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Agribusiness Initiative Trust (aBi Trust)

Final Report Economic empowerment of
bean farmers through improved production,
quality produce and market access in Hoima
District- Environmental Conservation and
Agricultural Enhancement Uganda
(Eco-Agric Uganda).

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List of Acronyms

aBi Trust	Agribusiness Initiative Trust
CDOs	Community Development Officers
CICS	Competitiveness and Investment Climate Strategy
CIDI	Community Integrated Development Initiative
DAO	District Agricultural Officer
DCED	The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development
DFA	District Farmers Association
ECO-Agric	Environmental Conservation and Agricultural Enhancement Uganda Ltd
FFs	Farmer Facilitators
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GAP	Good Agronomic Practices
IP	Implementing Partner
ISSD	Integrated Seeds Sector Development
Kg	Kilogram
KIIs	Key Informant Interview
LG	Local Government
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MI	Market Information
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NPK	Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Potassium
OECD-DAC	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PAYE	Pay As You Earn
PHH	Post Harvest Handling
SACCO	Saving and Credit Cooperative Society
SSP	Single Super Phosphate
TOR	Terms of Reference
U-Growth	Danida’s Uganda Growth Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USh	Uganda Shillings
VC	Value Chain
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Associations

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The Agribusiness Initiative (aBi) Trust contracted KPMG to conduct End of Project Assessments of 10 implementing partners under the Value Chain Development sub component.

Eco-Agric Uganda Ltd (Eco-Agric) Beans project is one of the assessments that has been conducted by KPMG to establish whether Eco-Agric has met the Value Chain Development sub component project goals and objectives as stipulated in the funding agreement including the indicators as defined in the results chain and project summary. The assessment was also intended to provide recommendations that can be considered to improve the results of the ongoing projects as well as generating a learning agenda for aBi Trust while working with other Partners.

1.2 Major conclusions

Sustainability: The documentation reviewed at the implementing partner revealed that Eco-Agric established 200 demonstration sites as required and these continue to serve as technology transfer centres among farmers. Compared to a target of 4,000 farmers, the Implementing Partner (IP) trained 4,927 farmers comprising of 54% women and 46% men in agronomic practices and collective marketing. On average 86% of the farmers interviewed adopted agronomic practices in bean production such as planting of improved seeds, proper drying and value addition (sorting, cleaning) which has resulted in increased productivity and quality of their beans. The beneficiaries continued to realize increased revenue due to price increase as a result of improved quality and collective marketing of beans. This has been an incentive for the farmers to continue quality and productivity enhancing technologies thereby sustaining the activities. The harvests from the one-acre demonstration plots are being used as a saving to the groups (after selling and distribution part of it to farmers on a revolving basis). The beneficiaries revealed that every member deposits ten kg of seed to the group store after harvesting and this seed is given out to more farmers in the next season - acting as a seed bank and managed by farmers. The respondents revealed that average yields increased from 244 kg per acre in 2010 to 410 kg per acre in 2013 per season (target was from 450 kg per acre to 700 kg per acre). Whereas there is an increase in yields, it is lower than the baseline and planned targets set. Yields were impacted by pests such as the bean aphids as well as the long dry spell in the 2nd season. The acreage was one acre in 2013 in accordance with the set target. Furthermore, the four Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAS) formed at the group level that are now operating as Saving and Credit Cooperative Society (SACCOs), have enhanced group cohesion as members recognize the benefits of belonging to groups. About 96% of the target groups interviewed are undertaking collective marketing. With the structures and mechanisms in place at ECO-Agric (including income from membership registration and renewal, tree and fruit nurseries, consultancy and fund raising campaign) Eco-Agric is able to sustain their activities in the event there is no intervention from aBi Trust.

Relevance: The project adapted to the needs and expectations of the beneficiaries by prioritizing farmer training topics that are considered critical by the farmers. This is evidenced by the high adoption rates of 86%. The key training topics that have addressed bean production and marketing problems and are relevant to the beneficiaries include: bean agronomy, post-harvest handling, value addition and collective marketing. These have resulted in uptake of the promoted practices and farmers have realized positive changes in quality, volume marketed and revenue. At farmer group level, practices related to saving and credit and collective marketing have been fully embraced and members are beginning to realize the benefits in the form of higher revenue. There is a high degree of collaboration as exemplified by collaboration with Hoima Local Government (LG), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Civil Society Fund, Traidlinks and other Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs). The project objectives are valid and consistent with the country's need as spelt out in the country's Vision 2040, the National Development Plan (NDP) and Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP).

Impact: Beneficiaries have observed positive changes in their revenue resulting from increased production, productivity and quality of beans collectively marketed by group members. Revenue from bean sales by members on average increased by 107% (from US\$ 316,224 to US\$ 656,000) between 2010 and 2013 (target was 30% increase). The beans prices increased from about US\$ 1,200 per kg to

US\$ 1,600 within the two-year period (an increase of 33%). Adoption of quality and productivity enhancing technologies by beneficiaries led to better prices offered. A total of 4,927 farmers were trained in various disciplines who as a result realized increased production and productivity and were conducting collective marketing. The production increased by 68% (from 244 kg per acre to 410 kg per acre per season) over and above the target of (from 450 kg per acre to 700 kg per acre). The farmers indicated 96% adoption of improved post-harvest handling of their produce (such as use of tarpaulins) resulting into reduced post-harvest losses. The actual percentage reduction was not ascertained. The reality though is that measuring post-harvest losses is a complex undertaking that requires data right from harvesting all through the different post-harvest stages (transporting to home, drying, winnowing, cleaning, transportation to centre). These were not available and so the post-harvest losses could not be determined. The beneficiaries used their land for crop farming (100% of the respondents), livestock keeping (100% of the respondents) and tree planting (83% of the respondents) thereby indicating an increased woodlot establishment and therefore water shade conservation. The target of increased woodlot establishment and water shade conservation of 20% could not be confirmed since Eco-Agric did not have data available. Through group mobilization and training, there is increased participation of women in decision making. Several on-farm jobs (not quantifiable) and 5 jobs (29% of total full time jobs) at Eco-Agric (technical staff) were created due to project intervention and about 71% of the farmers acknowledged using hired labour. Alternative sources of income comprising of membership registration and renewal, nursery, consultancy and fund raising campaign fees increased by 118% to US\$ 321,958,500 (target was 20% increase from Eco-Agric's contribution of US\$ 147,160,000).

Effectiveness: The production capacity of 220 farmer groups was strengthened through trainings (verified through the attendance lists) and field visits conducted. 88% of the beneficiaries interviewed reported improved quality of beans as a result of adopting the skills acquired from training. Records maintained by the IP Coordinator at Eco-Agric indicate that almost all 200 farmer groups formed collectively marketed their beans at least once during the project lifespan from February 2012 to December 2013. 96% of farmers interviewed conducted bulk marketing. Five Market linkages were created with Tullow Oil through Traidlinks, Makerere Competent Secondary School, St Cyprian School, St. Andrea Kaahwa's College and Arua Traders. Market information such as prices offered, type of beans demanded and volumes required by the buyers was disseminated to groups to enable them make informed decisions.

Efficiency: Eco-Agric Uganda follows the aBi Trust guidelines in accounting for the funds and maintains a separate account for the funds. However, it does not comply with statutory deductions on Pay As You Earn (PAYE) and National Social Security Fund (NSSF). The Board is appropriately constituted and engages management in the day-to-day operations of the Company. Eco-Agric has filing systems, meets reporting timelines but some employees do not have job contracts and descriptions. Eco-Agric Uganda's accounting system is made up of manual records. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system is efficient and field advisors have attended M&E related trainings, and the field team has the required skills and qualifications.

1.3 Overall assessment risk rating

Evaluation criteria	Overall assessment rating	Remarks
Sustainability	L	The structures and mechanisms in place both at Eco-Agric (several sources of funds) and at beneficiary level (demonstration harvests, capacity building, collection centres and SACCOs). Both Eco-Agric and the beneficiaries are able to sustain their activities in the event aBi Trust stops its intervention.
Relevance	L	The training topics and extension methodology used (demonstration plots and use of Community Development Officers (CDOs)) are in line with beneficiary needs and expectations. Project objectives in line with Hoima district agricultural priorities such as building farmer's skills and knowledge in production and marketing, linking farmers to agro-friendly micro finance services for chosen enterprises, food security and nutrition.

