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COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM EVALUATION REPORT

FEED THE FUTURE MARKET SYSTEMS AND
PARTNERSHIPS ACTIVITY
SEPTEMBER 2023

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This document was made possible through support provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of Contract No. 7200AA20C00054, the Feed the Future Market Systems and Partnerships Activity (MSP) managed by DAI. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

This document was prepared by Betsy Ness-Edelstein, Sarah Carson, and Rebecca Savoie of Abt Associates for DAI, with support from Anna Jefferson, Lauren Davis, Evan Grant, Alexandria Griffin, Eugene Lee, Simonne Vincent, Abdoul Aziz Mbaye, Asimenye Simwinga, Coumba Aicha Niang, and Ousmane Lamarana Ba of Abt Associates and consultants John Bamuturaki, Raquel Perez Andrade, Frelia Ferrua, Omoding Andrew Gerald, Tarin Siriwardane, and Nafhtari Wanjiku. Valuable feedback was provided by Emily Varga, Amanda Satterwhite, Colleen Brady, and K. Bailey Morton of USAID as well as Mark Pigott and Anna Garloch of MSP.

Recommended citation

Ness-Edelstein, Betsy, Sarah Carson, and Rebecca Savoie. *Cooperative Development Program Evaluation Report*. Washington, D.C.: United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Prepared by Abt Associates for DAI under the Feed the Future Market Systems and Partnerships (MSP) Activity, 2023.

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ACRONYMS

CDO	Cooperative Development Organization
CDP	Cooperative Development Program
DDI	USAID Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IR	Intermediate Result
KII	Key Informant Interview
LFT	Local, Faith, and Transformative Partnerships
MSP	Feed the Future Market Systems and Partnerships
OCDC	Overseas Cooperative Development Council
POC	Point of Contact
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The purpose of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Cooperative Development Program (CDP) is to support activities that advance cooperatives as trusted local democratic institutions that provide value to their members in countries where USAID works. From 2018 to 2023, nine cooperative development organizations partnered with CDP, supporting cooperatives in 17 countries. CDP primarily works with producer cooperatives (e.g., dairy, crops) but also supports primary and secondary financial, health, consumer, worker, and housing cooperatives and apex organizations.

In late 2022, USAID's Local, Faith, and Transformative Partnerships Hub in the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI/LFT), which oversees CDP globally, commissioned a whole-of-project evaluation to assess the extent to which CDP is progressing toward its stated project purpose via three intermediate results. These are: (i) improved cooperative business performance, (ii) improved cooperative enabling environments, and (iii) enhanced development community support to cooperatives. The evaluation is also meant to identify assumptions or gaps in the project's design or management approach to help inform a new project design and to contribute to the evidence base on effective cooperative development approaches.

To achieve the evaluation goals, the evaluation team used qualitative and quantitative data including project documentation, monitoring data, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and a cooperative leader phone survey. The evaluation team combined, triangulated, and synthesized the data to assess CDP's contribution to its overall project purpose and intermediate results using a contribution analysis approach.

Key Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The evaluation found that CDP programming is largely supportive of sustainable, locally-led development, though certain components of the program could be strengthened to support the project purpose. Key achievements concerned cooperative performance, particularly governance; collaborative and mutually supportive engagement among USAID and implementing partners; and linking cooperatives to services and resources. The project achieved less in some areas, including building member equity and fostering behavior change in the development community, which appeared to be driven by implementing partners' focus on some areas of the results framework more than others. The following are key evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations:

Cooperative Business Performance (Intermediate Result 1)

Management and governance stand out as areas where there is strong evidence to support CDP's contribution to improvements, and that those improvements have led to improved cooperative business performance. This may be partially driven by the comparatively large amount of programming in this area. Stakeholders also noted that this focus on management and governance is what truly defines CDP's niche in the development landscape and makes the program stand out from other activities that work with cooperatives.

Financial and market performance. There is also evidence that CDP activities helped improve financial performance, particularly through better governance, as well as production and operational improvements that led to better market performance. However, many cooperatives still faced market challenges, which they largely attributed to economic, climate, or political factors.

Member equity received relatively little attention from implementing partners, and subsequently there were fewer achievements in strengthening member equity. This was highlighted as a particularly challenging area for less mature cooperatives, and there was broad agreement on the need for further research on when and how to help cooperatives increase their equity capitalization.

Recommendations:

- **Continue supporting improvements to cooperative management, governance, and business performance.** These are areas in which CDP demonstrates considerable strength and plays a unique role in the development landscape.
- **Invest in additional research on member equity** and identify challenges encountered during implementation. Clearly define why building member equity is important and provide successful examples or approaches for how to achieve it.

Cooperative Enabling Environment (Intermediate Result 2)

Enabling Environments. There is evidence that CDP policy advocacy contributed to changes in the enabling environment in some countries, though this work is difficult and slow. Sometimes misalignment of goals and work styles between CDP and host-country stakeholders presented challenges.

Strengthening cooperative ecosystems. Some CDP activities involved local actors in the cooperative ecosystem (such as apex organizations, local government, cooperative education institutions, and other cooperative service providers), often with an emphasis on helping cooperatives form better linkages with these organizations. However, some respondents identified the capacity of those other actors as an important gap and indicated that CDP could do more to strengthen them and their ability to provide services and resources to cooperatives.

Access to finance seems to have been valuable to cooperatives when implementing partners specifically emphasized this as a goal. In places where implementing partners did not focus on access to finance, cooperatives often cited it as a remaining gap, indicating its status as a nearly ubiquitous priority. Thus, even as there were many examples of success, the findings point to room for even more emphasis on financing across implementing partners and geographies.

Recommendations:

- **Conduct system-level mapping of enabling environments in each country** and determine how best to work in alignment with local systems, expectations, and norms, especially when working in legal and regulatory reform.
- **Place a stronger emphasis on capacity strengthening for actors in the cooperative ecosystem**, including government, apex organizations, community-based organizations, local training institutes, accounting firms, and other service providers. Continue to emphasize access to finance.

Development Community's Support to Cooperatives (Intermediate Result 3)

Collaboration among CDP implementing partners. There was substantial collaboration and dissemination of learning among the implementing partner cohort. Collaboration and coordination among implementing partners operating in the same country was common, though it was not always substantive. Challenges include some competitiveness among implementing organizations as well as diversity in sectors, but these did not substantially limit collaboration.

Other development community actors. Achievements in enhancing non-CDP development community support to cooperatives were mixed, and development community behavior change was not targeted as heavily as other components of the results framework. The evaluation team also noted the lack of a clear vision or target in the CDP results framework, annual program statement, and custom indicators for the desired changes in development community behavior relating to cooperatives, or the role that implementing partners should play in achieving that vision.

OCDC was generally viewed as a helpful body whose strengths lie in its convening and advocacy functions. The evaluation assessed the extent to which OCDC's community of practice and coordination among the different CDP activities contributed to the project purpose. (OCDC also serves stakeholders in addition to implementing partners within CDP as well as stakeholders and functions beyond its CDP-specific role that the evaluation did not assess). Most CDP implementing partners perceived OCDC's research activities as less clearly linked to their priorities in programming for cooperatives. Implementing partners largely agreed that they would prefer both OCDC's events and its research activities to be more closely tied to specific issues of implementing partner interest, though it was unclear how feasible it would be to fully address the interests of all implementing partners.

Recommendations:

- **Continue leveraging the unique role and capabilities of OCDC as a convener and advocate and collaborate to refine the research function.** Consider additional focus on intended use(s) and users and how to best serve their needs.
- **USAID should more clearly delineate objectives for development community behavior change** and define which actors comprise the "development community" for CDP's purposes, what success looks like, how it is achieved, and to what extent each implementing partner is expected to engage in it.

Project Purpose

Non-traditional cooperative types. Cooperatives operating in less traditional areas, such as health, housing, and worker cooperatives, generally struggled more with business performance, particularly financial performance.

Elevating local voices. The evaluation found a high level of local involvement, including from cooperatives, in project implementation. This involvement usually occurred *after* the initial design stage was complete. It is challenging for implementing partners to engage local partners, particularly primary cooperatives, very early without raising unrealistic expectations of support, given the competitive and uncertain nature of USAID funding cycles.

Social capital. While income and services are a major component of the value that members derive from cooperatives, members also value social capital, connectivity with others, and community welfare activities. This stands in some contrast with the CDP results framework and its emphasis on business, rather than social, performance—particularly as resilience (of which social capital is an important capacity) gains prominence within the cooperative development community.

Gender and youth inclusion. Activities around gender and youth are often valuable, leading to meaningful change for both individual members and the cooperative as a whole when they occur. But even though all implementing partners mention gender and youth inclusion in their theories of change and program descriptions, they have not consistently implemented activities targeting women and youth at the cooperative level.

Recommendations:

- **Continue customizing support as much as possible to the specific needs of each cooperative.**
- **Support institutionalization of improved knowledge and practices and ensure that training models support long-term sustainability of changes.**
- **Outside of startups and extreme market shocks, the program should try to avoid covering operational costs.** Activities should continue to build the financial resilience of cooperatives and support them in accessing affordable capital. Conduct research on models of financial sustainability for service cooperatives and decide whether USAID and implementing partner expectations for their financial self-sufficiency should be relaxed.
- **Conduct comprehensive gender analysis and action planning** and invest in learning activities to inform locally and sectorally relevant youth integration strategies.
- **Consider additional research on the linkages between member engagement, social capital, and resilience.**
- **Establish and clearly communicate expectations for local ownership in activity design.** Work with implementing partners to clearly communicate with local partners to manage their expectations.

Programmatic Considerations

Flexibility, adaptation, and customization. One of CDP's greatest assets is an emphasis on flexibility when it comes to project implementation. In particular, implementing partners appreciated USAID/Washington's openness to program adaptations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Flexibility carried over to the relationship between implementing partners and cooperatives, as implementing partners often demonstrated adaptability in tailoring their activities to cooperatives' needs. Models to achieve this customization varied, but the key factor for success seems to be responsiveness to cooperatives' demand and context.

Partnerships between implementing partners and USAID. The USAID/Washington Agreement Officer's Representative has established a strong partnership with implementing partners built on shared understanding, communication, and flexibility. On the other hand, CDP engagement with USAID Missions at the country level is not as fruitful as it could be. One important contributor to this is the

dynamic between USAID/Washington-funded activities and local Missions in the countries where they work, as greater collaboration and coordination are not well-supported by incentive structures.

Monitoring and reporting requirements. The evaluation found that implementing partners tended to struggle with collecting and reporting on program monitoring indicators. In addition, they largely regarded program monitoring as a reporting function and not as a tool for management or program improvement. Some had difficulty compiling complete data or applying the same set of indicators and processes across different countries. This was not due to a lack of USAID support, but still represents a challenge that affects both USAID and implementing partners.

Recommendations:

- **Maintain strong relationships with implementing partners** by prioritizing responsiveness, encouraging flexibility during implementation, and providing technical expertise and ongoing guidance. Continue to foster a culture of learning and proactively seek feedback for continuous improvement.
- **Invest in building and maintaining relationships between implementing partners and USAID Mission POCs.** Establish clear expectations for Mission-level engagement and the division of labor between USAID/Washington and the Mission and provide clear guidance to each party.
- **Take steps to support improved collection, use, and reporting of monitoring data.** One component of this is to encourage implementing partners to allocate appropriate resources within their approved budgets for monitoring, evaluation and learning functions and internal capacity building. USAID should also consider refining some indicators to better reflect the definition of success and/or updating the corresponding indicator reference sheets with additional guidance.

I Introduction and Background

This report presents findings from the whole-of-project performance evaluation of USAID’s Cooperative Development Program (CDP), located within the Local, Faith and Transformative Partnerships Hub in the Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI/LFT). The evaluation was carried out under the [Feed the Future Market Systems and Partnerships \(MSP\) Activity](#)¹ managed by DAI, through a subcontract to Abt Associates (Abt).

This report is structured as follows. This section presents the evaluation purpose, an overview of the CDP program and its theory of change, and a brief literature review. Section 2 summarizes the evaluation design (additional details on methods are located in Annex B). Section 3 presents findings pertaining to each evaluation question. Section 4 contains the evaluation team’s conclusions and recommendations based on findings.

I.1 Evaluation Purpose

USAID commissioned MSP to perform a whole-of-project performance evaluation of the CDP. The evaluation’s objectives were as follows:

- Illuminate ways in which the entire project is making progress toward the stated Project Purpose or not.
- Identify the assumptions or gaps in the project’s design or management approach to help inform a new project design.
- Contribute to the evidence base on effective cooperative development approaches.

To meet these objectives, the evaluation addressed five evaluation questions (listed in full in Annex A) that concern the overall project purpose and intermediate results of the CDP. Addressing these evaluation questions enabled the evaluation team to develop an understanding of what has and has not been effective in the project to date and translate that into specific recommendations for future rounds of the CDP.

The evaluation was conducted with its intended users in mind—that is, all evaluation elements were designed to address evaluation questions in a way that meets users’ needs for information that can help them strengthen cooperative development programming in the future. The primary users of evaluation findings are USAID staff (both Washington-based and Mission-based), CDP implementing partners, partner cooperatives and their members, and the board and membership of the U.S. Overseas Cooperative Development Council (OCDL). Secondary users may include other members of the development community and members of the U.S. Congress who share an interest in the project.

I.2 Overview of the Program

The CDP aims to foster sustainable cooperative systems that deliver value to cooperative members and their communities. It does this by partnering with U.S.-based cooperatives and cooperative development organizations (CDOs), herein referred to as “implementing partners,” for five-year activities that work to strengthen cooperative businesses and credit unions across multiple sectors in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Since 2001 the CDP has worked to strengthen and build cooperative businesses around the globe. The motivation for supporting cooperatives as a development strategy is that this member-owned,

¹ MSP is advancing learning and good practice in market systems development and private sector engagement within USAID, USAID partners, and market actors. For more information visit www.agrilinks.org/msp.

democratically governed business model allows members to benefit from economies of scale, access services, invest in their community, and benefit from stronger social capital. The CDP has worked in sectors such as agriculture, housing, finance, health, energy and information technology, supporting primary cooperatives and apex organizations such as federations and unions. The current five-year iteration of CDP began on August 15, 2018, and ended on August 14, 2023. It is funded through a congressional earmark totaling \$16.5 million, and it also generated just over \$30 million in additional buy-in funding from other USAID Missions and operating units. The current CDP operates in 17 countries and supports 318 cooperatives and credit unions through nine implementing partners and across multiple sectors, as shown in Exhibit I below.

Exhibit I. CDP Implementing Partners and Countries

Implementing partner	Countries
Equal Exchange	Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru
Frontier Co-op	Sri Lanka, Guatemala*, India*
Global Communities	Kenya
Genex	Peru, South Africa
HealthPartners	Uganda
NCBA CLUSA	Ecuador, Guatemala, Kenya, Madagascar, Peru, Tanzania
U.S. Overseas Cooperative Development Council	Global
Land O'Lakes Venture37	Malawi, Rwanda, Lebanon*
World Council of Credit Unions	Burkina Faso, Guatemala, Kenya, Senegal

* Note: countries marked with an asterisk were added in the last year and are not included as part of this evaluation.

