Summary:

Memorandum of Grant Conditions Section A23 states: ‘The Recipient, at the request of the Centre (IDRC), will permit officers or representatives of the Centre to visit the Project site(s) at times convenient to the parties concerned and will facilitate the discussion of the results and progress of the Project between Centre representatives and Project personnel.’

Therefore, a joint field visit comprising officer of the IDRC (Dr. Innocent Butare), project scientists from UofM, UofS, UNIOSUN, OAU and UP, and NGOs was conducted from April 16-24, 2016 in Nigeria and Benin Republic. This was the first of such visit to Project 107983. The purposes of the field visit were to fulfil the tenets of value for money, ethical standard, meet and interact with the benefitting farmers, and ascertaining the scientific/development delivery of the project. The visit provided first-hand opportunity to assess the state of project implementation and aided useful suggestions on the path to follow during the remaining project period. The visit also allowed the IDRC and the project teams to meet the officers of the partnering institutions to discuss the project and the level of adherence to project schedules and timelines. The field visit also created the opportunity for a brief project meeting in Nigeria and Benin with discussions led by Dr Innocent Butare.
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1 Objectives of the sites visit
- To gain first-hand knowledge of what is happening on the field
- To ensure that the 4 major teams implementing this project follow the same protocol.
- To ensure that what is seen on the field shows value for money and is able to justify amount of money invested into the project
- To determine what will be indicators of success for this project
- To determine if the project is keeping to timelines on all the project activities.
- To use the sites visits to determine if there is need for re-evaluation of plans to ensure the project achieve the set milestones.

2 Field Visit in Nigeria
2.1 Lagos state visit
The IDRC officer and Canadian colleagues arrived in Nigeria on 16th April, 2016 (Day 1). The field visits commenced on the 18th April, 2016 with visits to four locations in Lagos State, Nigeria, namely Ojo Vegetable Farmers Association (Groups 1 and 2), Lagos State University (LASU) farmers (1 and 2) and Ajara Farm Settlement, Badagry, Lagos. The team met 170 farmers’ representatives (97 men, 73 women) at Ojo, 38 farmers’ representatives (18 men and 20 women) in LASU and 54 farmers’ representatives (34 men and 20 women) in Ajara. Also present at the Lagos site visit were other stakeholders including representative of Lagos State Government, government extension agents, Project 107983 field officers and British American Tobacco Nigerian Foundation (BATNF), an existing partner with the objective to improve capacity of farmers.

The visiting team met with two groups of farmers (Group 1 and Group 2) at Ojo. The Group 1 is made up of 12 Cooperative Societies with 750 members while Group 2 is made up of 22 Cooperative Societies with about 3000 members. The total land area under cultivation in Ojo-Lagos is over 70 ha while in LASU total land area under cultivation is about 10 ha. At Ajara, the total land area cultivated to vegetables is about 4 ha. The vegetables planted were Amaranthus viridis, Solanum macrocarpon and Telfairia occidentalis in very large quantities. The farmers at the three locations hosted the visiting team well. Under-the-tent meeting was held both at Ojo and Ajara where the visiting team asked the farmers several questions including scaling up plan (Innovation Platform), access to water and irrigation facility, seed procurement, technical training, interaction with our project staff and their major challenges. Farmers introduced themselves to the team and actively expressed appreciation for the support received so far from the project. They reported that the project had supported them with irrigation pumps, fertilizer, high quality vegetable seeds and training in all areas of fertilizer Microdosing and scaling up. Dr Butare led the team in asking questions from the farmers. The farmers responded adequately to the questions. Dr Butare thereafter delivered high quality vegetable seeds (Ugu, Igbagba and tete) and seed-dress to the farmers. The farmers acted a drama to demonstrate the different challenges that they face in the vegetables value chain. The project also explained the value addition component of the research, especially production of polyphenols and snacks, with a view to reassuring the farmers about the future opportunity for ready-markets.
The team visited the farmers’ fields to examine the level of work and participation in vegetable production. The team was satisfied with the enormity of land under cultivation, participation of the farmers and the general skills demonstrated by the farmers. The pictures below show some of the actions during the field visit.

