory approach of working with the communities and the fact that FFS are open for all interested community members ensures genuine participation of vulnerable groups. Focus group discussions did not reveal groups being left behind. In *Zimbabwe* there is deliberated targeting to include most vulnerable families.
 - The programme, with the exception of *South Vietnam*, has been very successful in including women as FFS members; this is an important achievement in particular in areas of high levels of women subordination (*North Vietnam, Laos*, among others) where the influence of the ONL

²⁸ ... whereby it should be noted that this is a delicate issue from many perspectives: what is the eventual political role of FFS and how should they pursue it knowing that there are farmer organization with similar agendas ...? In addition, so far the programme hasn't considered the FFS as a means to build a farmer movement, but rather as institutions to build the capacities of the farmers.

expert team has been notable. However, Asian partners equate the inclusion of women with a gender approach. In the other countries however, the attempts to include women in the FFS have been part of a broader gender sensitive approach and strategy.

- None of the programme areas has included specific measures to address the constraints of youth and undertaken specific efforts to include them in the programme.

5.4 Key achievements related to pillar 2 (Enhancement of livelihoods and seeds security by IPHSF by producing and marketing good quality and diversity of seeds through PPP)²⁹

The implementation of this pillar has experienced a series of notable setbacks causing a considerable delay (see also chapter 6.2 for more details). As such, the FSE has just started its operations after a long period of preparation. The major achievements so far can be summarized as follows:

- A scoping study and initial feasibility study were conducted to assess the need and potential of an FSE in Zimbabwe and work out a proposal related to this FSE. In addition important issues and/or gaps were identified which need to be discussed further. To that effect a multi stakeholder meeting was organised in March 2016 with representatives from the farmer community (in particular seed producing farmers), commercial companies, other farmers seed enterprise and research institutions.
- A detailed feasibility study has been worked out, identifying (among others) the potential target crops for the FSE (a series of small grains besides maize) whereby a balance is been sought among commercial and food and nutrition security considerations; the study further includes a study of the value chains for each crop, an identification of the potential production sites and an elaboration of the business and governance model for the FSE. The study builds on the results of a long consultation process including multi-stakeholder consultations;
- The FSE has been officially registered in 2016 and is owned by an association of farmers; the programme provided foundation seeds and other means of productions; 78 farmers have been selected as seed producers and linkages have been established with small agro-dealers for future seed distribution; 75 ha. of land are currently (April 2017) under seed production;
- Important capacity building efforts went along with the set-up of these pillar activities whereby promoting the farmers' ownership was a key consideration;
- While the present production mix still focuses mainly on maize, in the future the FSE clearly aims to specialize in small grains and other climate change resilient crops; these crops are expected to become increasingly important for the farmers' livelihoods in the near future (shifts towards these crops are actually already clearly present). The decision on the crops to be dealt with by the FSE was deliberated extensively³⁰.
- The FSE will conduct its activities in such a way that existing (non-formal) seed multiplication and exchange practices by farmers can be maintained (linkage with pillar 1);
- According to the business plan forecast, the FSE will reach financial sustainability by the end of the programme in 2019, which can be considered an ambitious target in view of its delayed start; enterprises of this kind often need several years (3 to 5 minimum) to reach break even;

²⁹ As mentioned elsewhere, the production of quality seeds takes various forms at the level of the farmers supported by the programme. Many FFS in one way or another engage, as a group or via their members, in seed production and engage in petty trade, bartering seeds, etc. as intrinsic part of their livelihood strategy. These activities are indirectly supported by the programme as part of efforts to ensure seed security and to contribute to bio-diversity, and are dealt with under 6.2. and 6.3. Under this sub-chapter we focus only on the specific outcome to produce and market good quality seeds using a PPP approach. This outcome has a pilot nature and is only implemented in Zimbabwe.

³⁰ Maize was chosen because there is a demand from farmers and 90% of this demand is for hybrid maize. It is in hybrid maize where genetic composition is fixed. Groundnut was chosen because it is an important food and cash crop, and 28% of the seed are purchased by farmers while 72 % are farm-saved seeds. Pearl millet has almost zero demand from the farmers as it is easy to save seeds at farm level. Sorghum has a limited demand. Due to this, there is also lack of good seeds and good varieties for pearl millet and sorghum, which the FSE will address.

- The compatibility with government policies and the strong collaboration with other key stakeholders (Agritex, breeders, international organisations (CIMMYT, ICRISAT) and the services of the Ministry of Agriculture are other key strengths of the initiative;
- The major challenge might be the innovative character of the FSE, both in terms of its technical and institutional set-up.

5.5 Key achievements related to pillar 3 (Empowerment of women to reclaim their role in food security through strengthening their capacity in seeds management and nutrition and global policy engagement to claim their rights to food)

This pillar has been addressed explicitly in *North Vietnam*, *Zimbabwe* and *Peru* (apart from India, Senegal and Mali where programme implementation was halted). However in all other areas where work on pillar 1 has been conducted, indirect contributions were made to the outcomes envisaged by this pillar and to improved nutrition at large. As is the case for pillar 1, there are clear signs of contributions towards the intended outcomes. The key achievements (overlapping partially with those mentioned under pillar 1) can be summarized as follows:

- *Women farmers are empowered to enhance their knowledge, access and use of bio-diverse sources of nutrition, contributing to building stronger seed systems of important nutritional crops (NUS) for household food security*
 - In *Zimbabwe*, at field level the distinction between Pillar 3 and Pillar 1 FFS has blurred in many instances. As women constitute 60% of the FFS membership, they constitute the majority of the beneficiaries of capacity building efforts related to seeds diversification and farm management at large and with regard to NUS in particular; women also played an important role in seed fairs that were conducted at decentralized and national levels.
A lot of specific tools and instruments (e.g. the NUS FFS curriculum, the 4 stars diet) and practices (e.g. related to cooking) are now being introduced, but their level of adoption and effects are yet to be established; the aim is to include the NUS in mainstream agricultural practices with a view of improving nutrition security and achieving more bio-diverse diets.
The limited involvement of men is an issue of concern but also a conscious choice: women feared that men would take the upper hand in case their involvement would be high; on the other hand, some engagement of men is necessary, as they control the resources to buy food and are the key decision makers at household level.
 - In *Peru*, 6 FFS in Chalakuy Park focus on NUS with women playing a central role. The NUS growing in the area are still being inventoried (cooperation with local university). The FFS women members clearly have increased their knowledge despite the fact that the FFS curriculum is still being developed. The curriculum also includes topics related to local knowledge of nutrition and medicinal plants. Participants of the FFS confirm they have increased their knowledge related to food preparation, the medicinal properties of some plants and with regard to new species.
 - In *South Vietnam*, the diversification of the FFS activities (cultivation of mung bean, vegetables, aquaculture, ...) as result of the pillar 1 support 1 certainly contributes to a more varied diet.
 - In *North Vietnam*, FFS representatives declared that via the introduction of NUS they now grow an additional 4 to 10 nutritious varieties/crops in their gardens. Good agricultural practices lead to a situation where women can sell part of their harvest, which secures an additional income and, in a number of cases, has become the most important trigger for cultivating these species. The adoption of NUS could benefit from existing traditional knowledge with regard to the nutritious qualities of some species.
 - In *Laos*, most FFS deal with the production of both staple food crops and vegetables; the vegetables promoted are often already known in the area and local business men join forces with the agricultural extension service to promote and support the production of high market value vegetables (such as cucumbers), rather with a commercial than with a nutritional aim.
- *Women farmers share their gained knowledge and innovative bio-diverse nutrition strategies, concepts and tools with other communities*

- With the exception of *Zimbabwe*, this objective hasn't been addressed yet in a systematic way. This being said, the experiences in *Zimbabwe* have been used to some extent in other countries.
- In *Peru*, women of the collective of Medicinal plants from the Potato Park led some training sessions in Chalakuy Park on the uses of NUS in traditional medicine. Women from the Gastronomy Collective also led training session on uses of NUS in traditional Andean cuisine and its benefits for health (in particular mother and infants health). Further, a Biocultural Festival in Lares was held by the Association of Communities of the Chalakuy Park, supported by ANDES. During this festival the different communities and FFS participants presented the different kind of NUS that can be found in their communities and organized a presentation of different recipes of gastronomy, the different native varieties of potato and native corn, and handicrafts.
- In *North Vietnam* and *Laos* there are clear signs of women sharing their knowledge with other farmer families in their own communities, and with other communities during food fairs.
- *Women farmers' knowledge and contribution served as catalysts of international awareness on biodiversity based diets, and they have increased their engagement in policy dialogue on claiming the Right to Food*
 - The programme has not yet addressed this issue in a systematic way.
 - From Lares in *Peru*, two female FFS participants have been selected and trained by their communities to participate in the CBD-COP 13 in December 2016.
 - Baseline findings on the role of women in biodiversity and nutrition were shared during the 16th meeting of the CGRFA, where the SD=HS programme organized a side event and photo exhibit of women farmers in *Zimbabwe*. Interventions made during the meeting of the CGRFA highlighted the need for research and programme interventions to be designed to ensure the participation, decision-making and inclusion of women.

5.6 Key achievements related to pillar 4 (Strengthening of the capacities and knowledge base of developing countries and their IPSHF to secure national and global legislation and policies for the full implementation of Farmers' Rights and Right to Food)

Under this pillar, key achievements are summarized that are the result of either direct efforts undertaken by the ONL programme implementation team, either by local implementing partners, either by the Pillar 4 consortium partners. These efforts were undertaken either individually, or in cooperation with other consortium or local implementing partners. The programme has come across numerous examples where consortium partners, in different configurations, either joined forces to pursue similar policy advocacy initiatives, either individually targeted key events and actors with different advocacy agendas (that are, however, never truly opposing each other). Overall, the following can be stated:

- ONL's policy work is designed and conducted with pillar 1 and 3 partners as part of the programme's 'local to global' approach;
- as such, there is a selected number of countries for national level engagement for Pillars 1 and 3. However, at the onset it was understood that the work of Pillar 4 partners at the global and regional level would encompass a wider range of countries. Pillar 4 partners, as with other pillars, work with many partners in countries "outside" the SDHS scope but the activism and progress made in those countries is meant to contribute to the regional and global policy decision-making that in turn supports the SDHS countries.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the ONL implementation team has further developed its lobby and advocacy capacities via this programme, in most cases in relation to issues that are also covered by the programme's pillar 4 partners. From their side, the programme pillar 4 partners (GRAIN, TWN, South Centre, ETC) have all a long track record and are obliged to constantly upgrade and review their capacities so as to react to new trends, anticipate future developments and come up with innovative insights and ideas. They do so in line with their own identity, vision and mission that some pillar 4 and ONL representatives alike consider as not necessarily entirely compatible with the major foci of the SD=HS programme. This constant need for

innovation might have required important research efforts that, at least indirectly, have been supported by the programme.

- *Improved knowledge and capacities of stakeholders to influence national and international policies, aimed at improving PGR governance, facilitating innovation and cooperation in farmers' seed systems, increasing farmers' freedoms to operate, thus contributing to the Right to Food.*
 - Capacity building at the FFS level has so far been essentially technical and institutional, notwithstanding the fact that 'empowerment' always includes a political dimension also. The ONL implementation team together with the local implementation partners has recently started the development of a policy module to be included in the FSS.
 - In addition, pillar 4 interventions have succeeded in building the capacity of key stakeholders – farmers, civil society groups, government policy makers – to build the knowledge base that can in turn activate change in policy and practice. Examples of achievements in this regard include:
 - South Centre trained negotiators with regard to CBD/Nagoya Protocol, WIPO, FAO ITPGRGA, UPOV and alternative models of plant variety protection. South Centre and TWN collaborated in training policy makers in December 2016 and an event at WIPO on alternatives to the UPOV model of plant variety protection;
 - GRAIN has been very active in supporting knowledge and capacity building efforts and strategies in several countries in Africa and Latin America. An example is its continuing involvement in the francophone seed and agro-ecology course in collaboration with JINUKUN, a Benin-based NGO that is secretariat to a regional network called COPAGEN;
 - GRAIN and TWN collaborated on knowledge building and awareness with regard to the impact of the Regional Comprehensive Trade Agreement (RCEP) on farmers' rights by co-organising a CSO strategy meeting in July 2016;
 - GRAIN and CTDI cooperated on a seed strategy workshop in Zimbabwe in 2015;
 - GRAIN and TWN supported the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) to undertake research and outreach activities on seed and PVP laws.
 - TWN conducted detailed research and analysis on the ARIPO Protocol and implementing regulations on PVP that contributed to knowledge building of and advocacy by AFSA and national partners in Ghana and Malawi in addition to CTDI;
 - TWN and SEARICE have collaborated closely on seed policy outreach and capacity building for South East Asian policy makers, community-oriented CSOs and researchers. In India TWN conducted a seed policy training workshop. Both organisations also co-organised a seeds and PVP training workshop for policy makers, NGOs and farmers' organisations in Vientiane, Laos in 2015, with a focus on the linkages between national/community seed protection/breeding and WTO TRIPS, UPOV and CBD.
 - In most countries, work at the grassroots level has been complemented with local or national-level policy advocacy initiatives. In *Asia*, the ONL implementation team and Searice played a key role in these events in which farmer representatives took part in the sense that they were facilitated to bring in the farmers perspective, a novelty in many of these events in Asia. Also in *Peru*, FFS participants participate in local, national and sometimes international level lobby and policy initiatives. This is especially the case for participants from the Potato Park as they have already been empowered for a very long time through longstanding processes (for example participation COP 21 in 2016 in Paris, organization of local events such as Ancestral Seeds' event in May 2016, the potato seed deposit at Svalbard Global Seed Vault in 2015). This is an important step towards gradually building up advocacy capacities at the local level,. On the other hand it should be noted that the Asian implementing partners often cannot openly challenge national policies but must rather work from within. Good interaction with Searice could however provide a partial answer to this constraint.
 - Although SD=HS targets specific countries, it also contributed indirectly to changes in other countries. TWN's work in Africa with regard to influencing the final text of the ARIPO Protocol was the result of efforts with regional and national partners to increase knowledge, analysis and advocacy targeting key national officials and negotiators, underscoring the contribution of the programme in linking global, regional and national policy making. TWN's work done with the China Farmers Seed Network succeeded in retaining the Seed Law's provision on the right of small farmers to use and sell farm-saved seeds.

- *Changes in national and international agendas, policies and practices enhance farmers' freedom to operate, positively strengthen innovation in plant breeding and promote plant genetic diversity and Farmers' Rights, contributing to the Right to Food*
 - Changes at the national level have been referred to already above (among others under 5.2), but a few other specific achievements are worth to be mentioned here. In *Peru*, ANDES succeeded in bringing the issue of collective governance to the attention of high-level political authorities and they have now become an implementing partner of part of the Regulation of the National Seed Law which deals with traditional seed systems. In *Zimbabwe*, CTDI has undertaken several efforts (policy briefs, workshops) related to key SD=HS issues and corresponding policy issues including the right to food, farmer managed seed systems and biodiversity. A common characteristic of the policy advocacy efforts are the conscious efforts to bring advocacy messages that are evidence based (local to global approach).
 - In the area of food and agriculture, change processes at the international level are most often going very slowly as a very broad range of stakeholders, many of them extremely powerful, advocate for changes (of for the status quo). As such, it is very difficult to attribute specific changes to the programme. The following are a presentation of some key achievements or processes in which programme actors have been instrumental with programme funding:
 - work around the role and position of UPOV (via coordinated efforts of South Centre, TWN, Grain and ONL) adopting different strategies and positions, with results that are not always easy to bring to the forefront (e.g. when governments change their policies as a result of the partners' efforts, this cannot always be openly claimed). An important output here was the analysis of contradictions between the Farmers Rights as recognized in the International Treaty on PGRFA and the breeders' rights under the UPOV convention;
 - studies on seeds laws in an important number of countries, including their impact on the lives of farmers and their rights to produce seeds (by the ONL advisor and by GRAIN);
 - reports, databases and educational materials about the impact of regional and international trade agreements on the right of farmers to manage their seeds (by GRAIN) helped to generate debate and involvement of civil society on these issues;
 - a proposal initiated by ETC for a UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism, which was formally adopted by the UN Sustainable Development Summit;
 - ETC and TWN are collaborating closely on research and advocacy related to synthetic biology: ETC on the technical and corporate concentration aspects, TWN on the patenting of gene sequences and bio-piracy implications. A positive outcome was a decision adopted by the Parties to the CBD in December 2016 to work on digital gene sequences and benefit sharing;
 - inputs by several partners (including Searice, ONL, CTDI and ANDES) in the process of elaborating and endorsement the FAO Voluntary Guide for national seeds policies;
 - alerting policy makers and CSOs on the problematic draft Voluntary Guide for national seeds policies, followed by inputs in the discussions on the Benefit Sharing Fund and the Multilateral System, with contributions from among others ANDES, CTDI, ONL, Searice and TWN;
 - the work done by TWN, SEARICE and CTDI as members of APBREBES (Association for Plant Breeding for the Benefit of Society).

6. EFFICIENCY

6.1 Effectiveness and accountability of the programme's governance structure

This chapter starts with an overall analysis and then focuses on two key issues that can be considered as case studies of the quality of programme's governance: the management of the budget cut and the exclusion of a consortium partner.

6.1.1 Key findings

The governance and management structure of SD=HS is outlined in a 10 pages governance document that takes the long history of partnership and cooperation of the nine SD=HS organisations as the main starting point for the governance of what is called the "SD=HS consortium" that should function along principles of *shared accountability* in the programme implementation in order to achieve collective goals, obligations and outcomes, thereby respecting the principle of *equality and autonomy* of its members. The document also describes SD=HS as part of the Sida funded Seeds GROW campaign whereby ONL as contract holder oversees via the Seeds GROW Steering Committee both SD=HS and the Sida funded elements of GROW. It is further stated that SD=HS is envisioned to integrate other similar projects such as the IFAD funded project "Putting Lessons into Practice: Scaling up people's biodiversity management for food security", whereby 'integration' includes consistency in key concepts, approaches, methods and key indicators.

Governance structure

In addition to the principles mentioned in the previous paragraph, other key principles are outlined, including the need to ensure programme quality through consistency and coherence, mutual respect, clear and open communication, creating synergies via exchange and learning, create room for disagreements and collective and participatory conflict resolution. The main governance bodies important of SD=HS include:

- *The Seeds GROW Steering Committee (SC)*, meant to keep the overview of the two programme components; on Sida's request, the entire programme had to be placed directly under the ONL Board of Directors. The SC consists of the directors of the two involved ONL departments (the Director Campaigns and the Director International Department) and is tasked to ensure strategic coherence on the overall (Seeds GROW) programme level, ensure that implementation remains on course and assure final responsibility towards back donors. The responsibility for contract management is located here. More specific tasks include among others³¹: assist with resolving strategic level issues and risks; approve or reject programme changes (proposed by the GPC) with high impact on timelines and budget; and review and approve final programme deliverables. The SC is supposed to meet quarterly and monitor programme performance on the basis of balanced scorecards.
- *The Global Partners Committee (GPC)* has as its members the nine consortium partners led by ON. The core tasks and responsibility of the GPC constitute the major part of the governance document. The GPC is to make joint decisions on content and strategic direction of the SD=HS programme. The GPC is also responsible for programme M&E. The strategic and technical direction of the programme is the main task of the GPC, that further has to co-read and comment on programme (narrative and financial) planning documents and reports, set the agenda of the GPC meetings and, if deemed necessary, propose substantive changes to programme objectives and budgets to the SC. Decision making in the GPC is consensus based; if that is not possible, the SC is asked for a deadline for a decision; if by the deadline consensus is still not possible, majority vote will be used. The SeedsGROW programme leader will represent the Seeds GROW programme management and implementation

³¹ The list of tasks mentioned here (and also in the next bullet for the GPC) is not exhaustive and constitutes a selection of the tasks that are most important to be mentioned in view of the discussion below and in a few other points (e.g. on the budget cut and the stop of the cooperation with CAWR). This section is entirely based on the HD=HS governance document that has been approved in the GPC.

team in the GPC as non-voting participant. Further, relevant partners are responsible for setting up National Steering Committees (see below) and bring their experiences back to the GPC. Finally, issues between consortium partners can be raised within the GPC that can mediate.

- SD=HS partners that implement project components on the country level are responsible to set up *national level coordination bodies* called SDHS National Steering Committees. These national SC should advise on programme and policy and facilitate joint decision-making. They are composed of national stakeholders that can differ per country.
- The Seeds GROW programme management and implementation team includes, for SD=HS, *the SD=HS implementation team of ONL* that has to work closely with and to support the consortium partners to ensure design, implementation and knowledge management and assure consistency in concepts, methods and policies and providing technical inputs on the activities of the four programme pillars. This team ensures daily management and implementation, reporting, evaluation and learning among the stakeholders. The team was planned to have 9 staff (2 part-time)³²; in addition, the Seeds GROW overall management was to be assured by 3 staff.

It is important to note that the governance structure described above has been the result of a discussion process during GPC meetings in 2014 and early 2015 (see below).

Actual functioning and performance of programme governance

The actual functioning of the four governance bodies presented above can be summarized as follows:

- The performance of the *Seeds GROW Steering Committee* is difficult to assess, as no minutes of their deliberations are available and its membership has changed frequently. Apart from interventions at critical moments (see below), the submission of quarterly reports using a balanced scored card (BSC) outline has constituted the main mechanism of inclusion of the SC in the programme management. The BSC in their present form are composed of different sections: the first section refers to the four programme pillars and presents for each key activities outputs (a column for key performance indicators is foreseen but not filled in), with at the end a provision to comment on contract management, MEL and knowledge management (left blank in the latest BSC); the second section deals with financial issues related to all donors involved; the third section deals with Human Resources; then follow small sections on 'business process' and 'External fundraising and Innovation'. The MTR team has not found any indication of the Seeds GROW SC intervening strongly in routine programme implementation. To the knowledge of the team, this SC has mainly played an important role at very particular moments in the process, such as the budget cut and the CAWR crisis (see also below). In addition, the GPC took important programme implementation related decisions, such as, for instance, the decision to limit pillar 2 to one country.
- *The Global Partner Committee (GPC)* is the main programme governance body and has played an important role in programme governance, in particular in the early years of programme implementation. GPC members participated in the three-days inception workshop (March 2014) that further included representatives of local implementing partners and the ONL implementation team. The report of that workshop illustrates the comprehensive approach followed to address all key content and managerial issues and the important involvement of the consortium partners. Consortium partners have different opinions on to which extent there has been sufficient discussion with regard to the implications of the new programme configuration, particularly Oxfam Novib's changing role from 'funder' of the individual partners towards the combined roles of 'contract holder/grant manager' for the consortium and of 'co-implementer'. In retrospect it has become clear that there have been different interpretations exist on the role and function of the GPC, despite in-depth discussions on the programme governance document. The latter did not foresee either clear indications on what to do in case of internal conflicts among the consortium members and, as such, was only of limited help when major difficulties arose. A three-day methodological workshop with the pillar 1 and 3 partners followed immediately after the inception workshop and dealt with key tools and concepts that were expected to be at the core of the programme approach, including the baseline survey, FFS, FSE and community seed banks, PPB/PVS,

³² After the budget cut, the number of ONL staff was reduced by 2.

women, seeds and nutrition, ... Some consortium partners stated that both events suffered from tensions rooted in the programme set-up (see chapter 5.1) and consequently were unable to lay down the foundation for the GPC to perform its tasks effectively; for other partners, the consequences of the new programme set-up have only later on become fully clear.

In the period following the start-up of the programme, the GPC has met four times: a three-days meeting in Barcelona (September 2014), a one-day meeting in Driebergen (the Netherlands) in January 2015 (preceded by a two-days consultation meeting), a teleconference in June 2015 and a two-days meeting in Geneva in March 2016. A meeting late 2016 was cancelled. The contents of the discussions during these meetings reflect a mixture of issues (in line with initial planning), covering programme content and approach (related to the four pillars), managerial issues (funding, ...) and governance issues (during the two first meetings).

- *The national level coordination bodies* called SDHS National Steering Committees have hardly played a role in programme governance. At the local level (in Asia) meetings have been conducted bringing together the key programme stakeholders, but the organisations attending these meetings differ from what has been foreseen in the governance document. This being said, most programme countries, via other initiatives, managed to get feedback on national programme policies, which constituted the main aim of these bodies.
- *The SD=HS implementation team (ONL and partner levels)* has roughly played its role as initially planned. Its functioning will be discussed in chapters 6.3 and 6.4 below.

Decision making process related to the budget cut

On 8 March 2016 Sida informed ONL that due to the migrant crisis it was obliged to cut the total budget of the SD=HS programme from 198M SEK to 156M SEK (i.e. a decrease of 27% compared to the initial budget). As the programme budget for the first three years had been based on the initial budget, this implied that the budget for the three remaining years had to be cut even more substantially: the remaining budget for years 4 to 6 was only 59% of the initial budget earmarked for this period³³. Already prior to Sida's official communication, ONL knew about what would happen and informed the other consortium members adequately.

Equally on March 8, ONL communicated Sida's decision to the other consortium members via a mail of a member of its Board of Directors in her position of SeedsGROW Programme Leader; the letter outlined the process of consultation and steps regarding the budget cut, including a consultation meeting with the GPC. The eight other consortium partners reacted jointly to this mail stressing their commitment to arrive at the best possible solution showing a sense of good comradeship and the desire to come to a decision acceptable to all partners. In their letter to the ONL board of directors they presented their broad consensus that was the result of internal discussions conducted in the margin of the seed expert workshop in Geneva. The letter recognizes the ultimate responsibility of ONL for the programme (also in terms of the decision on the budget cut), but also points to ON's position as a co-implementer implying that there might be different perspectives on the financial situation. The consensus referred to above implied (1) to protect and secure as much as possible the local work on the ground with Pillar 4 partners ready to truncate their work approximately one year, (2) hold of Pillar 2 activities until more funding is secured, with the exception of CTD's work in Zimbabwe, and (3) an examination of possible areas of reduction (in terms of countries and/or activities). The letter further suggested ONL to reconsider the 7% administrative charge, restructure the budget to achieve the original commitment that roughly two-thirds of the budget would be going to the ONL partners. Further the partners wanted to work with ONL to reach out to other funders and considered their letter as a preparation for a face-to-face discussion with the Board of Directors who was in charge of the final decision.

ONL came with a different proposal to manage the budget cut that was based on the results of the discussion in the March GPC. It indicated, among other things, ONL's agreement with point (1) above (provided Sida would agree with this) but disagreed with the suggestion to reconsider the administrative charge; it further questioned several elements of the partners' proposal that were considered not to be in line with the agreement of the GPC meeting of mid March. After this reaction of ONL followed rather complicated financial

³³ Project implementation actually covers five years only, but in the Sida decision with regard to the adapted budget, six budget years are referred to. We have taken this over here for convenience purposes.

discussions highlighting a major disagreement between the partners notwithstanding the fact that all partners agreed to undertake efforts to cut their respective budgets.

The disengagement from CAWR (see below) and its local partners in three programme countries then came in as an important element of ONL's proposal. The decision to halt the cooperation with CAWR that was taken in the middle of the budget cut discussion, was unacceptable for (at least) some other partners and seems to have substantially impacted on the discussion related to the budget cut³⁴. Consequently, the tone and content of the discussions soured and must have further affected the already shaky relations between in particular (but not exclusively) ONL and some other partners. In this process of deteriorating relations, nobody of the partners and individuals involved seems to have taken a step back to assess and discuss the quality of the on-going process and conduct (or facilitate) a 'process intervention', which could have implied – in the MTRs view – the implication of a neutral facilitator. No one referred to the governance document either, which could have given at least some guidance on how the GPC could/should handle this conflict. At the end of the day, ONL came with a decision that the other partners disagreed with, even though that decision took over elements that were also important for the partners and allowed to keep the other aspects of the programme more or less intact. The fact that this decision was not followed by further communication further affected the quality of the partnership.

Important in this regard is to remind the huge impact of the budget cut on the programme. The magnitude of the cut (27% of the total 5 years budget) imposed by Sida cannot be underestimated, as is the case for its implications on a well functioning programme and the pressure it put on the programme leadership.

The process has left deep traces. In line with earlier experiences in the inception phase, some other consortium partners interpreted ONL's proposal as a 'take it or leave it', and as a manifestation of ON's inability to manage its double role of grant manager and co-implementer. The other consortium partners felt that the GPC was the appropriate body to deal with this challenge, and that it was side-lined. ONL from its side felt they could not grant the other partners an equal decision making position on this matter, as ONL's role of contract holder implied another level of accountability and risks, and expertise.

The CAWR case

To be completed

6.1.2 Further analysis and assessment

To be completed

The governance structure of the programme is relatively complex but this is to a major extent unavoidable in a complex programme. When we consider the budget cut and CAWR as two illustrative cases, we can conclude that the governance structure has not truly functioned when things truly mattered. Clearly ON's double role as grant manager and co-implementer has been a major stumbling block with both ONL *and* the consortium partners lacking experience with how to effectively deal with the consortium set up. While the dual role was discussed and set and its experimental character recognised from the onset, it was never evaluated during implementation. In addition for ON, safeguarding a high level of involvement in implementation was also part of a kind of institutional survival strategy to cope with the rapidly changing institutional environment. From that point of view, it is difficult to understand that ONL and the partners alike have not heavily invested in efforts to attract additional funding. Considering the unique position and focus of the programme, chances for success would have been substantial, in particular as the other consortium partners were committed to join forces with ON.

A closer look at the programme functioning and performance as a consortium

As mentioned above, the first two GPC meetings dealt with a reflection on the partnership within the consortium, which found its origin in the tensions during the inception workshop that at least some consortium partners have experienced. Indeed, during that workshop, some consortium partners were unpleasantly

³⁴ Note that so far the MTR was not able to analyse 'the CAWR case' in detail – see chapter 2 above.

surprised by ON's decision to take up a strong co-implementing role in the programme. In the opinion of some partners this change was not clearly talked through with the partners during the preparation process and presented as a *fait accompli*, while other partners did not feel like that (the role ONL wanted to play was similar to that in the IFAD programme). ONL explained that the change was part of a proactive internal reform and reorganisation implemented against the background of important changes in the development and funding context. During this first meeting, the GPC members provided also extensive feedback on a first draft of a governance paper. A revised governance document that included the suggested changes was presented in the next GPC meeting a few months later (early 2015) and adopted with one (minor) amendment. The changes adopted in the latest version (and proposed by some of the partners) went clearly in the direction of a genuine partnership as basis for the consortium's functioning³⁵.