1.3 Theory of Change

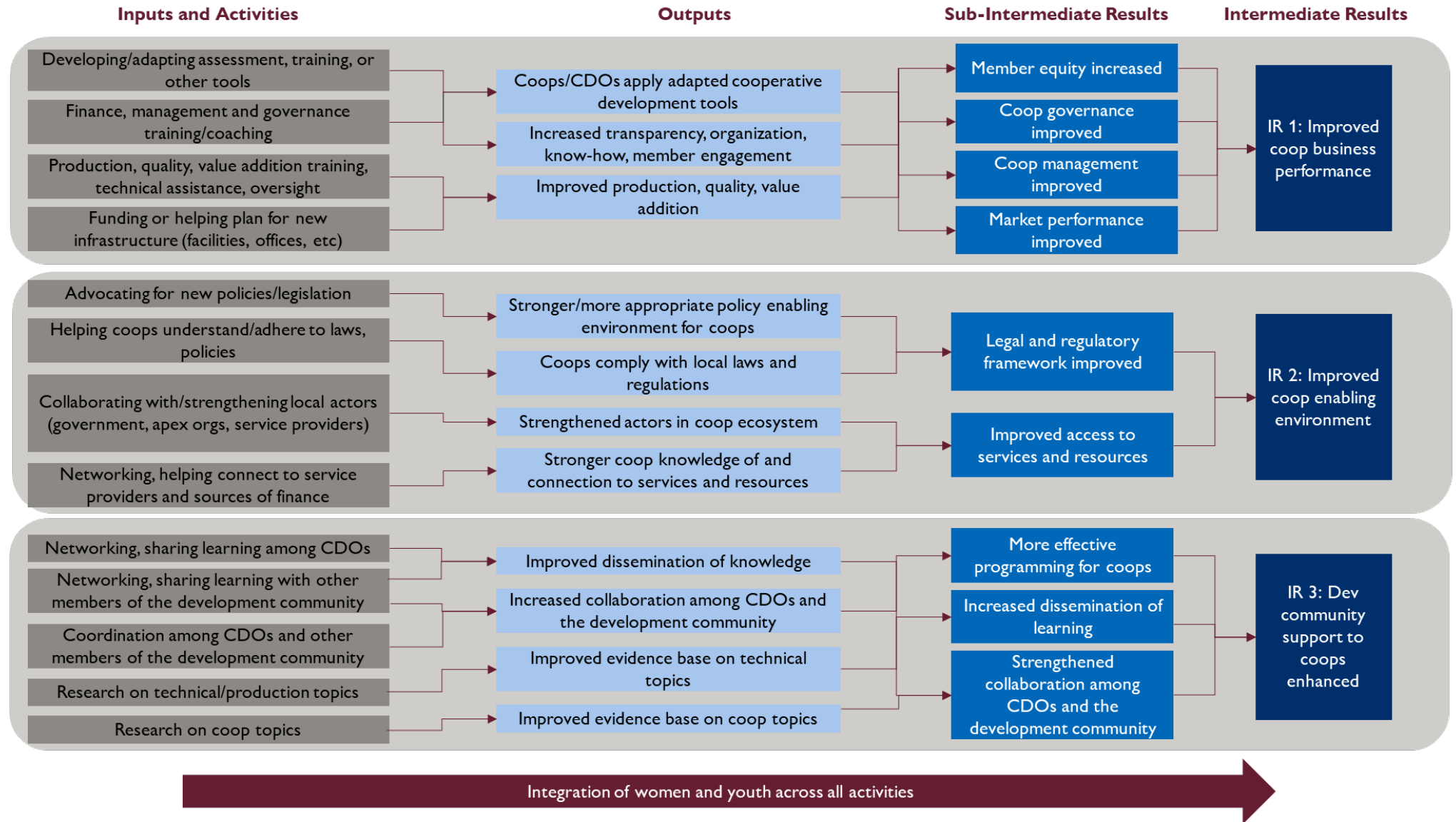
The CDP's goal is to contribute to the social and economic development of communities by strengthening cooperatives and supporting them as trusted local democratic institutions that provide value to their members. Its theory of change states:

If cooperative performance is improved, if the enabling environment is improved to support cooperatives with access to key resources and appropriate legal frameworks and services, and if donor funded cooperative programs are improved through collaboration and learning, then cooperative systems, members, and communities will work to address the root causes of poverty and instability through increased social and economic value.

The project is designed to reach its ultimate goal through three intermediate results (IRs): 1) improved cooperative business performance, 2) improved cooperative enabling environment, and 3) enhanced support to cooperatives by the development community, respectively—each with sub-intermediate results (sub-IRs) that contribute to their respective IRs (see the full results framework in Annex C).

Each CDP activity has a distinct design, and not all activities attempt to address all IRs. Rather, each implementing partner constructs its own theory of change and strategy for addressing one or more IRs. Thus, each implementing partner's activity design feeds into this overarching results framework, but none are identical, and each may focus on a different set of interventions.

Exhibit 2. CDP Consolidated Theory of Change



At the outset of the evaluation, the evaluation team constructed a draft theory of change describing each partner's planned activities and intended outputs and outcomes based on a document review of CDP program documents provided by USAID and the implementing partners, including program descriptions; monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans; monitoring data; annual reports; and mid-term evaluations. Each theory of change shows the intended pathways connecting each implementing partner's activities to short-term and long-term outcomes and to each of the IRs. The evaluation team discussed the draft theory of change with each implementing partner and refined it based on their feedback to ensure it represented an accurate understanding of their program. The evaluation team then used these partner-specific theories of change to draft a high-level, consolidated whole-of-project theory of change, depicted in Exhibit 2.

2 Evaluation Design

2.1 Evaluation Questions

The five questions that the evaluation addresses are closely linked to the project results framework. Question 1 pertains to the CDP project's overarching purpose and whether and how it is being achieved via strong linkages between CDP activities and their partner cooperatives. Questions 2 through 4 relate specifically to each IR and the project's major challenges and achievements in pursuit of those IRs. Question 5 focuses on USAID's support to the project.

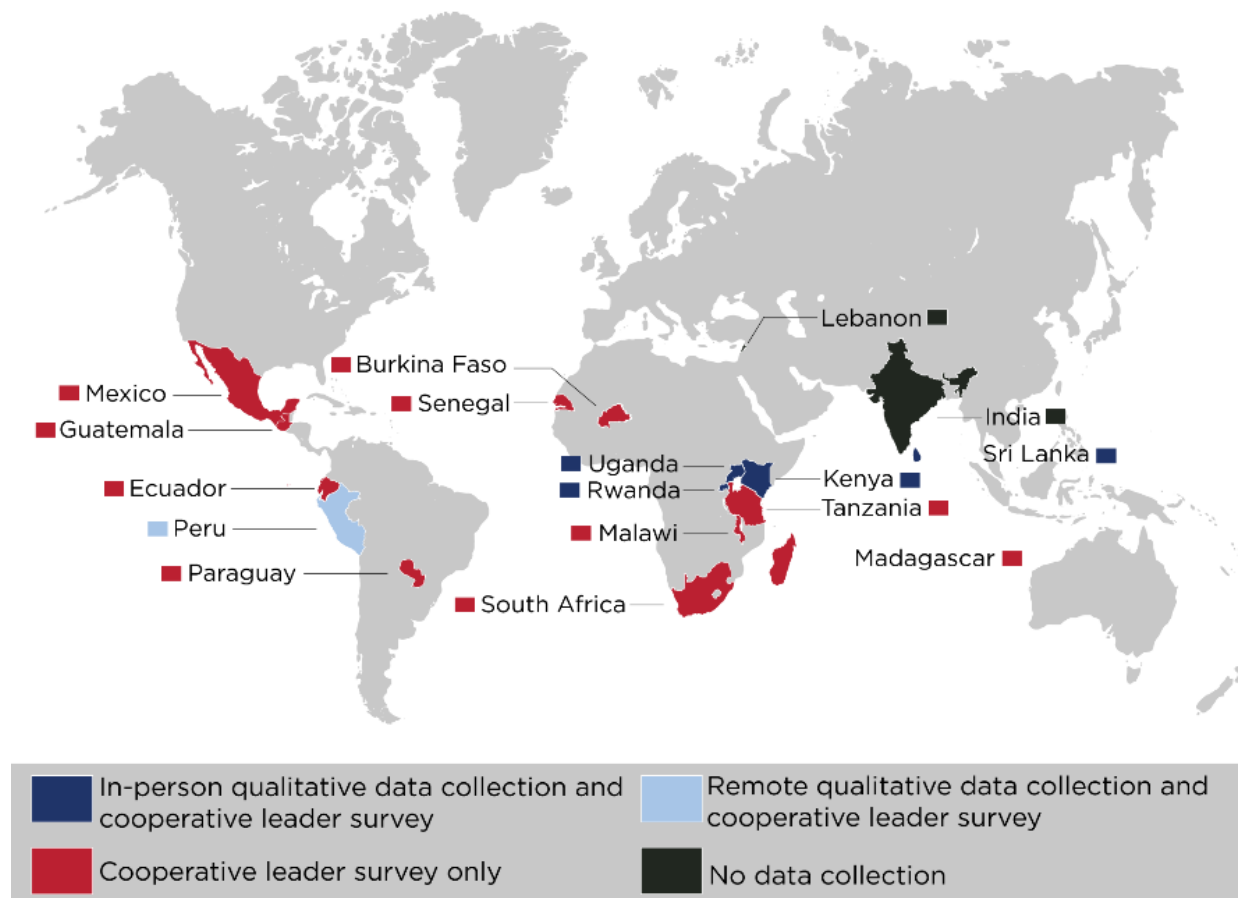
The main evaluation questions are as follows (each question has multiple sub-questions, which are listed in Annex A):

1. To what extent has the project contributed to facilitating more-sustainable cooperative systems that deliver value to their members?
2. Regarding IR 1, to what extent has the project contributed to any change in cooperative performance over time?
3. Regarding IR 2, to what extent has the project contributed to improvements in country-level cooperative enabling environments?
4. Regarding IR 3, to what extent has the project contributed to enhancing the development community's support to cooperatives?
5. To what extent has support provided by USAID/Washington and Missions to implementing partners contributed to the project purpose?

2.2 Methodology

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach guided by contribution analysis theory. The evaluation team used primary data and secondary quantitative and qualitative data in order to gather a full picture of CDP program implementation, achievements, and challenges. This included program documents and program monitoring data representing all CDP implementing partners across all countries covered by the evaluation; in-person qualitative data collection (KIs with cooperative leaders and stakeholders and FGDs with cooperative members) in four countries (Kenya, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Uganda); remote qualitative data collection in Peru; and a phone survey of cooperative leaders the evaluation team did not interview in person. Exhibit 3 shows the mix of primary data that was collected across all countries. The team also conducted a review of secondary literature on cooperative development, summarized in Annex D.

Exhibit 3. Collection of Primary Data Across CDP Countries



Note: The evaluation did not cover CDP activities in India or Lebanon because the work in those countries began much later in the program and thus was not included in the evaluation.

The overall evaluation approach was contribution analysis. Contribution analysis is a structured way of synthesizing information to reach evaluative conclusions and to assess the contribution of a project to observed changes in a given context (Mayne 2008, Hopkins 2021). This approach allowed the evaluation team to investigate how evidence about the CDP project as a whole bears out the linkages and assumptions in its theory of change.

As Exhibit 4 illustrates, contribution analysis requires working closely from a defined theory of change and then gathering data to investigate outputs and outcomes. Both the quantitative and qualitative data gathering instruments included questions both on what changes respondents perceived in response to CDP support, and on how external factors beyond CDP or implementing partners' control impacted the

achievement of intended results. The evaluation team then used the data (described in Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, below) to substantiate the intended linkages and assumptions underlying the theory of change.

The results of the contribution analysis process are presented in Sections 3 and 4 (Findings and Conclusions), which discuss whether the expected changes occurred and whether it is reasonable, based on the evidence, to conclude that CDP support helped lead to those changes.

2.2.1 Quantitative Methods

The evaluation incorporated two main types of quantitative data: monitoring data submitted to USAID by all nine implementing partners, and data from a survey of cooperative leaders in 14 countries conducted by the evaluation team. The data section below describes each of these in turn, followed by a discussion of data quality assurance and analysis.

Data

Implementing partners submitted program monitoring data to USAID, which provided it to the evaluation team. The evaluation team combined data from all nine implementing partners into a single dataset covering reporting years 2019 through 2022. Some indicators were reported on by most or all implementing partners, while some were used by only one or two. The evaluation team selected four key indicators to aggregate and discuss here, based on which were most relevant to the evaluation questions and had been reported on by a majority of implementing partners. These indicators are:

- **CDP Purpose #1:** Dollar value of income and/or services delivered to members by cooperatives and credit unions
- **IR 1:** Percentage of cooperatives and credit unions with improved governance

Exhibit 4. Key Contribution Analysis Steps

1 SET OUT

the attribution problems or questions to be addressed by the evaluation.

2 REFINE

the program theory of change, which demonstrates the logical links between achievements at one level and higher levels.

3 REVIEW

existing evidence to describe whether the logical links have held true, determine the level of confidence required to answer the evaluation questions, and explore the type of contribution expected – what do we know about the nature and extent of the contribution expected?

4 GATHER

primary data, focusing on the contributions expected.

5 ASSESS

alternative explanations.

6 ASSEMBLE

the contribution story, setting out the program context, planned and actual accomplishments, and the approach for assuring the quality of information, and the main alternative explanations and why they had no or limited influence. Seek additional evidence if required to strengthen the contribution story. Reassess strengths and weaknesses.

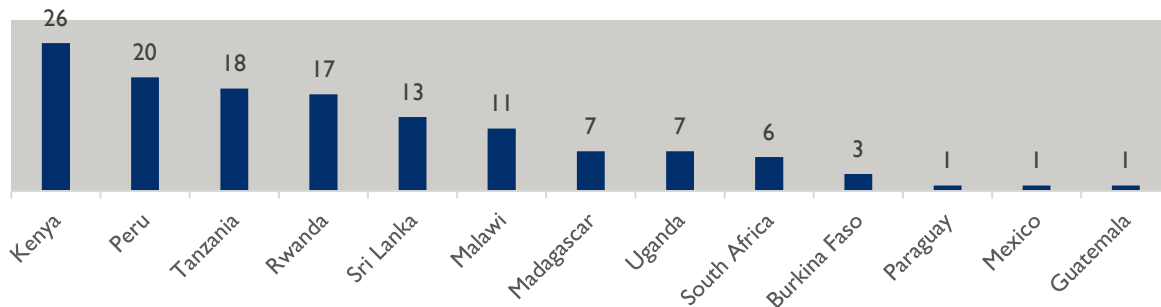
Adapted from Budhwani and McDavid 2017.