Challenges that the farmers face:

- Need for ever-ready markets for vegetables as glut caused by the rainy season had started and was causing a range of issues: prices were falling, vegetables were ageing on the farm and had to be disposed of and there were few buyers.

- Need for export facilitation and quality assurance training because they had access to the exporters but couldn’t move forward due to standards and requirements of the export agents

- New disease outbreak on ugu which was leading to death of plants at almost maturity

- New pest infestation (white fly) which was blackening of green leaves and reducing the marketability of the crop
2.2 Osun State sites

On the 19th April, 2016 (Day 2), the team moved to Osun State for field visit at Ilesha and Ede. At Ilesha, the team met with the representatives of 11 Vegetable Cooperative Societies. The representatives were 46 (22 men and 24 women) while we visited the Young Vegetables Scientists Club (YVSC) at Baptist High School, Ede. The School was on holiday but we met 12 students who volunteered to join the team despite the holiday. The team also met the School Principal, 2 Agricultural Science teachers and the Green Generation field officers on the site. The YVSC planted *Amaranthus, Solanum macrocarpon* and *Telfairia occidentalis*. The total area under cultivation was about 100 m². The School appreciated the project for supplying high quality seeds, fertilizer, pesticides and irrigation system.

At Ilesha, the team visited the field (about 2.5 ha) field to assess the project intervention impact and see physically how much knowledge had been transferred. The vegetables planted were *Amaranthus viridis, Solanum macrocarpon* and *Telfairia occidentalis* in appreciable quantities.

Responding to questions from the visiting team, the farmers demonstrated high knowledge in fertilizer microdosing techniques and field management practices. They expressed the positive differences they
had seen compared with their old practices and how much costs they have saved from the new technology.

Market was a major issue because the farmers had only few marketers coming to the farm to buy vegetables.

On behalf of the project, Dr Butare donated high quality seeds of vegetables and seed-dress to the farmers with an admonition that they should continually support production and marketing of vegetables. The visiting team re-assured the farmers on the commitment of the project to work directly with them and support market systems.
2.3 Institutional visit

On the 21st April, 2016, the project team met the leaders of the two institutions in Nigeria. The first visit was to the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife where the team met with the project leadership, postgraduate students and technical officers. There were 15 postgraduate students (5 PhD and 10 MSc) (8 male and 7 female) in attendance. The team discussed with the postgraduate students on their different research topics and related the topics to the project objectives. It was noted that most of the PhD research topics were in soil science with very few in marketing and sociology. It was decided that, if we have some extra money, effort should be made to recruit two Master’s degree students to conduct research into different aspects of marketing of the indigenous vegetables since our experience on the field showed that marketing is the most serious confronting the producers of indigenous vegetables. We engaged in discussion on the expectations from the postgraduate students, especially in relation to publication from the research work, attendance at local and international conferences and the expected dates of completion of their programmes.

At the Osun State University, Osogbo, the visiting team was welcomed by the Acting Vice-Chancellor (Prof O.J. Alamu), Registrar (Mr Gafar Shittu) and University Bursar (Mr A. Adegbite). Present at the meeting were the 2 PhD students being sponsored under the budget domiciled in UNIOSUN. The Acting Vice-Chancellor delivered an address to the team (copy attached) and expressed the commitment of the University to continue to support the project. The University presented cheques (covering tuition and sundry fees) to the two PhD students who are being supported through the budget domiciled in UNIOSUN. The project presented the products of value addition studies (vegetable fortified bread, chinchin and cookies) to the University so that members can taste and make comments. As requested by the Acting Vice-Chancellor, the visiting team led by Dr Butare made the following observations:

- The team informed the Acting Vice-Chancellor that they were very satisfied and had a very good impression based on the situation on ground at the sites visited. The extent of work on the sites demonstrated a practical value for money.
- The team was happy that the University is assisting the project to administer the fund with full transparency and without creating problems for the scientists to access the fund.
- The team expressed satisfaction that the UNIOSUN team is cooperating with the other partners to advance the project.
The team expressed joy that this bilingual cooperation is already yielding results, thus, proving that we can work together despite the differences in language.

