



المشروع السوداني لدعم هيكله قطاع
الصمغ العربي بالسودان

Support in structuring the
gum Arabic sector in Sudan

PROJECT MID-TERM



Report

For

Period (Dec.2014 to June 2016)



A-7
Mid-Term
Review

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFD	French Development Agency
AIPG	Association of International Gum Arabic Producers
AVN	Nubian Vault Association
DIG	Development Imitative Group
FNC	Forests National Corporation
GA	Gum Arabic
GAB	Gum Arabic Board
GAPAs	Gum Arabic Producers Associations
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IGARDS	Institute of Gum Arabic Research and Desertification Studies
LFW	Logical Frame-work
MFI	Micro-finance Institute
MIS	Market Information Service
MTR	Mid-term Review
SDG	Sudanese Ginaih (pound)
SHG	Self Help Group
SMS	Short Message Service
SSGASS	Support in structuring Gum Arabic Sector in Sudan
VC	Value Chain
VCA	Value chain analysis
VSL	Village Save Loan
TA	Technical Assistant of the Consulting firm
TOR	Term of references
TOT	Training of trainers
WB	World Bank

Table of Contents

Abreviation and Acronyms.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Excutive Summary.....	4
section 1. project background.....	6
Mid-term Review Methodology.....	8
Key Questions	8
Mid-term Review Process	9
Section 2. Review of Project Achievements.....	10
Project Effectiveness.....	10
Details of Project Implementation.....	10
Project Effeciency.....	18
Section 3. Effects Assessment Findings.....	19
Section 4. Conclusion & Recommendation.....	26
Recommendation.....	28
<u>Section 5 Appendics.....</u>	<u>29</u>
- ToR	
- Interview Questions	
- Persons met	

Executive Summary:

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) to the support instructing the GA sector project was internally done by the project staffs and it covered the first part of the project implementation cycle extended from Dec, 2014 up to June 2016.

The main purposes of mid-term review were to assess the technical performance of the project against the approved working plan, to evaluate the immediate effects of the project implemented activities and to identify lesson learns and weakness points associated with the implementation of the project during the evaluated period.

The evaluation process includes the revision of the project technical performance in term of achieved activities against the project implementation plan and logical frame and assessment of the immediate impact of the project implemented activities during the evaluated period. It started in July 2016 and ended in October 2016.

The evaluation survey covered the key actors of the GA value chain at Shikan locality in North Kordofan through group focus discussing with GAPAs' member/ leaders and individual interviews with local traders and exporting companies .In numerical manner , survey for data collection was conducted with 10 GAPAs , 8 traders and 4 companies respectively.

The evaluative questions were mainly designed to cover the different project components and centered on the components expected outcomes or results.

With subjecting the collected data to the qualitative analysis, the mid-term survey gave the following outcomes:

1. The project was very effective in achieving its working plan during the evaluated period

2. According to Gum Arabic value chain actors the opportunities and challenges of the sector are well understood due dialogue meetings/ workshops organized by the project and due to disseminated information on GA value chain analysis.
3. The project could disseminate a relevant and useful market information service to the actors in general and text message to GAPAs in particular which have positive impact in their bargaining power with buyers affecting gum prices at villages and local levels.
4. The development of quality guidelines and production best practices, and organizing training sessions on them by the project for actors has increased their awareness on quality issues.
5. The training sessions organized by the project for GAPAs leaders in institutional, financial and Credit management has improved the management skills of the GAPAs' leaders. This improvement in leaders capacity strengthens their ability to play more effective roles in providing better services for GAPAs members.
6. Significant number of GAPAs could successfully manage the credit they obtained from the banks to their members as the credit reimbursement was 100% for whole beneficiaries GAPAs.
7. The main difficulties facing the application of the quality guidelines and best practice are the absence of proper warehouses and quality monitoring mechanism at the local markets.

Section 1.

Project Background and Methodology

1.1 Project Description:

Forest National Corporation has received a grant from French Development Agency (AFD) to support the structuring of GA sector in Sudan for 1.4 million €. The on grant agreement of the project was signed between Sudan Ministry of Finance and National Economy and France Development Agency (AFD).

The project implementation cycle will take place in three years with supervision from Forest National Corporation (FNC).

1.2. The overall objective:

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to poverty reduction and environment protection by strengthening the GA value chain in Sudan and by developing new market opportunities to GA at national and international markets.