- **IR 2:** Number of cooperative members benefiting from services and resources delivered through cooperatives and credit unions
- **CDP Purpose #3:** Dollar value of member equity in a cooperative or credit union
- **CBLD 10:** Dollar value of non-donor resources mobilized for locally led development priorities

The evaluation team also collected primary quantitative data via a cooperative leader phone survey. The phone survey was administered to cooperative leaders, such as board members, to gather information on their perceptions of the CDP program and its impact on their cooperative. The survey sample included one leader from all cooperatives working with the CDP program, excluding leaders of cooperatives who were interviewed in person as part of qualitative data collection, to avoid respondent fatigue.

The survey was translated into eight languages (Chichewa, English, French, Kinyarwanda, Runyankole, Sinhala, Spanish, and Swahili) and conducted by enumerators fluent in the respondent’s preferred language. The evaluation team followed strict quality guidelines for data collection and data quality, described in Annex A. There were 134 successful cooperative leader interviews out of a total attempted sample of 167—a response rate of 80.2 percent.² As shown in Exhibit 5, there was at least one completed interview from all 14 countries where the survey was conducted. The respondents’ average tenure as a cooperative member was 12.2 years, with a range of four to 35 years.

Exhibit 5. Number of Surveyed Cooperative Leaders, by Country



As shown in Exhibit 6, the majority of cooperatives associated with the surveyed leader (100) were producer cooperatives, with dairy, coffee, maize, and horticulture prominently represented. Financial cooperatives (credit unions) were second, with 18 interviews, followed by health insurance (seven), worker cooperatives (five), consumer cooperatives (two), and housing cooperatives (two).

² The survey sample is smaller than the total number of CDP-supported cooperatives for a couple of reasons. First, some countries and cooperatives were newly added around the time of the evaluation, so they were not included. Second, the cooperative leaders who participated in qualitative interviews were excluded from the survey to avoid respondent fatigue.

Exhibit 6. Cooperative Leader Survey, by Sector

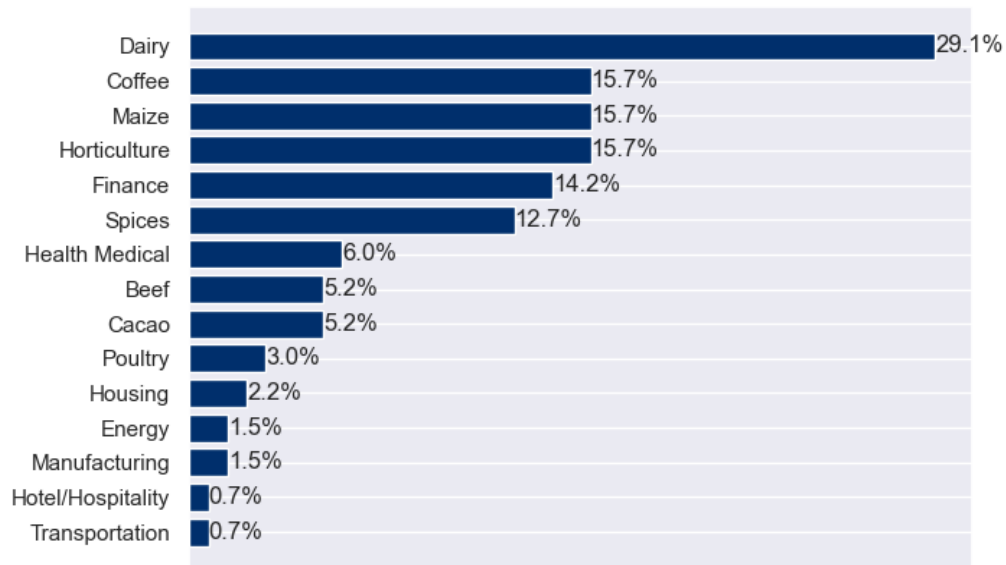


Exhibit 7 shows the topics on which cooperative leaders said they received support from a CDP implementing partner. Cooperative management was the most common topic on which cooperative leaders reported receiving CDP support, with 86.6 of leaders saying their cooperative received training or other types of support focusing on management. Most (82.1 percent) also said they received support on financial management. Gender inclusion (reported by 76.1 percent of leaders) and youth inclusion (67.9 percent) were also widely reported, though not as widely as expected given that all implementing partners included gender and youth inclusion as a component of their theory of change.

Exhibit 7. Topics on Which Cooperative Leaders Reported Receiving CDP Support

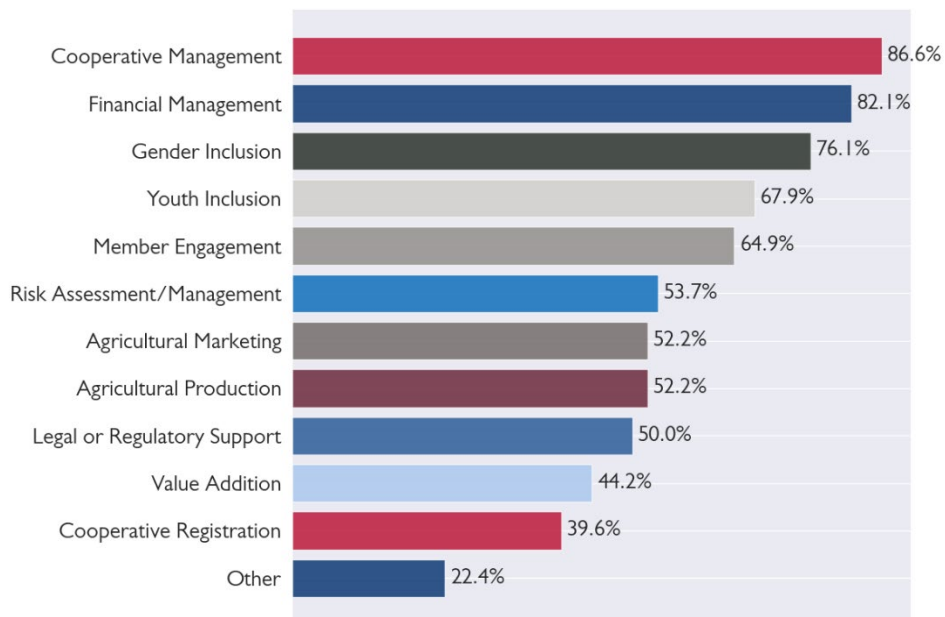
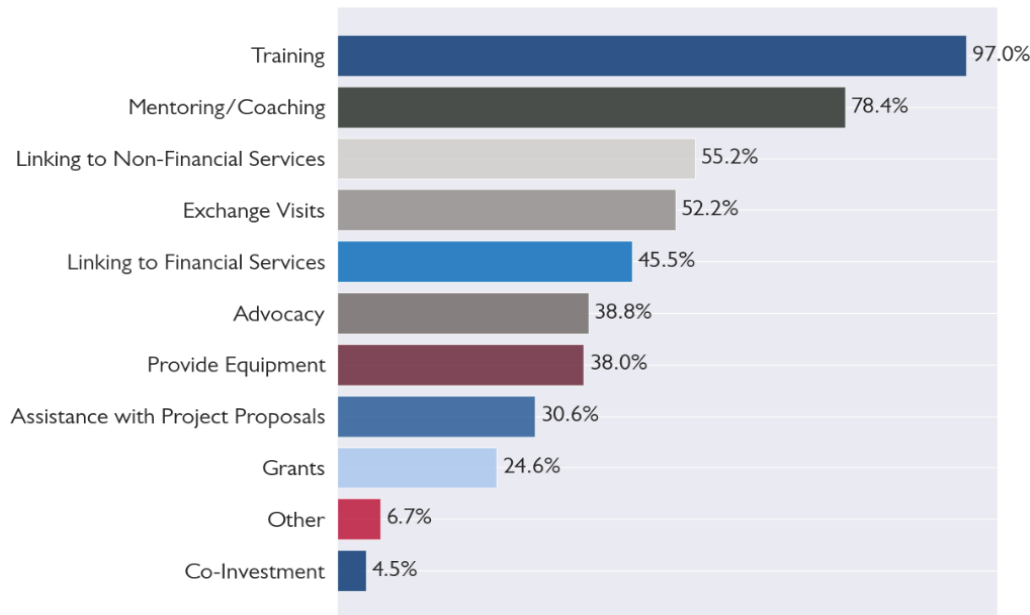


Exhibit 8 shows the mode by which the cooperative leaders said they received support. By far the most common way that implementing partners provided support was through training, reported by 97 percent of cooperative leaders. Mentoring or coaching, which the evaluation team differentiates from training as being more experiential, tailored, or hands-on, was reported by 78.4 percent of leaders. Other types of support included helping cooperatives form linkages with other (financial or non-financial) service providers, exchange visits, policy advocacy, provision of equipment, assistance with project proposals, direct grants, and co-investment.

Exhibit 8. Modes of CDP Support Reported by Cooperative Leaders



Analysis

The evaluation team used Stata to perform data re-coding and cleaning, as needed, as well as analysis for all quantitative data. Analysis was descriptive in nature—calculation of totals, averages, or other key descriptive statistics over time and across the CDP project.

2.2.2 Qualitative Methods

The evaluation used qualitative data gathered from KIIs, FGDs, and program documentation. This section discusses the sampling, analysis, and quality assurance measures the evaluation team used for qualitative components of the evaluation.

Data

The evaluation team drew upon primary and secondary qualitative data for the evaluation. Prior to collecting primary data, the team collected and reviewed secondary qualitative data, primarily consisting of program documents, to gather initial evidence relating to the evaluation questions and program theories of change. These secondary data consisted of program documents provided by USAID and other documentation gathered from implementing partners, cooperatives, and other stakeholders. Then, the team collected primary qualitative data in Kenya, Peru, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, and Uganda through semi-

structured KIIs and FGDs. Those five countries were prioritized for qualitative fieldwork because they represented a cross-section of all CDP implementing partners and a diverse range of settings. The KIIs and FGDs are described in turn below, and the data collection instruments are included in Annex C.

The evaluation team conducted KIIs with cooperative members, cooperative leaders, implementing partner staff, government representatives, USAID staff, and representatives of cooperative unions and federations, i.e., apex bodies. The team used a two-stage sampling process to select cooperative leaders and members to interview. First, the team purposefully selected cooperatives from lists provided by each implementing partner to ensure representation across countries, partners, sectors, and length of involvement with the CDP program. The evaluation team interviewed at least one leader, typically the chair of the board of directors, from each selected cooperative. To select members for interviews (in Peru) or FGDs (in Kenya, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Uganda), the evaluation team obtained lists of members from the implementing partner working with the cooperative and randomly selected participants and alternates. All other stakeholders were purposefully selected from lists provided by USAID and the implementing partners based on their knowledge of and involvement with the CDP program or of cooperative development in a particular country.

The Evaluation Team Leader, the Evaluation Research Coordinator, and/or local researchers conducted the KIIs and FGDs in English or local languages as applicable. The interviews and discussions were recorded with participant consent and then documented through verbatim notes in English.

For primary data collection, the evaluation team conducted 66 KIIs and 20 FGDs across the five countries. The majority of qualitative data collection occurred in person, except for in Peru, where political instability led to travel restrictions and data collection had to be conducted by phone. It was infeasible to conduct FGDs by phone, so instead evaluation team members conducted key informant phone interviews with 20 cooperative leaders and members.

Of all the interviews and FGDs, 20 were with female respondents or groups, 45 were with male respondents or groups, and 21 were with mixed-gender groups. Each respondent was associated with one or more implementing partners either by working for the implementing partner or working with the implementing partner.

Analysis

Following data collection, the evaluation team imported all initial consultation, FGD, and KII notes into NVivo 12. Analysis of qualitative data began with coding text that related to a theme or concept of interest or to a specific evaluation question, sub-question, or objective. The team used a combination of *a priori* codes informed by the EQs, and created new inductive codes based on what was in the data. To ensure consistency across coders, the team trained analysts on coding guidelines, held regular meetings for coding questions, and had the final coding reviewed by the team's Cooperative Development Specialist for quality assurance.

After coding was completed, the evaluation team analyzed the coded data in NVivo. First, the team mapped the codes to the relevant EQ(s). Then the team reviewed the coded data, documented observations, ran follow-up queries to identify patterns and themes, and documented the linkages between observations, themes, and the data that support them. Based on this, the team created a list of findings for each EQ. The evaluation team held multiple "sense-making" debrief sessions to present and discuss the findings for each EQ. In these sessions, the qualitative findings were triangulated with the quantitative findings to inform overall conclusions and recommendations.

2.2.3 Limitations

Readers should keep several limitations in mind.

The cooperative leader phone survey's primary limitations are that its coverage was limited to cooperative leaders, so it does not reflect the views of members, and that its response rate, while high for a phone survey, was not 100 percent. Some cooperative leaders could not be reached because they did not have a functioning phone number or because the evaluation team did not have correct contact information.

In some countries, there were a handful of instances where the evaluation team was not able to follow the intended sampling or data collection protocol. In some countries the evaluation team depended on cooperative leaders to contact cooperative members, since local custom dictates it would have been inappropriate for the evaluation team to make contact unannounced. However, in a handful of cases the evaluation team found that leaders had replaced some intended participants with others who were easier to contact or available during the meeting time, and it is possible that could have led to selection bias. In Sri Lanka, CDP staff played a more active role than anticipated in mobilizing participants to participate in the evaluation. This resulted in strong participation and fidelity to the randomly selected interview lists, but the presence of project staff during fieldwork days might have unintentionally biased some responses, although the evaluation team did ensure that staff were not physically participating or even within earshot of any in-person interviews. Additionally, during the phone survey in Sri Lanka, some cooperative leaders were only comfortable participating if the evaluation team contacted them through the phones belonging to CDP extension officers. Again, the evaluation team requested that respondents be given full privacy and confidentiality during these phone-based interviews, even when using the extension officers' phones, but this was impossible to fully ensure given the remote nature of this portion of the data collection. In Peru, political instability precluded the U.S.-based evaluation team members from traveling to the country and prevented Lima-based team members from conducting fieldwork with cooperatives in person. Because of this, the evaluation team conducted KIs with two members per sampled cooperative instead of conducting FGDs with members, leading to a smaller sample size. There was also one cooperative where no members could be reached and two where no female members could be reached for an interview.

The evaluation's assessment of sustainability has limitations because the evaluation was conducted prior to the end of the project. Thus, it is not possible to assess actual sustainability, which can only be gauged in retrospect. As a result, the evaluation only attempts to assess *likely* sustainability, or the extent to which observed changes—implementing partner achievements that enhance cooperatives' performance and/or the local cooperative ecosystem and enabling environment—are institutionalized and resourced. This relates to the sustainability of the cooperatives themselves and helps to determine CDP's contribution to more-sustainable cooperative systems.

