



3rd QUARTER MONITORING REPORT

(July-September, 2023)

GRAINS FOR GROWTH PROJECT (G4G)



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1.0 Executive Summary

In the third quarter of 2023, U3 Agrinet continued its partnership with IDH, Mastercard Foundation and Guinness Ghana to support smallholder farmers (SHFs) in the cultivation of Sorghum. This report provides an overview of the key activities undertaken during this period within the Ingrower and Outgrower Model between July and September, 2023.

Supply of quality fertilizer to farmers through their groups was effectively conducted and all farmers received and trained on how to apply. It was also to supplied fertilizer to farmers who had completed planting the sorghum seeds based on our monitoring report. U3 Agrinet in partnership with MoFA, continued the routine monitoring of farms and providing support to farmers through training.

In the quarter under review, U3 Agrinet participated in several meetings with Financial Institutions in attempt to secure an estimated GHS 2M financial facility to fulfil its estimate 400 MT of Sorghum to supply contract to Guinness PLC. Absa, Fidelity Bank, Zenith Bank and Bank of Africa have been engaged at various levels and awaiting results.

U3 Agrinet also organized a massive Green Field Day Durbar to showcase the technologies in sorghum production to farmers. The durbar was well attended by traditional authorities, input suppliers, farmers and partners including IDH, Guinness Ghana PLC and financial institution. The occasion brought together farmers to encourage peer learning. We acknowledge the support provided by IDH for a successful greenfield day.

2.0 Activities in Q3

2.1 Fertilizer Distribution to Outgrower Groups

The challenge of quality and timely access to fertilizer has been seasonal occurrence prior to U3 Agrinet's participation in the Grains for Growth project. The 600 farmers who participated in the G4G Project through our Maize for Sorghum initiatives received 100kg of Falcon/ETG fertilizer at the right time of the season for onward application to their crops at various levels of growth. Each farmer group delegated 2 members and paid their own transport service to receive on behalf of the entire group at the Winkogo Warehouse of U3 Agrinet.



Two Women form a participating group of smallholder farmer accessing their share of the Falcon/ETG fertilizer from the Winkogo Warehouse

Each group representatives signed or thumbprint to authenticate and acknowledge receipt of their group quota. The group leaders take responsibility of distributing to each member who cultivated Sorghum under the scheme. These farmers had already received training on when and how to apply fertilizer in their sorghum farms recommended in the G4G crop production protocol.

2.2 Supervision and Support to Outgrowers.

As part of the support to empower smallholders adopt to best farming practices, Management of U3 Agrinet carried out a joint monitoring of farms with the Ministry of Agriculture field officers in the various operational districts to acquaint with the conditions of fields and to provide technical backstopping where necessary.

The joint monitoring exercise was part of U3 Agrinet sustainability plan to ensure that it continued to enjoy technical assistance from the ministry of agriculture beyond the G4G support



During these monitoring visits, some few poor performing farms were spotted and mitigation measures were put in place to redeem crop performance. Some of these issues were beyond recovery hence such farms could be declared as lost investments. Most of these farms were in the Bongo District. Our rapid assessment of the issues revealed the following;

1. Poor germination of the Kapala variety in Bongo Adaboya covered 20 out of 85 acres supported.
2. Misapplication of herbicides in Sumbrungu resulted in crop shocks.
3. Delayed germination especially in Yinduri, reasons were not readily known
4. Some farmers could not afford the cost of weeding resulting in poor farm hygiene observed in some of the farms visited
5. Erratic rainfall pattern in some of the operational zones affected germination
6. Poor timing of planting of the Pack 501 variety resulted in stunted growth due to high moisture levels on such fields.
7. Non-adherence to fertilizer and herbicides appropriate use.



Some field that experience poor farmers in Adaboya and Sherigu in the Bongo and Bolga districts respectively

A combination of these bad practices constituted to the shocks and poor growth observed. Yields were going to be impacted leading to investment lost. However, the team ensured to keep sharing relevant information across the groups through their leaders anytime any lesson is observed. This hand holding support to smallholder farmers became necessary as the production of sorghum has been relegated to the background over the years and now going through a learning phase

2.3 Capacity Building Training of Field Officers

During the period under review, a number of trainings for both Field Officers and Smallholder



ToT for SME in the Upper East region on quality standards organized by IDH

farmers were conducted. U3 Agrinet field team participated in training conducted by IDH on grains quality and standards. This was a very significant capacity building session for staff as the need to ensure quality issues at the farmer level were becoming paramount if we wanted to remain relevant in the G4G Project.

