Conserving Our Land, Producing our Food – Sustainable Management of Land and Forests in Malawi & Zimbabwe

"An evaluation of the Zimbabwe program component"

FINAL REPORT

Conservation Agriculture Farmer in Zvimba (Fieldwork Picture)

Prepared by

taonabiz CONSULTING

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DISCLAIMER

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Dr Chris Nyakanda - Team Leader
(On Behalf of the Taonabiz Consulting Team)

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ACRONYMS

AGRITEX	Agricultural Technical and Extension Services
BLF	Big Lottery Fund
CA	Conservation Agriculture
CBA	Cost Benefit Analysis
CIAT	International Centre for Tropical Agriculture
CIIR	Catholic Institute for International Relations
CPB	Cost per beneficiary
CSP	Community Seed Project
DW	Development Worker
EA	Environment Africa
EAGs	Environmental Action Groups
EBT	Earnings before tax
FFS	Farmer Field School
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIV	Human Immuno Deficiency Virus
KIU	Knowledge into Use
MT	Metric Tonne
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTFP	Non-timber forest products
OPV	Open Pollinated Variety
RDC	Rural District Council
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SQCU	Quality Control Unit
ToT	Training-of-Trainers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings of the End of Term Evaluation of the project "*Conserving Our Land, Producing our Food – Sustainable Management of Land and Forests in Malawi & Zimbabwe"*, focusing solely on the Zimbabwe component of the project.

Progressio in partnership with Environment Africa having been implementing a three year livelihoods project termed "Conserving our Land, Producing our Food – Sustainable Management of Land and Forests in Malawi and Zimbabwe", which is terminating 31 April 2015. The project was funded by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund to the tune of GBP 399,945 (84.75%) and GBP 72,000 (15.25%) by Progressio match fundraising. The project was implemented in Salima district Malawi and in Nyanga, Zvimba and Guruve districts of Zimbabwe.

The project was a response to the needs assessment carried out by Progressio and its partner Environment Africa which noted that poverty, household food insecurity and environment degradation were the major causality of poverty in these target districts. As such the partners designed a business plan for the target districts premised on (i) promoting the use and management of natural resources and (ii) strengthening community resilience to climate change as a development path to reduction of poverty and food insecurity. The project was expected to benefit 41,000 disadvantaged farmers in Malawi and Zimbabwe. In Malawi, the project planned to reach 11,000 people in Salima district whereas in Zimbabwe, its target was to reach 30,000 people in Zvimba, Guruve and Nyanga districts. The project also intended to establish and build the capacity of community action groups, targeting 4.000 members.

B. PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AT TERMINATION

The overall rating of the project is that it performed very well but did not complete the full cycle (scope was too broad) of activities to achieve its intended results. (**Overall Performance Rating B: Good but should complete the cycle of testing and increase intensity of support**)

The table below shows a dashboard performance of the project at project termination stage.

Project Component	Current Goal	Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Outcomes / Impact	Sustainability	Overall
Outcome 1: Food and Nutrition, Markets	**Excellent**	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	**B**
Outcome 2: Mngt of Forests, Land and Water		Good	Good	Good	Satisfactory	Good	**B**
Outcome 3: Advocacy		Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory	C+
Overall		**Good**	**Good**	**Satisfactory**	**Satisfactory**	**Good**	**B**

B1. RELEVANCE

OECD Rating: A / EXCELLENT

The project package was well aligned to the needs as identified in the needs assessment. The intervention is well aligned to national priorities. The Zim-Asset blue print identifies Food Security and Nutrition; Social Services and Poverty Eradication; Infrastructure and Utilities; and Value Addition and Beneficiation to be the main four strategic clusters for the country. Despite the agricultural sector, being the second highest contributor to the GDP and a source for economic growth, food security and poverty eradication, it continues to experience severe systemic challenges within its entire value chain. The project is contributing to the Government attainment of two MDGs goals specifically **Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty** and hunger and **Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability.**

B2. EFFECTIVENESS

OECD Rating: B / GOOD

The project achieved and surpassed most of its targets focused on community organization, field crop and horticultural production under conservation farming, environmental protection mainly achieved through the strengthening of community access to non-timber forest products and use of alternative energy sources including setting up of woodlots. However other components of the value chain such as processing and marketing were not fully achieved in the project life span.

B3. EFFICIENCY

OECD Rating: C / Satisfactory

The program has satisfactorily transformed the available resources into the intended results in terms of quality, quantity and timeliness and in terms of the target beneficiaries. The project has a greater chance to graduate to good or excellent in terms of cost-effectiveness if market development and knowledge dissemination succeeds, in the event that the project proceeds to phase two of implementation.

Indicator 1: Return on labour investment

CA creates a higher return on labour invested despite requiring three-fold labours compared to the conventional ox-drawn farming method. Bee-keeping has a higher return on labour compared even to a civil service. However in terms of earnings, a civil servant earns higher compared to all the enterprises.

Return on labour investment per hour				
	4 months earning ($)	Hours Invested (hr)	Gross Return per hour ($/hr)	Net Return per hour ($/hr)
Bee-keeping* twice per year	360	128	2.81	2.73
Garden	1116.7	960	1.16	0.81
CA – Maize	700	1320	0.53	0.37
Conventional- Maize	140	400	0.35	0.24

Woodlots	16	31	0.51	0.51
Civil service	1200	704	1.70	1.69

Source: ETR Data

Indicator 2: Land-use efficiency

Enterprise	LUE[1]	Comment
Bee keeping[2]	0.015	Bee keeping is highly productive and the most efficient in land use among activities introduced by the BLF project, being 67 times more efficient than conventional maize, and 13 times more efficient than CA. Notably, there is usually no conflict in land use between bee keeping and arable cultivation, and hives can be sited in woodlots, implying even greater intensity of land use.
Gardens	0.16	To obtain financial returns in garden activities equivalent to those obtained under conventional practices for maize cropping, 6 times less land would be required, giving good returns to land.
CA-Maize	0.2	By embracing CA, a household would require 5 times less land than is required for conventional maize. It is the Evaluation Team's view that early planting is by far the biggest advantage that the practice of CA confers, for which the yield advantage is mostly attributed to.
Conventional-Maize[3]	1	For comparisons between activities, conventional maize, or maize produced using standard practices, is taken as the reference activity. This was giving average yields of 800 kg/ha, which is $350 in financial terms, being only more efficient than using land for woodlots.
Woodlots[4]	2.9	This activity gives the least return to land use- 3 x more land being required compared to conventional maize, yet it may be the most effective in conserving soil and protecting forests (being a wood fuel that strongly substitutes indigenous forests). Greater returns to land or money invested are likely if wood fuel from re-afforestation activities is used as input supporting livelihood activities e.g. tobacco curing.

Indicator 3: Other CBA indicators

	Indicator to be calculated	Result	Comment
1	Cost per beneficiary?	USD 19.65	The intensity of support is low for a project strengthening the entire value chain. However the project achievements were high but the project benefits beyond BLF funding may be compromised. There is need to increase the intensity of support in a second phase to complete other interventions partially done (processing and market linkage).
2	Cost of transfer?	USD 0.08	The method of program delivery is quiet efficient, prescriptively costing Progressio and EA 8 cents to transfer a dollar benefit. However the project runs the risk of affecting motivation of public officers if implementing partners do not have other sources of funding to support administration costs linked to program delivery.

3	Cost per specific input (assets), divide by caseloads?	USD 3.18	The program has a low investment in equipment. This could probably explain why irrigation systems were not installed and the limited pilot cases for biogas and solar. For a program with a strong component of product development, more investment in equipment is required particularly to strengthen the value chain
4	Cost of man-power?	USD 10.39	The financial productivity of man-power is very high. For example CA increased potential earnings by an estimated $560 for a 0.4 ha plot

B4. ECONOMIC VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

OECD Rating: C / Satisfactory

The project did well to promote production of food by households. However the processing and marketing function was not fully intensified in project implementation. Pilots for alternative sources of energy were few and only focused on domestic use of energy. Considering the high investment of the technology, the project should have also demonstrated the productive use of this energy source.

B5. OUTCOMES / IMPACT

OECD Rating: B / GOOD

The project has greatly contributed to the household food and nutrition outcome but still has space to do more to support increase in household income by strengthening the market access component. The alternative sources of energy are contributing to environmental conservation and also improvements in the quality of life of homesteads. However more biogas and solar pilots are required to reach more people. The advocacy component resulted in farmers getting stands for agro-processing centers, a major milestone under this project.

B6. SUSTAINABILITY

OECD Rating: B / GOOD

The benefits of this intervention have a high likelihood to be sustained beyond the current project life cycle. The intervention has been able to create community awareness in the conservation of forestry and built strong linkages between EMA, Forestry Commission and the community. Communities now see the benefits which can be tapped from their natural resources and the importance of conserving their resources particularly in this context the forestry species. Local authorities and government ministries responsible for forestry management acknowledged the cooperation they are now receiving from communities in protecting forestry resources and reporting perpetrators, a development which they directly attributed to the intervention. However the project should still focus on developing more non-timber products to further enhance protection of forestry resources by the community and government.

C. QUALITY OF PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Stakeholders involved in the successful implementation of the project are currently demonstrating good project management skills. The only limitation is that some critical components of the project were not completed in the project life span and the pilots for alternative sources of energy were thinly spread.

The table below summarizes the quality of program management by the critical stakeholders.

Stakeholder	Rating	Comment
Progressio	Satisfactory	Excellent technical and financial management prowess. However some critical project components were not completed during the lifespan of the project.
Environment Africa	Satisfactory	Excellent technical capacity and extension service. Synergy creation with government departments was well done. Still have in-complete work on product development and market linkages.
EAG	Excellent	Environmental Action Groups (EAGs) put sterling work into the project, coordinating members in activities on the ground, and driving the advocacy agenda.
AREX	Good	Highly decentralized influential extension network necessary for sustainability. Played a crucial role in catalyzing adoption of CA.
Department of Natural Resources	Good	Providing complementary support in promoting environment conservation and food production.
Forestry commission	Good	Highly decentralized influential extension network necessary for sustainability. It did well by participating in trainings on promoting the conservation of forestry in the target districts.
Local authorities	Good	Full support of the project, and engagement of communities to encourage levels of participation, which is an important stance to take for success with market-based interventions.
EMA	Good	Managed to leverage own mission with the project goals and activities hence intensifying reach out.

D. MAIN LESSONS LEARNT

D1 Lessons on quality of programme management

- For a project managed by a consortium of partners, it is imperative that all parties involved actively participate in the design and costing of the project to minimize design errors which may make project implementation difficult.
- In cases where the scope of the project is too broad for resources and time available, partners should either quickly apply to the donor to defer certain aspects of the project design so that the remaining components have any adequate intensity of support.
- Mapping the value chains for product development and involving critical actors with importance and influence in the value chain from project commencement ensures efficient utilisation of funds and project sustainability.
- Steering committee meetings are an important function in project management to ensure harmonisation of effort and timely achievement of results.

D2 Lessons on Outcome 1

- It is cost effective to renovate or purchase an existing building for an agro-processing centre than to construct a building in a three-year project. However in cases where it is in-evitable to construct, construction should commence in Year 1 so that the building can be productively utilised during project implementation.
- Non-timber products have a higher social return on investment to garden and field crop enterprises.

D3 Lessons on Outcome 2

- A strong performance monitoring plan (PMP), clear roles, responsibilities and a commitment to full implementation of the PMP, stronger demand on accountability of technical partners, development of standard reporting formats, are essentials for the smooth running of a multi-partner programmes.
- Community development projects have a greater chance of success if with strong stakeholder buy-in by all stakeholders; time spent on developing institutional goodwill is a good investment which gives high returns over time.
- Increased livelihood options for communities reduce pressure on the environment as a source of sustenance hence reduces damage to the environment (land, water, forests). Additionally, successful identification and development of livelihoods options from environmental resources improves community management of the environment, and imparts an increased sense of shared ownership.

D4 Lessons on Outcome 3

- For effective natural resource management, beneficiaries should learn to identify problems and design solutions, with externally-funded projects simply facilitating this process as much as is possible.
- Setting up EAGs/group approach enables reach of large target in community development: a variation of *Snowball Training Model*; but monitoring for quality assurance is critical to reduce maladjustments, a common problem responsible for distortion of learning messages under snowball training.

E. CONCLUSION AND MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

E1 Conclusions

- The scope of the project, basing on the CBA indicators and feedback from stakeholders, was too broad for the resources and time available for the project. Low costs of transfer can induce a reduced motivation in public officers if some important overheads are not adequately resourced. For projects of this nature (which have prescribed low cost of transfer), partners should seek additional financing from other funds to support the administration related costs such as financial management, administration and overall project management. This will help address motivation, which is one of Behn (1998)'s big-questions in public management.
- Overall, the project successfully strengthened group structures and governance, as well as capabilities of Environmental Action Groups (EAG) to mount lobbying and advocacy campaigns on environmental issues, particularly those linked to local governance structures. However,

there is little evidence of progress by the project towards influence of national-, regional, or global level environmental policy especially related to community co-governance, sustainable management and utilization of natural resources.

- The project made substantial progress in achieving its objectives of improving the stewardship of, and benefits from land, forests and water resources by disadvantaged communities inhabiting 3 wards in each of the districts of Nyanga, Zvimba and Guruve, Zimbabwe. Skills that the project intended to impart on access and amplification of non-timber forest products (NTFP), specifically in bee keeping, were transferred to the wider community.
- Nonetheless, a second phase to the project is recommended, which would focus on (i) broadening the range of NTFPs, (ii) transformation of alternative energy sources to productive assets achieved by integrating alternative energy with livelihoods initiatives, and (iii) the strengthening of product development and branding in NTFP, and a stronger establishment of value chains and market linkages, locally and globally.

E2 Recommendations

E 2.1 Recommendations for Progressio

- Apply for funding for Phase 2. This should focus more on water reticulation systems for gardens, product development, and market linkages. Under product development, the phase should consider identifying and developing more non-timber forest products as they have a low cost of investment, high return on labour and land use. Also non-timber forest products encourage communities to conserve the environment, being motivated by economic benefits arising from these NTFP-based enterprises. In market linkages the partners may need to explore the possibilities of public-private sector alliances (PPA) to ensure strategic engagement with lead actors having strong control of value chains.
- Consider a greater apportionment of resources to man-power directly involved in the project and also equipment to support sustainable product development. Progressio could consider supporting all processing centres with biogas digesters and solar systems to demonstrate the opportunity of using such technologies for productive uses over and above the domestic benefit.
- For projects with a low administration budget, Progressio should either assist or encourage partners to seek additional funding to support administration related costs linked to the project and not be fully supported by the BLF.

E 2.2 Recommendations for Environment Africa

- Broaden the number of options in non-timber forest products (NTFP) to cater for the varied interests and capacities of all community members by instituting feasibility studies (focusing on distribution, conservation and regulatory status, domestication, commercialization potential, economic viability, potential social impact), product development, piloting, commercialization and market development.
- Capacitate RDC to develop and enforce hence maintain quality control standards on biogas plants and household solar units to preserve integrity of plants and protect communities against poor

workmanship and exposure to unskilled bio-digester masons/solar installation artisans. This ultimately reduces risk of technology failures.