Finally, readers should not interpret evaluation findings as proof of causal attribution of results to CDP activities. As with any performance evaluation that seeks evidence of a project's contribution to observed results, even one that seeks to use methods that are as rigorous as possible, this evaluation, by definition, cannot prove *causal attribution* of results to the project. Even after performing contribution analysis and attempting to eliminate external explanations for observed changes, the evaluation team does not claim that the results tell us the *causal impact* of the project. Instead, the findings are evidence of the project's *likely contribution* to changes. This is particularly important with regard to evaluation question 1, since it concerns the project's contribution to its ultimate intended results.

3 Findings



3.1 Evaluation Question 1: To what extent has the project contributed to facilitating more-sustainable cooperative systems that deliver value to their members?³

Key Findings

- Many CDP cooperatives have increased the value and/or types of services they provide to members. In some cases, this is directly related to CDP activities, while in other cases the connection is less directly apparent from the data.
- There is room for improvement in the substantive involvement of local partners, cooperative leaders, and members in CDP activity *design*. Cooperative leaders and members do feel ownership over activity *implementation*, and often work together with implementing partners to select activities that are tailored to their needs.
- The evaluation found mixed evidence on likely sustainability of observed changes. On the positive side, cooperatives have more access to finance, and more trust and engagement from members. Some are also more integrated into their local cooperative ecosystems and planning for the long term. On the other hand, there are elements of CDP programming that could inhibit sustainability, including lack information transfer from leaders to members, instances of implementing partners' providing direct financial support for operations, and challenges to expanding the involvement of women and youth. There are also some instances of newly formed cooperatives that are still struggling with both business performance and governance, and cooperatives that are not well-integrated into broader systems.

To address this evaluation question, this section will first discuss what it means for cooperatives to “deliver value” to their members, and the role of CDP in supporting increases in value. Following this is an examination of the relationship between local partners—including both stakeholders and cooperatives—and the program, and the extent to which CDP has facilitated local ownership over activity design and implementation. The last component is sustainability—the extent to which observed changes are likely to be sustainable in the future without direct involvement of implementing partners.

Factors at the Cooperative Level

Achievements. At its core, the function of a cooperative is to deliver value to its members, whether that is in the form of increased income, beneficial services, or social support. According to project monitoring data (see Exhibit 9), the total value of income and services delivered to members by partner cooperatives has increased from about USD 94 million in the project's first year to USD 262 million in year four. The large increase between 2021 and 2022 was driven particularly by increases in income. At least some of the increase was likely driven by increases in project scale over time, since more and more cooperatives joined the program each year.

³ Sub-questions:

- a) What factors at the whole-of-project level are enabling and/or preventing the achievement of more-sustainable cooperative systems that deliver value to their members across CDP activities?
- b) How has the CDP contributed to facilitating more-sustainable cooperative systems at the activity level, particularly through local ownership of activity design and implementation by partner cooperatives?

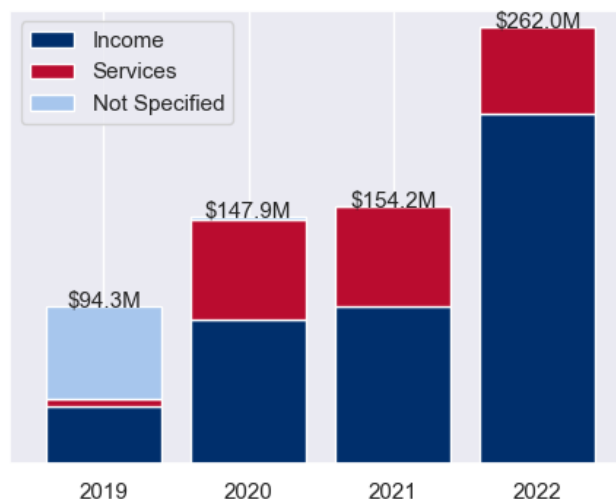
The data are not disaggregated by cooperative or member, so it is not possible to determine the extent to which cooperatives or individuals on average experienced increases in the dollar value of income or services they received.

Qualitative data does suggest how these increases manifested from the perspective of cooperative members and leaders. There are many examples of members noting increases in the services they receive from their cooperatives. For example, many producer cooperative members noted that they have started to receive more-frequent and more-comprehensive extension training since their cooperative joined CDP. In many cases, this training was provided directly by staff from implementing partners, making it easy to directly link CDP to the improved services. Similarly, members of health cooperatives provided numerous examples of how their membership in the cooperative has directly supported them in accessing more and better health services from private health facilities.

In some cases, the linkage between the program and the observed changes was less apparent, especially from the perspective of members, who often lacked visibility into why these changes took place. For example, one dairy cooperative hired their own veterinarian in 2022 to supplement services provided by their cooperative union. Other cooperatives had recently established their own cooperative-run stores supplying items such as agricultural inputs or staple foods. Some members have also noticed that their cooperative has recently purchased assets to support business functions, such as land, offices, or equipment. In these cases, members were not able to pinpoint whether the changes were connected to CDP, although it is plausible that the project might have contributed to these results, either directly or indirectly as a result of improvements in member engagement, management practices, and financial performance.

While income and services are a major component of the value that members see in belonging to cooperatives, they do not tell the full story. Members also value the social capital, connectivity with others in the cooperative and the community, and the pride they take in community welfare activities that their cooperative engages in, such as supporting religious ceremonies or providing health insurance to members (in non-health cooperatives). For example, the leader of a workers' cooperative in Kenya noted the importance of the social element of their cooperative and described how members decided to pool their resources together to purchase Work Injury Benefits Act insurance to provide a social safety net in case any members become injured in the course of their work. This component of the cooperative value proposition did not seem to be an explicit focus of any CDP activities, however, and most members interviewed in the evaluation have not noticed any major changes in this area over the past several years. There is an exception to this in Sri Lanka, where individual farmer societies' allocated pool for community welfare activities is dependent on their overall earnings. Because of CDP, the farmers' spice yields increased, raising their earnings, and therefore also increasing the funds available to

Exhibit 9. Dollar Value of Income and/or Services Delivered to Members by Cooperatives and Credit Unions



Source: CDP monitoring data.

each society for community welfare activities as an unintended outcome of the program. Each of these examples suggests ways that cooperatives may help support social capital as a contributor to individual, household, and community resilience.

Challenges. Challenges that limited cooperatives' ability to provide value to their members were mainly external and outside of CDP's control. Unsurprisingly, COVID-19 was the source of various challenges—for example, cooperative members in Peru found virtual training necessitated by the pandemic to be less effective than in-person training, citing connectivity as an issue. The pandemic also played a role in macroeconomic crises and instability in many countries, which negatively affected many cooperatives' businesses, which in turn impacted their ability to provide value to members.

Local Ownership

Achievements. The evaluation found strong evidence of local ownership during implementation, though some results were slightly contradictory. According to the quantitative survey, 76.9 percent of the leaders interviewed said they personally had some role in activity selection or design, and 80.6 percent of leaders reported that members in general played a role. Qualitative findings were more nuanced—after probing, it became apparent that cooperatives typically were not involved in the actual design of activities, but cooperative leaders often described having had an initial conversation with the implementing partner at the start of implementation to discuss areas of support that would be the best fit for their needs. Cooperatives appreciated these conversations and felt that they gave them a level of joint ownership over the program. They also valued when implementing partners were flexible and could add services and support over the life of the partnership based on evolving needs. Qualitative interviews also found that there has been improvement in engaging local partners—meaning higher-level actors in the cooperative ecosystem, such as educational institutions and apex organizations—in activity design in this round of CDP compared to in previous cohorts.

Even though cooperative leaders and members were rarely involved in the activity design itself, the support offered by implementing partners often aligned with cooperative priorities. The possible exceptions were activities related to inclusion of women, which were more likely to be driven by implementing partner interests rather than by cooperatives. In some cases of highly effective programming, cooperative leaders and members indicated signs of meaningful attitude and behavior change as a result of these gender equity components, describing how they strengthen the cooperative. For example, in one interview, respondents noted “In the beginning, [we] didn't think a woman could lead. But now [we] know that all members are equal. Now ladies or women can come and organize a meeting, [and] they feel more comfortable than before. [We] used to just look at women as not able to do such [things], but that has already gone. [We] got these ideas because of the training we got [from the implementing partner].”

Challenges. While there was some inclusion of local partner organizations in activity design, some local partners interviewed as key informants felt that the collaboration could have been more substantive and come earlier on, during the proposal stage, rather than local partners being engaged post award. One partner in Kenya offered a succinct summation of the rationale for increased local partner involvement in design (see Box 1).

Box 1. Involvement of Local Partner Organizations in Activity Design

A Kenyan stakeholder argued for increased local involvement: “I would like to see the CDP working more closely with the local partners. What do I mean by working much more closely? We can actually get involved in the design. ... I feel some of the most successful programs I've seen over my career are those programs that are driven bottom-up with great [local] involvement. Otherwise, it becomes a program that comes in with a particular specific cooperative development partner and once they move out, we sit back and say ‘OK, who’s coming next? ... USAID calls need to be structured in a way that invites input from local partners. USAID may be structuring its calls in a way that it is difficult to bring in local partners. ... So that brings up two things: first, help support capacity building in the institutions that are in the global South and second, then you will see the problems that are identified from the ground up. And it will result in more sustainability and continuity in the programs.”

As noted above, during qualitative interviews of cooperative members and leaders, it became clear that most local involvement of cooperatives also came during project implementation, rather than at the activity design stage. Despite a majority of cooperative leaders reporting involvement in activity selection and design during the survey, qualitative evidence contradicted this, revealing that very few leaders or members had actually played a role in initial design. Often, they had limited or no awareness of the USAID activity design or proposal process. Considering the qualitative evidence, it is likely that most survey respondents answered “yes” when asked whether they had participated in the selection and design of the activities on which they received support because they were able to have a voice in selecting specific activities once implementation was under way, not necessarily because they had actively played a role at the initial design stage. The program also underwent a co-redesign process during the second year of the award, which may have led to more involvement of local organizations in design discussions that happened later on.

From the perspective of implementing partners, one major barrier toward greater local ownership at the design stage by cooperatives is around expectation setting. During initial consultations, one implementing partner explained that “it was easier to directly design activities with the apex organization than directly with the cooperatives because they understand the nature of funding cycles ... [with them,] it was easy for us to say to them that we were in the proposal stage, so there was no guarantee of funding. It was easier to have that discussion and not feel like we were on the hook for something or setting up expectations.”

There were also a handful of cases where cooperatives did not feel that they had enough voice in activity selection. One cooperative in Peru recommends “correcting the implementing partner's mistake of treating all small and large organizations as equals, without a personalized approach to designing activities that are truly useful and in line with their development goals.” There were also a few examples where cooperatives requested a type of support (such as funding or in-kind provision of particular equipment or training on a specific topic) from an implementing partner that was not fulfilled, and they were unsure of the reason why. These findings suggest that while many cooperatives do feel a sense of local ownership, which is notable, there is room for implementing partners to increase this, particularly through earlier engagement and increased transparency about what they can or cannot provide and why.

Sustainability

For the purposes of this evaluation, the team conceptualized sustainability as the extent to which observed changes—implementing partner achievements that enhance cooperatives’ performance and/or the local cooperative ecosystem and enabling environment—are likely to be sustainable in the future without support from implementing partners. This relates to the sustainability of the cooperatives themselves and helps to determine CDP’s contribution to “more sustainable cooperative systems,” one of the subjects of this evaluation question.

Achievements. The evaluation team found evidence of several ways in which CDP programming may be contributing to cooperative sustainability. First, CDP has successfully supported some cooperatives in accessing outside financing for the first time, which could facilitate continued growth into the future, even after the program ends. Outside financing mainly took the form of loans, as well as some examples of grants. The CDP support that cooperatives mentioned as helpful included familiarizing cooperatives with financial services providers, help with business plan development, assistance understanding loan documents, and improving bookkeeping practices. Some cooperatives also pointed toward increased savings practices linked to CDP support. Also, because of improvements in IR 1, many cooperative members increasingly understand their ownership rights and said they feel they have a voice and a stake in the cooperative and its future. This enthusiasm is facilitated by stronger and more transparent leadership, which helps members feel more trust and interest in the future of their cooperatives. Many cooperatives are also engaging in long-term strategic planning in a way that they had not done prior to CDP. This forward-looking vision will give the cooperatives something to work toward even in the absence of implementing partner engagement. Finally, there are also examples of cooperatives that have become better integrated into cooperative ecosystems, which can provide more-sustainable support over time. Interviewees noted that improvements in this area are easiest when the implementing partners themselves are also well-networked in the local context.

Many cooperative leaders and members said that training leaders on their roles has made them both more effective and increased the transparency with which they manage their cooperatives, which members value highly and which likely contributes to sustainability through enhanced member engagement. For example, one Rwandan cooperative leader learned through training that financial oversight was part of his role, where previously he thought he was “not even supposed to look through [books of accounts] or know what is written there.” Members of a Kenyan cooperative cited increased transparency in leadership as one of the cooperative’s biggest achievements coming from their CDP involvement. The few cooperatives where neither leaders nor members mentioned improved transparency and management capacity tended to be headed by longstanding or non-elected leaders, a dynamic that discouraged implementing partners from focusing on these topics for fear of alienating the cooperative.

For members, understanding their ownership rights has often led to greater engagement in cooperative activities. For example, an FGD participant in Rwanda said, “We used to think the cooperative was for leaders, but after the training, we came to know our rights being part of the coop,” leading them to take greater advantage of services the cooperative offers, such as agricultural advice, dispute resolution, and financial assistance. A cooperative leader in Peru expressed a similar sentiment that “before working with [the implementing partner], our members were not very participatory, perhaps due to ignorance of their roles and fear of assuming functions within the cooperative, but thanks to the project they have strengthened their capacities and taken over the management of the cooperative.”

Challenges. Evidence shows that there are also some CDP activities that are less supportive of sustainability. For example, there were times when implementing partners stepped in to fill immediate budget gaps in operational costs for cooperatives, such as paying for staff salaries for some amount of time or covering the rent for an office.⁴ While cooperative leaders praised this type of operational financing as extremely useful and in line with what they were hoping for from the project, there is also a question of whether such operational subsidies could entrench dependence on CDP support instead of encouraging sustainable business planning practices.

Most of the examples of operational financing support came from service-oriented cooperatives like health and worker cooperatives, or those newly formed with CDP support. This suggested that implementing partners are still trying to figure out how to foster financial self-reliance as a pillar of sustainability for these types of cooperatives, or whether this is a realistic goal in the near-term. In some cases, newly formed cooperatives felt that they needed more support, and health cooperatives in particular frequently cited ongoing needs. Some implementing partners echoed this sentiment, proposing that service cooperatives should meet a different set of standards than producer cooperatives, with more-lenient expectations for self-financing. In other cases, new cooperatives said they felt ready to operate more independently: “We formed supported by [the implementing partner] ... but from my own understanding, why we needed to form this cooperative is we needed to have our own voice ... [the implementing partner] helped us, but they didn’t need to keep coming here to talk for us. We needed to talk for ourselves.”