Evaluation criteria	Overall assessment rating	Remarks
Impact	M	The beneficiaries have observed positive changes in their revenue resulting from increased production, productivity and quality of beans, increased political and socio-economic cohesion with increased participation by LG staff and increased participation of women in decision making. Attribution was however not measured based on the aBi M&E Guidelines and The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED) guidelines.
Effectiveness	M	The farmer group production capacity was strengthened which resulted in an increase in production. There was improved quality of beans as a result of adopting the skills acquired from training. Market linkages were established with buyers. Collective marketing and bulking was promoted. There was increased access to market information by the farmers. Seven out of the 11 objective were met and these are considered sufficient in measuring effectiveness.
Efficiency	M	ECO-Agric does not comply with statutory deductions on PAYE and NSSF, the Board lacks training in corporate governance and strategic management, accounting system is a mixture of manual records and the use of Microsoft Excel and not backed up to safeguard incidences of data loss. An M&E system is in existence, and staff is familiar with the results chain.

C -Critical. **H** -High. **M** -Moderate. **L** -Low.

Refer to section 4.1 for the detailed rating criteria.

1.4 Lessons Learnt

Based on discussions held with ECO-Agric, a cross-section of its collaborators, farmer groups and beneficiary farmers, the following lessons were noted:

- Having alternative sources of funds that are documented and tracked is important for sustainability of project activities after its closure. Apart from own resources, building partnerships and collaborating with other entities are more likely to generate resources (in kind, cash or time) towards the implementation of the project activities; and
- Diversifying in other enterprises such as agro-forestry is useful for negating the effects of adverse weather and brings in extra revenue to the farmers. ECO-Agric has fruits and tree nurseries that it sells to farmers as part of its wider development agenda.

1.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- Records are vital in assessing progress and should be emphasized both at implementing partner and beneficiary level. In this regard ECO-Agric should undertake capacity building at all levels in the implementation chain to enable vital records to be captured at the implementing partner, group and farmer levels. Financial records (including income and expenditure by various sources) and activity progress should be regularly monitored and up-dated;
- For impact due to project implementation to be measured, ECO-Agric should endeavor to measure attribution in line with established good practices and in conformity with donor guidelines such as the DCED guidelines. Attributions should not just be measured based on judgment but a documented plan.
- There should be compliance with the NSSF and Income Tax Act to avoid penalties;
- Board members should attend regular training on corporate governance and other relevant topics so as to be able to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities.

2 Introduction

2.1 Background to the assessment

The Agribusiness Initiative (aBi) Trust is an institution set up by the Governments of Denmark and Uganda to support agribusiness initiatives in the country. In particular, aBi Trust supports the private sector to enhance its contribution to the agricultural sector by increasing land and labour productivity hence contributing to poverty reduction through economic growth, wealth, and employment creation. aBi Trust is currently managing one of the three components of the Uganda Growth (U-Growth) Programme. The U-Growth programme aims at supporting the private sector in achieving the objectives of the Government of Uganda's Competitiveness and Investment Climate Strategy (CICS). The U-Growth Programme is a rural economic development programme focusing on growth and employment creation, with agriculture and agri-business at the core. The vision of aBi Trust is "a competitive private sector-led agriculture in Uganda" with the mission "to promote private sector driven agribusiness development to enhance wealth creation in Uganda". The development objective of the aBi Trust is "building a self-sustaining export led economy in which the benefits are shared by all Ugandans" While the immediate objective of U-Growth I is "to strengthen the competitiveness of Uganda's agricultural and agro-processing sector".

The development objectives are achieved through the sub-components of Value Chain Development, Financial Services Development and Gender for Growth. This end of project assessment will commence with review of the projects funded under the Value Chain Development Sub-component. The outputs of the Value Chain Development Sub-component are as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Value Chain Development Sub-component outputs

Sub component	Output
Value Chain Development	1.1: Increased demand and availability of farm inputs 1.2: Increased farmer and enterprise performance 1.3: Increased access to new markets 1.4: Human Resources 1.5: Trade related SPS and quality management systems 1.6: Promote dairy value chain 1.7: Support to climate change initiatives

2.2 Objectives of the assessment

The End of Project assessments have broadly two objectives:

- 1) Assessment of the extent to which each of the 10 implementing partners have met the project goals and objectives as stipulated in the funding agreements including the indicators as defined in the respective implementing partner results chain and project summary.
- 2) The assessment is also intended to provide recommendations that can be considered to improve the results of the ongoing projects as well as generating a learning agenda for aBi Trust while working with other Partners.

2.3 Assessment methodology

Overall study design

This evaluation utilized The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) guidelines¹ and adopted a largely cross-sectional descriptive and analytical study design utilizing qualitative approaches/techniques to the investigation and analysis. The descriptive and analytical approaches were useful in generating descriptive statistics and important fundamental qualitative information in respect to the extent to which project objectives were achieved. The issues investigated included reaching of 4,000 farmers (200 farmer groups) through establishment of 200 demonstration sites, 15% reduction in post-harvest losses, increase in beans area, yields and output, and 30% increase in farmers revenue as a result of increase in productivity, quality and

¹ The OECD-DAC guidelines spell out and defines the five evaluation criteria, namely sustainability, relevance, impact, effectiveness and efficiency for evaluating programs and projects

marketing channels, and increase in acreage under production. Other issues investigated included 40% increase in employment and 20% increase in woodlot establishment/water shade conservation.

The project evaluation methodologies included process evaluation (inputs, activities, systems, outputs and procedures) where the main method used was review of the key program documents to assess the extent to which the activities identified were implemented, and data collection with the active participation of the target beneficiaries and the community. The assessment also involved outcome and impact evaluation. The key indicators were clearly identified, and non-experimental design was used to conduct the impact assessment as indicated in the TORs given by aBi Trust. The method used to measure impact included checklists on the sustainable improvement of revenue of farmers through the beans value chain development.

Sample selection

From the IP, three farmer groups each with an average of 30 members were purposively selected. The three groups were: Twimukyungane Kisiiha Nigiina Farmers Group in Buhimba sub-county, Abagambakamu B. Farmers Group in Buhanka sub-county and Tukoolehamu Farmers Group in Bugambe sub-county. From each group, 8 members were randomly selected resulting in a total number of 24 interviewees. Another 8 members were also randomly selected from the rest of the community members that did not belong to the groups (referred to as control). This category of respondents served as a control². All together 32 farmers were interviewed

Data collection

Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected using the data collection methods below:

Interviews and meetings: By use of checklists designed for each category of the key informants, interviews were held with officials from, ECO-Agric, and LG in-charge of agriculture. Using a semi-structured questionnaire, interviews were held with 24 farmers who are the project beneficiaries and 8 farmers who did not attend training and did not belong to a group.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): FGDs were conducted to triangulate the information gathered. The FGDs comprised of leaders of each of the three farmer groups and a few members selected from these group.

The categories of respondents interviewed and their numbers are shown in Table 2 below. Lists of officials, group executives and farmers interviewed are given in *Annexes 1 to 3*.

Table 2: Categories of Respondents and Numbers Interviewed

Category of respondents	Number of respondents
ECO-Agric Coordinator	1
ECO-Agric Management staff	5
District NAADS Coordinator	1
District Agricultural Officer	1
Sub-county NAADS Coordinator	1
FGDs (with group members)	3
Farmers/Beneficiaries	24
Farmers from the control group	8

Source: End of Project Field Assessment

Documentary review: Review of relevant project documents from aBi Trust and the IP was undertaken to inform this evaluation exercise. The detailed list of documents reviewed is included in *Annex 5* of this report.

² These are farmers who live in the community but do not belong to any farmer groups and have not formally attended any of the training organized through ECO-Agric. The trainings they attend are organized by other institutions such as NAADS and other NGOs but not through ECO-Agric.

2.4 Data Management and Quality Control

The following steps were taken to ensure proper management of the data collected and to ensure high quality:

- Results of the farmer interviews were entered into the KPMG assessment tool for analysis. Generated codes were reflective of key study themes;
- Qualitative data was transcribed and word-processed to enable easy handling in preparation for analysis. After transcriptions and translations were made, the study team then edited the transcripts to ensure completeness and logical flow;
- Review of transcripts was done to delineate aspects directly relevant to the survey questions and objectives of the survey. After review of the transcripts, the preparation of an Analysis Grid showing the major key issues of investigation against the group classification was undertaken. Data was then reviewed for each specific issue of investigation and key quotations extracted, insights, explanations and interpretations was made;
- Field inspections were carried out to verify information collected from the respondents. Visits were made to a few beans collection centers, demonstration plots as well to beans gardens of some beneficiaries; and
- Debriefing session was held at IP offices during which the team presented key findings from the assessment for validity by the ECO-Agric staff.