1.3 The Specific Objectives:

1. Fostering the emergence of framework of ongoing regional dialogue involving all actors of GA sector, 2, The actors of value chain collaborate to develop coherent solutions to improve the quality of the GA, protect the GA trees and sustainably pre finance the sector and 3. Develop marketing opportunities to Sudan GA at national and international market

1.4 The project components:

The project objectives were planned to be achieved through implementing three components, these are namely:

Component 1: Initiating sectoral dialogue at level of a region pilot test. Component 2: Improving the quality and reinforcing the GAPAS capacities, Component 3: Promotion of GA at national and international market.

However, at the beginning of the implementation phase the project components were rearticulated "with support of the TA & AFD" while the activities and the content remained unchanged, some of them were relocated in the new components, hence the new components are:

- Component 1: Market Development and Market Information Service (MIS)
- Component 2: Gum Arabic Production and Quality management
- Component 3: Support Access to Microfinance.

1.5. The Key stakeholders:

The project basically targets GA value chain at Shikan locality in North Kordofan state.

More specifically the project key stakeholder includes:

- GA producers and GAPAs (30 GAPAs from 30 villages).
- Villages traders and intermediaries.
- Exporting companies, importers and companies agents.
- Supporting institutions like IGARD, research centers, FNC and MFI.

1.6. The organizational structure:

The organization structure of the project composed of the following:

- Project coordination office based in Khartoum (composed of project coordinator, project assistant, one driver and messenger).
- Project operation team (POT) in Elobeid (composed of project manager, Fin/admin manager, dialogue animator, forest animator, microfinance animator, two liaison officers, two guards, one driver and one messenger).
- Steering committee (comprising FNC General Manager, project coordinator, project manager, representatives of IGARD, forestry faculty, Gum Arabic Board (GAB), Companies representative, Project' GAPAs, and State' GAPAs union

representative, ministry of finance and national economy and ministry of international cooperation .

- International Consultancy Firm (TA) (IRAM & RONGEAD).

Compose of management technical& financial expert, quality expert, micro-finance expert and marketing and value chain expert

1.7. The Launch of the project implementation:

The launch workshop of the project was organized on 17th Dec.2014, immediately after finalizing the condition precedent to the first draw down and providing local component, project assets and POT staff recruitment.

2. The Mid-Term Review Methodology:

2.1. The purpose:

The project intended to conduct the Mid-Term Review (MTR) to assess the progress of the project towards achieving planned activities and objectives and to evaluate the immediate effects of the implemented activities with aim to get lesson learned, discover gap and weakness associated with the program implementation and help project management to take informed actions to manage any potential deviations in the project implementation.

2.2. The time scope:

The mid-term review will cover the project activities during period from Dec. 2014 to 30 of May, 2016 as the actual project program implementation started at December 17th, 2014

2.3. The Key questions:

The (MTR) conducted to provide answers to the following evaluation questions below:

- To what extent the project was effective in achieving its planned activities and objectives?

- To what extent the VC stakeholders have a better knowledge of the sector and of the actors
- Did this knowledge allow them to adapt their business or practices?
- Did the dialogue among the stakeholders allow them to better know each other, to trust each other?
- Do the stakeholders effectively use the promotional tools and to what extent does this enhance their business?
- To what extent GAPAs improve their management skills?
- To what extent GAPAs' members have access to credit to meet their needs? - Are the GAPAs' leaders able to manage credit in sufficient way?

2.4. Mid-Term Review (MTR) Process:

- Collecting data from secondary sources like periodic reports, proposals of implemented activities, activities achievements report critical review analysis.
- Collecting primary data by using opened -end structured interview through group focus discussion with producers, and GAPAs 'leaders, companies' representatives, and village traders.
- Simple statistical analysis and comparing of achievements against the expected outcomes.
- Drafting lesson learned and recommendations for work improvement.

Section 2

Review of PROJECT Implementation (ACHIEVEMENTS)

1. Activities Precedent:

- Conditions precedent to the first draw-down
- Staff recruitment
- Selection of GAPAs according to criteria
- Initial advance cash from local and foreign components
- Launching workshop
- Revision of the LFW
- Baseline survey

Activities of the Planned LFW:

2. PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

2.1 Project Effectiveness:

- Effectiveness is a measure of achievement of results at various levels in the log-frame, almost all activities are either completed, or on the right track for completion later this year.
- The Review considers the overall effectiveness at this level of the log-frame as very satisfactory.