2.4 Project Meeting

After the whole field visit programme in Nigeria, the project team met in the evening of April 21\textsuperscript{st}, 2016 to discuss the project further. In doing this, Dr Butare advised the team to discuss on the basis of the objectives. But before the discussion, we established the core objectives of our field visit as listed below:

- To gain first-hand knowledge of what is happening on the field
- To ensure that the 2 major teams implementing this project follow the same protocol.
- To ensure that what is seen on the field shows value for money and is able to justify amount of money invested into the project
- To determine what will be indicators of success for this project
- To determine if the project is keeping to timelines on all the project activities.
- To use the sites visits to determine if there is need for re-evaluation of plans to ensure the project achieve the set milestones.
2.4.1 Agronomy and food science

Develop technology capsule on fertilizer micro-dosing and water management technologies, value addition technology and seed production for indigenous vegetables.

What are the indicators showing the status of implementation of this objective?

- We have determined optimum rates for micro dosing in Nigeria for wet and dry seasons
- We have determined water requirement rates for vegetables in Nigeria for wet and dry seasons
- We have submitted reports on the technologies developed for both countries
- We have developed technologies for seed production
- We have reported these levels of progress in our technical report submitted to IDRC

Next steps

- To conclude the experiments in Benin on second season (wet) for the technologies
- To begin publishing papers
- To integrate an Msc/PhD on marketing since it is a main component of the innovation platform
- To organize farmers for training on seeds production
- To integrate entrepreneurs through IP to collate seeds produced, packaged and support to certify and make seeds available to farmers
- Involve National seed systems to guarantee quality seeds production
- Work towards inviting seed suppliers and certification bodies to join important meeting including annual project meetings

2.5 Scaling up models

Test, demonstrate and deploy two different models (Innovations Platform and Satellite Dissemination Approach) for reaching and benefiting more farmers with sustainable vegetable production and marketing innovations (project objective 2)

The project has plans to study and compare the effectiveness of 2 methods (SDA and IP) in chosen locations considering agro-ecology, existing market, social dynamics of farmers, and environmental effects. Where are we?

Findings

- We have begun the initiation and establishment of the platforms however replications on various levels is planned to be done so as to ensure accurate data

Next steps

- To have constant meeting between teams or thematic areas to ensure that methodologies are harmonized and results are collated for both countries.
- Social science: commission a student to study behavioral adoptions of farmers to new innovations. What are the things to do, what has been responsible for failures
- To see differences between farmers who own land and those who don’t own land

### 2.5.1 Scaling up the technology capsule

**Scale up the technology capsule to advance indigenous vegetables production, increase yields, preserve soil and water ecosystems and enable fertilizer cost-saving (objective 3).**

**Findings**

- We have an outlined strategy in the logical framework that explains how we will meet these numbers and we know that we will exceed it.
- Our strategy shows we will reach 51,000 farmers directly and reach 255,000 farmers in total, this will be managed by reaching 1,000 farmers per district in 51 districts. Each farmer is then expected to train 5 other farmers; this will bring the number to 204,000 farmers making a total of 255,000.
- Will create 51 women marketers cooperative groups with one market coop group per district and 25,500 young vegetable scientists which is 500 students per district, 50 students per school and 10 schools per district

**What are the indicators for measuring reach and impact on young vegetable scientists club (YVSC)**

Findings : Already in place but need to add a few more indicators for an effective measure of impact

**Next steps**

To add to the developed template, the following

- Seeds planted
- Physical proof of existence of farm
- Farm record book
- Income flow on vegetable sales

**Private Partnerships: who would they be?**

Findings:

Bakeries, seed suppliers, fertilizers suppliers, pesticide suppliers, industrial partners, industrial markets (shopping malls or flour mills), packaging companies, processing fabricators etc

### 2.5.2 Postgraduate students Research Topics

**How did you choose topics, how are the topics supervised so that they are harmonized?**

**Findings**

- Have a steering committee that interviewed and selected students, supervised design of topics and have monthly meetings with the students to see how far they have gone with the project
- Have quarterly seminars with students where they present to one another, understand how each of their project are of relevance to one another, get feedback from supervisors and principal investigators
- Each thematic area has one PhD student, attached to the MSc students in the research area.

