Horti Plus

Cultiver le succès

ANNUAL REPORT YEAR 1

01 DEC 2022 – 31 DEC 2023



Kingdom of the Netherlands

advance Consulting

AGRO DEV

AUXFIN

AGRI TERRA

SENSE

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1 Introduction

HortiPlus, a project financed by the Embassy of the Netherlands in Burkina Faso, kicked off on December 1, 2022, with an online meeting between the consortium members, being Advance Consulting, Agrodev, AUXFIN, Agriterra and Sense. A face-to-face launch meeting took place in Ouagadougou in January 2023. The project started with an inception phase, which included the recruitment of project staff, set-up of the office, selection of crops, cooperatives and SMEs, conducting of market studies, development of communication plan, the safety and security plans, and the set-up of the monitoring and evaluation plan. The inception phase was concluded on May 31, 2023. For a detailed description of this phase, we refer to the approved Inception Report and Annexes of June 30, 2023.

In the second half of 2023, we started implementation of the two Work Packages (WP). This report gives an outline of the activities and achievements within those Work Packages.

1.1 Project Background

The overall objective of HortiPlus is to improve food and nutritional security in Burkina Faso by (i) increasing production (+50%), income (+50%) and the climate resilience of 7,000 horticulture farmers, (ii) improving the commercial performance of 7 cooperatives and 100 SMEs, and (iii) improving the dietary diversity of 50,000 rural consumers. To achieve this objective, the project is implemented through two WPs to which distinct but interconnected objectives and target groups are assigned (Table 1.1).

Table 1: Architecture of HortiPlus

Overall objective: Improve food and nutritional security in Burkina Faso								
W.P.	1. Support 7,000 smallholders to increase production, income, access to finance and sustainable land use, and promote dietary diversity to 50,000 rural consumers			2. Improve business performance and access to financing and markets for 103 SMEs and 7 cooperatives				
Actions	1.1. Deployment of training and digital services (Agricoach, FinanceCoach, NutritionCoach) for smallholder farmers	1.2. Development of horticultural input packages and deployment on demonstration plots	1.3. Social media campaign	2.1. Support for businesses and SMEs	2.2. Development of cooperatives	2.3. Innovation Fund	2.4. Raise financing for horticulture SMEs	2.5. Support roll-out of Bio-PGS-certification

1.2 Report objective and outline

The objective of this annual narrative report is to provide insight into our progress during the first thirteen months of the project, covering the period from 01 December 2022 to 31 December 2023. As stated above, for a detailed description of the first 6 months, we refer to the Inception Report. The focus of this report will therefore be on the period from 01 June till 31 December 2023.

The underlying report has the following outline:

Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 2: Activities, challenges, and successes
Chapter 3: Realisation versus targets

2 Activities, challenges and successes

2.1 Work Package 1

2.1.1 Roll-out of blended ToT and financial services to smallholder farmers

The roll-out of the blended ToT and financial services to the targeted horticultural smallholder farmers in Burkina Faso is done through AUXFIN's G50 approach and its Universal Method of Value Access (UMVA) platform. In the G50 approach, groups of farmers are organised in groups of approximately fifty people. Each group receives a tablet through which several digital services are provided. So-called "Key Activators" support the groups in the roll-out of these services, which include financial services and applications such as AgriCoach and NutritionCoach. For HortiPlus, the activator strategy first needed to be verified and adapted to the Burkinabe context. The resulting strategy has been detailed in the Inception Report.

Recruitment and training of Key Activators

Seven activators were recruited in August and September 2023. In October they received training on the project, the approach, the UMVA platform and the applications.



Key Activator Training in Ouagadougou

Sensitisation of the G50s

The HortiPlus G50 network consists of the primary cooperatives belonging to the 7 unions/cooperatives selected during the inception phase. In November, we sensitised the members of the three largest unions on the opportunity to join the G50 approach and we explained the advantages of our approach.



Sensitisation of G50s



Sensitisation of G50s

We faced several challenges during this phase:

- The unusual longer duration of the rainy season made roads inaccessible and the members difficult to reach.
- Membership lists of the primary cooperatives were not always complete or up-to-date.

Registration of G50 members

Early December the registration started, and at the end of the month an estimated 3,026 farmers in 59 groups have been registered for HortiPlus. This is an estimation, because the registration for HortiPlus has been combined with the registration for two other projects (the HACA project and the TreeAid project). After the governance training at the beginning of the second year, the groups will be allocated to unions – and thus to a project. Also, the number of groups is expected to grow because some groups consist of more the 50 people and need to be split. The registration process will continue in 2024, and all horticultural farmers connected of the 7 unions will be reported under the HortiPlus project until 7,000 farmers are reached.




Registration of G50 members

Connection to MFIs

As reported in the inception report, MoU's have been signed with two MFI's, which are PRODIA and ECLA. It was planned to train Prodia on the connection to the UMVA-platform in the second semester of 2023. Because of internal changes in the AUXFIN team, this training has been postponed to the first semester of 2024.

