Market Oriented Agriculture Programme (MOAP)
1st Quarter Progress Report 2021 (January - March) | MOAP NW

Basic Programme Information

| Objective: | Quality of production in the agricultural sector is improved. |
| Output areas: | B. Support to Decentralised Departments of MoFA.  
C. Climate-sensitive quality production in horticulture.  
D. Capacity development of inclusive business models and service provision.  
E. Support to common interest groups. |
| Scope: | Programme area: 14 districts in Upper West, Savannah, and North-East Regions  
VCs: Cashew, Groundnut, Mango, Rice, Sorghum, Soybean and Vegetables.  
Phase I: 01/2017- extended until 03/2021  
Phase II: 04/2021 – 12/2023 |

Key Achievements of MOAP-NW since 2017

- Tentatively, **54,379 farmers** have received training with the support of MOAP-NW.
- Based on yield data from 110 sample farms, average yields for rice, sorghum and soybean have approximately doubled in the project area, for farmers applying recommended Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), since 2017.
- 345,237 man-days additional casual labour, equaling 1,596 full-time jobs, created from 2018 to 2020.
- **Over 8,000 smallholder** farmers across 6 VCs (Rice, Sorghum, Soy, Groundnut, Mango and Vegetables) received input credits for seeds, fertilizer, as well as extension, and marketing services, from their off-takers, since 2018.
- **80 groundnut producers** have obtained Organic certification according to EU standards in 2019/2020
- **25 vegetables farmers** have obtained Ghana Green Label Certification and have been linked to markets in 2019/2020.
- Facilitated the formation of two Value Chain platforms: The Soya Bean Round Table (SBRT) in 2019 and the Upper West Region Rice Platform (UWRRP) in 2020. The latter is linked to other regional rice platforms and the National Rice Coordination Committee (NRCC)
- Facilitated formation and training of 208 Village Savings and Loans Associations groups from 51 in 2019 to 208 in 2020 (total number of farmer members = 5,505 of which 4,653 Women = 85 %)
Support to GoG Flagship programmes in the 1st Quarter, 2021

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<tr>
<th>PFJ</th>
<th>Certification:</th>
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<td>• 230 (78 women) Participated in Integrated Crop and Pest Management (ICPM) vegetable production on-farm demonstrations.</td>
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| PERD | Identification and selection of Cashew “elite mother trees” for future cashew improvement. |
|      | MOAP-NW facilitated cashew nut quality awareness training, with suggestions for improved quality, to boost buyer attraction to the production area. 96 (8 Women) cashew farmers participated in the trainings. |

1. Activities and Achievements in the 1st Quarter 2021 per Output Areas

1.1. Output B - Support to Decentralized Departments of MoFA

- **2021 Operational Planning and Stakeholder Review Workshop:** During the reporting period, a virtual stakeholder review meeting was organized with 110 participants, comprising district, regional, and national stakeholders, from both the government and the private sectors, to provide feedback on the MOAP-NW annual operational plan of activities, that have been planned for implementation. The inputs from stakeholders have not only enriched the proposed activities for implementation, but have enhanced the acceptability and ownership of the project by stakeholders for joint implementation.

- **Stakeholder Meeting on District Medium-Term Development Plans (DMTDP’s):** Following from the support the programme provided, to the 6 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) to review their DMTDP, MOAP-NW organized a stakeholder review meeting to discuss how the remaining districts will organize the review of the 2018-2021 DMTDP’s and as well, the development of the 2022-2025 DMTDP’s. The engagement meetings with the various Regional Coordinating Councils and MMDAs resulted in the development of a strategy, which outlines the roles of various stakeholders in the implementation of activities related to the DMTDP’s.