A look at the Governance and Management Structure for SD=HS as worked out in the governance document reveals a strong foundation, clear indications on the programme's governance bodies and a good balance between task and responsibilities of all parties concerned. The document is not overly detailed and assumes that partners will above all cooperate, jointly reflect and take decisions in a spirit of good partnership. The inclusion, in the GPC, of content *and* managerial issues (including exchange and learning) seems to have worked well despite all difficulties, consortium members recalling good memories related to the quality of exchange of experiences during GPC meetings.

While the GPC has made a good start despite the initial tensions, also illustrated by its capacity to quickly deal with those tensions, its functioning has come to a standstill since March 2016. A recent (March 2017) global methodological workshop could have constituted a good opportunity to revive the GPC, had the pillar 4 partners been invited in time. In the end only one partner could eventually make it.

At first sight, the main reasons for the GPC becoming dysfunctional to a major extent seems to be situated in the decision making process around the budget cut and the disengagement from CAWR. However, some members of the consortium state that the problems with the budget cut and CAWR are rather a manifestation of deeper dissatisfaction with the consortium set up and functioning that already were felt before. There are several points to be raised in this regard.

First, *all* consortium partners have failed to recognize the specific requirements of the functioning of a consortium in the full sense of the word. Consortia are mostly defined as long term alliances to common ideals among very trusted partners, which require from all members *substantial investments* in time, resources, consultation, etc. In other words, a consortium should be rooted in trust, and nurtured, taken care of and 'defended' if necessary. Taking care of a consortium leaves room to members having their own interests, as long as their objectives are concurrent (different but compatible). Consortium members should further be committed to the same goal that, together with mutual trust, acts as glue to hold the structure together. Furthermore, the consortium functioning should be participatory, with all members contributing, with a commitment to equality despite (inevitable) power differences. Good leadership is essential, should avoid competing with membership organisations and should be conducted along the principles described above and facilitate their realization. Finally, as a structure, the consortium should find a balance between a too loose and a too heavy structure.

Second, although the members of the SD=HS consortium shared a long history of regular cooperation and consultation, they never cooperated in a 'real' consortium set up as the organisational entity for the implementation of a programme. All partners seem to have underestimated the challenges related to this set-up. At any rate, they forgot addressing these specific requirements of the functioning of a consortium. The inception workshop for instance had not (at least not sufficiently) addressed the implications of the new configuration within these longstanding collaborations, particularly of ONL changing from its well-known role of 'funder' of the individual partners towards the combined roles of 'contract holder' for the entire consortium and of a 'co-implementer' within the consortium.

When we look at these requirements from the SD=HS consortium position, many of these requirements are certainly fulfilled. The delicate issues relate obviously to leadership and the power differences (and later on: trust) brought in via ON's double role as grant manager and co-implementer. The first role brought the donor's trust and related funding into the consortium; ONL took the responsibility for the consortium and accepted the

³⁵ With the benefit of the hindsight, it is possible that these latest changes have not been entirely talked through/communicated within ONL, which might be a clarification for the way it has taken some decisions later on.

related risk to its brand. By combining this role of grant manager with the role of co-implementer it also ran the risk of (accusations of) a conflict of interest. When resources became scarce, and the risk turned into a (perceived) problem, the consequence is jeopardizing the role of the consortium leader.

Considering the key position of ONL, the MTR feels the consortium structure is inappropriate for the SD=HS programme *if ONL want to maintain its exclusive decision making power on funding issues*. In other words, there are two options, both of which allow genuine sharing of experience and learning and cooperation:

- either SD=HS acts a “genuine” consortium, which implies that all managerial (including financial) and substantive decisions are taken jointly, irrespective the members’ power position ;
- or SD=HS becomes an ONL- steered structure – a kind of a special purpose vehicle - in which ONL takes all key managerial and substantive decisions, preferably after due consultation with the co-implementers of the programme.

The SD=HS Governance document is actually not addressing explicitly the governance implications of ON’s double role. But the way its final version is conceived permeates clearly and consistently the centrality of a genuine partnership as guiding governance principle (in line with the first option above). While ONL no doubt formally carries a higher level of accountability and risk and (among others from a legal point of view) is in charge of taking the final decisions, in the MTR’s view this can be dealt with perfectly in a genuine partnership setting and cannot justify unilateral action. After all, the consortium partners have all a broad range of experience in dealing with funding agencies and in balancing their own and broader interests in collaborative actions. On the other side, this would require from – in particular – the pillar 4 consortium partners a higher level of interest for and commitment for SD=HS as ‘the common good’. It seems that the results of the budget cut discussion and the CAWR case have made some pillar 4 partners to actually disconnect from the programme dynamics to only do their own thing³⁶.

While all partners now seem prepared to make the best out of it and leave this story behind them, one cannot do otherwise than conclude that the consortium, in the real sense of the word, has stopped to function to a major degree. This is a rather sobering finding, which – luckily – seems to have not that much impacted the reality at grassroots level³⁷. This is also what somebody voiced at the local level: what is the relevance of all this, do we really need these structures, what is their added value, ... ? On the other side, when the problems remain unaddressed and are not sorted out, the programme risks to loose part of its institutional capital for future action.

One can rightfully ask, in retrospect, why the consortium has been unable to find a solution that was acceptable to all. Certainly ‘distance matters’ in this case, in the sense that the partners are spread over the globe, which, even in these times, affects the quality of communication. Second, the governance document, albeit being clear on key principles, was not worked out in detail to handle this type of difficulties and, hence, was interpreted in different ways or simply put aside. Third, the process lacked an instance that was positioned above the conflicting parties (or considered neutral) the process.

6.2 Quality of programme implementation

6.2.1 Quality of the programme framework

Key findings

The MTR has found *several versions* of the programme framework that seems to have evolved during programme implementation without clear indications for the rationale behind the changes introduced³⁸:

³⁶ There have however been efforts (from both sides) to try to engage in joint advocacy efforts – see 6.2.2 (latest part) for more information. Furthermore, from the onset it was clear that pillar 4 partners could also, as part of the programme, engage in policy advocacy efforts outside the countries where pillars 1-3 were implemented.

³⁷ More damage might have occurred with regard to Pillar 4 (see below), in particular in terms of missed opportunities.

³⁸ In this regard it should be reminded that the first year was considered a start-up year in which the planning framework could be adjusted.

- The SD=HS proposal (p.32-37) includes a programme framework that is composed of an overall objective, four specific objectives (one for each pillar), two expected results (called outputs) with a corresponding outcome for each specific objective and a series of 'indicative activities' for each expected result/outcome. Furthermore, an important number of indicators and sources of verification are formulated for each result/outcome.
In addition, it is stated (p. 38) that one set of indicators will be used consistently and that the baselines will use these indicators, which are consistent with the FAO's food security indicators. These FAO indicators and the indicators included in the programme framework overlap however only very partially.
- The first SD=HS progress report (October 2013 – March 2015) refers to the same four specific objectives, but only reports on the main activities undertaken under each objective, without any systematic reference to the level of achievement related to results and to the indicators included in the initial programme framework.
- The second SD=HS progress report (April 2015 – March 2016) includes in Annex 1 (p. 58) another version of the programme framework. Overall objective and specific objectives remain unchanged, but each specific objective (c.q. pillar) is broken down in two or three outcomes and each outcome, on its turn, in two or three outputs; for all outputs and outcomes corresponding indicators (in total close to 50) and sources of verification were formulated. The programme framework also contains a column presenting external factors/risks. The outcomes/outputs included in this framework are different from those in the initial programme framework.
- During the recently conducted methodological workshop (February 2017), a document presenting a more explicit working definition of SD=HS' four key indicators was presented and discussed. It was stated that, *"for a complex and diverse programme as SD=HS it was important for the partners to work with a common global framework, methodologies and approaches to allow meaningful comparison of results and sharing of valuable lessons"*³⁹. The document builds on the results of earlier discussions that even go back to the inception period of the IFAD-Oxfam Novib programme that started well before SD=HS. The four key indicators (one should actually better label them as 'key areas') relate to improvements in seed security, improvements in food and nutrition security, policy engagement and gender and social inclusion and further present corresponding indicators (as per logframe) for pillar 1 and pillar 3.

The field visits have learned that the different versions of the programme framework have been of little significance and operational value for day-to-day implementation. At the local level, the common programme frameworks needs to be 'translated' into the reality and that process requires time and resources Attempts to systematically and comprehensively collect the information related to the indicators vary much among countries (with Zimbabwe undertaking the most consistent efforts), also because – in particular at outcome level – it is too early to gather information. In most countries, the focus is clearly on the implementation of activities along the activity plan, *not* yet on the achievement of the results (outputs, outcomes) of these activities.

Analysis and assessment

SD=HS has developed in the three years of its existence several versions of its programme framework. While these frameworks are similar and even identical as far as their overall and specific (pillar) objectives are concerned, there have been substantial changes at the level of underlying outcomes, outputs and activities and the corresponding indicators and means of verification, be it that the four key 'indicators' have remained unchanged since the programme start. These frequent and substantial changes coupled to their intrinsic complexity (see e.g. the high number of indicators) have implied that the successive versions of the programme framework have not functioned as important reference tools for planning, monitoring/steering and also learning. In this regard, it is illustrative that, after more than three years, there seemed still an important need to agree on the definition and operationalization of the indicators related to the programme's key intervention domains, as is illustrated by the document discussed during the methodological workshop.

³⁹ SD=HS four key indicators' working definition; internal document discussed during the programme's methodological workshop in February 2017.

As will be explained below (see chapter 6.4), this does not necessarily imply that the programme was ill monitored and steered. The frequent changes can indeed be considered as an indicator of genuine internal learning processes and programme dynamics. While this might be true, we think also that the frequent modifications in the programme's results framework not only complicate programme implementation, but de facto make key stakeholders to focus on the activity level mainly. As such, activities are all believed to contribute to the pillar objective without there being defined a clear pathway to the pillar objective. Moreover, we feel the frequent modifications of the programme framework are also an illustration of the internal learning and reflection and, for the difficulty to agree on the key focus of pillar 3 (women empowerment and/or improved women's role in food security and/or improved production and consumption of NUS).

In addition, the weak technical quality of the programme frameworks has apparently constituted an additional constraint; in this regard, the following can be mentioned:

- the complex and multi-faceted formulation of the four specific objectives/pillars, without these being completed by corresponding indicators;
- the formulation of indicators that are not specific (i.e. not targeting the objective/outcome/output they are supposed to relate to) and far too numerous to allow good quality data collection and monitoring and/or not capturing the different realities on the ground (even within one country);
- the complexity of the framework at the level of the output/outcome level and the corresponding formulation of a very high number of indicators;
- the co-existence of the programme framework and a set of 'key indicators' that only partially overlap;
- the inclusion of a series of interesting external factors and risks, apparently without further operational consequences (in terms of monitoring mechanisms, mitigation strategies, ...).

The fact that the programme framework has to capture that many realities might well be a major reason for these weaknesses.

While finding an adequate balance between rigour and flexibility is a challenge in all development programmes, we feel the frequent modifications in the programme framework have constituted an important constraint, in particular in linking adequately the activities undertaken to the higher level (pillar) objectives. The lack of clearly operationalized pathways of change implies that activities are undertaken without assessing whether they are necessary and sufficient to reach the higher-level objectives. Finally, the frequent changes in the programme framework are a bit surprising, in particular with regard to pillar 1 and pillar 4, areas where the programme could largely capitalize on expertise and experience gained in the past.

6.2.2 Quality of implementation of key project activities

For obvious reasons, we want to analyse project activities along the pillar they belong to. In our analysis below, **the reality on the ground** will receive most attention (at least for pillars 1 till 3). Farmer field schools (FFS) are a key characteristic of the programme and, hence, deserve specific attention within our analysis. At the end of this section, we will also discuss the relationship and synergies, at operational level, between the four pillars.

Pillar 1: Scaling up models of bio-diversity management

Key findings

Overall, implementation of pillar 1 follows, in all countries, the same pattern that can be summarized as follows.

Baseline survey. Pillar 1 activities started with a baseline, despite the fact that both at the level of ONL and the local partners there existed already a lot of knowledge and experience related to the thematic area covered by pillar 1. The baseline implementation could benefit from ONL's and the partners' experience gained via the IFAD and Oxfam funded project that started prior to SD=HS⁴⁰ and from other related experiences implemented before that project (in Peru and Zimbabwe, the baselines from the IFAD project were used).

⁴⁰ This experience was elaborated in the technical report: 'Agro-biodiversity and food security: Scaling Up Innovations for Building People's Capacities to Respond to Climate Change: Conceptual and methodological development for a baseline survey'. This report seems to have guided the implementation of baseline surveys conducted under pillar 1.

Local opinions about the usefulness of these surveys were mixed: on the one hand they are considered useful as a means to better know community needs and requests and to assure that the programme adapts to local conditions; one resource person called it a double check of his (implicit) knowledge. Overall, local implementing partners were unable to clearly indicate the *specific* added value of the survey for them and felt the programme could have started on the basis of their expertise also. In addition, in Asia it was also stated that the survey came too late in the process and should have been conducted prior to the start of the programme implementation.

The added value of the baseline surveys was clearer at the grassroots level, be it that the baseline seems to have worked rather as a mobilisation and awareness-raising tool than as a means to get more in-depth knowledge. Local grassroots representatives stated that they actually knew well the local situation, but that now (i.e. after the baseline) they knew more exactly on what they need to focus on in the programme (i.e. knowing the preferences of the population). As such, the baseline was good to plan the activities in a suitable way and creating ownership. But at the grassroots level also, people felt that the baseline could/should have been conducted earlier and that the process was lengthy.

Training of trainers. TOT has been a key component of the approach. At the local level, the TOT (often completed with other types of trainings) are considered essential to spread knowledge and skills in terms of programme approach and objectives in line with the programme orientation, and as vital to increase local capacities that can be used to transfer capacities to farmers via the FFS. The TOT and connected capacity building efforts are highly valued and clearly produce positive effects. In *Asia* and *Zimbabwe* there exist good linkages with local authorities of which key personnel is trained that often uses the knowledge and skills gained in a broader context. For instance, in *Zimbabwe*, 19 Agritex extension workers and 206 lead farmers (2 per FFS) were trained in TOT to assure the accompaniment of 103 FFS (Sida component).

Local stakeholders (communities, extension staff) --, ..) and the MTR team feel that in *Zimbabwe* but certainly in *Asia* TOT and other ways of capacity building were focusing on a too small group of people as the limited number of people trained (five per intervention area) constitutes a major bottleneck for expansion and up-scaling⁴¹. As an example, in the UMP District 5 % of the total number of households were reached through direct participation in FFS; in *Asia*, this figure is even considerably smaller. In addition, those being trained have many other commitments and/or might be moved to other areas or follow a different career path. In addition, in *Asia* the content of TOT is not entirely adapted to the programme dynamics that do not only focus on staple crops (in particular rice) anymore but opt for diversification (with often a focus on crops with high market value); it is felt that the TOT should incorporate these developments more consistently and be better tailored along the priorities that came out of the baseline survey process.

In *Peru*, the project works with local technicians that are selected members from the communities in which ANDES is implementing the SD=HS project. These local technicians are selected by the other members of the communities (as ANDES is implementing the SD=HS project with a focus on bio-cultural territories instead of the individual farm level) based on criteria like being able to speak up, being able to mobilize people/participants, being able to learn from the project and transfer this knowledge to the participants of the FFS.

Actual implementation of activities at field level via the FFS approach. The FFS model that adopts an experiential learning approach guides field implementation. The FFS model is implemented along a clear approach and its adequate implementation without any doubt constitutes one of the major strengths of the programme. The fact that FFS were only set up once some initial steps (baseline, TOT, careful selection of members) were taken, constituted a guarantee for the quality of their membership and motivation. The FFS approach offers many advantages: via the field trials members can observe and evaluate and take over the practices they consider adequate for their farms. All activities are done with/by the farmers and following their conditions, putting a strong focus on the practice at field level; the sessions are highly practical, supported by tests/demonstrations in a nearby FFS plot or on fields of participants. In that way, the FFS also allow to gain practical knowledge and constitute an effective means to transfer knowledge and skills (farmers can observe, learn and practice and have opportunities to discuss, share, ...); the interactive nature of activities also ensures their quality and relevance. The FFS visited are following a similar growth path but engage in (slightly) different

⁴¹ In Zimbabwe, such a move has already been undertaken to build a second level core of facilitators. The limited availability of human resources remains however an important bottleneck.

activities with different priorities, which suggests that a genuinely participatory approach is followed. Experiences in the field have also learned that FFS are an adequate means to discuss climate change issues and explore and test out mitigation actions.

Overall, FFS are a clear means to facilitate the empowerment of (male and female) farmers and the FFS visited all have engaged in dynamics *beyond* the thematic boundaries of this pillar (and the SD=HS programme at large). At the local level, FFS are, in principle, open to all villagers/community members, men and women; in *Zimbabwe*, vulnerable families are encouraged to participate. However, in *Vietnam* members are recruited via a selection process in which the local government has an important role. Overall, women are well represented which is in some cases a clear consequence of programme steering by the ONL implementation team and Searice (in *Asia*) but in other cases it is inherent to the way the local implementing partner is working (ANDES, CTDT). Planning of the FFS seems adequate with a mix of activities that takes into account the agricultural calendar and farmers' (women's) needs, time and priorities. Well targeted interventions from technical specialists of the ONL and by the Searice/CTDT/ANDES teams (*Asia, Zimbabwe, Peru*) were highly appreciated. In Laos, work at FFS level was complemented with broader capacity building efforts directed at the local population at large and a selected group of lead farmers. These training sessions covered also subjects considered as a priority by the local population or local agricultural services (e.g. fight against traditional slash and burn practices). In *Zimbabwe*, training subjects related to seeds but also to the production of compost, conservative farming, nutrition (training by CTDT nutritionist), and to social problems: so several of their priorities and problems are addressed by the project. In *Peru*, FFS trainings of Pillar 1 related activities also included activities related to field preparation, pest management, and production and use of bio-fertilizers. Additional sessions on socio-economics and nutrition and health related issues are categorized under Pillar 3 activities albeit with quasi the same participants as for Pillar 1.

Tools development. Under this pillar, the programme has developed an impressive amount of tools and frameworks that have supported the key activities (baseline, TOT, implementation via FFS). They firstly related to the baseline survey whereby a comprehensive process started with finding an agreement on the survey objectives, seeking external expert advice, operationalizing the objectives/topics in a survey and the definition of the data collection tools and a gradual improvement of the tools on the basis of field-testing. Several versions of the survey reports have been developed, some of them worked out under the IFAD-funded programme (e.g. in *Zimbabwe*).

Secondly, scaling-up pathways/tools were developed under the thematic umbrella '*Scaling up pathways in peoples' biodiversity management*' thereby applying the principles of experiential learning with the aim to strengthen people's capacities to organize, learn, act and innovate and engage in corresponding policy changes. The scaling up approaches proposed build further on the concepts worked out in the programme proposal and include six interconnected pathways related to key areas of achievement that are to be scaled up: the PGRFA participatory toolkit, the FFS scaling up pathway, the PGRFA access scaling up pathway (facilitating access to PGR), the policy influencing (from local to global) pathway, the climate change response scaling up pathway and the gender inclusion scaling up pathway⁴². The FFS Field Guide includes several tools related, among others, to the diagnostic stage where farmers analyze their socio-economic, agricultural and production context, then their PGR problems and needs, and in setting their research and development objectives. The guide further includes tools related to the actual implementation of an FFS on PGR for specific crops systems and tools allowing that data are gathered and analyzed by the farmers themselves.

Geographical spread of the FFS. All countries have chosen specific areas of intervention on the basis of a series of criteria. While this choice implied a certain level of concentration (e.g. with a few FFS set up in villages close to each other), it also expressed the desire to work in different agro-ecological zones to capture diversity,

⁴² For more details, see the briefing note: "From lessons to practice and impact: scaling up pathways in peoples' biodiversity management". Examples of up-scaling given in *Zimbabwe* by CTDT team included:

- Selling and exchange of seeds and information with other farmers during social events: community meetings, village meetings, church meetings, field days, seed fairs, food fairs, etc. : diversity is shown
- Community seed banks giving greater outreach
- Lead farmers encourage others to start a FFS: they use opportunities of gathering of the whole community as they are invitation by the traditional community leaders: example of UMP (Dykora village) : 7 lead farmers (2 men, 5 women) encouraged/facilitated the creation of 13 new FFS, to be accompanied by the Agritex people

aggregate different experiences and gain a broader understanding of country level developments allowing broader learning processes. As such, in most programme countries, activities are spread over a relatively large intervention area, which has put considerable strains on the small programme teams and limited resources. The work of ANDES in Peru is an exception on this point. The SD=HS programme is implemented in communities which are rather close to each other. This fits within the territorial way of working, as has been implemented in Parque de la Papa and is being implemented in Parque Chalakuy. However, still different agro-ecological zones are served, based on the altitude (lower, middle and high altitude).

Analysis and assessment

Baseline surveys, TOT and actual implementation via FFS form a conceptually and operationally strong (but moving) triangle that is backed by continuous tool development and refinement in close cooperation with local partners and stakeholders to include their perceptions and local knowledge. Capable and motivated staff guarantees good implementation quality. Local stakeholders highly value the programme approach, in particular the practical nature of the TOT and FFS activities; the success of the FFS contrasts often with the (relative) failure of other development programmes implemented in the area. While it has been difficult to assess the technical quality of the activities, enthusiasm and pride at the local level were clear indicators of success; the demonstration fields visited looked well managed and produced good results. The programme further undoubtedly succeeded in creating an open culture of exchange and discussion, whereby many women were capable to overcome cultural constraints and participate fully in the process.

While the approach clearly yields convincing results, some remarks need to put forward, in particular in relation with the up-scaling ambitions of this pillar. The following can be said in this regard:

- Experiences in many countries over the last decades have learned that FFS are an interesting approach to promote agricultural development and transition. On the other side, it was also found that the specific characteristics of FFS, in particular its resources consuming experiential learning approach, often constitute a severe constraint to up-scaling (quantitatively and qualitatively) the change process envisaged. As somebody cannot learn to swim without entering the water, efforts to truly engender learning and spread improved agricultural practices might generate limited effects only if they are not adopting a similar experiential approach. The fact that the programme has not yet worked out a coherent operational strategy in this regard is an additional consideration. FFS members are indeed not requested and trained to spread their skills and knowledge beyond direct programme participants (Asia, Peru); farmer fairs and similar activities are undertaken and have their merits, but do not constitute a sufficient answer to this challenge as they might not allow qualitative adoption of new practices at the level of non members. Multiplier effects are further constrained by the fact that, simply, farmers cannot (or not immediately) apply innovations introduced at FFS level on their own fields, e.g. because of lack of the necessary inputs (seeds of the selected varieties in particular are often only available in small quantities at FFS level and need to be multiplied first)⁴³ and/or because it takes several production cycles to do the breeding and selection. In *Asia* FFS promoted practices related to vegetable production/home gardening were found to spread far more easily and spontaneously than is witnessed for main crops such as rice and corn. In *Zimbabwe* up-scaling ambitions have been better achieved and the conditions under which this could be realised may show if this can also be achieved in the other programme countries and which steps need to be taken to realise this potential.
- Linked to the previous point and bearing in mind the specific characteristics of the FFS approach, one should be aware of the limitations to increase the number of FFS *using the same level of human and financial resources*⁴⁴. The FFS approach is labour intensive by nature and while possibilities to increase efficiency should certainly be explored these can only yield limited results if one prefers to preserve the distinctive character of the FFS approach⁴⁵. Such challenge can only be overcome, as is showcased in

⁴³ The issue of multiplier effects of the programme has been dealt with more in detail in chapter 5.2.

⁴⁴ Programme management wants to achieve a higher number of FFS with roughly the same budget in the years to come.

⁴⁵ At the occasion of a recent (end 2016) field visit, the ONL team reflected on possible economies in the FFS approach. It was suggested to review the approach used for the FFS field trials. We agree that, indeed, the cost for field trials and demonstration plots can be reduced, as FFS members are (at least in Asia) very much willing to contribute more, in particular when these trials generate effects that are truly beneficial to their farm. However, such economies will only produce limited effects as is clarified below.

Zimbabwe, if other institutions, in particular government agencies are ready to adopt and take over the programme's approach of using FFS as an instrument to improve seed systems and food and nutritional security. Furthermore, our visits have found substantial differences in maturity and skills among the FFS, mostly depending on their age. Quite understandably, FFS seem to need some time to gain experience and expertise and come to full performance. This finding pleads against creating additional FFS late in the programme implementation period if no follow-up funding (e.g. via a follow up project or the local extension service) can be guaranteed; having a clear exit strategy is fine but cannot solve this constraint: empowerment processes (in technical, institutional, political), ... sense) simply need time.

- Three additional constraints hamper the up-scaling process (in quantitative terms at least) under pillar 1. First, the fact that the FFS are geographically scattered in *Asia* and *Zimbabwe* puts a serious strain on the limited financial and human resources and limits the possibilities for exchange, joint action, economies of scale, etc. at the local level. While there might have been legitimate (political?) reasons for spreading out the programme over such a big area, this option is certainly not the most adequate from an efficiency point of view and only justified in case all locations chosen can constitute the basis for local expansion (which is the case in *Zimbabwe* because of the Agritex extension workers); such expansion is however not foreseeable in other countries during this programme period. Second, the resources budgeted for activities at the local level under pillar 1 only constitute about 12.5% of the total programme budget⁴⁶. Third, in *Asia* and partly in *Peru* (some communities in the Parque Chalakuy) the locations where FFS have been set up were all new programme areas, i.e. not linked either to earlier ONL projects. As such, the process had often to start from scratch, which implies substantial time and resources are needed before up-scaling (in terms of quantitative expansion of FFS) becomes viable.
- In *Asia*, the process of tools development and refinement, with the exception of the baseline survey guidelines, seems not to have permeated consistently to the local (= district) level. Partner staff remained rather vague about the usefulness of the other tools developed under pillar 1 and the MTR team has found little evidence of tools being used effectively at the local level. Several factors have constituted an additional constraint in this regard: the necessity to translate the tools in the national language⁴⁷ while local partners in *South Vietnam* and *Laos* already dispose of their own tool boxes (in the case of *Laos* a comprehensive manual that was developed in 2010). In addition, there are always limitations in mainstreaming (proposed) innovations, in particular when the change process has to be conducted via a limited number of key staff. Further, the well crafted final versions of baseline reports were made redundant by local dynamics and came too late to influence these (see above). A final factor that might have played a role is that learning, in *Asia*, does often not occur via written guidelines. On the contrary, 'personalised' inputs and interaction (via ONL staff visiting, for instance) were highly valued because of their big immediate learning effect, and so were the ONL team's inputs related to the required social skills to work with farmers. As such, the unit cost (per FFS established) of the tools developed becomes very high, the more when one considers their limited use at the local level. This applies *a fortiori* of the documents that present the consolidated baseline findings.
- In *Zimbabwe*, under the leadership of CTD, and with the technical support of the ONL programme team, a field guide was developed by the participants of the *Training of Trainers Workshop on FFS-PPB* conducted at ICRISAT. The field guide covers all topics and activities that need to be undertaken in a season-long FFS-PPB course. It is meant to function as the main reference for FFS facilitators, guiding the latter in FFS implementation. It also provides FFS facilitators with a framework for the preparation of regular and periodic reports. The facilitators guide is a rather « scientific » document; a simplified version for lead farmers in national languages is underway. Similar initiatives are planned in the other programme countries.
- On a broader page, the ambition to develop high quality guidelines and tools seems also to reflect the strong research focus of programme staff, to some extent at the expense of rather operational

⁴⁶ Note that this budget is complemented by local contributions and by contributions that are budgeted under the ON implementation team.

⁴⁷ At the local level very few people have a sufficient command of English to make use of the tools.

institutional and strategic considerations related to how shape - organisationally and logistically - an up-scaling process (*Asia, Peru, Zimbabwe*). Considering their track record in PGR, the main partners in *Asia* were ideal in terms of supporting the research agenda, but need other partners to assist them in actually implementing the FFS approach on the ground. This combination of research and extension competence seems to be ideal for the SD=HS programme but its potential did not really materialize in *Asia* as all partners have many other obligations and, as such, face resource constraints (apart from the limited programme resources) to meet the up-scaling ambitions. Substantially expanding the programme outreach might require the inclusion of other organisations and an effort to ensure that these adopt and take ownership of the SDHS approaches.

- The MTR team also wonders to which extent it is wise to use experiences at the ground (FFS level) for advocacy (policy influencing) purposes. While the approach followed on the ground is clearly effective, in many cases its empirical basis remains small so far (limited to a relatively small group of FFS that are intensively supported), and major challenges are still faced in terms of up-scaling the approach in an efficient way. As such, it might look premature to present the experiences so far as significant breakthroughs in view of the present challenges. At least, when such experiences are brought to a broader audience, it is adequate to clearly indicate the remaining challenges. Successes in policy advocacy have however indicated that small-scale experiences can also generate a major effect.
- At the local level there are challenges finding the right balance between empowering FFS and sticking to the PGR agenda, SD=HS wanting to be a 'PGR programme' (including its political dimension). Genuine empowerment processes have implied that FFS defined their own agenda that goes beyond PGR-related issues (even when baselines to some extent 'push' them in that direction). So, SD=HS in all cases needs to work hard to find out how they can intervene in a relevant way and finding the right balance between local priorities and the programme's identity. In addition, ensuring quality in supporting FFS in implementing a broader programme is challenging and cannot be done in the same way as the present PGR-related support, in particular when FFS deal with a broad variety of crops and with issues beyond production (processing, marketing) as is the case in (among others) Laos and Vietnam. But even within the narrower field of PGR, there are already huge challenges to assure sustainable contributions to the key programme objectives.