AgriCoach videos

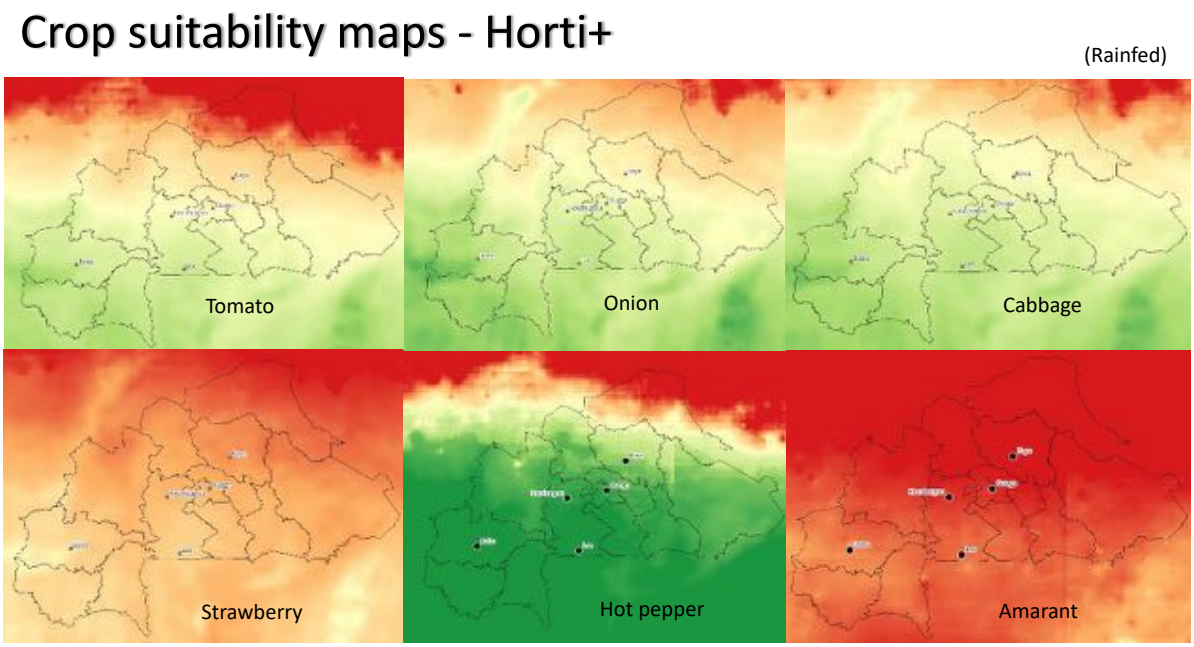
The best practices for the six selected crops in HortiPlus have been developed and added to the AgriCoach application in written version. For the four main crops (onion, tomato, cabbage and amaranth) we will add videos on the best practices. Filming and editing started in October 2023 and will be ongoing until April 2024.

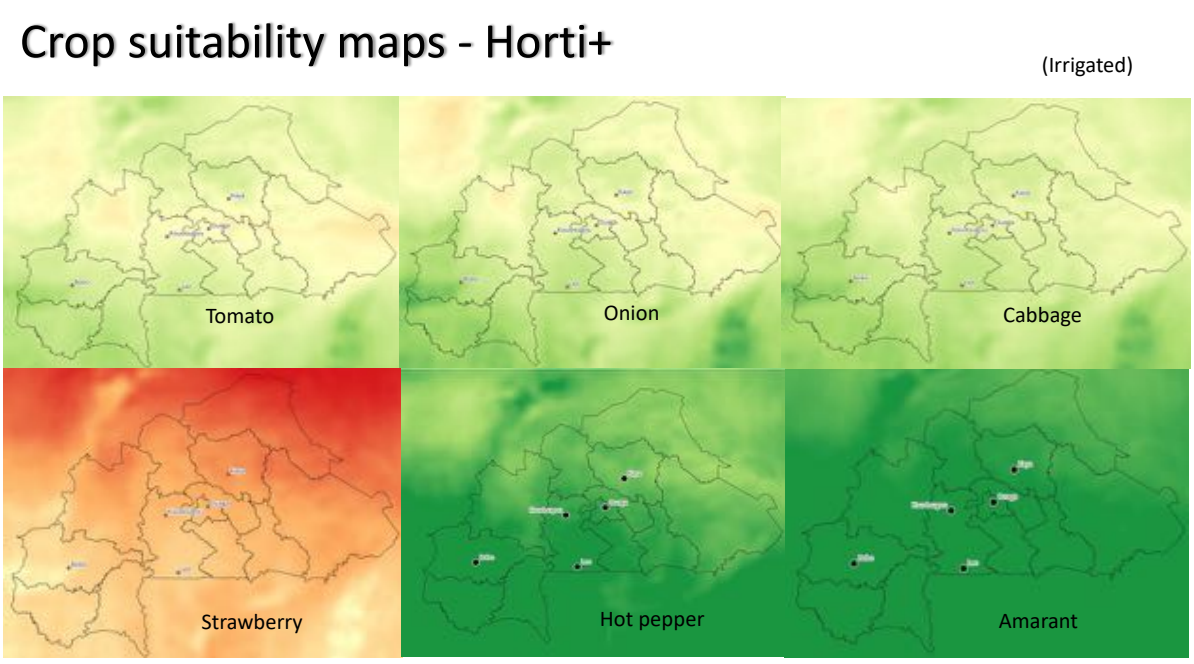


Filming for the AgriCoach

Crop suitability maps and climatology study

To support development of input packages and to define the start of the season in different parts of Burkina Faso, 20 years of climatology and rainfall data have been studied and verified by our agronomists. This resulted in the development of 12 crop suitability maps, as illustrated below.





2.1.2 Development of horticulture input packages and roll-out to demonstration plots

Input package development

During the inception phase, four main crops and two pilot crops have been selected for the project. Initially, it was planned that we would develop input packages for the four crops only, but we have decided to work on all six crops. In the second half year, we conducted a soil analysis in collaboration with Bunasol. The results of this study enabled the team to categorize the project areas' soil into four types:

1. Overall favourable soil conditions
2. Variations in the level of PH with high fertility
3. Moderate fertility levels
4. Low PH and low fertility

Next, this categorization has been used to develop fertilisation packages for each crop per soil type. These fertilisation packages will be tested and demonstrated during implementation of the demonstration plots.