- **Sensitisation of RAD and DAD on Local Subsidy Contracts:** To provide support to the Department of Agriculture to enhance the development of agriculture in the respective districts, MOAP-NW commenced a process for the provision of financial support for project activity implementation by the departments. In this regard, sensitization meetings were organised for the management of each District Agricultural Department (DAD) on the local
subsidy contract arrangements. The Local Subsidy Contract (LSC), will become the main instrument for financing the implementation of the project activities of output B in 2021. To ensure its successful roll out, trainings on LSC administration and management were provided to 51 participants. Each District Department of Agriculture, for the 14 districts, is currently completing the application process for the funding under this arrangement.

- **Training of Market Traders on Food Safety and Hygiene:** MOAP-NW, in collaboration with Women in Agricultural Development (WIAD), of the Department of Agriculture, organized trainings on food safety and hygiene, for market traders in all of the 14 operational districts of MOAP-NW. A total of 362 market traders benefited from these trainings, with 82% being women. Topics, such as the causes of poor food safety and hygiene, harmful effects of consumption of unsafe food, and precautions in food safety and handling were discussed. Action plans were developed by the traders to organize sensitizations in the markets scheduled for the second quarter of this year. Also, MOAP-NW will pilot the introduction of an ideal standard model stand, in various markets, in the course of the year, to improve safe and hygienic handling, storage and display of vegetable, fruits, dry and processed cereals and legumes.

- **Stakeholder Meeting on Plant Health Clinics Sustainability:** Given the importance of Plant Doctors under the Plant Health Clinics programme, a service under the PPRSD of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, for the effective diagnosis and management of pests and diseases in crop production in NW Ghana, there is the need to devise strategies to sustain the services to smallholder farmers, particularly given the current investments in the activity by MOAP-NW and the intended eventual hand-over to PPRSD / the District Departments of Agriculture. Hence, a virtual stakeholder meeting, involving 23 participants drawn from national and regional PPRSD officers, as well as the respective district directors of agriculture, was organized on the sustainability of the programme. In this regard, some strategies were collectively agreed upon as the way forward. These include: Increasing the number of staff competent in plant clinic activities in each district to the planned six per district, whilst providing competency based trainings; the development of guidelines by PPRSD, to mainstream the service within the department of agriculture and guide the operation of the activity, ensuring budgetary allocations (especially from GoG) are made by the department of agriculture for plant clinic advisory services; ensure robust monitoring on plant health clinic activities by Department of Agriculture and PPRSD, as well as exploring the participation of the private sector in the programme and the support possible from radio programming. The implementation of these strategies will be followed through, within the year.

- **Cashew “Elite Mother Trees” Identification and Selection Training and Data Collection:** The implementation of this activity in the first quarter of 2021, saw trained enumerators in each district of the project embarked upon the identification and selection of elite mother trees. Data collected so far, includes the following: 3,518 potentially elite trees were identified, 2,692 trees were recorded as number of trees flowering and 1,975 were recorded as number of trees fruiting. The number of most promising trees and their subsidiary data collection, are ongoing, and will be presented in the 2nd quarter 2021 report. However, a total of 2,395 trees were selected for further studies. A series of activities will be carried out in the following quarters to establish quality scion banks (the identified elite mother trees), under the management of the department of agriculture, for use by
smallholder farmers. This is expected to improve significantly the performance of the varieties of cashew available in the regions.

1.2 Output C - Climate-Sensitive Quality Production in Horticulture

- **Training on Vegetables GAPs**: The third and Final ToT on vegetables GAPs training at 39 new (for MOAP-NW) dry season irrigated vegetable production sites, was conducted for selected lead trainers under the period of review, which was also followed with the step-down trainings of smallholder farmers at the 39 irrigation sites. Within a competency based training approach, the trainers were taken through harvest and post-harvest management practices, in order for them to carry out the step-down training, with farmers, effectively. The trainers were additionally taken through basic Ghana Green Label (GGL) certification, for them to sensitize the farmers on the basics and relevance of the certification. A total of 8 out of 9 trainers participated in the third training of trainers (ToT). After the last ToT, the trainers conducted step down trainings at the various locations for 643 (266 women) smallholder vegetables farmers, on harvest and post harvest management practices. Monitoring visits were also conducted by MOAP staff and the Consultants (Natures’ Wisdom) to some of the irrigation areas, to ascertain the level of implementation of the training activities and also to provide technical backstopping to the trainers. Generally, the overall conduct of the trainers was reported to have been highly professional, with an expected outcome of improving the participating farmers knowledge in vegetables GAPs for an enhanced production and increased productivity. The GAPs training was brought to a closure after the submission of the consultants report, which was reviewed and accepted. These farmers will be monitored to ensure, what have been learnt is put into practice.