Pillar 2: Farmer Seed Enterprises

Key findings

The MTR was told that the success of small farmers in *South Vietnam* to multiply quality seeds has inspired the ONL team in charge of the programme preparation to consider addressing the seed needs of the farmers via the set-up of seed enterprises; experiences of previous programmes have indeed learned that this constitutes a crucial need that often hampered smallholder farmers and is a main barrier to seed and food security (e.g. there are crop seeds and type of seeds (varieties) that are neglected by the formal sector because these are not commercially attractive). The openness and interest of Sida and their readiness to see this programme pillar as a pilot encouraged ONL to engage in a domain where its competence and experience was still very limited.

The option to address the limited access to quality seeds via an enterprise approach stemmed from ONL's feeling that it needed to learn from the private sector's approach in this domain. Whereas ONL and their partners had the technical knowledge, seed *business* expertise was lacking. The implementation of scoping studies with a comparative analysis conducted in 4 countries (*Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Peru, Vietnam*) was a first concrete step, which experienced a delay because of internal staff changes, the under-performance of an external consultant (who eventually left) and other urgent demands. Eventually and after consultation with the GPC two countries were selected for a pilot: *Myanmar* where a linkage was considered with a private partner, East West, a company liaised to the Netherlands for a pilot on mungbean, and *Zimbabwe*. The budget cut made that one of the pilots had to be cancelled - *Myanmar*, also because the administrative problems delayed the actual start of the programme in that country. As a result, the pilot is only implemented in *Zimbabwe*. These initial difficulties implied that the implementation of this pillar got substantially delayed and that the actual work on the establishment of an FSE only started roughly 2.5 years into programme implementation.

The Pillar 2 lead in close cooperation with one of the advisors then engaged intensively in the process, whereby the programme manager liaised with the GPC representative on a regular basis. The organisation, in March

2016, of a multi-stakeholder workshop (including companies, regulatory agencies, breeding institutes, farmers, ...) allowed a very rich exchange and reflection and constitutes an illustration of the good cooperation with the private seed sector throughout the process. In addition, bilateral talks were organised with a broad range of actors. The workshop and subsequent discussions provided the basis for further action. Since then, several studies were conducted: a marketing study, a production study and based on the results of these studies, a business plan including a financial forecast was drafted. This business plan provides the roadmap for the development of the business. It includes the SD=HS grant (627.000 €) and assumes that after a couple of years other funding should come in (possibly in the form of loans). The ONL team already explored ways to look for additional funding, among others during a recently conducted workshop in The Hague. The crops retained for seed production are maize (OPV and hybrid varieties), sorghum, millet and groundnuts; by focusing on a broad range of crops, the programme wants to address the potential threats of climate change. The inclusion of hybrid maize seeds is justified because of the strong demand from the farmers. The seeds are acquired from a national crop breeding institute that liaises with CIMMYT. The preparatory steps included the set-up, registration and certification of a local company and the establishment of its management structure. Measures are taken to ensure farmer ownership (via a farmers association) of the company. The recruitment of specialised pillar staff (seed expert and financial manager) was done jointly by CTDI and the ONL team, and in view of the specific challenges and risks of the initiative, a specific management mechanism was set up that does not exist for the other pillars.

At the moment of the MTR field visit, actual implementation of the activity was still in its early stages. Many efforts have been undertaken to build the capacity of the farmers. In total, 78 farmers belonging to the FFS were selected as seed producers and received foundation seeds, as well as other inputs (fertilizers, herbicides); after the harvest the farmers will be requested to pay back the inputs (not the seeds). Locally based agro-dealers will take care of the seed distribution.

During a few months, the role of the ONL expert team in the above described process became very prominent, illustrated by three duty trips of two or three members of the expert team to Zimbabwe in the period July – October 2016, and by a side meeting during a conference in Nairobi in September 2016⁴⁸. CTDI, the local partner who plays a key role in the FSE, was strongly involved in the process but the specific set-up of the FSE was a new experience compared to its earlier involvement in seed production. According to the BTOR, the duty trips were partially meant to deal with the lack of communication between the ONL implementation team and CTDI, and clarity in the management structure of the initiative, the poor quality of some key documents and the severe delay in implementation in view of the upcoming start of the planting season.

Further analysis and assessment

The experiences so far with the set up of a FSE illustrate clearly the challenges of engaging in a domain in which the key partners involved lack in-house competence and experience. On the other side, it is important to realize that the design and implementation of business initiatives almost by definition brings along particular challenges that can only to a partial degree be foreseen. Delays, unexpected setbacks and miscalculations often occur. This being said, the MTR has some important remarks that are formulated hereafter. We will however start from the rather operational level (without assessing all steps conducted so far) before dealing with our more in-depth observations.

The preparation process of the FSE follows a rather traditional approach leading to the outputs of the 'classic' preparation of a business venture: scoping studies and farmer consultations, marketing study, production study, business plan, set-up of the business structure. While there is no doubt that these documents/tools should eventually lay the foundation of a viable and sustainable business, we wonder whether the approach followed has not too much banked on the *ex ante elaboration* of key documents, notwithstanding the programme's efforts to involve all relevant stakeholders, local farmers in first instance. We feel that in line with the overall programme approach and the fact that this pillar is considered as a pilot, a learning-by-doing way of working could have allowed a more gradual definition of the key parameters of the FSE and a deeper and better 'owned' learning process. Such an approach might at first sight be more time consuming (but if that is the case, so what?). The present approach has however also been highly demanding and time consuming (cfr. the

⁴⁸ In this meeting in Nairobi other organizations from Uganda and Ethiopia participated that are working on similar enterprises.

scoping study), and further entails the risk that much of the work done so far will need a substantial review after the first production year in view of the experience gained. Last but not least, other experiences in Zimbabwe learn that the set-up of a viable seeds enterprise requires much time; and we can safely assume that the time needed will be longer in case the process is managed by organisations with limited experience in the area.

We presume that the FSE pilot will eventually lead to a situation where the FSE 'co-exists' with other strategies/actions to scale up farmers' seeds⁴⁹. The way the articulation with other actions will take place is however not explained in the key documents and has not been addressed in the March 2016 workshop either. As the interests of the FSE do not necessarily coincide with that of individual seed producers, one might ask whether farmers (individually and via their FFS) will still be capacitated to continue seed selection and production on their level and to engage in traditional forms of exchange and sale (what might go against the interests the FSE); will there be efforts to share the skills and knowledge of FSE producers with other farmers, etc.? CTDT is presently conducting negotiations with government issues to safeguard the farmers' rights to produce and sell their seeds locally.

Further the MTR feels that a few other issues got only limited attention and might have been more elaborated, even more than many aspects included in the present documents:

- The first issue deals with gender. The business plan refers to the adoption of a 'gender-lens' but this is not worked out further, except for the intention to have gender-balanced producer groups (which has been realised). Experiences all over the world learn that maintaining a fair gender balance and including and empowering women (and also marginal farmers) in the context of income generating activities can be highly challenging.
- The same applies for the linkage with nutrition, an issue that is addressed (e.g. via the inclusion of pulses in the production plans) but could be dealt with more consistently in the plans, e.g. by looking at other food groups⁵⁰.
- A third issue deals with the inclusion of hybrid maize seeds in the production plans. While the MTR team is fully aware of the complexity of on-going discussions with other consortium partners around this issue and feels not qualified to come up with a judgment. This issue was taken up in the business plan and continues to be discussed within the programme, in particular considering the programme's ambition and strong conviction to promote bio-diversity (and 'de-maize' the country) in view of ensuring seed and food security⁵¹. In more recent discussions at GPC level, hybrid maize has been again questioned and the ONL team has prepared a documented response to support the decision
- The last issue deals with the relation between CTDT and the FSE enterprise. Over the last decade, much experience has been gained and documented with NGOs engaging in business operations, including the existing models, challenges and opportunities. Managing the delicate relation between CTDT and the FSE enterprise will be key for future success and sustainability and could have been better addressed.

Our final and most fundamental consideration relates to the relevance and appropriateness, *as such*, of the creation of an FSE. In the MTR's eyes the FSE is a means to address a major problem, i.e. the lack of continued access of small farmers to quality and diverse seeds; the FSE is not an end in itself. The high requirements

⁴⁹ A document of Gigi Manicad, the present programme director (Towards a business model: Piloting a Farmer Seed Enterprise in the Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security (SD=HS) Programme distinguishes five different approaches in the SD=HS strategy on scaling up farmers' seeds.

⁵⁰ See as illustration of a good practice, the interview with Avanos Enterprise, in the BTOR of 17-23 March 2016.

⁵¹ A comment on the first draft of this report, formulated it as follows (text slightly adapted). *This is indeed an important discussion point. In Zimbabwe, the reality is that 90% of the seeds used every year are hybrids. It is 100% controlled by big corporations. It is in maize hybrid crop where genetic uniformity is strongest. It is the crop that most endangers failure due to lack of genetic diversity. It is the crop where farmers are dependent on seeds from private companies. Furthermore, companies just want to make profit and sell seeds, even of varieties not suited to the different zones of the country causing more headaches and food problems. The question is: do we engage in it or not? If hybrid technology is part of agriculture now and in the future, should this technology be also transferred into farmers' hands? Genetic diversity in hybrid maize will only happen if farmers are engaged in it too. Is the FSE the first to hold?*

related to the set-up and functioning of an FSE, imply however that it can easily turn into an end in itself (e.g. the management of the tensions between social and economic motives, the inclusion of hybrid seed production considered as the FSE 'cash cow'), as has been experienced elsewhere. There are however other ways (c.q. other means) to address the problem of lack of access to quality seeds, e.g. the (from the programme's and local partner's perspective) less demanding (because of the inclusion of an experienced partner) model designed for the *Myanmar* FSE.

Furthermore, and more fundamentally and as stated in the programme proposal, most farmers are using their own farm-saved seeds (in Africa as much as 80-90%), and much of the programme efforts are focussed on increasing the farmers' capacities in this area (via PVS, PPB, promoting local seed production systems, ensuring access to seed banks) and are most often also successful (see chapter 5 above). In addition the rights of farmers to save and sell their own seeds locally is a key issue in programme's advocacy efforts as the farmers' rights in this domain are formally not yet fully acknowledged in the country's seed laws. The challenge is to strike (and constantly adjust) a fine balance between different considerations: increasing (or maintaining) agro-biodiversity, maintaining co-existence with and the strengthening of farmers seed system, identifying and providing adequate seeds and varieties that are adapted to climate change, incorporating a market approach, balancing farmers control with the need of expert involvement, and ensuring eventually institutional and financial sustainability.

In view of the above, there must be clear reasons before opting for a seed enterprise, even a *farmer* seed enterprise. In view of the programme's principles, it will have to address issues farmers cannot solve at their level, take care of a synergetic co-existence with farmers' seed production practices, bring in innovation in view of increased bio-diversity (hence the crucial importance of the multiplication of small seeds rather than maize) and avoid competition with farmers' practices that might lead to an erosion of their capacities to grow their own seeds and a disappearance of valuable local seed exchange mechanisms and practices. And all thus will have to be done on a continuous basis.

In the view of the MTR team, it is unfortunate that those more fundamental considerations have not been addressed in the March 2016 multi-stakeholder workshop. No doubt that this workshop provided interesting information, but it was entirely set-up and implemented from the FSE mind-set.

Pillar 3: Women, seeds and nutrition

The approach followed under pillar 3 is in many ways highly similar to that for pillar 1. As such, the analysis below is less elaborate and will mainly focus on the differences in terms of approach between both pillars.

Key findings

Baseline survey. Pillar 3 activities also started with a baseline survey, as is the case with pillar 1. The way the surveys were designed and gradually refined is also similar to the process followed for pillar 1 (including pre-testing and refinement). However, as nutrition was a relatively new subject for the programme staff, the programme team engaged in a consultation process with Wageningen University, which among others led to the decision to use the 'Household dietary diversity score' (HDDS) tool in the survey⁵². The HDDS had however to be simplified whereas at the same time the programme team decided to add specific questions related to hunger periods and coping mechanisms to compensate for aspects not included in the HDDS tool but considered vital for the programme. In addition, the team added the specific focus on NUS (neglected and underutilized species) in an attempt to assess to which extent nutrient deficiencies could be addressed by NUS⁵³. Focus group discussions were a second survey tool that was used and a NUS resource flow map

⁵² The HDDS reflects the capacity of a household to access a variety of foods (along 12 different foods groups); studies have indicated that the latter (food diversity) is closely linked with food security.

⁵³ Note that the programme did not envision that NUS would entirely address nutrition deficiencies. The role of NUS for nutrition was defined as follows after a workshop. *Many rural communities, and in particular the poorest, rely on only few food groups, sometimes only cereals and legumes, for their daily diet. If these communities are able to improve the access and use of NUS they are able to improve the nutritional quality of their diet, since many NUS feature relatively high contents on minerals and vitamins, in particular if more NUS can be accessed and used simultaneously and in a complementary manner. Furthermore, NUS may feature an important source of food and nutrition in times of food scarcity, when the regular staple crops are not available.*

constituted the third tool. For example in *Peru*, such a community resource flow on NUS was elaborated during focus group discussions using yupana (traditional way to count and rank), drawings, participatory flows map, defining the Sumaq Kausay criteria and seasonal calendars on NUS, problem tree related to malnutrition... in *Zimbabwe* a register was created per ward, community or district to document the outcomes of the women farmers' assessment of their NUS contributing to nutrition and food security. The combination of the tools was meant to generate complementary data and insights but also as means for triangulation.

The survey implementation experienced difficulties in *North Vietnam* and *Zimbabwe* and (in *North Vietnam*) the local partner did eventually decide not to follow the survey outline and methodology prepared by the team, which complicated the subsequent consolidation process. For obvious reasons it was also decided to conduct a baseline at two distinct moments: during the hunger period and during the period of sufficient food availability. After implementation the local partner drafted the reports at their level and presented these to the key stakeholders for discussion and validation. The process can be considered of good quality and creating genuine ownership at the local level. As was the case in pillar one, decisions and further process at the local level were conducted *in parallel* with a further analytical processes by the ONL team, and with the writing out of the comparative baselines of *Vietnam* and *Zimbabwe* (including the formulation of follow up actions in these document) and the subsequent development of further tools and guidelines.

Training of trainers. The TOT was held already after the first part of the baseline (early 2015) and lasted for 10-12 days (*Vietnam, Zimbabwe*). In *Peru* the training of local technicians was organized during the baseline survey, as part of the training also consisted of capacity building related to researching the use of NUS, identifying causes of malnutrition. The training was provided by the local partners, and dealt among others with the following issues: crop diversity, PGR preservation, climate change, food and nutrition, gender). The approach (selection and number of participants, focus on building skills besides knowledge development, ...) was similar to the pillar 1 TOT and, seemingly, the people trained became the facilitators for training sessions at the local level. In *Zimbabwe* a draft NUS FFS curriculum (content) and Field Guide have been developed; a field guide that is more accessible (less scientific) than the field guide for pillar 1.

Actual implementation of activities at field level via the FFS approach. The FFS model adopted for pillar 3 was very similar to that for pillar 1 and essentially applying an experiential learning approach that guided implementation. As was the case for pillar 1, the FFS model is implemented along a clear approach and its adequate implementation without any doubt constitutes one of the major strengths of the programme (see above for more details). The major difference with pillar 1 is the focus on women that form the majority of the FFS (some are composed of women only).

In *Zimbabwe* the collaboration with the Ministry of Health District nutritionist staff is considered as the most important achievement. The involvement of village health workers constitutes a positive addition to the program since they work with a "family approach" that among others assesses intra-household dynamics.

Geographical spread of the FFS. The same remarks as formulated under the analysis of pillar 1 above, can be made here.

Analysis and assessment

As was the case for pillar 1, the triangle 'Baseline surveys, TOT and actual implementation via FFS' form a conceptually and operationally strong foundation for the programme approach and its key strength. This triangle is backed by continuous tool development and refinement and internal reflection, which is not a luxury in view of the complexity of the issue and the relative inexperience of the ONL team and local partners with nutrition (*Asia, Zimbabwe, Peru*). As was the case for pillar 1, capable and motivated staff guarantees good implementation quality, while local stakeholders highly value the programme approach, in particular the practical nature of the TOT and FFS activities. This being said, a few key observations can be made:

In such period NUS may play a dual role as calorie provider and staple substitute, as well as contributor to a more nutritious diet.

- the remarks (with their country specific nuances) formulated under pillar 1 with regard to the challenges for expanding the outreach following a FFS approach, the limited human and financial resources, the limited influence of the tools developed at the local level, and the prudence to be applied when using the pillar's achievements for policy purposes, also apply for pillar 3. One should note in this regard that the budget for 'grassroots' work on pillar 3 is higher and amounts to roughly 20% of the entire programme budget⁵⁴.
- Pillar 3 is focusing on nutrition, but – referring also to our analysis under 6.3.1 below – it is not entirely clear to which extent improved nutrition is the eventual aim of this pillar. The programme approach clearly differs from that of regular projects that aim to improve the nutritional status of the population and thereby mostly uses a targeting approach that concentrates on vulnerable groups (pregnant and lactating women, children below five), measures and monitors their nutritional status and undertakes actions to improve that status when needed⁵⁵. From its side, the SD=HS programme combines different focuses: women empowerment, the promotion of NUS as a key element of diverse and enriched diet and bio-diversity, The fulfilment of these objectives does not automatically result in improved nutritional status. Along the same line of thought, the huge efforts using the HDDS tool generated, indeed, important information on the level of variety in the diet, but no direct information on the actual nutritional status of, in particular, vulnerable groups.
- In *Zimbabwe* there are many arguments pro NUS: (i) are important contributors to the 4 Stars diet (= balanced diet with the 4 main components) ; (ii) very good choice because these crops were known and used before and are available for the families ; (iii) it is important to close the knowledge gap between old and young people (who do often not share meals anymore) and (iv) this approach helps to bring the NUS into the mainstream of agriculture.
- Working on nutrition is challenging and complex. As such, and in view of the novelty of 'nutrition' as a theme and the relative inexperience of ONL and the partners with the subject, the substantial investment in analysis (via baselines and other efforts involving local actors) and in the development of good reference documents and tools was justified. On the other side, one might wonder whether SD=HS has not been too ambitious in this regard. On the one hand, an impressive amount of data are generated to meet the ambition and address the different focuses; processing these and 'translating' them into clear action lines is however a delicate step in view of the high level of (agro-ecological, social, economic, ...) heterogeneity among and within the programme areas. Furthermore, as the programme acknowledges, the research focus on NUS and PGR in general only provides a partial view on the factors that influence the nutritional status. While the analyses undertaken provide indications on the importance of these factors, the interplay among these factors and their relative importance remain unclear, as can be said also of the potential of NUS to substantially contribute to improved nutrition. While the promotion of NUS might be justified from different angles (e.g. among the poor NUS can contribute towards addressing malnutrition as these crops are cheap and often easy to access) one should remain realistic of the nutritional effects it can generate; NUS and the pillar 3 work in general might constitute an answer for some nutritional deficiencies, but not for others. As such, what happens under pillar 3 can maybe best be described as 'bio-diverse and nutrition sensitive agriculture'.
- The concept of NUS is not always easy to apply at the local level. The approach via the FFS however clearly sparked interest for producing a broader range of crops and other agricultural products (e.g. via aquaculture), but this apparently resulted out of the FFS dynamics *under both pillar 1 and pillar 3*. As was the case under pillar 1, it also became clear that the aim for improved nutrition via NUS cannot be disconnected from the broader aim of improved livelihoods for the farmers (men and women). Despite the focus on nutrition, the possibility to market part of the food items produced constituted an important motive to grow NUS.

⁵⁴ This figure includes expenses in Mali, Senegal and India where activities have come to an end when the cooperation with CAWR was stopped.

⁵⁵ Reaching out to vulnerably groups is better guaranteed in Zimbabwe via the cooperation with the Health Department.

- Along the same lines, the specific pillar 3 focus implied that important developments related to the biodiversity of the main food crops of the programme area (e.g. in *North Vietnam, Peru*) were not addressed by the programme. Discussions in *North Vietnam* very clearly indicated that biodiversity with regard to the main food crops (maize and particularly rice) is rapidly decreasing as a consequence of several factors that reinforce each other, the higher productivity and shorter growing cycle (compared to traditional varieties) of selected varieties being the most important factors. These developments are known but not addressed by the programme. While the need for a focus is recognized, one might wonder whether this is the right choice.
- In *Peru*, the NUS were considered relevant with regard to food security and problems of malnutrition in the SD=HS programme. The problem tree of malnutrition identified 3 main causes of malnutrition: 1) lack of support from government, 2) Contamination of the surroundings and climate change, and 3) lack of knowledge. The first one, cannot be solved within the scope of ANDES and the SD=HS programme, but the SD=HS programme offers the opportunity to work on the second and third one. Related to the contamination in the surroundings, there are some workshops in de FFS (related to Pillar 1 but in this way also helping with objectives of Pillar 3) that deal with this concept and provide strategies to combat/cope with this. Further there will be (plans are set and preparations are set) a project component on Managing NUS resources. Also in the FFS (related to Pillar 1 but in this way also helping with objectives of Pillar 3) there is a focus on climate change and its effects, including its effect on food security and how to deal with these...Lack of knowledge is tackled in FFS sessions related to Pillar 1 but also in the sessions related to Pillar 3. Sessions within the framework of Pillar 3, also deal with nutrition (and health) for mothers (pregnant, lactating, ..) and babies and young children. This topic is very much appreciated by the communities. Communities indicate that the staff members of health posts often speak too quickly (and in Spanish) and that they have difficulties to understand them. Moreover, these health posts focus on Fortification and Supplementation (with medicine...), which is not widely accepted by (and accessible for) the local communities. With the focus on NUS, a culturally acceptable solution is been provided. Moreover it is a solution that fits in the whole cosmo-vision of the three Ayllus. This being said, therefore it also makes sense not only to look at the nutritional added value of NUS but also have attention for its medicinal use, spiritual use, commercial use (as some can be used in beauty products, for example).

Pillar 4: Governance and Knowledge Systems

This pillar includes the efforts undertaken to strengthen the capacities and knowledge base of developing countries and their IPSHF to secure national and global policies for the full implementation of the Farmers Rights and the Right to Food. The pillar 4 consortium partners, mostly organisations working at the international level, play a key role in this regard and do so via programme support and using other resources. In addition, local implementing partners and ONL itself are involved in lobby and advocacy efforts in this area, in particular but not exclusively in response to constraints experienced locally. As such, pillar 4 partners and ONL (sometimes in cooperation with other implementing partners) often find themselves working on similar issues on the international level.

Even more than the other pillars, this fourth SD=HS pillar builds on long-standing relationships and cooperation with a broad range of organisations and networks, and on the social capital built up at the level of local governments and advocacy targets. As such, the results presented below often find their origin in efforts conducted well before the start of this programme⁵⁶.

Key findings

A policy brief entitled 'Knowledge, Views, Experiences and Best Practices on the Implementation of Farmers' Rights' was submitted by ON, ANDES, CTD, Searice and the Centre for Genetic Resources (WUR) to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (IT-PGRFA). The paper builds on the experience of the SD=HS and the IFAD programmes in relation to the articles 6 (on the sustainable use of PGR) and 9 (on farmer rights) of the IT-PGRFA.

Seed law studies in the (initially) eight programme countries constituted the second main policy-related output of the ONL team in the SD=HS programme. The study overlapped to some extent with a GRAIN initiative to map

⁵⁶ See also the analysis under chapter 5.6, which overlaps to a substantial degree with the findings and analysis below.

the seed laws all over the world, but zoomed in specifically on the situation in the originally eight programme countries. The results were shared and validated at the local level via national workshops that were meant to define the focus of country based strategies and interventions. The study also resulted in a policy paper that summarized the impact of seed legislation on the functioning of small-scale farmers' seed systems in Zimbabwe, Vietnam and Peru. GRAIN, one of the P4 partners of the programme, has also been very active in the seed sector and produced research results and educational material dealing, among others, with the perverse effects of seed laws on farmers, and the increased control and monopoly position of international companies.

Year two of the programme saw a broad range of initiatives with relevant actions undertaken by consortium partners towards key advocacy targets including UPOV (Union for the Protection of Plant Variety), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the FAO (i.c. the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, CGRFA). These initiatives included the publication by TWN, a P4 partner, of an analysis on the contradictions between Farmers' Rights as recognized in the IT-PGRFA and the activities of, among others, UPOV. Further there is the joint work of P4 partners ETC and TWN with Searice on intellectual property rights issues, involving mutual exchange among these organisations on their research results in their respective areas of specialization.

ONL's policy advocacy efforts, often conducted jointly with Searice, CTDt and ANDES, were characterized by an evidence-based approach whereby the experience on the ground (i.c. the local and national level) was used and consolidated for national and global policy influencing purposes. Furthermore, ONL and the consortium partners played a positively appreciated role in the drafting and endorsement process of the 'Voluntary Guidelines for National Seed Policy' of the FAO CGRFA. Some observers also cited positively the work of ONL and partners related to the WIPO treaty on the protection of traditional knowledge and related to the HR Declaration on the rights of peasants.

In March 2016, ONL together with TWN and SC organized a Global Expert Meeting on seed systems. This meeting provided the foundation for a clearer definition and delineation of the SD=HS global policy agenda that from then onwards would be guided by six partially overlapping topics: (1) Farmers' Rights, (2) Seed Laws and Policies, (3) Intellectual Property Rights, (4) Corporate Concentration and Emerging Technologies, (5) Public Research and Access to Genebank Materials, and (6) Policy Advocacy on Women, Seeds and Nutrition.

Apart from actions at the international level, local implementing partners have undertaken substantial lobby and advocacy efforts, mostly at local and national level. Without being exhaustive, these are a few important highlights:

- *In Peru*, ANDES has initiated a national dialogue on the dynamic implementation of the Regulatory Framework for Seeds and Agro-biodiversity, bringing together a wide range of actors from the grassroots to national ministries. Ministerial visits to the Potato Park have provided recognition and support for the attempts to preserve the genetic diversity of potatoes and the development of a Seed Regulation that better recognises local seed management and farmers' varieties;
- *In Zimbabwe*, CTDt, as a nationwide implementing organisation recognized for its expertise, has initiated and supported important national discussion forums on the issue of pro-farmer seed policies. It has established a national network on seed systems and hosts the secretariat of the network. CTDt is well regarded and regularly contracted by the government to perform policy work (.g. related to the environmental policy act, and the Farmers' Rights act). At international level, CTDt has been part of the government delegation negotiating the IT PGRFA. CTDt includes in every pillar a specific lobby and advocacy section so as to ensure 'pillar 4' compatibility with the other pillars.
- *In Asia*, the partners on the ground in Vietnam and Laos are government institutions, which implies that policy work is to be framed differently. Local implementing partners follow a strategy of demonstrating how local innovative approaches are in line with existing policies and practices and can actually make these more effective. In other words, a non-confrontational '*approach from within*' is followed. Policy work on the national level is conducted via Searice that is since long active in the region and disposes of a broad network. Working from behind the scene most often, it (among others) takes the initiative for policy workshops and for including the farmers' voices in national forums.

Further analysis and assessment

Pillar 4 is the program area where the difficulties related to the double role of ONL in the programme (as grant manager and co-implementer) were most felt. The fact that Pillar 4 partners are further well established organisations with a broad range of activities and agendas with various focuses that are not necessarily entirely compatible and are sometimes of a substantially different nature than the bulk of the work under the three other pillars appeared another complicating factor. When looking more closely at the interaction between Pillar 4 partners on the one hand and ONL and the other implementing partners on the other hand, one comes across several examples of cooperation on different (mainly seed related) topics, but these seem to be more the consequence of the partners working in the same areas than a direct consequence of the SD=HS consortium set-up.

The broad range of initiatives under pillar 4 is obviously a consequence of the particular set-up of the programme and its antecedents. As such, it is to some extent unavoidable that various initiatives were undertaken without there being, at least initially, a clear strategic framework⁵⁷.

While several consortium partners referred to positive examples of exchange and discussion, e.g. during GPC meetings, the overall feeling is one of disappointment and dissatisfaction with the present level of collaboration, in particular between pillar 4 partners and the other consortium members. Several efforts, mostly on a bilateral basis, have been undertaken to intensify cooperation leading to mutual declarations of intention that however did not sufficiently materialize. It seems however as if consortium partners lacked the necessary level of time, energy and resources to engage consistently with joint efforts. All partners interviewed agreed that in that way many cooperation opportunities were lost and lack of exchange and communication sometimes led to inefficiencies. This being said, there have been examples of good cooperation, including a TWN-SEARICE workshop; regular SC-TWN briefings for diplomats and negotiators in Geneva on UPOV, WIPO; TWN and ETC working closely together in relation to the MLS, interfacing with ONL as well.

The MTR team notes that the situation described here is actually typical for many network set-ups that for one reason or another cannot mobilize the necessary energy and determination to realize joint agendas. The situation is not helped by the lack, in SD=HS, of a well established and adhered mechanisms to *jointly* plan, monitor and evaluate Pillar 4 related activities and hold each other mutual accountable, despite efforts to do so. This being said, the ideas of consortium partners on the (ex ante) envisaged level of coordination and planning differ among each other; some state there were clear ambitions in this regard, others underline that the approach agreed upon was rather to frame cooperation on the basis of upcoming opportunities. In addition, some other factors play a role:

- For obvious reasons, lobby and advocacy cooperation on an international level is more difficult to organize than on the local or national level; at these last levels, consortium partners interact with each other on a virtually daily basis and can, hence, more easily, identify opportunities for policy work.
- While ONL and the consortium partners globally pursue the same agenda, they do not agree on everything. This shouldn't be a problem, as was indicated by several pillar 4 partners: consortium partners can agree that they disagree and even explore opportunities to tactically make good use of the existing differences, which was for instance the case in the consortium positions on national legislation regarding plant variety protection. This challenge was well anticipated from the start of the programme, as it was agreed that differences among partners were to be respected and all partners agreed to not undermine each other's work. It was also agreed that SD=HS would *not* be a something that is regarded as a new "entity" that can project common positions – (1) because it may not be possible to have a consensus and (2) often it is a matter of nuance and tactical positioning and having many voices with the same message would be valuable for advocacy and partners will not be held back and timeliness lost when they have to internally "negotiate" a paper or position.
- The decision to become a co-implementer has constituted an important element of tension and affected the relations among the partners (see above). This resulted from the fact that, in line with its co-implementing role, ONL has also its own lobby and advocacy policy interventions that are not or not well coordinated with those of the Pillar Four partners (and vice versa) and are also inspired by

⁵⁷ As mentioned above, in March 2016 such a framework was worked out.