2.4 Distribution and Assisting SHFs with Passbooks Books

As part of efforts to track and report accurately on the participation and progress of smallholder farmers in the G4G Project, IDH supported U3 Agrinet with 1,600 copies of Farmer Passbooks. The Farmer Passbook is a record book designed to track the farm production and sales activities of a farmer. The books will also be used to track jobs created because of the G4G activities.

To date, all 600 smallholder farmers under the G4G Project have had their profile records transferred onto their Farmer Passbooks. The respective field officers of the groups continue to engage, track and record progress of activities during supervisions or through representatives.



2.5 Transferring of SHFs and Their Support Package into the ActivityInfo App

The process of synchronizing small holder farmers' (SHFs) information onto the ActivityInfo app involves collecting data from their passbooks, uploading it to the app, and validating it for discrepancies. Field officers gather the passbooks from SHFs, meticulously enter the data into the ActivityInfo app, and scrutinize the information for any errors or inconsistencies. This systematic approach ensures the accuracy and reliability of the data, which is vital for informed decision-making and project management.

The ActivityInfo app currently host data of all 600 farmers and their activities. The purpose of streamlining data management, enhancing data accuracy, and facilitating efficient decision-making while ensuring data security and promoting transparency and engagement among small holder farmers. Relying on ICT to improve efficiency at every facet of our model is a key priority.

U3 Agrinet is also collaborating with AgroCenta in the onboarding processing which is ongoing with smallholder farmers onto their system to aid easy management and tracking of relevant indicators of the G4G Project.

2.6 Step Down Training for SHFs

The step-down training for small holder farmers (SHFs) organized by U3Agrinet encompassed a structured curriculum aimed at imparting essential knowledge and skills for optimizing their harvest and post-harvest activities. The content and purpose of this training were as follows:

Harvesting Techniques: The training covered best practices for harvesting crops at the right stage of maturity, emphasizing the use of appropriate tools and methods to minimize damage and maximize yield.

Post-Harvest Handling: SHFs were educated on proper handling techniques to maintain the quality of their produce. This included information on cleaning, sorting, and grading to ensure market-ready products.

Storage and Preservation: Participants learned about suitable storage methods and facilities to prevent spoilage, pests, and decay. Techniques for preserving produce, such as drying, were also discussed.

Quality Control: The training emphasized the importance of quality control measures, including regular inspections and quality standards, to meet market demands and secure better prices.

2.7 Harvesting of Sorghum-Procurement of Tarpaulins to Smallholder Farmers

As part of preparation toward harvest, especially with the early maturing variety such as Pack 501 of Sorghum, U3 Agrinet began initiating the process for timely harvesting. Even though majority of fields were yet to mature for harvest, most of the model farms and few other smallholder fields showed signs of readiness.

Following this, U3 Agrinet procured about 30 tarpaulins to start harvesting these fields as early as possible to avoid moulding and birds. Even though the rains were still regular, the team ensured that harvested grains were adequately protected and dried in the warehouse. Notwithstanding all the proactiveness of the team in the timely harvest, portions of some model farms were damaged through the excessive rainfall.



Women engage in harvesting of Sorghum (pack Variety) in U3 Agrinet/MoFA Model Farms and plot of PLWDs at the Balungu Farm Estate

3.0 Green Field Day Durbar on Sorghum Production

Working to build resilience agriculture and sustainable incomes for smallholder farmers in the Upper East Region is a collective effort of key actors in the value chain. Our market-driven model is a sound approach to ensuring that farmers have the resources they needed to produce high-quality crops that meet the demand of the market.

The Grain for Growth Project (G4G) funded by IDH-Ghana is a much-needed initiative that is making a real difference in the lives of smallholder farmers in the north of Ghana. As part of

our implementation approach, U3 Agrinet partnered MoFA (Talensi) to setup model farms as training centres to demonstrate GAPs and encourage peer learning.