3 Overview of the project and implementation framework

3.1 Overview of implementing partner and project

Eco-Agric Uganda (ECO-Agric) is a legal organisation that was registered in 2008 with a focus on environmental conservation and livelihood development support programs in communities. The purpose is to promote environmental conservation with improved agricultural production for better livelihoods.

ECO-Agric with support from aBi Trust, implemented a two-year project (effective 7 February 2012 as per agreement between aBi Trust and ECO-Agric) with the purpose of increasing productivity and profitability of beans among 4,000 small holder farmers in Hoima district by December 2013. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Strengthen production capacity of 200 farmer groups to increase production by December 2013.
- ii. Improve quality of produce through PHH trainings, farming as a business.
- iii. Strengthen market linkages with established buyers, input stockiest for beans produce.
- iv. Promote collective production, bulking and collective marketing of beans
- v. Promote networking and farmer linkage to market information service providers

In accordance with the agreement between aBi Trust and Eco-Agric Uganda, aBi Trust provided the following support:

- Funds for training farmers in Good Agronomic Practices (GAP), Post-Harvest Handling (PHH), entrepreneurship, group dynamics and saving and credit schemes;
- Establishment of 200 demonstration plots as centres for learning. Each of the one-acre demonstration plots was equipped with the following kit: 20 kg of improved bean seed (NABE 4) because of their high value on the market; pesticides (Lava, Cyper), herbicides and 50 kg of fertilizers (DAP, Super Grow and Rizobia);
- Equipment to help at the group and association levels (200 large tarpaulins, 4 weighing scales, 1 motorcycle and 25 bicycles);
- ECO-Agric staff capacity building through training;
- Funded 16 radio talk shows (aired out on a quarterly basis);
- Supported ECO-Agric to disseminate information to the farmer groups through the Farmer Facilitators (FFs) on a monthly basis; and
- Supported ECO-Agric to monitor project activities and group and farmer levels and provide back-stopping support.

3.2 Implementation Framework

Key Collaborators: The implementation of the project titled: “Beans economic empowerment of bean farmers through improved production, quality produce and market access in Hoima District” whose purpose was to increasing productivity and profitability of beans among 4,000 small holder farmers in Hoima district by December 2013 was through a collaborative arrangement. The project implemented by ECO-Agric had the following collaborators (Table 3).

Table 3: Project Collaborators and Summary of Roles Played

Collaborator	Roles Played
1 Traidlinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Market linkages• Support to value addition and bulk marketing• Technical exchange visits• Capacity building• Provision of technical advice
2 Civil Society Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group mobilization and development• Village savings and credit schemes• HIV/AIDS using Farmer Field Schools and Farmer Life Schools• General agricultural training

Collaborator		Roles Played
3	USAID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding OVC which has a component of income and food security to supply seeds, vegetables sweet potatoes to farmers
4	Hoima Local Government (NAADS and Departments of Agriculture, Marketing and Community Development)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group formation and Development (NAADS, Community Development) • Registration of farmer groups (Department of Community Development) • Settling Disputes • Providing training and other technical advice (Departments of Agriculture, Marketing and Community Development) • Provision of seed (NAADS) • Organizing beans shows during which farmers display their products and also learn new ideas
5	Other NGOs/CBOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sought out technical support from ECO-Agric (e.g. consultancy) thereby increasing the financial base of ECO-Agric to carry out its activities

Source: Project Documents and corroborated through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Activities Carried Out: The key activities carried out under the project through funding from aBi Trust, ECO-Agric cost-share contributions and contributions by collaborators included the following:

- Offering advisory services and training on beans production and crop management with a view to increasing output, productivity and quality;
- Establishing 200 demonstration plots to act as centres of learning;
- Provision of technical inputs such as fertilizers, mulch materials, tarpaulins, to support demonstration activities and quality at farmer level and at collection centres;
- Enhancing capacity of Community Development Officers (CDOs) to act as Farmer Facilitators (FFs);
- Raising awareness on gender issues;
- Supporting farmer groups to undertake village saving and credit schemes in order to generate own funds to better their livelihoods;
- Promoting value addition and collective marketing in order to earn higher revenue through selling of quality beans, in bulk, rather than individually; and
- Linking farmer groups to market outlets including processors and exporters for better negotiations and realization of higher prices.

4 Analysis of assessment findings

4.1 Risk rating criteria

Table 4 below indicates the definition of each level of risk rating regarding the level of achievement of the targets in the grant agreement, financial management and organizational assessment results and the Monitoring and Evaluation Systems in place.

Table 4: Risk Rating Criteria

Priority risk rating	Definition
Critical	 The required results have not been achieved and/or are inconsistent with the results of the data collection. There are adverse project management findings that pause unacceptable risks to aBi Trust. The funding agreement and other policies and procedures have not been complied with. The Implementing partner has very weak financial management and M&E systems. Mitigating actions are either not possible or highly challenging for the DFA to implement.
High	 The required results have not been achieved and/or are inconsistent with the results of the data collection. There are adverse project management findings that pause unacceptable risks to aBi Trust. The DFA has made limited effort to comply with the funding agreement and the financial management and M&E systems. Where mitigating actions can be put in place, the DFA has potential to achieve the targets set out in the funding agreement.
Moderate	 Some of the required results have not been achieved and/or are inconsistent with the results of the data collection. However, the findings do not pause unacceptable risk to aBi Trust. The project management, financial and M&E systems are in existence. The DFA has complied with the requirements of the funding agreement in all material requirements. However, it is advisable that the weaknesses identified during the review are addressed to improve their systems, processes and procedures.
Low	 There is compliance with the project management, financial and M&E systems. The results of the assessment are in-line with the requirements of the project funding agreement and the required results have been achieved and consistent with the results of the data collection. A few minor changes may need to be made to improve the operations of the DFA.

4.2 Sustainability

Sustainability in this assessment is measured from two perspectives, namely that of the institution (ECO-Agric) and the beneficiaries (the farmer groups and their members). The focus is on whether there exist structures and mechanisms that can sustain activities and gains made beyond project life.

Beneficiary capacity and mechanisms to ensure ownership and durability

ECO-Agric carried out training for beneficiaries in group dynamics, entrepreneurship, record management, planting clean improved seeds, weeding, harvesting, drying, storage, and value addition among others. ECO-Agric used innovative approaches including crop varieties, inputs, water and soil management techniques and post-harvest handling practices for the development, dissemination, promotion and adoption of improved technologies and practices. Adoption rates showed that a high percent (average of 86%) of the group members trained had put into practice the skills acquired, with the exception of record management which is blamed on the high illiteracy levels (Table 5). The high adoption rates point to the prospects of sustained adoption of the practices promoted by the project. The lower adoption rates by the control group are due to lack of encouragement and pressure that members exert upon each other in groups. Another reason for the low adoption within the control group was the feeling that adoption of these improved practices was expensive.

As a way of ensuring continued technology transfer among farmers, Eco-Agric established 200 demonstration sites. The beneficiaries continued to realize increased revenue due to price increase as a result of improved quality and collective marketing of beans. Also, the increase in revenue has been an incentive for the farmers to continue quality and productivity enhancing technologies thereby sustaining

the activities. This was exemplified both at individual farmer interviews and FGDs, where it was noted that application of artificial fertilizers (SSP, NPK), pesticides (Dimetholate), proper drying (on tarpaulins) and value addition (sorting and storing in gunny bags) were on the increase. The demonstration harvests are being used as a saving to the group after selling and part of it is given out to farmers on a revolving basis: every member deposits 10 kg of seed to the group store after harvesting and this seed is given out to more farmers in the next season - acting as a seed bank and managed by farmers. The four VSLAs (Kiziranfumbi Savings and Credit, Buhanika Farmers' Savings Association, Kisiha farmers' Cooperative and Kyakabale Farmer's Cooperative) at the group level are now operating as SACCOs and this has enhanced group cohesion as members recognize the benefits of belonging to groups. With the structures and mechanisms in place at ECO-Agric (various sources of income) and at the beneficiary level (demonstration sites, seed bank, extension workers) there is a high chance of sustaining the project activities in the event there is no intervention from aBi Trust.