Next steps:
- Have working sessions on topics to really see how to streamline and make sure each topic flows to one another.
- Include gender balance in all meetings and considerations at the data collection for the paper publications.

2.5.3 Recommendations from IDRC Program Officer-Dr Butare

Dr Butare admonished the team to note the following points:
- Ensure regular internal communication and have reports of such meeting sent to IDRC.
- Your communications strategy must have a measure of impact. Put in place from now, the indicators to measure impact of the external communication whether it’s true radio, bulletins, press releases or website information. He recommended Farm Radio International because they have a protocol and we need to reach them to see how we can adapt their protocol to meet our needs of measuring impact.
- Be careful to maintain the momentum of your progress, you are now a star project at IDRC.
- Recommendation to IDRC to organize a write-shop for publishing stories of change from the project.
- Project may require IDRC for language training assistance.
- Next annual meeting is Oct 11th – 15th, 2016 at Saskatchewan. This workshop will serve to evaluate scaling up on the field and the teams’ annual progress.
- Delegates from the project should be sent to FARA general assembly in Kigali, Rwanda between June 13th-16th, 2016 and at least a presentation made to ensure that the project starts getting international recognition.

3 Field visit in Benin Republic

3.1 Institutional visit to Universite de Parakou

On Friday, 22nd (Day 1) The visiting team led by Dr Innocent Butare met with the officer of the Université de Parakou led by the Vice Chancellor (Prof Prosper Gandaho) and Dean of the Faculty of Agronomy (Prof Honorat Edja). Also in attendance were Prof Noel Akiisoe from the University of Abomey-Calavi, Mr Ibrachi Gouda from AR2PI(NGO) and seed- phytosanitary representative (Mr Mahamadou ZIME ). We recognized the presence of 4 PhD students (Nutrition, social sciences, Agronomy/biophysics and Biophysics/Environment) and 3 MSc students (Soil science, biophysics, and social sciences) during the visit. The University expressed happiness for the international recognition of the University of Parakou, increased visibility, great impact of the project on livelihoods and economy on rural people which the MicroVeg project brings. The University is grateful for the body of scientific knowledge which is improving the scientific profile of the university and scaling up of project students. The University promised to continue to facilitate ease of access and ensure financial management at the departmental level. The University also appreciated the ‘anglophone-francophone marriage’ in this project which is already
yielding positive result. The Benin Food Technology task team presented samples of the innovative ‘Petits

3.2 Postgraduate students’ poster session in Parakou:
Postgraduate students that are domiciled at the University of Parakou had a poster session. The poster session exhibited the level of student led research works that had been done in Benin Republic in the area of agronomy, social science and value addition. Twelve (12) posters were mounted and each postgraduate student presented the results and also responded to questions that were asked by the visiting team. The session gave the team the opportunity to assess the extent of work done and the results so far. In general, the overall assessment is that the poster session was successful and a very good indicator of the carriage of the postgraduate students in the cascade of project implementation.
3.3 Visit to Association pour la Recherche et la Promotion de Pisciculture intégrée (AR2PI NGO)

The team visited the NGO’s office where the integrated aquaculture-vegetables production is the major operation. The NGO coordinates the activities of the Field Officers and also assist with scaling up programme. This occasion aims to meet with the representatives of the major stakeholders of the TLVs Innovative platform (Parakou district). The NGO explained its terms of engagement by the project and presented its operation modules across the project locations. Seven farmers’ representatives (3 men and 4 women) of 7 production sites and one marketers’ representative from Parakou district joined the team at the meeting. The team engaged the farmers in discussions especially in the area of marketing, field management of vegetables and scaling up. The farmers explained that marketing was not a problem because buyers come to their farms and that supply could not meet demand. They also explained the fertilizer micro-dosing innovation in details. The farmers and other actors are now being organized into functional innovation platform.
3.4 Field Visit to Sokounon women Vegetables Farmers field