- Pressure gauges should be routinely fitted on biogas digesters, which would give true reflections of the status of gas holds in digester domes, and lead to quicker responses in taking remedial actions for malfunctioning digesters and leakages of methane (a strong climate change gas that damages the ozone layer) into the atmosphere.
- Extend alternative energy (solar and biogas) appliances from solely providing household energy services to being dual purpose, also becoming sources of productive energy. This may be achieved by modifying biogas appliances to provide heat for processes such as vegetable and fruit drying, tobacco curing, or solar units to power solar water pumps for use in irrigating vegetable, thus transforming appliances from being liabilities which take money away from households, to assets which bring money to households).
- To periodical trace the beneficiary household economy changes against baseline in the M&E system and to ensure M&E reporting is gender disaggregated.

E 2.3 Recommendations for communities

- Actively participate in economic development activities promoted by EA, and increase own productive assets and income to overcome poverty.
- Be aware of the changes due to globalisation and the greater demand by the market for food safety and quality. As such communities should be flexible to combine their indigenous knowledge with the scientific knowledge brought about by the project so that they remain market-driven and not producer driven.

E 2.4 Recommendations for BLF

- Consider funding the partners for phase 2, to ensure the achievement of Phase 1 is sustained. The key components BLF can support include establishment of water systems for gardens, identification of more non-timber products, processing and market linkages.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Progressio in partnership with Environment Africa have been implementing a three year livelihoods project termed "Conserving our Land, Producing our Food – Sustainable Management of Land and Forests in Malawi and Zimbabwe" which is now at the terminal stage. The project was funded by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund to the tune of GBP 399,945 (84.75%) and GBP 72,000 (15.25%) by Progressio match fundraising. The project was implemented in Salima district Malawi and in Nyanga, Zvimba and Guruve districts of Zimbabwe. However, this document constitutes a report of the end-of-term evaluation solely commissioned to focus on the Zimbabwe component of the project.

The project was a response to the needs assessment carried out by Progressio and its partner Environment Africa which noted that poverty, household food insecurity and environment degradation were the major causality of poverty in these target districts. As such the partners designed a business plan for the target districts premised on (i) promoting the use and management of natural resources and (ii) strengthening community resilience to climate change as a development path to reduction of poverty and food insecurity. The project was expected to benefit 41,000 disadvantaged farmers in Malawi and Zimbabwe. In Malawi, the project planned to reach 11,000 people in Salima district ~~and~~ whereas in Zimbabwe, its target was 30,000 people in Zvimba, Guruve and Nyanga. The project also intended to establish and build the capacity of community action groups to engage local leadership on environmental issues, and its target was 4.000 members.

The main objective of the project was to promote food security and livelihoods by adopting innovative and sustainable approaches to agriculture production and management of natural resources as alternative forms of livelihoods.

The project contributed to two Key Result Areas (KRA) of the Big Lottery Fund outcomes namely:

- Outcome 3 – improved livelihoods for the most disadvantaged people by enabling communities in need to reduce poverty in a sustainable way.
- Outcome 5 – improved access to and use of natural resources to benefit the most disadvantaged people, especially more sustainable use of land and taking into consideration environmental stresses.

In view of the project goal and specific activities implemented under this project systematically followed five main steps contributing to (i) improved agronomic practice by promoting conservation farming and adaptation to climate change; (ii) identification and commercialization of non-timber forest products including apiculture; (iii) pro-poor inclusive market development of non-timber products including processing, preservation, packaging and marketing and lesson learning, (iv) putting knowledge-into-use through strengthening community structures to understand and advocate for access to, sustainable use and protection of land, forest resources and clean water at a local level; and (v) attaining improved livelihoods for the poor and vulnerable households targeted by the project.

The expected project outcomes[1] were:

a. Increase in household income and food security of poor and marginalised people in Malawi and Zimbabwe through agro-ecology and sustainable, equitable farming approaches and access to market.
b. More sustainable management of forest, land and water resources for the benefit of the most disadvantaged households in Malawi and Zimbabwe.
c. Local communities and Environment Africa engage with local and national government to ensure better management and use of natural resources for the benefit of poor and marginalised communities in Malawi and Zimbabwe, linking to Progressio's policy work at an international level.

1.2 ToRs

The BLF project has come to an end. As such Progressio and its partner seek an independent assessment of the performance of the project during its three-year tenure. The evaluation will use the OECD criterion of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, outcomes, and sustainability to measure the performance of the various components of the project. Progressio and Environment Africa having implemented the project for three years are interested to measure the changes brought about by the project. The end of term evaluation is focusing on:

- The appropriateness of the project design to respond to the needs and achieve the anticipated outcomes.
- The extent to which all planned activities were achieved and adaptation to changes in the environment.
- To assess the cost-effectiveness of the project.
- Applying Social Return on Investment (SROI) and other economic valuation techniques where appropriate to derive a quantitative estimate of the economic benefits of the project.
- To assess the changes brought about by the project interventions.
- To measure the project sustaining after termination of project by end of April 2015.

Evaluation target audiences

The evaluation is intended to benefit Progressio, Environment Africa, project participants in Guruve, Mudzi and Nyanga, and the Big Lottery Fund, who are the funding agency.

1.3 About the report

This report is presented in 7 sections. The first two sections are introductory, followed by study findings presented in the third and fourth section. The fifth and sixth sections of this report are concluding sections focused on lessons learnt, conclusions and recommendations. The last section is appendices to the report.

[1] According to the Business Plan and evaluation ToRs

2 Methodology

The adopted methodology had four main phases summarised as follows:

Phase 1: Inception Phase;
Phase II: Data collection;
Phase III: Synthesis and Write – up; and
Phase IV: Report finalization and Dissemination

The assignment was organized over a period of seven (7) weeks with a total of 28 working man-days.

2.1 Phase 1 - Inception phase

The mission began with an inception meeting on 23rd of March 2015 to introduce the evaluation team to Progressio and Environment Africa and also to discuss the scope of work, methodology and work plan. The study team collected all relevant literature and project documents and obtained further information on the project from Progressio. Relevant stakeholders to inform the ETR were identified in this phase and schedules of appointments were set with key informants as presented in the field work itinerary (See Annex 2). Fieldwork logistics was also organised to ensure the team and protocols for clearance were done in all sampled areas. All the documents related to current and past Progressio BLF activities; budgets; and monitoring reports were reviewed with a view to understand the design and implementation of the project. Data collection instruments were developed in this phase based on the preliminary information from the ToRs (see Annex 1), literature and inception briefings to ensure sufficient coverage of issues and consistency in the data collection process.

Appointments with key informants were scheduled and executed as detailed in Annex 2.

2.2 Phase II – Fieldwork / Data Collection

The team managed to conduct over 90% of the projected interviews for ETR. A total of 31 Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted with various stakeholders consisting 6 KII with Progressio, 6 from Environment Africa, and 19 KII with government and quasi-government officials[2] in Nyanga (6), Zvimba (6) and Guruve (7) in March and April period. A total of 10 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with an average of 12 participants were conducted in Nyanga (3 FGD[3]), Zvimba (4 FGD[4]) and Guruve (3 FGDs[5]) over a 7 day period of data collection in the field between 29 March 2015 and 8 April 2015. The evaluation team also consulted a total of 5 cases consisting 1 bee keeper in Nyanga, 1 nutritional gardener and 1 biogas adopter in Zvimba, and two solar users in Guruve.

The evaluation also reviewed secondary sources which included the projects' M&E reports, business plans, MOUs, budgets, MTR and other relevant reports received from Progressio and Environment Africa.

[2] Consisting AREX, Ministry of Woman Affairs, Gender and Community Development, Ministry of Youth Empowerment and Indigenisation, Rural District Councils, Counsellors, Environment Officers, District Administrators and Presidential Office
[3] Nutritional gardens, bees keepers, and EAGs
[4] Nutritional gardens, woodlots, conservation agriculture (CA) and EAGs
[5] Nutritional gardens, woodlots, renewable energy and EAGs

2.3 Phase III - Synthesis and report writing

Reflective discussions and content analysis was used to analyse responses from key informants and focus groups. This generic approach to qualitative data analysis aided in discerning, examining, comparing and contrasting, and interpreting meaningful patterns or salient themes related to the evaluation topics. Data matrices were used to extract quantitative data from Progressio and EA M&E records. Based on the synthesis process, the assessment of the project progress was construed into an ETR Report.

2.4 Phase IV: Finalization of reports

The team presented the report to the Reference Group and also stakeholders in a Learning Workshop. Based on the comments received on the draft reports from the client and stakeholders, the evaluation team amended accordingly the final evaluation report including all outputs mentioned under section 6 of the ToRs.

2.5 Limitations

- Although a number of planned key informants were interviewed, a few critical respondents from Progressio and EA were not available during the data collection phase.
- Due to the time limitations, the study relied mostly on triangulated qualitative primary data as opposed to primary quantitative data. A household survey to collect quantitative data was not feasible for the available time and resources.
- M&E data collected under the project did not periodically track household economy changes against baseline hence making attribution of outcomes very difficult.
- Word limits for BLF reporting template made review and analysis of progress reports difficult as not all variables were consistently reported in each report.

3 EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Outcome 1: Increase in household income and food security of poor and marginalized people in Malawi and Zimbabwe through agro-ecology and sustainable, equitable farming approaches and access to market.

Overall OECD rating: B = Good

3.1.1 Description of outcome 1

Under this outcome, the model focused on improving food production methods by adopting agronomic practices which conserve the agro-ecosystem, improve efficient utilization of inputs and increase the yield per unit area for the various agricultural value chains for both field and garden crops. The model further supported the diversification of vegetable crops to enhance household food and nutrition security throughout the year. The model also promoted value addition, preservation and access to markets by the poor farmers resulting in an increase of household income.

3.1.1.1 Target groups

The interventions for this outcome aimed at benefitting 30,000 people in Nyanga, Zvimba and Guruve districts of Zimbabwe. It also sought at least 4,000 community members who would form community action groups to tackle unsustainable use of natural resources[6]. Other project targets are as follows:

- 600 farmers to have adopted 1 or more new conservation farming methods promoted by project.
- 60 nutritional gardens established and functional and 1600 farmers benefitting.
- 300 adopting one or more soil and water conservation farming techniques promoted by the project in Zimbabwe.
- 200 households are food secure and experience no hungry period throughout the year in Malawi and Zimbabwe.
- 200 farmers adopt one or more new sources of livelihood based on non-timber forest products in Malawi and Zimbabwe.
- 200 farmers adopt food (including non-timber forest products) processing, value addition preservation techniques in Zimbabwe.

3.1.1.2 Intervention package

The intervention package for this outcome covered promotion of conservation agriculture (CA), communal and individual gardens, and bee keeping. Under CA the project encouraged the use of planting basins, reduced tillage, organic manure and biological control of pests in Zvimba district. However the principles of CA were also applied in nutritional gardens in all the three provinces. Farmer Field Schools (FFS) were to be established to give demonstration lessons of best practice to farmers who in turn would apply this knowledge to their individual gardens. In the Garden farmers were organized in groups for joint procurement and savings scheme to support input purchase. Progressio through its partner EA supported Community Gardens (CGs) with fencing and access to water.

[6] Progressio's Business Plan September 2011

Progressio placed two DWs to EA Zimbabwe who were to support improved technical skills and knowledge in:

- agro-ecology and expertise on conservation agriculture technologies, including farmer field school establishment.
- agricultural production, diversification, value chain addition, marketing and business development.
- community mobilization, community savings schemes and field training material.
- monitoring and evaluation and,
- Advocacy.

3.1.1.3 Budget

A total budget of US$530,562.92 was spent on the Zimbabwe component over three years. Of this amount, $489,907.92 was spent on programs and capital expenditure (CAPEX). The remainder $40,655.00 was for administration related expenses. From the program budget allocation, $ 36,364.97 directly supported this outcome at grass roots level.

3.1.2 Relevance

OECD Rating: A = Excellent

Alignment to community needs

The intervention was rated highly relevant by community members, local government officials and extension services agency. In the FGDs conducted with community members in all the three districts, availability of rain fed and irrigation water was ranked among the top three critical challenges. Erratic rainfall and limited window of essential rains was cited to be a persistent problem farmers' face. One farmer in Zvimba said, "Dambudziko takupa mazita ku mvura" translated to mean farmers delay planting await rains they believe to be suited for summer crops[7]. In the target districts, drying of reservoirs' which supply irrigation of water contributed to seasonal farming and hunger even for those involved in nutritional gardens. Government officials including the District Administrators and Environmental Officers cited difficulty for adaptation to climate change as one of the key drivers to the socio-economic challenges embattling the community. The evaluation team also noted that the project redressed other related problems shared by the communities such as lack of fencing materials and limited crop diversification for both field and garden crops[8]. Thompson (2013) argues that "international threats to food security in Southern Africa include monoculture".

Alignment to national and international priorities

The intervention is well aligned to national priorities. The Zim-Asset blue print identifies Food Security and Nutrition; Social Services and Poverty Eradication; Infrastructure and Utilities; and Value Addition and Beneficiation to be the main four strategic clusters for the country. Despite the agricultural sector

[7] This affected farmers in the 2014/15 season as rains delayed due to the convergence of the tropical monsoons in the Indian Ocean
[8] This relates to problems before the project interventions

being the second highest contributor to the GDP and a source for economic growth, food security and poverty eradication, it continues to experience severe systemic challenges within its entire value chain such as financing. This has also been exacerbated by prolonged periods of drought caused by climatic changes. According to the ZIMVAC Report (2014) at least 2.2 million people are food insecure following the backdrop of poor cereal production in 2013 estimated at 798,500 Mt compared to national cereal requirement of 2.2 million metric tonnes. This is compounded by a paltry 6% Strategic Grain Reserve stock in the Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is a signatory to the Millennium Development Goals agenda and this project contributes to Government's attainment of two MDGs goals specifically **Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty** and hunger and **Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability.**

Appropriateness of the design

The project was well designed to achieve the outcome as it strengthens farmers' capacity across the entire value chain from input acquisition, production, farmer organisation, processing to marketing. The CA approach promoted under this outcome has been proved to contribute to increase in production per unit area. Nutritional gardens on the other hand have been ranked amongst the top five sources of income by the community, a position which correlates to various related studies on livelihoods approaches in Zimbabwe. Value addition and preservation improves shelf life and access to functional markets. FAO (2014) from case studies done on determinants of adoption of technologies and practice highlight that having the possibility of marketing output from more selling points in the village, correlates to a likelihood of households adopting technologies and practice. Hence the design focus on production, setting up of agro-processing centre and market linkages is a full package to achieve the project goal which is … **"To reduce poverty and food insecurity of disadvantaged people in Malawi and Zimbabwe by improving the use and management of natural resources and developing community resilience to climate change"**.

Capacity of Progressio and Environment Africa as vehicles for change

Progressio and Environment Africa have a long history of working together spanning over a decade in both Zimbabwe and Malawi. The two organisations have a good understanding of the context in the target districts based on their past experience and need assessment carried out for the three districts (BLF Business Plan, 2011). Prior to the BLF project, the two organisations partnered on an Irish Aid (€205,000) funded sustainable environment project in Malawi and Zimbabwe in 2009 to 2011 which had similar components but targeting different districts to the one under BLF. Environment Africa also implemented the EED project which had the components of renewable energy, woodlots and community gardens in the same district and wards as the BLF project. Having assessed the profile of the institutional memory, quality of technical personnel and strong social capital with stakeholders, the evaluation team is convinced the two organisations were well placed as vehicles of change to drive this project.