Table 5: Exposure and Adoption Rates for Beneficiaries

Type of training	Beneficiaries				Control group			
	No. trained in skill (n=24)	% trained in skill	No. applying skill (n=24)	% applying skill	No. trained in skill (n=8)	% trained in skill	No. applying skill (n=8)	% applying skills
Group dynamics	24	100%	24	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Entrepreneurship	20	83%	20	83%	1	13%	1	13%
Record management	19	79%	10	42%	1	13%	1	13%
Marketing techniques	24	100%	23	96%	1	13%	1	13%
Planting clean seeds	24	100%	24	100%	1	13%	1	13%
Weeding	24	100%	23	96%	1	13%	1	13%
Thinning	10	42%	9	38%	1	13%	1	13%
Harvesting	24	100%	24	100%	1	13%	1	13%
Drying	24	100%	24	100%	1	13%	1	13%
Storage	24	100%	24	100%	1	13%	1	13%

Source: End of Project Farmer Interview

In regards to marketing practices, beneficiaries preferred to undertake collective marketing (96%) compared to the control group (0%). It is noted that 88% of the beneficiaries and 63% of the control group farmers did acknowledge improvement in quality of their bean, implying that the latter had also taken up certain practices either by observing from their neighbours or by receiving support from other service providers. In terms of drying, majority (96%) of beneficiaries and 38% of control group farmers consistently dried their beans on tarpaulins (Table 6). The table shows that 96% of beneficiaries are likely to sustain group marketing and improved drying methods.

Table 6: Adoption of Marketing Practices

Marketing	Beneficiaries		Control group	
	Frequency (n = 24)	Percentages	Frequency (n = 8)	Percentages
Bulking	23	96%	0	0%
Individually	1	4%	8	100%
Both	0	0%		
Change in quality of beans				
Yes	21	88%	5	63%
No	3	13%	3	38%
Drying beans				
Bare floor	1	4%	5	63%
Tarpaulins	23	96%	3	38%
Raised concrete	0	0%	0	0%
By the road side	0	0%	0	0%

Source: End of Project Farmer Interview

Five market linkages have been created with: St. Cyprian School, Makerere Competent Secondary, St. Andrea School, Tullow Oil through Traidlinks Ltd (an MOU signed) and Arua Traders. The farmers

have their records made at farmer group level by the leaders and these include amounts brought to the centre, amounts of beans sold and the payments made.

Mechanisms to ensure ownership and durability

The interviews with various stakeholders revealed that ECO-Agric has built strong partnerships with actors in the beans value chain. It has sought collaboration with several institutions (as shown in Table 3) in community mobilization and sensitization, technical aspects of beans production and marketing, and supply of improved seeds. These levels of collaboration have enhanced the sustainability of project gains. Key informant interviews indicated high awareness of and participation in project activities by relevant LG departments including NAADS, and Department of Agriculture Production and Marketing. The 200 demonstration plots established act as centres of learning to enhance technology adoption.

Project capacity to continue activities without aBi Trust support

ECO-Agric has 17 of its permanent staff and two temporary staff members trained in various disciplines including business management, accounting, marketing and agronomy. ECO-Agric thus has the technical capacity to carry out training and advisory services to its groups. As elaborated in the section under efficiency, ECO-Agric has other sources of income like consultancies, membership subscription and renewal, fruit and tree nurseries, and fundraising activity among others.

At the beneficiary level there is a seed bank that is managed by the farmers themselves. Furthermore, the four VSLAs formed at the group level are now operating as SACCOs. These should ensure sustained adoption of activities promoted by the project.

Overall assessment rating

Assessment of risk to **Sustainability** of project activities at ECO-Agric without aBi Trust support is **Low risk** as there are structures and mechanisms at ECO-Agric (various sources of income notably consultancies, nurseries, SACCOs and the strong collaboration with LG, NGOs and the private sector) that can enable it continue activities without support from aBi Trust. At the beneficiary level, farmers have been trained and have adopted such practices as planting improved seed, soil and water conservation techniques, proper harvesting and drying and value addition, resulting in increased productivity and quality of their beans. Some of the groups are undertaking collective marketing and the demonstration plots established continue to serve as centres of learning. Furthermore, the seed bank and saving and credit schemes at the group level have enhanced group cohesion as members recognize the benefits of belonging to groups.

4.3 Relevance

Extent to which project has adapted to needs and expectations of beneficiaries

In February 2012 ECO-Agric successfully designed a project and negotiated a 66%:34% cost-share agreement in which aBi Trust obligated US\$ 244,244,000 and ECO-Agric was to contribute US\$ 147,160,000/= (both in cash and kind) as part of its cost-share. The project obtained the approval of aBi Trust because it addressed relevant issues affecting the beans farmers, namely:

- low production and productivity due to lack of good planting seeds,
- PHH losses,
- poorly organized agricultural marketing system, and
- lack of market information plus exploitation by middlemen

These issues were identified during the project design period, which entailed needs and gap assessments, stakeholder consultations and capacity needs to address these constraints to beans production and marketing. Assessment of project activities shows that the project adapted to the needs and expectations of the beneficiaries by prioritizing farmer training on topics that are considered critical by the farmers (Table 7). The key training topics that have addressed beans production and marketing problems and are relevant to the beneficiaries (based on exposure and adoption rates under sustainability) include: planting improved bean seeds, weeding, thinning, proper harvesting and proper drying. The high rates of farmer attendance and adoption are testimonies of the extent to which the beneficiaries see the training events as relevant to addressing their concerns. To address the high incidence of pests and diseases, beneficiaries were encouraged during training to identify symptoms that relate to pests and diseases and seek advice immediately on their control. Regarding the adverse effect of weather changes, beneficiaries were encouraged to plant trees and erect soil and water conservation structures. On the

marketing side, collective marketing of good quality beans was emphasized to enable the groups meet market demands and to take advantage of economies of scale.

Each of the 200 demonstration units had a starter kit³ which has helped in demonstrating beans enhancing technologies and the majority of farmers have adopted them. Farmers' capacity was enhanced through training in business skills and GAP, and actively participated in demonstration sites set-up for hands-on experience. The adoption of the practices promoted has resulted in increased yields, better beans quality and reduced unit production costs. As far as product markets are concerned, the beneficiaries have benefited by marketing their beans collectively.

Table 7: Major beans Production and Marketing Problems

Problems found in Beans growing	Group Members		Control Group	
	number (n = 24)	Percentage	Number (n = 8)	Percentage
Pests and Diseases	9	38%	4	50%
Weather Changes	15	63%	0	0%
Lack of market for the variety	2	8%	0	0%
Variety not demanded	2	8%	0	0%
Aggressive weeds	2	8%	1	13%
High costs of production	1	4%	0	0%
Poor yields	0	0%	5	63%
Problems found in marketing	Group Members		Control Group	
	number (n = 24)	Percentage	number (n = 8)	Percentage
Low prices offered by traders	2	8%	4	50%
Meeting the Demands of traders	11	46%	0	0%
Market unavailability	1	17%	1	13%
Transportation problems	1	4%	1	13%
Selling immediately after harvesting	1	4%	0	0%
Small store for our produce	1	4%	0	0%
Expensive inputs	0	0%	1	13%

Source: End of Project Farmer Interview

Project technical, socio-economic feasibility

FGDs and KIIs conducted revealed that the beneficiaries and stakeholders did appreciate the trainings conducted and the structures and systems put in place to promote technology adoption (demonstration plots) and collective marketing and value addition (collection centres, market linkages). These have resulted in uptake of the promoted practices. While this varies from group to group, the adoption levels are as follows:

- 96% of farmer interviewed conducted bulk marketing twice, each time earning about US\$ 3.32 million on average per farmer; and
- The farmers interviewed indicated that nearly all the 200 farmer groups have a savings and credit scheme through which members save between US\$ 2,000 and US\$ 10,000 on a monthly basis. Members can borrow and pay back within a period of 3 months at an interest of 5% per month. This was obtained from FGDs and verified by taking a look at their savings books where they make recordings.

Overall assessment rating

Assessment of rating of the risk related to the **Relevance** of the project is **Low risk**. Project activities as exemplified by high attendance and adoption rates demonstrate relevance to the beneficiaries. The training topics and extension methodology used (demonstration plots and seed bank) are in line with

³ These kits include improved bean seed (NABE4) because of their high value on the market; 20Kg per demo, Pesticides (Dimetholate), Herbicides and Fertilizers (Rizobia) 50kg], Equipment to help the farmer groups (Tarpaulins, sisal string (1 roll), information boards, and weighing scale).

beneficiary needs and expectations. At farmer group level practices related to saving and credit and collective marketing have been fully embraced and members are beginning to realize the benefits in the form of higher revenue. The project objectives are valid and consistent with the county's need as spelt out in the country's Vision 2040, the National Development Plan (NDP), Development Strategy and Investment Plan (DSIP) and Hoima Local Government priorities.