2.2 Details of Activities' implementation:

ACTIVITY (18 ACTIVITY)	RESULTS OUTPUT	COMMENT ON RESULTS & OUTCOME	REMAIN	PERCENT of Achievement
COMPONENT 1. (A11- A18) Initiating sectoral dialogue at level of a region pilot test				

A11. Updating value analysis and popularization of the results among the actors -Develop guidelines for VC study -Field survey and TA monitoring -Final report - Dissemination of results	-The VC analysis done in 2015	Validated by the VC expert who committed to send the final report	-the final report not produced yet by VC expert -popularization of results not done	60%
A12. Organizing intra regional exchange learning trips: -Prepare contents& expected outcome - Trips -Results	Exchange trip 1. (15 leader, 10 companies in villages..) Exchange trip 2. (15 leader, 10 companies in villages..) In 2014	Main topics: 1.Quality at the farm gate production 2.marketing and pricing of gum OUTCOME: Both parties become aware of the challenges facing quality production and gum prices	Two exchange trips remain	50%
A13. Organizing thematic meetings with the producers and other actors - Prepare thematic meetings' content -Mobilization workshops Identify priorities and - Develop-key messages for Y1, Y2, Y3	30 Meetings in 30 GAPAs and 1111 Producers IN 2014	MAIN TOPICS: Introduce the project to the producers and GAPAs for better understanding the project objectives and highlight their expectations of the project OUTCOME: A consensus vision is developed among GAPAs on the project aims and its main issues VC, quality & pre-finance of the sector	One round of thematic meetings (30 GAPAs)	50%
A14. Support inter-professional and regional workshops - Prepare each profession to the meeting: key issues, possible improvements, etc. -Meetings and debriefings	REGIONAL WORKSHOP1.	MAIN TOPICS: Elements of the Gum Arabic value chain - Aspects of collaboration and future prospects Protection of Gum Arabic resources and quality	One Regional WORKSHOP in 2016 (Protection)	50%

		management Microfinance future and challenges.		
	INTERPROF. WORKSHOP1.	Main topics: To link all GA value chain actors to identify the problems and challenges of GA sector and try to put the solutions and facilitate discussions to list common interest between actors	One INT.WORKSHOP in 2016 (Quality)	
	INTERPROF. WORKSHOP2.	Main topics: Contract Farming Main actors: Representatives of GAPAs leaders and Exporting companies		
A15. Support marketing of GA at national and international levels (Movie production, broadcast of the movie, participation in international meetings) <i>- tender</i> <i>-Movie production, including subtitles and different languages</i> <i>-Broadcast and direct distribution of the movie (internet link+ emails)</i> <i>-Project participation to international meetings (AIPG or other)</i>	Steps for producing movie for promotion of Sudan Arabic Gum at national and international markets Participation in COP21 Paris, PC& PM	EOI Tender advertized EOI of applicants received and evaluated EOI Report written RFP sent to the selected companies (April- July016) Participation in the FNC seminar for disseminating Paris Agreement	-Proposals by companies -Bidding process by the recruitment committee - Criteria and selection of the awarded company Film Production	30%
A16. Market study for identifying the users of GA at national and international <i>-The study</i> <i>-One day seminar for disseminating result</i>	In June 2015 presentation of the main findings of study done by IRAM for market analyses between January and April 2015, based on statistical data available at international level and on interviews with a sample of 7 importers (France, Germany, USA, Mexico..).	The study gives an overview of the gum market at international level (main producers and consumers, trends in trade and partnerships, main expectations from the importers in terms of quality and new trends in markets, such as corporate social	Need translated report of the study to English (from French) Need to be regularly updated	50%

		responsibility).		
A17. Organizing a study trip in Chad and hosting Chadian actors to discuss relative collaboration	The trip cancelled due to the fact that Sudanese actors think that Chadians are competitors in GA marketing and don't accept the exchange trip	None	The budget would be used for enhancing GAPAs after the TA advise	0%
A18. Develop and use of market information system for all actors in the value chain <i>-Collect price information</i> <i>-Obtain official agreement to launch the MIS</i> <i>-Set up mobile phone system</i> <i>Train FNC staff on MIS</i> <i>-Dissemination of information to all VC stakeholders</i> <i>-Linkage with International Bourse' Experts</i>	<p>MIS Developed MI with analyzed report collected & written on weekly base</p> <p>MIS disseminated to GAPAs, traders and companies (Dec.2014-up-to date) with less reporting at the dead seasons</p> <p>mobile phone system to disseminate MIS and extension messages to the producers. (date of starting)</p>	<p>Information collected are quantity of gum slod at farm gate level, auction markets of main cities, and prices and FOB price on weekly base, as well as qualitative information on the market trends and future forecast, number of reports published are 20 reports and number of recipients are XX (Rongead documents) from local and abroad (traders, companies, importers ..etc.)</p> <p>same information of the MIS compressed in capsules for the sms, number of sms published are 20, recipients are GAPAs & some of the FNC staff</p>	Carry on the activity	65%
COMPONENT2. (A21- A26)				
ACTIVITY (18 ACTIVITY)	RESULTS OUTPUT	COMMENT ON RESULTS & OUTCOME	REMAIN	PERCENT of Achievemen t
A21. Drafting the quality specification (final client requirements):	The study guideline and methodology was developed first,	-The deliverable is the report of IRAM expert first mission for quality	need to be updated for end users	50%