3.1.3 Effectiveness

OECD Rating: B = Good

Conservation Agriculture

Output indicator: 600 farmers have adopted 1 or more new conservation farming methods promoted by project

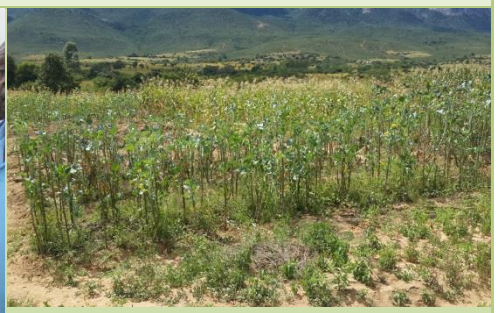
The evaluation noted that there was overwhelming evidence from the field particularly in Zvimba[9] on adoption of CA. The evaluation team had a tour of Zvimba and could see many plots belonging to adopters and non-adopters of CA. Basing on field observations most EAG members from the 22 EAGs in Zvimba adopted conservation farming methods. EA Statistics shows that at least 1,450 farmers adopted CA and far surpassing the set target for the BLF project. All the ten randomly selected plot owners confirmed they received training and support from EA which led to the adoption of the technique. The adopters of CA had a better crop compared to the farmers who practised the conventional ox-drawn plough method. One interesting feature from the field visits in Zvimba is that there were many adjacent fields where one household employed CA and the other conventional method. Consistently those who adopted CA had a better crop and yield potential, (1.2 tonnes per 0.4 Ha), compared to (0.3 tonnes per 0.4 Ha).

CA PLOT	CONVENTIONAL PLOT
	

Nutritional Gardens

Output indicator: 60 nutritional gardens established and functional and 1600 farmers benefitting- (6 community gardens: 2 Nyanga, 1 Zvimba, 3 Guruve, 54 will be individual gardens

As at Year 3, 52 out of 60 planned nutrition gardens have been established in Zimbabwe. Farmers in Zvimba and Guruve bemoaned the flooding of vegetables on the market which they blamed on the wide spread adoption of the intervention and a limited market. One lady in the FGDs had this to say, "Wese munhu akungoita garden hakuchina wekutengesera" translated to mean everyone now has a garden that there is no local market to sell produce to. This gave evaluators a sense that activities in Nyanga were not well developed in

GARDEN IN ZVIMBA	GARDEN IN NYANGA
	

[9] CA was promoted in Zvimba

comparison to the other two districts where they never really complained of over production of vegetables. A visit to Muchakata Communal Garden by the evaluation team in Charamba ward, Nyanga did not convince compared to the garden in Zvimba. The agronomic practises Muchakata Communal Garden at the time of the evaluation did not show the precision normally employed under CA and the quality of the crops was generally poor except for the spinach and bean crop. This could probably have been due to the fact some farmers in Nyanga had grown maize crop in the garden; or the late deployment of the Field Officer which took place in July 2014 might have caused the lag in adoption of CA principles even for the gardens.

The farmers are benefitting from the acquired skill of vegetable drying which increase shelf life of the produce minimising post-harvest losses. However market development for this enterprise was not fully developed as there was no evidence of market linkage to the Top Supply Chain for the farmers. As such there is still a heavy dependence on the local or individual markets for vegetables, a status core which prevailed at project commencement.

Non-timber products

Outcome indicator: 200 farmers adopt one or more new sources of livelihood based on non-timber forest products in Malawi and Zimbabwe

By Year 2 at least 392 farmers in Zimbabwe against a target of 400 for Year two had adopted bee keeping as a new source–of livelihood based on non-timber forest products. This was dominantly in Nyanga due to the ideal environmental conditions such as dense vegetation and availability of open water sources. The evaluation team came across a number of new bee keepers (an estimated 90% of the randomly selected FGD participants were new bee-keepers) who joined the enterprise as a result of the project sensitization. A sample of bee keepers from the FGD shows a high adoption of this non-timber activity and current performance of the enterprise (Table 1).

Table 1: Hive ownership and value of sales per farmer

Description	No. of hives	Value of sales ($)	Total Harvests
Farmer 1	35	220	3
Farmer 2	30	100	2
Farmer 3	5	30	1
Farmer 4	45	200	2
Farmer 5	24	53	1
Farmer 6	500	750	1
Farmer 7	20	40	1
Farmer 8	8	20	1
Farmer 9	20	30	1

Source: ETR Field FGD

Taking a weighted average, farmers now have at least 20 hives producing an average seasonal harvest of at least 8 kgs per hive twice a year.

Output indicator: 300 adopting one or more soil and water conservation farming techniques promoted by the project in Zimbabwe

A total of 780farmers against a cumulative target of 400 for year two (400 Zimbabwe, 200 Malawi) have so far adopted soil and water conservation farming techniques promoted by the project.

Processing, value addition and market linkages

Training and orientation on value addition

Farmers have received a number of trainings on value addition, processing and product development as shown in the table below. The training also covered the aspects of markets and market linkages. Feedback from communities shows that farmers now have a strong theoretical background of the core functions related to processing and marketing in a value chain. However hands-on practical experience was still very limited at the time of the evaluation. The recommendation in the MTR to give practical orientation to the farmers on the processing function was adopted late in February 2015, with only two months left before project termination.

Table 2: Community involvement in training activities provided under the BLF project

Training/Engagement	No. of Participants	District		
		Guruve	Nyanga	Zvimba
Conservation Farming Training & Adopters	1801	616		1185
Promotion of CA and FFS Approaches for Stakeholders	50	17	18	15
Household Energy Training	21	21		
Biogas Construction Builder Training	21	7		14
Biogas Official Launch	635	635		
Environmental Law, Lobbying and Advocacy Training	277	48	38	191
Market Linkage Training	171	55	53	63
Value Addition/Processing/Product Development	254	101	20	133
Participatory Market Research	96	28	26	42
Group Governance And Conflict Management	144	44	42	58
World Environment Days Commemorations	4721			
Capacity Building for EA staff - EA Head Office	24			

Farmers in Guruve had a better grasp of the processes compared to those in Zvimba and Nyanga. The evaluation team attributes it to the decision made in Guruve to refurbish an existing building, giving more ample time and a conducive environment for farmers to acquaint to the processing machinery as opposed to Nyanga and Zvimba who went the construction route. In Zvimba farmers had just started the processing of produce from a rented building whilst construction was taking place. The sample of roasted maize grain and peanuts from Guruve were of better quality to the ones in Zvimba which were slightly over roasted. Farmers in Nyanga only had a practical orientation to the machinery in March 2015 a month before project termination.

Output indicator: Establishment of 3 processing centres (One for each district)

The Guruve processing centre was functional at the time of the ETR with most of the machinery being utilised (Fig 1). As stated above the refurbishment route was a quick win in Guruve considering the limited time-frame of the project span. However production capacity was still very low to sustain the overhead costs for running such a business. In Nyanga construction was 80% complete with a likelihood of having the super structure completed by end of April 2015. However the evaluation team believe a quick-win could have been scooped if investment had been made in negotiating the purchase or rental of the community owned Paprika Processing Centre which is now dis-functional as opposed to constructing. The Paprika Processing Centre is bigger than the Agro-processing centre being constructed and had added facilities such as a loading bay, toilet and tank basin, components missing on the centre under construction.

Figure 1: Status of agro-processing centres at ETR

Nyanga Agro-Processing	Zvimba Agro-processing	Guruve Agro-processing
		

Source: ETR Pictures, April 2015

The agro-processing centre remains an output as there is still a lot of work to orient farmers on the management of agro-processing centres and establishing a viable model of linking farmers to the market. At the time of the evaluation, no model of operating the centres had been tested and evaluated for viability in all the centres. Lessons could be drawn from EA experience setting up these centres in Hwedza and Chimanimani but will require testing and adaptation to local context. As such the agro-processing centres face a risk of being abandoned if the catalyst role played by Progressio and EA is terminated at this stage.

3.1.4 Economic value chain development

The input supply, production and partly processing functions have been well developed. However the project has not been able to fully orient and link farmers to sustainable markets for both field and garden crops. In the time-frame of three years, it may have been limiting to focus on promoting increase in production and at the same time develop sustainable markets. The project is credited to have successfully boosted production in all the enterprises it supported, but was limited in creating a market-driven approach to production as a measure of promoting sustainable markets. There were no significant private sector players who had established a market linkage relationship with the farmers. As such the value chain development still requires strengthening in as far as meeting consumer quality and safety standards requirements in all core function processes.

3.1.5 Efficiency

OECD Rating: C = Satisfactory

Return on social investment

Indicator 1: Return on labour investment

Using estimates from statistics shared from in FGDs and by AREX officials in the target wards, the various enterprises promoted by the project has a competitive return on labour investment. CA creates a higher return on labour invested despite requiring 3 fold labourers compared to the conventional ox-drawn farming method. Bee-keeping has a higher return compared even to being a civil servant. However in terms of earnings, a civil servant earns higher compared to all the enterprises.

Table 3: Return on labour investment

Return on labour investment per hour				
	4 months earning ($)	Hours Invested (hr)	Gross Return per hour ($/hr)	Net Return per hour ($/hr)
Bee-keeping* twice per year	360	128	2.81	2.73
Garden	1116.7	960	1.16	0.81
CA – Maize	700	1320	0.53	0.37
Conventional- Maize	140	400	0.35	0.24
Woodlots	16	31	0.51	0.51
Civil service	1200	704	1.70	1.69

Source: ETR Data

Indicator2: Return on land-use

The project creates a social an economic development opportunity to households without or with limited land. Bee-keeping for instance has a significantly higher–return on land-use compared to all enterprises promoted by the project. Land use required to achieve adequate grain for a year is 5 times less compared to conventional maize production method.

Table 4: Land-use efficiency

Enterprise	LUE[1]	Comment
Bee keeping[2]	0.015	Bee keeping is highly productive and the most efficient in land use among activities introduced by the BLF project, being 67 times more efficient than conventional maize, and 13 times more efficient than CA. Notably, there is usually no conflict in land use between bee keeping and arable cultivation, and hives can be sited in woodlots, implying even greater intensity of land use.

Gardens	0.16	To obtain financial returns in garden activities equivalent to those obtained under conventional practices for maize cropping, 6 times less land would be required, giving good returns to land.
CA-Maize	0.2	By embracing CA, a household would require 5 times less land than is required for conventional maize. It is the Evaluation Team's view that early planting is by far the biggest advantage that the practice of CA confers, for which the yield advantage is mostly attributed to.
Conventional-Maize[3]	1	For comparisons between activities, conventional maize, or maize produced using standard practices, is taken as the reference activity. This was giving average yields of 800 kg/ha, which is $350 in financial terms, being only more efficient than using land for woodlots.
Woodlots[4]	2.9	This activity gives the least return to land use- 3 x more land being required compared to conventional maize, yet it may be the most effective in conserving soil and protecting forests (being a wood fuel that strongly substitutes indigenous forests). Greater returns to land or money invested are likely if wood fuel from re-afforestation activities is used as input supporting livelihood activities e.g. tobacco curing.

- *1 - Land Use Efficiency, as used in this analysis, is the amount of land required to give financial returns equivalent to conventional maize*
- *2- Assuming 20 beehives at 75 % colonization 4m* 4m spacing X 8 kg raw honey for each harvest x $3/kg x 2 harvests per year*
- *3 -Gross return per ha for CA-Maize, at 800 kg/ha: $350/year*
- *4 -Assuming 2mx2m spacing, $12 a cartload, 4 cartloads/year for a 1 000 tree grove*

Indicator 3: Other Cost Benefit Analysis Indicators

The scope of the project basing on the indicators was too broad for the resources and time available for the project. EA as the implementing agent could have had its motivation affected by the too low cost of transfer. A project of this nature requires additional financing from other funds to support the administration related costs such as financial management, administration and overall project management. This will help address motivation, which is one of Behn (1998) big questions in public management. The table below shows other calculations and comments on the overall program.

Table 5: Cost Benefit Analysis

	Indicator to be calculated	Data Required	Data	Result	Comment
1	Cost per beneficiary?	DR1. What is your program budget for the program?	530,563	USD 19.65	The intensity of support is low for a project strengthening the entire value chain. However the project achievement were high but the project benefits beyond BLF funding may be compromised. There is need to increase the intensity of support in a second phase to complete other interventions partially done
		DR2. What was the target caseload?	27,000		

					(processing and market linkage)
2	Cost of transfer?	DR3. What is your administration budget under the project?	40,655	USD 0.08	The method of program delivery is quiet efficient, prescriptively costing Progressio and EA 8 cents to transfer a dollar benefit. This is quite a commendable cost of transfer and less than a third of the recommended limit in development work. However there runs the risk of affecting motivation of public officers if implementing partners do not have other sources of funding to support administration costs linked to the program delivery.
		DR4. What is your program budget (exclusive of admin) under the project?	489,908		
3	Cost per specific input (assets), divide by caseloads?	DR5. Total cost of specific inputs (assets, e.g., cameras, vehicles, computers, etc) purchased by partner for the program?	85,930	USD 3.18	The program has a low investment in equipment. This could explain probably why irrigation systems were not installed and the limited pilot cases for biogas and solar. For a program with a strong component of product development, more investment in equipment is required particularly to strengthen the value chain
		DR6. Total number of beneficiaries (i.e. households) directly reached by the program	27,000		
4	Cost of man-power?	DR7. What is your annual payroll for staff directly involved in the program	280,568	USD 10.39	The financial productivity of man-power is very high. An example with CA, increased potential earnings by an estimated $560 for a 0.4 ha plot
		DR8. Total number of caseload reached	27,000		

Timely delivery of services

Overall project funds were timely transferred from the BLF to Progressio the fund manager. Progressio also efficiently transferred funds to EA. In times were they were limitations, at times Progressio would handle the process to ensure efficient flow of funds.

The major limitation which affected the extent of project cost-effectiveness was the delay in securing the CAPEX fund which stalled construction of agro-processing until in the last half of the final year of implementation. As such the funds invested in the agro-processing centers and machinery is yet to generate productive income and also contribute to the Return on Investment. This has created a missed opportunity for the project to create a viable processing and market linkage function. The late recruitment of the field officer, who was contracted in July, 2014 also affected the potential extent of results which could have been achieved in Nyanga district.

Delay in implementing the MTR recommendations.

The delay in adopting some of the MTR recommendation such as using rented space to process produces and market goods whilst awaiting the completion of the customized agro-processing centers was noted as another missed opportunity for the project.

3.1.6 Outcomes / Impact

OECD Rating: C = Satisfactory

Indicator: The percentage of households that have enough grain to last to the next harvest with balanced food diversity.

Conservation agriculture

Farmers practicing CA have had a better crop and harvest compared to farmers practicing conventional farming methods. According to the AREX official in Zvimba, a CA farmer is harvesting between 2 – 3 tons per hectare compared to a conventional farmer getting 0.3 tons on the same piece of land. CA farmers also confirmed the same statistics after having noted the same whilst comparing their own plots. As an un-anticipated outcome farmers are now practicing CA even on greater pieces of land than the advised 0.4 hectare piece of land. Households which adopted CA have been able to harvest enough grain to last a year which is estimated to be 1 ton and still remain with a surplus to sell and acquire other food requirements for the household.