4.4 Impact

Improvement for intended beneficiaries

Revenue: Based on results from farmer interviews, the beneficiaries realized an increase in revenue by about 107% (revenue per acre increased from US\$ 316,224 in 2010 to US\$ 656,000 in 2013). The increase in revenue was attributed to several factors notably adoption of improved farming practices (GAP, PHH), better price through collective marketing, use of improved inputs in beans production, and enhanced capacity of farmers in entrepreneurship skills. The beans prices increased from about US\$ 1,200 per kg to US\$ 1,600 within the two-year period (an increase of 33%).

Table 8 below compares average area, output, yield and revenue from beans for both beneficiaries and control group farmers per season. The beneficiaries have a higher yield and higher revenue due to adoption of better practices and collective marketing that fetches higher price. The table shows that through training, exposure to demonstration plot and bulk marketing, beneficiaries were faster in adopting the practices they were trained in and are realizing positive changes at a faster rate than non members. The increase in revenue (107%), and yields (33%) realized by beneficiaries are all higher than the project targets of 30%.

Farmers reached: A total of 4,927 farmers (200 groups) were trained in various disciplines including GAP, PHH, entrepreneurship and collective marketing. These farmers realized increased production and productivity. Arising from the project intervention, farmers reported having benefitted in many ways including being able to diversify enterprises (including livestock keeping), undertake businesses such as shops, saloon, and meet basic household needs (food and education for their children). Although the team was not able to independently verify these benefits, they were repeatedly mentioned during FGDs and KIIs.

Jobs: FGDs indicated that adoptions of the practices promoted by the project through training resulted in increased on- and off-farm jobs. On farm jobs arose as a result of adopters hiring labour to undertake activities such as land opening, weeding, harvesting and planting trees for soil and water conservation. Off-farm jobs created included transporting beans to collection centres, hire of vehicles (including on-loading and off-loading), and dealing in inputs. The exact number of formal and informal jobs as a result of project activities could not be ascertained or verified due to absence of records on jobs created as a result of the project implementation. It was not therefore possible to estimate off-farm jobs attributed to project intervention.

Table 8: *Impact of Project to Beneficiaries and Control Group*

No.	Category of farmers	Period	
		2010	2013
	Project beneficiaries		
1	Average area under beans (acres)	1.08	1.00
2	Average output (harvested) in kg	264	410
3	Yield (kg/acre)	244	410
4	Selling price per kg (US\$)	1,200	1,600
5	Revenue realized (US\$)	316,224	656,000
	Control group farmer		
1	Average area under beans (acres)	1.04	1.08
2	Average output (harvested) in kg	255	292
3	Yield (kg/acre)	245	270
4	Selling price per kg (US\$)	1,200	1,400
5	Revenue realized (US\$)	305,760	408,240

Source: Farmer Interview corroborated with FGDs

Impact of policy, environment, external political and socio-economic factors

Environment: Beneficiaries reported that the changing and unpredictable weather patterns have greatly affected beans production. Long drought spells dried up some of the plants, thereby reducing yields in some instances. They suggested the need to come up with other sources of water in case of long drought spells like construction of valley dams or irrigation so they can properly plan their farming activities. The farmers reported that heavy rains especially during pod formation led to rotting of plants thereby reducing yields. Pests and disease outbreaks such as bean root rot, bean aphids and caterpillars were reported to be a threat to increasing beans production.

Political: District specifically the DAO and NAADS Coordinator were fully aware of aBi Trust sponsored project. As such there was collaboration between the district, project and beneficiaries in the district.

Socio-Economic: Study findings indicate that women make 54% of membership in the groups. There has been strong advocacy for gender mainstreaming and so gender issues were incorporated in the beans VC. This has seen a positive result in the form of ownership and control of productive resources by women to influence the decision making process. Issues of gender inequalities have been greatly addressed and therefore the potential to enhance productivity and more equitable sharing of productive resources and benefits.

Attribution

Attribution refers to extent of change that can be claimed by a project/intervention out of total change that takes place. ECO-Agric does not have a documented plan for assessing and estimating the attribution of observed changes for each of the key indicators in the results chain. Instead ECO-Agric periodically conduct informal surveys with collaborators and beneficiaries to get attribution related to change in project area. ECO-Agric does not use any plan to estimate attributable change in indicators and neither can the staff explain the methods used to assess and estimate attribution. Attribution is not measured in accordance with DCED guidelines.

Both internal and external factors were reported to have boosted the impact of the project. Among the internal factors, the staff of ECO-Agric, the beneficiary farmers and FFs received several trainings which empowered them with the skills and knowledge of improved beans production as part of the *external factors*, there are other partners involved in the beans VC including NAADS, NARO, Hunger Project, ISSD and Millennium Village Project.

The farmers reported having gained skills and knowledge on beans improvement and put them into practice resulting in better yields, quality and therefore higher revenue. Entrepreneurship skills have helped them diversify into other enterprises. The beneficiaries are able to manage their time thus proper management performance and project implementation. They reported as having “one voice” and so can market collectively and they are therefore able to get better prices. The benefits realized and changes observed as a result of the project intervention are shown in Table 9. Against each change is a percentage attribution, showing the extent to which the beneficiaries related such a benefit/change to project intervention.

Table 9: *Change and Associated Attribution due to Project Intervention*

	Benefit/Change	Attribution ⁴ (%)
1	Farmers have accessed advisory services and now better understand beans production, value addition and marketing	65%
2	Promoted value addition and collective marketing of FAQ beans	65%
3	Increased production, productivity and area under beans	60%
4	Improved quality through improved drying methods (drying slabs and use of tarpaulins)	70%

⁴ Key informants (particularly NAADS coordinators and Production Department officials) at district and sub-county levels where asked to assign a percent, reflecting the extent to which the benefits/changes indicated in the table were due to project interventions. These were just estimates but not based on any methods used to assess and estimate attribution

	Benefit/Change	Attribution ⁴ (%)
5	Training/capacity enhancement of Community Based Educators (CBE) to act as Extension Link Farmers (ELF)	80%
6	Establishment of demonstration plots that act as learning centres	100%
7	Enhanced market linkages with beans processors and exporters	80%
8	Women now own beans fields due to training community mobilization	40%
9	Increased saving culture through the village saving and credit schemes	100%
10	Better record keeping at farmer and farmer group levels	25%

Source: Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Overall assessment rating

Overall assessment of risks relating to the **Impact** of the project to the beneficiaries is **Moderate risk** since the beneficiaries have acknowledged the impact associated with the project. The beneficiaries have observed positive changes in their revenue resulting from increased production, productivity and quality of beans collectively marketed by group members. There is a high degree of collaboration with local government and increased participation of women in decision making. Attribution is, however, not measured in conformity with the DCED guidelines but rather based on subjective judgment and as such it is not possible to assign attributions based on established good practices. It is therefore important that the impact is well documented by ECO-Agric and utilized as lesson learnt using established good practices as recommended in the DCED guidelines.

4.5 Effectiveness

Extent to which planned goal and objectives have been fulfilled

Table 10 shows progress made towards specific objective areas of the project. In nearly all cases the targets were met, except for the self-governing small scale bean producer groups with improved access to markets and market information.

Table 10: *Project Objectives*

	Objective Indicator	Target	Achievement		Means of verification	Factors affecting achievement or non achievement of objective
			Achievement	% of target		
1	% increase in farmers' revenue	30%	167%	457%	Derived from bulk marketing sales, corroborated with FGDs	Better yields, price and quality of produce
2	Number of farmers exposed to productivity enhancing technologies	4,000	4,927	123%	Derived from project records, corroborated with FGDs	More groups were formed than originally planned due to demand by farmers
3	No of farmer groups marketing collectively	200	200	100%	Project records, corroborated with and FGDs	As planned
4	Number of technology demonstrations set up	200	200	100%	Project records, corroborated with FGDs	As planned. Funds were sufficient to establish number as budgeted
5	Reduced PHH losses through trainings and equipping stores with	25%	-	-		The actual percentage

	Objective Indicator	Target	Achievement		Means of verification	Factors affecting achievement or non achievement of objective
			Achievement	% of target		
	basic facilities by December 2013.					reduction was not ascertained.
6	Number of farmers trained and adopting the recommended agronomic practices, marketing collectively, accessing MI	4,000	4,213	105%	Project records, corroborated with FGs and farmer interviews	The average group sizes turned up to be bigger than originally planned
7	Increased acreage for bean production	1	1	100%	Farmer interviews, corroborated with FGDS	Farmers were encouraged to remain with same acreage and diverse into other enterprises
8	Increase in production of beans (MT) per acre	700	410	59%	Farmer interview, corroborated with FGDS	The yield of 700 kg per acre was an overstated target, not generally attainable in Uganda
9	At least 8 self-governing small scale bean producer groups with improved access to markets and market information.	8	---	---	Not measured	This was not understood at both the IP and group level and was not addressed
10	% increase in woodlot establishment and water shade conservation	20%	83%	415%	Farmer interviews, corroborated with FGDS	More farmers heeded the advice to plant trees, fruits and construct soil and water conservation structures
11	% increase in employment	40%	---	----	Not measured	----

Source: Project records, End of Project Farmer interviews, FGDS

Market linkages

In regard to output market linkages, the 200 groups were linked to buyers including three schools (St. Cyprian, Makerere Competent Secondary and St. Andrea Schools) and Tullow Oil through Traidlinks Ltd (an MOU signed). The assessment team observed that the farmers have their records maintained at the group level by their leaders and these include amounts brought to the centre, amounts of beans sold and the payments made.