- **Integrated Crops and Pest Management (ICPM) Model farms**: Another major intervention implemented in this period was the Integrated Crops and Pest Management (ICPM) Model farms. The main objective was to introduce and train farmers in ICPM principles, through farmers own cultivation of selected high valued vegetables. One hundred smallholder farmers were selected randomly from five irrigated vegetable production areas (Jawia, Kong, Nimoro, Methor Bor / Yipaala and Sankana / Kaleo) for the implementation of the ICPM. The selected **100 farmers** were supported with a quarter of an acre worth of inputs to produce any vegetable of their choice under the guidance of a consulting crop protection expert from the Savanna Agricultural Research Institute (SARI).

Prior to the implementation, two initial meetings were organized with the participating farmers. The first meeting, was to sensitize farmers on ICPM, and also, to randomly select the participating farmers. The second meeting was to sensitize all the stakeholders involved, on the principles of ICPM and also to allow interactions and to define roles and responsibilities. The second meeting was organized in Wa, and involved all the participating farmers, selected inputs dealers and aggregators.

The farmers were taken through the common pests and diseases, for the various stages of crop development. The discussion covered nursery establishment and management, general crops husbandry practices, pests and diseases identification and control, harvest and postharvest management. The farmers were also trained on scouting, and general field hygiene and cleanliness. A series of field days were organized, to showcase the
implemented activities. During these field days, 230 (78 women) smallholder farmers participated.

- **Soil Fertility Management and Site Selections for Community Demonstrations:** To assess the effect of application, in the 2020 cropping season, of prilled lime on some acidic soil community demonstration plots, soil samples from 23 treated plots were collected and sent to the Soil Research Unit of CSIR Kumasi, for laboratory analysis. Results, which are yet to be received are expected to confirm the positive impact of calciprill® prilled lime, in amending low pH soils.

31 out of the 80 planned sites (6 rice, 9 groundnuts, 8 soy, 8 sorghum) for the 2021 MOAP-NW community Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) demonstrations have been identified, and soil samples and GPS coordinates collected, with the assistance of a software on a tablet supplied to MOAP-NW Community Support Officers. 31 lead farmers expected to benefit from an upcoming ToT (Training of Trainers), which is expected to build their technical capacity in managing the demonstration plots, were also identified. Sites selection for the remaining communities are ongoing and expected to be completed by the 2nd week of April 2021.

- **GAPs Posters Distribution:** 400 (100 rice, 95 soy, 100 groundnut, 105 sorghum) posters were distributed to 12 newly-identified FBO groups in 5 districts (Nadowli, Lawra, Jirapa, DBI and Nandom). The groups were sensitised on how to use the posters. Emphasis was placed on proper planning, inputs acquisition and land preparation, as farmers get ready to go into the 2021 production season.

- **Training on Rice Processing:** In partnership with the Upper West Region Regional Agriculture Department, 300 women, in the Upper West Region, benefited from a skills enhancement in rice parboiling, to enable them to add value to their processed rice and improve on the market value of their produce. The women trained, were rice parboilers from 9 selected communities, in three districts (Wa West, Wa East and Wa Municipal). The MOAP-NW program, as part of the training, supported the Women In Agricultural Development (WIAD) units, of the three districts, with 3 parboiling vessels and 3 high quality
tarpaulins, for a sustained capacity building of other rice parboiling groups. Five women groups out of nine indicated an interest in buying expensive purpose-manufactured rice parboiling vessels for quality parboiling of rice, and have been linked to the MOAP-NW Matching Grants facility, where they can make group applications for assistance with procurement.