Soil sampling

Demonstration plots strategy development

To demonstrate the input packages and low-tech innovations to the horticulture farmers of the 7 unions/cooperatives, the project will realise 21 demonstration plots in total. In the second half year of 2023, the consortium developed the following strategy to maximum impact and reach:



Preparations for demonstration plots

1. The first 12 demo plots will be installed at the three unions/cooperatives around Ouagadougou (Komsilga, Loumbila, Boumiougou), 2 demo plots per crop, starting in 2024. The remaining 9 plots will be distributed at the other four unions/cooperatives;
2. Each demo plot will be divided in a control-part and a demonstration-part;
3. The results of the demonstration will be filmed and shared trough the AgriCoach with all 7,000 smallholder farmers.

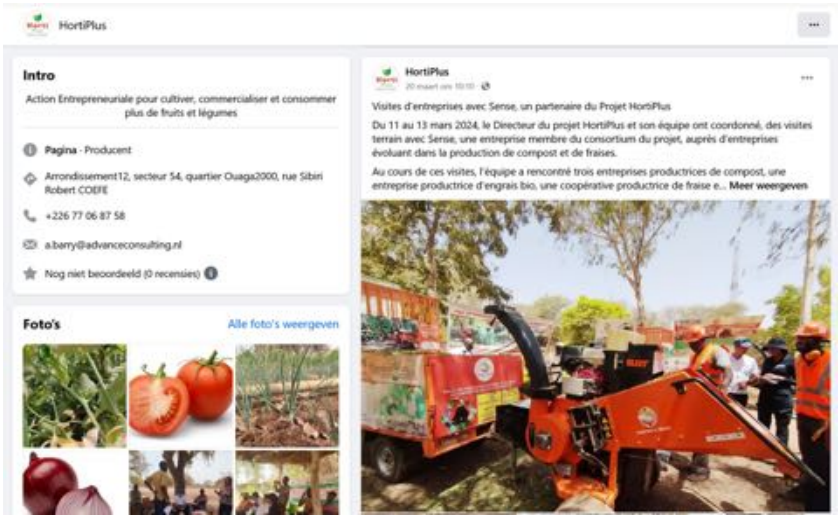
2.1.3 Social Media Campaign

The communication strategy for HortiPlus serves two main purposes:

1. To inform on HortiPlus progress and achievements.
2. To support reaching the project's objectives on:
   - **Successful Cultivation**: The promotion of GAP/CSA and conservation practices
     • Target: 7.000 horticulture farmers
   - **Cultivate Success**: The improvement of SME & cooperative business operations
     • Target: 100 SMEs & 7 cooperatives
   - **Healthy Nutrition**: The promotion of dietary diversity
     • Target: 50.000 rural consumers

Informing on HortiPlus progress and achievements

Regarding the first objective – informing on HortiPlus progress and achievements – HortiPlus newsletters have been produced since October 2023. The newsletters describe the main activities carried out, their objectives, the results achieved and the challenges. In addition, the social media accounts on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter have been created, and the website is under development. Further, a project brandbook, including logos, templates, project colours and banners, has been developed.



Screenshot of the HortiPlus FaceBook page

Support reaching the project's objectives

Regarding the second objective, the first two points – Succesful Cultivation and Cultivate Success – are addressed in respectively WP 1 and WP 2. The last point – Healthy Nutrition – falls under the activity "Social Media Campaign". The overall objective of this activity is to promote dietary diversity, with as specific objectives to:

- Increase awareness about the benefits of increased vegetable and fruit consumption for health, notably the health of young children, elderly, sick etc;
- Increase awareness about locally available nutritious legumes/alternatives for the daily diet.

Our approach to reach these objectives is to:

1. Implement NutritionCoach in the G50s:
    - Translate current information in NutritionCoach (Moore & Dioula)
    - 7000 producers and their families receive training from 140 activators on healthy nutrition
    - Add videos with cooking demonstrations on, for example, enriched porridges
    - Link to the social media & radio campaign
2. Develop and roll-out a (Social) media campaign on dietary diversity:
    - Set-up radio campaign for community radios
    - Set-up & expand campaign Facebook page with weekly posts
    - Create a Facebook community, actively linking to thematic groups, women groups, youth (agri- and nutrition related).

Further, in September-October 2023, a nutrition research was carried out by a nutrition consultancy, both to establish our nutrition baseline and to inform our strategy on the social media campaign. The final report is expected early 2024 and its recommendations will be included in our strategy.



Focus group discussion during the nutrition research

2.1.4 Conclusion of Work Package 1

Successes

- A feasible strategy to deploy the G50 network has been developed.
- 7 key activators have been recruited and trained.
- 3,026 G50 members have been registered.
- 2 MFI's have been contracted.
- AgriCoach best practices have been developed and 30% of the videos have been shot.
- Soil analysis carried out.
- Input packages developed per crop and soil type.
- Demonstration plot strategy developed.
- Communication strategy developed, social media accounts set-up and project brandbook available.
- Social media campaign strategy developed.