In line with this objective, U3 Agrinet in collaboration with MoFA (Talensi District) invited stakeholders and the general public farming communities to participate, learn and adopt best practices in the production of sorghum in our region. The program which was dubbed: **Rekindling the Production and Utilization of Sorghum-Our Traditional Crop for Economic Transformation**, was largely successful following the high participation from the cross representation of traditional authorities, patterners, MoFA, Input Suppliers, Financial Institutions, NGOs and Smallholder Farmers. Over 350 people participated in the field day.

Key stakeholders such as MoFA Regional Director and his five (5) District Directors (Bolga Municipal, Bolga East, Talensi, Bongo and Nabdam) as well as representatives of Guinness Ghana, SNV and IDH were in attendance.

Four (4) model farms were visited and farmers interacted, asked questions and shared their views. The Balungu Farm Estate climaxed the event, where participated toured the 20-acres dedicated to PLWD who participated in Sorghum Production. The participants also toured the 248 maize and sorghum farm to see the various activities happening.

The durbar which was highly participated by traditional authorities from 5 communities and 2 paramountcy's, graced the occasion and pledge their support to release over 500 acres of land to support activities of U3 Agrinet.

The team met with some of the beneficiaries of G4G Project who were persons living with



1PLWDs participating in G4G Project

Disability, who now felt included and hoping for a bountiful harvest that will impact on their incomes and livelihood. The 20-acre fenced and mechanized garden could only support 16 PLWDs in the Balungu Community while 12 of them are supported outside the model farm in others communities. This implies that, few of the PLWDs and other smallholder farmers will remain productive with irrigated vegetables using the boreholes and solar powered system.

The participants also experienced a tour of part of the 248-acre Balungu Farm Estate production site. The farm had multiple crops (maize and sorghum) in different well design and labelled quadrants to facilitate learning as the least. The farm also served as a pilot field for Regenerative Agriculture led IDH as part of the climate smart practices to ensure sustainable sourcing of grains. This also aligns with the Guinness Ghana Ltd and SNV partnership initiative on the Sustainable Sourcing of Sorghum project launched few weeks ago.



248 Block Model Farm of service vulnerable women, youth and PLWDs

At the durbar ground, the representative of the Tongo-Raana (Paramount Chief of Tongo Traditional Area) Prof. Keneth Pelig-Ba, Chief of Gorogo, chaired the programme. Solidarity messages were presented by all the key stakeholders including Guinness Ghana, IDH ,Regional Director of MoFA ,Stanbic Bank,Ghana, Falcon/ETG and representative of traditional authorities (Paramount Chief of Naaga Traditional Area). The Paramount Chief of Naaga traditional area-Chief Olando Awuni in his remark, appealed to his fellow traditional authorities to emulate the gestures. However, pledges have been made by the two traditional rulers on the release of more land to support U3 Agrinet activities in the area. Chief John Atiah, (Chief of Balungu) pledged 1000 acres and Chief Olando Awuni also pledged 500 acres respectively.to U3 Agrinet to support the vulnerable in their communities in the coming season.

Key areas of learning observed by farmers:

1. Choice and access to quality seed
2. Planting dimensions
3. Time and process of applying farm practices
4. Weed and disease control and management
5. Yield expectation
- 6. Harvest and post-harvest preparation**





3.1 Key lessons and recommendations:

- Scale Up Regenerative Agriculture on the model farm and encourage smallholder farmer adoption.
- Increase land development and fencing to increase the number of PwDs into Sorghum value chain.
- Support from traditional authorities to increase land access by releasing farm lands for development. The land is available, however, there is limited resource capacity to develop these lands to allocate to vulnerable groups.
- Increase production support to sorghum production in the region, invest in processing and mechanization of sorghum and build capacity.

The programme which was largely funded by IDH at an amount of GHS 39,810, was also technically supported by the IDH Agronomist, Gender Advisor and Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor. U3 Agrinet and the entire team will continue to show gratitude and a good spirit of partnership in in this project.

3.2 U3 Agrinet New LOGO

As part of our branding and communication strategy, management, and staff of U3 Agrinet used the occasion to unveil its new logo. The entity will hence be identified by this logo by smallholder farmers, partners and suppliers.