ONL's own institutional and strategic interests (as pillar 4 partners also keep an eye on their interests). This is also leading to situations whereby ONL and other partners are present on the same key events but not necessarily coordinating their action with each other. While differences in position are not necessarily a problem (see previous point), from a programme's point of view, this might lead to inefficiencies. The frequent staff turnover at the level of the ONL implementation team has also been referred to in this regard.

- In addition, two particular events that were dealt with earlier in this report, i.e. the budget cut and the stop of the cooperation with a consortium partner (CAWR) and of the programme components in India, Senegal and Mali, have further eroded the trust between ONL and (in particular) the pillar 4 consortium partners.

Apart from the considerations above, discussion with advocacy targets have revealed the added value of ONL and the pillar 4 partners in policy debates, whereby it is indicated that in the sector it often takes a long time before policy changes are achieved. ON's (or SD=HS') ambition to bring the evidence from the field to the forefront is clearly seen as distinctive feature by all stakeholders. Several resource persons considered is an eye opener to see the implications of their policies at the grassroots level they were unaware of. Others stated that via dialogue with ONL they discovered that there were far more areas with similar than with opposing interests. In particular ON's willingness to come up with solutions for the problems found on the ground is well appreciated (e.g. efforts to reconcile farmers and plant breeders' rights). Not all advocacy targets are however even so positive and consider some of ON's interventions (e.g. on the relation between farmers rights and the ITPGRFA) as 'wishful interpretations of Farmers Rights', i.e. going beyond what was actually meant by those agreeing on the IT.

Synergies among the pillars

Key findings

The programme design and implementation structure includes the division of the programme in four pillars of which the three first pillars are interconnected whereas the fourth pillar is of a different nature and to a major degree also implemented by consortium partners that are not directly involved in the pillars 1 to 3. The pillar division is to a major extent the programme's managerial approach to cope with the complex reality of "seed systems". While the pillars 1 to 3 require different competences to be addressed adequately, the reality in the targeted communities is different: smallholder farmers deal with seeds, seed and food security in a rather holistic way and undertake various often interconnected actions to ensure the fulfilment of their basic needs in these domains (see above). As such, when the programme is supporting FFS in one pillar, the dynamics in the FFS often imply that activities related to the other pillars are undertaken also. Moreover, changes at the level of the pillar supported induce directly or indirectly changes at the level of the other two 'grassroots pillars' also. ONL programme staff, with the exception of the programme manager and two advisors, at all levels is very much aware of this reality but prefers to concentrate individually on one pillar only in an attempt to ensure a high quality support.

Progress on the local level is also effectively used for policy advocacy purposes under pillar 4, virtually exclusively via the ONL and local implementation partners. Obviously, the limited number of countries in the programme limits the potential of contribution of pillar 4 partners in this regard.

Analysis and assessment

Conceived from a distance, the issue of creating synergies among the pillars might look a bit odd, as it relates to overcoming the disadvantages of an organisational set-up (the '*pillarisation*') the programme has imposed on itself. While nobody will deny the distinctly different nature of the four pillars and the need to set up adequate working mechanisms, programme management has all means in hand to ensure optimal synergies: the ONL implementation team includes four pillar leads that are coordinated by a programme manager and supported by two senior technical advisors. The team members can meet and exchange virtually on a daily basis and consultation and exchange mechanisms at team level are present. Finally, during field visits, pillar leads are often accompanied by the programme manager and/or technical advisors who are tasked to ensure consistency and coherence.

There are however constraints at other levels that might constitute challenges for fully realising synergies. The decision, in Asia, to deal with only one pillar in a particular area and disregard (on programme level) activities undertaken by FFS that relate to other pillars obviously limits the search for synergies. The same applies for the

way policy advocacy is presently organised, i.e. without a structural coordination mechanism between pillar 4 partners and ONL (see discussion above). Clear opportunities for creating synergies were missed here. The MTR recognises the particular challenges related to seed production, but the way this challenge is addressed (via the creation of a FSE) implies that there are important challenges for creating and above all maintaining synergies notwithstanding the fact that local farmer groups that are supported via the other pillars play an important role in the FSE (and the fact that seed multiplication activities conducted under the other pillars (see also our analysis of pillar 2 under chapter 5.3 above).

In particular the distinction between pillar 1 and pillar 3 might be more closely considered. Indeed, work on nutrition is probably of a different nature and more demanding, but, above all, needs an approach that starts essentially with activities and an approach that are highly similar to those undertaken under pillar 1. Moreover, in Zimbabwe in particular, the distinction between 'Pillar 1 FFS' and 'Pillar 3 FFS' gets increasingly blurred and the same applies for the FFS created under this programme in Peru. It might be more adequate to work along a complementary approach whereby FFS are firstly formed and supported around Pillar 1 objectives, to later continue working on pillar 3 with the same FFS. Some of the tools developed might also be reconsidered to include both Pillar 1 and Pillar 3 considerations.

6.3 Quality of programme management

6.3.1 Key findings

Overview

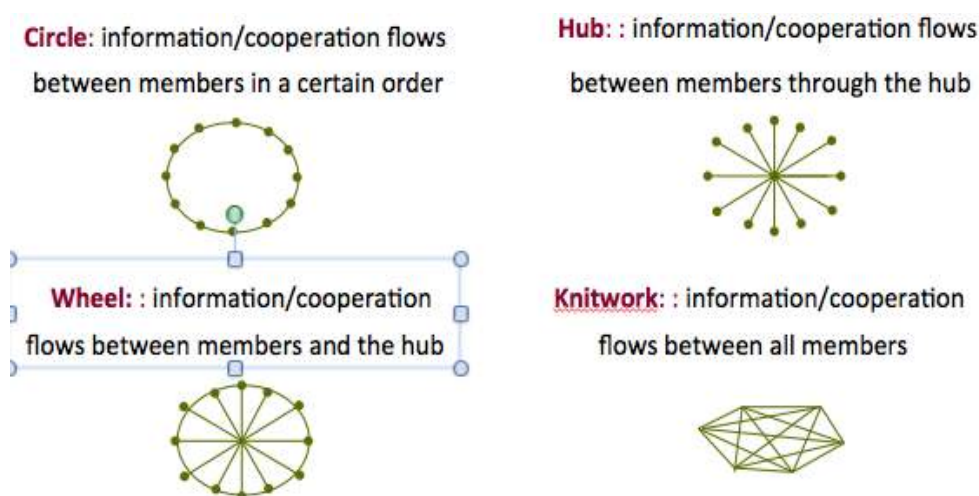
Quality of programme management is to be viewed against the background of the particular institutional set-up and the governance of the programme that have been analysed under chapter 6.1. It is obvious that this background to an important extent influences day-to-day implementation and, in particular, the interaction among the different consortium partners and other implementing partners involved in programme implementation.

The programme disposes of a clear set of rules, procedures and tools related to programme management and implementation, and those are adequately shared with the partners and, overall, well adhered to. Considering the complex programme set-up, financial and content-related planning and reporting are of good quality and succeed in ensuring accountability to the donor; the M&E system and practice is to some extent an exception in this regard (see below).

Cooperation among the partners

As already indicated in other parts of this report (see, among others, 5.1, 6.1 and 6.2), there exist many ways partners cooperate with each other. If we approach the consortium as a network configuration, the following models can be distinguished conceptually (see next page).

Figure 1: Forms of communication and cooperation in networks



Depending on the situation, several of the configurations presented above seem to be valid for the ways consortium and implementing partners cooperate and liaise with each other:

- Overall, the 'hub and spoke' model (top right) is valid in the sense that in many ways, ONL, i.e. the ONL expert team, takes up the role the SD=HS programme hub. For evident reasons, this is certainly true for administrative and financial issues (see also below). But also in terms of governance, ONL is the gravity centre and the main driving force to (e.g.) organize GPC meetings and take key decisions. Further, also related to substantive issues the ONL expert team is situated at the centre, which obviously does not exclude substantial involvement from the 'spoke' partners. Consortium and other implementing partners value the role of the ONL team to a major extent (see also 6.2 above). But pillar 1 and 3 partners also feel that for operational issues they often depend too much on prior agreement from the hub. In this regard, they would prefer an output (as opposed to input and activity) steering (management by results), also in view of their large body of experience. Implementing partners and members of the expert team also mentioned a high level of micro-management by the OHL leadership as a factor of delay in the implementation of activities. In the case of *Asia*, the model is a bit more complex in view of Searice's role and position whereby there is a co-existence of direct communication and cooperation lines between the ONL 'hub' and both Searice and the Asian implementing partners, and similar lines between Searice and the Asian partners. Another remark is that a dotted line would actually be better to visualize the quality and intensity of the relation between the ONL hub and some P4 partners, whereas a bold line would be more adequate to visualize the relationship with some other partners, CTDI in particular.
- The wheel model only applies to a limited extent to the programme. Periodic exchange and joint reflection (such as during the recent methodological workshop) are examples of this model, as are the linkages among some of the P4 partners. Considering the present set-up of the programme with partners spread over five continents, each dealing in first instance with their part of the programme, this is logic.
- The same applies for the knit-work model in view of the central position of ONL and the fact that there are no structural forms of cooperation (on a bilateral basis) among the consortium partners.

Furthermore, the success of networks, consortia, alliances, ... in development work (but also in the private sector for instance) over the last decade has a lot explaining factors that in first instance have to do with the increasing interdependency and complexity of their working environment. Overall, networks and related structures are seen as a means to improve performance, which can be of a different nature:

- Upgrading*, i.e. upgrading the performance of each member, through collective action, sharing of information, ... It can be stated that the consortium has been effective at this level, in particular with

regard to pillars 1 and 3 via the development and use of a common set of concepts, tools, instruments, etc.;

- *Upstreaming*: the search for alternative approaches, new ways of understanding and intervening; the added value of the programme (c.q. the consortium) seems to be mainly at the level of putting 'seeds' at the centre of action and consideration and assigning it the crucial position it deserves in present-day agriculture;
- *Upshifting*: the need to be heard at a higher level, to influence national and global decisions; the 'from local to global' credo is an example of the ambition to be heard at higher levels and influence global decision making.

Overall, it can be stated that the cooperation within the consortium has achieved results at each of these dimensions, but that the potential so far has not been fully used.

Financial planning and reporting

The programme's budget and financial reporting follows a structure that is built along the four key outcomes (c.q. pillars) of the programme. This set-up (still rather exceptional in development programmes) has the major advantage that expenditure can be related easily to outputs and/or outcomes, which provides a good basis for cost effectiveness monitoring and assessment, a potential that in the eyes of the MTR team is not sufficiently exploited.

All partners are requested to report quarterly; Pillar 4 partners and ONL (the programme implementation unit) report individually, Searice sends a consolidated report for the Asian part of the programme. Respecting the agreed timing is a challenge, in particular in Asia where additional constraints (language, lack of qualified auditor in Laos) play a role. As a result, (relatively small) delays have been common in the past. Despite the challenges, the ONL financial officers manage to produce the reports fairly well in time and with the desired quality. They sometimes have problems with discontinuity of staff at the local level and, if problems arise, adopt a coaching role and try to find solutions jointly with their local counterparts. Overall, relations are however good and 'finance' is certainly not a problematic issue as it is in many other projects and programmes (with Myanmar as a notable exception – but for other reasons, see below). The latest audit report (September 2016) that also included findings of local component auditors, states that the financial report covering the period April 2015 – March 2016 ...'is prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with conditions for financial reporting as stipulated in the agreement with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency ...'.

A positive feature of financial management is that it consistently links finances with content aspects of implementation and tries to follow programme development in the field; the financial unit also encourages partners to do likewise. Furthermore, quarterly reports are always discussed with the ONL thematic and financial management and local partners are encouraged to include programme managers in financial issues also.

On the other side, partners consider the present financial reporting system as heavy and bureaucratic (though they might consider it as an inevitable consequence of development cooperation). In particular in the early years, there were many complaints about the financial rules and regulations that were considered as exaggerated. The situation improved slightly after ONL changed from auditor (from PWC to Mazars) and simplifications introduced by the ONL team⁵⁸. However partners still consider requirements heavy in comparison with the limited budgets that are at their disposal.

The performance of human resources

The programme deploys human resources at different levels whereby it should be noted that, in organisational terms, the use of human resources in *Asia* differs substantially from *Peru* and *Zimbabwe*. In the two last countries, staff members of the local partners play a key role in implementation. In Peru programme

⁵⁸ The reporting requirements were made lighter since the start of year 3. In addition, the first quarter of reporting was skipped, and narrative reporting is reduced from 4 times to 2 times per year.

implementation is done by ANDES programme staff assisted by local technicians from participating communities. In *Zimbabwe*, CTD staff is assisted, at the grassroots level, by government extension agents and staff from the health service. In *Asia*, Searice personnel acts as an intermediate layer and guides and supports programme implementation in the three countries. In *Vietnam* and *Laos*, the local partner is only to a limited extent involved in programme implementation that is actually assured by decentralised teams composed of local extension staff mainly. In *Myanmar* programme implementation is still in its early stages, but implementation modalities will be similar to those in *Zimbabwe*.

- *The ONL (co-implementation) team* consists of a mixture of younger and senior highly experienced staff with a long track record in development work in general and 'seed systems' more specifically; the team is supported by two technical advisors. For all positions (including the advisors) work descriptions have been worked out. While all staff members have a strong and adequate profile, the team *as a whole* has only limited specialized competence with regard to pillar 2 and pillar 3. Abstraction made from the resistance against the heavy ONL role in project implementation (see above), the team members are well appreciated for their hard work; younger team members are also well regarded and their openness and commitment welcomed. A major constraint has been the frequent staff mutations, in particular in the early implementation years, which coincided with major internal difficulties within ON; partners stated that many of these staff changes were ill communicated to them. Later on, the situation improved notably, but the frequent changes in programme leadership have persisted; SD=HS has since March a new SEEDS Grow programme leader who is the fourth to occupy that position.
- As mentioned above, *Searice* occupies a rather exceptional position in the programme. Having built up an extensive experience and network in the Asian programme countries, it has played a key role in the identification process of the implementing local partners (and key figures within these partner organisations), in local-level capacity building and in policy advocacy, a domain where local (government) partners have only small margins for action (see also chapter 6.2 above). Prior to the programme, it has played a key role in elaborating the first manual on FFS on PGR in Vietnam. Management and capacity building by expatriate staff of foreign organisations are huge challenges in Vietnam and Laos for various reasons (language, weak civil society, ...). As such, the work and performance of *Searice* is to be regarded positively, in particular their success in getting local actors acquainted with the key principles, concepts and characteristics of the SD=HS approach. *Searice's* approach (via regular country visits and yearly programme management committee meetings) seems to have worked well and seems to have been vital, in particular in the early stages of programme implementation.
- Actual implementation in Laos, North and South Vietnam is coordinated by *local government partners* with key figures having a strong academic profile and based in the capital or the major city of the area (in *South Vietnam*). Key staff of these partners only can commit themselves partially and has to combine local programme coordination with their regular tasks as government staff. As such, implementation at field level is mainly in the hands of staff of local government departments (i.e. the ministries in charge of agriculture). The programme has trained key members of local staff (see 6.2) who are supposed to train on their turn local actors. The field visit found most of this staff committed and working well; many considered the programme as a means for personal development and for expansion of their own programme. A major constraint at this level is that cooperation with the programme is limited as it has to be combined with other duties.
- In *Zimbabwe*, CTD staff disposes of a stable and qualified core team that works under capable and well respected leadership. This team steers local-level field officers who in their turn liaise with local actors for programme implementation. CTD staff has managed to adequately involve and where needed build the capacities of strategic stakeholders, i.e. Agritex (agricultural extension agency), local NGOs (Dabane and Fachig) and, recently, the Ministry of Health (nutritionists). This configuration has allowed CTD staff to have a substantially bigger outreach than the other partners (see also chapter 5.1). Note that CTD staff had to invest a lot in training of their staff because they were not familiar with "PGR".
- In *Peru*, ANDES disposes of motivated and capable staff with the programme manager in charge of managing the relations with ONL and providing the necessary reports. The team uses local experts for support on certain aspects of the FFS programme (e.g. nutrition). The programme team strongly adheres, in their daily work, to the ANDES vision and mission and relies on its expertise related to bio-cultural heritage.

- The MTR has not attempted to address the quality of human resources at the level of *the pillar 4 partners*, among others because it is difficult to ‘define’ the pillar 4 partners’ contribution to the programme⁵⁹. It can however be mentioned that the representatives of pillar 4 partners that liaise with the programme all dispose of a solid track record, among others via cooperation with ONL.

Quality of the M&E system and its implementation

Under 6.2.1 we presented already a rather comprehensive analysis of the SD=HS programme framework, the changes this framework has undergone since its inception and the corresponding consequences at the level of the key programme indicators. This analysis has allowed concluding that over the 3.5 years of programme implementation there hasn’t been *one* clear and adequate programme framework that could be the basis for the definition of a coherent programme-level M&E framework and M&E implementation plan. While planning documents and progress reports contain an important number of data relating to indicators at different levels, which gives to some extent a picture of the progress made, the lack of uniformity implies that (aggregated) comparison over time and with the initial baseline remains difficult⁶⁰. Most programme monitoring is action oriented with a focus on problem solving, not referring that much to the programme framework. The quarterly reports to the ONL management, using the BSC format, constitute the singly regularly applied monitoring tool, which serves its purpose for the monitoring needs of the ONL management, but leaves other monitoring needs unaddressed.

The recently conducted methodological workshop constituted an attempt to deal with this constraint and has tried to set a step further towards alignment and harmonization to allow meaningful internal comparison of results, aggregation (for internal and external purposes) and structured learning. The document operationalizes four result areas (seed security, food and nutrition security, policy engagement and gender and social inclusion) and further tries to come to an agreement on the definition of target beneficiaries and FFS that, as main instrument and scaling-up pathway, constitutes important indicators in themselves.

6.3.2 Further analysis and assessment

The start up of the programme in *Myanmar* experienced a serious delay because of different views between Metta (the local partner NGO) and ONL around the inclusion of overhead costs in the budget. Metta has a strict policy to include such costs in their budget, which was unacceptable in the context of SD=HS. In the end, a temporary solution was found via the local Oxfam office that earmarked a small budget for this purpose. While it is not a surprise that such problems arise in complex programme set-ups, the long period to settle this discussion (more than one year) raises questions and inevitably has a major impact on programme implementation.

The audit requirements for the programme are strict and heavy and, hence, relatively costly in view of the programme budgets, in particular at the local level. While nobody will question the need of audits and financial compliance is a major consideration for ONL, one might wonder whether *yearly* audits, both at centralised and decentralised levels, are needed. In particular at the local and pillar 4 level, where most implementing partners manage budgets below 100,000€ yearly, one might question such practice.

The senior members of the ONL implementation team have all a strong scientific background. This has proved an asset for the programme and constitutes an important factor in providing the programme a strong status and image. This background has also been instrumental in the development of strong conceptual frameworks, the development of high quality tools, and adequate capacity building and technical support. It also has allowed internal capacity building of the less experienced members of the ONL implementation team. The

⁵⁹ This is to a major extent the consequence of the differences in data collection methods. Partners in southern countries were interviewed face to face, and field visits enabled observation and exchanges with beneficiaries; the pillar 4 partners, on the other hand, only were contacted via a limited number of (mostly) Skype interviews.

⁶⁰ Figures related to the number of beneficiaries reached and the number of FFS created and support constitute to an exception to a major extent, be it that there have been different approaches in estimating the number of beneficiaries reached. We come back to this point under chapter 6.

flipside is however that this scientific background might 'colour' too heavily programme implementation, in particular when the main local implementing partner shares the same scientific background, as is the case in *Vietnam* and *Laos* and, hence, focus might be more on 'depth' than on 'breath'. In *Zimbabwe* (and maybe *Myanmar* in the future), the strong operational grassroots focus of the local partner might bring things more in balance. In *Peru* there is a strong operational grassroots focus in ANDES, which is complemented by a research-minded focus and the academic background of the local SD=HS programme manager.

The previous point is also important in view of the fact that local implementation teams are relatively small. Moreover, in the case of *Zimbabwe* and *Asia* the teams are multi-layered and have staff who often can only part-time deal with project implementation. As such, local implementation teams have only limited absorption capacities so that the many tools, procedures, ... that have been worked out are not, or not entirely, used at the grassroots level, or substantially simplified. In *Peru*, the small team invests considerable time and effort in the adaptation and contextualization of tools and procedures that are developed upstream, an effort that is needed anyway, since all tools need to be translated in Spanish and Quechua. This 'translation' process requires vast amounts of time, also because it is mostly done in cooperation with the local technicians from the different communities and/or other local experts, and it is part of the agenda setting process. In *Asia*, the language constraint constitutes an additional hindrance for use and adoption. In addition, local level actors state that they dispose of a fair level of capacities and developed already their own instruments. When asked to indicate the added value of 'ONL The Hague' Asian partners point rather to other aspects: ONL's success in building capacities related to participatory approaches, their consistent focus on the inclusion and empowerment of women and (in *Zimbabwe*) their efforts to well document key experiences. The ONL implementation team is aware of this constraint and tries to enhance the process of local adoption via frequent visits and targeted capacity building. While such efforts produce certainly results, they do not necessarily produce the desired results in the longer run as the 'uptake' structure has limited resources. And they do certainly not resolve the imbalance between, on the one hand, the strong ONL implementation team and the relatively small local teams in charge of implementation (with *Zimbabwe* to some extent as an exception).

The main explaining factor for the small size of local teams are the small budgets that are earmarked for local level implementation. This can be partially explained by the specific programme configuration and, as such, has little to do with the budget cut which, to the extent possible, has tried to limit the effects of the cut on local level implementation. These limited resources constitute a major constraint for the envisaged expansion and up-scaling, in particular in view of the 'labour intensive' FFS approach.

While local staff resources are limited, the ONL implementation team is involved in many activities at the local level. It has been observed that their work in *Asia* overlaps to some extent with the task that Searice could or should do. This creates inefficiencies, apart from the high cost of flying in members of the ONL co-implementation team. Another overlap is found at the level of pillar 4, and has already been addressed under chapter 6.2.

The lack of a 'formalized' M&E system at programme level does not imply that the programme hasn't worked out an M&E function. In particular with regard to pillars 1 till 3, monitoring is actually conducted at the country level using the logical framework as a major reference. The MTR team has however not come across a standard procedure and tools that allow aggregation at country and programme level. Monitoring at that level seems to be conducted in a rather qualitative way, among others via exchanges and learning events at different levels, and regular reflections between the ONL implementation team and local partners on the progress made and difficulties encountered seem to act as a proxy for more traditional monitoring practices. There seems to be a good culture of exchange between ONL and the local partners (not that much between Southern implementing partners), that at least partially compensates for the lack of a well structured monitoring system.

The MTR feels that in most countries⁶¹ the present situation is unsatisfactory in view of the complexity of the programme and is a key explanation of the programme's difficulties in convincingly demonstrating, at least at the aggregated level, its progress towards the programme outcomes (see also chapter 6 below). The programme should proceed to developing a clear M&E system and getting it rolled out at all programme levels.

⁶¹ Zimbabwe is to a major extent an exception.

This might require the mobilisation of specific M&E skills that are presently not included in the teams (with CTD as an exception). In the end, the MTR team feels that an adequate elaboration of an M&E system (e.g. using key performance indicators at various levels) might require some extra initial effort, but will help programme implementers in the long run. In addition, a well thought and well functioning M&E system will constitute an important means for further exchange and learning⁶². Efforts in this regard should however take existing M&E practices and systems at partner level as their starting point.

M&E of pillar 4 activities and results includes additional challenges that are linked to the specific nature of policy related lobby and advocacy work (advocacy mostly occurs in a highly dynamic environment which requires constant adaptation and flexibility). Furthermore, the particular position of pillar 4 and its implementing partners in the programme has implied that no real monitoring efforts of pillar 4 results have been undertaken so far (input and to some extent activity monitoring has been conducted however).

6.4 Exchange and learning

The strong conceptual foundations of the programme and their consistent application during programme implementation have created adequate conditions for learning.

Our analysis under the other sections of this chapter already has demonstrated to which extent learning and exchange are intrinsically part of most programme activities and form a key constituent of the programme's culture that has been present throughout programme implementation. Without being exhaustive, examples of learning situated at different levels have included:

- the highly experiential learning approach that has become part of the FFS approach and constitutes the backbone of the FFS, from its inception over subsequent phases. Especially, the focus on horizontal participatory and experiential learning through the FFS is highly appreciated by local staff and FFS participants.
- The learning cycle linked to the IFAD review whereby important lessons and recommendations were taken up effectively, leading to relevant changes, in particular at the grassroots level. For instance, the CTD team learned from the IFAD internal and external reviews that led to programme improvements. In *Zimbabwe* « learning » is in-built in the programme; there is a culture of sharing and dialogue and use of local knowledge by the CTD staff and the fieldworkers. The experience with IFAD showed the importance to built on the collaboration with different stakeholders (local leaders, institutions, government) that permit to benefit from each other's knowledge and strengthen it mutually. CTD is an effective bridge between extension service, international research centres (CIMMYT and ICRISAT, with offices in Zimbabwe) and farmers.
- In *Peru*, there is also a strong focus on exchange of learning (which fits within the cosmo-vision of reciprocal work - Ayni). The experiences of Parque de la Papa where ANDES has been doing work since 15-20 years is used to set up Parque de Chalakuy with communities in Lares.
- The field visits by Searice and the ONL implementation team that have a strong learning/backstopping function and in many cases allowed local stakeholders to set steps forward; they have brought in skills and knowledge related to key participatory approaches (e.g. PVS) that before were hardly known in the area.
- The learning that occurred via cooperation among consortium partners (in particular within pillar 4, not that much between pillar 4 and the other pillars), but also during a few (not all) GPC meetings.
- In *Peru*, the local partner ANDES identified opportunities for cross fertilization through the multi-country approach of the SD=HS project. A few examples include the following:
 - learning from Laws and Regulations that are applied in the different countries
 - for example for analysing the national seed law regulations in Peru, see *legislacion en semillas* (<http://www.inia.gob.pe/ente-rector/autoridad-en-semillas/129-cat-ente-rector/peas/337-legislacion-en-semillas>)
 - an analysis of the Farmers Rights in Zimbabwe to support the internal reflection

⁶² See also our recommendation in this regard, under chapter 5.6.

- learning from strategies, methodologies and applications from other countries
 - the strategy of development of Seed Clusters in Vietnam
- In the SD=HS programme there is a clear focus on bringing together scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge. In Peru there is the cooperation with CIP and there are currently negotiations to sign an agreement with INIA and university students who will help with the identification of NUS. In Zimbabwe, the combination of scientific and local knowledge did not yet lead clear results but experiences are underway, especially regarding information gathering and interpretation of weather forecasting (in collaboration with University of Zimbabwe), in addition to the collaboration with the breeding stations of ICRIOSAT and CIMMYT and with Agritex.

Further it is important to reiterate here the programme's capacity to develop clear conceptual frameworks, while trying to strike a fine balance between flexibility and rigidity during their actual implementation on the ground.

The flipside of the various learning processes has been their cost. The fact that the consortium partners are geographically spread over the globe has important implications (high costs, high ecological footprint) when global meetings are to be conducted. In addition, some consortium members and local implementing partners have remarked that exchange with partners from the other side of the globe is always interesting, but also that exchange with partners from neighbouring countries will eventually be more productive. Learning at international level has its positive aspects (for the director of CTDT) but other team members are more critical and insist on local needs. Learning between continents is not evident and expensive. You can always learn something but in terms of comparing it is not so relevant because of the important differences in terms of: (i) types of crops, (ii) range of crops (iii) number of harvests a year; (iv) development processes to release a variety, etc.

III. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

7.1 Conclusions

Background

SD=HS is a global programme that builds on a legacy that has been acquired over years-long continued and committed involvement of ONL in biodiversity and/or food and seed security. This legacy has allowed ONL to set up the SD=HS programme with a broad range of nine consortium partners that with one exception are all long-standing partners having a long history of cooperation with ONL and often also with each other. SD=HS is led by ONL that is responsible for the overall management of the consortium, programme and funding. Four partners implement(ed) directly the programme in eight countries and four other partners contribute to global research and policy advocacy. ONL's role as consortium leader implies that it has a central position as grant manager but also as co-implementer of the programme, in charge, among others, of the development of common frameworks, concepts and tools, which subsequently are discussed with and agreed by the respective partners. ONL also provides technical support for in-country field implementation and aggregates findings at global levels.

Preparation, inception and relevance of the programme

The unique consortium configuration of SD=HS can to a major extent be explained by ONL's desire to work with solid and well known partners. Even so, it is important to note that the preparation of this programme coincided with a period of substantial institutional and financial uncertainty at the level of ONL. These changes put long-term relationships with partners under pressure and obliged ONL to fundamentally reconsider the ways it had worked so far and to also become a (co-)implementer of development projects and programmes. SD=HS is said to be the first major initiative under that new constellation whereby ONL combines the role of grant manager with that of co-implementer.

This probably explains some of the weaknesses in the programme structure for the implementation of a complex and ambitious programme such as SD=HS. Despite its high number of members, the expertise in the new partnership concentrated around pillars 1 and 4, and initially included only limited competence related to setup of a farmer seed enterprise and nutrition (pillars 2 and 3). Finally, the valid and noble intention to include long-standing partners worldwide resulted in valuable and diverse country experiences but also in a geographically scattered programme, which hampered efficient programme management, exchange and mutual learning.