Challenges

- One of the main challenges for the deployment of the G50 network has been the development of a localized G50 strategy for the context of Burkina Faso. As reported in the inception report, the distances between individual farmer and farmer groups turned out to be much larger than initially anticipated. This means that the development of a G50 group network per value chain is not opportune from a sustainability perspective. Fortunately, there are three projects implementing a G50 network in Burkina Faso (HortiPlus, HACA and TreeAid) and it was decided that each key activator works with 1 commune serving all G50s within that commune - even if these G50 fall under different projects. In this way, the HortiPlus network can be served by more key activators traveling less, which enables a leaner business model for future sustainability of the G50-network. For transparency reasons it has been agreed that all horticultural farmers connected to the 7 unions are reported under the HortiPlus project until 7,000 farmers are reached.
- Another challenge has been that the key activator cost turned out to be much higher than expected. This has been solved by having the key activators using their own motorcycle – instead of buying new motorcycles.
- Taking along technical staff at technical departments of the Ministry of Agriculture at provincial and communal level is another challenge. During the introduction workshops we have received the feedback that these staff members should be made aware of and gain insight into the AgriCoach content, so that they can support the project when necessary. We are working on a strategy to do so.
- The security situation is an ongoing challenge (see also 2.3.3.). During the selection process we selected areas that are relatively safe. The project teams have therefore been able to travel to urban centres. Beyond that, travel becomes more difficult, but through our activator network, we are still able to reach our smallholder farmers target group.

Changes to the initial plan

- It was planned to train the MFI Prodia on the connection to the UMVA-platform in the second semester of 2023. Because of internal changes in the AUXFIN team, this training has been postponed to the first semester of 2024.
- The consumer research was not yet carried out in 2023, since we were awaiting the results of the nutrition research. Any gaps in the nutrition research will be addressed in the consumer research in 2024.

2.2 Work Package 2

2.2.1 Business support and matchmaking for SMEs

The business support and matchmaking of SMEs is divided in an intensive and extensive track, as follows (please note the targets are end-of-project targets):

- Intensive SME support track
    - 40 SMEs receive business plan training
    - 5 SMEs receive intensive business development support / coaching (start Y2)
    - 10 SMEs matched with new markets (start Y2)
    - 5 SMEs assisted with fundraising (start Y2)
- Extensive SME support track
    - 80 SMEs participate in masterclasses on value chain developments (start Y2)

Under this activity for Year 1, we have selected 103 SMEs during Inception Phase. In addition, we have developed the strategy for the implementation of this activity for the remainder of 2023 and year 2. The selection process and the adapted strategy have been set forth in the Inception Report and the Annual Plan 2023 and 2024.

Strategic Business Plan training

In line with the strategy for the remainder of year 1, we trained the first cohort of 17 SMEs in strategic business plan development in a hands-on and practical course. The strategic business plans serve as a guide for further development of the company, and were created by the entrepreneurs for maximum ownership.



Company visits by HortiPlus

To select the participants for this training, we first analysed the pre-selected 103 SMEs in our database. We visited 44 companies to further assess their capacities, challenges, needs, potential and motivation to benefit from HortiPlus interventions. After analysis, we retained 21 SMEs to participate in the training – the other SMEs being yet too weakly structured or having needs that do not match HortiPlus' activities. Eventually, 17 out of the 21 selected took part in the training – the other 4 were unable to participate due to illness or obligations elsewhere.



The first cohort of SMEs trained by HortiPlus

The curriculum was developed by consultants of Advance Consulting, Sense and Agrodev. The training consisted of plenary sessions, group session and individual coaching. The objectives were as follows:

- To develop a good understanding of the business.
- To improve critical thinking skills and engage in strategic reflection.
- To develop and commit to implementing an action plan with timelines and precise control points.
- To bring together the elements of a business plan.
- To network with other like-minded entrepreneurs.

The curriculum was built around five modules:

1. Connecting: examining the internal and external environments of the company with emphasis on what is under the control of the entrepreneur and his/her team (internal and external locus of control).
2. Inspiring: formulating the mission and clearly defining the value proposition.
3. Concentrating: developing concrete strategies that can lead the company to follow the development path (strategic objectives).
4. Organising: examining the current structure of the company, the strategy development tools, focusing on what to achieve and how.
5. Constructing: combining all elements above into a strategic action plan.

Modules 1-3 were covered in the training in December. Modules 4-5 will be covered in a second training in January 2024. In between the two training sessions, the HortiPlus BDO conducted follow-up visits and calls with the companies to work out their action plans. Also, a WhatsApp group has been set-up to exchange and share opportunities for training, webinars, networking events and calls for proposals.

2.2.2 Development of cooperatives

During the Inception Phase, we have selected 7 cooperatives with a total membership of over 11,000 smallholder farmers (see Table 2.1), of which 7,000 will be reached through HortiPlus. The selection process has been described in the Inception Report. After the selection process, the support to those unions and cooperatives started with training and the development of action plans for each of the 7 unions/cooperatives.

Table 2.1: Unions/cooperatives supported by HortiPlus

Name	Region	Type	Main value chain	Member total	Active members in 2023	Female active members 2023	Youth active members 2023
Scoop Namaneg-zanga de Boulmiougou	Centre	Primary coop	Onion, cabbage, strawberry, lettuce	105	105	37	49
Coopérative Maraichère de la Commune de Komsilga	Centre	Primary coop	Onion, tomato, cabbage, strawberry, lettuce	107	107	20	6
Union NAKOLBZANGA de Loumbila	Centre	Union	Onion, tomato, cabbage, amarant, aubergine	214	214	137	30
Union NYI-DWI-NYE du Sanguié (Ténado)	Centre Ouest	Union	Onion, tomato, cabbage	6,780	3,085	1,112	973
Union Provinciale des Producteurs d'Oignon des Balé	Boucle du Mouhoun	Union	Onion, tomato, cabbage, chilly	456	456	170	134
UDSCOOP SONG-TAABA de Korsimoro	Centre Nord	Union	Onion, tomato, cabbage, chilly, aubergine	1,867	1,568	738	458
Union UPCPO de Kaya	Centre Nord	Union	Onion, tomato, cabbage, chilly, aubergine	2,157	1,689	450	423
Totals				11,686	7,224 (62%)	2,664	2,073

Action plan development

After the Inception phase, we supported each of the seven cooperatives to develop an action plan for the remaining period of 2023. These action plans were based on both the cooperatives analysis reports that had already identified actions for improvement, as well as on HortiPlus' planned interventions.