Nutritional gardens

The CA principles of organic production championed by the project are scientifically proven to increase nutritional content of vegetables (see insert) which is an added benefit to the community (Worthington, 2001). Secondly farmers in nutritional gardening confirmed they now grow a wide range of vegetable crops such as tomatoes, butternuts, onions, spinach, peas amongst other as opposed to the traditional *Rugare* leaf vegetable they traditionally grew. The production quantities also produced of vegetables throughout the year is higher.

Differences in nutritional content between organic and conventional vegetables: [Worthington V (2001). Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine 7: 161-173].

Vegetable	Vitamin C	Iron	Magnesium	Phosphorus
Lettuce	+17*	+17	+29	+14
Spinach	+52	+25	-13	+14
Carrot	- 6	+12	+69	+13
Potato	+22	+21	+5	0
Cabbage	+43	+41	+40	+22

*Plus and minus signs refer to conventional crops as the baseline for comparison. For example, vitamin C is 17.0% more abundant in organic lettuce (conventional 100%, organic 117%).

Indicator: The percentage contribution of cash from different sources to the total household income

Conservation agriculture

Income levels of households have significantly improved due to the increased production levels per unit area by farmers. CA farmers at year 3 are now have the potential of earning $560 more on a 0.4 hectare plot than a farmer doing conventional farming.

Nutritional gardens

A case study on one farmer doing nutritional gardening highlighted that a farmer doing marketing gardening has potential to earn as much money as a civil service employee for a relative time input. Gardens are providing cash for farmers through-out the year and were ranked as one of the top 3 sources of income. However the potential of gardens is still limited due to the under developed market linkages as well as limited operation of the agro-processing centers presently.

Bee-keeping

Bee-keeping farmers have the highest return on labour hours than any other enterprise at double the civil service rate per hour. They are having an additional income ranging from $30 to over $1400 earning for a limited time input of at least 4 days in a month.

Bee keepers are adopting apiaries in the backyards cutting several kilometers they were travelling to set hives in mountains. One old man in Nyanga says he made more than 400 hives in the mountains and with his advancing age his capacity to monitor all hives was getting limited. However having learnt that apiaries can be set at backyard, this has created a new opportunity for him. It also reduces case of theft of honey when apiaries are in the backyard.

Other benefits

A number of participants participated in bee-keeping for medical purposes. Some farmers claim bee-stings have made them resistant to malaria, one of Zimbabwe's top deadly diseases. Others say honey helps calm asthmas and high blood pressure problems.

3.1.7 Sustainability

OECD Rating: B = Good

The project benefits particularly of CA and bee-keeping have a higher likelihood of being sustained beyond the project life span. EA did well to involve critical stakeholders in the development of value chains covered by this initiative. Players like AREX, Forestry Commission and RDC have gained skills and capacity to support these enterprises.

Gardens have a strong likelihood to continue but production levels may drop if market linkage component is not strengthened. The local market for fresh produce is currently saturated during on-season hence causing a drop in prices due to reduced demand.

The sustainability of benefits on nutritional gardens hinges on the performance of the agro-processing centers. Water reticulation system is a major problem which was outlined at project design by

communities but was not addressed during project implementation. As such the nutritional gardens have a high risk of not being fully utilized due to seasonal drying of some water sources.

3.1.8 Treatment of Cross Cutting Issues

The intervention package is highly inclusive as both the chronic and transit poor can actively participate in the promoted enterprises. The project did well to include both men and women in the project. The involvement of Ministry of Woman Affairs, Gender and Community Development was an added advantage to the project outcomes. Women contribute positively to family life; hence investment in improved position of women results in improved changes for children as well. Countries that have taken positive steps to promote gender equality have substantially higher levels of economic growth (Mayoux, 2007).

3.2 Improved and More Sustainable Management of Forest, Land and Water Resources for the Benefit of the Most Disadvantaged Households in Zimbabwe

Overall OECD rating: B⁻= Good

3.2.1 Description of the Model

In this intervention, the ultimate outcome was to integrate natural resource management (the management and protection of land, forests and clean water), and sustainable utilisation of these resources for livelihoods and food security needs of disadvantaged households. Hence, this would concurrently address the environmental problems of acute deforestation and land degradation and the socio-economic challenges of poverty and energy needs, both concerns being generally regarded as strongly interlinked. To achieve this, the programme would raise awareness in environmental management and protection, and promote non-timber forest products (NTFP) including apiculture; promote the collection, processing and marketing of NTFPs; identify and capture best practice.

3.2.1.1 Target groups

Target beneficiaries included 4 000 community members to form (about 90) community action groups, in addition to the overall project target of 27 000 people to be reached indirectly. Beneficiaries would largely constitute the most vulnerable, among them female-headed households, orphans and vulnerable children (which includes child-headed households) and people living with HIV/AIDS or disability. Other beneficiaries, possibly representing the equivalent of the transitory poor who in addition would be prepared to share and train peers through the Farmer Field School (FFS) concept, would host pilot technologies (i.e. biogas plants, solar installations). The latter were expected to have access to productive resources of water, livestock (for biogas plants) and be in ownership of a well-built primary residence (for solar technologies).

3.2.1.2 Intervention package

Activities included agro-processing of NFTPs, establishment, support and training of Environmental Action Groups (EAG) in sustainable use of local resources, environmental legislation, advocacy & community mobilization; promotion of community woodlots; commemoration of major international

environment days at community level; promotion of alternative energy sources, specifically construction of biogas digesters, installation of solar energy units and promotion of energy saving wood stoves.

3.2.1.3 Budget

Funded activities directly targeting beneficiaries included beneficiary training in environmental education (energy saving technologies, environmental law), field days for environmental champions, environmental commemorations, documentation, financing for purchase of pilot solar kits and biogas starter packs. The total budget specific to these activities was USD 27 792, running the duration of the project.

3.2.2 Relevance of the Model

OECD Rating: B= Good

The evaluation findings are that a significant number of global initiatives have adopted the integrated environmental management for sustainable development approach or community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) whose aims are to concurrently address the uplifting of marginalized communities from poverty and food insecurity, as well as the improved and sustainable management of environmental resources of water, soils and forests.

The interventions were within the priorities of the key partners, Progressio and Environment Africa. Progressio, in its international initiatives focusing on marginalised communities on wide-ranging themes such as access to water, or the redress of community or individual rights, combines skills share in its collaborative partnerships and the promotion of advocacy as strategic tools, the latter aimed at influencing decision makers and policy at all levels- local, national and global. Environment Africa's strategic plan (2010-2014)[10] is indicative that the organization's priorities and areas of strategic focus include promotion of sustainable livelihoods linked to improved and sustainable management of the environment and the strengthening of advocacy in environmental governance. These strategic focus areas, in the Evaluation Team's opinion, were strongly relevant to the intervention logic of the BLF project, namely that skills transfer to target communities in improved and sustainable management of the environment, and in lobbying and advocacy on environmental governance, would support and sustain access by communities to the natural resources of water, land and forests without jeopardizing ecosystem services which are critical for the resilience of the environment to various human and natural shocks.

The theory of change underpinning this project outcome, namely that communities are more willing to protect and sustainably manage the environment if they are guaranteed equitable access to, and use of the natural resources, is consistent with existing Central Government and local policies and priorities. Duties of the local level BLF project stakeholders- local authorities, Environmental Management Agency (EMA) and the Forestry Commission in respect of the environment, are governed under the Environmental Management Act. The Environmental Management Act (Act 13/2002, 6/2005) promotes the integration of conservation and sustainable utilization (of biological resources), and the act also enshrines rights of communities to environmental education and awareness, and promotes the

[10] Environment Africa Annual Report, 2013

strengthening of household capacities in terms of attitudes, values, skills and behavior in order for communities to meaningfully address environmental issues.

The Evaluation Team also acknowledges that key activities of the BLF program were highly relevant to address environmental challenges identified through several methods prior to its implementation, including district profiling, baseline studies and participatory rural appraisals. Community concerns captured from these studies were on high rates of deforestation, land degradation and acutely unsatisfied energy needs, as well as weak support from local government in the area of natural resource management. In direct response to these challenges, areas of BLF project activity included (i) tree planting and establishment of woodlots, (ii) training on environmental law, (iii) promotion of alternative/renewable energy technologies including biogas digesters, household solar technologies, together with the promotion of energy saving strategies including energy saving stoves, (iv) access to non-timber forest products, namely bee keeping.

3.2.3 Effectiveness

OECD Rating: B-= Good

3.2.3.1. Model Design

Output Indicator: Utilization of renewable energy resources as an alternative to wood fuel
Beneficiary communities exhibited strong positive response to the biogas digester pilot as a renewable energy source that would mitigate the pressure on local forests as sources of fuel wood for household energy needs. Installed biogas plants were providing multiple needs, heat energy for cooking, household illumination, and bio-slurry, a bio-fertilizer that was being used in vegetable gardens although it is equally usable in agricultural fields. Comments from the chief executive of Guruve Rural District Council were that, 'biogas digesters address up to 70% of the multiple household needs'. Biogas digesters also have the advantage that livestock dung used as biomass is equally accessible to all levels of household endowment levels; households without livestock may access droppings in grazing lands, complemented with household waste and other biomass. However, the units have to be made air-tight to prevent as loses and escape into the atmosphere, as methane (CH_4) is a strong greenhouse gas. Also, the units have to be water-tight, to prevent contamination of water bodies. In addition, operating the biogas plant is relatively sophisticated, including the requirement for regular feeding (up to daily) with small quantities of raw manure and water and the maintenance of fixed slurry levels in the outlet tank in order to have adequate gas in the gas holder (dome).

Output Indicator: Number of woodlots established
Tree planting activities and woodlot establishment based largely on Eucalyptus species which are fast growing compared to the majority of indigenous trees, is an equally useful intervention. Communities were equally receptive of the tree planting intervention. Observations by the Evaluation Team were that tree planting activities in Nyanga District were integrated with bee-keeping, leveraging the usefulness of Eucalypts as pollen sources for honey bees. Whilst integration gives impetus to tree planting, this was not leveraged in the other target districts. Additional strengths of the tree planting intervention were that the project promoted seed collections from mature Eucalypt groves, and transferred the seed collection skills to communities, which saved communities from the challenge of

accessing distant seed sources, and the additional costs of purchase. However, challenges with tree planting include the need to protect young saplings from livestock damage; communities tend to rely on brushwood, which may inadvertently put pressure back on existing forests. Other challenges, which were evident to the Evaluation Team, were thefts of timber from woodlots, and threats from invasive pests. Eucalypts in Nyanga were exhibiting extensive Red gum Lerp Psyllid, a major sap sucking pest that has recently escaped into the country. Other invasive pest problems that have already been recorded locally include red gum chalcid (Leptocybe invasa) and the bronze bug.

Beekeeping, which has been introduced in Nyanga and to some extent in Zvimba, is strongly successful for engendering good stewardship of natural environment, specifically forests, indirectly through re-afforestation efforts for woody species that are a strong source of pollen, especially Eucalypts. The project however, could have made a case for fruit trees which can be an equally strong source of pollen, and has strong nutritional benefits.

Under this outcome, the Evaluation Team's conclusions are that further gains could have been made by a deliberate integration of biogas plants with productive activities at household level, for instance heat supply to tobacco curing, even if on a pilot basis. This would have the immediate effect of transforming biogas plants from being liabilities or cost items on the household, to being productive assets contributing to household income. Also, biogas plants could have been integrated into agro-processing centers (which form an integral of the BLF project) for processing and drying of produce. Similarly, the six pilot household solar units installed could have been connected to solar water pumps for domestic vegetable gardens, even connecting these to shallow wells (approx. down to 10 m deep). Shallow wells are simple to construct with domestic tools. Access to water at close proximity to dwellings would reduce pressure on fragile wetlands as sources of water for gardens, a predominant practice in all three target districts. In addition, the project design was rather weak in the range of options for NTFP, and could have identified more NTFP to give viable options relevant to a wider range of communities in their varied circumstances of local physical and biological environments, levels of economic endowment, and social and cultural attributes.

3.2.3.2. Performance in Program Implementation

Output indicator: Renewable energy resources piloted as alternatives to wood fuel

The program generally met its targets with respect to pilot schemes in alternative energy, specifically 6 pilots for household solar installations, and 2 biogas digester plants, both of these in Guruve district, wards 7, 8 and 22. These structures were constructed early in the project implementation, with some installations being commissioned by December 2012 (biogas digesters) and July 2013 (household solar installations), which created adequate exposure and opportunity for target communities to adopt the technologies.

Output indicator: Awareness raising on environmental issues through trainings, commemorations, etc.

Significant achievements were made in awareness raising on environmental issues, especially using environment day commemorations (including Clean up Campaigns, Fire Campaigns, World Environment Day, World Food Day, World Forests Day, World Water Week, and World Wetlands Day). Up to 4 721 contacts were made (Table 1), against an overall project target of 4 000 beneficiaries (in community action groups). Although it is reasonable to assume that not all attendees to environment

commemorations were members of Environment Action Groups (EAG), the Evaluation Team notes that the project had supported the creation of 39 EAGs by end of Year 2. Significantly, the project accomplished early, the training of EAGs on critical skills of group governance and conflict management for all three target districts of Guruve, Nyanga and Zvimba (Table 1). Again, across all three target districts, the project educated communities on governance and legal provisions of environmental laws including use, restrictions aimed at environmental protection, and penalties for contravening the provisions.

Table 6: Number of Participants in Various Environmental Management Activities.

Training/Engagement	District			No. of
	Guruve	Nyanga	Zvimba	Participants
Household Energy Training	21	-	-	21
Biogas Construction Builder Training	7	-	14	21
Biogas Official Launch	635	-	-	635
Environmental Law, Lobbying and Advocacy Training	48	38	191	277
Group Governance & Conflict Management	44	42	58	144
World Environment Days Commemorations	-	-	-	4721
Capacity Building for EA staff - EA Head Office	-	-	-	24
	Source: Environment Africa			

Although a Beekeeping Production manual has been produced, a first in Zimbabwe as it appears that no other manual has ever been produced for the local bee keeper; the Evaluation Team observes that the manual is in an incomplete state and has not been published yet. Additionally, a more local leaning in content could be introduced, giving local examples, providing recommendations to handle unique local circumstances (favorable socio-economic environment , ideal local bee keeping bio-physical environment, honey processing chain, market nuances), thereby making it more relevant and practical to the local beekeeper.

Skills in planting indigenous trees appear weak, and this area was raised by communities as not working very well.

3.2.4 Economic value chain development

Ideally, by mid-term, project focus should have shifted from skills transfer among communities, towards production, product development and market linkages for non-timber forest products (NTFP). Yet, instead of being market-led which imparts greater chances of sustainability for community enterprises, the project stagnated in the establishment phase. Even then, the range of non-timber forest products were restricted to bee-keeping, which gave communities limited options. To its credit, the project realised that not all sites and communities would be suited to this enterprise, so the focus remained in Nyanga District. Even so, the project kept its flexibility in supporting an initiative by some Zvimba communities supported by AGRITEX to likewise embark on bee keeping. A couple of agricultural exhibitions in the district locality in July 2013, a project-supported apiary expo are a few of the recorded

efforts the project made in developing markets for the community, but these were woefully inadequate. Hence, the markets accessed by project beneficiaries were traditional, mainly local ones.

