Oxfam management response to the evaluation of the GRAISEA programme, Phase 1

A: Context, background and findings

1. The context and background of the evaluation, i.e. the purpose and scope of the evaluation.

The evaluation is mandatory for the programme according to the Oxfam Common Approaches to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning and Social Accountability (CAMSA) principles. The evaluation purpose is to provide Oxfam and the donors, partners and stakeholders involved with:

- A robust assessment of results achieved and how the programme contributed to change at national and regional levels;
- An assessment of the current multi-country programme model to understand how Oxfam can improve processes and coherence on this implementation modality;
- An assessment of current learning practices that can help the team improve use of evidence in future implementation and support the identification of learning questions on women’s economic empowerment, private sector engagement for inclusive and responsible business practices and climate change adaptation.
- Concrete recommendations on how to improve GRAISEA’s operational arrangements and strategic approaches that could feed into evidence-based design, inception and adaptation of similar programmes within Oxfam and in the sector.

The evaluation is articulated around two different but interconnected work strands:

- **Results and learning:** The evaluation will assess what changes have been observed at the result level through a rigorous assessment of country and regional outcomes with the objective of establishing GRAISEA’s contribution to the observed changes, and their alignment with selected elements of the programme’s theory of change. It will also assess current learning practices to improve the use of evidence in the context of multi-country programmes, and based on assessment of the existing evidence, identify possible learning questions on key areas of interest for the programme. This work strand is the core assignment for these terms of reference.
- **Process:** The evaluation will assess GRAISEA management and coordination structures to understand how the programme governance structures affected implementation processes to inform the future design of multi-country programmes and improve coordination practices. This work strand is being conducted under a different assignment, and its results will be incorporated into the final evaluation report that should be produced as part of these terms of reference.

2. Summary of the main findings and recommendations

**Overall conclusion**

The evaluation concluded that GRAISEA’s main assumption of a win-win-win proposition holds true when key factors are in place to sustain it, and that there were different levels of achievement for the programme’s four results. The evaluation also translated some elements of GRAISEA’s complexity through the identification of strategies and mechanisms implemented by partners at country and national levels, and showed how these mechanisms functioned, or failed, in supporting the achievement of the programme’s results.

**Strategic and direction setting of GRAISEA 1**

The link between the design and plan of the country team and partner with the regional design and plan should be improved. Our findings suggest that while the majority of efforts on various fronts and at different levels were able to serve their respective goals well, they do not add up to an integral result and interconnectedness between the different components that are mutually enforcing, and as predicted by the theory of change (especially Result 1). They do at a micro scale, but are not generally
observational for all the components. If a new iteration of GRAISEA is to be implemented, designing a programme that features a seamless connection across the different components should be an aim.

Results and the effectiveness of multiple mechanisms used to achieve results

Result 1: Influencing ASEAN and member states

Despite continuous challenges, GRAISEA has tried various ways to influence the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). But there are more avenues to explore, should a new iteration of GRAISEA take place. It is important that a substantial adjustment in strategy should also be reflected in the change of indicators, especially in the case of influencing the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF). GRAISEA has learned great lessons in influencing ASEAN, particularly that the nature of ASEAN does not, as was assumed by the original proposal, allow for direct engagement. In response, the strategy has been adjusted to organize CSOs into the Business and Human Rights (BHR) Caucus comprising national CSOs of countries under GRAISEA. The Caucus enables their participation in ASEAN influencing, as well as a shift to influence the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC) due to persistent challenges with influencing AMAF. The fact that the Result 1 indicator on influencing AMAF remains unchanged implies that GRAISEA continues to report on and be accountable to this result. Moreover, evidence shows GRAISEA learned that building constituencies in some member states and engaging relevant ministers to take up policy recommendations are key to success in influencing ASEAN. Most importantly, it is critical to position GRAISEA’s design (should a new iteration takes place) within the spectrum of change processes of influencing ASEAN.