Despite these challenges, ONL and its partners managed to define a well elaborated programme based on strong conceptual foundations. The MTR team's visits at the grassroots level and discussions with advocacy targets have largely confirmed the high level of relevance of the overall programme analysis and rationale. SD=HS addresses key issues that are vital in the struggle to safeguard seed security (and, hence food security) and bio-diversity and to uphold and maintain the rights and capacities of IPSHF in general: seeds are recognized everywhere as a key element to safeguard food (and seed) security and biodiversity and to promote the empowerment of farmers (men and women). Furthermore, the inclusion of a nutrition component in the programme constitutes a clear added value compared to other similar programmes. Finally, the programme is considered highly relevant in view of the challenges brought by climate change, as the use of adequate PGR is a key element in the development of adequate coping strategies.

On the other side some consortium partners feel that the institutional challenges and how ONL translated these in the programme implementation structure and budget were not sufficiently discussed during the preparation process, which dealt mainly with substantive issues. These partners initially expected that the relation with ONL would remain very similar to what they were used to and most of them only gradually came to an understanding of the financial and operational implications of the shift in ONL's role and position. As such, the heavy ONL involvement (compared to the past) in management and implementation from the early stages sparked resistance from some consortium partners. In addition, ONL's lack of experience with managing simultaneously the roles of grant manager and co-implementer further weakened the partners' confidence, the more because the combination of these roles was never subject to internal discussion and reflection.

Discussions during the inception workshop dealt only in a limited way with the actual functioning of the consortium, as the need to attach specific attention to this issue was insufficiently recognized by all partners. As such, from the very start of the programme, relations among some of the partners were far from optimal. While this has not prevented them from doing a good job, it has implied that the potential added value on the consortium set-up (in terms of efficiency, up-scaling, ...) has only partially materialized and that, later on, conflicts erupted that have requested much time and energy from all involved and affected the programme's performance. At this point it must be stressed that the situation described above applies mostly to the relationship with pillar 4 partners, and much less or not at all with the other field-based partners.

Outreach and effectiveness

The programme presently works directly with about 170 FFS, that have around 4,200 members (direct participants) of which 62 % are women; the programme has not undertaken specific efforts to address the specific needs and position of the youth and include these in the FFS. In addition to the direct participants, there is an important number of primary beneficiaries (households living in communities where the programme is active) that cannot be estimated precisely as no systematic and rigid recording at this level was conducted so far. Overall, the MTR team feels that, with the exception of Zimbabwe, the programme outreach (for pillars 1 till 3; the outreach for pillar 4 is very difficult to estimate) is still relatively limited, leading – at this moment - to a high unit cost per FFS and direct participant. This can partially be explained by the choice for the FFS approach that is a highly demanding in terms of human resources and by the fact that the programme is presently only midway. But other factors also play a role: the strong focus of – in particular – the ONL implementation team on assuring high quality implementation using approaches that allow global interpretation and comparison; the relative inexperience with two of the four pillars leading to slower implementation; an imbalance in terms of human resources funded and/or trained by the programme, with on the one hand a strong ONL implementation team and on the other hand, at the local level, a relatively small number of local staff dealing directly with programme implementation; (linked to the previous point) the relatively limited budgets earmarked for the actual work on the ground. Factors that allow up-scaling in Zimbabwe seem to relate, among others, to the strong anchorage of the local partner at the local and national level, its excellent cooperation with strategic partners (including the agricultural and health department) and the capacity building of a substantially bigger number of extension staff at the local level.

A key finding from the MTR is that programme implementation demonstrates, overall, clear progress towards its envisaged outcomes. Not surprisingly, this is most obvious for the first programme pillar where important key achievements are noted, in particular via the consistent and high quality implementation of the FFS approach leading to effective adoption of envisaged changes in terms of food and seed security in view of climate change. It is thereby noted that PGR related changes go along with a genuine process of empowerment of FFS members (women and men), leading to increased confidence and autonomy and direct or indirect contributions to gender equality. As such, in all countries the supported FFS engage in an agenda that is far broader than envisaged (and directly supported) by the programme. The MTR considers this an evolution that should be dealt with more consistently, the more because the need for income increase is fairly outspoken everywhere and needs to be addressed if the progress achieved is to be sustained.

Progress with regard to second pillar hampered by a broad range of factors including a few setbacks that could not be foreseen. At the moment of this MTR, the FSE has just become operational in Zimbabwe so that it is too early to assess its performance. Important characteristics of the approach followed include the farmers' ownership and control over the enterprise, the ambition to focus on small grains that are increasingly crucial to address climate change challenges but for which so far no strong seed multiplication facilities exist, the co-existence of the FSE and informal mechanisms of seed production and exchange of the members and the compatibility with government policies and strong collaboration with other key stakeholders. Major challenges include the (for the key stakeholders) innovative character of the FSE both in terms of its technical and/or institutional set-up, the challenge to strike a fine balance between economic, social and ecological considerations and the need to ensure continued support for the post-programme period by the end of this programme period, even when the company would become profitable from 2019 (as is forecast in the business plan).

Also in the case of the third pillar, there are clear signs of progress towards the envisaged outcomes despite some initial difficulties in working out the pillar approach and initial analyses which implies that, among others, the linkage with policy advocacy activities is still less developed than for pillar one. Key changes include the

empowerment of women allowing them to develop stronger seed systems whereby NUS constitute an important element. The strong focus on NUS has allowed the inclusion of nutritious species in the daily diets. A major issue for consideration under this pillar is the interplay between the three key constituents of the pillar approach: women empowerment, the promotion of NUS and improved nutrition. If the latter is to be considered as the final aim, a more focused and targeted nutrition approach (with a special focus on vulnerable sections of the population) could have been considered (in Zimbabwe some steps are taken in that direction). However, dynamics in the field learn that the distinction between pillars 1 and 3 gets increasingly blurred at grassroots level; it is also obvious that successes related to pillar 1 have a clear positive effect on pillar 3 and its objective to improve nutrition.

The key achievements under pillar four are the result of either direct efforts undertaken by the ONL programme implementation team, either by local implementing partners, or by the Pillar 4 consortium partners. These efforts have been undertaken either individually or in cooperation with other consortium or local implementing partners and related to both capacity building of local partners and other stakeholders, and to policy changes. The programme has come across numerous examples where programme stakeholders, in different configurations, either join forces to pursue similar policy advocacy initiatives, either individually target key events and actors with different advocacy agendas (that are, however, never really opposing each other). In all countries visited excepted for Laos where the programme started only recently, implementing partners have been able to influence national policy agendas, thereby intelligently using the evidence gained at the grassroots level and involving IPSHF representatives in actions at the national level. At the international level, policy change processes are most often going very slowly as a very broad range of stakeholders, many of them extremely powerful, advocate for changes. As such, it is very difficult to attribute specific changes to the programme, but there are nevertheless clear indications of programme partners *influencing* important policy discussions and change processes in the framework of (among others) the ITPGRFA, the FAO CGRFA and UPOV. The use of an evidence based approach (both at national and international level) is the most distinctive feature of the advocacy efforts undertaken and probably the most effective element among the broad range of advocacy tools used.

Efficiency

Effectiveness and accountability of the programme's governance structure. The governance structure of the programme is relatively complex but this is to a major extent unavoidable in such a complex programme as SD=HS. When we consider the budget cut and CAWR as two illustrative cases, we can conclude that the governance structure has not fully functioned when things truly mattered, despite the existence of a governance document that clearly describes the role and competence of the GPC, the main programme governance structure. From the inception phase onwards, dealing with ONL's double role as grant manager and co-implementer has been a major challenge with both ONL *and* the consortium partners lacking experience with how to effectively deal with it within a consortium set-up. In addition for ONL, safeguarding a high level of involvement in implementation was also part of an institutional survival strategy to cope with the rapidly changing institutional environment. As such, the GPC has never been able to comprehensively take up the role it was meant to play, despite the fact that it has at several occasions offered a forum for exchange and reflection that was highly valued by all consortium partners. At this moment, the GPC's functioning as a governance body is minimal but members, each from their side, stay committed to make the best out of it and stick to their commitments with regard to programme implementation.

Quality of programme implementation. SD=HS has developed in the three years of its existence several versions of its programme framework. While these frameworks are similar and even identical as far as their overall and specific (pillar) objectives are concerned, there have been substantial changes at the level of underlying outcomes, outputs and activities and the corresponding indicators and means of verification. These regular and substantial changes coupled to their intrinsic complexity (see e.g. the high number of indicators) have implied that the successive versions of the programme framework have not functioned as important reference tools for planning, monitoring/steering and also learning; the frequent changes have further complicated processes at the local level, as each time changes in the framework had to be translated into local reality.

Overall, the quality of implementation of key activities has been good. Pillar 1 and 3 key activities are very similar (baseline survey, TOT and broader capacity building efforts, actual implementation via FFS support by tools and instruments). Baseline surveys, TOT and actual implementation via FFS form a conceptually and operationally strong triangle that is backed by continuous tool development and refinement. In many cases

however, the (initially) too complex nature of these tools made their direct use difficult at the local level and substantial efforts by local partners a condition; language problems are a key additional constraint in Asia. Capable and motivated staff guarantees good implementation quality. Local stakeholders highly value the programme approach, in particular the practical and participatory nature of the TOT and FFS activities; the success of the FFS contrasts often with the (relative) failure of other development programmes in the area. The implementation choices imply however that (quantitative) up-scaling of the programme is difficult without additional resources and most of all allies in the public sector (with whom in most countries collaboration exists already): the FFS is conducted along a highly labour intensive experiential learning approach, the baselines are very comprehensive, in some countries the number of local agents involved in TOT has remained limited; finally within the countries the FFS supported are often spread over several geographic and agro-ecological areas (except for Peru where a territorial approach is followed and communities are relatively close by but located different agro-ecological zones). Support from government offices, extension services and breeding institutions is absolutely essential to allow up-scaling as foreseen, as is demonstrated by the positive experience in Zimbabwe.

The experiences so far with the set up of a FSE (pillar 2) illustrate clearly the challenges of engaging in a domain in which the key partners involved lack substantial in-house competence and experience. However, it is important to realize that the design and implementation of business initiatives almost by definition brings along particular challenges that can only to a partial degree be foreseen. The MTR nevertheless wonders whether the preparation could not have been conducted following a more experiential approach and states further that specific considerations (such as the articulation of the FSE with traditional seed production and exchange, the relation between CTDT and the enterprise, the attention of the position of women in the management structure of the enterprise) will need continuous attention in the future.

The broad range of initiatives under pillar 4 is obviously a consequence of the particular set-up of the programme and its antecedents. Pillar 4 is the program area where the difficulties related to the double role of ONL in the programme (as grant manager and co-implementer) are most felt. The fact that Pillar 4 partners are further well established organisations with a broad range of activities and agendas that are not necessarily entirely confluent and are sometimes of a substantially different nature than the bulk of the work under the three other pillars is another challenge. Efforts under pillar 4 have clearly led to policy advocacy results (see above) and these are both the consequence of the consortium partners' individual efforts and of concerted action by the programme consortium. All partners agree however that opportunities to generate more influence and even impact via joint action have been missed by the incapacity of the partners to engage in structured cooperation, despite notable efforts by several members.

Quality of programme management. The programme disposes of a clear set of rules, procedures and tools related to programme management and implementation and those are adequately shared with the partners and, overall, well adhered to, despite the fact that many partners consider them as too heavy in view of the relatively small budgets at their disposal. Considering the complex programme set-up, financial and content-related planning and reporting are of good quality and succeed in ensuring accountability to the donor.

The human resources used at various levels of programme implementation are of good quality, among others thanks to the substantial capacity building efforts conducted at various levels. HRM seems to meet the standards at all levels. The only major challenge at this level has been the rather frequent changes at the level of the ONL implementation team and programme leadership.

Over the 3.5 years of programme implementation several versions of the programme framework were developed; as such, it has been difficult to define a coherent programme-level M&E framework and M&E implementation plan. While planning documents and progress reports contain an important number of data relating to indicators at different levels, which gives to some extent a picture of the progress made, the lack of uniformity implies that (aggregated) comparison over time and with the initial baseline remains difficult. The quarterly reports to the ONL management, using the BSC format, constitute the singly regularly applied monitoring tool, which serves its purpose for the monitoring needs of the ONL management, but leaves other monitoring needs (addressing the level of achievement of outputs and outcomes, among others) unaddressed. The recently conducted methodological workshop constituted an attempt to deal with this constraint and might allow to set a step further towards alignment and harmonization in view of meaningful internal comparison of results, aggregation (for internal and external purposes) and structured learning.

The strong conceptual foundations of the programme and their consistent application during programme implementation have created adequate conditions for learning and exchange that have become intrinsically part of most programme activities and form a key constituent of the programme's culture that has been present throughout programme implementation. However, apart from budget considerations, learning on the basis of experiences from highly diverse geographical, agro-ecological, cultural, ... contexts has intrinsic limitations, although it might allow universal application of the concepts and tools over time.

7.2 Lessons learned

- A clear strategic programme focus (e.g. on PGR) is defensible from a programme management point of view, but it conflicts with a participatory and empowerment approach. This is recognised by programme staff, but finding a satisfactory way on how to deal with it is not easy.
- In economically depressed areas in particular, a focus on PGR preservation and bio-diversity – that can be justified in itself - is not necessarily compatible with the grassroots' main needs and priorities, but can only be reached if such activities contribute at the same time to the livelihood enhancement of the communities involved (e.g. via income generating activities - both within and outside the agricultural sector - and, often, the corresponding need to small loans).
- The adoption, *beyond* programme supported groups, of improved PGR practices depends on many parameters including the specific characteristics of the crops that constitute the focus of the programme, and the willingness of collaborating partners (such as Agritex in Zimbabwe and local governments in the Mekong Delta and Laos) to take over and adopt programme objectives and approaches.
- The FFS approach is adequate to introduce important changes related to PGR practices in view of promoting food and seed security and biodiversity, and increasing resilience against agro-climatic changes. The unique experiential learning approach of FFS is at the same time its major strength and a major constraint for up-scaling the intervention outreach.
- There do not seem to be easy solutions to up-scale the programme's outreach but the success in Zimbabwe with up-scaling suggests that good linkages with and inclusion of key government institutions and breeding organisations is a preliminary requirement.
- The empowerment approach introduced in FFS itself contains an important "capacity building" aspect with a high potential for outreach to other communities and inclusion in other projects/programs and activities.
- Working out quality approaches at field level can benefit substantially from the use of an in-depth 'scientific' (as opposed to a more 'developmental') approach, particularly in the early stages. Once the approaches are worked out and fine-tuned, a transition should however be made to simplified approaches and tools that allow expansion at a lower unit cost. Ensuring such transition might need the development of adequate tools and imply the involvement of specialists with another profile, and the inclusion of extension services and development organisations (including CBOs and mass organisations) in programme implementation.
- Adequate gender mainstreaming is a key requirement for success and sustainability but requires the adequate involvement of men and an understanding of their role in decision-making around issues that are important for the programme (such as changes in the diets). In addition, there is a need to adequately take into account the constraints of women FFS members (workload, ...).
- Development actors easily accept to become member of a consortium because well functioning consortia provide much substantial advantages and support in reaching key objectives. The same actors often forget however that consortia need to be taken care off and nurtured and, hence, require a substantial effort from their members to become and remain effective. Substantial member contribution is at the heart of each consortium but often difficult to combine with regular tasks and activities.

- The combination, in a programme, of the role of grant manager and co-implementer implies the existence of conflicts of interests that are difficult to manage without external neutral facilitation. In addition, a consortium set-up might prove an inadequate structure when one of the partners takes up such a double role while the others are solely or mainly implementers.
- A long history of cooperation is clearly an asset when starting up a new programme. But in such cases, the changing role of one of the consortium partners vis-à-vis other partners - and the implications of such a change - should be discussed very explicitly in order to avoid misunderstandings among partners that used to be close to each other before. A major challenge in this regard is that the full consequences of such changes cannot always be foreseen ex ante, but rather evolve during implementation.
- It is very challenging to try develop linkages for policy advocacy purposes between partners working on the ground in a limited number of countries and other partners that have a more international focus and lack presence and experience in those countries.
- Finding the right balance between, on the one hand, the development of *standard* approaches, tools and instruments and, on the other hand, adopt adequately *contextualized* approaches, tools and instruments, in highly diverse socio-economic, cultural and agro-ecological programme locations, constitutes a major challenge. The most adequate approach seems to be to enable/support local partners to operationalize these standard approaches and tools (guidelines and models rather than blueprints).

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Below, we limit ourselves to key recommendations, as we presume that our detailed analysis, in particular under the efficiency chapter, allows to easily deriving operational lessons and follow up actions.

1. The consortium members should engage in an effort **to re-define the consortium foundations and working principles and to act accordingly**. In theory, there are two options:
 - either SD=HS acts as a “genuine” consortium, which implies that all managerial and substantive decisions are taken *jointly, irrespective the members’ power position*. This requires more specifically:
 - that each consortium partner puts aside to the extent possible the grievances of the past or, at least, ensures that their influence is contained. During a GPC meeting in the immediate future time should be earmarked for this purpose and the session conducted under the guidance of an experienced external facilitator. Restoring trust should be a basic consideration of the approach.
 - the results of this process should be used to review the governance document which actually already provides a sound basis for working along these lines. In any case, working along the principles of a genuine partnership, implies that ONL takes rather a position of ‘primus inter pares’ (the first among the equal) and internally takes care of clearly situating at different instances its role of grant manager and of co-implementer.
 - SD=HS becomes *unambiguously* an ONL chaired and steered structure – a kind of a special purpose vehicle in which ONL takes all key managerial and substantive decisions. This second option implies actually the abandonment of the consortium model for the purpose of joint decision making, but does not exclude joint consultation, learning and exchange, and the search for synergies and opportunities for joint or coordinated activities.

The first option is obviously the most difficult and ambitious, but the MTR team hopes that consortium partners want to give it a try as working as a genuine partnership actually has a potential for bigger impact than the second option. A first step should be that all consortium partners unambiguously indicate whether they want to give this option a chance, or not. If all partners react positively, there decision should be quickly followed up and a GPC meeting planned. A key requirement for a sustainable solution would be that all partners recognize that being member of a consortium requires a specific (additional) effort and commitment. In addition, one partner alternately could be tasked (and resourced!) to assume the typical ‘consortium maintenance’ functions.

The second option has the advantage of being more feasible in view of the limited time till programme’s closure and ONL’s present outspoken attitude with regard to its double role in the programme. Opting for this ‘minimal approach’ has further the advantage of unambiguity and can, if successful, become the basis for higher-level cooperation in the future. It does not exclude either win-win cooperation initiatives among the present consortium partners.

Whatever the direction the consortium will develop till the end of the programme, it is recommended that a specific analysis be undertaken – possibly also with the help of a third party - so as to use the SD=HS experience to learn for future similar set-ups that might be increasingly used in development cooperation. This issue should also be included in the end of programme evaluation.

1. FFS in all countries have **an agenda that is far broader than PGR-related activities**. This should be considered as an indicator of the programme’s success in empowering local people. While the programme should preserve PGR as its core business and continue to adopt an empowerment perspective, it should embrace these ‘other’ FFS dynamics. Presently, local staff members in consultation with ONL’s expert team already support FFS in implementing their broader agenda but are not always sufficiently qualified to do so (e.g. in the case of income generating activities). As such, the programme should define a clearer policy and practice in this regard, also because sustaining the gains related to food security and bio-diversity might only become possible when these can go along with income generation and livelihood improvement which are often the most urgent demands of the programme participants. To some extent, a ‘*beyond PGR*’

engagement can also be considered as a new form of up-scaling the programme.

2. **Work on pillar 1 and 3 should become part of one integrated approach** whereby the expertise and experience gained with pillar 1 approaches and tools can be used to lay down a solid foundation for subsequent 'specific' pillar 3 actions of which the relative importance will much depend on the local nutritional situation (see also recommendation 10). Further integration should use the experiences of the '*de facto*' integration of both pillars in some countries and should be conducted in a conscious and well documented way (maybe via one or two case studies that can provide inputs for a possible follow up programme). Integration can be pursued by integrating the principle of 'nutrition sensitive agriculture' as a key consideration from the very start of the implementation of pillar 1 activities, which might imply that competent government services in the area of nutrition are associated to programme implementation from its early stages (cfr. experience of Zimbabwe).
3. Presently, the unit costs for FFS and participant support are very substantial, with Zimbabwe as a notable exception. As such, ways should be explored to increase cost effectiveness and efficiency, taking Zimbabwe as a study case. The increased level of integration of pillar 1 and pillar 3 should allow creating efficiencies in terms of conducting baselines, TOT, tools development and the set-up and support of FFS. Apart from this and considering the large body of knowledge and expertise gained over the past years and prior to the programme, there should be **consistent and continued attempts to alleviate the present approaches** in the direction of less comprehensive ways of working. If this succeeds, the possibilities to entrust key activities of the process (such as the baselines) entirely to local partners (and hence build their capacities) will increase (see example of ANDES), whereby it is better to steer on outputs and results than on activities and inputs (that can safely be managed by the local partners). This approach might bring a loss of quality in the early stages, but this will be compensated by bigger overall impact.
4. Related to the previous recommendation, the programme should pay more attention to supporting and following up the PGR-related changes promoted (in view of increased food and seed security, and policy interventions), in first instance at the level of the FFS members (on their own fields) and by the primary beneficiaries (i.e. the SD=HS households in the communities where FFS activities take place). Following up changes at these levels should become part of a comprehensive monitoring system (see recommendation 12 below).
Even so, the programme should engage more consistently in promoting the adoption of its approach and tools by third parties (e.g. government agencies adopting the FFS model for PGR changes) so that the SD=HS approach and tools develop into 'common goods' at provincial and even national level. The programme should, to the extent possible, support these agencies in adopting the envisaged change process in an adequate way and thereby attempt to get an understanding of the quality of the process and propose adjustments where necessary.
5. Related to the recommendations 4 and 5, the programme, via its local implementing partners mainly, should **explore the possibilities of cooperation with local organisations with a large constituency base and other strategic partners** (such as farmer organisations or movements and networks, national women organisations, government bodies, universities, etc.) with a view of integrating these in future up-scaling strategies.
6. So far, the programme has not paid specific attention to which age groups involving in its activities. All over the world and also in most programme areas, **young people (men and women)** are leaving their communities and/or have no interest to further engage in agriculture to ensure their livelihoods, as their elders and parents do. In that way, rural communities are often losing their most dynamic actors. While the programme, if successful, can play a role to halt this process, it does not yet dispose of a specific strategy to focus on the inclusion of young people. The programme's efforts should be part of a broader strategy to make life in rural areas more attractive and a viable option for young dynamic people. This might imply the use of new technologies that attract younger men and women and are in line with their interest in modernity.
7. **Gender mainstreaming** is addressed to varying degrees in the programme countries. Particularly in Asia, efforts should be undertaken to ensure a proper understanding of gender mainstreaming (beyond the present approach of only ensuring the participation of women). But also in the other countries there

should be increased attention for particular challenges that relate to gender, such as the adequate inclusion of men in the programme, also when they are not participating in the FFS. Empowerment of women in the context of the programme should always go along an adequate inclusion of men and efforts that consciously aim to achieve higher degrees of gender equality.

8. The programme should remain constantly aware of **the challenges related to the further implementation of pillar 2 (FSE)**. Besides the regular challenges related to the FSE operations, this implies that the programme (via the FSE and besides the FSE) should take care of a synergetic co-existence with farmers' seed production practices, bring in innovation in view of increased bio-diversity (hence the crucial importance of the multiplication of small seeds rather than OPV and hybrid maize) and avoid competition with farmers' practices that might lead to an erosion of their capacities to grow their own seeds and a disappearance of valuable local seed exchange mechanisms and practices. All this will imply close monitoring of the immediate effects of the FSE operations, which can be conducted in a relatively easy way as pillar 2 FSE seed producing activities are implemented in communities where pillar 1 related support is also provided.
9. Pillar 3 has several important key objectives (improved nutrition, women empowerment, promotion of NUS) that do not necessarily reinforce each other. The MTR feels that one of the objectives should become the priority and is of the opinion that **'improved nutrition' is the most adequate objective to be put at the centre of pillar 3**. This choice will facilitate the development of synergies with pillar 1 (see recommendations 3 and 4 above), but will also imply a partial review of the pillar approach and related tools and instruments, with targeting on the most vulnerable groups as a key consideration. The use of NUS and the empowerment of women should support this key objective. Food security is not equal to nutritional security that should be addressed using different approaches. In addition, there exist rapid methods to get a good understanding of the nutritional status of individuals that can support the changed focus of programme recommended here.
10. The consortium partners should double their efforts to look for cooperation and synergies in relation to **national and international policy advocacy**. *National* policy advocacy efforts are preferably linked to the existing work under pillars 1 to 3 and can be implemented with or without involvement of pillar four partners (depending on the added value pillar four partners can provide at country level). Partners working mainly around pillars 1-3 and those working mainly around pillar 4 can clearly support each other to pursue the pillar 4 programme objectives. Using an evidence based approach should remain at the core of the lobby and advocacy strategy.
The implementation of this recommendation is very much linked to the follow up of recommendation 1 and, more concretely, to the redefinition of the terms under which ONL and the other consortium partners will collaborate and coordinate their lobby and advocacy efforts. A first step could be the inventory, by all partners, of advocacy related offers and demands for cooperation. Further, it appears that 'complementarity' whereby the specific strengths of the different partners can be merged into a synergetic approach, can become an important guiding principle to define future cooperation within and outside the programme.
11. So far, the programme activities are well monitored using a process type of approach whereby the course of action is well analysed, discussed and adjusted in a participatory way. While this participatory approach needs to be maintained, the programme now enters into a phase whereby its **M&E system needs to be upgraded** so that it can more systematically monitor and account for its progress towards outcomes. The results of the recently conducted methodological workshop can be used to that effect. The implementation of this recommendation implies also reconciling the need for a certain level of uniformity (in view of aggregation) with taking into account the specificity of the local situation and (in some cases) existing sound M&E practices in programme countries. The improved M&E should also assess the multiplier effects of the programme at the level of its direct participants and primary beneficiaries and, where possible at the level of third parties (see recommendation 5 above). In addition there are clear opportunities to involve FFS and their members in M&E efforts at the grassroots level, which can further enhance local empowerment, learning and exchange processes. These on their turn can generate stronger evidence based findings that can be used for policy advocacy purposes.

ANNEXE 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

SeedsGROW SD=HS midterm review Terms of Reference

Terms of reference	
Program/project title /affiliate identification code	SeedsGROW: Harvesting Global Food Security and Justice in the face of Climate Change SD=HS, Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security component (A-03592) Sida grant reference: 61050063
Partner organisation/s if applicable	Partners: ANDES, CTD, ETC, GRAIN, SEARICE, SOUTH CENTRE, TWN and Oxfam Novib. Partners will be involved in the evaluation through the evaluation of national level implementation, and national, regional and global policy advocacy
Geographical coverage: global; region; country(ies)-please specify	The review will cover global, regional and national levels including country level work in Myanmar, Laos, Peru, Vietnam, Zimbabwe and The Netherlands
Program/project lifespan (from mm/yy to mm/yy)	The period covered will be 1 October 2013 to 31 December 2016 Project lifespan is 1 October 2013 to 31 December 2018
Program/project budget in the period covered by the review	Sida budget to the SD=HS between 1 October 2013 - 30 December 2016 was approximate Euro 6,500,000.
Evaluation budget	Euro 53,000 including VAT and logistics (e.g. consultants' flights, accommodation etc)
Sponsor for the evaluation	Maarten De Vuyst (SeedsGROW interim Programme Leader)
Evaluation commissioning manager	Karen Biesbrouck (MEAL Specialist)
SD=HS MTR steering group	Two partners from Pillar 1, 2 and 3 : Alejandro Argumedo (ANDES) and Andrew Mushita (CTDT); One partner from Pillar 4: Pat Mooney (ETC Group) Gigi Manicad (Senior Programme Manager; Oxfam Novib) Bert Visser (Scientific Advisor) Karen Biesbrouck (Evaluation commissioning manager; Oxfam Novib)

1. Background, rationale and purpose of the evaluation

The Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) provides financial support to the SeedsGROW programme. SeedsGROW consists of two programme components, the Seeds (Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security (SD=HS)) component and the Oxfam International GROW campaign component. The overall implementation period for the Sida contribution runs from 1st of October 2013 until 30th of June 2019, with a total amount of 156,000,000 Swedish Crowns¹. The contractual agreement between Oxfam Novib and Sida, includes a midterm review. The MTR report is now scheduled on 31 January 2017. This Terms of Reference

¹ Is equivalent of 20,6 million Euro against the exchange rate dated 27th of August 2015. Source www.oanda.com.

covers the midterm review for the Sida supported SD=HS programme component. For the GROW campaign a separate review exercise had been conducted, which paid attention to synergy between both components.²

SD=HS is a global programme that builds from and is composed of the results and lessons learned from several integrated donor funded programmes: Oxfam Novib's Global Programme, the Oxfam-HIVOS Biodiversity Fund and IFAD co-financed programme 'Putting Lessons into Practice: Scaling up People's Biodiversity Management for Food Security'. The current SD=HS programme is funded mainly by Sida with funding from other donors such as IFAD, the Dutch Postcode Lottery and the Netherlands 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was launched in October 2013 with a 3 month preparatory phase and 12 month inception phase.

SD=HS is working in several countries and aggregates these diverse experiences into a coherent global agenda. Its niche and credibility stems from the agenda and evidences that are bottom up; and vice versa, global development and policies are discussed at local and national levels and used for policy advocacy for compliance to international binding agreements. The overall goal of the SD=HS programme is to contribute *to uphold, strengthen and mainstream the rights and technical capacities of indigenous and smallholder farmers, and to influence local to global policies and institutions on access to and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and nutrition security under conditions of climate change.* The SD=HS programme is framed by four pillars; Pillar 1 (Scaling up models), Pillar 2 (farmer seeds enterprise), Pillar 3 (women, seeds and nutrition) and Pillar 4 (Governance and knowledge management). A simplified version of the overall logframe can be found in the annex to this ToR. More information is available at <http://www.sdhsprogram.org/>.

SD=HS implementation started with 9 consortium partners, including Oxfam Novib who leads the programme and is responsible for the overall management / administration of the consortium, programme and funding. Four partners implement directly in eight countries Andes (Peru), CTDT (Zimbabwe), Searice (Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar), and CAWR³ (India, Mali, Senegal). Four partners contribute to global research and policy advocacy (ETC, GRAIN, South Center, TWN).