Another potential barrier to sustainability is that cooperative board members, who tend to be exposed to the most training, mentoring, and other knowledge- and skill-building, are usually replaced every few years in keeping with local regulations and cooperative bylaws. The rationale for training specific groups on specific topics (e.g., training board members on governance and targeting professional staff on financial management) is sound, since those topics relate directly to their current functions. But knowledge gaps may return later on, when the individuals in those roles turn over and new members who may not have been exposed to capacity strengthening activities take over. This is particularly important in a context like Rwanda, where short term limits are strictly monitored and enforced. As one stakeholder noted, “Myself, I have a background in cooperative management. The issue is always around leadership and management. You can have a very good cooperative with good management, board, good manager and after three years when you come back you will find when they changed the board, everything is falling down.” Similarly, one implementer focused their training exclusively on professional staff, without including either board members or other cooperative members, leading to limited visibility and understanding of the program.

Women and Youth

Achievements. When activities that specifically targeted women and youth were implemented, they were perceived as very effective. For example, out of those who reported activities targeting youth, 91 percent described the activities as succeeding in strengthening youth participation, and out of those who reported activities targeting women, 94 percent of them said the activities strengthened women’s participation. While various activities contributed to the increased participation of women and youth, qualitative interviews and FGDs revealed that the activities that have been most effective at increasing women’s and youth participation in cooperatives were trainings that emphasized women’s

⁴ USAID approved providing direct financial support to cover cooperative operations as an acceptable approach in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the examples cited in this report were ongoing and not specifically linked to the pandemic.

empowerment, self-sufficiency, and prevention of and response to gender-based violence as well as trainings that encouraged members to invite youth to join. Other training mentioned included financial training for women, agribusiness training, and training youth in various skills such as farming or textiles.

Cooperative leaders and members mentioned that gender-related training has resulted in women taking on leadership roles with confidence, strengthened participation of women in various activities such as dairy farming within the cooperative, economic growth within households, ability to access credit, increased opportunities for youth, and women writing and using account books. A cooperative member in Rwanda said, “They used to not see they would see a woman come in front of them and speak and being empowered and taking up positions, taking technical decisions in the coop. After the training, now she knows about the way a coop is governed and a way the finances are managed.” Gender awareness training has also led to greater equality between women and men, a cooperative member in Rwanda said: “He’s now aware he can intervene if he finds a man mistreating a woman he can intervene and say no this is not right. Then how could he do it before when he has never heard about gender equality. Now he comes and intervenes, ‘no this is not right.’”

Additional activities mentioned include the formation of women and youth subgroups and offering youth access to resources and loans for them to be able to join. A male project coordinator in Peru said, “We intervene in three ways with young people under 20 years of age. We provide them with access to resources (according to the production line), we advise them with their scaling and consolidation plans, and, to those who perform satisfactorily, we advise them to put together a more advanced business plan that involves financing and other benefits.” Another cooperative member described how CDP training led them to waive registration fees for women or allow women to pay their shares in installments in order to facilitate increases in women’s membership.

Additional contributors to increased youth and women’s participation are country-specific laws, such as in Kenya, where the inclusion of women is required, or changes in governance within the cooperative. For example, “No man can now borrow without the consent of the wife. Whenever the man comes to borrow money, he has to come with the wife, that’s one of the things that has changed. A man that belongs to the coop, he cannot attend meetings all year round alone, a woman must appear in one of the meetings or a child who is above 18 should at least attend one of the meetings.” The reasons for change in governance could be linked to CDP, as the survey results showed improvement in this area due to CDP support.

Challenges. In some cases, male cooperative members resisted ideas about women’s empowerment or questioned its relevance. For example, in an all-male focus group in Kenya, members laughed in agreement when one member questioned the relevance of gender and domestic violence to the skillset they need to succeed as a cooperative.

Some cooperatives reported struggling to meaningfully involve and engage youth and women, and that their membership continues to be dominated by older male adults, in a challenge to long-term sustainability. This dynamic is not CDP-specific, but most CDP partners have recognized it and tried to address it by including some element of gender and youth integration in their program design. While activities targeting women and youth were overwhelmingly seen as effective by cooperative leaders (as reported under Achievements, above), the proportion of cooperative leaders who reported any such activities was lower than the evaluation team expected, particularly given that all implementing partners incorporated gender and youth into their program description in some way. In the cooperative leader survey only 56 percent of cooperative leaders noted that there were CDP activities that specifically targeted youth, and 65.7 percent noted activities targeting women.

In sum, the evaluation found that CDP design and implementation were generally supportive of more-sustainable cooperative systems that deliver value to their members. This was especially true when implementing partners customized their support to cooperatives' needs, which they often did. There appeared to be potential for earlier involvement of local partners in activity design, more institutionalization of new or improved practices, and a more consistent focus on gender and youth. Section 4.2 describes these and other recommendations in further detail. The next sections will explore the evaluation's findings specific to each intermediate result, beginning with the extent to which the project contributed to improved cooperative performance, management, and governance.



3.2 Evaluation Question 2: Regarding IR 1, to what extent has the project contributed to any change in cooperative performance, management, and governance over time?⁵

Key Findings

- 60.7 percent of cooperative leaders reported that their management and governance were much improved since they had begun to work with CDP, 54.7 percent said their bylaws and policies were much improved, and 47.9 percent said financial performance was much improved.
- Members and leaders appreciate that CDP work in these areas has helped them better understand their roles and increase transparency within the cooperative.
- There are also many examples of cooperatives' financial performance improving over time, driven by better financial management, improved recordkeeping, stronger governance, and increases in production or product quality.
- Financial and market performance are influenced heavily by external factors outside of cooperative and CDP control; accordingly, results were somewhat less strong than for management and governance.
- Member equity and cooperative capitalization received far less emphasis and had weaker results than other components of cooperative performance.

This section begins with a discussion of changes observed in cooperative management and governance, including both achievements and challenges, followed by the extent to which the program has led to changes in business performance, including successes and challenges.

Management and Governance

The evaluation found widespread mutually reinforcing increases in transparency, understanding, and engagement for cooperatives that had received CDP management and governance support, though there were some notable gaps.

Achievements. Monitoring data indicates that about three-fourths of CDP cooperatives working with implementing partners who reported on this indicator have demonstrated improved governance (shown in Exhibit 10). This indicator is calculated as the number of cooperatives that demonstrate improved

⁵ Sub-questions:

- a) What changes have occurred in cooperative business performance and cooperative management and governance according to CDP performance monitoring data and cooperative-level data?
- b) What changes do cooperative leaders and members perceive in the areas of cooperative business performance, management, and governance? How do these perceptions compare to the changes observed in monitoring data?

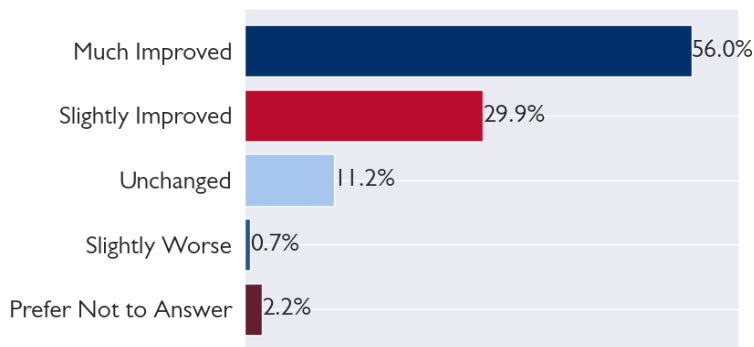
governance, using any cooperative governance assessment tool, divided by the number of cooperatives receiving tailored support for governance improvements. This suggests a potentially large contribution of the project to this outcome.

As in the monitoring data, management and governance were areas where cooperative leaders and members perceived substantial improvements. In the cooperative leader survey, as shown in Exhibit 11, 56 percent of the 134 leaders surveyed said that their cooperative’s management and governance was much improved since beginning to work with CDP, followed by slightly improved at 29.9 percent, and unchanged at 11.2 percent, and slightly worse at 0.7 percent.

Many cooperatives also saw improvements to their own bylaws and policies that they attributed to CDP support. As shown in Exhibit 12, 50 percent of cooperative leaders indicated their bylaws and policies were much improved, followed by slightly improved at 25.4 percent, unchanged at 19.4 percent, and slightly worse at 1.5 percent.

In qualitative interviews and FGDs with cooperative leaders and members, three related types of

Exhibit 11. Perceived Changes in Management and Governance

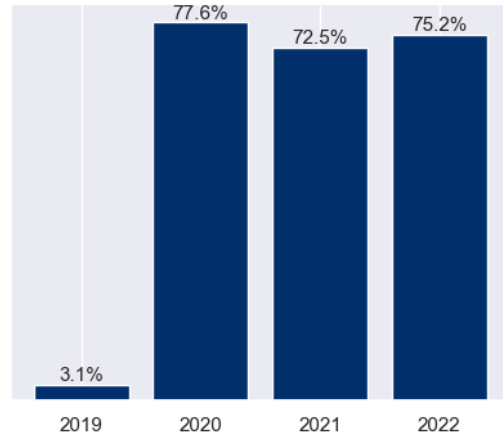


Source: Cooperative leader survey

their roles. Both cooperative members and other types of stakeholders noted the importance of this type of support—respondents in several countries pointed to a lack of capacity and education of cooperative members as a key driver of poor cooperative management that CDP helped to address.

In addition to helping cooperatives understand their own roles, CDP support often helped cooperatives understand their enabling environments—the relevant local laws and regulations and what they mean for the cooperative. Multiple cooperative leaders reported consulting with CDP partners on proposed changes to their bylaws, getting legal advice on how proposals align with regulations and laws in their country. One cooperative leader commented, “We have received information and advice from the

Exhibit 10. Proportion of Cooperatives with Improved Governance



Source: CDP monitoring data.

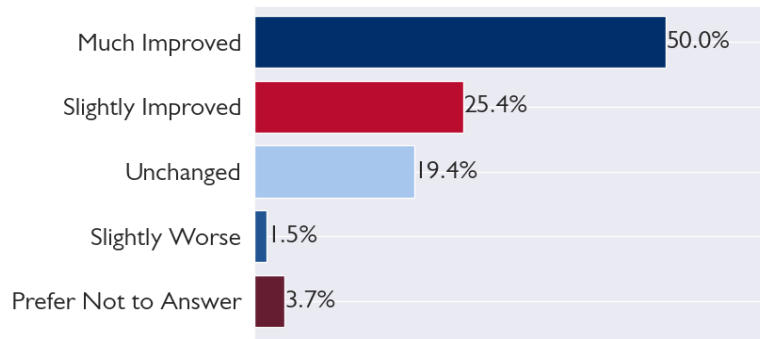
management and governance improvements stood out: increased transparency, better recordkeeping, and better understanding of roles and responsibilities both for leaders and for members. Many respondents also described how CDP activities helped them to better understand and comply with local laws and regulations, which reinforced better management and governance practices.

Members and leaders alike cited CDP implementing partner support that helped them understand and fulfill

implementing partner regarding tax benefits and support for associativity that [a new policy] brings. ... In the same way, we are receiving legal advice [from the implementing partner] in the modification of [cooperative bylaws] to adapt to the requirements and benefits of the law.” Another said he had not known there were laws and policies for cooperatives before working with CDP, but after the training he received he not only knew policies existed but could explain them.

Recordkeeping was another area where leaders and members perceived improvement. Better recordkeeping had important benefits—cooperatives in both Peru and Rwanda in particular noted that it led to better access to finance because it gave financial institutions more ability to assess their creditworthiness. This was even the case for some cooperatives in Sri Lanka, where management and governance were less of a focus—a couple of societies noted that their recordkeeping improved as an unintended result of having more-frequent visits from agricultural extension workers.

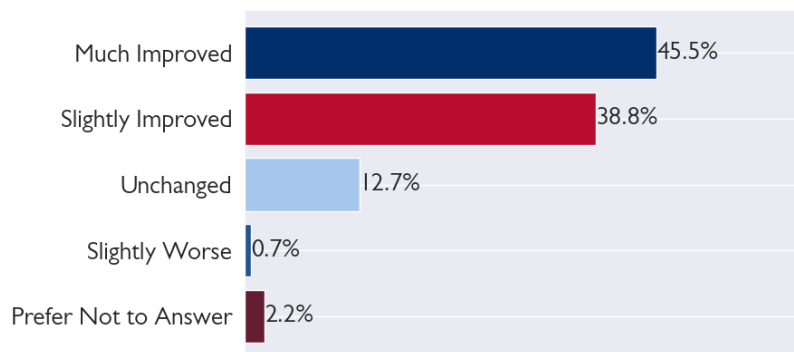
Exhibit 12. Perceived Changes to Bylaws and Policies



Source: Cooperative leader survey

Challenges. In Uganda’s health cooperatives, members often lacked awareness of even the basic financial structures and regulations governing the cooperatives, with many describing confusion about fees (member share) they paid into the cooperative on top of their insurance premiums. Many of the health cooperatives are formed by schools or businesses, and students or employees automatically become members based on enrollment in school or employment by the business. Shares and premiums are added to school fees or deducted from salaries. These

Exhibit 13. Perceived Changes in Financial Performance



Source: Cooperative leader survey

members tended to be much less engaged in their cooperatives than members who made a conscious decision to join. Thus, most cooperatives struggled to drive a sense of the value of membership among the health cooperative members, despite CDP support. While this dynamic was not exclusive to Uganda or the health sector—a handful of cooperative members in other countries and sectors also exhibited a lack of

understanding of how their cooperative was run and financed—this was particularly acute for the health insurance cooperatives. This poses a threat to member retention and may contribute to the high turnover rates in Uganda’s health cooperatives.

Business Performance

Achievements. There was evidence that CDP support can lead to improved business performance. Financial performance, particularly revenue and profitability, were often perceived as having improved due to CDP support. In the cooperative leader survey (see Exhibit 13), 45.5 percent of leaders said their cooperative's financial performance was much improved, followed by slightly improved at 38.8 percent, unchanged at 12.7 percent, and slightly worse at 0.7 percent. Improved bookkeeping and accounting practices also helped lead to more transparency and in some cases better access to finance, as noted earlier. Production, quality, and marketing support from CDP implementing partners can also help cooperatives improve performance—production support for producer cooperatives is especially common.

Box 2. Gender, Management, and Performance

Several cooperatives whose CDP support included gender equity training reported substantial changes in management and business outcomes. One woman cooperative leader in Kenya remarked that after CDP support, her “relationship with men has improved ... they interact more freely, they discuss, deliberate ... they don't see you as a woman, they see you as a board member.” In Rwanda, numerous women cooperative members described how gender-focused CDP activities led to their stronger engagement in their cooperatives, more confidence in voicing their ideas, and more respect from other members. Gender-based violence training in Rwanda seems to have extended this shift in gender dynamics to the household level in some cases. Participants in an all-female FGD described how, now that women are involved with the cooperative and members have been trained on gender-based economic violence, the cooperative has updated its bylaws so that men can no longer borrow money without their wives' consent.