Result 2: Value chain work and the market-linkage initiative

Overall, Result 2 has been successfully achieved. The effect of the overall value-chain work demonstrated the relevance of the market-linkage initiative with the smallholder farmers’ primary need to increase income. Yet, some elements of the value-chain work strategy need further strengthening. Despite the positive effects of the market-linkage initiative and Result 2 overall, a centralized model of contract farming needs to be closely monitored. It has virtues, but also risks. Analyses of the effectiveness of the contract farming model and building a farmers’ organizations mechanism suggest a need to further develop the capacity of farmers’ organizations to have a long-term plan, particularly a transition from conventional/subsistence farming to export-orientated farming and for individual farmers to acquire entrepreneurial skills.

Women’s economic empowerment and gender equality

a) Access to economic opportunity does not automatically lead to gender equality. Bringing about gender transformation progress requires the influencing of change at individual/agency level and is a political process that may require a long-term shift in organizational thinking. It is evident that women’s economic empowerment is an avenue to reducing women’s poverty. However, economic empowerment alone does not automatically lead to a reduction in gender inequality within the community and society. While GRAISEA strongly addresses economic aspects, there is a continuous question about how to tackle gender inequality so that the gender dynamic between women and men can be transformed at all levels. While there is evidence of success in influencing the insertion of gender transformative/responsive principles into some international standards (the Sustainable Rice Platform – SRP, the Asian Seafood Improvement Collaborative –ASIC, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil – RSPO), and women’s empowerment at the individual and collective levels, it is worth exploring how companies in the value chain would benefit from involving women (by influencing their business strategy, for example).

b) There is recognition of women’s valuable contribution in the value chain. This is attributed as a unique contribution of GRAISEA. It is evident that all private sector representatives of the rice value chain programme recognized and conveyed this during the field visit, as they witnessed that women contributed significantly to the high quality of rice/paddy production. This opens an opportunity for women to take a quality control/quality assurance role.
c) **Coherence between the prevailing realities of women’s inequality in selected value chains in seven countries with the approach used to affect systemic change could be improved.** Findings suggest a degree of incoherence between issues that presents a barrier to women’s agency in selected value chains and countries. This is partially contributed to by the lack of gender analyses (at regional level and in Cambodia) or where gender analysis was only developed after the inception phase (Thailand, Indonesia, Pakistan, Vietnam, Myanmar and Philippines).

d) **Reporting on women’s economic empowerment can be improved** by tracking the empowerment journey of women and the perception of men of their involvement in the programme, and their interaction with women.

**Result 3: Influencing agribusiness corporations/the private sector**

a) **Influencing corporations takes time. It requires relationship and trust building.** Thus, a three-year programme should be well strategized, for example by acknowledging the need to engage the most strategic allies. There is strong evidence to suggest that the private sector outreach strategy should be strengthened to engage with only the most strategic companies or multi-stakeholder initiatives and/or other social movements. The strategy should be informed by a proper assessment of the current state of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in South-East Asia, and the market structure and corporate structure of each ASEAN member state.

b) **The assumption on influencing multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) as a key strategy to bring about scalable impact needs to be revisited.** Engaging with them might require further scrutiny. There is evidence of success in inserting gender responsive/transformative principles into MSI standards, principles and policies. While this success has opened the door to advancing the gender transformation agenda, there is no evidence to suggest the extent to which these principles and standards have demonstrated impact, nor is there any reporting mechanism in place to monitor and evaluate success in influencing MSIs, especially when this is expected to bring about a scalable impact. Any strategic decision to allocate resources (should a new iteration of GRAISEA take place) may need to take into account this consideration. Moreover, the recent trend of global corporations moving towards implementing more innovative models of multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) to bring about a concrete impact in achieving inclusive and sustainable business practices also need to be considered.

**Result 4.: Responsible agribusiness investment and new initiatives**

GRAISEA is an effective laboratory for partners to test and pilot new models of intervention, as is evident in the case of the Institute of Social Entrepreneurs in Asia (ISEA) and Change Fusion. The GRAISEA presence was timely for ISEA’s intention to develop a gendered benchmark in transformational partnership as well as for Change Fusion to pilot a Global Impactor’s Network (GIN) model. This unintended effect could be an aim of every Oxfam initiative — to foster innovative solutions and community-based innovation — and is worth continuing.

**Communications strategy**

A good communications strategy needs to move beyond the classic donor-and-development-professionals-orientated visibility strategy and has to be adequately budgeted for. The shortcomings of the current communication strategy are partially contributed to by the inadequacy of the budget to allow space for creativity within plans. While internal communication reached its desired results, efforts to strengthen external communication should be improved.