The team visited the Sokounon women vegetable farmers group where we met the expectant women farmers waiting for our team. There were 28 farmers (4 men and 24 women) in attendance. The estimated land area planted to vegetables was about 11 ha on 2 sites. The major vegetables planted were *Amaranthus* secondary by *Solanum macrocarpon*. They were not planting *Ocimum gratissimum* because its market is limited in Parakou. The farmers welcomed us with traditional songs and dancing. They sang to praise the team and to appreciate the support we have given to their group. They greatly appreciated the supply of seeds of *Solanum macrocarpon* and *Amaranthus* by Nigeria team. They reported that Benin team had supported them with 200m irrigation hose for water transportation from the small dam to their fields. They were given the opportunity to express what they knew about the project while the visiting team also asked them questions on issues including marketing, fertilizer microdosing, pest control, interaction with project staff, water management and challenges. The farmers demonstrated the practical application of fertilizer microdosing and stated the superiority of this to their earlier practice of fertilizer broadcasting. The farmers stated that their profit margin has improved significantly through cost-cutting on fertilizer.
3.5 **Visit to Suanin Women Vegetable Farmers field**

On the 23rd April, 2016 (day 2) the team visited the Suanin Women Vegetables Farmers Group. All the 21 farmers in attendance were women and one man who welcomed our team with dancing and joy. They predominantly grow mixed exotic and traditional vegetables (*Amaranthus* and *Solanum*). They were given the opportunity to express what they knew about the project while the
visiting team also asked them questions on issues including marketing, fertilizer microdosing, and pest control, interaction with project staff, water management and challenges. The farmers demonstrated the practical application of fertilizer microdosing and stated the superiority of this to their earlier practice of fertilizer broadcasting. They also expressed their acknowledgment to Benin team for supporting of irrigation hose (170m). The farmers stated that their profit margin has improved significantly through cost-cutting on fertilizer. The team appreciated the women group for the great work on the using vegetables production to sustain their respective families.

3.6 Visit to Young Vegetables Scientist Club:
Our team visited the Agricultural high school of INA where we met with 20 members of young vegetable scientist club (10 boys and 10 girls) and their technical officer/teacher (Mr Adisso Achille). The 20 boys and girls welcomed our team with dancing and singing. The total land area for vegetable production at the location was about 3 ha. The site was majorly devoted to the cultivation of Amaranthus and Ocimum some other local vegetables like bitter-leaf and Moringa oleifera. At the location, the students established 2 demonstration sets with 5 plots each to show how Amaranthus responds to fertilizer microdosing, urea and organic manure for each
demo set. The sites were well laid out in a fashionable way and are adjudged adequate for demonstration. The students had full skills of the practicals of application of fertilizer microdose.

3.7 Visit to Project Experimental Site at INA
Our team visited the project experimental site located in the National Institute of Agricultural Research of Benin INRAB Ina CRA North. On ground to receive us were the MSc and PhD students. The students were given the opportunity to explain their research objectives, the justification and the setup of the experiments. Overall, the experiments were well laid out and investigations were based on fertilizer microdosing, water management and regimes of fertilizer application. All of three studied leafy vegetables were established (*Amaranthus, Solanum* and *Ocimum*). We noted a high application of science on the field and the commitment of the students is commendable.
3.8  Project meeting in Benin
Reviewing important thematic areas. This discussion was led by Dr Innocent Butare.

3.8.1  Scale of impact
Nigeria should continue to work on expansion while Benin Republic should now focus on high market locations to reach the number of target farmers.
3.8.2 Food Science

To extract polyphenols (PP) concentrate to determine if we can use it to enrich various food products so that people who don’t eat vegetable can have it in other forms

- The PP is important for health especially blood pressure and reduce amount of glucose released in the body system.
  - Mandate of University of Manitoba: with high technology facility to extract PP into concentrate.
  - Mandate of Obafemi Awolowo University: focuses on *Telfaria* and *Amaranthus* to make processed dried vegetables into powder.
  - Mandate of University of Parakou: focuses on *Ocimum gratissimum* to make processed dried vegetables into powder.

Next steps
- Tested one rate of application in bread, cookies and chin-chin and plan to have sensory evaluations so that the rates are acceptable by consumers.
- Benin to send vegetable samples to UofM immediately and also send a trainee to UofM to learn some tech in food science research.
- To report on these during next reporting period coming Sept 19th, 2016.
- Results by then: optimized extraction of PP.
- Started training students.