Awareness promotions and technology demonstration

A total of 40 one-acre demonstration plots (each provided with the necessary start-up kit) were established by ECO-Agric through funding from aBi Trust. The beneficiaries revealed that each kit comprised:

- Improved bean seed (NABE4) because of their high value on the market; 20 Kg per demo;
- Tarpaulins;
- Pesticides (Lava, Cyper);
- Herbicides;
- Fertilizers (DAP, Supper Grow and Rizobia); and
- Equipment to help at the group and association levels (200 large tarpaulins, 4 weighing scales, 1 motorcycle and 25 bicycles).

Overall assessment rating

Overall rating of the risk relating to **Effectiveness** (i.e. the extent to which planned goals and objectives have been fulfilled) is that there is **Moderate risk**. The targets of seven out of 11 objectives were met regarding; increase in revenue, number of farmers exposed, number of farmers adopting GAP, groups formed and collectively marketing, demonstrations set-up, are under bean production and increase in woodlots. The four that were not achieved were either a result of difficulty in measurement (employment created and PHH losses) or lack of clarity (increase in production and self-governing small scale bean producer groups).

4.6 Efficiency

Reliability and technical specifications

Eco-Agric is led by the Executive Director and Coordinator who are responsible for the day to day management of the office and ensuring that the project activities are performed. They are supported by five staff including the Accountant, two Field Officers, Extension Officer and Community Development Officer. The team reviewed photocopies of resumes and academic certificates of Eco-Agric staff that were available and noted that the staff have adequate qualifications and experience.

Eco-Agric Uganda staff undertook various trainings during the implementation of the project including collective marketing, PHH, Agronomy, Entrepreneurship and store management, value addition, sustainability and financial management which were facilitated by aBi Trust. From information reviewed, Eco-Agric was then able to train 4,927 (449 in collective marketing, 1,245 in Post-harvest handling, 1,647 in agronomy, 1,261 in entrepreneurship and 325 in store management as per DFA attendance lists) farmers (including non project beneficiaries) during the project period.

The Board members attended trainings on achieving the organization’s mission, vision and strategy and this was conducted by Coordinator and the Executive Director in 2009 as confirmed by the Board Secretary and the Coordinator. The team interviewed the Secretary to the Board and the Coordinator and noted that the board members have sufficient education and training in achieving the organization’s mission, vision and strategy.

Adequacy of resources

The major sources of funding for Eco-Agric Uganda for the two-year period ending 31 December 2013 are shown in Table 11 below:

Table 11: Eco-Agric Uganda Sources of Funding

Particulars	Amount in USH
aBi Trust	244,244,000
Other Income: Membership registration and renewal, nursery, consultancy and fund raising campaign	321,958,500
Total Income	566,202,500

Source: Eco-Agric Accounting Records (Audited for the period ended 31 December 2012 and Unaudited for the period ended 31 December 2013)

US\$ 5,690,000 of the other income relates to membership registration and renewal for the period ended 31 December 2013 that had not been audited.

The total disbursement from aBi Trust is 43% of Eco-Agric’s income.

Record keeping surrounding other sources of income is adequate based on the audited financial statements. However for the period not yet audited as at 31 December 2013, the extra income earned

from Membership registration and renewal was verified from receipt books. It was therefore not possible for the team to verify the completeness of resources since management could not quantify this amount.

Mechanisms/Institutional Arrangements

Governance

Eco-Agric Uganda is registered as a company limited by guarantee. The Board oversees the operations and activities of Eco-Agric Uganda through providing guidance and effective leadership. Board members are elected at the General Assembly once a year and a particular board member is eligible for a period defined by the promoters and members of Eco-Agric. Quarterly Board meetings are held to assess the progress of implementation of the project activities.

The Coordinator was recruited by the Executive Director. The decisions of the Board are binding on the Coordinator and the management team. The General Assembly comprises the district farmers who elect a governing board. The Board oversees the Secretariat (i.e. Eco-Agric Uganda) which is headed by the Executive Director and the Coordinator for the aBi Trust project recruited by the Executive Director. Eco-Agric Uganda as an institution has a strategic outlook spanning three years from January 2012 to December 2013. The strategic outlook details the key goals and the various pathways towards achieving their goals. Eco-Agric has a human resource management manual that was last updated in December 2008.

Systems, processes and procedures

Financial management system

The Grantee guidelines provided by aBi Trust are the benchmarks for financial management for the aBi Trust project. They are used to cover such areas such as bank reconciliations, fund requests, expenditure procedures and management of grant funds. Eco-Agric Uganda uses the cash basis where expenditure is recognised at the time of payment.

Eco-Agric Uganda operates one bank account with DFCU Bank for aBi Trust funds i.e. DFCU Eco-Agric Uganda Account. A separate account is maintained for alternative sources of income. The organisation books are maintained by the Accountant who is currently pursuing a course with the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda but demonstrated excellent knowledge of accounts and the procedures involved in his work. Bank reconciliations for the period ended 31 December 2012 were performed on a monthly basis (this was confirmed by the team) except for 2013 (the team was not availed with bank reconciliations for April, June and the last quarter in 2013). The bank reconciliations are prepared by the Accountant, reviewed by the Coordinator and approved by the Executive Director. The Accountant reconciles with the Bank and to satisfy herself that the cash book balance tallies with the Bank balance. Regarding the missing bank reconciliations, it was highlighted that these could have been misplaced or misfiled as Eco-Agric has had four reviews within the month of May 2014 from the various partners.

Eco-Agric Uganda's accounting system is of manual records and these are not backed up to safeguard incidences of data loss in case of a disaster. Manual accounting records are kept in a physical cash book which is updated by the Accountant and reviewed by Coordinator and approved by the Executive Director. The Coordinator mentioned that the accounting system is necessary however, Eco-Agric has limited funds and all the systems recommended are expensive.

Fixed assets management

Eco-Agric Uganda maintains a fixed asset register that is used to track all assets. All assets including those given by aBi Trust such as a motorcycle are included in the register. However, the assets are not engraved and the asset register was not up to date. As a result, there is an increased risk of theft of assets procured using aBi funds.

Budgeting

Eco-Agric Uganda budgets are prepared on a quarterly basis and submitted to aBi Trust along with the requisition for more funding. The budgeting process is robust and execution is monitored against the budget on a quarterly basis.

Reporting

The Coordinator prepared quarterly progress reports which were reviewed by the Executive Director before they were submitted to aBi Trust. Variance reports were prepared but the appropriate narratives explaining the variances were included in the reports submitted to aBi Trust. The Coordinator also prepared a completion report at the end of the project and quarterly monitoring and evaluation reports that were conducted by the Field Advisors, Extension Officer and Coordinator. The descriptions set out in the project summaries were in line with the description set out in the financial reports.

Audits

Eco-Agric Uganda's annual audit is carried out by Chuckle & Co certified public accountants and they have issued an unqualified opinion for the two years ending 31 December 2011 and 2012.

Procurement system

Eco-Agric Uganda has a procurement committee consisting of four (4) members (Chairperson-Hoima District Local Government, a member of Kiziranfumbi Farmer Group, a member from Buhimba Farmer Group and the Project Coordinator), that meets to evaluate and approve purchases. The procurements are conducted based on the budget that was approved by aBi Trust. Eco-Agric Uganda has a list of prequalified suppliers who submit quotations based on certain specification whenever there is a purchase beyond US\$ 1,000,000 as set by aBi Trust guidelines. Once the bids are received, they are evaluated by the committee and the cheapest firm that meets all specifications awarded the contract. Reference is, however, made to the firm's past performance, integrity and ability to supply the required quantities within the specified time period. The Eco-Agric Uganda procurement system complies with the grantee guidelines from aBi Trust.