**Governance structure, the capacity building mechanism for partners and learning modalities**

1. **Governance structure**

   a. The implementation structure has been acknowledged and perceived to be overly complex for a similar size and type of programme.

   b. The Programme Steering Committee (PSC) could have played a more active role in guiding and steering the Programme Management Unit (PMU) rather than having only an accountability role.
c. The PMU was key in holding together the different aspects of the programme, but was vastly understaffed for the number of entities (partners and Oxfam country offices) involved in the programme, and given the expectations of the donor.

2. Capacity building mechanism for implementing partners

Countries and partners appreciated the support Oxfam provided in brokering links with other organizations or offices in the region: face-to-face (F2F) advisory support, blended forms of support and the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) support provided by the MEL officer. Some of the challenges in provision of capacity building support included the assessment of partner needs and the amount of advisory time available (with some advisers only having 10% to give to GRAISEA) to allow advisers to really understand the programme, country contexts and partners’ needs.

3. Learning modalities

a. The MEL role focused more on donor accountability rather than learning and adopted a traditional approach of using quantitative indicators to measure change, which did not allow for changes in quality to be monitored and did not necessarily match the nature of the change to which GRAISEA was aspiring.

b. While learning was identified via the working group (WG) and F2F, the ambitious work plans meant countries and partners were focused on implementing their activities, which challenged the headspace and time people had to consider how learning could be applied to their context.

Recommendations: See below response.
B: Oxfam responses on key recommendations

Recommendations to improve strategic and direction setting of GRAISEA 2

1. **Improve the focus of the programme design.**

GRAISEA, or future similar initiatives, should focus the theory of change into a more streamlined approach with two or three agriculture value chains that are relevant for South-East Asian consumers, brands (South-East Asian or global), and alignment with national governments’ priorities. This interconnectedness between the three elements is necessary in order to gain public attention and constituencies for the issues. It is strongly recommended that at least one of the value chains is open to or embraces the proposed ideas of change presented in this report.

2. **Use the momentum of the SDGs as a strategic entry point for the overall programming.**

The momentum of the SDGs could be used as an avenue to engage both the private sector and national governments. For the private sector, the SDGs have commercial value, whereas national governments are interested in reporting their progress on the SDGs at High Level Panel Forums. Engaging with the SDGs implies the need to, (1) clearly indicate which SDG global indicators each component is contributing to, and (2) to align the contribution of country-level outcomes with SDG national level indicators. Using the SDGs in this way could potentially attract other donors to also invest in any new iteration of GRAISEA.

3. **Improve the due diligence process to sharpen the strategy.**

There is a need to invest in better capacity for policy, political and stakeholder mappings. An improvement in these aspects may contribute to sensible and well-rounded programme design/strategy and adjustment.

Management response:

**Overall Agree/ Partly Agree/ Disagree**

*(Please elaborate)*

Recommendation 1 has already been put in place. The design of GRAISEA 2 is more focused – only two value chains across only four countries. The theory of change is explicit about how country and regional work is integrated.

Recommendation 2 is already in place. Vietnam and Cambodia will use the SDGs as an entry point to engage with national governments. In addition, the SDGs were already very much used by CSR Asia to influence Asian companies. This will continue. Additionally, regarding the work with multi-stakeholder initiatives, the SDGs will be used as an influencing framework, but coupled with other UN and voluntary frameworks.

Recommendation 3 is partially in place, with the development of an ASEAN influencing strategy that maps key stakeholders and opportunities for influence.
Recommendations to improve results and the effectiveness of multiple mechanisms

1. **Result 1: Influencing ASEAN and member states (GRAISEA 2 Result 3)**
   Strengthen the strategy under the regional influencing mechanism by exploring other avenues to influence ASEAN such as:
   
   a. **Objectives that are related to regulation or a regulatory framework are best treated as part of enabling the environment strategy and should be led by national partners and/or a coalition of national partners at ASEAN level.** These objectives may involve real political engagement, not only with government officials, but also with political parties and politicians. There should be some considerations related to the visibility of the donor, as the partners need to be seen as legitimate national interests. Also note these objectives do not need to be accomplished, as there may be serious political challenges, but they need to be in motion.
   