3.2.5 Efficiency

OECD Rating: B⁻= Good

Use of exposure visits for target beneficiaries in Zvimba (representatives from Wards 3, 5 and 28) in promoting adoption of biogas plants was an efficient way of utilizing the limited number of pilot biogas plants given that the project was only able to site three pilot plants in one target district, Guruve due to budgetary limitations. At least community leaders were taken on a Look-and-Learn visit.

The Evaluation Team obtained evidence that the project exerted strong leveraging of complementary expertise and interests within the public Institutions at district level, especially EMA, Forestry Commission and AGRITEX. For instance, local district councils have environmental management sub-committees representing 3 wards at a time, operating under the umbrella district environmental committees. The BLF project was able to set up Environmental Action Groups (EAG) at ward level, hence extending, rather than duplicating local governance structures at community level. In any case, the environmental sub-committees have been virtually inactive, a point confirmed by Nyanga Rural District Council (RDC), due to constrained operational budgets. Forestry commission and EMA officers were facilitated to address and directly train communities using BLF project platforms, which reduced duplication of effort.

The BLF adopted several time-tested implementation approaches borrowed from both Progressio and Environment Africa which brought significant efficiencies to the BLF project, allowing greater reach to beneficiaries despite limited resources. In the Farmer Field School (FFS) approach, lead community members, referred to as 'champions' under the BLF program, would host training sessions, pilots and demonstrations, this way becoming learning centers for the rest of the community members to imitate. Also, the Environmental Action Group (EAG) approach created platforms for training and learning, disbursement of inputs, and living hubs around which community members continued to run activities. Furthermore, local government agencies in agriculture, environment, community development and small to medium enterprise (SMEs) engaged these structures for other initiatives complementary to the BLF thrusts.

3.2.6 Outcomes / Impact

OECD Rating: C+= Satisfactory

Outcome indicator: Number of households adopting alternative energy sources promoted by project
Financial benefits: Under tree planting and woodlot establishment, the Eucalyptus species extensively planted only reaches harvest maturity when in its 7th year. Despite this, a significant number of groups have been sharing financial dividends from the sale of seedlings to community members within 3 years of initial establishment, which constitutes an unintended benefit. A number of households testified to receiving between US$10-$75 from this activity, after cost deductions. Costs are minimal, especially since these groups have been trained under the project on seed collections from local mature grooves.

Adoption of Alternative Energy Sources:

Outcome indicator: number of households adopting alternative energy sources promoted by the project in Zimbabwe

On household energy, the project had a target of 120 new households adopting alternative energy sources by end of the project. By Year 2, 57 households had adopted alternative energy sources promoted by the project (biogas 2; solar enery-7, and energy-saving (tsotso) stove-48) [11]. Since then, additional households adopted biogas digesters, with and without access to loan facilities. In Zvimba, more than five households have adopted and constructed biogas digesters in the last two years, and in Guruve, at least three households have constructed biogas digesters. Whilst some households self-financed, other households accessed loans through an existing revolving fund with the Zvimba and Guruve District Councils, set up independent of the BLF project. These adoption figures are significant, considering that the total costs of installation of biogas plants are high relative to income levels for rural communities, ranging up to US$ 1 000, with the costs of hiring a builder contributing about 40%. It is also noteworthy that Zvimba District registered biogas adoptions, attributable to the look-and-learn visits to Guruve District referred to earlier, since Zvimba District had no pilot biogas digesters under the BLF project. A rise in adoption levels will also contribute indirectly to livelihoods of construction workers involved in the construction of biogas digesters.

Putting Alternative Energy to Productive Use: It was evident to the Evaluation Team that biogas plants address multiple household needs, such as the provision of energy, light, and bio-fertilizer (See Box.1). Household savings on the cost of securing wood-fuel (some households hire woodcutters and transport to transfer wood to homesteads) were being used for alternative purposes critical to households. Gender-related benefits were also acknowledged by communities, with men increasingly willing to prepare meals, lifting this burden off women.

Box 1: Most Significant Change Profile in Alternative Energy, an Amalgamation of Biogas and Solar Energy

Mrs. Sawaya of Ward 7, Guruve is a widow. She is one of the recipients of the pilot BLF household solar installations that the project mounted in 2012 as demonstration units. In realizing that the services she was getting from the solar installation was limited to powering her radio, and lighting, she subsequently adopted, on her own initiative, the biogas digester in December 2014 as a source of cooking energy, having again learned about this innovation under the BLF project. She accomplished construction of this 6 m^3 capacity bio-digester without external support, except a US$ 1 000 loan from a revolving fund in the district. She anticipates paying back all her loan from her current tobacco crop, which she is harvesting and curing. Her source of biomass is the cattle pen located within the perimeters of her farmhouse.

Besides using methane from the digester as an energy source for cooking her meals and lighting her hut using a special methane lamp mounted at the center of the room, she uses the bio-slurry from the biogas digester outlet pit for fertilizing her vegetables. To extend the use of her solar unit to cover both domestic and productive services, she now extends her chicken feeding hours using solar-generated biogas light. Since installing the external lights, she has raised and disposed of 350 birds through sales outlets in Harare, at US$6 per bird.

[11] Year 2 BLF Final Report, Progressio.

Output indicator: Increased awareness on environmental issues leading to remedial responses to environmental degradation and increased access to forest products

Enhanced Environmental Protection in Association with Increased Access to Natural Resources: By raising environmental awareness, seeking alternative sources of energy, and supporting access to non-timber forest products (NTFP), the BLF project has contributed significantly to enhanced environmental protection, as evidenced by the marked reduction in cases involving deforestation since 2013, a position supported by over 63 % of the sampled community[12]. Up to 46% of the communities have become aware of at least 3 clauses of environmental legislation, and an increase of 12% in community involvement with environmental management was recorded between 2013-2014[13]. At the same time, it would appear that, between 2013-2014, initiatives by local authorities designed to protect and preserve the environment and forests has increasingly interfered less with community access to forests due to introduction of the BLF project (Table 2). This is attributed to increased awareness of what constitutes violations of the Environmental Act, and enhanced access to non-timber forest products (NTFP) (Table 3).

Table 7: Community has less access to forests than one year ago due to initiatives to preserve the forestry resources (% of population)

Disagree		Not Sure		Agree	
2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
16	57	-	14	83	29
***Source: Progression & Environment Africa*[14]**					

Table 8: Communities in the past year have been able to access more natural products and resources from the forests

Disagree		Agree	
2013	2014	2013	2014
50	14	50	88
		Source: Progressio & Environment Africa[15]	

3.2.7 Sustainability

OECD Rating: B⁻= Good

Interventions under this outcome have enhanced community consciousness and positive attitudes in environmental conservation, reflected in increased compliance and reduced deforestation activities.

[12] Income, Food Security and Forest Benefits Report, RICA Methodology, 2014-2015.
[13] Income, Food Security and Forest Benefits Report, RICA Methodology, 2014-2015.
[14] Income, Food Security and Forest Benefits Report, RICA Methodology, 2014-2015.
[15] Income, Food Security and Forest Benefits Report, RICA Methodology, 2014-2015.

These changes have also been accompanied with tangible, direct and early benefits to the community, and these rewards reinforce positive behavior towards the environment, which increases chances of sustainability of changes. By strongly involving stakeholders, the project has also forged strong linkages between local government agencies- Environmental management Agency (EMA), District Council Environment and Agriculture Sections and Forestry Commission, in support of communities.

Skills transfer and capacity building of communities, for instance in the practice of bee keeping, the training of masons in biogas construction, presence of local supplier markets for fittings -these skill and services will remain in the community as the project terminates, which ensures continuity. Acquired knowledge and skills from the training, guidance and technical input from development workers (DW) Progressio placed in the implementing agent, will remain in Environment Africa for use in other assignments. The manuals[16] put in place through efforts of the development workers remain as reference sources which can also be used for mounting refresher courses.

Nonetheless, for the household solar facility, the project does not seem to have trained local artisans/technicians, unlike the arrangements made for biogas digesters were more than 21 local masons were trained in Zvimba and Guruve districts combined. Fittings for solar facilities (e.g. lighting bulbs for direct current (DC)l are not readily available within communities, which constitutes oversight by the project. Some fittings for biogas plants are not locally available, non-robust and expensive, i.e. biogas lamps. Emerging challenges of invasive insect pests (Red gum Lerp Psyllid, red gum chalcid (Leptocybe invasa) and the bronze bug), pause significant threats to sustainability of eucalypt-dependent woodlots and tree planting exercises. However, it appears that Forestry Commission is exploring the possibility of introducing natural enemies to keep the pest problems under control.

3.2.8 Treatment of Cross Cutting Issues

Efforts by the project to ensure equity across gender and disadvantaged groups were evident to the Evaluation Team. For instance, the main EAG committee in Zvimba District has 4 men and 3 women representatives, which mirrored the general situation for other groups interviewed during the evaluation. It was also evident that disadvantaged groups such as widows were represented in piloting project innovations, and that EAG platforms were commonly used for awareness raising on HIV/AIDS issues, and in disseminating messages against domestic violence. These thrusts were planned for, as evident in the project proposal documents.

3.3 Local Communities and Environment Africa Engage with Local and National Government to Ensure Better Management and Use of Natural Resources for the Benefit of Poor and Marginalized Communities in Zimbabwe, linking to Progressio's Policy Work at an International Level

Overall OECD rating: C^{+}= Satisfactory

[16] Beekeeping Manual; Agro-ecology Manual.

3.3.1 Description of Model

This model focused on the establishment and/or strengthening environmental action groups (EAGs) in the capacity to advocate for, and mobilize communities for addressing local issues involving the management and protection of environmental resources especially of land, forests and clean water. It also focused on the transformation of these structures to become focal points and platforms for mobilization of the community in environmental advocacy.

3.3.1.1 Target groups

These EAG structures would incorporate a broad range of community representatives, including disadvantaged members especially women and the youth. Target beneficiaries consisted of 4 000 community members to form (about 90) community action groups. Capacity building activities would also extent to Environment Africa, (especially focusing on field staff), as well as individual representatives from collaborating public institutions (Forestry Commission, Environmental Management Agency) at district level.

3.3.1.2 Intervention package

Establishment, support and training of EAGs on group governance (effective structures, leadership roles, conflict management); environmental legislation; environmental management (deforestation and local by-laws, co-management of natural resources with local authorities, access to natural resources of land, forests and clean water, alternative energy to reduce over-reliance hence stress of natural resources); and environmental protection (local environmental action plans). Provisions were made for strengthening Environment Africa's capacity to implement this package by attaching a development worker who would impart the skills.

3.3.1.3 Budget

A small budget of USD 2 531 was allocated for direct activities under this outcome, which encompassed skills training in lobbying and advocacy, the development of action plans on lobbying and advocacy and finally the appropriation included a budget line for lobbying government on alternative energy.

3.3.2 Relevance

OECD Rating: B= Good

The group approach is a well-established and acceptable strategy for the dissemination of agricultural skills and practices in AGRITEX, especially using the Farmer Field School (FFS) concept. Similarly, the Environmental Management Act has provisions for the formation of community-based Environmental Management Sub-committees (EMSC) that report to, and operate under the District Environmental Management Committees. However, activities of EMSCs are currently low key, if at all existent. Also, EMSCs represent 3 wards at a time, whereas EAG are more localized, with several EAGs existing in any one ward. Based on the foregoing, EAGs are strongly relevant to environmental management and protection initiatives. In addition, beneficiary communities and stakeholders under the BLF project identify with the group strategy. The Evaluation Team obtained evidence of the acceptance and usage of EAGs and proxy structures by the beneficiary communities, community leaders and local government agencies.

3.3.3 Effectiveness

OECD Rating: C+= Satisfactory

Output indicator: Number of EAGs established for community-based natural resource management
Whilst it is evident that several groups were established in the three beneficiary districts, it appears that less than half the target number of new groups was established by end of Year 2[17]. Nonetheless, the BLF project strongly input into strengthening existing group structures, especially in training on group governance, in imparting lobbying and advocacy skills, in teaching groups on the development and implementation of action plans, and in the support of community groups as they employed learned skills to solve real life issues confronting them.

However, with the exception of Zvimba, Environmental Action Groups (EAGs) or Farmer Field Schools (FFS) were not well defined, and individual members of the communities would neither directly relate the EAG structures, nor to the term. Rather, community members recognized more the activity-based groups, such as the community garden group. Notwithstanding, the operations of these groups clearly demonstrated gains in knowledge and skills obtained from the BLF program. For instance, each group that the Evaluation Team met had well defined structures. Each ward has several committees and in addition an overall committee responsible for recruitment, establishment of new committees (Chair and Secretary), initial orientation, follow-up monitoring and mentoring. New groups are formed for various reasons- existing groups becoming too large, special requests by community members, or in consideration of distance. Each group has 7 committee members (chairperson and deputy chair, secretary and deputy secretary, treasurer and two committee members). In Zvimba, the overall committee was especially strong for assisting in the establishment, orientation and initial follow-up of new groups, and they were clear on which positions were accountable for this exercise.

Output indicator: Number of lobbying and advocacy engagements by EAGs on environmental issues
These group structures became platforms and entry points upon which communities were mobilized and coordinated for engagements, for training, for the peer dissemination of messages to the wider community on improved environmental management principles for sustainable food security and livelihoods. In the FFS concept, lead members of the community were being trained, they would host demonstrations and pilots, and they in turn would impart skills to the wider community, all the while under monitoring by Environment Africa. Communities appeared more receptive when they received concept from peers, and confirmed that the approach was working for them.

Output indicator: The number of national and international level policy engagements by Progressio and EA.
Concerning the placement of development workers (DW) in Environment Africa for capacity building, submissions to the Evaluation Team were that this advocacy gave direct interaction with Progressio, strengthened the capacity of Environment Africa to transfer skills to community groups, which in turn empowered communities. This enabled the BLF project to make advocacy strengthening one of the most successful elements of the overall project. However, due to the late recruitment of a field assistant in Nyanga District, DW in some instances were forced to focus on project implementation at

[17] Year 2 BLF Final Report, Progressio.

ground level, which detracted DWs from focusing on the main mandate of capacity building. Concerns were also raised regarding dual reporting structures, whereby DWs were in some instances submitting reports direct to Progressio, which reduced opportunities for lesson sharing and capacity building on the part of Environment Africa staff.

It is the Evaluation Team's assessment that on the policy side, the project created platforms for communities to engage with duty bearers at local government and community leadership level, which bore tangible benefits within the lifespan of the project implementation.

Output Indicator: Number of environmental policy and/or management best practice related papers/articles produced and disseminated in Zimbabwe

The project had a target to produce 3 papers in Zimbabwe on environmental policy and or best practice by end of project. At the end of the project, two papers, outputs from the project focusing largely on management best practice, have been prepared and submitted for publication. One paper, focusing on the role of environmental education in accelerating sustainable solutions, has been submitted to the Environmental Education Association Southern Africa[18]. Another paper, focusing on biogas diffusion and adoption mechanisms especially as influenced by the perceptions and behavior patterns of women as community members[19].

Output indicator: Number of policies improved with regard to environmental conservation as a result of the project in Zimbabwe

The Evaluation Team found no evidence that the target to improve at least two policies in regard to environmental conservation by the end of the project either met or addressed. Whilst this target was well within the realms of the project, however it was outside the scope of a 3-year timeframe of the BLF project, since policy changes involve several long-winded steps including identification, analysis, drafting, consultations and lobbying, followed by processes to assent the policy by the legislature and the executive arms of government.