Based on the action plans, we decided to start earlier than initially planned with three trainings in the remainder of 2023 (instead of 2024): the MyCoop training (on cooperative management and governance), the basic financial management training and the training on cooperative principles. The latter two trainings have been carried out, while the MyCoop training was rescheduled to early 2024 because of illness of the trainer.

Various coaching activities were also planned, which vary from one cooperative to another; but in 2023, these generally focused on cooperative management, financial management and market access. This is particularly the case of UPCPO and the Tenado union. In addition, the action plans included several other activities that the cooperatives undertake themselves to implement as their own contribution, to increase sustainability of the measures.

Table 2.2. Training and advisory activities

No.	Activity	Type	Start date	End Date	Organisation involved	Results
1.	Workshop to connect with buyers	Advise	19-10-23	19-10-23	UPCPO, TENADO, CMCK de Komsilga	3 purchase intentions with buyers
2.	MyCoop training	Training	22-10-23	27-10-2023	4 cooperatives: TENADO, UPPOB, NAMAGZANGA (strawberry), CMCK	Rescheduled to early 2024
2	Basic financial management	Training	13-11-23	17-11-23	4 cooperatives: UPPOB, TENADO, SONGTAABA, NAKOGLZANGA de Loumbila	16 people trained
5	Training on cooperative principles	Training	05-12-23	07-12-23	CMCK de Komsilga	21 people trained

Basic Financial management training

From 13 to 17 November, Agriterra organised a training on Basic Financial Management, which was attended by 16 participants representing four cooperatives. The participants were the chairmen of the boards of directors/management boards or their representatives, the managers, the accountants, and the members of the supervisory boards. During the training, basic concepts and best practices in the financial management of cooperatives were treated in order to enhance participants' knowledge. The course also addressed the problem of internal financial information sharing within cooperatives, which is often a cause of frustration between managers and technical staff.



Basic Financial Management Training

Governance and cooperatives principles training

This training was carried out for the CMCK cooperative in Komsilga from 5 to 7 December, and was attended by 21 members of the cooperative, including five women. The training provided participants with simple and appropriate knowledge on the management of agricultural cooperatives under OHADA, so that the group could become more dynamic and more useful in developing activities and engaging members.

The specific objectives were to:

- Explain the statutes and internal regulations of the cooperative to the participants;
- Understand some of the cooperative principles under OHADA;
- Identify services to be developed within the cooperative in order to generate income;
- Assess members' needs using the appropriate tools;
- Make sound decisions on how the cooperative should deliver services to members;
- Transparent management of resources;
- The duty of accountability to members (minutes, reports, holding AGMs, etc.).

Direct coaching & advisory services

In terms of direct advisory services to cooperatives, Agriterra facilitated a market linkage workshop on 19 October 2023 in Kaya, to facilitate the connection between UPCPO and buyers, creating a unique opportunity to develop new business relationships. The workshop brought together many stakeholders from the agricultural sector, such as representatives of the Regional Chamber of Agriculture as well as partners such as AUXFIN and TRIAS, and buyers from different cities in Burkina Faso.





Market linkages workshop in Kaya

The exchanges were enriching, with a question-and-answer session allowing participants to better understand the functioning of UPCPO. Also, one-on-one meetings between producers and buyers took place, allowing participants to get to know each other, collect purchase intentions and build professional relationships. The results of these meetings were promising, with a total of 394 tons of onions in purchase intentions, which represents a significant opportunity for UPCPO producers. The actual purchases that will be made in 2024 as a result of this workshop will be monitored by Agriterra.

2.2.3 Conclusion of Work Package 2

Successes

- First cohort of 17 highly motivated SMEs trained in strategic business planning.
- SME support strategy developed.
- 7 horticultural unions/cooperatives selected, with a sufficient total number of active members.
- 2 trainings for the 7 unions/cooperatives carried out.
- 394 tons of onions in purchase intentions.

Challenges

- The security situation; the security situation in the Centre Nord and in the Centre Ouest at Tenado makes it difficult for the cooperatives to reach the farmers, due to the internal displacement of people in this area. This affects the number of active farmers that are working with the cooperatives. For example, the Kaya union reached only 67% of its members, while the Tenado union was able to work actively with only 40% of its members. Since the total number of members of the 7 cooperatives exceeded the project target with 5,100 members, this does not affect the project target for now.
- The lack of technical staff at cooperative level: the level of professionalism of the cooperatives is very low. Most of the selected cooperatives (5/7) do not have an accountant or manager to support the professionalisation; which makes the direct support for business development difficult and time-consuming. As a solution, Agriterra has planned to include the UPPOB and Tenado unions in another Agriterra program (Farmers Focused Transformation Program) to support the hiring of technical staff within these unions. This technical staff will be very helpful in supporting the implementation of HortiPlus;

Changes to the initial plan

- Rescheduling of the MyCoop training to early 2024.
- Inclusion of the UPPOB and Tenado unions in another Agriterra program (Farmers Focused Transformation Program) to support the hiring of technical staff within these unions.
- 17 SMEs were trained in strategic business plan development instead of the anticipated 20, as some SMEs were unable to participate due to illness or obligations elsewhere. In year 2, a group of 23 SMEs will be trained as compensation.