   b. **As public outreach is recommended as part of the change objective, be mindful about using ‘naming and shaming’ as an advocacy tactic.** ASEAN ways of diplomacy and culture do not have room for the ‘naming and shaming’ of any single entity, be it any member state or unscrupulous corporations. Similarly, in most ASEAN member states, this tactic is counterproductive.
   
   c. **Explore follow-up fully-fledged learning sessions on engaging the private sector and MSIs involving staff from Oxfam offices and partners.** Sources should not be limited to GRAISEA, but should also come from other private sector and MSI engagement across affiliates and countries. This also means that global private sector teams, such as Behind the Brands/Behind the Price should be involved. Documented discussions and ideas should inform the next cycle of programming.
   
   d. **Identify and explore the possibility of engaging with the ASEAN policy think tanks.**

Management response:

**Overall Agree/ Partly Agree/ Disagree**

*(Please elaborate)*

*We agree with the overall tone of the recommendations but not some of the detail regarding what GRAISEA should actually do. For instance, ASEAN influencing will include a strong role for countries as recommended but, given the charitable and non-political status of Oxfam, it is difficult for GRAISEA to engage with political parties and politicians directly. GRAISEA will not adopt ‘naming and shaming’ tactics – it instead aims to emphasize what good practice looks like and puts in place incentives and regulations that encourage this. However, other Oxfam programmes such as the Oxfam Behind the Barcodes/Price campaign, the Fair Finance programme and its overall GROW campaign do use other tactics, but still in acknowledgement of the Asian ways of diplomacy and culture. GRAISEA will aim to work in tandem with these initiatives.

Lastly, although we agree in principle with the need to prioritize learning on the private sector and MSIs, a lot of this has already taken place in GRAISEA 1 and will be continued. Overall learning priorities for GRAISEA 2 will only be finalized during inception.*
Recommendations to improve results and effectiveness of multiple mechanisms (cont.)

2. **Result 2: Value chain and market-linkage initiative (GRAISEA 2 Results 1 and 2)**

Strengthen the existing mechanism or explore other mechanisms to bring about a scalable impact of value chain work through the following:

a. **Future design should build the capacity of farmers’ organizations on all fronts and create space for their participation at the systemic level (farmers’ organizations network, policy dialogue/forum, local and national government) and strengthen engagement with the global value chain.** As the farmers and farmer-value organizations become more mature, the programme’s direction ought to shift from subsistence farming to export-orientated farming and for women and men farmers to build their entrepreneurial skills. Future strategy should clearly indicate long-term plans, steps in the transition from subsistence farming to export-orientated farming and a clear exit strategy. Long-term plans may include enabling farmers’ organizations or unions of farmers’ associations to afford organic certification (Cambodia case) and participate to influence MSIs (similar to the case of Serikat Petani Kelapa Sawit (SPKS) to participate in RSPO meetings). There is the potential to organize and structure farmers’ organizations in ASEAN at the national level to build constituencies and collective voices, to strengthen their negotiation positions with the respective governments. Furthermore, it is desirable to strengthen engagement and broader opportunities with the global value chain, as it is evident in the case of the rice value chain in Vietnam and Cambodia and the shrimp value chain in Indonesia that this will increase their bargaining power.

b. **Add an element of showcasing the benefit companies experience as a result of women’s involvement.** The benefits women experience from increased access to resources and economic opportunity are evident throughout GRAISEA. What about adding an element on how companies in the value chain would similarly benefit from involving women? There is a significant amount of evidence that good practices of similar type/initiatives have demonstrated a positive impact, such as the initiatives implemented by Agrifocus in some African countries.

c. **Register and monitor contract-farming risks and include it in risk management.** The contract farming model has the potential for contract default and risks. Several circumstances fall under potential contract default: the company involved, failure to deliver inputs/services at the correct time, refusal to accept produce, arbitrarily raising quality standards and farmers’ production failure. These risks have to be monitored and carefully handled.