- Develop study methodology and guidelines -Interview of key stakeholders and production of quality specifications	interview of key stakeholders was conducted in June 2015 to know their quality specifications requirements. The quality specification was drafted with technical assistance support from IRAM.			
A22. Developing manual for quality specification procedures <i>-Identify existing manual (FNC, WB project) and improve to include quality specifications</i> -Update the existing training modules (leaders & members' packages) <i>-Prepare manual's content</i> <i>-Production of the manual (and related flipchart)</i> <i>-Distribution and presentation of the manual</i>	The good practices guidelines edited by the AIPG were used to develop quality procedures manual, FNC existing material were also reviewed	The manual draft was developed with technical assistance support from IRAM in early 2016. It has served as the basis for training VC actors. The quality procedures manual is being under translation to the Arabic language	-Finalize translation to Arabic -Diffusion amongst actors	50%
A23. Training farmers and other actors on quality issues	68 GAPAs' leaders were trained on good practices in 3 workshops dated 2015 November, 2016 February & March, 1524 farmers were trained practically on GA production good practices demonstration at field level in 30 workshop in 2015, 2016	GAPAs' leaders and producers become aware and practiced good practices for quality gum production	Other Actors were not informed about good practices at their levels (traders, companies ..etc.)	50%
A24. Support GAPAs for direct contracting with companies based on clear specifications <i>-Test with some GAPAs</i> <i>-test with clusters</i> <i>-with bigger scale</i>	workshop on contract farming was organized in January 2016, attended by four companies, 10 GAPAs' leaders and representatives of other GA value chain support institution	one exporting company and two GAPAs initially agree to sign contract farming based on clear quality specifications and the project want to deal with agreement as a model	-Complete the contract farming process -Evaluation after the end of the coming harvesting season for learning lesson and replication of the success in other GAPAs and companies (with clusters & bigger scale).	70%
A25. Support to individual and collective projects for sustainable GA value chain	- Financial needs assessment in early 2014, identifying	Micro-projects comprised 3 concrete water	-Define civil engineer ToR for work follow up and supervision,	35%

-Financial needs assessment, selection of eligible GAPAs, development of guidelines and support to project design -Identify needs, GAPAs- project discussion, Assess project feasibility, develop draft proposals to be discussed and validated, Mix (GAPAs+ project) Committee examination and transparent awarding process, Project give financial support, based on written agreement	GAPAs' needs priorities - Call for submission of proposal to the GAPAs, and selection eligible micro projects proposals early 2015 Selection criteria for GAPAs A bilateral agreement was signed in May 2016 between the project and 6 GAPAs with eligible proposals for implementation of the micro-projects	basin and 3 stores 550 sonkis distributed as tapping tools to the 30 GAPAs representing the third micro-project	- Complete the micro-projects program process -Handing over of the projects to GAPAs -Evaluate the projects implementation and results	
A26. Financial support to applied research for sustainable GA value chain <i>-Finalize partnership and research program</i> <i>-Project implementation</i> <i>-Final report and presentation workshop</i>	- An agreement was signed between the project and the IGARD for implementation of the studies in January 2016. The research subjects were " The socio-economic importance of GA value chain in household income " and " Developing a manual tool for GA harvesting". - Discussions were held with the Nubian Vault Association between June 2015 and April 2016 for them to implement a feasibility study for the up-scaling the AVN " A Roof + A Skill + A Market " s strategy, in partnership with Sudanese authorities and local stakeholders "	-The data for the first study was collected and now under analysis, -The harvesting tool has already been designed and being subject to testing with different producers to undertake any modification might be required before finally recommended for use at mass scale - The convention with the AVN was signed in June 2016 and the study will be implemented between September 2016 and May 2017	-Final report for the two first researches, with the harvesting tool approved -Implementation of the study -Project document as a result of the study	75% for IGARDS Researches and; 15% for the AVN
COMPONENT3. (A31-A34)				
ACTIVITY (18 ACTIVITY)	RESULTS OUTPUT	COMMENT ON RESULTS & OUTCOME	REMAIN	PERCENT of Achievemen t
A31. training on access to microfinance and	-Three training modules were designed in Institutional	GAPAs are ready for any type of finance	Training of GAPAs leaders in micro-	100%