Administrative system

Administrative systems and procedures capture the set guidelines that govern Eco-Agric Uganda's day to day activities. These include, filing systems, meeting reporting timelines, job contracts, and job descriptions necessary to keep Eco-Agric Uganda operational. The team noted that some employees did not have contracts that spell out the duties and responsibilities and staff files are not appropriately maintained. The Coordinator was aware of the objectives of Eco-Agric Uganda as set out in the strategic plan except for the Accountant and Office Attendant. The team confirmed through reviewing the Strategic Plan for three years (2012 – 2014) and discussions with the Coordinator, Accountant and an officer that the objectives spelt out by the Coordinator were as per Strategic plan.

Eco-Agric Uganda has an organisation structure indicating all the employee positions. However, some of the positions were vacant such as Internal Audit, Human Resource Manager, Procurement/Logistics Manager, Field Accountant. This was attributed to budget constraints based on our discussion with the coordinator.

The Coordinator is paid a gross salary of US\$ 700,000 as stipulated in the project summary. The other staff members are paid out of membership registration and renewal, nursery, consultancy and fund raising campaign and also using the 10% overhead as set out in Section 1.6 of the contract between Eco-Agric Uganda and aBi Trust. The Coordinator received a salary but no remittance of PAYE was done in 2012 and 2013. The Coordinator acknowledged the lapse and mentioned that registration for PAYE was done in 2014 and currently the PAYE deductions are being made. This was confirmed from review of banking slips and returns filed. Eco-Agric Uganda maintains payrolls that show all staff members and their respective salaries. The team noted that some of the employees have contracts and job descriptions spelling out their responsibilities.

Monitoring and Evaluation System

Eco-Agric has an M&E unit with an M&E officer and a data entrant. The M&E has terms of reference that stipulates duties and responsibilities. An M&E system is in existence, the formats for data collection are made according to information to be collected and the data is collated by the M&E Officer, and entered by a data entrant. The M&E Officer also interprets and makes summaries to enable compilation into a quarterly report. As regards capacity enhancement, the new M&E officer was introduced to the new reporting format and results chain through training by aBi Trust. The staff is now familiar with the results chain and uses it to capture quantitative data, though to a limited extent. It was established also that as part of M&E, work plan reviews are held weekly during staff meetings where they update everyone on the progress of the project and if there is need for change, it is done then. This is all approved during the monthly management meetings.

Overall assessment

The overall assessment of the risk relating to **Efficiency** is that there is **Moderate risk** to continued level of efficiency. Eco-Agric Uganda follows the aBi Trust guidelines in accounting for the funds and maintains a separate account for the funds. Eco-Agric Uganda, however does not comply with statutory deductions on PAYE, which could result in penalties. The majority of structures relating to governance are in place and functioning and the requirements of the governance document are met. The Board is appropriately constituted and engages management in the day-to-day operations of the Association. Regarding administrative systems and procedures Eco-Agric Uganda has filing systems, meeting reporting timelines, some employees had job contracts and job descriptions and quarterly reports were submitted to aBi Trust on a timely manner. The project management and financial systems are in existence and there is an effort to comply with key internal controls regarding payments. Eco-Agric Uganda's accounting system is of manual records and these are not backed up to safeguard incidences of data loss in case of a disaster. Furthermore, insufficient records for periods not audited are maintained on other sources of income for Eco-Agric Uganda. The M&E system is efficient and M&E Officer attended M&E related trainings. The field team, however lacks M&E experience but have the required skills and qualifications.

4.7 Lessons learnt

Based on discussion held with Eco-Agric Uganda, a cross-section of its collaborators, farmer groups and beneficiary farmers, the following lessons are learnt:

- Having other sources of funds (that must be documented and tracked) rather than aBi is important for sustainability of project activities after its closure. For instance, provision of advisory services by the trained FFs is possible as long as they can be facilitated. Apart from own resources, building partnerships and collaborating with other entities are more likely to generate resources (in kind, cash or time) towards the implementation of the project activities; and
- Diversifying in other enterprises such as agro-forestry is useful for negating the effects of adverse weather and brings in extra income to the farmers. ECO-Agric has fruits and tree nurseries that it sells to farmers as part of its wider development agenda. Both at ECO-Agric and farmer group level the scheme has been well received and farmers are looking forward to earning extra income from the enterprise.

A Annexes

A.1 List of officials who attended the briefing session at the implementing partner

	Name	Designation	Organization`
1	Francis Byabakama	Accountant	Eco-Agric Uganda
2	Sandra Nanteza	Financial and Organization Development	KPMG
3	Valeria Mwesigwa	Agricultural/Monitoring and Evaluation specialist	KPMG
4	Ndagire Praxeda	Research Assistant	KPMG

A.2 List of key informants

	Name	Designation	Organization`
1	Bernard Nuwamanya	Hoima District Coordinator	NAADS
2	Catherine Kaija	Hoima District Agricultural Officer	Production Department

A.3 List of farmer group leaders and farmers interviewed

Focus Group Discussion			
1	Kobusinge Margaret	Chairperson	Twimukyangan Kisiha Nigiina Farmer's group – Buhimba Sub-county
2	Shamira Bagonza	Secretary	“
3	Alice Karanzi	Secretary for Information	“
4	Daisy Kaliisa	Member	“
5	Bisoborwa George	Chairperson	Tukoolehamu FG – Bugambe Sub-county
6	Barongo Juliet	Vice Chairperson	“
7	Lawrence Kwesigwa	Member	“
8	Wakulera Paul	Chairperson	Abagambakamu FG – Buhnika Sub-county
9	Ndagire Sylvia	Secretary	“
11	Mugisa Godfrey	Member	“
12	Kaahwa A	Member	“
13	Birungi Bosco	Member	“

Farmers interviewed

	Group Farmers			Control Group
#	Twimukyangan Kisiha Nigiina Farmers Group	Tukoolehamu Farmers Group	Abagambakamu B Farmers Group	
1	Kabajwahya Abifaisi	Amanya Christopher	Ndagire Sylvia	Katusiime Pross
2	Nyamahunge Kate	Mugisha Roger	Navuga Janat	Nelson Kaahwa
3	Tinka Jostina	Tumwesige James	Sunday Francis Mucunguzi	Kaahwa Atuhura Godfrey
4	Irumba Sarah	Busingye Edward	Kiiza Aidah	Namaga Annet
5	Sion Tibenda	Kiiza Yabezi	Mulindwa Moses	Kizza Annet
6	Miriam Mugisa	Kaahwa Silver	Kiiza Francis	Katusiime Rose Mary
7	Bagamba Edida	Esther Balikagira	Abigaba Robert	Margaret Namirembe
8	Nsungwa Rose	Mugabo Elly	Judith Nyamaizzi	Mwesige Nathan

A.4 List of officials who attended the debriefing session List of officials who attended the debriefing session

	Name	Designation	Organization`
1	Josephine Nakakande	Coordinator	Eco-Agric Uganda
2	Francis Byabakama	Accountant	Eco-Agric Uganda
3	Jonathan Kanyike	Marketing Manager	Eco-Agric Uganda
4	Abigaba Ronnet	Monitoring and Evaluation	Eco-Agric Uganda
5	Tushabe Rosette	Secretary/data entrant	Eco-Agric Uganda
6	Sandra Nanteza	Financial and Organization Development	KPMG
7	Valeria Mwesigwa	Agricultural/Monitoring and Evaluation specialist	KPMG
8	Ndagire Praxeda	Research Assistant	KPMG

A.5 Key documents reviewed

Key documents reviewed included the following:

1. Contract agreement between Agribusiness Initiative Trust and Eco-Agric Uganda;
2. Agribusiness Initiative Trust Project Summary;
3. Organisation structure;
4. Strategic and operational plan;
5. Certificate of Incorporation;
6. Memorandum and Articles of Association;
7. Activity work plan;
8. List of Beneficiaries;
9. Completion and progress reports;
10. Revenue and expenditure reports;
11. Bank reconciliations;
12. Bank statements;
13. Cash Book;
14. Staff resumes;
15. Training records;
16. Monitoring and evaluation reports;
17. Board meeting minutes;
18. Procurement committee meeting minutes;
19. Staff meeting minutes;
20. Audited financial statements 2012.