d. **Explore alternative products or suitable crop rotation to reduce the adverse effects of agricultural risks.** Although this might be out of GRAISEA’s focus, it is worth considering that key informant interviews (KIIs) suggest that smallholders in the countries evaluated are entangled in debt that perpetuates poverty. In addition, to mitigate the risks of price volatility, hazards or any other factor leading to crop failure, findings suggest a potential exploration of producing alternative products or crop rotation. This is evident in the case of shrimp farmers in North Kalimantan, Indonesia. Similarly, an interest in taking this step was expressed by women farmers in Cambodia. It is important to consider the most strategic pathways to help farmers overcome the perpetual debt they are facing. This may not be the focus of GRAISEA, but to some extent WWF in Indonesia has used this approach in GRAISEA and found it to be successful.
e. **Explore the potential to endorse the role of women to take a quality-control role in household production.** Evidence suggests that recognition of women’s important contribution in the rice value chain contributes to a higher quality of production. This presents an opportunity to explore the possibility for women to take a quality control/quality assurance role in each value chain.

f. **Critical questions to reflect on regarding contract farming in order to reshape strategy and approaches:** ‘In what ways do these models encourage transformational partnership that will contribute to gender transformation progress? In what ways can farmers be better educated to understand the risks and opportunities of these various models? In what ways can a fair contract be pursued – one where farmers are fully aware and capable of making informed decisions when signing the contract? Is there a way they could be given a choice of the type of partnership they embark upon?’

**Management response:**

**Overall Agree/ Partly Agree/ Disagree**

*(Please elaborate) Partly agree*

Partly agree with (a) – effective and well-run producer organizations are essential for farmers to have voice and influence. But it is beyond the remit of GRAISEA to support the development of national farmer movements. Where possible, we will link producer groups supported by GRAISEA to such movements but cannot directly support their development. However, we reject the suggestion that farmers should be supported to focus only on exports. National and even local markets will also be critical for ensuring stability. In GRAISEA, the promotion of standards such as SRP improves access to all markets, not simply export markets – and connections to exporters, such as in Pakistan, is not an exclusive strategy.

Attention will be given to (b), specifically to the generation of evidence of the business case for women’s economic empowerment.

Do not agree with (e) – women producing good quality rice does not automatically lead to a role in quality control, which may be limited by other constraints such as norms (e.g. women judging men’s output), but also quality control is a very different thing to quality production.

It is not totally clear what the recommendations are in (c) and (f) but there is agreement with the points being made. Any contracts will be subject to ongoing monitoring to check for fairness. This will include issues such as who is paying for the costs of sustainability. Where does climate change risk sit? What prices are paid to smallholders and how is value distributed along the value chain? Linkages will be made with other initiatives that support learning on these issues such as the Mars Living Income Lab. It is not within the scope of GRAISEA to support the development of significant non-farm income generating activities.
Recommendations to improve results and the effectiveness of multiple mechanisms (cont.)

3. Result 3: Influencing corporations/the private sector (GRAISEA 2 Result 2)
   a. Directly influence private sector business strategies to adopt and adhere to inclusive and sustainable business practices. This corresponds to Recommendation 2b. The strategy could be informed by understanding the institutional dynamics of corporations in each ASEAN member state and business landscape (consumers). The following questions are suggested to guide the private sector engagement strategy: ‘What is the corporate structure and market structure in Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam? What is the nature of the present government regime and what is their appetite for inclusive and sustainable business? What is the current state of evolution of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in South-East Asia?’

   b. Explore some potential innovative approaches. For example, engagement with start-ups, young entrepreneurs and business university students, combined with experience and knowledge-sharing from established brands tanks from the investment country of origin, as in Myanmar, is also something that can be replicated in other GRAISEA countries. Building alliances with associations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, or, in the case of Indonesia, the national chapter of the UN Global Compact, has certain benefits in facilitating easier acceptance from the business community. In addition, future programmes may want to consider engaging embassies from the countries of origin. This should open more windows of opportunity to convey messages to their respective capitals.

   c. Explore models of multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) with the private sector. Considerations of influencing MSIs to bring about scalable impact ought to be informed by careful assessment to decide the optimal proportion, and resource allocation, between direct private sector engagement and influencing MSI focus. GRAISEA should aim to report its effectiveness (at least at the outcome level) and to be reflected in programme indicators. The assessment should answer the following questions: ‘Were there other networks competing with either similar initiatives or blocking the initiative? Were there other influencing factors or historical events, such as a changing government landscape or a conflict, taking place? To what extent does the compliance of MSI members remain entirely superficial, and to what extent do corporations actually change their practices as a result of MSI membership?’