3.3.4 Efficiency

OECD Rating: C= Satisfactory

Instead of working with individual households, the group approach that the project adopted (in both the Environmental Action Group (EAG) and Farmer Field School (FFS) concepts), and leveraging the peer training model, synonymous with snow-ball training, facilitated wider community reach. Hence the project succeeded in committing less resource (financial, human, time, etc.) in implementing activities and achieving output targets. Whereas the project intended to establish new EAG groups as one of the focus areas, its associated focus of strengthening already existing groups involved in themes relevant to the project circumvented disruptions to ongoing programs and activities.

[18] The role of education ESD/EE in accelerating the sustainable solutions at local levels-the case of Nyanga, Guruve and Zvimba districts of Zimbabwe, July 2014; Diego Matsvange, Patisiwe Zaba, Munyaradzi Kaundikiza and Ruvimbo Sagonda.

[19] Biogas technology diffusion and adoption mechanisms in Zimbabwe-the women perspective. Mutsvange D, Sagonda K, Kaundikiza M and Zaba P, 2015.

Implementation of activities was provided in collaboration and with the full participation of existing extension services (Rural District Councils, AGRITEX, Forestry Commission, Environmental Management Agency, and representatives of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Community Development and Small to Medium Enterprises, which effectively integrated beneficiary groups into existing support structures. Several stakeholders confirmed this approach by the project, and in Guruve, the District Administrator (DA)'s office made the comment that the project, 'worked well with existing structures without creating parallel structures'. Inevitably, this created synergies for stakeholders and communities alike.

3.3.5 Outcomes / Impact

OECD Rating: B⁻= Good

Beneficiary communities appear more conversant with, and show ability to develop community action plans with timescales, whereby they identify problems, come up with solutions, and act upon the solutions. Communities have also successfully applied acquired skills in conflict situations evident among groups when dealing with internal and external grievances. In some instances, groups have shown a clear understanding of group governance and specific roles of various leadership positions, and have fully leveraged these roles and responsibilities in addressing community challenges. There are also several instances whereby communities have successfully utilized acquired lobbying and advocacy skills in addressing neighborhood grievances. Some of the cases shared with the Evaluation Team, relating application of acquired knowledge and skills gained from the BLF project are illustrated below.

Outcome indicator: number of farmers adopting one or more soil and water conservation farming techniques promoted by the project in Zimbabwe

Refer to Section 3.1.3 under Conservation Agriculture (CA).

Outcome indicator: Increased number of lobbying and advocacy engagements by EAGs on environmental issues

Self-Perpetuation of the EAG Model: New EAG groups have been successfully formed in the absence of the project implementing agent, Environment Africa. This was especially visible in Zvimba, where the chairperson and secretary from the principal committee were tasked with overseeing the creation of other community Environmental Action Groups (EAGs) by other community members. For instance, this principal committee facilitated setting up of at least 3 new EAGs in wards 3 and 7 in 2014, mentoring the new groups, and closely monitoring these groups during the initiation and early establishment phases.

Community Initiatives in Rural Development: Supported groups have demonstrated growth into maturity and an increased capacity for independent initiation of development schemes. In Zvimba, these groups organized, using own-generated resources, at least one look-and-learn visit for 5 of its representative members, to another community project, Chigondo Honey Processing Centre in Wedza, in September 2013. Following this visit, bee keeping activities commenced among some Zvimba community members. These groups also attended and showcased their agricultural produce at Kadoma Ranch Motel during the Community Capacity Building Expo. In 2014, the groups independently and successfully organized 2 field days. EAG platforms have also been largely credited for the lobbying

Nyanga, Zvimba, Guruve Rural District Councils (RDCs) and successful acquisition of agro-processing sites these two respective districts, and for access and refurbishment of the disused Guruve Community Centre.

Seeking Services: The group approach has led to communities being measurably more assertive, demanding services from duty bearers in public service and local government positions. Forestry Commission reported a spike in the number of requests for services, especially in training on specific topics of interest to the affected communities. This act is near-impossible for individuals to request such government service packages. In the unlikely event that individual community members request individualized services, these would be too expensive to provide.

Calling Public Figures to Account: By end of Year 2, the project had recorded 22 engagements[20] of local communities with local leadership to address environmental issues that affected them in their specific localities (see Box 2). The prevalence of such engagements with local leadership is attributed to capacity building interventions directed at imparting lobbying and advocacy skills that would enable communities to gradually gain co-management status with local authorities.

Box 2. Most Significant Change Profile in Community Level Lobbying and Advocacy-deposing of a Village Head, Nhamburiko Village, Ward 19, Nyanga

Angered that a village head was, for his sole benefit:

- selling pit sand from the village, which had potential negative environmental effects,
- Settling numerous people from outside the village on grazing lands,
- Selling stray livestock,

The local community approached the local chief in 2014, through a representative group, equipped with advocacy skills acquired under the BLF project, and
presented their grievances. Subsequent to these representations, the community grievances were resolved by way of a decision, by the chief, to replace the offending village head. To the extent that the community was satisfied with the performance of the new leader in his position as the village head, they further elected him into the Overall Environmental Action Group (EAG) which, among other things, provides oversight on the new community agro-processing center under construction at Charamba Business Centre, Nhamburiko Village.

Advocacy at National and International Level to Influence Policy:

Outcome indicator: The number of national and international engagements on environmental policy and management best practices

Regarding policy influence, Environment Africa and Progressio were in the lead in setting up and coordinating the Zimbabwe Civil Society on Scaling up Nutrition (ZSCOSUN), whose aim was to galvanize civil society in promoting nutritional well-being and food security among communities and increase nutrition-sensitive programming in their development agenda. These efforts led to the securing of funding from the Multi-partner Trust Fund (MPTF).

Adaptation to Economic and Climatic Changes: The EAG platforms allow communities to adapt to changing circumstances, some brought on them, others of external origin. For instance, in Nhamburiko

[20] Year 2 BLF Final Report, Progressio.

village, Ward 19, Nyanga a Cold Storage Commission (CSC) livestock auction center which operated in the past, is now closed and has derelict pens. A paprika collection and agro-processing center has also closed up, leaving behind a disused building. Gardens have become the major source of income here (thanks in part to the BLF project), whereas previously, maize was the main source of income, with wheat grown in wetland gardens coming in forth. Now the wetlands have disappeared, forcing them to adjust by producing other, more relevant agricultural products as determined by market forces. Involvement of community members in (EAG) group structures has given them opportunity to engage with each other and systematically identify solutions to their changing circumstances. Nonetheless, evidence of derelict livestock auction pens and a disused paprika agro-processing center juxtaposed to a newly rising BLF agro-processing center suggests additional areas of focus. More needs to be done in equipping farmers to be judicious, never wasting, but integrating the resources they already have with the new resources at their disposal, for the sake of the environment, and their very survival.

3.3.6 Sustainability

OECD Rating: C= Satisfactory

The project invested heavily in knowledge on environmental management. Skills acquired by communities as a result of their involvement in constitution making and action plans remains with them at termination of the project.

3.3.7 Treatment of Cross Cutting Issues

Social inclusion measures were built into the project at proposal stage, focusing on disadvantaged groups, including integration of widows and orphans. In addition, EAG platforms were used extensively by stakeholders for HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, domestic violence advocacy, youth empowerment and activism. However, there was little evidence of the participation of youths in programs, which suggests that projects did not have strong appeal to this group.

4 Project Management

4.1 Progressio

Overall rating: C = Satisfactory

Progressio managed to steer the project by providing the technical oversight and satisfying the intense reporting requirements and fund management prowess required by the project. Despite some challenges faced by the organisation such as staff attrition, match fund raising and tight deadlines, Progressio was still able to fulfil its contractual mandate and offer support to its partner. The organisation was also able to add value due to the highly skilled staff and DWs employed by the organisation. However the coordination between Progressio and EA was not smooth and as such more steering committee meetings were required than the ones conducted. The evaluation team infer the scope of the project was too broad for the resources and time-frame which was available for the project.

Basing on the CBA data, Progressio should have assisted EA fundraise for administration costs and also share implications of the prescription of the fund appropriation required by the funder. The delayed availability of CAPEX fund stalled the processing and market linkage function of the project.

4.2 Environment Africa

Overall rating: C= Satisfactory

Conclusions by the Evaluation Team are that the organization was appropriate as a technical partner, with its core business being the protection of natural resources and promotion of community development through sustainable environmental management. It possessed adequate (human) capacity to host the project since it had suitably qualified and skilled staff (team leaders, field officers and assistant field officers) for field activities specific to the BLF project. Areas of capacity weakness within EA, which had been identified during capacity assessments for the BLF project (weak advocacy effectiveness, limited skills in agro-ecology, value addition, product development and value market development), were augmented with the attachment of three experts (development workers) with requisite skills during the life of the project, which was proper. In addition, the Evaluation Team's position is that EA was well-suited for implementation of the project, having previously extensively run and managed several projects on environmental issues, poverty reduction and livelihoods. The Evaluation team also noted that Environment Africa possessed significant levels of goodwill in all three districts hosting program, an acceptance built in a period extending before the current program, and this contributed significantly to the smooth running of the project. Environment Africa garners this goodwill due to its consistent approach of facilitating strong stakeholder involvement at the facilitator-community interface, an approach that received significant affirmation from stakeholders in interviews with the Evaluation Team.

However, despite significant experience in implementing similar projects, and its experience in setting up Agro-processing Centres which are currently running and have substantially well-established market value chains, involving export of products, for instance, Bumba Agro-processing Centre in Chimanimani and Chigondo Agro-processing Center and Wedza and a case in point Environment Africa, this experience was not brought to bear establishing the three agro-processing centres under the BLF project. In the Bumba project, which has run independently for more than 4 years, two professionals run

the centre (an accountant, a business manager), and bee keepers are shareholders, the more honey they bring in, the greater the dividends. Output from the plant exceeds 2 tonnes per month, with local and export markets. Auditing and training of committees is done by Chimanimani Rural District Council and SME department of a line ministry.

Whilst lower level staff, including staff on the ground did sterling work and showed significant enthusiasm for the project, the level of effort by senior management was on the low side. For instance, several delays were experienced with financial reports, and there was inertia in submitting narratives as justification for further release of funds. The Evaluation Team acknowledges that Environment Africa cited low budgetary allocations for the level of effort required from senior management, but also realises that the BLF project budget exhausted the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) limits for funding of International Communities. Hence, the inference by the Evaluation Team is that not enough effort was exerted at Steering Committee level (which could have met more frequently to deal with such issues).

4.3 EAG

Overall OECD rating: A=EXCELLENT

Environmental Action Groups (EAGs) put sterling work into the project, coordinating members in activities on the ground, and driving the advocacy agenda. Some groups showed innovativeness in organizing and fundraising for look-and-learn visits, leading to community-led programmes. Overall EAGs in all districts successfully secured land or buildings for agro-processing centres crucial to the success of the project. Also, Overall EAGs have incorporated mechanisms for creating and mentoring new EAG groups, which may remain a driving force for sustaining groups into the future.

4.4 Government extension services

Overall rating: B = Good

The agency is responsible for offering technical assistance to farmers in each ward. AREX played a critical role in catalysing the adoption of CA as per training by EA. Extension Officers were keen to participate in project activities, learning by doing and also offering some trainings to farmers. Despite a low budget allocation from the fiscal budget for their activities, extension services played a critical role in promoting the adoption of CA by villagers.

4.5 Department of Natural Resources and Agriculture

Overall rating: B=Good

This department is responsible for the District Environment Management Committees, the appointment of community-based Environment Management Sub-committees, as well as oversight over these structures. This department in all districts cooperated in using Environmental Action Groups at ward level as proxy Department platforms on which they mounted environmental awareness, management and protection campaigns in partnership with the project. The Department also participated on the livelihood and food security agenda under the project, at times as resource persons in training activities. In other instances, the Department made contributions to the project in terms of mobilising communities, providing transport and other needs.

4.6 Forestry Commission

Overall rating: B= Good

The Department is responsible for forestry management. It did well by participating in trainings on promoting the conservation of forestry in the target districts. Forestry Commission participated in capacity building of communities in conserving the land. The personnel were instrumental in the citing of woodlots and scouting for pests and diseases in the woodlots.

4.7 Environment Management Authority

Overall rating: B= Good

Environmental Management Agency (EMA) had strong involvement in the project in all the districts, well realising that the program advances EMA agenda. The organization was involved in a wide range of activities, from clean-up campaigns to awareness campaigns, and the development of community action plans, which created strong synergies in activities between the two organizations. Due to the strong relationships developed between the two organizations, EMA often invited Environment Africa to its separate activities, such as clean-up campaigns.

4.8 Local authorities

Overall rating: B=Good

Local authorities did well to support the project by gracing all important functions such as field days and launches of various technologies. The authorities complemented the project by also selected project sites for special commemorations such as tree planting days. This promoted the advocacy work of EA of encouraging households to plant woodlots. Furthermore the local authorities are commended for donated pieces of land at business centres which were used for the construction of processing plants in Nyanga and Zvimba.

5 Lessons Learnt

5.1 Lessons on quality of programme management

- For a project managed by a consortium of partners, it is imperative that all parties involved actively participate in the design and costing of the project to minimize design errors which may make project implementation difficult.
- In cases where the scope of the project is too broad for resources and time available, partners should either quickly apply to the donor to defer certain aspects of the project design so that the remain components have any adequate intensity of support.
- Mapping the value chains for product development and involving actors with importance and influence in the value chain from project commencement ensures efficient utilisation of funds and project sustainability.
- Steering committee meetings are an important function in project management to ensure harmonisation of effort and timely achievement of results.

5.2 Lessons on the Outcome 1

- It is cost effective to renovate or purchase an existing building for an agro-processing centre than to construct a building in a 3 year project. However in cases where it is in-evitable to construct, construction should commence year 1 so that the building can be productively utilised during project implementation.
- Non-timber products have a higher financial return on investment to garden and field crop enterprises.
- The involvement of AREX, Ministry of Woman Affairs, and Ministry of Youth is very crucial in promoting adoption of new methods by the community and to ensure sustainability.
- High production levels cannot be sustained without sustainable market linkages. As such the market linkage function should have an equal weighting as the production function.
- Having a strong local partner on the ground with previous working experience in target communities ensures efficient attainment of results even when resources are limited.

5.3 Lessons on the Outcome 2

- A strong performance monitoring plan (PMP), clear roles, responsibilities and a commitment to full implementation of the PMP, stronger demand on accountability of technical partners, development of standard reporting formats, are essentials for the smooth running of a multi-partner programmes,
- Community development projects have a greater chance of success if with strong stakeholder buy-in by all stakeholders; time spent on developing institutional goodwill is a good investment which gives high returns over time,
- Increased livelihood options for communities reduce pressure on the environment as a source of sustenance hence reduces damage to environment (land, water, forests). Additionally, successful identification and development of livelihoods options from environmental resources improves community management of the environment, and imparts an increased sense of shared ownership,
- A full household situation analysis, capacity and risk assessment are critical in targeting household hosts for pilot projects,
- Awareness raising and mounting of strategies and mechanisms for improved management, access and sustainable utilisation ensure better and more economical protection. Arrests for violations of the Environmental Management Act should be the last resort as it is very expensive due to repeat offences in difficult socio-economic circumstances with limited livelihood option.