<p>facilitation linkage with MFI and banks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Evaluate WB/IFAD project experience -Design of training plan -Preparation of training planning -ToT trainings and on-the-job training 	<p>management , financial management and microfinance management by DIG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -DIG trained the project staff as TOT between September and December 2015 -The trained staff held training sessions to the GAPAs leaders (74 participants trained on institutional management in 2015 and training on financial management in March\April 016) in three workshops (69 leaders trained) 	<p>management activities and managerial & institutional issues</p>	<p>credit</p>	
<p>A32. Sustainable pre-financing of the producers " provision of revolve fund"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design and publish scheme -Procedure manual guideline training of GAPAs -Cycle year 1 - Cycle year 2 - Cycle year 3 	<p>The model or mechanism for rendering revolve fund was set by IRAM, revolve fund proposal was prepared and sent to AFD for no objection but the proposal was not accepted by AFD. Although the principle of revolving fund was considered in the project document, it was considered by the AFD that the project should not be substitute for banks, for sustainability reasons. The AFD also stated that follow up and justification of these expenses would be very difficult (financial risk for the project).</p>	<p>-Instead the project staff is facilitating linkages between GAPAs and banks. The project is also exploring the possibilities of (partly) pre-financing of the gum campaign by exporting companies.</p> <p>-Five meetings held for this facilitation</p> <p>Banks policy is one of the challenges facing implementation</p>	<p>The program did not implemented and the linkages with banks and MFI faced some difficulties (lack of trust between the banks and GAPAs)</p>	<p>0%</p>
<p>A33. Support to 2 to 3 of efficient GAPAs for market access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Selection of GAPAs -Trainings (marketing, communication, BS plan, etc.) -Tripartite contracts with companies 	<p>-Appreciated effort done by the project to encourage farmers adopt collective marketing or marketing through the GAPAs (awareness raise)</p> <p>-No specific plan for cluster establishment (may be after validating the pilot of the contract farming) some innovations take place</p> <p>Example: Sanduk self help group(SHG), Village save& loan (VSL)</p>	<p>Farmers are well aware about the payoffs of the group marketing as compare to individual one</p>	<p>No clusters established yet may be needed for the partly pre-finance by exporting companies after validating the test of contract farming</p>	<p>0%</p>
<p>A34. Financial support</p>	<p>-Not started yet, we need to;</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>0%</p>

for new business opportunities <i>-Prepare and publish call for proposals</i> <i>-Selection of proposals</i> <i>-Award of grants (based on agreement)</i> <i>-Monitoring of project implementation</i>	-Identify possible business areas and their possible key target actors, -The proposals should be in relation with gum and innovations in terms of product, market etc -This could be done by consulting actors for ideas. -A workshop should be held with actors, with assistance of ronead during their next mission			
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Project Efficiency:

The efficiency is the degree to which project resources have been economically converted to results. It is based on project progress reports, "technical and financial reports".

Audits usually provide a more detailed analysis of efficiency with respect to administrative procedures. The project has been audited two months before the mid-term review, so that useful information would be available from that particular audit report.

The project coordination unit in Khartoum has explored and used various ways to make the project succeed, in spite of the excessive administrative, logistic, and technical burden. Some of the procurement and many of the contracts pass through Khartoum office and all technical activities planning and remote follow-up of implementation as well as frequent missions to the POT office.

Other efficiency issues are that the project experienced considerable exchange rate losses (exchange rate Euro to SDG, reduced from 7.8 at the beginning of the project to 6.9 after six months.)

In terms of staff competencies with regards to the project log-frame, a great deal of competencies is available in the team; never the less staff instability was one of the main challenges encountered (staff quit to other jobs)

Section 3

Effects Assessment Findings

Evaluation questions 1.