Management response:
Overall Agree/ Partly Agree/ Disagree
(Please elaborate) Partly agree

(a) seems to suggest a need for a broader understanding of the environment that influences how business operates. We are not sure what response is appropriate.

We agree with the point made in (b) about the need for innovation, although it may not look like the examples provided.

We are not clear what the recommendation in (c) is – we will try to work in MSPs as much as possible on the understanding that this provides opportunities for peer-to-peer influencing, replication and scale.
### Recommendations to improve results and the effectiveness of multiple mechanisms (cont.)

4. **Women’s economic empowerment (WEE) and gender equality**
   
   Strengthen and reshape WEE and diffusion of the gender transformative principle mechanism to advance the WEE and gender transformative agenda through:

   a. **Exploring specific private sector areas to pilot gender-sensitive business strategies** in which they could experience the benefit of women’s involvement or show recognition of women’s critical contribution in their value chain. This type of programme design has demonstrated impact elsewhere.

   b. **More engagement with men and women’s organizations to build critical awareness of women.** Evidence suggests engagement with men, as evident in the Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) application, is highly likely to contribute to success. This element should be continued in any new iteration of GRAISEA Regional learning forums should be explored as a way to scale up GALS at the multi-stakeholder level.

   c. **When possible, engage in participatory action research approaches for gender analysis to identify and monitor key gender transformative indicators.** Gender analysis could be used as a basis for reflection and dialogue with programme stakeholders to identify relevant issues for gender transformation, including any policy implications. This gender analysis should inform design and planning throughout implementation.

   d. **More stories of women’s and men’s support for gender transformation efforts** should be collected to record their journey of empowerment.

   e. **Monitor the progress of influencing gender transformative principles/policies at the regional level.**

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**Management response:**

**Overall Agree/ Partly Agree/ Disagree**

(Please elaborate)

GALS will continue to be used in GRAISEA 2 but we do not currently have the resources to explore regional learning forums. Otherwise there is not much disagreement with the recommendations.
### Recommendations to improve results and the effectiveness of multiple mechanisms (cont.)

**5. Result 4: Responsible agribusiness investment and response to new initiatives**

Future programming should continue the next stage of implementation of the new models/initiatives being developed under Result 4 (ISEA gendered benchmark, GIN mentorship model) by taking into account all the learning and feedback as these models/initiatives become more mature models and garner their own constituencies, so that nothing is wasted.

**Management response:**
**Overall Agree/ Partly Agree/ Disagree**
*(Please elaborate)*

*Not all of Result 4 has continued into GRAISEA 2. The elements that have will build on what was developed in GRAISEA 1.*

### Recommendations to improve the communications strategy

**1. The communications strategy** should move beyond a classic donor-and-development-professionals-orientated visibility strategy, by:

- **Exploring public outreach objectives in similar programming.** GRAISEA or future similar initiatives ought to put the communications strategy at the heart of the community development initiatives, MSIs, individual company engagement, CSO allies and partners, as well as government institutions.

- **Improving tangible or communicable positive results that contribute to national or local government priorities.** This will provide some protection in facing a more assertive government and a better position in terms of ‘moral authority’ to appeal for reforms.

- **Strengthening investment in social media capabilities.** South-East Asian countries are home to hundreds of millions of social media users. Successful public social media campaigning does build constituencies, including crowd-sourcing funding opportunities for Oxfam partners. This capability also involves engaging with celebrities and/or social media influencers on YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Specific engagement is also needed with the social media accounts of companies/brands and related government ministries.