To be an effective global programme that captures the rich diversity in the implementing countries, Oxfam Novib leads in the development of common framework, concepts and tools, which are collectively developed and agreed by the respective country partners. Oxfam Novib also provides technical support for in country field implementation and aggregates findings at global levels. Global level analysis and recommendations are collectively formulated and agreed by the respective country partners.

Why is the evaluation being undertaken?

Whereas monitoring enables tracking trends towards program outcomes, this MTR helps us to strengthen the evidence for those trends and understand why they are (not) occurring. It also provides an opportunity to find unexpected program outcomes, both positive and negative.

The purpose of the MTR is to review and assess the program implementation process, to show progress towards outcomes over the last three years (2013-16), and to derive lessons to be learned. It is for this reason that this will mainly be a process evaluation⁴ with some characteristics of an outcome evaluation⁵.

² The rationale for having two separate evaluation exercises (GROW and Seeds) is that the programmes have taken off and advanced in different degrees, thus, for the Midterm review of Seeds will be conducted in a later stage

Moreover, the competencies required from the evaluators for conducting the midterm review would differ substantially between the two subprogrammes. For the latter, evaluators need to show robust experience in (evaluating) campaigns.

³ Due to the serious structural implementation delays in the CAWR, which coincided with the 2016 Sida budget cut, Oxfam Novib in agreement with Sida, decided that CAWR, implementing in India, Mali, and Senegal, would not continue with the programme in Year 3, i.e. from 1 April 2016.

⁴ Oxfam explains Process evaluations as follows "A process evaluation is undertaken during the course of a program/project. It focuses on assessing how and in what ways the program is working, and for whom. Process evaluations provide opportunities for feedback and reflection amongst stakeholders in a way that can immediately inform the ongoing implementation and iterative design of a program/project. Process evaluations may also assess whether the use of resources is proving to be effective and efficient, and whether the organisational systems and capacities of Oxfam and partners are appropriate for achieving program/project, and are improving. Mid-term reviews and, for humanitarian initiatives, Real-Time Evaluations, can be considered types of process evaluations.." Source: Oxfam evaluation guide, August 2014.

The midterm review is to serve the following stakeholders:

- Sida: uses it to take stock of the progress made, to learn what works and what does not work in terms of governance and programme set-up, and to help shape monitoring as well as potential future engagements and commitments.
- SeedsGROW Steering committee as consortium lead; accounting for the progress made to the different stakeholders and decisions on how to optimize the implementation and results both within and across pillars and at local, national, regional and global level.
- SD=HS Global Partner Committee; for learning about the program implementation and results to date and understanding of which lessons learned should be carried forward and how this could take place.

The MTR results will be used to strengthen the programme implementation by informing decisions on possible redirection of the programme in the remaining period May 2017 to December 2018. These decisions will be described in Oxfam's management response.

Why at this point in time?

The midterm review will take place in the period of 1 November 2016 – 31st of May 2017 (submission date). The program is now halfway its implementation period; the programme needs to look back, reflect, learn and look to the future. At this point all baselines would have been completed; main interventions agreed with partners communities are underway, and significant results can be indicated. Furthermore the six pathways for scaling up the program identified and documented under the IFAD program would have been further implemented with Sida funded implementation areas; and serves as a guide in implementing the comprehensive SD=HS programme. All governance and management structures will be in place, and 2016 Sida policy changes and the resulting budget cuts and the realities of implementation put these structures to the test.

Critical background has been established by previous evaluations – recent internal and external evaluation of IFAD 'scaling up' programme identified gaps in knowledge management, pulling together and building on the knowledge that is gained at local and global levels and leveraging this across the programme and externally.

Early February 2017, two consecutive events will group representatives of implementing partners in pillars 1, 2 and 3 in The Hague. For SD=HS MTR consultants, this constitutes an excellent opportunity to interview some partners' coordinating technical specialists as well as their representatives involved in governance of the SD=HS program. The events are a Global Methodological workshop⁵ 6-10 February; and a program development write-shop in the subsequent week.

2. Specific object and objectives of the evaluation

The overall questions for the evaluation are: how well has the SD=HS programme progressed and in what ways towards the outcomes of each pillar, and to what extent is it feasible to reach the overall SD=HS objective? The review should reflect on effectiveness at local, national, regional and global levels. It should:

- take stock of the accomplishments so far,
- assess to what extent SD=HS contributed to these accomplishments,
- appraise the efficiency of Oxfam Novib (contract manager) and of the implementing partners,
- assess the added value of each of the consortium members to SD=HS and vice versa, the added value of the SD=HS programme to each of the consortium members, how synergies are created and

⁵ "Outcome evaluations are typically undertaken at significant periodic markers with in a longer-term initiative. They assess how and in what ways the program is contributing to immediate changes in policies, practices, ideas and attitudes, and if there have been any negative or unexpected effects. They also seek to identify the mechanisms that have contributed to or worked against program effectiveness and successful change." (Ibid.)

⁶ The workshop aims to bring together SD=HS partners working in pillars 1, 2 and 3 in Peru, Zimbabwe, Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar, to share their experiences and lessons in the use of the tools (e.g. the baseline surveys and the FFS curricula), assess and improve these community-based methodologies in relation to Programme design, better understand human-crop relationships, harmonize monitoring systems and celebrate achievements. The workshop -and the outputs produced in preparing the workshop- will help in taking stock of the Programme's progress.

- draw lessons on how SD=HS can be most efficient and effective at achieving its objectives

The evaluation will focus on all Pillars and also country level interventions linking to global level advocacy (process).

In this midterm review the focus will be on effectiveness and efficiency, and to a lesser extent on relevance, learning and sustainability.

3. Key questions of the evaluation

Effectiveness

- What are the key accomplishments to date under each pillar? What are the intended and unintended, positive and negative, effects of the intervention on people, institutions and the physical environment? What is the evidence of the SD=HS programme contributing to relevant local to global social actors' changing policies, practices, ideas or attitudes?
 - o What have the different partners contributed to those accomplishments? What is the added value of each of the consortium partners to SD=HS, and vice versa?
 - o To what extent did SD=HS help building capacity of different stakeholders, including farmers, to understand and deal with policy issues?
 - o Are the key activities undertaken under each pillar well linked to the key activities under other pillars and effectively linking local to global and global to local activities? How does this speak to the program's underlying idea of how change happens?
- What was the effect of the Sida budget cut in the programme design and delivery?
- The reasons behind the progress (or lack of it) towards objectives. What does this say about the assumptions underlying the transmission mechanisms in the ToC/pathway for scaling up? What aspects (assumptions, expected outcomes and links) appear to be stronger/weaker when looking at the results? To what extent can we assume that the outcomes expected at the end of the project will be realized?

Efficiency

- To what extent has the SD=HS-programme been managed efficiently? What measures have been taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used? How do we appraise the efficiency of Oxfam Novib (contract manager) and of the implementing partners as consortium members? Are synergies between members realized through the consortium set-up?
- Given the global scope, thematic expertise and programme implementation, to what extent is the SD=HS team organizational management responsive to the demands of the work? To what extent does the SeedsGROW management facilitate the SD=HS programme management? To what extent is the level of collaboration and coordination within / between the pillars and partners appropriate and efficient ('mean and lean') for reaching maximum synergies and enhancing partner and programme capacity?
- What can be learnt from the organizational challenges SD=HS team faced both internally and in the Oxfam Novib structure and in collaboration with the Global Partner Committee (GPC), also in managing the effects of the budget cuts? Is the governance structure at the GPC effective and accountable?
- Are monitoring and evaluation systems sufficient / efficient for recording and enhancing processes, progress and achievements? How could these be improved?
- What are the recommendations to make the management and governance of SD=HS more effective and accountable?

Relevance

- Have gender and social inclusion been adequately considered in programme design and implementation? To what extent and through what means do partners address perceived and prioritised beneficiary needs? Have adequate measures been taken to assure this?
- What lessons have been learned that would enhance the programme's relevance to these groups?

Sustainability

- To what extent can the results/effects of the programme be expected to be long-lasting and sustainable?
- Are programme efforts adequate for enhancing the long-term sustainability of the programme effects?

Learning

- To what extent has the learning and recommendations from the IFAD internal and external review been followed up? If not, what are the reasons behind this and how could they be taken forward in the programme?
 - To what extent have the consortium partners learned and contributed to the local to global nature of programme and policy implementation of SD=HS?
 - To what extent has the programme succeeded in taking the lesson learnt at local level to global scale?
- What are the major lessons from the progress to 31st December 2016 which should be taken forward for the remainder of the programme (until 31st December 2018)?

4. Scope of the evaluation and approach and methods, establishing the basic methodological requirements

Time period

The period to be covered is 1 October 2013 to 31st of December 2016.

Thematic Coverage

The midterm review will cover all pillars of the SD=HS programme.

Geographical Coverage

The MTR covers programme works at local, national, regional and global level.

Local: specific areas in Vietnam; Laos, Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Peru

National: Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Zimbabwe, Peru

Global: The following institutions and instruments at a global level are influenced

- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)
- Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) & Nagoya Protocol
- International Union on Plant Variety Protection (UPOV)
- Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)
- World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)
- UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- Relevant regional organizations (e.g. ARIPO; SADC; ASEAN)

Please note that the FSE pilot (pillar 2) and former partner CAWR should be included in data collection on issues of governance, efficiency and contract management and their results should be included in the desk review on outcomes. However, given the fact that CAWR does not continue with the SD=HS program, India, Senegal and Mali should not be chosen by the evaluators as countries to do field research. Due to the

different nature of Pillar 2 (enterprise aspects, technical and operational nature of seed production and marketing, specific political economy of Zimbabwe), which would require a particular expertise in the team of evaluators, the FSE pilot in Zimbabwe will be included in the MTR by utilizing the peer reviews of the FSE business model by multi-stakeholders in Zimbabwe and international peers. If Zimbabwe is selected by the evaluators for field research, then evaluators are asked to focus on pillars 1 and 3 in that particular country.

5. Mid Term Review team: qualifications and skills needed

Given that ToR relates to a multifaceted midterm review with case work that has to be conducted in a limited time period, a multidisciplinary team is preferred for conducting the review. We are looking for a team of approximately three members, with competencies as described in the “award criteria” in section 9 of this ToR, plus the following specific expertise :

1. Language: Functional ability to work in Spanish and English with the ability to communicate (written and verbal) clearly and concisely in English.
2. Available to start collecting data during the Global Methodological workshop and the program development Write shop. This will include working outside office hours (evening, weekend).
3. Excellent analytical, writing and synthesis skills
4. Knowledge and use of Code of Ethic mandated by a relevant evaluation society

6. Schedule, budget, logistics and deliverables. Include outline of the evaluation report (*see below*)

Schedule

Contract evaluator signed	31st January
Critical issue: availability of evaluator	
Evaluators start MTR process	1st February
(Global Methodological workshop, opportunity for evaluators)	6-10 February
(Program Development Write shop)	14-17 February
Evaluation framework sent to SD=HS MTR steering group	28th February
Evaluation framework approved by SD=HS MTR steering group (=end phase one)	7 th of March
First draft MTR report presented to SD=HS MTR steering group (=end phase two)	29 th of March
Second version MTR report discussed in SD=HS MTR steering group (=end phase three)	26-27th of April
Final report sent to SD=HS MTR steering group	2d of May
Final report signed off by SD=HS MTR steering group	9 th of May
Final report signed off by SD=HS steering committee	15th of May
SD=HS MTR steering group decides on Management response	29th of May
SD=HS steering committee decides on Management response	
Sida receives final report and Management response	1 st of June
Sida Management response	
Evaluation report posted on websites Sida, SD=HS, Oxfam	Mid June

In order to conduct this review, four phases are envisioned. Below a short description is provided of each of these phases and the related deliverables.

a. Phase one: Inception phase (to be finalized within 4 weeks)

Extensive desk review of available reviews and evaluation reports is conducted and interviews with key staff involved in the programme (all partners). The SD=HS global methodological workshop 6-10 February 2017 as well as the Program Development Write-shop in the subsequent week offer some excellent first opportunities for interviewing partners in pillars 1, 2 and 3.

As such, this phase is concluded when:

- a first inception report is produced by the evaluation team with the first findings of the desk review and interviews;
- the evaluators have developed an evaluation framework and related research proposal which is approved by the SD=HS MTR steering group;

b. Phase two: Data collection (to be finalized within 3 weeks)

This phase mainly concerns conducting research in line with the proposal developed in phase one.

This phase is concluded when a first draft of the midterm review report is drafted -according to the outline provided below- and presented to the SD=HS MTR steering group. Partners who are not in the steering group will verify the findings regarding their own work and react.

c. Phase three: Feedback & consultation (to be finalized in 1 month)

The SD=HS MTR steering group provides a first feedback to the report. Based on this, the evaluators draft a second version of the report. This second version will be tabled for feedback to the Sida representative, a group of SD=HS key staff and partners. The design (methodology) and facilitation of this discussion is the responsibility of the evaluator(s).

d. Phase four: finalization (to be finalized in 1 week)

Based on the feedback of the workshop, the evaluators prepare the third and final draft of the mid-term review report. This may be subject to revision based on feedback from the SD=HS MTR steering group. This phase is concluded when the SD=HS MTR steering group signs off the final midterm evaluation report and issues a management response.

Budget

The budget reserved for the midterm review is 53,000 Euro including VAT and including logistics (e.g. consultants' flights, accommodation etc). The final budget made available is based on the quality of the proposals.

Final Deliverable

The final midterm review report should have the following outline:

1. cover page clearly identifying the report as an evaluation and stating:
 - evaluation title
 - Programme title / affiliate identification code
 - Geographical coverage: global; region; country(ies)
 - date that the evaluation report was finalized
 - evaluator(s) name(s) and logo (if available)
 - Oxfam logo
 - appropriate recognition of institutional donor support.
 - Clear statement in case this report can NOT be used externally
2. Table of contents
3. Glossary
4. List of abbreviations.
5. Executive summary that can be used as a stand-alone document
6. Introduction, stating objectives of the evaluation and evaluation questions
7. The intervention and context
8. Methodology, including an indication of any perceived limitations of the evaluation
9. Presentation of the findings and their analysis
10. Conclusions
11. Learning and Recommendations
12. Appendices:
 - Terms of reference
 - Evaluation program (main features of data and activities carried out).
 - A list of interviewees (name, function and working environment) and places visited.
 - List of documents and bibliography used.
 - Details on composition of evaluation team (names, nationality, expertise, working environment).
 - Link to Methodological appendices:
 - The evaluation proposal
 - Evaluation instruments such as questionnaires and interview guides
 - Pathway research report(s)

7. Evaluation responsibilities and management arrangements

The SD=HS steering committee

- Approving and signing off the Terms of Reference for the MTR
- Approving and signing off on the final report as well as the management response.
- Decision-making in case the SD=HS MTR steering group cannot come to joint decision.

Sida program manager

- Approving and signing off the Terms of Reference for the MTR and the final report
- Deciding –with SD=HS MTR steering group- on the consultant/agency to be selected for the assignment;
- Sida will respond on specific findings and recommendations of the evaluators toward Sida as donor.

The SD=HS MTR steering group (see composition on page 1) takes care of:

- Advising –with the commissioning manager- to SD=HS steering committee and to Sida on the consultant/agency to be selected for the MTR, following Oxfam Novib procurement policy;
- taking care of a proper briefing of the consultant;
- introducing the consultant to the internal stakeholders to be interviewed
- reviewing the draft report and providing feedback
- Advise commissioning manager in formulating management response
- Advise SD=HS steering committee on signing off on the final report as well as the management response.

Partners

- Advising the SD=HS steering committee on the Terms of Reference

The commissioning manager takes care of:

- drafting the ToR and finalising it based on input Sida, partners;
- together with the procurement specialist organising the selection procedure of the evaluator;
- assuring the issuing of the contract and fulfilling the contractual obligations (when positively advised by the SD=HS MTR steering group);
- serving as contact point for the consultant for any issue related to the assignment;
- co-reading forthcoming reports and advising the SD=HS MTR steering group thereon;
- drafting the management response on behalf of Oxfam Novib.

The procurement specialist takes care of:

- ensuring accountability and transparency of the selection of the consultant in line with prevailing procurement regulations (Oxfam Novib) applicable to this assignment.

Co-readers

- The Co-readers will provide technical advice to the SD=HS MTR steering group and commissioning manager (methodological proposal, report).

8. Dissemination strategy, plan and responsibilities for sharing and using the findings.

The findings of the evaluation will be shared with partners, donors and relevant Oxfam affiliates and country offices. The document will be made public on both the Oxfam and Sida website. It will be for the partner's discretion if they share the evaluation with their communities in which they work, but they will be encouraged to do so.

Within the SeedsGROW programme itself and the SD=HS component, the findings will be used to inform programme development and planning for the remaining years, as well as organizational and programme learning, accountability and advocacy. Following the completion of the mid-term evaluation a management response to the findings and recommendations will be developed. This will include an action plan for addressing the prioritized findings including the programme development initiatives.

9. Process of the selection of the evaluator or evaluation team and expectations for evaluation proposal

This procurement procedure is organised to contract the service of the midterm review of the SD=HS programme. After careful consideration and pre-selection, a selection of potential suppliers is asked to take part in the competitive negotiated procedure for the above mentioned contract. These potential suppliers are asked to make a bid based in the administrative criteria and award criteria mentioned below. These bids are assessed on their compliance, quality and price. The contract will in principle be awarded to the organisation with the economically most advantageous bid. This means that not only the price, but all award criteria will be taken into consideration. Oxfam Novib withholds the right to conduct interviews with one or more potential suppliers before an award decision is made. Purpose of the interview is to seek further clarification on the submitted bids and learn more about the background and previous experiences of the potential suppliers and their teams.

Oxfam invites bids from individuals and groups of individuals with the experience and skills as referred to above. The bid must include the documents listed in the table stating the administrative criteria.

Bids should be titled 'Mid Term Review SD=HS programme' and sent to Cindy O'Regan (cindy.oregan@oxfamnovib.nl) and received no later than 5pm CET January 16th. Short-listed candidates will be contacted and invited for an interview in the two following weeks.

Please address questions for clarification to Cindy O'Regan. Deadline for request for any clarifications from Oxfam is January 2^d 5pm CET. Last date on which clarifications are issued by Oxfam January 3^d 5pm CET

Selection and assessment

The assessment of the quotations will start with an assessment of the administrative criteria, which are all Knock-out criteria. That means that if these criteria aren't met in your quotation, this quotation will be put aside and the award criteria of this quotation will not be assessed.

The quotations that meet the administrative criteria will be assessed against the award criteria. The award criteria are assessed according to the following distribution of points.

Criteria	
Administrative criteria	Knock out (KO)
Quotation received from a team of consultants	KO
Quotation received within deadline	KO
A set of documents is provided including the following: 1. A cover letter of no more than 3 pages introducing the evaluator(s) and how the skills and competencies described above are met, with concrete examples as appropriate. Please also use this cover letter to indicate evaluator/evaluation team's availability at critical periods. 2. A maximum 2-page budget covering all major anticipated costs. 3. A CV detailing relevant skills and experience of no more than 4 pages, including contactable referees, for each member of the evaluation team. 4. One example per evaluator of a relevant previous evaluation that is comparable in content, time and money. 5. A document describing your proposed methodological approach and organization of the evaluation including a schedule of activities	KO
Copy of the registration with the Chamber of Commerce	KO
Award criteria:	Max. Points
Experience in conducting evaluations of NGO-led, multi stakeholder agricultural programmes including indigenous peoples and smallholder farmers and the	20

development of plant genetic diversity for food and nutrition security	
Significant experience in evaluating governance and efficiency in cooperation, also in a network/con-federal setting.	15
Demonstrable experience and expertise in multi-site, international evaluations. Particularly experience in evaluations in East Asia (Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar), East Africa (Zimbabwe), and South America (Peru).	10
Excellent knowledge of and experience in NGO-led programming and policy work – including both public communications and policy/advocacy strategies. Experience in conducting evaluations on international influencing and related methodologies.	15
Adequacy and feasibility of the evaluation methodology proposed (in relation to the analysis required for responding to the MTR's key questions)	20
Value for money.	20
Total (100%)	100

If necessary, interviews will be organised with the two suppliers with the highest scoring quotations. Purpose of the interview is to seek further clarification on the submitted quotations and learn more about the background and previous experiences of proposed consultants and their competencies. After the interviews the total points scored on the award criteria can be reassessed.

Disclaimers

Oxfam Novib may require the supplier to clarify its quotation and/or provide supporting documentation. However the supplier may not modify its quotation after the deadline for submission of quotations mentioned above.

Oxfam Novib reserves the right to stop the purchase procedure completely or partly, temporarily or permanently until the moment of contract signing. In these situations suppliers are not entitled to reimbursement of any costs or damages incurred in connection with this purchase procedure.

Quotations should be valid for at least three months after the deadline for handing in quotations mentioned above.

Oxfam Novib cannot be charged in any way for costs related to preparation and submission of a quotation. This can also include interviews and/or providing further information about the quotation.

The risk of any costs and/or damages which may arise by not awarding this contract to a supplier lay solely with the supplier. Oxfam Novib cannot be held responsible for any such costs or damages.

By submitting a quotation the Supplier agrees all the terms and conditions specified in this procedure and the provisions of the contract template. The quotation will not contain any reservation(s) to these terms and conditions. A quotation with one or more reservations can be excluded from the procedure.

ANNEXE 2: LIST OF THE PERSONS INTERVIEWED

*Resources persons interviewed in the Netherlands*⁶³

Name	Function	Working environment	Location of interview/contact
Karen Biesbrouck	Evaluation commissioning manager	ONL	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Maarten De Vuyst	SEEDS GROW interim Programme Leader	ONL	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Gigi Manicad	Senior Programme Manager	ONL	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Anita Dohar	Programme expert team, in charge of pillar 1	ONL	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Dawn Ng	Programme expert team, in charge of pillar 2	ONL	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Sanne Bakker	Programme expert team, in charge of pillar 3	ONL	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Bram de Jonge	Programme expert team, in charge of pillar 4	ONL	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Diane Langedijk	Head of programme finance and administration	ONL	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Lalith Bhandary	Financial programme officer	ONL	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Cindy O'Regan	Administration programme officer	ONL	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Rene Salazar	Technical operations advisor	Advisor	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Bert Visser	Scientific advisor	Advisor	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Hélène Botreau	ANDES programme manager and Lead Researcher	ANDES	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Sara Argumedo Gomez	ANDES research and program assistant	ANDES	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Ricardo Pacco Chipa	ANDES field coordinator	ANDES	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Andrew Mushita	CTDT programme director	CTDT	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Hilton Mbozi	CTDT assistant programme	CTDT	The Hague,

⁶³ Some of the resource persons interviewed in the Netherlands have later on been interviewed again, either during the field visits either via Skype.

Name	Function	Working environment	Location of interview/contact
	coordinator		Headquarters of ONL
Mercy Mupfumi	CTDT programme nutritionist	CTDT	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Sakile Kudita	CTDT seed expert	CTDT	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Nori Ignacio	Programme support staff for Asia	Searice	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Vu Dang Toan	Researcher	PRC (Vietnam)	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Huynh Quang Tin	Head of department	MDDRI	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Siviengkherk Phommalth	Researcher	NAFRI	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Gum Sha Aung,	National programme coordinator	Metta	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Maung Khae	Project coordinator	Metta	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL
Pat Mooney	Executive director	ETC Group	The Hague, Headquarters of ONL

Resource persons interviewed during Peru field visit

Name	Function	Working environment	Location of interview/contact
Alejandro Argumedo,	Program director	ANDES Staff, SD=HS GPC and Pillar 4	ANDES Office Cusco
Hernan Oscar Ramos Cardenas	Agronomist SD=HS, Lares	ANDES Staff, SD=HS Pillar 1	ANDES Office Cusco Field Visits 21-23/03/2017
Hélène Botreau	Program Manager and Lead Researcher Sd=HS	ANDES Staff	ANDES Office Cusco, ANDES Office Lares, Field Visits 21-23/03/2017
Sara Argumedo Gomez	Research and Program Assistant SD=HS	ANDES Staff	ANDES Office Cusco, ANDES Office Lares
Ricardo Pacco Chipa	Field coordinator SD=HS	ANDES Staff	ANDES Office Lares
Ing. Ladislao Palomino Flores	Researcher, Investigador del Programa Nacional de Innovación en Papa del INIA	Instituto Nacional de Innovación Agraria Estación Experimental Agraria Andenes Cusco INIA – Peru	INIA Office Cusco
Milton Hidalgo	Researcher	CIP, International Potato Center	ANDES Office Cusco

Name	Function	Working environment	Location of interview/contact
Comunidades Potato Park: Laguna de Paru Paru	FFS and local stakeholders (+local technician) of Pillar 1 + presentation of the work done within the framework of the implementation of the Seed Multiplication Center and the PPB done in the FFS in the Potato Park	FFS participants Parque de la Papa, Pillar 1	ANDES representatives: Hélène and Oscar
Comunidad Pampacorral	FFS and local stakeholders (+local technician) of Pillar 1 and pillar 3	FFS participants Parque Chalakuy, Pillar 1 and Pillar 3	ANDES representatives : Hélène and Oscar
Comunidad annex Ñusta Pakana	FFS and local stakeholders (+local technician) of Pillar 1 and pillar 3	FFS participants Parque Chalakuy, Pillar 1 and Pillar 3	ANDES representatives : Hélène and Oscar
Comunidad Ccachín + members of comunidad Rosaspata	FFS and local stakeholders (+local technician) of Pillar 1 and pillar 3	FFS participants Parque Chalakuy, Pillar 1 and Pillar 3	ANDES representatives : Hélène and Oscar
Comunidad Choquecancha	FFS and local stakeholders (+local technician) of Pillar 1 and pillar 3	FFS participants Parque Chalakuy, Pillar 1 and Pillar 3	ANDES representatives : Hélène and Oscar
Workshop Presentation Results Baseline Study Pillar 3 on NUS in Parque Chalakuy			Parque Chalakuy
Participation in the Biocultural festival in Lares			Lares

Persons interviewed during Zimbabwe field visit

Name	Function	Working environment	Location of interview/contact
Joseph Mushonga	Deputy Director	CTDT	Briefing – Debriefing
Andrew Mushita	Director	CTDT	Debriefing – Interview
Patrick Kasasa	Program Manager	CTDT	Briefing – Debriefing - Interview
Hilton Mbozi	Assistant Program Manager	CTDT	Briefing – Debriefing – interview during fieldvisit
Tisashe	M/E (MEAL)	CTDT	Briefing – Debriefing
Sakile Kudita	Seeds Expert	CTDT	Briefing – Debriefing - Workshop
Sipire Marjengaz,	Ass. Program Manager	CTDT	Briefing – Debriefing – Workshop

Mercy Mupini,	Nutritionist	CTDT	Briefing – Debriefing - Workshop
Martin Cammunoraz	Breeder	CTDT	Briefing – Debriefing – Workshop
Dumisani Kutwayo	Director Crops Research	Crop Breeding Institute –	Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanization & Irrigation Development
Claud Mujaju	Head Seed Services	Seed Services	
Kudzai Kuseng	Head National Genebank of Zimbabwe	Department National Gen Bank	
Emmanuel Mashonjowa	Head of Department, Associate Professor Agricultural Meteorology	Department Agricultural Meteorology	University of Zimbabwe Agricultural Meteorology and Food and Nutrition Sciences
Juliet Gwenzi,	Lecturer, Phd Student	Physics Department	
Eunice Mungwariri	Extension worker	Agritex	2 meetings in Goromonzi District
Blessing Maprie	Extension worker	Agritex	
Tony Mazadra	Extension worker	Agritex	
9 women and 1 man of Shandai	Members FFS	Shandai	
15 women - 5 men of Gondo	Members FFS	Gondo	
Tatenda Mebistanze	Field officer	CTDT	
16 women and 8 men of Patsika	Members FFS	Patsika	2 meetings in UMP District
16 women and 14 men of Zunznya	Members FFS	Zunznya	
Sarah Kwangwari	Extension worker	Agritex	
Edward Maposa	Field officer	CTDT	
Isaac Zuiriro	Head of District Agricultural Extension Offices	District Agricultural Extension Offices	UMP District
Edward Maposa	Extension worker	(Agritex)	
Onia Katsande	farmer seed producer for Seed Enterprise “Champions Seeds”	Farmer Field Day	UMP District
Ms and Mr Chabuka	Owners of the field		
Saineti Owen	Extension worker	Agritex	Meeting with FFS pillar 3 UMP District
Kuziwa Loice	Extension worker	Agritex	
Sengai James	Extension worker	Agritex	
Chimbwanda Dzingai	Extension worker	Agritex	
Javangwe Distance	Extension worker	Agritex	

Group of women and men of 5 villages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BCD FFS - Patikai - Mashambanhaka - Mugayi - Zorai 	members FFS pillar 3	Chomazumba Hall, Dyora village	
Workshop with representatives of: (i) FFS from all 4 Districts: Tsholotsho, Chiredzi, UMP, Goromonzi; (ii) representatives of Government Departments, (iii) staff of CTD, (iv) NGO's FACHIG and Dabane Trust, (v) Agritex			CTDT – Harare

Resource persons interviewed during South Vietnam field visit

Name	Function	Working environment	Location of interview/contact
Huynh Quang Tin	Head of department	MDDRI	Can Tho
Nguyen Hong Cuc	Staff member	MDDRI	Can Tho
15 farmers (of which 5 women)	Member	FFS	Vi Tan village, Hậu Giang province
14 farmers (of which 4 women)	Member	FFS	Nhơn Nghĩa A village, Hậu Giang province
Hung	Staff	District plant protection station	Hậu Giang
Tam	Village extension worker	District agricultural office	Hậu Giang
Dung	Lead farmer	FFS	Hậu Giang
Hieng	Staff	District plant protection station	Hậu Giang
27 farmers (of which 10 women)	Member	FFS	Bình Mỹ village, An Giang province
Nguyen	Vice director	District agricultural extension centre	Chau Phu, An Giang province
Tam	Staff	District agricultural extension centre	Chau Phu, An Giang province
Hao	Local technician	District agricultural extension centre	Chau Phu, An Giang province
Tuah	Head of extension station	District agricultural extension centre	Chau Phu, An Giang province
Tai	Representative local authorities	Chau Phu district authority	Chau Phu, An Giang province
Tuyet	Local technician	District agricultural extension centre	Chau Phu, An Giang province
6 farmers (all men)	Members	Seed club	Thaan My Tay, Chau Phu, An Giang province
Nguyen Binh My	Director	Seed company	Mỹ Phú Village, Chau Pu, An Giang province
Huỳnh Đào Nguyên	Staff	Agr-Extension Center of An Giang	Can Tho
Phan Thành Tâm	Staff	Agr-Extension Center of An Giang	Can Tho