- To what extent the value chain stakeholders have better knowledge of the sector and of its actors?
- Did the knowledge allow them to adapt their business or their practices?
- What do you know of information disseminated by the project?
- Was the information useful and why and why not?
- Do think the information might help you build new business partnership?
- In what way (can you give examples?)
- do you have any comments /suggestion information (content and format)

GAPAS' Responses

- According to the interviewees knowledge on the GA sector improved significantly and GA value chain information, good practices, quantities and prices of gum sold was disseminated by the project, through the VC regional workshops, inter-professional meetings and training as well as the MIS,
- The majorities of the interviewed GAPAs perceived the disseminated information as good, sufficient and useful in terms of its content and format and applicability.
- According to the interviewees, the information was useful and adoptable (8 out of 10) GAPAs have adopted the information related to the good practices, two GAPAs did not adopt the good practice information because the training held to them recently.
- GAPAs stated that with this type of information the GAPAs could have smart partnership with companies based on production of quality gum
- One GAPA member stated that they could understand the role and responsibilities of the other actors and now they feel sympathetic with them unlike in the past where they thought that the other actors are unjust for the producers.

Their main suggestion was that the information should include points of finance issue.

Local Traders' Response:

- 7 out of 8 interviewed traders were aware of the information disseminated by the project and according to them the disseminated information includes GA prices and the average quantities sold at main markets and market trends.
- For them the information was useful as it helped them to fix prices at villages level and the right time to take the GA to the market for selling.
- The knowledge presented by the project allows the traders to decide whether to buy GA or not.
- According to them the information helps them to have concrete bargaining power with companies and big traders

Companies Response:

- Representative of 3 companies out of interviewed 4 companies aware of the value chain information disseminated by the project.
- Representatives of two companies only were aware of the market information disseminated by the project (gum price at FOB, quantities and market trends)
- Two interviewed companies described the information as useful and they actually used it in take right decision in right time whether to buy and sell their gum or postponed the process.
- They thought that the information can help them develop business partnership for gum purchasing.
- They suggested having information on global market prices and the prices of the processed gum.
- More information on the clients and end users needs

Evaluation Questions 2:

- Did the dialogue among stakeholders allow them to better know each other to trust each other, and to initiate collective action?

- Do you participate to some of the inter-professional meetings organized by the project? And why and why not?
- Do you think it is useful to better know the other actors of the VC? In what way (can you give examples?)
- Do you think it might help you build new business partnerships?
- What type of content and format for the meetings with others VC actors (meetings, visit, others ...) would be useful, do you have any suggestions?

GAPAs Response:

- According to interviews the dialogue among actors allows the GAPAs to know other stakeholders, the lack of trust which was one of the main challenges built between GAPAs and companies and initiation of collective action like contract farming is in place (the dialogue now between two GAPAs and one company) and it might be distributed among other the GAPAs.
- All GAPAs and leaders participated in inter professional meetings, to learn new ideas, to discuss common issues and to develop solution to the common issues. It was useful for GAPAs leaders and members to know other actors for getting good marketing opportunities can assist developing new business.
- GAPAs suggested for the inter-professional meetings sessions discussing the social responsibilities in environmental issues like finance opening fire lines in the hashab stands, provide water ... etc

Traders Response:

- All the interviewed traders participated in all the inter professional meetings organized by the project,
- According to them they acquired new knowledge and information linked to gum production techniques, marketing and quality.
- Knowing other actors could provide good buying and selling opportunities for the actors, enable the actors know problem facing the sector.
- More over actors collaborated to provide solution to the common problems.
- Traders thought the dialogue helped them develop new business partnership.

- 6 traders out of 8 thought the meeting at the village level would be more useful, two traders suggested exchange trips beside the meetings at the village level

Companies' Response:

- All interviewed companies participated in the inter-professional workshop. Different purposes for their participation which include: getting new knowledge, share knowledge and experience with others, discuss constraints of gum production and marketing,
- The 4 interviewed companies believe that knowing the actors of value chain is useful for the following reasons: creating trustful relationships with other actors and enabling actors to discuss problems for each party and developing solutions to the common problems.
- All interviewed companies believe that participation in inter professional meetings might help them to discuss with GAPAs issues of quality and good practices.
- Companies representative prefer workshops and exchange trips and field visits as format for meetings with others, they stated that visiting the field at the production period is a good tool for following up production process according to quality management

Evaluation Questions 3:

- To what extent VC stakeholders effectively use the information provided by MIS and to what extent does this enhance their business?
- The project has set up a market information system (reports and text messages). Do you think it's useful, do you use it effectively? why and why not?
- Are the format and the modalities of dissemination adapted? And why and why not?
- Does the information have a positive effect on your business? Do you have suggestions (content, format Etc) do you have any suggestion concerning the process of elaboration of protection tools?