4.0 Other Operational Activities

U3 Agrinet have our operation visible in over in a number of communities across four districts in the region so far. It is expected that our Field Officers provide supervision and support activities across these communities. However, due to the constraints of inadequate motor cycles, management procured two (2) new motorbikes to facilitate the movement of field officers. The procurement of the two (2) motorbikes has contributed to the increased visibility of officers on the ground. This will also assist during recovery of grains for repayment for inputs supplied to farmers.



Two Motor Bikes to enhance field supervision

Another important addition was the procurement of a new tricycle. The tricycle is a significantly relief to both U3 Agrinet management in terms of transporting farm inputs. Also, the tricycle has helped the organization to really practice her inclusion agenda of transporting Persons Living with Disabilities to enable them participants in the G4G Project at the garden.



U3 Agrinet Procure One Tricycle to facilitate operations

The tricycle which is a multi-purpose machine, continue to serve critical needs of U3 Agrinet and some of the ingrower farmers by transporting farm inputs, farmers and food stuff to and from the farm.

5.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

5.1 Summary statistics of project indicators

Indicator Tracking Table (As at end of September, 2023)

Theme	Indicator Name	Annual Target	Q2 Actual	Q3	Comments
Smallholder Farmer Engagements	Number of smallholder farmers registered with company sourcing database	2000	1,216	1267	Female=1076 Male=191 Young Adult Female=428 Aged Adult Female=628 Young Adult Male=86 Age Adult Male=95
	Number of SHFs who participate in trainings in good agricultural practices to produce high-quality grains	2880	760	600	Female=465 Male=135 Young Female=227 Adult Female=238 Young Male=76 Adult Male=59
	Number of SHFs who participate in trainings on climate smart or regenerative agriculture	450	380	350	Green field day training Male=100 Female=250 Young male=40 Young female=85 Adult male=60 Adult female=165
	Number of SHFs that participate on trainings on financial and business literacy.	225	670	N/A	

Theme	Indicator Name	Annual Target	Q2 Actual	Q3	Comments
	Number of SHFs with improved access to high-quality seeds, agrochemical and mechanization as a result of project support)	1000	600 SHFs 1000acres	N/A	Pack 501seeds Kapala seeds Dorado seeds Hybrid Maize
	No. of demonstration farms setup to demonstrate good agricultural practices, climate smart agriculture, regenerative agriculture	5	5	N/A	
	Number of Extension Officers engaged in facilitating agricultural production and technology	10	11	15	Male=13 adults Female= 2 Adults
	New land acquired and developed for ingrower farmers	200 acres	110 acres	0	
Production	Number of Persons in work opportunity		47	600	Female=465 Male=135 Young Female=227 Adult Female=238 Young Male=76 Adult Male=59 These are largely the Smallholder farmers
	Number of farmers who have been allocated farm lands	TBD	116	N/A	

6.0 Plans For the next quarter

- Harvesting of all fields
- Support to farmers in the post-harvest handling
- Recovery of input credit
- Secure aggregation financing to aggregate and supply
- Preparing Onion nurseries
- Provide land preparation service to Smallholder Farmers in Vegetable Production
- End of season review meeting and planning

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

The quarter has been exciting and full of collaboration, learning and adapting of strategies to improve implementation and drive toward achieving the set objectives for the quarter. The external and internal collaboration impacted positively to our learning culture but more importantly given us a leverage to build new partnership.

U3 Agrinet is currently working hard with potential financing institution expressing interest to finance the upcoming aggregation of sorghum from our Smallholder Farmers. This is so critical in our operations to secure fund, yet all effort has not yielded any result even when most farmers are harvesting. The risk of farmers side selling is coming high and U3 Agrinet could loss investment in Sorghum.

It is important for financing institutions in the Agribusiness space develop innovative system to improve and reduce waiting time for financial facilities to SMEs.

7.0 Annex

7.1 Telling Our Story

Leaving No Vulnerable Behind-Participation of Persons living with Disabilities in Grains for Growth Project

7.2 U3 Agrinet Brochure



U3 Agrinet brochure
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