2.3 Coordination

2.3.1 Project management

The financial and administrative management of HortiPlus is carried out jointly by the Advance Consulting coordination team in the Netherlands and the execution team based in Ouagadougou. HortiPlus staff in Ouagadougou are hosted by Agrodev. During 2023, project management focused on:

- the establishment of the project's administration and financial management systems,
- the recruitment and commissioning of the Ouagadougou office,
- the development of the Inception Report,
- the organization and coordination of project consultation and steering frameworks (managers' meeting and steering committee),
- the development of a Communication Plan,
- the development of a Risk and Security plan and
- the establishment of a Monitoring and Evaluation system.

The achievements made by activity are as follows:

- **Establishment of project administration and financial management systems**

The administration and financial management systems have been put in place. Indeed, in April 2023, the members of the consortium, Advance Consulting and Agrodev Services organized a four-day workshop on administration, financial management and accounting software. A second workshop on administration and finance was organized in mid-June 2023. Finally, the project procedure manual was finalized in December 2023.

- **Recruitment, staff training and commissioning of the Ouagadougou office**

The HortiPlus staff is made up of six full-time employees and a communications intern (Table 2.3). They are employed under labour regulations in Burkina Faso and the administrative supervision of Agrodev and the technical supervision of Advance Consulting. The HortiPlus staff is based in Ouagadougou in offices shared with AUXFIN, located in the Ouaga 2000 district since March 2023.

Table 2: HortiPlus staff

Staff	Number
Director	01
Senior Agronomist	01
Business Development Officer	01
Administrative and Financial Director	01
Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	01
Communication intern	01
Driver	01
Total	07

In addition, one media creator was recruited as a service provider, mainly for the Agricoach videos.

Staff capacities were strengthened on the architecture of the project, the expected objectives and the working methods accepted by the partners and the Embassy. Finally, different team members participate at the projects' meetings (see table 2.4).

Table 2.43: Involvement of Ouaga HortiPlus staff at project meetings

Steering meetings	Staff involved
Steering Committee	Director
Managers meeting	Director, M&E, Senior Agronomist and BDO
Network of safety and security coordinators	Director, Senior Agronomist

To effectively implement activities and best manage staff and materials, a weekly meeting of project staff was established in Ouagadougou. This framework allows all staff to take stock of achievements, plans, successes, and difficulties according to a framework designed for this purpose. The summary of the discussions from each meeting is recorded in a report and shared with all staff. In 2023, 23 weekly meeting reports were written and shared. In addition, weekly meetings are held between the Advance Consulting Project Coordinator and the HortiPlus Project Director.

- Inception Report

The inception report was sent on June 29, 2023, to the Embassy, which approved the report through its correspondence dated November 2, 2023.

- Management frameworks

Two Steering Committee sessions were held in 2023, both with participation of the Embassy:

- A kick-off Steering Committee from 17-18 January in Ouagadougou
- An online Steering Committee on September 7

In addition to the Steering Committees, HortiPlus managers' meetings have been organized with the consortium members. During the inception phase, these meetings were held each week, whereas since the implementation phase, the meetings are held bi-weekly.

- Annual Planning and budget for 2024

The planning of activities and budget for 2024 was developed and submitted to the Embassy on September 29, 2023. The Embassy gave its formal approval on December 19, 2023.

- Institutional outreach and communications

The HortiPlus team organized visits to Kaya, Korsimoro and Koudougou, with a view to meeting cooperatives, administrative authorities and decentralized technical structures of agriculture and presenting the project. Then, HortiPlus conducted induction workshops in Kaya and Koudougou respectively on September 5-7, 2023 and September 11-13, 2023. On these occasions, the project was presented to approximately 100 people. Participation in the workshops allowed for better knowledge of the project by development stakeholders in the Center-North and Center-West regions, all of which will facilitate the projects' integration

into the sphere of development projects operating in said regions. In terms of integration, HortiPlus has already contributed to the development of the third and fourth quarter special reports of the Governor of the North Central region.



Introduction workshop in Kaya

As part of its continued deployment in all target areas, HortiPlus carried out a mission from December 18-21, 2023, in Boromo, Bagassi, Fara and Poura in the Balé province with a view to taking contact with the provincial union of cooperative societies of Balé onion producers. The team met 52 people including nine women and five young people, members of the provincial union of cooperative societies of onion producers of Balé, the communal unions of Fara, Poura and of Bagassi. The participants expressed their interests and support for the implementation of the project. The process will continue during 2024. Furthermore, the project has requested the authorities of the Ministry of Agriculture for its inclusion in the national budget.



Exchanges with the provincial union of Boromo



Exchanges with the cooperatives in Bagassi

2.3.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

The changes to the initial logical framework have been set forth in the Inception Report. Following the Inception Phase, the HortiPlus monitoring, learning and accountability document has been developed and is being implemented. It is based on four pillars including planning, monitoring, information flow and reporting and evaluation. The document describes the different levels by pillar and offers detailed timetables and tools. It also contains a description of the key performance indicators, the collection and calculation methods, the

data collection schedule for each indicator and responsible for collection. Finally, it addresses questions of learning, management of feedback and complaints, risks and responsibilities of partners and support measures.

For the effective implementation of monitoring and evaluation activities, an M&E network has been set up. The network is composed of the M&E officers designated by the consortium partners and the HortiPlus M&E Officer. It meets once a month to review activities and to analyse the quality of learning and accountability data. In 2023 it has held two meetings.

In addition, the M&E Officer carried out a mission was from 27 September to 01 October 2023 in Kaya (Central North Region) and Koudougou (Central West Region) to monitor the data collection of the nutrition study. It made it possible to meet with management of cooperatives and to follow six focus groups, an individual survey, and an exchange with the Provincial Director of Agriculture of Sanmatenga.