A.6 Minutes of debriefing meeting at implementing partner

Minutes of the Exit Meeting at Eco-Agric Uganda – aBi Trust End of Project Assessments

Client name	aBi Trust
Held at	Eco-Agric Uganda Offices on 16 th May 2014 at 06:00 pm
Present	(See list)
Agenda	1.Introductory remarks 2.Discussion of the findings 3.Concluding remarks
Minutes keeper	Sandra Nanteza

Item	Agenda Items	Comments from Eco-Agric team
1.	<p>Introductory remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The KPMG Financial and Organisation Development personnel thanked KDFA for their cooperation. • The purpose of the meeting was to present the findings from the assessment that will be shared with aBi Trust and to obtain views from Eco-Agric. The KPMG team consisted of two groups and as such findings would be presented by both the Financial and Organisational assessment team and the Agricultural/Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist team. • 	
2.	<p>Discussion of findings</p> <p>A: Financial and Organization Development</p> <p>Areas of strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization has a dedicated accountant and coordinator who have assisted us through the assessment exercise. • The organization has a separate bank account as per grantee guidelines. • The templates in the grantee guidelines are being used • Most of the expenditures had support documents attached such procurement minutes, receipts invoices LPOs • Has audited books of accounts. • The organization has manuals such as finance manual <p>Areas of improvement</p> <p><i>Organizational</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most the employees do not have employment contracts, job descriptions and resumes on file. • Trainings are required for some employees such as the accountant. • The vacant position of program manager should be filled up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The board has some posts that are not filled such as treasurer and publicity secretary as stated in the memorandum and articles of associations. • The board need refresher strategic trainings • The board minutes should have an action tracker. • The organization has two structure one in the finance and accounting manual that includes positions like internal audit, procurement and logistic manager, company cashier, field accounts and another manual. The organization should stick 	

to using one structure and any vacant positions filled out.

Financial management and systems

- There is no accounting system and as such all records are manual
- There is no back up of information
- All payment vouchers should be serially number by the machine and not manual like was the case in 2012. There was an error done by the supplier but will be worked upon.
- Bank reconciliations should be prepared for all months especially 2013 and should be accurately prepared as stipulated in the grantee guidelines
- The templates for training records such as attendance lists should include a provision for activity performed, they should be pre-numbered and the date
- Expenses regarding overheads should be fully supported with invoices, receipts.
- The cash book should be signed off by the preparer, and approved.
- Some of the issues raised in the management letter were not attended to such as the issue on statutory deductions.
- The finance manual had some lapses. It is good that the team has got people that have assessed the
- Inconsistencies in PAYE and NSSF.

B: Technical and M&E Assessment

aBi Trust project awareness of activities

- Eco-Agric agrees to having received support from aBi Trust and implemented activities according to plan.
- The secretary to the Chief Administrative Officer received the courtesy letter as the CAO was not in office.
- The technical officers such as the District Administrative Officer and NAADS coordinators are fully aware of the project and are working jointly in implementing the project.
- The Implementing partner is aware of the results chain and using it in quarterly reporting in monitoring and evaluation.

Capacity building

- Beneficiaries confirm having trained and the topics and frequency were adequate. They recommend more trainings and they are willing to facilitate the trainers.
- Project coordinator and field officer continue to train.
- Staff were also trained.

The accounting system recommended TRIAS was very expensive. However there is need for Eco-Agric to have an accounting system.

The supplier made an error and had supplied very many copies of payment vouchers that could not be returned and as such Eco- Agric has payment vouchers that are not serially number for 2013.

It was recommended by aBi Trust that for overheads there is no need to attach support documents. This is due to the fact that the Executive Director and coordinator were absent. KPMG recommended that these two signatories should delegate the responsibility in their absence.

	<p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus group leaders are organized with member's lists • There is farmer participation in aBi Trust activities • Adoption rates are high as a result of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and collective marketing. • There is evidence of food security at household level as 100% are growing it on farm. • There is evidence of increased livelihood this was evidenced from the fact that farmers are paying school fees for their children in good schools such as Katikamu SDA. • There is value addition of sorting. • Farmers have diversified. <p>Monitoring and evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a fully fledged monitoring and evaluation team since October 2013, before monitoring and evaluation was done by the coordinator, field officers, board of directors and the executive Director. • The M&E formats are in place • The monitoring and evaluation personnel are in place with job descriptions with a monitoring and evaluation officer and data entrant. <p>Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a revolving scheme of beans • Partnerships with government institutions such as NAADS and other development partners such as Civil Society Fund, USAID, WWF, and Traidlinks. • Skills and knowledge gained, applicability and continue to boost farming as a business. • There are savings • Buying more shares. <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other donors provide grantee officers however, Eco Agric Uganda needs a grantee officer from aBi Trust such that any issues are communicated to aBi trust and as such there are lapses. • All the report formats for monitoring are the initiative of Eco Agric Uganda and they do not have an implementation person from aBi Trust. The aBi Trust focus on results. • aBi trust should fund a minimum of two people as other employees have an input to the project. • Climate change and as such beans are affected. • And the organization will implement and change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organization has registered in 2014 and has started complying.
3.	<p>Concluding remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The KPMG team thanked Eco-Agric team for being cooperative. • Project Beans Project Coordinator thanked the KPMG team and said they had learnt a lot from the visit by KPMG. He assured the team that 	Not applicable

	ECO-Agric would put the recommendations by KPMG into practice	
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List of those present

- 1 Nanteza Sandra - KPMG Financial and Organization Development
- 2 Valeria Mwesigwa – Agricultural and Monitoring and evaluation Specialist
- 3 Praxeda Ndagire – Beans Project Coordinator
- 4 Nakakande Josephine –Coordinator
- 5 Babyabakama Francis – Accountant
- 6 Abigaba Ronnet –Monitoring & Evaluation
- 7 Jonathan Kanyike - Marketing Manager

A.7 Implementing partner assessment schedule

Date	Task	Key tasks performed	Person Responsible
14/05/2014	<p>Introductory Meeting with ECO-Agric core team.</p> <p>Welcome remarks by the ECO-Agric Coordinator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Address by ECO-Agric Coordinator ▪ Introduction of ECO-AGRIC staff ▪ Circulated KPMG attendance register/sheet for signing by all ▪ KPMG asked ECO-Agric staff to be in attendance during the entrance and exit meeting ▪ KPMG staff informed meeting that the team would meet District Personnel including the CAO, District Production Coordinator, NAADS Coordinator as well as Farmer Group Leaders and Farmers selected. KPMG also informed the ECO-Agric coordinator that focus group discussions would be held with the farmer group executives ▪ A KPMG team member took minutes of proceedings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ECO-Agric Coordinator ▪ KPMG Staff ▪ Monitoring and Evaluation
	Brief on the assignment by KPMG Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brief background about aBi Trust End of Project Assessments ▪ Brief about the key technical personnel required & key documents to be availed to the team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Key people as above ○ Reminded on list of data and information needs ▪ Communicate work plan and timeframe for the three days ▪ Request for allocation of working space ▪ Breakout to allocated room (<i>or in District offices</i>) for review and interaction with officers ▪ Review and all inquiries at the municipality to be completed on day one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KPMG Resource ▪ ECO-Agric Staff

Date	Task	Key tasks performed	Person Responsible
15/05/2014	Individual assessment of allocated areas and scoring in the provided report format	Documentary review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of documentation available at the ECO-Agric; ▪ Meeting with ECO-Agric staff to clarify various aspects arising from documentary review. Consultations and interview: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consultation and interview of Board members and ECO-Agric staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KPMG team members ▪ ECO-Agric staff
15/05/2014	Continue and finalize individual assessment of allocated areas and scoring in the provided report format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Courtesy call on CAO and district officials; ▪ Interview Farmer Group Leader and beneficiaries selected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KPMG Staff, Agricultural and M&E Specialists, ▪ ECO-Agric Coordinator, ECO-Agric Field Assistants
15/05/2014	Carry out assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Field visits to sampled Farmer Group leaders and Farmers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ KPMG Staff, Agricultural and M&E specialists, ▪ ECO-Agric Coordinator, ECO-Agric Field Assistants
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finalised Report for de-brief 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All KPMG team members
16/05/2014	De-briefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finalized draft ECO-Agric Assessment report, debriefing and thereafter farewell to ECO-Agric technical team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ECO-Agric Coordinator, Business Manager, Accountant ▪ KPMG Financial and organizational assessment specialist; ▪ Agricultural and M&E Specialists