There were numerous other examples of how CDP support helped cooperatives improve their business performance. One cooperative in Rwanda described how CDP support had helped them to set up an ancillary business providing veterinary supplies. Several cooperatives in Kenya and Rwanda described how gender-focused training had led to broader business performance improvements (see Box 2).

Support in all areas of business performance was perceived to be most effective when it was customized to the needs of the cooperative and its operating context. One Rwandan cooperative leader described how the implementing partner came to observe and identify gaps in their current practices and provided support that addressed those gaps, for example, providing a list of potential milk buyers and advising the cooperative on how to approach them in response to the cooperative's professed lack of markets.

Challenges. These generally strong results on business performance come with several

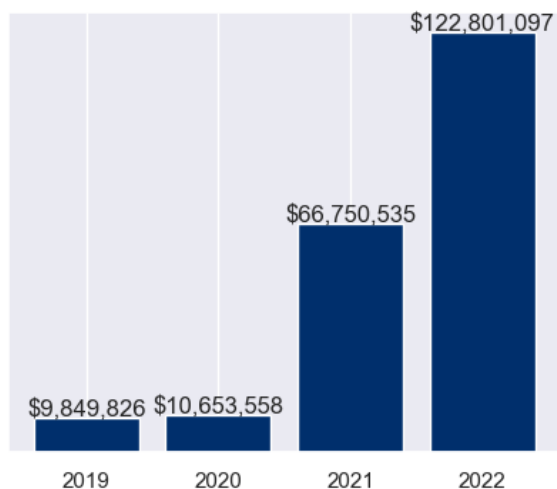
caveats. Some of the implementing partners used structured training curricula or standardized tools that some cooperatives found challenging because they were not certain how to implement what they learned or did not have access to the resources to do so. One cooperative leader noted, “They had a curriculum that wasn't supposed to change, and that was a challenge ... we felt like [the implementing partner] was providing answers to the questions, but the action component was left entirely to the cooperative.”

Business performance appeared to be most challenging for non-traditional cooperative types, such as health insurance, housing, and worker cooperatives. This may be because CDP has engaged with these cooperatives in early stages when they have not yet found their financial footing. For example, the leader of one worker cooperative explained that they are still struggling to obtain work as a group through the

cooperative, and in practice all of their members are currently operating individually, without the funds going through the cooperative. Similarly, the Treasurer of a housing cooperative noted that “Honestly, we don’t have financial performance because our first project is not completed. It’s the first business we are doing. ... Projections are showing that once it’s complete, we will be financially stable ... but we don’t have a financial backbone at the moment.” Health cooperatives in particular require robust membership, including healthy individuals, which some cooperatives struggled to achieve and maintain. It was not clear how financially viable some of these cooperatives would be without CDP support.

While management and governance are largely within the control of a cooperative and its members, business performance as a whole is much more affected by external factors. The many external factors that affected cooperative business outcomes included COVID-19-related restrictions, economic and political disruptions such as inflation, market fluctuations, and political instability or uncertainty. Agricultural cooperatives frequently mentioned climate and weather events, pests, and crop and livestock diseases that affected production and processing. Social and cultural factors that are slow to change and largely out of CDP control can also affect business performance (see Box 3).

Exhibit 14. Dollar Value of Member Equity



Source: CDP monitoring data.

Of all components of cooperative performance, the evaluation found that member equity and cooperative capitalization received the least emphasis. There were fewer partner activities geared toward this topic and a high degree of variation in cooperative member understanding of equity as a concept and in the value they placed on it. In a couple of cases, implementing partners provided training or support on members’ rights that increased members’ understanding of member equity and how it can benefit the cooperative. However, the evaluation team did not find examples of changes to cooperatives’ practices around member equity that were clearly linked to CDP activities. Monitoring data show year-over-year growth in this indicator, but implementing partners’ reporting notes indicate this was in part due to the addition of cooperatives in each year rather than to increases in equity for existing cooperatives (see

Exhibit 14). The data and reporting notes are not detailed enough to determine the proportion of growth due to additional cooperatives versus activity interventions.

The evaluation team, implementing partners, and USAID had substantial discussions around member equity findings during the validation workshop prior to finalizing this report. While there was broad agreement that achievements in this area were thin, implementing partners raised questions and concerns about how best to address it. They characterized it as a new concept for many cooperatives, requiring strong financial controls and trust in leadership. Some stakeholders noted that many cooperatives simply needed support on more-basic topics, such as recordkeeping or planning meetings, and that a focus on strengthening member equity was seemingly too advanced given cooperatives’ current needs and capacities. Often, they said, it is difficult to prioritize membership shares on top of operational costs and trying to break even as a business. Some cooperatives obtain equity capital from members only because it is required under local regulations. Relatedly, some questioned whether it should always be included as a goal or whether it should be included only for cooperatives that have

reached a certain level of maturity. They also pointed out the difficulty of measuring member equity and cooperatives' willingness to share that information with implementing partners.

With the exception of member equity, the evaluation found that components of cooperative management, governance, and business performance were the most consistently supported areas across CDP activities and countries, and accordingly this intermediate result saw numerous achievements. Challenges and limitations were often outside of implementing partner control, such as economic factors that affected business performance. Non-traditional cooperatives tended to struggle more, regardless of CDP support. The next section turns to the cooperative enabling environment.



3.3 Evaluation Question 3: Regarding IR 2, to what extent has the project contributed to improvements in country-level cooperative enabling environments?⁶

Key Findings

- The number of members benefiting from services and resources has more than doubled (from 820,595 in 2019 to 1,834,995 in 2022), and most (82.8 percent) cooperative leaders reported that their access has improved since they began working with CDP.
- CDP has played a prominent role in expanding cooperatives' access to finance, bolstered by improvements in management, governance, and financial performance.
- CDP has sometimes provided cooperatives with valuable linkages to other actors within the cooperative ecosystem, although respondents believe that these services and resources are often inferior to the support they receive directly from CDP.
- A few implementing partners have also emphasized legal and regulatory improvements, achieving major accomplishments in legislation despite challenges including frequent turnover of government partners, slow progress, and competing priorities.
- Improvements in the enabling environment are easier when these changes are in line with the priorities of political leaders and come from a country with a strong cooperative culture.

This section presents findings for the two components of IR 2 separately, first examining changes in access to services and resources, and then delving into changes observed in the legal and regulatory framework.

Access to Services and Resources

Achievements. Overall, cooperatives' access to services and resources seems to have improved during the course of the program, in scale, level of access, and types of access. The monitoring data for this indicator, shown in Exhibit 15, demonstrates that the total number of cooperative members benefiting from services and resources has increased dramatically from 820,595 members in 2019 to more than 1.8 million in 2022. The number of members decreased in 2020 and was still below 2019 levels in 2021, possibly due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, but quickly rebounded. When

⁶ Sub-questions:

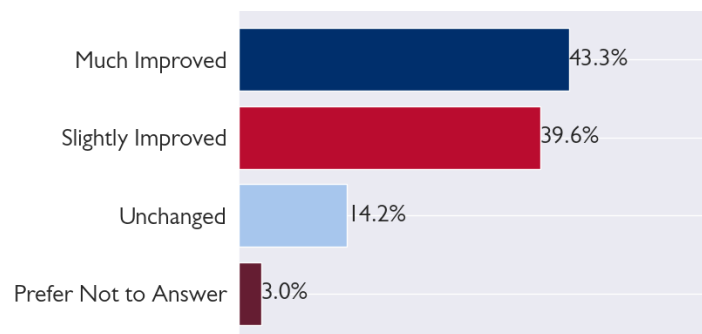
- a) What have been the major achievements of the project in terms of improving the enabling environment, including improving access to services and resources, and improving the legal and regulatory framework for cooperatives? What programmatic or contextual factors enabled and/or prevented these achievements?
- b) What have been the biggest challenges to improving the cooperative enabling environment? Do these challenges suggest any implicit or explicit assumptions that are missing from the program logic?

interpreting this data, it is worth noting that these increases might have been driven by growth in the scale of CDP over time, as more and more cooperatives have joined, rather than increases in membership in existing cooperatives.

The monitoring data also shows that the proportion of both women and youth benefiting from services and resources has increased over time. In 2019, 22.2 percent of members were between the ages of 18 and 35, but by 2022, the proportion had increased to 30.3 percent. The proportion of women started at 43.2 percent, and then decreased sharply to 26.7 percent in 2020, before eventually rising back up to 44.2 percent in 2022.

Speaking directly to cooperative leaders during the quantitative survey revealed that the magnitude of the change in access to services and resources at the cooperative level was also notable. According to the survey results, noted in Exhibit 16, 43.3 percent of respondents reported that their access was “much improved” since the start of the program, and 39.6 percent reported that their access was “slightly improved.” Only 14.2 percent of cooperative leaders surveyed saw no change in access to services and resources since the start of their engagement in this round of CDP. While these results are slightly less strong than those for IR I,

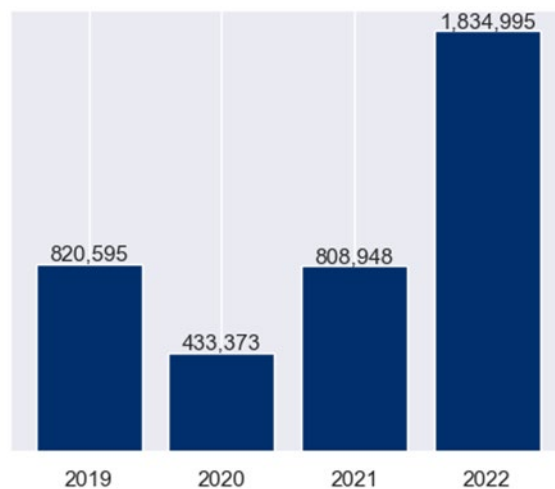
Exhibit 16. Changes in Access to Services and Resources



Source: Cooperative leader survey.

they still clearly demonstrate meaningful change for a majority of the respondents. These results were also largely confirmed in the qualitative data, which provided further depth on the types of services and resources that cooperatives can now access, as well as the factors leading to these changes. Respondents noted that the most important types of services and resources included access to finance, markets, networks, and the resources that networks can provide, such as skills development or inclusion in government programs. For some cooperatives, it has become easier to access loans. These cooperatives often clearly tied their success in accessing financial institutions to the improved management and recordkeeping practices, stronger financial footing, and business planning skills they implemented as a result of CDP training. Members from one focus group noted that there is a staff member from the implementing partner who “specifically helps us do better business plans to help us get loans from the banks. [He/she] tells us which documents are needed by the banks to help us get loans. ... If we weren’t working with [the implementing partner], we would not

Exhibit 15. Number of Cooperative Members Benefiting from Services and Resources Delivered Through Cooperatives and Credit Unions



Source: CDP monitoring data.

know how to use that capital or finance from the bank.” A cooperative leader in Peru noted that, because of the better financial stability since working with the implementing partner, they have now accessed two new lines of credit. There was also at least one instance of a cooperative who used the skills they learned from the implementing partner—in this case, developing a business plan—to design a project, which was accepted for funding by another donor.

CDP support has also helped cooperatives form linkages with other actors in the cooperative system, such as local government officials and apex bodies. As one cooperative in Kenya noted, “We have sat down with players, and we have also sat down with national government. We have had other cooperatives join our activities. In networking, we are good. [The implementing partner] really helped us—we have better networks than we did before.” These relationships can then provide cooperatives with new opportunities, resources, and services. In cases where CDP has helped cooperatives form, register, or obtain certain certifications, this formalization also provides additional advantages, such as tax benefits, the opportunity to join a union, or the ability to make agreements on joint projects with other associations.

Challenges. Despite major strides made during the project, gaps remain in access to services and resources. Access to finance is the most important example—activities to improve access to finance were often found to be effective where they happened, but access to finance was also frequently pointed out as a gap in places where implementing partners did not focus on it.

In some countries, or with certain financial institutions, CDP cooperatives still face major challenges in accessing finance. According to respondents, one of the driving factors is the lackluster reputation of cooperatives among financial institutions: “It’s an area of improvement, just because even if there are some banks that deliver loans to cooperatives, there are other financial institutions that resist because those cooperatives are still facing mismanagement of finance, they are poorly governed, and they have unstable governance.” Although many cooperatives who are part of CDP have made improvements in governance, this stigma remains widespread in some places and may take time to change.

Cooperatives also noted that there is a difference between accessing services and accessing *quality* services. Many respondents noted that entities other than CDP implementing partners have limited ability to support cooperatives, especially with regard to governance and management, even when they have a mandate to do so. When asked about services that cooperatives receive from apex organizations, government agencies, and other service providers, cooperatives frequently discounted the quality of those services as being inferior to the services they receive from CDP. As one leader from Kenya described, “You cannot compare the training from government with training from [the implementing partner]. The government officer is monitoring what we are doing, whereas [the implementing partner] came to empower us.” A stakeholder in Rwanda felt similarly about the apex organization, admitting that “I think we have a long way to [go with] capacity building in terms of the unions, federations, and confederations. They have to have a business which can sustain the primary coops.”

Legal and Regulatory Framework

Achievements. In terms of the broader legal and policy framework, one of the major accomplishments of CDP has been the development of new cooperative policies and laws. Among the countries where the evaluation team collected data in person, these results were most significant in Uganda, Madagascar, Tanzania and Kenya. In Uganda, CDP implementing partners were involved in the most recent 2020 Cooperatives Act. In Kenya, CDP implementing partners have collaborated closely with government partners to draft and validate the 2021 Cooperative Bill, which is currently waiting for consideration by the Senate and Parliament. This bill will bring Kenyan cooperative law up to international standards.

CDP has also been involved in the process of devolving certain cooperative functions to the counties in Kenya and supporting counties in passing their own cooperative bills. Tanzania and Madagascar similarly saw new proposed legislation linked to CDP activities.

Some of these changes under IR 2 were also enabled by concurrent changes in the context. For example, in Kenya, which has been undergoing a process of political decentralization in recent years, respondents noted the challenge of devolving cooperative management from the national government to the counties, noting a clear opportunity for CDP to fill this gap. Respondents in Kenya also cited the election of a new administration in 2022, which happened to emphasize cooperatives and micro, small, and medium enterprises as part of its plan for “bottom-up” development. Generating improvements in the legal and regulatory framework was also sometimes a smoother process in countries with a pre-existing cooperative culture. A strong history of cooperative development facilitates understanding of cooperatives by both members and policymakers, and also a recognition of their importance in development. For example, as one partner notes, “The strongest coops in [the country] are in this part. ... So, things to do with coops in our community [are] not something new. People only need mobilization—they know how coops work and they are [already] in a number of coops. ... So, it wouldn’t be a challenge for coops to prosper in this region.”