2.3.3 Safety and Security

A risk and security plan adapted to the local context was developed for the benefit of the consortium and partners and adopted in May 2023. It includes five main elements. These are:

1. **A holistic approach** to the safety and security framework that includes physical, psychosocial and digital dimensions in which the roles and responsibilities of partners and staff are detailed;

2. **A network of safety and security coordinators** with monthly meetings, promoting the exchange of information, the documentation of threats and incidents and the establishment of links with external information sources. Coordinators are responsible for organizing regular safety and security risk analyses, capacity analyses and safety and security conversations within project teams. Additionally, the network collaborates with security at the Dutch Embassy in Ouagadougou for security updates and advice for specific missions. The network has held seven monthly meetings in 2023. The summary of the meetings is regularly presented in a report distributed within the network. In addition, the HortiPlus project participated in the security exchange framework organized by the Dutch Embassy in Ouagadougou in November 2023;

3. **Contextualized action plans and directives** which take into account the prevention of the most imminent threats (traffic accidents, banditry, violence/hostage-taking by unknown perpetrators) and a specific mapping of actors in the different areas of implementation. implemented. The guidelines focus on communication (contact persons in the office, contact times, lists of trusted contact persons, list of emergency contacts, field contacts), travel procedures (when to travel, who to inform and not to inform, exit strategy), number of people, how to present the project to third parties, modes of transport, trusted transport companies, guidelines for drivers, POS, etc. They are being updated by each

partner and take into account staff groups and sites. The consolidated guidelines will be subject to amendment and validation by an external security expert;

- Staff working with smallholder farmers and traveling to/from villages and fields.
- Staff working with cooperatives in regional centres.
- General transportation guidelines for staff, drivers and communications.
- Safety and security of the Ouagadougou office: HortiPlus has contracted with a security company which permanently deploys security guards at the door with the role of filtering entries. In addition, a note on office security is being finalized. It takes care of the days and times of opening and closing of offices, working conditions on weekends and public holidays, the introduction of visitor badges, etc.
- International staff visiting Burkina Faso.

4. **Establishment of crisis management teams** within consortium partners who did not have such a team yet.

5. **A capacity building plan for staff training** on topics such as HEAT, first aid, office safety. As part of the implementation of the said plan, a two-day workshop was organized in June in Ouagadougou to train project staff and consortium members on the holistic approach to safety and security. This framework was used to develop contextualized security action plans for the most imminent threats and organize the exchange of security information within and outside the consortium and to establish security management teams. crisis within each organization.



HEAT training for HortiPlus consortium members

In addition, a HEAT training was held in Koubri from November 2 to 3, 2023 at the Les Alizés hotel. In total 18 people from the HortiPlus staff, Agriterra, AUXFIN and Agrodev participated. The training combined theory and practice on issues of personal security and information security in a precarious safety context. In addition, notions about first aid and defensive driving were shared. The training reinvestment plan has been adopted and is being implemented with the training of MAs, KAs and all AUXFIN Burkina staff as well as the establishment of mission WhatsApp groups. In addition, a first aid training for HotriPlus consortium members' field staff is planned for 2024.



HEAT training diploma ceremony

2.3.4 Conclusion of Coordination

Successes

- The establishment of the project management unit in Ouaga, with the required staff;
- The establishment of the administration system, project management and the monitoring and evaluation system;
- Signing of the consortium agreement;
- Validation of the inception report and the work plan for the year 2024;
- The development of detailed implementation plans for the WPs and start of implementation of activities in both WPs;
- The inclusion of the project in the sphere of projects in the North Center region;
- Submission of a file to the General Directorate of Sector Studies and Statistics (DGESS) of the Ministry in charge of Agriculture for the linking of the project to a Budget Program;
- Finalizing the communications strategy;
- The establishment and deployment of a security and safety plan.

Challenges

- The security situation is a continuous challenge to which we keep a close eye. In December 2023, the Dutch MoFA has increased the risk level for Ouagadougou from orange to red, which indicates a negative travel advice. Nevertheless, several international consortium partners' team members continue to travel to Ouagadougou. The project coordination team has taken an additional travel insurance with coverage for conflict situations, and has advised the other consortium partners to do likewise. Further, monthly security meetings, crisis management teams and procedures for missions are in place.
- Reporting in IATI is a challenge. It has been a challenge to find out which are the requirements to meet. For example, for budgetary reasons, we are working with the unpaid version of Aidstream to upload information to IATI. This version does indicate when "MoFa-requirements are not met", but only the paid version explains what is meant by that statement. For this and user-friendly reasons, we are considering switching to the paid version.
- Including the project in the budgetary program of the Ministry of Agriculture. We have filed our project at the Ministry in August 2023 and are awaiting the official notice of the Ministry that the project has been included in the budget.

Changes to the initial plan

- Instead of a cameraman under an employee contract, it was decided to work with a service-delivery contract for efficiency and budgetary reasons.
- Instead of an Operations Manager and Office Assistant, we will hire a Media Campaign Officer to implement the social media campaign activities and the overall communication strategy of the project.

3 Realisation versus targets

Table 3.1 below summarises the realisations achieved during year 1 of the project versus the targets as set in the Monitoring and Evaluation framework.