GAPAs Response:

- Eight GAPAS members/ leaders out of interviewed 10 thought that the MIS was useful for them and the information disseminated by text messages was used effectively by them especially the information regarding prices and extension messages and the formats and modality of MIS were adapted.
- Two GAPAs have no access to Sudani phone text; therefore they have no access to the information.
- All GAPAs which have access to the sms (8) stated that, the disseminated information has positive effect in their business specifically the price at the auction market this information enabled them take decision of selling to local traders or not, Information of using of sonki for taping, good practices and quality management, knowing the market trends, raising community awareness were very useful to GAPAs in improving knowledge on production process, and they suggested increasing the frequencies of messages during the week.

Local Traders' Response:

- Seven out of eight interviewed traders thought the information is useful and was used effectively.
- Seven traders thought that the information could help them build new business based on the provided information.
- They think it can be an opportunity to build business relationships with the producers as well as with companies and big traders.
- Six traders out of eight thought the meetings at the villages level would be more useful, two traders thought the meetings at the villages level plus the exchange trips would be most useful.

Companies Response:

- The companies used to receive MIS reports (mainly include information of GA marketing at the auction market and other main market at the project region.
- They did not benefit from the MIS because the information is already available for them.

- In term of modality and content the companies suggested to be involved in the text messages because of it's easier access than emails and asked to include information on the best practices to be adopted and bad practice to be avoided.
- In addition they suggested promotional campaign at international level to promote the Sudan gum and production of promotion movies on GA.

Evaluation Question 4:

- To what extent the innovations in terms of quality management and best practices have been effectively disseminated and adopted by stakeholders?
- The project has elaborated quality guidelines and training of VC actors about the best practices, have you read the guidelines?
- What do you think of these (content, format?),
 - About the feasibility of applying the guidelines and difficulties or constraints that you might encountered?
- What could you do to promote those guidelines among your business partners?
- Do you have any suggestion (content, format etc),?

GAPAs Response :

- All the interviewed GAPAs know the best practices and quality guidelines
- The guidelines are useful and can be feasibly applied.
- The lack of stores with the required specification represents the only encountered problem
- GAPAs suggested distribution of tapping tools to wider area at the producers' level to promote implementation of the best practices guidelines.

Traders' Response :

- All interviewed traders know the quality guidelines
- For traders the guidelines are good, and useful and could be feasibly applied .
- Not existence of warehouse affects the use of quality specification.
- The traders stated that they can motivate the producers to apply the quality guidelines by paying more prices for the quality gum.

Companies Response:

- All the interviewed companies representative were found to be aware about the quality guidelines and good practices disseminated by the project
- For the companies the quality guidelines and best practices are good and useful.
- They stated that the best practices guidelines could improve the quality and hence decrease the cost of cleaning for gum processing.
- Three companies see no difficulties for applying the quality guidelines, while one company stated that it might need effective monitoring mechanism at the auction market to oversee the application of the guidelines (Example Standard & Specification Institute).

Evaluation Question 5:

- To what extent have the GAPAS improved their management skills?
- The project has been conducting training on institutional management, business management and financial management.
- Have you participated to training? if not did you get the information /knowledge through peers for example ?
- Are there books in GAPAS now? Are the roles and responsibilities better known by GAPAS' leaders and members? Can you give example?

GAPAs Response:

- Eight Leaders of GAPAs out of ten interviewed have partially attended the institutional and financial management trainings.
- They stated that the training improved their skills.
- Seven GAPAs found to have well maintained books and the leaders responsibilities and roles are clear for them.
- Three Interviewed GAPAs have no books and the responsibilities and roles are clear for leaders them.

Training sessions done only to GAPAs and not applicable to Traders and companies

Evaluation Questions 6:

- To what extent the actions of the GAPAs have improved the sales conditions for their members?
- Did the number of members sell their gum through the GAPA and the average volume sold increase? Are there any other services offered by the GAPAs to their member?

GAPAs Response:

- Nine GAPAs out of ten interviewed stated that there was no increase in the number of members who sell their gum through GAPAs, only one GAPA referred to increase of the members who newly tap their trees
- Four GAPAs could provide other services for members like soil plough and supply of bio-gas tubes and some social services.

Evaluation Question 6:

- To what extent the GAPAs members have an access to credit to meet their needs?
- How many GAPAs members benefited from the bank credit through the GAPAs?
- How much the average amount for each member?
- Was there an existence and utilization of well maintained and verified books?
- Was the credit effectively reimbursed to the banks?