Challenges. Even in countries where direct policy engagement has occurred and led to changes, there have been challenges that are largely outside of CDP control. These include frequent turnover of government officials, competing legislative priorities, and bureaucratic delays. For example, one stakeholder noted that one of their key partner ministries has cycled through new staff about every six months, which has made it difficult to progress forward. In Kenya, while the achievement of the Cooperative Bill was a major milestone, the law had not yet been passed at the time of data collection, meaning that the government was still operating under an outdated policy. As one cooperative leader put it, “If the Act has not passed the parliament, then we are struggling.” These bureaucratic processes are also often complex, requiring layers of multi-stakeholder engagement and partnership, which can be difficult for implementing partners to navigate. There was at least one case of government partners who perceived the implementing partner’s approach as having failed to align their objectives with national regulations, communicated later than needed about activities, and not done enough to identify and engage the right stakeholders in appropriate ways.

When it comes to cooperative leaders and members, a handful of respondents said they want to be more directly involved in the policy work being led by implementing partners. However, many cooperative leaders and members still lack capacity and awareness of existing laws and policies, making it difficult to fully engage them in supporting the development of improvements. Some implementing partner activities increased cooperative members’ understanding of local enabling environments, as discussed earlier, though the evaluation team did not find any examples where they parlayed this into specific implementing partner advocacy activities.

The next section is the final one dealing with achievements toward the project’s results framework, focusing on the extent to which it contributed to enhancing the development community’s support to cooperatives.



3.4 Evaluation Question 4: Regarding IR 3, to what extent has the project contributed to enhancing the development community's support to cooperatives?⁷

Key Findings

- Collaboration and coordination between CDP implementing partners is generally high, both through OCDC and through direct engagement.
- There are examples of learning, sharing, and collaboration with non-CDP actors in the development community, but few specific examples of how CDP partner activities led to enhanced support to cooperatives by non-CDP members of the development community.
- OCDC is generally seen as providing a useful forum for sharing ideas and was praised for its success in lobbying activities. The more recent research activities were perceived as use but contributing less to the project purpose than its convening and advocacy functions. Some implementing partners felt that both the research and convening activities should respond more closely to their demand. However, the evaluation team also found that implementers have diverse needs and interests (making it hard to respond to all needs).

This section begins with a discussion of collaboration and coordination, including both among CDP implementing partners and between CDP and the wider network of organizations involved in cooperative development. Following this is a discussion of OCDC's unique role and its contributions to the goal of enhancing development community support to cooperatives.

Development Community Behavior Change

All implementing partners reported some collaboration with development actors outside the CDP project, but for most of them the bulk of coordination and collaboration has focused on other CDP implementing partners.

Achievements.

Collaboration among CDP implementing partners is high—most described substantial engagement with others through multiple channels including OCDC events, in-country coordination where multiple implementing partners work in the same geographies, sharing of advice and good practices through direct meetings, and assistance with expansion. Collaboration is emphasized in the CDP results framework and program design as a tool to improve programming through shared learning and

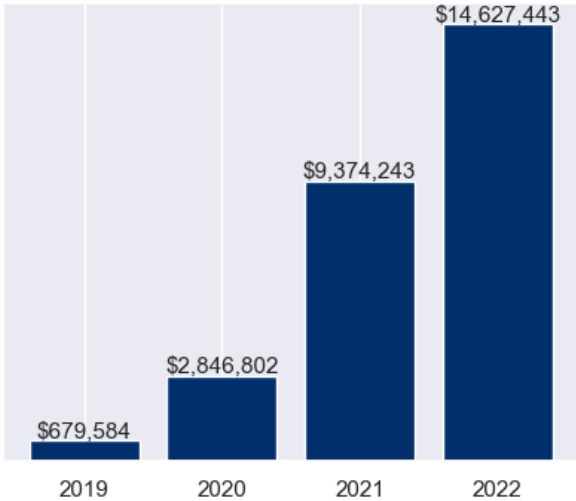
⁷ Sub-questions:

- a) What have been the major achievements of the project in terms of behavior change within the development community in support of cooperatives? (This may include more-effective programming, increased dissemination of learning, and strengthening collaboration among CDOs and the development community, among other changes.) What programmatic or contextual factors contributed to these achievements?
- b) What have been the biggest challenges to improving the development community's support to cooperatives? Do these challenges suggest any implicit or explicit assumptions that are missing from the program logic?
- c) What factors contributed to major achievements or challenges related to behavior change in the development community that supports cooperatives?
- d) To what extent has the U.S. Overseas Cooperative Development Council's community of practice and coordination among the different CDP activities contributed to the project purpose? What are the main benefits or challenges to coordination between CDP partners? How can these challenges be addressed?

coordination. A minority of implementing partners noted that the diversity of their organizations, the sectors they work in, and the project activities they choose to focus on could make collaboration more difficult, but this challenge was reportedly minor. Rarer still were reports of competition for resources or territorial attitudes—rather, implementing partners generally described other implementing partners’ openness to collaborating and the value they have derived from collaboration both within and across countries and sectors. For example, HealthPartners noted that the three implementing partners in Kenya helped them to understand the landscape in Kenya and make connections with local stakeholders there when they were looking to expand. In another example, multiple implementing partners collaborated on a research project to understand the impact of COVID-19 on agricultural cooperatives.

There were numerous examples of in-country coordination between implementing partners and other development community actors, such as communicating to avoid duplication of activities in countries where both CDP implementing partners and other USAID projects provide agricultural production support to cooperatives. Most implementing partners had substantial collaboration with national and local government actors, including regulators, extension agents, and local leaders. Implementing partners in some countries also organized learning events to share information with other organizations. HealthPartners described coordinating with ongoing USAID projects in the health sector, including inviting former beneficiaries of a project that had provided vouchers for health care to join insurance cooperatives once the voucher project ended. In addition, several implementing partners pointed to requests from other local entities for more information about their work or requests for CDP support.

Exhibit 17. Dollar value of non-donor resources mobilized for locally-led development priorities



Source: CDP monitoring data.

Notably, CDP mobilized more than \$27 million in non-donor resources to support CDP activities (as reported under the USAID standard indicator “dollar value of non-donor resources mobilized for locally-led development priorities,” shown in Exhibit 17). Some portion of this represents resources provided by external partners through in-kind contributions such as volunteer labor, grants, or other funding. That portion indicates development community behavior change in the form of providing resources for cooperative development that they otherwise might not have. Other resources came from implementing partners and cooperatives themselves in the form of cost sharing or equity shares and payments made by members to cooperatives. Not all implementing partners reported the sources of all these resources to a level that would enable the evaluation team to calculate the proportion that comes from non-CDP or cooperative sources, so these figures are suggestive of development

community support but not a definitive quantification of that support.

Challenges. Despite many examples of coordination and collaboration, the evaluation team did not find many examples of behavior *change* among non-CDP development community actors. While many of the partners reported publicizing their activities at country level or international forums, as well as publishing reports, it was not clear whether these dissemination activities aimed to change development

community behavior, or in what way. And though some implementing partners worked in collaboration with other development community actors in ways that were beneficial to cooperatives, it was not clear that this led to development actors providing more or different support to cooperatives than they would have in the absence of the CDP program.

One potential barrier limiting CDP impact on the development community's support to cooperatives is that in some countries, the development community lacks awareness of CDP and its activities. This may be partially a function of relatively low levels of engagement in in-country activities by USAID Mission POCs, which may hinder broader awareness of the activity, and subsequently, opportunities for collaboration and support. This was apparently unintentional in most cases, though in Sri Lanka activities were intentionally kept quiet because of potential political sensitivities.

Finally, despite substantial coordination among implementing partners, respondents characterized some of it as surface-level, particularly in countries where more than one partner operates. For example, in Kenya, which like Peru hosts three CDP activities, NCBA CLUSA and Global Communities agreed to split their work on policy issues at the national and county levels, respectively, but some stakeholders noted there was less coordination on which policy issues were most important and how to ensure harmonization among different levels of government. Some local stakeholders also highlighted a lack of co-creation and co-implementation of activities, saying the current level of coordination missed opportunities to take advantage of potential synergies.

OCDC and Coordination Among CDP Partners

OCDC is itself a cooperative whose membership is made up of other cooperative development organizations, many of which are also CDP implementing partners. Its activities include advocacy in Congress for cooperative development funding, organizing convenings and events for members to network and share information, and conducting primary research on cooperative-related topics. The evaluation looked at the extent to which OCDC's community of practice and coordination among the different CDP activities contributed to the project purpose. (OCDC performs other functions and deals with other stakeholders, but these were not a focus of the evaluation.)

OCDC's perceived successes mainly relate to its convening and advocacy functions. CDP partners generally described the monthly learning events and annual meetings as useful for sharing ideas. Staff noted that early events focused on building trust among this CDP cohort, which could have contributed to the collaborative environment most implementing partners described. Some also noted there was an emphasis on holding a large number of meetings and events and less attention given to substantive follow-up on specific issues of importance to the other implementing partners. In a similar vein, some respondents perceived OCDC's activities as not responding to their organization's needs, or expressed that activities should be more geared toward identifying and cultivating specific opportunities for cooperative development across OCDC members. On the other hand, some also acknowledged the difficulty of creating and carrying out a cohesive learning agenda that serves the demand of a diverse group of members.

One notable change in this round of CDP funding is OCDC's shift toward conducting more research activities, including leading some research studies in-house. OCDC published at least a dozen products based on its own research over the course of the project, most notably a publication series titled "What Difference Do Cooperatives Make?" and a group of studies on the cooperative context in various countries. The research outputs seemed to function mainly as advocacy tools, used to build awareness of and support for cooperative development. Implementing partners said that was generally helpful to them, but some noted that they would have preferred more studies targeting issues they faced, the

findings of which could help improve the effectiveness of their programming. OCDC also provided research grants to other implementing partners, and while those partners said this enabled them to do valuable research, they also noted administrative challenges that made implementing these grants difficult.

While it was clear that OCDC invested significant time and resources into member engagement, there may be a need to communicate better about priority setting and the balance it aims to strike between responding to CDP partners' demand while also catering to other stakeholder groups. Overall, while the evaluation found more internal (within-CDP) than external communication and collaboration, this internal collaboration is a notable achievement. With regard to externally-focused efforts aimed at members of the development community beyond CDP, further definition of specific objectives and targets for this intermediate result by USAID may help encourage additional activity. The next and final findings section addresses USAID's role in contributing to the project purpose.

3.5 Evaluation Question 5: To what extent has support provided by USAID/Washington and Missions to implementing partners contributed to the project purpose?⁸

Key Findings

- USAID/Washington has built a trusting relationship with implementing partners through responsiveness, emphasis on feedback, flexibility, and proven technical expertise in cooperative development.
- Some implementing partners struggle with monitoring, evaluation, and learning requirements and find them to be not as specific or relevant as they could be to activity objectives.
- Relationships between implementing partners and Country-level Mission POCs vary, but overall, there is limited substantive engagement and a lack of clarity on expectations for this relationship on either side.
- Factors that enable productive relationships between implementing partners and Mission POCs include CDP alignment with Mission strategy, a receptive POC, and a proactive CDP Chief of Party.

This section examines the relationship between USAID/Washington and implementing partners, and then the relationship between Country-level Mission POCs and implementing partners. Each section describes both challenges and achievements, drawing on KII data collected from implementing partner staff and USAID staff.

Partnerships between USAID/Washington and Implementing Partners

Achievements. Evaluation data demonstrated that the Agreement Officer's Representative and her team have fostered a productive and positive relationship with CDP implementing partners. Specifically, partners have appreciated USAID/Washington's responsiveness, flexibility, and emphasis on two-way

⁸ Sub-questions:

- a) What are the main challenges or achievements in creating and fostering effective partnerships between the USAID/Washington Agreement Officer, Agreement Officer's Representative, and monitoring, evaluation and learning staff with implementing partners?
- b) What are the main challenges or achievements in creating and fostering effective partnerships between Country-level Mission Points of Contact and implementing partners?

feedback. In this case, “flexibility” was used as a shorthand by implementing partners to summarize a willingness from the USAID/Washington team to support partners in deviating from their proposed activity plans in cases when changes in the context or learning from the program clearly supported the change in approach. The most obvious example of this flexibility was during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, when partners worked closely with USAID/Washington to adjust their programming. The overall dynamic of the partnership was described by one implementing partner as follows: “USAID/Washington has been awesome to work with, especially during the COVID time frame. They are insanely fast at issuing approvals, they are highly collaborative, and they have provided us with a lot of contacts to reach out to when we had challenges. ... They are also very understanding when we run into major roadblocks.”

The partnership has also been bolstered by the USAID/Washington team’s technical expertise in cooperative development, which enables them to ask informed questions and engage in deep technical discussions, thought partnership, and joint problem-solving. A few partners also recognized the Agreement Officer’s Representative for the work that she has done to expand awareness and understanding of CDP and cooperative development more broadly throughout USAID.

Challenges. According to implementing partners, one area for improvement in their relationship with USAID/Washington is around monitoring and reporting requirements, which they sometimes perceive as overly burdensome and not as specific or relevant as they could be to individual CDP activities. In particular, they noted difficulties in consistently applying a single set of indicators across multiple countries where they may not apply. Some implementing partners also acknowledged that their teams have made errors in indicator calculations in the past. Despite the challenges, a few implementing partners also noted that USAID/Washington monitoring, evaluation and learning staff have been understanding and open-minded when they have proposed adjustments to indicators or requested to eliminate some that were less relevant to their activities.

The evaluation team also noted that there were limitations to how the monitoring data could be used as part of this evaluation. One limitation was that the data are generally not disaggregated at the country level. Another is that for some indicators, it is unclear whether growth is driven by adding more cooperatives to the project or by increases in membership and benefits among existing cooperatives. A final challenge for the evaluation was that different implementing partners seem to have interpreted and calculated indicators in different ways, leading to difficulty with interpreting some of the aggregated data at the whole-of-project level. For example, for the indicator “Number of organizations using CDP-developed tools and resources to benefit cooperatives and cooperative systems,” some partners included local cooperatives themselves in the number they reported, while others did not. Discrepancies like this made it difficult to accurately quantify certain CDP achievements.

One partner did note the turnover of the USAID/Washington Agreement Officer during the course of the project as a challenge. However, overwhelmingly, the positive relationship and close coordination with the Agreement Officer’s Representative seems to have minimized the impact of the shift in the Agreement Officer position.

Finally, one implementing partner noted that political shifts from Washington can occasionally lead to disruptions in CDP activities. This partner had recently started implementation in Guatemala, but when the U.S. political administration shifted, USAID directed them to end operations in this country.

Partnerships between Country-Level Mission POCs and Implementing Partners

Achievements. In a handful of cases, Mission POCs have been able to link CDP implementers with potential partners to fill gaps in their programming. For example, a POC in Kenya was able to link a

partner with Microsoft to explore possibilities for digitization of the CDP activities. There have also been several cases in which the relationship between implementing partners and Mission POCs was limited at first but has become stronger over time. For example, one Mission POC recently began including CDP leaders in regular Mission-wide implementing partner meetings to promote more synergies between the activities. (See Box 4).