5.4 Lessons on Outcome 3

- For effective natural resource management, beneficiaries should learn to identify problems and design solutions, with externally-funded projects should simply facilitating this process as much as is possible,

- Setting up EAGs/group approach enables reach of large target in community development: variation of *Snowball Training Model*; but monitoring for quality assurance is critical to reduce maladjustments, a common problem responsible for distortion of learning messages under snowball training,
- The group approach was effective for resource mobilisation as well as for peer training,
- A combination of Bottom-up and Top-down

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

The overall rating of the project is that it performed very well but did not complete the full cycle (scope was too broad) of activities to achieve its intended results. (**Overall Performance Rating B: Good but should complete testing and increase intensity of support**)

The scope of the project basing on the CBA indicators and feedback from stakeholders was too broad for the resources and time available for the project. Low costs of transfer can induce a reduced motivation in public officers if some important overheads are not adequately resourced. For projects of this nature (which have prescribed low cost of transfer), partners should seek additional financing from other funds to support the administration related costs such as financial management, administration and overall project management. This will help address motivation, which is one of Behn (1998) big questions in public management.

Overall, the project successfully strengthened group structures and governance, as well as capabilities of Environmental Action Groups (EAG) to mount lobbying and advocacy campaigns on environmental issues, particularly those linked to local governance structures. The next phase of the project would need to focus on the on consolidation of group structures to bring group stability by aiming for higher level achievements relating to longer lasting changes in by-laws and policies in environmental co-governance, and on group sustainability by capacitating groups to establish coalitions and links for fundraising and wider reach. However, there is little evidence of progress by the project towards influence of national-, regional, or global level environmental policy especially related to community co-governance, sustainable management and utilization of natural resources.

The project made substantial progress in achieving its objectives of improving the stewardship of, and benefits from land, forests and water resources by disadvantaged communities inhabiting 3 wards in each of the districts of Nyanga, Zvimba and Guruve, Zimbabwe. Skills that the project intended to impart on access and amplification of non-timber forest products (NTFP), specifically in bee keeping, were transferred to the wider community. Alternatives to forests as sources of energy, namely tree planting and woodlot establishment, use of biogas digesters and household solar units, were piloted and already, there are signs of wider adoption, especially of biogas plants and tree planting activities. Regarding the project's achievement of intended outcomes, there are signs already of the widening of livelihood

opportunities derived from environmental resources, and associated improvements in environmental protection, as expected in the theory of change model which was being pursued.

Nonetheless, a second phase to the project is recommended, which would focus on (i) broadening the range of NTFPs, (ii) transformation of alternative energy sources to productive assets achieved by integrating alternative energy with livelihoods initiatives, and (iii) the strengthening of product development and branding in NTFP, and a stronger establishment of value chains and market linkages, locally and globally.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Recommendations to Progressio

- To apply for funding for phase 2, this should focus more on water reticulation systems for gardens, product development, and market linkages. Under product development, the phase should consider identifying and developing more non-timber forest products as they have a low cost of investment, high return on labour and land use. Also non-timber forest encourages communities to conserve the environment as they will be getting an economic benefit from the enterprise. In market linkages the partners may need to explore the possibilities of PPA to ensure strategic engagement with lead actors with a strong control of value chains.
- To consider a greater apportionment of resources to man-power directly involved in the project and also equipment to support sustainable product development. Progressio could consider supporting all processing centres with biogas digesters and solar to demonstrate the opportunity of using such technology even for economic productive uses over and above the domestic benefit.
- For projects with a low administration budget, Progressio should either assist or encourage the partner to seek additional funding to support administration related costs linked to the project which may not be fully supported by the BLF.
- To consider carrying through the advocacy component but now also focusing on strengthening district and provincial actors in addition to the communities.

6.2.2 Recommendation to Environment Africa

- Broaden the number of options in non-timber forest products (NTFP) to cater for the varied interests and capacities of all community members by instituting feasibility studies (focusing on distribution, conservation and regulatory status, domestication, commercialization potential, economic viability, potential social impact), product development, piloting, commercialization and market development,
- Capacitate RDC to develop and enforce hence maintain quality control standards on biogas plants and household solar units to preserve integrity of plants and protect communities against poor workmanship and exposure to unskilled bio-digester masons/solar installation artisans. This ultimately reduces risk of technology failures,

- Pressure gauges should be routinely fitted on biogas digesters, which would give true reflections of the status of gas holds in digester domes, and lead to quicker responses in taking remedial actions for malfunctioning digesters and leakages of methane (a strong climate change gas) into the atmosphere,
- Extend alternative energy (solar and biogas) appliances from solely providing household energy services to being dual purpose, also becoming sources of productive energy. This may be achieved by modifying biogas appliances to provide heat for processes such as vegetable and fruit drying, tobacco curing, or solar units to power solar water pumps for use in irrigating vegetable for irrigation, thus transforming appliances from being liabilities which take money away from the household to assets which bring money to households).
- Strengthening institutional status, organizational structures and operational systems for District Agro-processing Centres thus creating enduring market outlets and a vibrant supply chain node for NTFP,
- Introduce measures to significantly increase income levels by further product development of NFTPs to premium status (branding, certification, securing market niches e.g. organic products), and ensuring a stronger development of value chains and market linkages, locally and globally,
- Introduce public/private sector partnership schemes (PPA) that have capacity building components address funding huddles and returns on investment, which is often low for private business to sustain investments. Under market-based PPA approaches aimed at improving livelihoods and food security, the longer lasting interests of private sector entities in viable ventures tend to strengthen sustainability of interventions.
- Focus on the on consolidation of group structures to bring group stability by aiming for higher level achievements relating to longer lasting changes in by-laws and policies in environmental co-governance, social and livelihood safeguards,
- Consolidate activity-based splinter groups under the Environmental Action Group (EAG) structure to build a strongly defined and effective framework for addressing environmental issues, and create appropriate sub-committees catering for activity fluxes in environmental action plans,
- Strengthen coalitions and networks linking beneficiary communities and institutions with the wide range of local and global environmental advocacy groups for further strengthening of advocacy capacity, fundraising in support of community advocacy plans and activities,
- Introduce financing safeguards for sustainability of EAGs in community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) by accessing global climate change facilities including carbon trading, e.g. World Bank Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and Forest Investment Program.
- To periodical trace the beneficiary household economy changes against baseline in the M&E system and to ensure M&E reporting is gender disaggregated.

6.2.3 Recommendation to communities

- To actively participate in economic development activities promoted by EA, and increase they own productive assets and income to overcome poverty,
- To appreciate the changes due to globalisation and the greater demand by the market for food safety and quality. As such the communities should be flexible to combine their indigenous knowledge with the scientific knowledge brought about by the project so that they remain market-driven and not producer driven.

6.2.4 Recommendation to BLF

- To consider funding the partners for phase 2, to ensure the achievement of phase 1 are sustained. The key components BLF can support include establishment of water systems for gardens, identification of more non-timber products, processing and market linkages.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

End of Project Evaluation
Project: Conserving Our Land, Producing our Food -Sustainable management of land & forests in Malawi & Zimbabwe.

Funder: BIG Lottery Fund
Country: Zimbabwe

THE PROJECT

1. Brief background to the *Conserving Our Land, Producing our Food (Sustainable management of land & forests in Malawi & Zimbabwe).*
Progressio and its partner, Environment Africa (EA), have a long history of working in Zimbabwe and Malawi. Progressio has worked in Malawi since 2007 and in Zimbabwe since 1963, while EA has been in Malawi since 2007 and registered in Zimbabwe as a Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO) in 1990. Progressio and EA have a good understanding of the contexts of the two countries including the target districts where project assessments were carried out as a build up to this business plan. In Malawi, the project will be implemented in Salima district while in Zimbabwe it will be implemented in three districts, namely: Zvimba, Guruve and Nyanga. Poverty, household food insecurity and environmental degradation are among pressing development issues in the project target districts.

The **main objective of the project** is to support 41,000 poor and vulnerable people in Salima district of Malawi and Guruve, Nyanga and Zvimba districts of Zimbabwe achieve food security by adopting innovative and sustainable approaches to agriculture production and management of natural resources for alternative forms of livelihoods. In Malawi, the project is targeting 11,000 people in 46 villages of Traditional Authority Msosa in the Salima district (central Malawi) while in Zimbabwe, the project is targeting 30,000 people in three wards per each of three districts – Zvimba, Guruve and Nyanga (in the North and Northeast of Zimbabwe).

The project contributed to 2 Big Lottery Fund Outcomes, namely: Outcome 3 – improved livelihoods for the most disadvantaged people by enabling communities in need to reduce poverty in a sustainable way; and, Outcome 5 - improved access to and use of natural resources to benefit the most disadvantaged people, especially more sustainable use of land and taking into consideration environmental stresses.

To support the implementation of the activities, Progressio placed 3 Development Workers (DWs) in EA. Two of the DWs (one based in Malawi and one in Zimbabwe) focused on: agro-ecology; agriculture production, diversification, value chain addition, marketing and business development; community savings schemes and field training material; and monitoring and evaluation. The third DW was an Environmental Advocacy Adviser and in charge of supporting EA in developing and implementing advocacy and lobbying at national, regional and international levels. Progressio also supports the advocacy capacity of EA by linking with Progressio's international advocacy team to ensure community evidence collection and engagement, linking into key international events and policies, and representing key issues at a regional and international level.

The project objective will be achieved through the following activities:

a. Promoting conservation agriculture that is environmentally friendly and climate change resilient and increased food productivity and diversity, targeting vulnerable groups in order to improve their food security and nutrition.
b. Raising awareness of and promoting non-timber forest products including: apiculture (bee-keeping); multi-purpose trees (e.g. Jatropha, Neem and Moringa) collecting, processing and marketing of wild fruits as alternative sources of livelihoods, and capturing best practises for sharing and replication.
c. Raising awareness and training small holder farmers in value addition of agricultural and non-timber forest products including the processing, preservation and packaging for future household consumption and marketing and capturing best practises for sharing and replication.
d. Strengthening structures at community level to increase their capacity to understand and advocate for access to, sustainable use and protection of land, forest resources and clean water at a local level. Their capacity will be strengthened to enable them to manage, protect and sustainably use local natural resources including land, forests and clean water. The Community Structures will also be trained to be able to advocate and mobilise their communities for local changes in the management and protection of local resources.
e. Building the capacity of Environment Africa and community structures to effectively implement the programme activities, share learning across the region and increase capacity to advocate on climate change adaptation through agro-ecology and conservation of water resources at international, regional and national level for the benefit of the communities it serves.

The **expected project outcomes** will be:

a. Increase in household income and food security of poor and marginalised people in Malawi and Zimbabwe through agro-ecology and sustainable, equitable farming approaches and access to market.
b. More sustainable management of forest, land and water resources for the benefit of the most disadvantaged households in Malawi and Zimbabwe.
c. Local communities and Environment Africa engage with local and national government to ensure better management and use of natural resources for the benefit of poor and marginalised communities in Malawi and Zimbabwe, linking to Progressio's policy work at an international level.

4. Issues that the evaluation should study

The end of project evaluation shall provide an independent assessment of the project and shall consider the five evaluation criteria endorsed by the OECD-DAC (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability).of the **"Conserving Our Land, Producing our Food"** project as outlined below:

Relevance

The extent to which the project was suited to the priorities of the target groups. Progressio and the Big Lottery Fund. In evaluating the relevance of the project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- At the end of the project, to what extent were the initial objectives of the programme still valid in relation to priorities of the target groups?
- At the end of the project, to what extent were the delivered outcomes of the programme valid in relation to priorities of the target groups, Progressio the two relevant Big Lottery Fund outcomes?
- Were the activities and outputs of the project logical and consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?

Efficiency

Efficiency measures the outputs in relation to the inputs. When evaluating the efficiency of the project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- Were activities / outputs delivered in a cost-efficient way? (also comparing to alternative ways
- to deliver the activities and outputs)
- Were activities delivered and objectives achieved on time?

Effectiveness

Effectiveness measures how well outputs contributed to desired objectives. In evaluating the effectiveness of the project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent were the objectives achieved / are likely to be achieved?
- To what extent were the outputs the best way to achieve the outcomes?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?

Impact

The positive and negative changes produced for target beneficiaries solely due to the development intervention, including directly or indirectly, intended or unintended changes. When evaluating the impact of the project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- What real differences has the project made to the beneficiaries lives? Consider valid comparisons for what would have happened if the project had not been implemented (baselines, comparisons with similar groups who did not participate in the project).
- What is the amount of change which can be attributed to the project's activities and outputs?
- How important was the project in achieving change, were there any other contributory factors to the change which were not due to the project activities?
- Where there any negative effects of the project, either for the target groups, for other groups or relevant resources (land, water, animals etc).

Sustainability

Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable. When evaluating the sustainability of a programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- To what extent is it likely that the benefits of the project continue after the project has ended?
- What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the programme or project?
- Additionally, the evaluation should consider:
- Applying Social Return on Investment (SROI) and other economic valuation techniques where appropriate to derive a quantitative estimate of the economic benefits of the project.
- How men and women have been affected differently and any changes in power relations between men and women as a result of the project.
- What aspects of the project worked well, why?
- What aspects of the project did not work so well, why?
- Standard evaluation and survey methodologies and good practices should be applied. A useful guide on this issue is the Bond Evidence Principles, available at http://www.bond.org.uk/effectiveness/principles. In particular, all findings and conclusions

should be based on evidence which is presented in the evaluation report. All decisions on samples should be clearly justified.

2. Main audience of evaluation

Internally, the evaluation will be conducted for the benefit of Progressio, EA, and the project participants in Guruve, Mudzi, Nyanga as well as their stakeholders. Externally, the results of the evaluation will be shared primarily with BIG Lottery Fund, the funding agency to this project.

3. Evaluation Process

This evaluation will include field based study, desk review, and interviews with beneficiaries and stakeholders.

The evaluator(s) will be required to visit the sites where activities are implemented to consult key stakeholders and target groups. The methodology should encourage participation and incorporate feedback from project beneficiaries. The methods can include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Desk review of key documents, including the original Project Plan document, quarterly reports, 6-monthly DW- Reports, project annual reports, reports of mid-term evaluation, tripartite agreements and any other relevant documents.(These will be provided to the consultant during the meeting to initiate the evaluation exercise)'
- Review of the monitoring data collected during the project;
- Literature search and review for material on the environment in which the program operates, and recent developments which impacted on project activities.
- Key Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions with key project beneficiaries and project staff
- Semi-structured interviews among targeted beneficiaries and community representatives;
- Key Informant Interviews with targeted project stakeholders with interest and insight in the project activities
- Case studies

4. Logistics and Administrative Support

The lead evaluator will be responsible for the following:

- To make all arrangements related to medical insurance for him/herself and the team (Progressio does not pay for insurance for consultancies);
- A working laptop;
- Arrange and pay for his/her own accommodation and his/her teammates, no further costs will be paid aside from the consultancy fee.
- Pay for food consumed during workdays, no further per diem will be given aside from the consultancy fee.
- Establish working contacts with all the relevant project stakeholders.
- Visit selected project sites.

Progressio will be responsible for the following:

- Coordinating the end of project evaluation
- Arranging transportation for the field visits according to Progressio policies.
- Providing the evaluator all the required project documents

- All collected data will be the sole property of Progressio. The evaluators may not use the data for their own research purposes, nor license the data to be used by others, without the written consent of Progressio.