GAPAs Response:

- Five out of ten interviewed GAPAs benefited from the bank credit.
- Beneficiaries size range between 51 members to 300 members.
- Average credit amount 1070 SDG.
- Reimbursement rate was 100%
- There was an existence and utilization of well maintained books

Section 4

Conclusion and Recommendation

The conclusion:

1. Project Implementation and achievements:

The Mid- Review shows that , the project was very effective for implementation of the working plan during the first half of the project cycle based on comparing the achieved activities against the approved plan.

2. Assessment of Project Achievements

Assessing the effects of the implemented activities in achieving the expected outcomes of the different components could be elaborated in the followings points below:

2.1. Expected outcomes1: The main challenges and opportunities for Sudanese GA value chain are well understood by all actors and enable them to design collective actions. In this regard, so far the project could disseminate useful relevant information on VC and organized inter professional meetings for the GA actors which made them more aware of the GA value chain challenges and opportunities, and enabled them to understand themselves better.

The different actors became aware of the problems of each other and feel sympathetic towards each other; each party became aware of his roles and responsibilities towards the others as well as his rights to others.

The dialogue events attended by different actors and provision of information and knowledge about the sector assisted VC actors to design collective action.

2.2. Expected outcome 2: The different actors have relevant market information and promotion tools and are able to develop their business at national and international levels. The Study shows that, the project was effective in developing a system for market information services (MIS) to provide a service to gum arabic value chain stakeholders that can help them to decrease risks in marketing activities through a better knowledge of market evolution and trends.

In order to do so, the MIS provided qualitative analysis of current trends and forecast the next evolution of GA markets (price trends).

Information was key to take decision. Trustworthy and regular market information an analysis enabled VC stakeholders to take the right decision in selling and buying.

Dissemination of the information took place among the different actors through phone system (sms) and emails and blog

Promotion campaign which is one of the main activities for the coming bi-annual plan is very important and movie and other promotion tools will be effective for Sudanese gum promotion

2.3. Expected outcomes 3: A quality management System is in place and used by the Actors. According to the study, the actors (companies, GAPAs and local traders) were found to be more aware about the quality guidelines and production best practices developed and disseminated through various training sessions among the GAPAs who considered them as useful and could be feasibly applied.

Majority of GAPAs apply good practices in production, the project plan to disseminate the AIPG instruction to all of VC actors at different level through the production and distribution of the quality manual.

All actors according to the study consider the absence of warehouses and stores with required specifications as the main difficulty facing the application of the quality guidelines and best practices while the absence of the mechanism for monitoring the application of quality guidelines is a second difficulty.

2.4. Expected outcomes 4: GAPAs have developed and strengthened their role in marketing the GA for the benefits of their members. The study shows that, the majority of the GAPAs leaders participated in the institutional and financial management training session organized by the project during the evaluated period as evidenced by increase in leaders aware of their roles and responsibilities and increase in the number of GAPAs with a well maintained verified books. However the study shows no significant increase in the number of the members who sell their GA

through GAPAs as well as some GAPAs could provide other services to the member like soil plough and supply of bio gas.

2.5. Expected outcomes 5: GAPAs play significant role in enhancing access to finance to their members. According to the study 50% of the interviewed GAPAs could obtain credit from the bank to their members during the project reviewed period, with reimbursement rate was found to be 100% as well as there was an existence of a well maintained verified books, meaning that GAPAs need to make more effort in order to play significant role in enhancing their members to have access to finance.

GAPAs also started dialogue with companies for contract farming based on quality production of gum in exchange for services and more prices.

Recommendations:

1. Adoption of villages meetings and exchange trips between actors as the most preferable dialogue process as an exit strategy.
2. Increase the number of beneficiaries covered by mobile text messages to include the companies and involve GASPAs with no access to Sudani phone system.
3. Organizing campaign and displaying movies to promote Sudanese Gum Arabic at national and international market.
4. Addressing the challenges regarding lack of proper warehouses and quality monitoring mechanism at local markets
5. Close follow up is needed by the project to ensure that the knowledge and skills gained by the training of GAPAs leaders in institutional, financial and business management capacities are adopted as the study shows that some GAPAs still lacked a well maintained records.
6. Though, the management capacities of the GAPAs have improved due series of training sessions organized by the project on various aspects of management, still no mentionable improvement in the GAPAs' performance like supporting group selling, getting credit from the banks for their members and providing other service. The project needs to think of additional support to ensure that, the GAPAs could be

manifested in their ability to manage group selling and provide finance to their members, example supporting an action plan for leaders to implement a program for access to finance GAPAs' members and constitute group sale.