Trần Văn Hào	Staff	Agr-Extension station of Chau Phu district-AG	Can Tho
Võ Tùng Tài	Staff	People's committee of Binh Mỹ village-Chau Phu district-AG	Can Tho
Ngô Nam Thạnh	Staff	Seed center of Sóc Trăng	Can Tho
Phạm Thị Kim Xuân	Staff	Seed center of Sóc Trăng	Can Tho
Ngô Thanh Liêm	Staff	Plant Protection Station at Mỹ Xuyên district-ST	Can Tho
Quách Kim Toàn	Staff	People's committee of Long Phu village-Long phu district-ST	Can Tho
Hồ Mỹ Hiền	Staff	Plant protection department of Hau Giang	Can Tho
Lâm Văn Hùng	Staff	Plant Protection Station at Châu Thành A district-HG	Can Tho
Võ văn Hai	Staff	People's committee of Nhơn Nghĩa A village-Châu Thành A district - HG	Can Tho
Nguyễn Hoàng Khải	Staff	MDDR	Can Tho
Nguyễn Hồng Cúc	Staff	MDDR	Can Tho
Nguyễn Hồng Tín	Staff	MDDR	Can Tho
Huỳnh Quang Tín	Staff	MDDR	Can Tho

Resource persons interviewed during North Vietnam field visit

Name	Function	Working environment	Location of interview/contact
Vu Dang Toan (PhD)	Head of Research Planning and International Cooperation Department	Plant Resources Center, MARD	Hanoi
Vu Van Tung	In charge of international cooperation	Plant Resources Center, MARD	Hanoi
Tuong	Assistant	Plant Resources Center, MARD	Hanoi
Hai	Head of Food Crop Division	MARD	Hanoi
Vuong	Country responsible for Food Security	MARD	Hanoi
Le Thanh Hai	Vice Director	People's Committee	Vi Xuyen, Ha Giang

Name	Function	Working environment	Location of interview/contact
		Vi Xuyen district	province
Ng Thi Huong	Vice Director and programme manager	District Agriculture and Rural Development Department	Vi Xuyen, Ha Giang province
Ha Thi Huyen Huong	Programme officer	District Agriculture and Rural Development Department	Vi Xuyen, Ha Giang province
6 farmers (5 women)	FFS member	Ngoc Minh commune	Toong village, Ngoc Minh commune, Vi Xuyen, Ha Giang province
3 women farmers	FFS member	Bac Ngoc commune	Toong village, Ngoc Minh commune, Vi Xuyen, Ha Giang province
5 women farmers	FFS member	Linh Ho commune	Toong village, Ngoc Minh commune, Vi Xuyen, Ha Giang province
2 women farmers	FFS member	Ngoc Linh commune	Toong village, Ngoc Minh commune, Vi Xuyen, Ha Giang province

Resource persons interviewed during Laos field visit

Name	Function	Working environment	Location of interview/contact
Chay Bounphanousa	Deputy Director	NAFRI	Vientiane
Chantakone Boualaphane	Director	ARC	Vientiane
Bounsou Soudmal	Central project coordinator	Department of Agriculture	Vientiane
Anoma Chantakong	Finance and Administration officer	NAFRI	Vientiane
Bounsouang Vansy	Head	DAFO Salakham	Salakham
Lienthong Sisoulit	Provincial project coordinator	PAFO Vientiane	Salakham
Douangpi Chanthavansin	District coordinator	DAFO Salakham	Salakham
Sinthalongkone Vorachit	Technician for Rural Development Unit	DAFO Salakham	Salakham
Saengthavi Ounkham	Agriculture extension staff	DAFO Salakham	Salakham
Souliya Phansilit	Agricultural technician	DAFO Salakham	Salakham
Souphaphong	Agricultural technician	DAFO Salakham	Salakham
14 farmers (12 women)	Member	FFS	Nakang village

12 farmers (4 women)	Member	FFS	Phon Ngam village
14 farmers (3 women)	Member	FFS	Nasomboun village
Sengphet	Agricultural technician	DAFO Sayboully province	Nasomboun village
Phonpaseuth	Agricultural technician	DAFO Sayboully province	Nasomboun village
Lamphone	Provincial technician	PAFO Vientiane province	Nasomboun village
Phetkeo Asavong	District coordinator in village cluster	District Health Office of Salakham	Nasomboun village
Phokham Sengdalay	District coordinator in village cluster	District Cabinet Office of Salakham	Nasomboun village
Phonmany Souvanthong	Agriculture technician	DAFO Sayaboully	Nasomboun village
Bounmy Phomphiphak	Agriculture technician	DAFO Sayaboully	Nasomboun village
Phonphet Oudomixay	Grassroot officer	District Cabinet Office of Salakham	Nasomboun village
Thanousay Akanphout	Grassroot officer	District Cabinet Office of Salakham	Nasomboun village

Other resource persons interviewed

Name	Function	Working environment	Location of interview/contact
Alvaro Toledo	Staff, IT-PGRFA	FAO	Via Skype
Dan Leskein	Senior Liaison Officer Secretariat of the PGRFA Commission	FAO	Via Skype
Niels Louwaars	Managing Director	Plantum	Via Skype
Sonia Csorgo	Director Intellectual Property and Legal Affairs	European Seed Association	Via Skype
Henk Hobbelink	Staff member	GRAIN	Via Skype
Chee Yoke Ling	Legal Advisor	TWN	Via Skype
Viviana Munoz	Coordinator Development, Innovation and Intellectual Property Programme	South Centre	Via Skype
Carl Lachat	Professor, Department of Food Safety and Food Quality, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering	University of Gent	Gent
Olivier Honnay	Professor, Ecology, Evolution and Biodiversity conservation	University of Leuven	Leuven
Jessica Raneri	Nutrition research specialist	Bioversity International	Skype

ANNEXE 3: MAIN EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

The following pages include the key evaluation instruments used by the MTR team:

- *the evaluation framework*, which is the overarching document that has been drafted on the basis of the evaluation questions in the TOR and has provided the basis for the other evaluation instruments;
- *the field data collection sheet* that has constituted the main document used during the field visits;
- *the interview protocols used for :*
 - implementing partners (used prior to the fieldwork)
 - consortium partners (used both before and after the field visits)
 - advocacy targets

Annex 3.1: Evaluation framework

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case	Expert panel
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTDT, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTDT, ANDES, Sea- rice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS repre- sentatives (women and men)	Direct bene- ficiaries - FFS (women and men)	study analysis	
FINDINGS/FACTORS TO BE EXPLAINED												
1. RELEVANCE AND APPROPRIATENESS												
<i>1.1 Inclusion of beneficiary needs in programme design</i>												
• to which extent does the programme proposal address the perceived and prioritised beneficiary needs of IPSHF, in particular women?	X					X	X					
<i>1.2 Inclusion of beneficiary needs in programme implementation</i>												
• is programme implementation addressing the perceived and prioritised beneficiary needs of IPSHF, in particular women? Have specific measures been undertaken to reach out to these intended beneficiaries? Does the programme know the socio-economic status of those effectively reached?	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		
• what is the quality of inclusion and participation of the IPSHF (women in particular) in programme implementation (their participation and voice in key decision making processes, inclusion of their priorities, ...)? Have specific measures been taken to ensure quality participation of IPSHF (women in particular)?	X	X					X		X	X		
<i>1.3 Lessons learned and recommendations related to relevance and appropriateness</i>												
• what lessons can be learned that can enhance the programme's relevance for its intended beneficiaries, including women and socially excluded groups?			(X)	(X)		(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)			
• what are the main recommendations for improvement related to relevance and appropriateness?			(X)	(X)		(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)			

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case study analysis	Expert panel
			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTDT, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTDT, ANDES, Sea- rice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS repre- sentatives (women and men)	Direct bene- ficiaries - FFS (women and men)		
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators												
2. EFFICIENCY												
2.1 Effectiveness and accountability of the programme's governance structure (GPC)												
• are there reference documents describing the GPC's role, position and procedures? Are these documents of good quality and comprehensive? Are partners aware of the GPCs role and position; do they agree with these?	X		X	X		X	X					
• is the GPC adhering to that role, position and procedures?	X		X	X		X	X					
• what is the quality of GPC governance? Do they intervene when it is needed? Do partners know about the GPC functioning and key decisions and what is their view about these and the GPC performance in general?	X		X	X		X	X					
2.2 Quality of the programme implementation structure												
• are the role, tasks and position of consortium partners clearly described? Is this description of good quality and comprehensive? Do consortium partners know each other's role and tasks? What do they think about the programme set-up?	X		X			X	X					
• are consortium partners adhering to their role, tasks and position?	X		X			X	X					
• are the role, tasks and position of local partners clearly described? Is this description of good quality and adhered to? (to be addressed in Asia only)	X		X			X	X					
• how does Oxfam Novib implements its double role and task (as funder and implementer)? How do the other partners feel about it? Is there an adequate balance? What are its advantages and disadvantages?			X	X		X	X					
• how adequate and relevant is the overall programme structure in view of its characteristics (4 pillars, 5 countries, 8 consortium partners at this moment, and more countries and partners before) and objectives?			X	X		X						

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case study analysis	Expert panel
			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTD, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTD, ANDES, Searice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS representatives (women and men)	Direct beneficiaries - FFS (women and men)		
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators												
2.3 Quality of programme management and implementation (content wise)												
• what is the quality of the programme's intervention logic and logical framework, and of the underlying (implicit of explicit) TOC (as evidenced in the logical framework and other key documents)?	X		X			X	X					
• is the intervention logic understood correspondingly by the partners and at the local level; in case of deviations, what is their rationale and how do they influence the programme's overall coherence and efficiency?	X		X			X	X					
• what is the quality of implementation of programme activities and level of responsiveness to the work demands (to be assessed via tools and approaches being used, interaction/coordination between ON team, consortium partners and local teams and between local teams and local stakeholders in particular FFS, relevance and quality of inputs from ON team, ...)	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
• how is the M&E system set up and implemented? What is its quality: its linkage with planning, organisational set-up, the quality and quantity of its human and financial resources, involvement of other stakeholders in M&E, linkage with learning and planning, ...?	X		X			X	X		X			
2.4 Adequacy and quality of the farming field school approach												
• is the FFS an adequate approach in view of the SD=HS objectives, in particular the programme's willingness to target IPSHF, in particular women)? What farmers effectively participate in the FFS?	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		
• are facilitators/extension workers capable and motivated to adopt and apply the participatory learning and empowering approach of FFS (and e.g. facilitating the bridging scientific and traditional knowledge work in practice?	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		
• are FFS adequately supported (timeliness and relevance of support, adequacy of tools and communication, leadership development, ...)?	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case study analysis	Expert panel
			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTDT, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTDT, ANDES, Sea- rice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS repre- sentatives (women and men)	Direct bene- ficiaries - FFS (women and men)		
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators												
• is programme support in line with FFS' needs and priorities; do FFS undertake other activities (with or without programme support)?	X		X			X	X	X	X	X		
• is the FFS approach and pedagogy empowering; what are its strengths and weaknesses in this regard? Is it responsive to the high level of diversity among IPSHF (including women)?	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		
• what are the effects of FFS in terms of empowerment, contribution to bio-diversity and higher yields and income?	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X		
• how do FFS relate to the communities where they are active; is there diffusion to neighbouring farmers; if so, how big is their multiplier effect ?	X		X			X	X	X	X			
2.5 Quality of programme management and implementation (management activities; HQ and partner level)												
• does the programme dispose of adequate financial rules, procedures and tools and these are these well known and understood by the partners, and adequately applied and adhered to?	X		X			X	X					
• does the programme (including the partners) succeed to attract and keep qualified personnel?	X		X			X	X					
• does the programme dispose of and nurture a positive working climate and culture (genuine participation, openness for alternative views, focus on exchange and learning, ...)	X		X			X	X					
• does the SeedsGROW management facilitate the SD=HS management adequately?			X			X						
2.6 The consortium set-up, functioning and added value												
• is the nature and functioning of the consortium of good quality (clear and congruent vision and goals in line with the members' interests, mutual trust and respect, balanced participation and 'give and take', functioning not too strict, not too tight, adequate management (facilitation, maintenance of dynamics and trust,	X		X	X	X	X	X				(X(

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case	Expert panel
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTDT, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTDT, ANDES, Sea- rice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS repre- sentatives (women and men)	Direct bene- ficiaries - FFS (women and men)	study analysis	
good communication and interaction, regular face-to-face contact and exchange, no over dependence on few members/individuals)?												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> does the consortium succeed to create synergies: <i>up-scaling</i>: upgrading the members' performance via collective action and sharing; <i>up-streaming</i>: adoption of alternative approaches, new ways of understanding and intervening; <i>up-shifting</i>: being heard/influencing at higher levels (quantitative and qualitative dimension) 	X		X	X		X	X				(X)	
2.7 The budget cut and the break with CAWR												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> did the programme management and partners succeed in dealing adequately with the budget cut: clarity of the issues at hand, quality of the consultation and decision making process, level of fairness of the decisions taken (incl. to finish P4 one year earlier), concern to minimize impact on the ground, quality of mitigation efforts, ... 	X		X			X	X					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the break with CAWR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to which extent was this the consequence of a transparent, fair and logic process? Could/should the break have been avoided? What was the influence of the budget cut on this process? how was the break communicated (in terms of process and result) to the consortium partners? To which extent did it affect the relationships among the partners, the programme culture, the overall programme's efficiency? What were the effects on the ground? 	X (?)					X	X					
2.8 Learning and cross fertilization (some overlap with some questions above)												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is learning in-built in the programme (part of programme culture), as evidenced by the existence of exchange practices and cross fertilization, a culture of sharing and dialogue, use of local knowledge, ...? 	X	X	X			X					X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> were the results of IFAD internal and external review followed up and led these to programme improvements? If so, how; if not, why? 	X		X	X		X						

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case study analysis	Expert panel
			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTDT, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTDT, ANDES, Sea- rice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS repre- sentatives (women and men)	Direct bene- ficiaries - FFS (women and men)		
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators												
• did/do the consortium partners learn from other partners and were they able to support other partners in their learning processes (within the same pillar and across pillars); how did learning take place most significantly; good and less successful practices?	X			X		X						
• did/do the consortium partners succeed in translating learning into changed behaviour and practices?			X	X		X		(X)			X	X
2.9 Lessons learned and recommendations related to efficiency												
• what are the recommendations to make the management and governance of SD=HS more effective and accountable?												
• what can be learned from the organizational challenges the SD=HS team faced both internally and in the ON structure and in collaboration with the GPC, also in managing the effects of the budget cuts?												
• what can be learned from the CAWR experience? Should anything be done to mitigate the negative impacts?												
• what can be learned from the programme's attempt to find a balance between developing uniform frameworks, approaches and outputs and the (recognized) need for local specificity (in terms of approach, priorities, ...)? What can be learned from the present practice in terms of cross-fertilization between partners and pillars?												
• what are the main lessons related to the programmes' efforts to combine scientific with local knowledge?												
3. EFFECTIVENESS												
3.1 What are the key accomplishments (progress to outcomes) so far related to pillar 1 (adaptive capacities of IPSFH in seed conservation, access and sustainable use by scaling-up innovative and engendered models of biodiversity)												

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case study analysis	Expert panel
			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTDT, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTDT, ANDES, Sea- rice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS repre- sentatives (women and men)	Direct bene- ficiaries - FFS (women and men)		
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators												
<i>management). What is the specific added value of each partner in this regard?</i>												
• what can be said of the programme's outreach – in terms of FFS and individuals (IPSHF, in particular women) effectively reached? Is there actually a need to scale up; what did the programme actually achieve so far in terms of up-scaling?	X		X			X	X	X	X			
• since the start of the programme, were IPSHF (in particular women) capacities enhanced (scaled up) to develop and implement innovative PGR adaptation strategies, concepts and tools, and were traditional and scientific knowledge and a gender perspective integrated (see indicators in LF)? Are the up-scaling results convincing?	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	
• did the programme manage to increase access to PGR for IPSHF and for women in particular (see indicators in LF)?	X					X	X	X	X	X		
• did the programme introduce participatory plant breeding and IPSHF (in particular women) adaptation strategies in a gender sensitive way in key relevant institutions (see indicators in LF)?	X					X	X	X	X		X	
• do IPSHF (in particular women) since the programme start contribute to relevant policy changes at local, national and global level (thanks to the capacity building by the programme) (see indicators in LF) (can also be addressed under 3.5)	X					X	X	X	X		(X)	(X)
• are there any other achievements related to pillar 1 that were not intended (positive and/or negative)?	X	X				X	X		X			
3.2 What are the key accomplishments (progress to outcomes) so far related to pillar 2 (to enhance the livelihoods and seeds security by IPSHF by producing and marketing good quality and diversity of seeds through PPP) ? What is the specific added value of each partner in this regard?												
• Do the pilot farmer seed enterprises have the potential to contribute to IPSHF's (in particular women's) reliable access to diverse, good quality and locally adapted	X											

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case study analysis	Expert panel
			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTDT, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTDT, ANDES, Sea- rice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS repre- sentatives (women and men)	Direct bene- ficiaries - FFS (women and men)		
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators												
seeds (see indicators in LF) (<i>only Zimbabwe</i>)												
• Do IPHSF (in particular women), private sector, governments and CSOs have access to lessons and advice from SDHS' FSE experience so far (see indicators in LF)? (can also be addressed under 3.5)	X					X	X	X	X			
• were there any other achievements related to pillar 2 that were not intended (positive and/or negative)?	X					X	X	X	X			
3.3 What are the key accomplishments (progress to outcomes) so far related to pillar 3 (to empower women to reclaim their role in food security through strengthening their capacity in seeds management and nutrition and global policy engagement to claim their rights to food) ? What is the specific added value of each partner in this regard?												
• (since the programme start) have women farmers been empowered to enhance their knowledge, access and use of bio-diverse sources of nutrition, contributing to building stronger seed systems of important nutritional crops (NUS) for household food security (see indicators in LF)	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	
• (since the programme start) did women farmers share their gained knowledge and innovative bio-diverse nutrition strategies, concepts and tools with other communities (see indicators in LF)	X					X	X	X	X			
• (since the programme start) did women farmers' knowledge and contribution serve as catalysts of international awareness on biodiversity based diets, and did they increase their engagement in policy dialogue on claiming the Right to Food (see indicators in LF) (can also be addressed under 3.5)	X					X	X	X	X		X	
• are there any other achievements related to pillar 3 that were not intended (positive and/or negative)?	X	X	X			X	X		X		X	
3.4 What are the key accomplishments (progress to outcomes) so far related to pillar 4 (to strengthen the capacities and knowledge base of developing countries and their IPSHF to secure national and global legislation and policies												

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case study analysis	Expert panel
			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTDT, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTDT, ANDES, Sea- rice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS repre- sentatives (women and men)	Direct bene- ficiaries - FFS (women and men)		
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators												
<i>for the full implementation of Farmers' Rights and the Right to Food) ? What is the specific added value of each partner in this regard?</i>												
• (since the programme start) did knowledge and capacities of stakeholders improve to influence national and international policies, aimed at improving PGR governance, facilitating innovation and cooperation in farmers' seed systems, increasing farmers' freedoms to operate, thus contributing to the right to food (see indicators in LF)	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
• (since the programme start) did (programme induced) changes in national and international agendas, policies and practices enhance farmers' freedom to operate, positively strengthen innovation in plant breeding and promote plant genetic diversity and Farmers' Rights, contributing to the Right to Food (see indicators in LF)	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
• are there any other achievements related to pillar 4 that were not intended (positive and/or negative)?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	(X)
3.5 What are the key accomplishments (progress to outcomes) so far related to the programme's efforts to link the lessons learned at local level with the global nature and policy change objectives of the programme? (can also be addressed under 3.1 --> 3.4)												
• do IPHSF (in particular women) since the programme start contribute to relevant policy changes at local, national and global level (thanks to the capacity building by the programme) (see indicators in LF) (can also be addressed under 3.1)	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		(X)	(X)
• Do IPHSF (in particular women), private sector, governments and CSOs have access to lessons and advice from SDHS' FSE experience so far (see indicators in LF)? (can also be addressed under 3.5)	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
• (since the programme start) did women farmers' knowledge and contribution serve as catalysts of international awareness on biodiversity based diets, and did they increase their engagement in policy dialogue on claiming the Right to Food	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case study analysis	Expert panel
			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTDT, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTDT, ANDES, Sea- rice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS repre- sentatives (women and men)	Direct bene- ficiaries - FFS (women and men)		
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators												
(see indicators in LF) (can also be addressed under 3.3)												
3.6 Key lessons learned and recommendations related to the programme achievements												
• what can be learned from the key programme achievements to date ?												
• what are the reasons behind the progress (or lack of progress) towards objectives? What does it say about the underlying assumptions and TOC; to what extent can we assume that the outcomes expected at the end of the programme will be realized?												
<p>• what can be done to further enhance the effectiveness of the programme – consider in this regard (among others):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the balance between objectives/considerations related to bio-diversity (with often an embedded long-term focus) and local needs and priorities focused on (rather short-term) food security and welfare considerations - the balance/interplay between scientifically grounded approaches and more pragmatic development approaches - the balance between the focus on plant genetic resources (to ensure depth and quality) and understanding the interplay between PGR and other elements of the farming system that are key to achieving higher level objectives), ... - the interplay between the four pillars - the requirements to make of SD=HS a truly global programme 												
EXPLANATORY FACTORS												
1. Contextual factors												

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case study analysis	Expert panel
			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTDT, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTDT, ANDES, Sea- rice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS repre- sentatives (women and men)	Direct bene- ficiaries - FFS (women and men)		
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators												
• did agro-ecological factors (soil characteristics, rainfall patterns, in particular climatic change, ...) affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?	X	X				X	X		X			
• did agro-economic factors (cropping patterns, existing farming practices including local knowledge and skills, land ownership and security, relative importance of agricultural sector, drivers for change related to land occupation and farming practices, balance between food and cash crops,); affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?	X					X	X	X	X			
• did socio-economic factors (task division and decision making mechanisms at household level, existence and effectiveness of social institutions at grassroots level, migration patterns, role of private sector actors, ...; internationally: evolutions in the seed sector and agricultural sector in general) affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?	X	X				X	X		X			
• did institutional factors (role and influence of government institutions and their policies with regard to rural development, including of technical departments, role of other development actors, ...) affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?	X					X	X	X	X			
• did social factors (level of social differentiation, existing values and attitudes and changes, in particular among youth, factors contributing to social (dis)harmony, ...) affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?	X	X				X	X		X			
• did unexpected events affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?	X					X	X		X			
2. Programme characteristics												
• did the nature and capacities of local partner(s) affect the programme performance; if so, how? Are they the right partners?	X		X			X	X					

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case study analysis	Expert panel
			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTDT, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTDT, ANDES, Sea- rice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS repre- sentatives (women and men)	Direct bene- ficiaries - FFS (women and men)		
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators												
• did key characteristics of grassroots beneficiaries (level of knowledge and skills, level of socio-economic autonomy, ...) affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?	X		X			X	X					
• did the scale and scope of programme (geographical, content wise) in relation to financial resources affect the programme performance; if so, how?	X		X			X	X					
• did programme duration in relation to key targets affect the programme performance; if so, how?	X		X			X	X					
• did the level of innovation/duplication of previous experiences affect the programme performance; if so, how?	X		X			X	X					
3. Programme design and management												
• did quality of the programme preparation (initial analysis, involvement of target groups and other stakeholders, compatibility between programme objectives and priority needs of key stakeholders, ...) affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?	X											
• did the level of ownership of programme by stakeholders affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?		X		X		X	X	X	X			
• did the level of clarity and quality of the programme's underlying TOC and intervention logic, (including of key assumptions and risks, existence of clear indicators, ...) affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?	X			X								
• did level of clarity and common understanding/application of key concepts and approaches of the programme such as 'biodiversity', 'food security', 'seed security', 'consortium', ... affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?	X		X	X		X	X					
• did level of contribution (financially and in kind) of programme stakeholders to programme implementation affect the programme performance (with attention	X		X			X	X					

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case study analysis	Expert panel
			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTDT, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTDT, ANDES, Sea- rice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS repre- sentatives (women and men)	Direct bene- ficiaries - FFS (women and men)		
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators												
for gender differences); if so, how?												
• did the quality and motivation of human resources (technical, social, ... competence of local staff) affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?		X	X			X						
• did the relevance, quality and timeliness of support by ON specialist team and advisors affect the programme performance; if so, how?	X		X	X		X	X	(X)				
• did the relevance, quality and timeliness of support by financial and administrative team affect the programme performance; if so, how?	X		X	X		X	X					
• do the consortium partners each play their role and contribute to the programme (produce added value)?	X		X	X		X	X					
• did quality of implementation mechanisms (internal and external communication and organisation, adequacy of input - output ratio for key activities, timing of activities, quality of key outputs such as tools, guidelines ...) affect the programme performance; if so, how?	X	X	X			X	X					
• did the quality of programme monitoring system and adjustment mechanisms (including: compatibility of programme M&E system with local systems, role of FFS in monitoring, view on monitoring as administrative and/or empowering tool, linkage with learning) affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?	X		X			X	X					
• did the level and quality of cooperation with relevant in-country institutions (research centres, government structures, other NGOs, ...) affect the programme performance; if so, how?	X			(X)		X	X	X				
• did the quality of local participation and ownership (in key decision making) affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?		X	X			X	X	X	X			
• did the level of benefits gained by the various stakeholders affect the	X					X	X	X	X			

Means for information collection	Docu- ments	Obser- vation	Interviews (face-to-face, phone, Skype) in/from the North			Regular interviews, FGD, MSC, impact story telling, statement game (in the South)					Policy case study analysis	Expert panel
			Program me staff ON	Consortium partners P4	Advocacy targets P4 (global level)	Leadership CTDT, ANDES, Searice	Programme staff CTDT, ANDES, Sea- rice, local partners	Representatives of local and national institutional stakeholders	FFS repre- sentatives (women and men)	Direct bene- ficiaries - FFS (women and men)		
Evaluation questions, judgment criteria and indicators												
programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?												
• did quality and relevance of reporting formats, frequency and feedback mechanisms affect the programme performance; if so, how?	X		X			X	X					
• did unexpected events at programme implementation level affect the programme performance (with attention for gender differences); if so, how?	X		X			X	X	X	X			
OVERALL LESSONS LEARNED/RECOMMENDATIONS SECTION												
• overall ... what goes well and what doesn't, and what are the main reasons for this?												
• what are the major lessons from the progress so far which should be taken forward for the remainder of the programme (till December 2018) – at different levels?												
• what are the major needs to refocus and re-strategize (if any)?												

Annexe 3.2: Field data collection sheet

Evaluation question/criterion	Judgement criterion	Information origin
1. Relevance and appropriateness		
To which extent does the project address the needs of the beneficiaries? 1.1 Inclusion of beneficiary needs in project design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extent to which the project proposal addresses the perceived and prioritised beneficiary needs, in particular women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
1.2 Inclusion of beneficiary needs in project implementation Does the programme know the socio-economic status of those effectively reached?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> extent to which specific measures have been undertaken to reach out to the intended beneficiaries extent to which the project effectively reaches out to the intended project beneficiaries level and quality of inclusion and participation of smallholders - of women and socially excluded people in programme implementation (their participation and voice in key decision making processes, inclusion of their priorities, ...) specific measures taken to ensure quality participation of IPSHF (women in particular) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
1.3 Lessons learned and recommendations related to relevance and appropriateness		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> what lessons can be learned that can enhance the programme's relevance for its intended beneficiaries, including women and socially excluded groups? what are the main recommendations for improvement related to relevance and appropriateness? 		
Findings:		
Main explanatory factors		
2. Efficiency		
2.1 Level of effectiveness and accountability of the project's governance structure (GPC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> level of existence and quality of the GPC's role, position and procedures level of adherence of GPC (its structures and members) to that role, position and procedures quality of Global Partner Committee governance : intervention when needed – knowledge of partners know about the GPC functioning and key decisions - their view about these and the GPC performance in general 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Findings		
Main explanatory factors		

Evaluation question/criterion	Judgement criterion	Information origin
2.2 Quality of project implementation structure?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> level of existence and quality of definition of role, tasks and position of consortium partners level of adherence of consortium partners to that role, tasks and position level of existence and quality of definition of role, tasks and position of local partners (where applicable) adequacy/relevance of project set-up : structure in view of key project characteristics (4 pillars, 5 countries, 8 consortium partners, ...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
How does Oxfam Novib implements its double role and task (as funder and implementer) ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> appreciation of the other partners an adequate balance? Advantages and disadvantages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Findings		
Main explanatory factors		
2.3 Quality of project management and implementation (content wise)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quality of intervention logic and underlying (implicit of explicit TOC) level of understanding of intervention logic by the partners – deviations ? rationale ? quality of implementation of project activities and level of responsiveness to the work demands (to be assessed via tools and approaches being used, interaction/coordination between ON team, consortium partners and local teams and between local teams and local stakeholders in particular FFS, relevance and quality of inputs from ON team, ...) set-up and quality of the M&E system and its implementation: quality = its linkage with planning, organisational set-up, the quality and quantity of its human and financial resources, involvement of other stakeholders in M&E, linkage with learning and planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Findings		
Main explanatory factors		
2.4 Adequacy and quality of the farming field school approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level of appropriateness of FFS in view of the SD=HS objectives, in particular the programme's willingness to target IPSHF, in particular women Type of farmers that effectively participate in the FFS Level of capacities and motivation of facilitators/extension workers to adopt and apply the participatory learning and empowering approach of FFS (and e.g. facilitating the bridging scientific and traditional knowledge work in practice) Degree of adequate support of FFS adequately (timeliness and relevance of support, adequacy of tools and communication, leadership development, ...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Evaluation question/criterion	Judgement criterion	Information origin
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequacy of programme support : in line with FFS' needs and priorities Level of autonomy : FFS undertake other activities (with or without programme support) the FFS approach and pedagogy : empowering approach ? (strengths and weaknesses) degree of responsiveness to the high level of diversity among IPSHF (including women) Effects of FFS in terms of empowerment, contribution to bio-diversity and higher yields and income Relation of FFS with the communities where they are active : degree of diffusion to neighbouring farmers; level of multiplier effect 	
2.5 Quality of project management and implementation (management activities; HQ and partner level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the project disposes of adequate financial rules, procedures and tools and these are adequately applied and adhered to the project has an adequate personnel policy (recruitment, enumeration, introduction to the job, coaching, appraisal ,capacity building, ...) and manages to attract and keep qualified personnel the project develops and nurtures a positive working climate and culture : (genuine participation, openness for alternative views, focus on exchange and learning, ...) the SeedsGROW management facilitated the SD=HS management adequately 	•
Findings		
Main explanatory factors		
2.6 The consortium set-up and functioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the nature and functioning of the consortium are of good quality the consortium manages to create synergies 	•
Findings		
Main explanatory factors		
2.7 The budget cut and the break with CAWR Did the programme management and partners succeed in dealing adequately with the budget cut ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarity of the issues at hand, quality of the consultation and decision making process, level of fairness of the decisions taken (incl. to finish P4 one year earlier), concern to minimize impact on the ground, quality of mitigation efforts, ... 	•
The break with CAWR ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consequence of a transparent, fair and logic process ? extent to which this the could/should the break have been avoided ? the way the break was communicated (in terms of process and result) to the consortium partners effects on the relationships among the partners, the programme culture, the overall programme's efficiency? 	

