

**Semi-Annual Report for the Feed the Future Innovation Lab
for the Reduction of Post-Harvest Loss
January 1, - March 31, 2014**

I. Research Progress Summary

A. Research progress made during the reporting period

Work Plans for Year 1 and the Performance Management Plan have been developed and submitted to USAID.

Bangladesh

Objective 1: Execute sub-award agreement between the University of Illinois, ADM Institute and IRRI.

The sub-award agreement between the University of Illinois, ADM Institute and IRRI is in the final stages of completion.

Objective 2: Design job profiles, recruit and hire local staff

The Local Project Coordinator and a PH Engineer have been hired. The former is based in the IRRI-Bangladesh Office in Dhaka, the latter in the CSISA Jessore hub office. This will not only save the project costs but allow us to leverage existing infrastructure and other projects where post-harvest needs.

Objective 3: Identify PH stakeholders and local partners

We are moving ahead with engaging local partners, including Bangladesh Agricultural University, Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute, NGOs such as Practical Action and local networks of women's groups, farmer associations, and, of course, the private sector (millers, seed processors, and agro-machinery fabricators, etc.)

Objective 4: Conduct Post-Harvest Assessment in FtF Zone and broader PH landscape

Literature review of past research projects and extension materials have been completed. PHL Survey and Rapid Assessment tools are underway (FGDs, in-depth interviews in combination with field visits).

Objective 5: Implement Year 1 piloting and learning activities with collaborators and local stakeholders

We have been able to acquire a pilot flatbed dryer from another USAID funded project, CSISA (Cereals Systems Initiative for South Asia). Currently this flatbed dryer is housed with a collaborating seed processor. More “fine-tuning” and adaptive work is required to optimize this technology.

Objective 6: Evaluate and pilot mechanical drying options with relevant stakeholders

Drying is the most important technology that we can implement to control the moisture of harvested paddy, as well as parboiled paddy. Currently we are discussing with millers how to dry high moisture parboiled paddy. Lots of questions and concerns about the application still remain. Exposure visits to the site have been done (Feb), and March 19-22. Two batches of fresh wet parboiled paddy have been dried to date with good results. There is interest in establishing 4 more pilots, invested by private sector processors, who want to give this a try with Innovations Lab technical support. We are able to catch the main Boro season for this year, which can help to show progress in terms of outputs and research by year's end. These dryer trials have received media coverage.

Ethiopia

Objective 1: Accumulate data on postharvest losses in maize, wheat, sorghum, and pulses

Members of the Ethiopian team are planning their first visit to Ethiopia April 25 – May 2 to meet with the USAID Mission office and the local country team member, Dr. Fetien Abay, Mekelle University.

Objective 2: Develop PHL assessment survey questionnaire

The PHL team in collaboration with Dr. Fetien will meet with local stakeholders during the visit in April and will setup a broader team to start working on the PHL assessment survey questionnaire.

Ghana

Objective 1: Hire an In-Country Coordinator (ICC) and identify in-country stakeholders for PHL surveys etc.

Members of the Ghana team are planning their first visit May 15 – 31. The internal country coordinator (Mr. Kwabena Adu-Gyamfi) is on board. The Ghana PHL team and the ICC will meet with the USAID mission on May 15 before going to administer the PHL survey to the target stakeholders. The ICC is currently meeting a lot of potential stakeholders and will formalize the list in collaboration with the PHL team under the advisement of the Ghana USAID Mission.

Objective 2: Gain overall understanding of the maize value chain and conduct a PHL verbal survey (face-to-face interviews)

The PHL verbal survey questionnaire has been developed by the PHL team.

Objective 3: Identify and facilitate admission of three Ghanaian M.S. students to Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and Oklahoma State University (OSU) in Fall of 2014

The potential students have been identified for fall admission.

Guatemala

Objective 1: To identify and engage in-country stakeholders

PHL team visited USAID mission offices on March 17th to meet the mission staff and introduce themselves. The team presented a brief overview of the project and the year 1 work plan. The project team also visited the University Del Valle and met with the staff of the extension and research group and also the director of the vegetable protection office. The team members visited the SHARE office to meet the staff. SHARE is an NGO which has been selected as the sub-awardee in Guatemala for the project. On March 19th, the team visited the regions of Municipio de Chantla and Municipio of Todos Santos along with the SHARE staff. On March 20th, the team returned back to Guatemala City after stopping over at SHARE offices for reviewing the team visit to Huwhuetenango area and discuss next steps.

Some of the stakeholders selected in Guatemala for the PHL project are University del Valle, Molinos Modernos , Alimentos SA, and Red Mujeres women farmers association. More stakeholders will be identified and added to the list of stakeholders.

Objective 2: Development of PHL Assessment Survey Questionnaire, review and execute the survey

SHARE is working on developing the survey questionnaire for PHL assessment by incorporating and merging the Innovation Lab's PHL questionnaire with SHARE questionnaire that they developed for earlier projects involving respondents for the same target districts. SHARE will include questions related equal gender population in the survey, as well as children nutrition and growth issues.

B. Issues or concerns encountered during the reporting period

Sub-award agreements have taken more time to establish than anticipated. The Administrative Director and Managing Director have been able to push to get the process moving forward.

C. Data Sharing and Dissemination

No progress to report in this area.

II. Human and Institutional Capacity Development

A. Short-term training

No progress to report in this area.

B. Long-term training

No progress to report in this area.

C. Institutional capacity development

No progress to report in this area.

III. Technology Transfer and Scaling Partnerships

No progress to report in this area.

IV. Future Work

Country teams will finalize the PHL survey assessments, compile the responses, and analyze the data. They will identify potential projects and technologies to be initiated in each country and evaluate the pilot projects and technologies.

The Year 1 Annual Report will be completed for each country. Work plans for Year 2 will be developed based on the findings of the assessment surveys, analysis of the data and collaborating with stakeholders.