5. Reporting Relationship

The evaluator(s) will report directly to Mrs. Fiona Mwashita, Sub-regional Manager-Progressio in Zimbabwe.

6. Timeline

The evaluation process is anticipated to begin by the 16th of March 2015 with the final draft of the evaluation report being submitted by the 21st of April 2015.

Deliverables Expected deadlines

Deliverables	Expected deadlines
Meeting to award contract and agree final ToR/evaluation questions and plan	2 Hours
Literature review	2.5 days
Inception report with detailed work plan, evaluation tools and literature review.	0.5 days
Conduct field study and Draft/Preliminary report with key findings	16th of March 2015
Presentation of findings to the project steering committee for internal review	27th of March 2015
Debriefing Session to the Steering Committee	30th of March 2015
Revision and finalisation of the report including preparation of power point presentations	13 April 2015
Lesson dissemination workshop to partner and Progressio staff and evaluation participants	14 April 2015
Submission of final report. The final report will be presented in soft copy (CD format) and two bound hard copies.	21 April 2015

7. Application Details

Consultants / firms are invited to submit a proposal (not more than 20 pages) outlining the approach to be used in carrying out the assignment and provide a quotation of professional fees (as well as reimbursable costs) for the entire assignment in US Dollars. The proposal should include the following:

- Profiles or details of the firm or individual(s) including experience relevant to this assignment;
- A detailed Work Plan and the proposed Methodology, which shall include full justification for procedures to be adopted;
- Stakeholders to be interviewed including sampling methodologies if they are to be used
- A sample of an evaluation document written by the consultant
- Financial Proposal (professional fees and reimbursable). We expect the financial proposal to represent good value for money and all spend to be justified in being required to deliver an evaluation of the required quality.
- Three References on recent relevant work by the firm or individual

8. Evaluation of the Proposals

A one-stage procedure will be adopted for evaluating the proposals, i.e. the technical and financial evaluations will be combined. The overall evaluation parameters will be as follows:

i. Technical – 70%

ii. Financial – 30%

The technical proposal will be evaluated using the following criteria:
i. The firm or individual's experience in similar or related assignments – 14%;
ii. Understanding of the Terms of Reference and the proposed Work Plan and Methodology- 42%;
iii. The Professional qualifications of Consultant and/or personnel proposed for the assignment – 14%.
We intend to review applications without the need for interviews, however, if interviews are deemed necessary then we will let relevant applicants know.

9. Qualifications
The lead consultant will have an advanced degree in, Agriculture, Sustainable Environment, Development Studies, International Development or related field and have good communication skills. The Lead consultant will have at least 10 years relevant experience in leading evaluations of capacity building projects, conducting results based evaluations and using participatory evaluation methodologies for international development projects.

All proposals should be sent to recruitment@progressio.org.zw. The application deadline is 6th of March 2015. Only short listed candidates will be contacted. Application received after the deadline and incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Annex 2: Evaluation Itinerary

Date	Day	District	Ward	Respondents	Start time	End time
29-Mar-15	Sunday	Travel to Nyanga				
30-Mar-15	Monday	Nyanga	Rural District Council	DA/AGRITEX/EMA/Environ Officer/Forestry Commission	0830hrs	1130hrs
				FGD with Bee keeping farmers	1200hrs	1300hrs
				FGD Nutrional Gardens / Community Gardens	1400hrs	1500hrs
				Non timber farmers / collectors	1510hrs	1600hrs
31-Mar-15	Tuesday	Nyanga		FGD with EAG Members (FFS)	0830hrs	0930hrs
				FGD with Bee keeping farmers	0945hrs	1045hrs
				Field observations	1100hrs	1300hrs
			Travel to Harare - Transit		1400hrs	1800hrs
1-Apr-15	Wednesday	Zvimba	Travel to Zvimba - Transit		0800hrs	1000hrs
			Rural District Council	DA/AGRITEX/EMA/Environ Officer/Forestry Commission	1030hrs	1300hrs
				FGD with CA Farmers	1400hrs	1500hrs
				FGD Nutrional Gardens / Community Gardens	1515hrs	1615hrs
2-Apr-15	Thursday	Zvimba		FGD with EAG Members (FFS)	0830hrs	0930hrs
				Tree planting	1030hrs	1130hrs
				Field observations	1130hrs	1300hrs
			Travel to Harare - Transit		1400	1600hrs
3-Apr-15	Friday	Easter Break				
4-Apr-15	Saturday					
5-Apr-15	Sunday					

6-Apr-15	Monday					
7-Apr-15	Tuesday	Guruve	Travel to Guruve - Transit		0700hrs	1000hrs
			Rural District Council	DA/AGRITEX/EMA/Environ Officer/Forestry Commission	1030hrs	1300hrs
			Part District C	FGD with CA Farmers	1400hrs	1500hrs
			District A	FGD Nutrional Gardens / Community Gardens	1515hrs	1615hrs
8-Apr-15	Wednesday	Guruve		FGD with EAG Members (FFS)	0830hrs	0930hrs
				Tree planting	1030hrs	1130hrs
				FGDs Biogas / Solar		
				Field observations	1130hrs	1300hrs
			Travel to Harare - Transit		1400hrs	1600hrs
End of fieldwork						

Annex 3: List of people interviewed

KEY INFORMANTS

Name	Position/Title	Organization
		PROGRESSIO
Jura Patience Mrs	Finance and Administration Officer	Progressio
Matsvange Diego Mr	Development Worker	Progressio
Mwashita F. Mrs	SASRM	Progressio
Zaba Patisiwe Mrs	Programme officer	Progressio
		ENVIRONMENT AFRICA
Gwande Kudzanai Mr	Team Leader	Environment Africa
Hodzonge Innocent Mr	Regional Director	Environment Africa
Kaundikiza Munyaradzi Mr	Field officer	Environment Africa
Nyangwande Lawrence Mr	Team Leader	Environment Africa
Nyamhunga Derek Mr	M & E Officer	Environment Africa
Shamu Garnet Mr	Assistant Field Officer	Environment Africa
		NYANGA DISTRICT
Bozai Mrs	Acting District Administrator	Nyanga District
Dzivanyika Esther Mrs	AGRITEX Extension Officer	Nyanga District
Manzou Daniel Mr	Environment Officer	Environmental Management Agency (EMA)
Mubayiwa Mr	Environment Officer	Nyanga District Council
Mudiwa Charity Ms	Student Attachment	Environmental Management Agency (EMA)
Pfengwe Mr	Bee keeper	Nyanga District
Zenda Mr	Assistant Environment Officer	Nyanga District Council
		ZVIMBA DISTRICT
Dubungwazi Reward Mr	AGRITEX Extension Officer	Zvimba District Council
Gama Mr	Farmer	Mupumbu Village, Zvimba
Jochore Mr	Councillor	Zvimba District Council
Mukudo Pardon Mr	District Forest Extension Officer	Forestry Commission
Murombedzi Andrew Mr	Vice Secretary for Overall Committee (EAG)	Zvimba
		GURUVE DISTRICT
Gatsi Mr	District Administrator	Guruve District Council
Marisa Mr	Chief Executive Officer	Guruve District Council
Mashanje L. Mr	AGRITEX DAEO	Guruve
Pagaravanhu Mr	Mason, Chairperson-Ward 7 EAG	Guruve
Sawaya Mrs	Beneficiary (Household Solar)	Ward 7, Guruve
Takavambiwa Mr	District Head	Environmental Management Agency (EMA)

FGDS CHARAMBA WARD – NYANGA DISTRICT

Name	Surname	Sex	Village
Richard	Chimufambo	M	Nhamburiko
Annie	Gorogedo	F	Nhamburiko
Grace	Nyamwanza	F	Nhamburiko
Patrick	Pamunembe	M	
Patricia	Sedze	F	Nhamburiko
Sindiso	Mpofu		Nhamburiko
Theresa	Chiwesi	F	Nhamburiko
Susan	Chimufumbo	F	Nhamburiko
Ruth	Guta	F	Dzapasi
Herbert	Maboreke	M	Dzapasi
Nisbert	Sawunyama	M	Dzapasi
I	Pfengwe	M	Nhamburiko
Killian	Sharamba	M	Nhamburiko
Lambert	Sagwidza	M	Nhamburiko
Lenah	Nyatsanza	F	Nhamburiko
Makumbe	Iren	F	Nhamburiko
Leonard	Foya	M	Nhamburiko
Robson	Chimusasa	M	Nhamburiko

Name	Surname	Sex	Village
Patrick	Munembe	M	Village 2
Ignatius	Pfengwe	M	Nhamburiko
Richard	Chimufambo	M	Nhamburiko
Felistas	Musima	F	Nhamburiko
Forward	Sedze	F	Nhamburiko
Susan	Chimufumbo	F	Nhamburiko
Annatoria	Chiwesi	F	Ngavaseke
Veronica	Tousamoyo	F	Village 2
Akurina	Saunyama	F	Dzapasi
Patricia	Sedze	F	Village 2
Rachel	Maringa	F	Village 2
Chiedza	Marakumbe	F	Nhamburiko
Ridiya	Hondo	F	Dzapasi
Annie	Gonogodo	F	Dzapasi
Normatter	Mapara	F	Nhamburiro
Grace	Nyamwanza	F	Nhamburiko
Ruth	Guta	F	Nhamburiko
Jane	Saunyama	F	Nhamburiko
Sindiso	Mpofu	F	Dzapasi
Cecilia	Sagwidza	F	Nhamburiko
Rena	Nyatsanza	M	Nhamburiko

Killian	Sharamba	M	Nhamburiko
Fungai	Maboreke	M	Dzapasi
Sagwidza	Lambert	M	Mapako
Robson	Chimusasa	M	Nhamburiko

FGDS – ZVIMBA DISTRICT

Name	Surname	Sex	Village
Charles	Hombe	M	Chigonero
Betty	Chirasasa	F	Run'anga
Edwich	Chaparadza	F	Run'anga
Tabeth	Chirasasa	F	Run'anga
Chezi	Sabiri	F	Magambanga
Mary	Machokoto	F	Run'anga
Alphew	Chaparadza	M	Chitunzi
Solomon	Temekayai	M	Magambanga
John	Chawatama	M	Chirimanyemba
Munene	Kenneth	M	Mupumbu
Kadzimukai	Tauya	M	Chitunzi
Wonder	Dikwindi	M	Chinyemba
Andrew	Murombedzi	M	Mushambi
Brian	Nyahuku	M	Mabvure
Shelly	Sagita	F	Run'anga
Tendai	Matare	F	Run'anga
Beatriace	Madenyika	F	Mapumbu
Unity	Kupara	F	Chitunzi
Last	Kupara	M	Chitunzi
Donemore	Nyaruviko	M	Village
Stephen	Chikazamba	M	Run'anga
Sabhaston	Sagita	M	Run'anga
Simon	Mbangani	M	Run'anga
Gilbert	Nyaruviko	M	Devero
Dzingayi	Chijiri	M	Run'anga
Phineas	Kupara	M	Chitunzi
Monica	Madziyauswa	F	Janhi
Evermore	Kabumbe	F	Chitunzi
Hope	Mpezani	F	Chitunzi
Cindirella	Matuwa	F	Muringureri
Emward	Masanga	F	Janhi
Mathi	Katsotso	F	Zinyaka
Abigail	Zunza	F	Magambanga
Karen	Kushamba	F	Zvanaya
Samson	Zinyemba	F	Mushungu
Lilian	Musonza	F	Chirimanyemba

Lessy		F	Chirimanyemba
Shelly	Sagita	F	Run'anga
Eunice	Munyongani	F	Chirimanyemba
Abigael	Zunza	F	Magambanga
Sabiri	Chezi	F	Magambanga
John	Chawatama	M	Chirimanyemba
Felistus	Mushonga	F	Chitunzi
Last	Kupara	M	Chinyemba
Blessing	Mafuwa	M	Chirimanyemba
Concern	Manyenga	M	Chinyemba
Bartholomew	Musarurwa	M	Mabvure
Bartholomew	Mudoti	M	Magoronga
Godfrey	Magoronga	M	Chirimanyemba
Smart	Gaura	M	Chinyemba
Barnabas	Takawira	M	Chirimanyemba
Gift	Kofi	M	Chirimanyemba
Kennedy	Manyongani	M	Tagara
Mark	Mareserwa	M	Chirimanyemba
Emily	Mavera	F	Chirimanyemba
Alfred	Masaya	M	Chirimanyemba
Estere	Mizeke	F	Chirimanyemba

FGDS GURUVE - CHIKOKONYA

Name	Surname	Sex	Village
Tsitsi	Tafungavamwe	F	Gamanya
Beullah	Manyumwa	F	Dauro
Chipo	Abuna	F	Katsiru
Ruth	Pongo	F	Nhauriro
Miriam	Kuzvozha	F	Chimbabwe
Mista	Muzhona	F	Kanatsa
Luke	Makina	M	Tahwa
Driver	Gezi	M	Gezi
Christopher		M	Gwazhe
Mathias	Nyanhete	M	Chatiza
Benjamin	Goraiza	M	Gamanya
Kuwizha	Gamatox	M	Chobondo
Mwanza	Susan	F	Mutova
Judith	Tembo	F	Gamanya
Chikonyora	Cecilia	F	Mutova
Marowa	Rosemary	F	Marowa

Katsiru	Sylvia	F	Mutova
Maruta	Sophia	F	Chimbwere
Namangwinya	Uchikai	F	Marowa
Rusere	Rozina	F	Bangira
Chido	Pama	F	Chimbwerere
Gwaze	Daniel	M	Gwaze
Manyumwa	Benya	M	Dauro
Manyumwa	Missionary	M	Dauro
Dziko	Jacob	M	Chipanyanga
Kauchika	Munyaradzi	M	Tahwa

Ward 8

Surname	Name	Sex	Village
Marina	Luke	M	Tahwa
Chimera	Faxwell	M	Tahwa
Chikomo	Munyaradzi	M	Tahwa
Kunaisa	Mcdonald	M	Tahwa
Chabvuta	Mark	M	Tahwa
Kuzvova	Miriam	F	Tahwa
Kunatsa	Sopai	F	Tahwa
Makope	Patrisa	F	Tahwa
Tahwa	Crispen	M	Tahwa
Tahwa	Judith	F	Tahwa
Nyadzayo	Sherry	F	Tahwa
Panavanhu	Christopher	M	Gweshe
Marveni	Tangeni	F	Chatiza
Gukushu	Rabecca	F	Kunatsa
Chidenyu	Anna	F	Nhauriro
Makuwaza	Christine	F	Chatiza
Chikonyora	Farai	F	Chatiza
Dakuedzwa	Jesina	F	Chatiza
Chidhuri	Chenesai	F	Chimera
Pongo	Ruth	F	Nhauriro
Kangande	Betty	F	Chimera
Gomba	Tespy	F	Chimera
Zhanero	Sekesayi	F	Nhauriro
Mapuranga	Martha	F	Nhauriro
Kuzvova	Miriam	F	Kunatsa
Muzhona	Mista	F	Kunatsa
Chabvuta	Esther	F	
Mupindiko	B. Regnas	F	
Nyanhete	Mathias	M	Chatiza
Chifumba	Wenais	F	Chatiza

Mtetwa	Brenda	F	Chimbumu
Mufanechiya	Dorcas	F	Nhauriro
Muzerengi	Bright	M	Chabvuta