- **Identification and Sensitization of Farmers on Dry Season Groundnut Production:** During the period under review, two communities (Luggi community in Lawra and Gengenkpe community in Nandom), out of three (3) planned target communities, for the pilot dry season groundnut production, have been identified along the Black Volta, since the activity is dependant on irrigation. 60 selected farmers were sensitized on dry season irrigated groundnut production and they have expressed interest to adopt this intervention, to improve their incomes in the dry season, as well as making available, fresh groundnuts for consumption.

- **Formation of 51 Agricultural Radio Listenership Clubs (ARLC’s) to Improve Extension Messaging amongst Smallholder Farmers:** The high deficit in Agricultural Extension Agents relative to smallholder farmers creates a significant gap for smallholder farmers, especially amongst women, in accessing transformative agricultural information. This gap or exclusion from agricultural information, undoubtedly has an impact on food insecurity and limits the potential for improving household income levels amongst farming families. Recognising the power of community radio and its potential mass impact, in terms of agricultural information dissemination, MOAP-NW during the period under review, piloted the establishment of 51 community Agricultural Radio Listenership Clubs (ARLCs), for 51 Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) groups, in the 14 districts of MOAP-NW. A total of 51 quality Freeplay® solar/mechanically-powered radio sets, have been distributed to the groups to increase access to reliable agricultural and good agricultural practices (GAPs) information, which can be put into practice in their farms, for increased productivity. The VSLA members of each ARLC, were trained in techniques of participatory radio listnership and management of the radio clubs. The groups were linked to 5 partner radio stations, that are collaborating with the MOAP-NW project, to bridge the current gap for smallholder farmers’ access to agricultural information, in five districts (Wa Municipal, North Gonja, Bole, Lawra and Sissala East districts). The groups meet once or twice in a week, to listen to radio agricultural discussions, which are handled by experts from the Department of Agriculture. During the broadcasts, the groups have the opportunity to ‘phone in to ask questions about the specific topics discussed. It is expected that the radio extension packages will improve farmers knowledge and drive adoption of good agricultural practices to enhance yields. A total of 1,242 (1,201 women) are currently benefiting from the radio clubs.
• **Update on Cashew Bee Integration Program:** During the period under review, the final training on Cashew bee integration was completed, with harvesting and processing of honey and bee’s wax. For three sample farmers in the clusters who harvested, for the first time, honey from their MOAP-supplied hives, 8.5 kg of honey (Daboya), 9.5 kg (Bawena) and 10.5 kg (Yagbung) was harvested. It is expected that introduction of beekeeping to cashew farmers and the hives, which are all located, adjacent to the cashew plantations will substantially improve pollination and cashew production, and will give an impetus to these farmers to embrace organic cashew production, as well as gaining a second income stream.

In addition, MOAP facilitated cashew nut quality awareness training, with suggestions for improved quality, to boost buyer attraction to the production area. 96 (8Women) cashew farmers participated in the trainings.

• **Training and Extension on Conservation Agriculture in the Savannas (TECAS):** During the period of review, follow up visits were made to communities where CA videos were screened, to ascertain the impact of the CA video on farmers and assess the market for the TECAS 2021 CA mechanization service. 192 (117 Women) farmers were met from 13 Communities within 5 districts (Lawra, Lambussie, Jirapa, Wa West and Wa East).

• **Certification:** 209 organic groundnut producers from Wa West, Lawra and Nandom Districts, are currently under the final stages of audit processes towards the renewal (Wa West group) and issuance of new organic certification (Lawra and Nandom groups), to enable them to export to the EU market. Additionally, 4 samples of the organic groundnuts have also been sent to the Ghana Standard Authority in Accra for Aflatoxin testing.