**Management response:**
**Overall Agree/ Partly Agree/ Disagree**
*(Please elaborate)*

*An externally facing communications strategy that takes advantage of social media and mobilizes a spectrum of GRAISEA 2 staff and stakeholders to contribute will be prioritized in GRASIEA 2.*
Recommendations to improve governance structure, the capacity building mechanism for partners and learning modalities

1. Governance structure

   a. **Review the role of the Programme Steering Committee** to agree if this group primarily focuses on programme governance or if it should provide a wider programmatic steer. Consider inviting external stakeholders to be part of the Committee, to enable this group to also act as a reference group for the PMU.

   b. **Greater capacity support for the Programme Management Unit and other core coordinating functions.** It has already been recognized by the Mid-Term Evaluation that the PMU needs greater capacity in its donor compliance and finance functions. In addition, build the MEL capacities with a Learning and Evidence Coordinator (whose scope should include steer, direction and oversight of learning as well as monitoring), and a MEL Officer (with a scope similar to the current role, with a focus on compiling data from different partners and on building capacity). The structure of the Gendered Enterprise and Markets (GEM) programme could be a good example of how to incorporate learning capacity into the programme management structure (i.e. existence of a learning advisor and MEL advisor as part of the team).

   c. **Add coordinator roles in the PMU for key value chains and gender** (assuming in the future GRAISEA focuses on fewer value chains and gender remains a core crosscutting aspect of the programme). The coordinator should also have technical expertise allowing them to take on some of the advisory capacity, but still pulling in additional advisory expertise where needed. This will free up the time of the programme manager to allow the role to focus on more strategic programmatic issues. In this case, GRAISEA is in itself a good example, as the Rice Value Chain Coordinator role brought positive outcomes. Secondly, include a Gender Coordinator role within the PMU. The coordinator should have technical gender expertise (plus the ability to tap into external resources as needed), as well as the coordination skills needed for the role.

   d. **Develop GRAISEA induction materials.** This could include, for example, a video for new staff who join part-way through the programme, to help them get up to speed as quickly as possible. The *My Rights My Voice* programme is a good example of how to develop tools to facilitate induction.

Management response:
**Overall Agree/ Partly Agree/ Disagree**
*(Please elaborate)*

*Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) roles have been realigned to fulfil the principles described in the recommendation. The addition of a part-time monitoring and reporting officer will release the MEAL lead to take a more strategic approach to learning. The Value Chain Coordinator role is in post, covering both rice and shrimp. A WEE and gender lead is in post within the PMU. However, the role is not full-time and it is a leadership and coordination role. It does provide support to some countries/partners, but it is unrealistic to expect technical support to be carried out by one person, even if it is full-time. The rationale for the post is that by having effective leadership and coordination, we will be able to mobilize more support and make it more efficient.*
Recommendations to improve governance structure, the capacity building mechanism for partners and learning modalities (cont.)

2. Capacity building mechanism for implementing partners
   Strengthen the capacity building mechanism by adapting partners’ assessment so it reflects their respective capacity. Adapt the partner assessment tool for the programme so that it focuses on the specific skills and knowledge that would be needed to implement GRAISEA (technical as well as management), and assess partners based on these. More specific questions should be used to identify gender capacity needs. The coordinators should work with country focal points and partners during inception to proactively plan the capacity support needed.

   Management response:
   Overall Agree/ Partly Agree/ Disagree

Recommendations to improve governance structure, capacity building mechanism for partners and learning modalities (cont.)

3. Learning modalities
   a. Consider reorganizing the WGs so they focus on a particular value chain, each led by one of the PMU coordinators and with the participation of relevant advisors as needed. Giving the responsibility of leading the WGs to a coordinator should enable more follow-ups between WG meetings and more support to countries on how they can apply learning in their context. The coordinator could have responsibility to lead on learning for their WG, supported by the Evidence and Learning Coordinator.

   b. WGs should consider if a ‘webinar approach’, where one topic or example is presented and then discussed in depth, would work best, rather than aiming for all participants to share their learning on each call. Oxfam’s Women in Agriculture Knowledge Hub can offer guidance and expertise on how best to organize this type of learning call.

   c. Build ‘wiggle room’ into plans to support adaptive programming and the application of learning. This means having budgets and work plans that allow space for new initiatives to be tried.

   Management response:
   Overall Agree/ Partly Agree/ Disagree
   (Please elaborate)
   We are re-thinking the approach to supporting cross-programme learning and coordination in a process that will culminate at the inception workshop for GRAISEA 2. Focusing WGs on specific value chains is one option that will be considered among others. Recommendation (b) is too micro to be debated here but we will take a more strategic and purposeful approach to learning, something facilitated partly by the new configuration of MEAL roles. Recommendation (c) is addressed in our work plan – we have built in reflection periods prior to annual planning and budgeting.