Result Level	Results chain	Indicator	Unit	Cumulative Targets 2026	Target Year 1	Actuals Y1 (31-12-2023)	% Achievement Y1	% Achievement Final	Comments
Outcome 1	**Increased income and production** for 7,000 smallholders, and 800 Ha of **farmland** under **sustainable use**	Number of hectares of farmland under at least 2 conservation practices	ha	800	0				
		Increased revenues earned by smallholders (F: 40% & <35: 25%)	%	50%	0				
		Increased volume of fruit and vegetables produced by smallholders (F: 40% & <35: 25%)	%	50%	0				
Outcome 2	**Improved business operations** and **access to finance and markets** of 7 cooperatives and 100 SMEs	Sales increase for SMEs and cooperatives	amount in Euro	€ 1.300.000	0				
Outcome 3	50,000 rural consumers have **improved access to safe and nutritious foods.**	Number of people with a more diverse and adequate diet (F: 50% & <35: 50%), measured by Household Dietary Diversity (HDDS)	number	50.000	0				
Outputs	**1.1:** AgriCoach app is adapted to local context and selected crops	Number of crops selected	number	4	4	6	150%	150%	
		Number of training videos produced per crop	number	15 videos per crop	0				
		Number of crop suitability maps created	number	4	4	12	300%	300%	
		Climatology and soil data collected and prepared	number	1	1	1	100%	100%	
		Number of G50 groups created	number	200	60	86	143%	43%	This is an estimate. In Y2, the registered farmers will formally be assigned to the HortiPlus G50 groups on the platform.

Result Level	Results chain	Indicator	Unit	Cumulative Targets 2026	Target Year 1	Actuals Y1 (31-12-2023)	% Achievement Y1	% Achievement Final	Comments
Outputs	**1.2**: Smallholders have capacity to apply GAP and CSA practices on their farms	Number of activators recruited, trained and supporting G50s	number	10	5	7	140%	70%	An error occured in the updated logframe that was sent in November 2023 to the Embassy - where it is stated that the number of activators recruited and trained would be 21 over the entire project and 12 in Y1. This is incorrect and should be the same as in the inception phase logframe, namely 10 in total and 5 for Y1
		Number of smallholders trained on CSA, GAP and food safety (F: 40% & <35: 25%)	number	7,000	0				
		Number of smallholders actively using AgriCoach App (F: 40% & <35: 25%)	number	7,000	0				
		Number of smallholders registered on Auxfin UMVA platform (F: 40% & <35: 25%)	number	7,000	2,000	3,026	151%	43%	This is an estimate. In Y2, the registered farmers will formally be assigned to the HortiPlus G50 groups on the platform.
		Number of hectares of farmland directly reached with activities aimed at structural/systemic improvement of agro-ecological sustainability	ha	800	0				
	1.3: Smallholder farmers have access to financial services	Number of MFIs connected to UMVA system	number	2	1	2	200%	100%	
	1.4: Smallholders have access to quality horticulture input packages developed and low-tech innovations	Number of input packages developed	number	4	0	6	400%	150%	
		% of smallholders accessing input packages (F: 40% & <35: 25%)	%	75%	0%				
		Total number of demonstration plots of low-tech innovations established	number	21	0				
		% of farmers applying new low-tech solutions on their plots (F: 40% & <35: 25%)	%	50%	0%				
	1.5: NutritionCoach is adapted to local context and used by smallholders and their families	Number of smallholders trained on nutrition	number	7,000	0				
		Number of people directly reached with activities aimed at structural/systemic improvement of their nutritional situation	number	7,000	0				
		Number of people indirectly reached aimed at structural/systemic improvement of their nutritional situation	number	43,000	0				
	1.7: Social media campaigns on dietary diversity developed and rolled-out	Reach of Facebook campaign (F: 50% & <35: 50%)	follower	10,000	0				
		Number of total posts (video, events, photos)	publication	150	0				

Result Level	Results chain	Indicator	Unit	Cumulative Targets 2026	Target Year 1	Actuals Y1 (31-12-2023)	% Achievement Y1	% Achievement Final	Comments
Outputs		Number of factsheets with latest insights on business opportunities and value chain developments on four crops developed	number	4	0				
	2.1: 100 SMEs received business support and matchmaking	Number of SMEs participating in and benefitting from Business training	number	40	20	17	85%	43%	17 SMEs were trained in strategic business plan development instead of the anticipated 20, as some SMEs were unable to participate due to illness or obligations elsewhere. In year 2, a group of 23 SMEs will be trained as compensation.
		Number of SMEs participating in and benefitting from Masterclasses	number	80	0				
		Number of sales contracts for SMEs	number	10	0				
		Sales increase created for SMEs and cooperatives	euro	€ 1,300,000	0				
	2.2: Finance is raised for horticulture SMEs	Number of SMEs that obtained growth finance	number	5	0				
		Value of working capital and project finance obtained for SMEs in EUR	euro	€ 500,000	€ 0.00				
	2.3: New products, services and business models introduced via Innovation Fund	Number of proposals received	number	50	0				
		Number of proposals awarded	number	3	0				
		Total amount in Euro of the innovation fund granted to SMEs	euro	€ 120,000	€ 0.00				
		Number of new products, services and business models introduced to the horticulture sector	number	3	0				
		Sales increase created for SMEs in Euros	euro	€ 300,000	€ 0.00				
		Number of smallholder farmers acquired new market, services and/or products (F: 25% & <35: 25%)	number	200	0				
	2.4: Bio-PGS certification rolled-out, including additional smallholders, SMEs and sales outlets	Number of SMEs and farmer groups that receive training on Bio-PGS certification	number	3 SMEs 6 farmer groups	0 0				
		Number of SMEs and farmer groups with Bio-PGS certification	number	3 SMEs 6 farmer groups	0 0				
		Number of new outlets that sell Bio-PGS certified fruits & vegetables	number	10	0				
		Number of smallholder farmers with new markets (F: 25% & <35: 25%)	number	150	0				
	2.5: Cooperatives with strengthened business operations	Number of cooperatives that improved their operations and structures	number	7	0				
		Number of cooperatives trained in business development	number	7	0				