**1.3. Output D - Inclusive Business Models**

• **The Inputs Fund:** In view of problems faced in getting re-payment into the Inputs revolving Fund, by some aggregators, that is jeopardising the operation of the Inputs Fund;
professional legal advice was sought, and an agreement developed that is legally-binding on the aggregator representing FBO groups of outgrower farmers. It is hoped, with the use of this legally-binding agreement, that all aggregators, making use of the Inputs Fund, to provide inputs on credit to their outgrower farmers, will comply with the re-payment rules of the fund.

- **Matching Grant support:** The applications of 2 processors – Pognaa Foods and Jackibra have been appraised and are ready to be submitted to the Matching Grant Approval committee for further scrutiny. However, the estimated costs of some processing equipment are not immediately known, resulting in the delay of the reports to the committee. A standard Matching grant application notice has been developed, to be circulated to the 14 District Departments of Agriculture (DoA) offices, for potential applicants to apply.

- **Contract Farming Training:** During the reporting period, 132 (69 women) FBO leaders and representatives from six districts (Daffiam-Bussie-Issa, Nadowli-Kaleo, Jirapa, Lambussie, North Gonja and Mamprugu-Moagduri) have received trainings on Contract farming - linked to the MOAP-NW Inputs Fund. The objective of this training was for the FBOs to have a better understanding of the concept of Contract farming, for a smooth implementation of the Inputs Fund. These FBOs were originally scheduled to be trained with the rest of the 14 districts in 2020. However, as a result of time constraints, only 8 districts were trained in 2020.

- **Support to Agro Inputs Dealers (AID’s):** In order to improve the quality of services of the Agro inputs Dealers, the following activities were carried during the period of reporting: 340 posters related to plant nutrient deficiencies, pH and fertiliser compatibility, were distributed to 78 out 116 Agro input dealers that the program is working closely with. One on One coaching and training was also given to the 78 AID’s to improve their quality of service to farmers.

- **Sourcing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) under an Inputs Revolving Fund:** Major Importers of hazardous chemicals Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), pH test kits and agricultural lime, were met (Agromonti, Louis Dreyffus, AAMI, Dizengoff, Stock, Medical Soil Solution, Carmeuse) and samples of PPE and pH test kits were received and examined, in order to create supply linkages between the major importers and Agro Inputs dealers.

- **Increasing Availability to Farmers of Natural Pesticides from Neem:** With a view to the development of an inclusive business model to ensure a supply of neem-based pesticides to farmers through the Ghana Agricultural Inputs Dealers Association (GAIDA) and licensed Agricultural Inputs Dealers (AID’s), a quality stainless steel cold screw press has been procured, on behalf of a women’s group, that will use it to produce neem oil and neem seed cake – for sale to farmers, via GAIDA, through participating AID’s. Currently the cold press is being tested prior to the training of the women’s group in its use.

- **Pilot Farm Plastic Waste Recovery:** In order to deal with potentially hazardous empty chemical containers, in the farms and communities, within the operational areas of MOAP-NW, a consultant is being contracted from Crop Life Ghana, to put in place, together with
MOAP NW, 14 pilot fenced collection points and a scheme to encourage and motivate the collection and return of Farm Plastic Waste – for onward delivery to specialised re-cyclers of contaminated plastic waste.

- **Agricultural Inputs Dealers Client Satisfaction Survey:** During the first quarter of 2021, a sample of 500 farmer clients of 50 randomly selected Agricultural Inputs Dealers (AID’s) across the MOAP-NW operational Areas, are being assessed to ascertain the satisfaction level of client farmers with regards to the advice received from their inputs dealers. So far, 130 out of the target 500 clients to be sampled, have been assessed. Data analysis and data collection from the outstanding 370 farmers is still on-going.