3.8.3 Agronomy

- List of students in technical report submitted.
- Number of MSc students likely to increase as project progresses to second phase.
- Prof Derek Peak will send in a PhD student before the end of the year to study microbial populations with special reference to the effects of the microdose technology in Benin and Nigeria.
- No problems with this thematic area.

3.8.4 Innovation platform

- By next report, IP results will become visible and dynamics of measure ascertained.
- Prepare questionnaire that will show data to be collected on Innovation Platform (IP) and share it among teams by first week of May.
- IP establishment will be completed by end of July.
- Nigeria team will appoint a PhD student to work on IP, to collect data, monitor and compare the two models being implemented on the field.
- Track cost-benefit analysis on both platforms so that we can have economic measure on the models as an immediate outcome on the short term.

3.8.5 School clubs

Next steps

Benin: integrate schools which are not agricultural centered schools to increase the number of schools above the 6 schools currently adopted.
Nigeria: to integrate colleges of agriculture and train their students on the projects innovations beyond the planned secondary schools.

To ensure concrete measure of change and impact as a result of the school project.

Organize meeting and workshop to exchange informations/project results with other development or research actors.

4 Comparative table of visited sites versus project objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Objectives</th>
<th>Nigeria sites</th>
<th>Benin sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Develop technology capsule on fertilizer micro-dosing and water management technologies, value addition technology and seed production for indigenous vegetables.</td>
<td>Ilesha, Chinchin and cookies enriched with Telfairia and Solanum Bread enriched with polyphenol from Telfairia and Solanum.</td>
<td>Experimental site INA, Petits cailloux enriched with Ocimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Test, demonstrate and deploy two different models (Innovations Platform and Satellite Dissemination Approach) for reaching and benefiting more farmers with sustainable vegetable production and marketing innovations</td>
<td>Lagos state visit, Osun state visit (Ilesha)</td>
<td>Agricultural High school, INA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Scale up the technology capsule to advance indigenous vegetables production, increase yields, preserve soil and water ecosystems and enable fertilizer cost-saving.</td>
<td>Lagos state visit, Osun state visit Baptist High School, Ede, Institutional visit</td>
<td>Suanin TLV women field, Sokounon, YSVC of Agricultural High school of In, Institutional visit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Next Project team meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 11th-15th October, 2016 in Saskatchewan, Canada.
Visiting team

The Site visiting team:

- Dr. Innocent Butare: IDRC program officer
- Prof Clement Adebooye: Regional Project Coordinator, MicroVeg – Osun State University, Nigeria
- Prof Duro Oyedele: Principal investigator, MicroVeg – Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria
- Prof Derek Peak: Principal investigator, MicroVeg- University of Saskatchewan, Canada
- Dr. Irenikatche Akponikpe: Principal investigator, MicroVeg – University of Parakou, Benin
- Prof Rotimi Aluko: Principal investigator, MicroVeg – University of Manitoba, Canada
- Dr. Mohamed Baco: Co-investigator- University of Parakou, Benin
- Dr. Carole Sossa-Vihotogbe: Co-investigator- University of Parakou, Benin
- Dr. Jonas Djenontin: Co-investigator- University of Parakou, Benin
- Prof David Natcher: Co-investigator- University of Saskatchewan
- Prof Adeolu Ayanwale: Co-investigator, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria
- Prof Kolawole Adekunle: Co-investigator- Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria
- Prof Noel Akissoe- Partner on PhD supervision, University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin
- Mr Ibrachi Gouda- AR2PI NGO lead, Benin
- Mr Mahamadou ZIME - National extension service (CARDER, Benin), agent on seed and phytosanitary issues
- Dr Titus Alao-Osun State University
- Mr Oba Fasiku: Field supervisor- Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria
- Ms Jacinta Uramah: NGO lead- The Green Generation Initiative
- Mr Tosin Adeboye: Field officer (Green Generation)
- Mr Freeborn Jessa: Field Officer (Green Generation)
- Ms Naguibath Soumaila, Field officer , AR2PI, Benin
- Mr Rachad Bakari, Field officer, AR2PI NGO, Benin
- Mr Malick Dougbè, Field officer, AR2PI NGO, Benin