Evaluation question/criterion	Judgement criterion	Information origin
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effects on the ground? • the influence of the budget cut on this process 	
2.8 Learning and cross fertilization (some overlap with some questions above)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extent to which learning is in-built in the project (part of project culture) as evidenced by the existence of exchange practices, a culture of sharing and dialogue, .. • extent to which results of IFAD internal and external review have been followed up and led to project improvements. • extent to which consortium partners (state they) learned from other partners and were able to support other partners in their learning processes; and nature of the learning processes and products : most significant learning within the same pillar or across pillars : good and less successful practices • extent to which achievements (lessons, ...) of the project are taken over by third parties (at both decentralised and centralised levels) • degree of changed behaviour and practices due to learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Findings		
Main explanatory factors		
2.9 Lessons learned and recommendations related to efficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what are the recommendations to make the management and governance of SD=HS more effective and accountable? • what can be learned from the organizational challenges the SD=HS team faced both internally and in the ON structure and in collaboration with the GPC, also in managing the effects of the budget cuts? • what can be learned from the CAWR experience? Should anything be done to mitigate the negative impacts? • what can be learned from the programme's attempt to find a balance between developing uniform frameworks, approaches and outputs and the (recognized) need for local specificity (in terms of approach, priorities, ...)? What can be learned from the present practice in terms of cross-fertilization between partners and pillars? • what are the main lessons related to the programmes' efforts to combine scientific with local knowledge? 		
3. Effectiveness		
3.1 Key achievements related to pillar 1 (adaptive capacities of IPSFH in seed conservation, access and sustainable use by scaling-up innovative and engendered models of biodiversity management) - specification by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme's outreach – in terms of individuals effectively reached - level of up-scaling : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of households reached with percentage of women recorded ○ Number of FFS participants with percentage of women recorded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Evaluation question/criterion	Judgement criterion	Information origin
<p>partner/country to the extent possible</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what can be said of the programme's outreach – in terms of FFS and individuals (IPSHF, in particular women) effectively reached? Is there actually a need to scale up; what did the programme actually achieve so far in terms of up-scaling? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • since the start of the programme, were IPSHF (in particular women) capacities enhanced (scaled up) to develop and implement innovative PGR adaptation strategies, concepts and tools, and were traditional and scientific knowledge and a gender perspective integrated (see indicators in LF)? Are the up-scaling results convincing? • did the programme manage to increase access to PGR for IPHSF and for women in particular (see indicators in LF)? • did the programme introduce participatory plant breeding and IPHSF (in particular women) adaptation strategies in a gender sensitive way in key relevant institutions (see indicators in LF)? • do IPHSF (in particular women) since the programme start contribute to relevant policy changes at local, national and global level (thanks to the capacity building by the programme) (see indicators in LF) (can also be addressed under 3.5) • are there any other achievements related to pillar 1 that were not intended (positive and/or negative)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of FFS formed (with at least 50% women) ○ Number of engendered scaling up tools documented and published ○ Number of case studies capturing the innovations, tools improvements contributed by women or through which gender inclusion is ensured • level of enhancement of IPSHF capacities to develop and implement innovative PGR adaptation strategies, concepts and tools, integrating traditional and scientific knowledge and gender perspective and increased access to PGR for IPHSF <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ number of households (MW) with demonstrated capacities to adapt to various challenges on access and use of diverse seeds and PGR materials ○ increased crop diversity (in %) ○ increased diversity in varieties of staple crops in % and in minor crops in farmers' fields (in %) ○ increased climate resilient varieties (in %) ○ reduced frequency and duration of periodic hunger ○ decreased number of households affected from periodic hunger • level of mainstreaming of gender sensitive participatory plant breeding and IPHSF adaptation strategies in key relevant institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ number of formalized partnerships with key stakeholders and/or institutions ○ number of researcher, extension agents and educators with capacities to provide support to farm management of agricultural biodiversity ○ system and mechanisms (Biocultural Heritage Territory, seed banks, seed fairs) that ensure active participation of farmers in PPB and local seeds management in key relevant institutions ○ types of protocols developed between farmers and research institutions ○ number of segregating and stable lines received from research institutions • level of contribution of IPHSF to relevant policy changes at local, national and global level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ number of local and national policies reviewed and/or amended with input from the project, contributing to global engagement on the Right to Food • other unintended achievements related to pillar 1 	
Findings		

Evaluation question/criterion	Judgement criterion	Information origin
Main explanatory factors		
<p>3.2 Key achievements related to pillar 2 (to enhance the livelihoods and seeds security by IPHSF by producing and marketing good quality and diversity of seeds through PPP) - only Zimbabwe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do the pilot farmer seed enterprises have the potential to contribute to IPHSF's (in particular women's) reliable access to diverse, good quality and locally adapted seeds (see indicators in LF) (only Zimbabwe) - Do IPHSF (in particular women), private sector, governments and CSOs have access to lessons and advice from SDHS' FSE experience so far (see indicators in LF)? (can also be addressed under 3.5) - were there any other achievements related to pillar 2 that were not intended (positive and/or negative)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot farmer seed enterprises potentially contribute to IPHSF's reliable access to diverse, good quality and locally adapted seeds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ % Increase in availability of good quality seeds ○ % increase in reliable access to seeds for IPHSF ○ % increase diversity in seeds available ○ % increase in distribution of locally adopted seeds ○ maintain or % genetic base of the FSE crops (stock) • IPHSF, private sector, governments and CSOs have access to lessons and advice from SDHS FSE experience (see indicators in LF) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ N° and diversity of lessons, publications and/or presentations provided to a diversity of stakeholders ○ Improved FSE business model • other unintended achievement related to pillar 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Findings		
Main explanatory factors		
<p>3.3 Key achievements related to pillar 3 (to empower women to reclaim their role in food security through strengthening their capacity in seeds management and nutrition and global policy engagement to claim their rights to food) - specification by partner/country to the extent possible</p> <p>-----</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • since the programme start) have women farmers been empowered to enhance their knowledge, access and use of bio-diverse sources of nutrition, contributing to building stronger seed systems of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women farmers are empowered to enhance their knowledge, access and use of bio-diverse sources of nutrition, contributing to building stronger seed systems of important nutritional crops (NUS) for household food security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ number of women farmers aware of the nutritional value of local biodiversity and NUS ○ number of women led seed exchanges of traditional and nutritious crops ○ number of women focused FFS established ○ number of women-led FFS assessments on NUS carried out, sharing knowledge on NUS ○ increased biodiversity on farms and in gardens as compared to baseline ○ increased intake of nutritious food based on local biodiversity and NUS as compared to baseline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Evaluation question/criterion	Judgement criterion	Information origin
<p>important nutritional crops (NUS) for household food security (see indicators in LF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (since the programme start) did women farmers share their gained knowledge and innovative bio-diverse nutrition strategies, concepts and tools with other communities (see indicators in LF) • (since the programme start) did women farmers' knowledge and contribution serve as catalysts of international awareness on biodiversity based diets, and did they increase their engagement in policy dialogue on claiming the Right to Food (see indicators in LF) (can also be addressed under 3.5) • are there any other achievements related to pillar 3 that were not intended (positive and/or negative)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ decreased duration of periodic hunger and decreased number of HH suffering from periodic hunger in project sites as compared to baseline ○ improved intra household food distribution and access to nutrition ○ empowered women in harnessing biodiversity to improve food security and nutrition • women farmers share their gained knowledge and innovative biodiverse nutrition strategies, concepts and tools with other communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ number of women farmers trained on plan biodiversity and plant nutrient contents ○ knowledge, strategies and tools shared: tools/models integrating traditional and scientific knowledge available and used for local, national and international policy engagement ○ traditional knowledge are included in het concept of good nutrition ○ Food fairs, screenings and other events where strategies are shared – documents on innovative strategies produced and shared with other communities • women farmers' knowledge and contribution served as catalysts of international awareness on biodiversity based diets, and they have increased their engagement in policy dialogue on claiming the Right to Food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ number of women farmers that attend national and international seminars related to NUS ○ number of local, national and international policy briefs and other related material acknowledging and using local women farmer's knowledge on nutrition, NUS and biodiversity published and distributed ○ number of contributions to local, national and global policies changes and/or debate on the Right to Food and biodiversity based with a nutrition influence 	
Findings		
Main explanatory factors		
3.4 Key achievements related to pillar 4 (to strengthen the capacities and knowledge base of developing countries and their IPSHF to secure national and global legislation and policies for the full implementation of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved knowledge and capacities of stakeholders to influence national and international policies, aimed at improving PGR governance, facilitating innovation and cooperation in farmers' seed systems, increasing farmers' freedoms to operate, thus contributing to the right to food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Evaluation question/criterion	Judgement criterion	Information origin
<p>Farmers' Rights and the Right to Food) -- specification by partner/country to the extent possible</p> <hr/> <p>the programme start) did knowledge and capacities of stakeholders improve to influence national and international policies, aimed at improving PGR governance, facilitating innovation and cooperation in farmers' seed systems, increasing farmers' freedoms to operate, thus contributing to the right to food (see indicators in LF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (since the programme start) did (programme induced) changes in national and international agendas, policies and practices enhance farmers' freedom to operate, positively strengthen innovation in plant breeding and promote plant genetic diversity and Farmers' Rights, contributing to the Right to Food (see indicators in LF) • are there any other achievements related to pillar 4 that were not intended (positive and/or negative)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of policy makers, opinion leaders and other stakeholders that have increased knowledge and capacities and are engaged to help improve seed systems governance ○ Multi stakeholder consultations agree on seed policies that respond to food security and improved seed governance ○ Number of farmers and engaged citizens that are reached and informed directly and millions indirectly • Changes in national and international agendas, policies and practices enhance farmers' freedom to operate, positively strengthen innovation in plant breeding and promote plant genetic diversity and Farmers' Rights, contributing to the Right to Food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contribution to national level changes in agendas, policies or practices ○ Contribution to international level changes in agendas, policies or practices 	
Findings		
Main explanatory factors		
<p>3.5 What are the key accomplishments (progress to outcomes) so far related to the programme's efforts to link the lessons learned at local level with the global nature and policy change objectives of the programme? (can also be addressed under 3.1 --> 3.4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do IPHSF (in particular women) since the programme start contribute to relevant policy changes at local, national and global level (thanks to the capacity building by the programme) (see indicators in LF) (can also be addressed under 3.1) - Do IPHSF (in particular women), private sector, governments and CSOs have access to lessons and advice from SDHS' FSE experience so far (see indicators in LF)? (can also be addressed under 3.5) - (since the programme start) did women farmers' knowledge and contribution serve as catalysts of international awareness on biodiversity based diets, and did they increase their engagement in policy dialogue on claiming the Right to Food (see indicators in LF) (can also be addressed under 3.3) 		
Findings		
Main explanatory factors		
3.6 Key lessons learned and recommendations related to the programme achievements		

Evaluation question/criterion	Judgement criterion	Information origin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what can be learned from the key programme achievements to date ? - what are the reasons behind the progress (or lack of progress) towards objectives? What does it say about the underlying assumptions and TOC; to what extent can we assume that the outcomes expected at the end of the programme will be realized? - what can be done to further enhance the effectiveness of the programme – consider in this regard (among others): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o the balance between objectives/considerations related to bio-diversity (with often an embedded long-term focus) and local needs and priorities focused on (rather short-term) food security and welfare considerations o the balance/interplay between scientifically grounded approaches and more pragmatic development approaches o the balance between the focus on plant genetic resources (to ensure depth and quality) and understanding the interplay between PGR and other elements of the farming system that are key to achieving higher level objectives), ... o the interplay between the four pillars o the requirements to make of SD=HS a truly global programme 		
Findings		
Main explanatory factors		

EXPLANATORY FACTORS

1. Contextual factors

- agro-ecological factors (soil characteristics, rainfall patterns, influence of climatic change, ...) - with attention for gender differences
- agro-economic factors (cropping patterns, existing farming practices including local knowledge and skills, land ownership and security, relative importance of agricultural sector, drivers for change related to land occupation and farming practices, balance between food and cash crops,) - with attention for gender differences
- socio-economic factors (task division and decision making mechanisms at household level, existence and effectiveness of social institutions at grassroots level, migration patterns, role of private sector actors, ...) - with attention for gender differences
- institutional factors (role and influence of government institutions and their policies with regard to rural development, including of technical departments, role of other development actors, ...) - with attention for gender differences
- social factors (level of social differentiation, existing values and attitudes and changes, in particular among youth, factors contributing to social (dis)harmony, ...)
- influence of unexpected events

2. Project characteristics

- nature and capacities of local partner(s)
- key characteristics of grassroots beneficiaries (level of knowledge and skills, level of socio-economic autonomy, ...) - with attention for gender differences

- scale and scope of project (geographical, content wise) in relation to financial resources
- project duration in relation to key targets
- level of innovation/duplication of previous experience

3. Project design and management

- quality of the project preparation (initial analysis, involvement of target groups and other stakeholders, compatibility between project objectives and priority needs of key stakeholders, ...)
- level of ownership of project by stakeholders
- clarity and quality of the project's underlying TOC and intervention logic, (including of key assumptions and risks, existence of clear indicators, ...-
- level of clarity and common understanding/application of key concepts and approaches of the programme such as 'biodiversity', 'food security', 'seed security', 'consortium', ...
- level of inclusion of sustainability considerations in project design and implementation
- level of contribution (financially and in kind) of project stakeholders to project implementation)
- quality and motivation of human resources (technical, social, ... competence of local staff)
- relevance, quality and timeliness of support by ON specialist team and advisors
- relevance, quality and timeliness of support by Financial and administrative team
- level of timely availability of financial resources
- quality of implementation mechanisms (internal and external communication and organisation, adequacy of input - output ratio for key activities, timing of activities, quality of key outputs such as tools, guidelines ...))
- quality of project monitoring system and adjustment mechanisms (including: compatibility of project M&E system with local systems, role of FFS in monitoring, view on monitoring as administrative and/or empowering tool, linkage with learning)
- level and quality of cooperation with relevant in-country institutions (research centres, government structures, other NGOs, ...)
- quality of local participation and ownership (in key decision making)
- level of benefits gained by the various stakeholders
- quality and relevance of reporting formats, frequency and feedback mechanisms
- influence of unexpected events at project implementation level

Annexe 3.3: Interview protocol implementing partners (used prior to the fieldwork)

1. Have you been well informed about the aims and approach of this evaluation? Are there any questions for clarification from your side?
2. *Additional clarification from our side: all results we obtain via interviews, discussions, mails, ... will be dealt with confidentially and not shared with the other programme stakeholders.*
3. Do you have specific expectations towards this evaluation? If so, can you explain these to me? Are these expectations sufficiently addressed in the TOR?
4. Do you have specific concerns towards this evaluation? If so, can you explain these to me? What are your suggestions to effectively address these concerns?
5. Can you provide me with some key information on the organisational set-up of the programme in your country:
6. Can you explain me what you consider as the main achievements and main challenges of the programme so far (in terms of the programme content)? *Do not refrain from sharing with us some real-life examples.*
7. In terms of the four pillars of the programme, can you explain a bit more in detail what you have achieved so far, what activities are going on smoothly and where you experience challenges?
 - a. Pillar 1: scaling up models of biodiversity management
 - b. Pillar 2: farmer seed enterprises (only for Zimbabwe)
 - c. Pillar 3: seeds and nutrition (via empowerment of women)
 - d. Pillar 4: governance and knowledge systems for policy and advocacy on farmers' rights and right to food
8. Preparation of the field visit: do you have particular suggestions related to the field visit that will take approximately XX days and is scheduled for the period YY? Important aspects to be taken into account:
 - Role of main partner during the visit (essentially facilitator – conscious effort to avoid biases)
 - Learning as a major focus
 - Avoid too much travel time, while trying to find a good balance (representative sample of local actors to be visited: good and less performing groups,)
 - To the extent possible, the visits should allow getting information related to pillars 1, 3 and 4 in a balanced way (but also corresponding to country focus and achievements so far)
 - Inclusion of short briefing and debriefing at the end: desirable, feasible, ...? If feasible: envisaged participants?
 - Need to well inform local partners, resource persons and communities that will be visited on the aims and approach of this MTR
 - Practical aspects: visit schedule, arrangement of transportation (hire vehicle for trips outside capital), hotel, visa requirements (if any), suggestion on airlines to be used, translation
 - Suggestions related to specific programme documents (in as far as not available on programme website)
 - Other suggestions
 - Contact persons in view of visit preparation?

Annexe 3.4: Interview protocol used for consortium partners (used both before and after the field visits)

1. Background questions

- History of your partnership with ONL?
- Your role in the formulation (preparation) of the programme?
- Your role (as an organisation) in actual implementation?
- How important is this project for your organisation?

2. The programme, more in detail

- What are in your eyes the **key accomplishments** of this project so far (try to distinguish your working area from the programme as a whole):
 - Pillar 1: scaling up models of biodiversity management
 - Pillar 2: farmer seed enterprises (only for Zimbabwe)
 - Pillar 3: seeds and nutrition (via empowerment of women)
 - Pillar 4: governance and knowledge systems for policy and advocacy on farmers' rights and right to food:
 - At local and national level
 - By international consortium partners
- Are there areas where the programme did not yet live up to its expectations?
- Main reasons for accomplishments and (relative) failures so far? Relative importance of local and consortium partners and of ONL?
- Can you explain the organisational set-up of the programme as you have experienced it?
- Can you explain the programme management mechanism as you have experienced these:
 - Internal planning, monitoring, reporting
 - Financial management
 - Role/position local level – consortium partners – ONL project staff
 - Cooperation/interaction between local level – consortium partner – ONL project staff
 - Relation with pillar 4 consortium partners
 - Communication, exchange and learning
 - Programme governance (GPC) and key decision making
 - Working in different countries with different partners: pros and cons; consortium effects?
- **Two particular events** (call it 'case studies'):
 - Budget cut: ways of dealing with it (and appreciation), effects in terms of relations between partners, on the ground, ...
 - CAWR: ways of dealing with it (and appreciation), effects in terms of relations between partners, on the ground, ...
- **Conclusion:** what are in your eyes the **key particularities (positive and negative)** of this programme? How does it benchmark against other similar programmes you might be aware of?
- **Key lessons learned/suggestions for improvement?**

3. This MTR

- Have you been involved in determining the aims and approach of this MTR? Do you agree with its present set-up/the questions highlighted in the TOR?
- Do you have specific expectations towards this MTR? If so, can you explain these to me? Are these expectations sufficiently addressed in the TOR?

- Do you have specific concerns towards this MTR? If so, can you explain these to me? What are your suggestions to effectively address these concerns?
- Do you have specific suggestions related to implementation?

4. Preparation of the field visit

Do you have **particular suggestions** related to the field visit? Important aspects to be taken into account:

- Role of main partner during the visit (essentially facilitator – conscious effort to avoid biases)
- Learning as a major focus
- Avoid too much travel time, while trying to find a good balance (representative sample of local actors to be visited: good and less performing groups,)
- To the extent possible, the visits should allow getting information related to pillars 1, 3 and 4 in a balanced way (but also corresponding to country focus and achievements so far)
- Inclusion of short briefing and debriefing at the end: desirable, feasible, ...? If feasible: envisaged participants?
- Suggested resource persons
- Practical aspects: visit schedule, arrangement of transportation (hire vehicle for trips outside capital), hotel, visa requirements (if any), suggestion on airlines to be used, translation
- Suggestions related to specific programme documents (in as far as not available on programme website)

Annexe 3.5 Interview protocol used for advocacy targets

0. Introduction

- Why this interview? Aim of the MTR, importance of talking to advocacy targets, ...
- Who are we ...

1. Background questions:

- Background on your organisation?
- How does your organisation relate to 'Seeds'?
- History of your relation with ONL and/or one or more of the programme's consortium partners?

2. The programme, more in detail

- What are according to you the **key characteristics of the approach/messages** of ONL and/or its partners in relation to 'seeds', in particular "governance and knowledge systems for policy and advocacy on farmers' rights and right to food"?
 - At national level
 - At international level
- Are there elements in their approach that stand out – positively or negatively – compared to other actors?
- What are according to you the **key accomplishments** of ONL and/or its partners in relation to the same area?
 - What have they reached?
 - Are there areas where they could have done better?
- In-depth discussion on particular aspects of ONL/consortium partners work that you know best ...
- **Main reasons** for accomplishments and (relative) failures so far? Relative importance of local and consortium partners and of ONL?

3. Key lessons learned/suggestions for improvement?

ANNEXE 4: MAIN DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

The MTR team has received, at different moments during the implementation of the review, an important number of documents. The main documents consulted have been received via the ONL implementation team.

Publications and key programme documents

- Oxfam NL, Seeds GROW: Harvesting Global Food Security and Justice in the Face of Climate Change, September 2013 (programme proposal)
- Oxfam NL, Seeds Grow Harvesting Global Food Security and Justice in the face of Climate Change, Progress Report October 2013 – March 2015, September 2015
- Oxfam NL, Seeds Grow Harvesting Global Food Security and Justice in the face of Climate Change, Progress Report April 2015 – March 2016, September 2016
- Oxfam NL, Seeds Grow Annual Plan Year 3, April 2016 – March 2017
- Oxfam Novib, *Putting lessons into practice: scaling up peoples' biodiversity management for food security*, Grant Completion Report, June 2016
- Trygve Berg, *Putting Lessons into Practice: Scaling up peoples' biodiversity management for food security*, External Programme Evaluator, January 2016
- *Putting Lessons into Practice: Scaling up peoples' biodiversity management for food security*, Mid term project review workshop, Zimbabwe, June 2014
- Oxfam NL, *Building on farmers' perception and traditional knowledge: biodiversity management for climate change adaptation strategies*. Policy brief, July 2016
- World Bank, *World Development Report 2016*
- H. Waddington and H. White, *Farmer field schools, From agricultural extension to adult education*, March 2014, International Initiative for Impact Evaluation

Pillar 1 documents

- Several BTOR
- Baseline study reports pillar 1 (South Vietnam and Laos)
- SD=HS, Discussion on pillar 1 Laos baseline and workplan
- CTDT, *Putting Lessons into Practice: Scaling up People's Biodiversity Management for Food Security*, Agro-biodiversity and Food Security Baseline Survey, November 2013
- CTDT, *Facilitators' field guide for farmer field schools on participatory plant breeding in maize, pearl millet, sorghum and groundnut*, May 2016
- Vietnam, *Refresher Course on FFS on PPB – Rice*, May 2015
- ANDES, *Facilitators' field guide for farmer field schools on participatory plant breeding in potato and maize*, August 2015
- Pillar 1, 2, 3, 4 action points methodological workshop 2017
- Writeshop minutes 13-14 February 2017

Pillar 2 documents

- Several BTOR
- CTDT, *Is it possible to establish a viable farmer seed enterprise in Zimbabwe? Workshop report*, March 2016, Harare, Zimbabwe
- CTDT, *Champion Seeds, Business Plan & Model*, 4th draft
- Oxfam NL, *Towards a business model: piloting a farmer seed enterprise in the SD=HS programme*, July 2016
- CTDT, *Market research for the establishment of Champion Seeds Pvt Ltd in Zimbabwe*, September 2016

Pillar 3 documents

- Several BTOR
- ONL, Pillar 3 baseline survey: lessons from phase I
- Oxfam NL, Consolidated baseline survey report: women, seeds and nutrition, Technical report, July 2016
- Oxfam NL, Evidences on the use of Neglected and Underutilized Species (NUS) to cope with food scarcity and climate change in the Peruvian Andes, Briefing Note, January 2017
- ONL, Nutritional facts on selected NUS in North Vietnam
- ONL, Nutrition, coping strategies, knowledge and use of neglected and underutilized species. Baseline study, April 2016
- Searice and PRC, Seeds GROW: Harvesting Food Security and Justice in the Face of Climate Change (Pillar 3 – Women, seeds and nutrition), Report Results of baseline survey in Ha Giang, Lao Cai and Son La province, 2015
- ONL and CTDT, Draft FFS curriculum Women, Seeds and Nutrition, December 2016
- CTDT and ONL, Our seeds: lessons from the drought, Voices of farmers in Zimbabwe, December 2016

Pillar 4 documents

- Several BTOR
- Oxfam NL, Reconciling farmers' and breeders' rights. Partner statement, November 2016
- Oxfam NL, SD=HS Global Policy Agenda, Policy brief, July 2016
- Oxfam NL, Seed laws that criminalize farmers: research and educational materials from GRAIN, Policy brief, July 2016
- FAO – IT-PGRFA, Knowledge, Views, Experiences and Best Practices on the Implementation of Farmers' Rights – Submitted to Contracting Parties and Relevant Organizations,
- SD=HS, Global Expert Meeting On Seeds, Report, Organized by Third World Network, South Centre and Oxfam Novib, March 2016

Other SD=HS documents

- Governance and Management structure SDHS , final version
- Organogram SeedsGROW February 2017
- 1st contract amendment Sida SeedsGROW
- 2nd contract amendment Sida SeedsGROW
- SD=HS task description
- TOR Task description advisors
- Agenda and minutes GPC meetings
- Financial and audit report year 2

ANNEXE 5: DETAILS ON THE COMPOSITION OF THE EVALUATION TEAM

Four experts who all belong to the core team of South Research have been associated to this MTR and have taken up different roles, tasks and responsibilities: Dirk VAN ESBROECK has acted as team leader and visited Vietnam and Laos, Ellen VERHOFSTADT and Lisette CAUBERGS were the team members in charge of the field visits to Peru and Zimbabwe, while Bob PEETERS functioned mainly as technical back-stopper for issues related to farmer field schools (FFS) and Farmer Seeds Enterprises (FSE).

Dirk Van Esbroeck is a socio-economist with more than 35 years of experience in development co-operation. He worked for six years in Indonesia in a rural development project and as country representative for a major Belgian NGO. Since 1984, he has conducted field missions to about 40 countries in Africa, Asia, South America and Eastern Europe for European and international NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors, private actors, universities and research institutions. His major interest and expertise are related to participatory approaches of project and programme cycle management, strategic planning, institutional strengthening of NGOs and grassroots organisations, gender, monitoring and evaluation. The design, implementation and management of complex (programme, thematic, ...) evaluations is presently his major area of work.

Ellen Verhofstadt has a background as a bioscience engineer with a specialization in tropical agriculture and a PhD in bio-economics, complemented with a master in Cultures and Development Studies and a master in Food Science and Nutrition. During her research at the National Institute of Public Health in Mexico and at the KU Leuven University she was involved in several studies and projects. She acquainted herself in the analysis of reports, policy documents and academic literature...and in the organization and evaluation of stakeholder and expert meetings. Ellen has a strong know-how to efficiently explore and examine both quantitative and qualitative data resulting in several reports and academic articles of high quality. Her main interests are situated around agricultural development (and food value chains), food security, public health, gender, and intra-household relations.

Lisette Caubergs has a Master in Chemistry (University of Leuven) and a Master in Ecology (University of Ghent). In addition, she is trained in textiles (weaving, spinning, dyeing) via a workshop in Leuven. Through this knowledge and interest she has specialized in supporting small businesses in the soap and textile sector. As a team member of ATOL (Appropriate Technology in Developing Countries) she gained a lot of experience and knowledge with the support to women entrepreneurs in these domains. Out of her practice she has built up her expertise on gender. She was responsible for the identification and formulation of the first phase of the Programme ARMF (Augmentation des revenus des Femmes Monétaires Dosso - Niger). She was co-writer of the Guide for the formulation of indicators for empowerment of women commissioned by DGIS (Belgian Government).

Bob Peeters has more than thirty years of experience in the development sector. In the beginning of his career he worked for six years as an agronomist in a rural development project in Tanzania. He set up an extension service, strengthened a network of farmer organisations and invested a lot in making information and knowledge available to farmers. Since 1989, when he started working as a consultant for South Research, he has built up competences especially in the field of food security and rural development including aspects of capacity building and decentralization. He is highly familiar with all kinds of planning and M&E approaches such as PCM, PRA, Outcome Mapping, Most Significant Change and the theory of change and is continuously searching on how these approaches can improve the quality of the work of the organisations he is working with.