### 1.4 Output E - Common Interest Groups (CIGs)

- **Ghana Groundnut Working Group (GGWG):** Under the support of MOAP-NW, the Ghana Groundnut Working Group (GGWG), held an introductory meeting, on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021, at the In-Service Training Centre in Wa, to consider strategies for effective collaboration with MOAP NW. The GGWG, initially established under the auspices of USAID Feed the Future, is a platform that brings together experts in groundnut research across Ghana as well as partners in the USA. The idea for this SARI – based working group was to build synergies and collaboration amongst groundnut research actors for a more efficient use of resources. With MOAP NW involvement, it is expected to broaden the agenda and participation, to steer the direction of the GGWG, into a truly representative Value Chain Committee for groundnut in Ghana. For the introductory meeting with the GGWG, 17 representative participants, sourced from all 14 operational districts, working in the groundnut value chain were invited for an introductory meeting, with the principal organisers of the working group from SARI. These participants were representatives from the producers, Processors and research level. The objective for this meeting was to propose and consider strategies for an effective collaboration between MOAP-NW and the GGWG. Some of the concerns raised / decisions reached, during the discussions, can be seen below:
  - MOAP to fund some activities of GGWG, including annual conferences / programs
  - Sponsor some FBOs participation in the working group meetings
  - Ensure that FBOs pay their annual dues
  - Identify gaps in the groundnut value chain and involve GGWG in addressing these gaps
  - Expand the geographical scope of GGWG (Currently concentrated in Tamale area)
  - Capacity building in the form of training and facilitation
  - Radio sensitization - Train radio journalists before the radio sensitization.

### 2. Communication and Visibility

- 500 copies of the EU-GAP / MOAP-NW 2021 Calendar, with a display of agricultural photos from the NW have been printed and distributed to Partners to enhance visibility of MOAP-NW in northern Ghana.
3. Challenges Encountered During the Reporting Period / Need for Joint Steering:

- COVID-19 continues to pose considerable challenges to the implementation of activities. The gathering of large numbers of people physically for review of the District Medium Term Development Plans (DMTDP’s) was not possible within the first quarter of the year, due to COVID-19 Restrictions. Internet connectivity in most parts of the operational area of the MOAP-NW programme is also a major challenge when it comes to holding online meetings with partners and stakeholders; which are held “virtually”, due to the restriction imposed as a result of COVID-19.

- Clarity on role and responsibilities of the EU-GAP PCU members, their reporting lines, plus logistics and resources (e.g. office space) for the unit to function effectively.

4. Success stories from the Period Under Review:

**Enhancing the Capacities of Market Traders to Making Agricultural Value Chains ‘Safe and Hygienic’**. There have been concerns about the increasing levels of unwholesome food products being sold, from unhygienic premises, in the markets. MOAP-NW worked with relevant partners and stakeholders – particularly with the Women in Agriculture Development (WIAD), in the three Regional Agriculture Departments and the 14 WIAD units, of the District Agriculture Departments – to address the challenge. Specifically, trainings, on proper food handling and storage (for vegetables, fruit, legumes and cereals), were organized for 362 market traders, mainly women, who are the main handlers of food stuffs. The market traders were also taken through the recommended processes for cleaning food stuff. The environmental health department of the various assemblies participated and provided practical steps, towards making the markets hygienic and conducive for the safe sale of food stuff. Following these trainings, action plans were developed, to reverse the negative trend of food contamination, through poor handling and storage of food stuff in the markets. Critical human resource capacity has been built around the issues of food safety and hygiene, and the trained market traders, are championing and rallying other stakeholders, to support, in making agricultural value chains, safe. Rashid Amina, a market trader from Wa Market, in appreciation of the initiative, stated: “I have been a vegetable trader in the Wa market for over 10 years and have been displaying my vegetables on a piece of sack on the bare ground even when it rains. This training has revealed all of the wrong things I have been doing and the effects on the health of my customers. I am grateful for the training and will also educate my colleague traders in the market”
Training session with Market Traders.