According to qualitative interviews, two of the most critical factors that seem to facilitate more-effective partnerships between implementing partners and USAID Mission POCs are strong interpersonal relationships and alignment between CDP and USAID's Country Development Cooperation Strategies and/or local government strategies. In the absence of set standards for how Missions and implementing partners should engage (see Challenges, below), partnership often seems to rest on individual work styles or backgrounds. For example, how proactive is the COP in reaching out to the Mission? How compelling is she or he in their description of CDP activities? On the other hand, how interested is the Mission POC? Do they have any background in cooperative development themselves?

One POC noted that implementing partners with more USAID experience tend to be more proactive, and therefore have closer engagement. One said “[the implementing partner] has been aggressive to strengthen the relationship and leverage opportunities ... [their] previous programs [with USAID] motivates them to engage more with the Mission.” When CDP is aligned with the Mission's overall development strategy, CDP activities are more likely to attract the attention of the Mission and receive broader buy-in, including from USAID Mission-funded development partners.

Challenges. Many of the challenges respondents cited related in some way to the fact that CDP is a centrally-funded program (managed by USAID/Washington) rather than a Mission-funded one. As such, Missions do not “count” CDP activities as part of their annual reviews and reporting for in-country programs, creating a disincentive for them to devote time and resources to the program. When time is limited and Mission staff are forced to prioritize, they understandably choose to focus on the activities for which they are directly accountable.

According to Mission staff and implementing partners, there does not seem to be any agreed-upon standard for the communication and relationship that is expected in this partnership. As one implementing partner noted, across countries, “there is somewhat of a frustration among the [implementing partners] about the different levels of engagement with Missions depending upon the personnel in the country. Their interaction depends a lot upon what they have going on in their portfolio and there is a tension between centrally and field managed activities.” Engagement appears to vary from occasional, to annual, to quarterly meetings, depending on the Mission POC preference.

Box 4. Strengthened Partnerships with Missions

In Rwanda, the implementing partner and the Mission POC used to only meet once or twice per year. However, the Mission POC recently decided to invite the CDP Country Manager to quarterly meetings with other IPs, even though these meetings typically do not include centrally funded activities like CDP. The Mission POC is hoping that greater exposure between CDP and other activities will promote more synergies between projects. For example, while there are other USAID activities in Rwanda that work with agricultural cooperatives, most of them focus only on increasing production, and not on management and governance. It is also worth acknowledging that this Mission

POC has a background in cooperative management, which might have made him more receptive than the average POC. Cooperative development is also aligned to the Rwanda CDCS, although the POC noted that this was “by coincidence” rather than through active engagement in activity design.

According to implementing partners, engagement that does exist with the Mission is often more superficial, especially compared to the relationship with the Agreement Officer's Representative: "We've always had a good relationship with USAID [Missions] and had at least semiannual, if not quarterly meetings with them. But [it's] never been about co-designing our program. It's more about 'Here's what we're doing; here's who we're connecting with,' etc. It's a little less engaging than USAID/Washington." In addition, some implementing partners seemed to be skeptical or unaware of the value of engaging more closely with their local Missions. This perception seemed to be more common among newer partners and those without existing USAID portfolios.

Mission POCs can often be stretched thin, with limited bandwidth to manage their own Mission-funded activities, let alone provide intensive support to CDP activities—something that is outside of CDP's control. Counter to the perception among implementing partners that POCs lack interest in CDP, POCs were often quite supportive of the program. From the POCs' perspective, the main barrier was limited availability to initiate follow-up or respond promptly to messages. As one POC noted, "I have found the quality of the program is high, in terms of the partners and the work they are doing, but there is a disconnect in information sharing and coordination."

Because of POCs' limited bandwidth and mostly infrequent communication with implementing partners, there is occasional tension when implementing partners request assistance from the Mission late in the development of a CDP activity without including them earlier on during the implementation process. For example, one implementing partner reached out for Mission support to promote a new policy that they had developed under IR 2. As the POC noted, "The challenge was that this work was mature already and that the Mission may not have had visibility on [it]. There was a bit of tension with the request, and I had to get the CDP programming into the portfolio ... no one had known about the project prior to the contact." Since CDP activities are co-designed with Mission staff and receive formal Mission Concurrence, it may be the case that Mission turnover or lack of internal communication led to this lack of visibility, rather than a lack of CDP communication. In this example, the POC was able to facilitate a presentation at the Mission and secure wider buy-in to the activity, as well as establish a more regular cadence of communication with the implementing partner. In other cases, this lack of coordination can sometimes result in duplicated efforts between Washington-funded and Mission-funded activities. POCs noted that if they were more aware of CDP activities throughout implementation, they would have the ability to address any issues as they arise.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

This section summarizes the evaluation conclusions based on findings, organized around the results framework, and based on the contribution analysis approach. It focuses on the extent to which the evaluation found evidence that the CDP contributed to changes in its intended IRs and project purpose.

4.1 Conclusions

Cooperative Business Performance (Intermediate Result 1)

Management and governance stand out as areas where there is strong evidence to support CDP's contribution to improvements, and that those improvements have led to improved cooperative business performance, consistent with the existing literature. Training in these areas does seem to be leading to increased management capacity and adoption of new practices among cooperative leaders and members. This may be partially driven by the comparatively large amount of programming in this area. Stakeholders also noted that this focus on management and governance is what truly defines CDP's niche in the development landscape and makes the program stand out from other activities that work with cooperatives, which often focus on agricultural extension. Increased cooperative awareness of local laws and policies seems to be leading to better compliance, which often corresponds to better cooperative performance, since local regulations often include mandates concerning how cooperatives govern themselves.

Financial and market performance. There is also evidence that CDP activities helped improve financial performance, particularly through better governance, as well as production and operational improvements that led to better market performance. However, financial and market outcomes are less strongly and directly linked to CDP support than changes in management and governance. Many cooperatives still faced market challenges, which they largely attributed to economic, climate, or political factors. There was some evidence, however, that CDP support can help to blunt the impacts of negative external factors, for example by helping cooperatives secure financing that helps them weather economic fluctuations.

Member equity received relatively little attention from implementing partners, and subsequently there were fewer achievements in strengthening member equity. This was highlighted as a particularly challenging area for less mature cooperatives, and there was broad agreement on the need for further research on when and how to help cooperatives increase their equity capitalization.

Cooperative Enabling Environment (Intermediate Result 2)

Enabling Environments. There is evidence that CDP policy advocacy contributed to changes in the enabling environment in some countries, though this work is difficult and slow. It can be difficult to tease out the role of CDP compared to other drivers of policy change, though some advancements, such as the recent inclusion of health cooperatives in the national regulatory framework in Uganda, are clearly linked to CDP. Helping cooperatives better understand their own legal and regulatory environment has been a substantial benefit of CDP programming for many cooperatives.

Strengthening cooperative ecosystems. Some CDP activities under IR 2 involved local actors in the cooperative ecosystem (such as apex organizations, local government, cooperative education institutions, and other cooperative service providers), often with an emphasis on helping cooperatives

form better linkages with these organizations. However, implementing partners did comparatively less to strengthen these organizations and improve their ability to provide services. Respondents identified this as a gap—in addition to increasing cooperatives' access to services and resources that benefit members, there is also a need to ensure that these services and resources are of high quality, and that these local actors have both the skills and motivation to engage more closely with cooperatives.

Access to finance seems to have been valuable to cooperatives when implementing partners specifically emphasized this as a goal under IR 2. In places where implementing partners did not focus on access to finance, cooperatives often cited it as a remaining gap, indicating its status as a nearly ubiquitous priority. Thus, even as there were many examples of success, the findings point to room for even more emphasis on financing across implementing partners and geographies.

Development Community's Support to Cooperatives (Intermediate Result 3)

Collaboration among CDP implementing partners. Much of the activity, as well as much of the success, under IR 3 was inward-facing—in other words, there was substantial collaboration and dissemination of learning among the implementing partner cohort. CDP implementing partners perceived collaboration with other implementing partners as valuable and cited few barriers to collaboration, particularly at the headquarters level. Collaboration and coordination among implementing partners operating in the same country was common, though it was not always substantive and did not tend to include co-design or co-implementation of activities. Challenges include some competitiveness among implementing organizations as well as diversity in sectors, but these did not substantially limit collaboration.

Other development community actors. Achievements in enhancing non-CDP development community support to cooperatives were mixed. Development community behavior change was not targeted as heavily as other components of the results framework. While the evaluation team did not comprehensively assess why implementing partners decided to focus on certain types of activities and not others, it does seem that the activities they selected tended to be well suited to their organizational strengths and operating environments. Given this, it may be the case that development community behavior change is simply outside the wheelhouse of most cooperative development organizations. Alternatively, it may be crowded out of programming because resources are finite, and direct support to cooperative performance and enabling environments is the priority. It may also be the case that other development actors simply do not focus on cooperative development. Even if that is the case, there is likely potential for more mutually-beneficial coordination and synergistic activities between CDP and other development actors that benefit cooperatives, even if the other actors are not specifically focused on cooperative development. The evaluation team also noted that the CDP results framework, annual program statement, and custom indicators do not articulate a vision or target for the desired changes in development community behavior relating to cooperatives, or the role that implementing partners should play in achieving that vision. This stands in contrast to other parts of the results framework that are more clearly articulated, where results are easier to define and achieve within the CDP's five-year timeframe. That may act as a disincentive to implementing partners to work toward this intermediate result.

OCDC was generally viewed as a helpful body whose strengths lie in its convening and advocacy functions. Most CDP implementing partners perceived OCDC's research activities as less clearly linked to their priorities in programming for cooperatives. Implementing partners largely agreed that they

would prefer both OCDC's events and its research activities to be more closely tied to specific issues of implementing partner interest, though it was unclear how feasible it would be to fully address the interests of all implementing partners.

Project Purpose

Non-traditional cooperative types. Cooperatives operating in less traditional areas, such as health, housing, and worker cooperatives, generally struggled more with business performance, particularly financial performance. This finding suggests either that the support that implementing partners have provided to these newer types of cooperatives was less effective, that CDP support alone is not sufficient to bolster business performance for non-traditional cooperatives no matter how effective it is, or that these cooperatives need more time to become established. Assuming these types of cooperatives continue to be a priority for CDP, there may simply be a need to reconsider the expected pathways and timelines for achieving a self-sustaining business model.

Elevating local voices. The evaluation found a high level of local involvement, including from cooperatives, in project implementation. This often took the form of consulting on the types or topics of support that were the best fit for their needs when presented with options. This involvement usually occurred *after* the initial design stage was complete, making it less meaningful and substantive than if local partners were involved earlier. However, it is challenging for implementing partners to engage local partners, particularly primary cooperatives, very early without raising unrealistic expectations of support, given the competitive and uncertain nature of USAID funding cycles. Some cooperatives are also interested in contributing more directly to CDP activities involving policy advocacy.

Social capital. There is comparatively little CDP emphasis on social value that cooperatives provide to their members, despite social capital's importance as a facet of resilience—an increasingly prominent focus area for USAID. While income and services are a major component of the value that members derive from cooperatives, members also value social capital, connectivity with others, and community welfare activities. This stands in some contrast with the CDP results framework and its emphasis on business, rather than social, performance—particularly as resilience (of which social capital is an important capacity) gains prominence within the cooperative development community. Some respondents noted that cooperative development has strayed from its initial function as a source of community development: “The cooperative is not a real agent of social, and community development ... the social aspect has been lost and it is only used as a management model. [If this is] attended to [it] would give us a lot of presence as a cooperative and as a true agent of action for the community.”

Programmatic Considerations

Flexibility, adaptation, and customization. One of CDP's greatest assets is an emphasis on flexibility when it comes to project implementation. In particular, implementing partners appreciated USAID/Washington's openness to program adaptations during the COVID-19 pandemic. This flexibility in implementation was also carried over to the relationship between implementing partners and cooperatives, as implementing partners often demonstrated adaptability in tailoring their activities to cooperatives' needs. Cooperative leaders generally perceived CDP support to be most effective when it was customized to their needs. Models to achieve this customization varied, but the key factor for success seems to be responsiveness to cooperatives' demand and context.

Partnerships between implementing partners and USAID. The USAID/Washington Agreement Officer's Representative has established a strong partnership with implementing partners built on shared understanding, communication, and flexibility. Implementing partners remarked that USAID's fast approvals and problem-solving support, in particular, help them to operate more efficiently and effectively. On the other hand, CDP engagement with USAID Missions at the country level is not as fruitful as it could be. One factor might be that some implementing partners lack an understanding of USAID structures and processes, how to navigate that system, and the kind of support that Missions can provide if leveraged. A larger issue is the dynamic between USAID/Washington-funded activities and local Missions in the countries where they work, as greater collaboration and coordination are not well-supported by incentive structures.

Gender and youth inclusion. Activities around gender and youth are often valuable, leading to meaningful change for both individual members and the cooperative as a whole when they occur. But even though all implementing partners mention gender and youth inclusion in their theories of change and program descriptions, they have not consistently implemented activities targeting women and youth at the cooperative level.

Monitoring and reporting requirements. The evaluation found that implementing partners tended to struggle with collecting and reporting on program monitoring indicators. In addition, they largely regarded program monitoring as a reporting function and not as a tool for management or program improvement. Some had difficulty compiling complete data or applying the same set of indicators and processes across different countries. This was not due to a lack of USAID support, but still represents a challenge that affects both USAID and implementing partners.

4.2 Recommendations

To arrive at recommendations, the evaluation team first developed an initial set of draft recommendations based on evaluation findings and conclusions. Then, the team presented these to USAID for initial feedback and presented a revised version of the recommendations during a stakeholder workshop with both USAID and implementing partners. The evaluation team asked for detailed feedback to ensure recommendations were relevant and feasible and addressed stakeholders' priorities for future CDP program design.

USAID/Washington

Maintain strong relationships with implementing partners by prioritizing responsiveness, encouraging flexibility during implementation, and providing technical expertise and ongoing guidance. Continue to foster a culture of learning and proactively seek feedback for continuous improvement.

Invest in building and maintaining relationships between implementing partners and USAID Mission POCs. Establish clear expectations for Mission-level engagement and the division of labor between USAID/Washington and the Mission and provide clear guidance to each party. Encourage Mission engagement for learning opportunities, reduction of duplication, access to external partnerships, and advocacy of CDP activities. This is especially important for partners with less experience implementing USAID projects. In addition, USAID/Washington should invest in relationship building between USAID/Washington and Mission-level individuals (for example, Communication Specialists and Private Sector Engagement Liaisons) to reduce dependence on individual personalities and country-by-

country variation and to inform design and monitoring of CDP activities. Engage Mission Youth and Gender Specialists to better inform design and monitoring of CDP activities.

Establish and clearly communicate expectations for local ownership in activity design. Local partners and cooperatives are keen on having more of a voice in the design phase. One way to do this would be for USAID/Washington to incorporate a formal co-design process that includes USAID team members, implementing partner staff, and a selection of local partners. Work with implementing partners to clearly communicate with local partners to manage their expectations.

Clearly delineate objectives for development community behavior change. Define which actors comprise the “development community” for CDP’s purposes, what success looks like, how it is achieved, and to what extent each implementing partner is expected to engage in it.

Invest in additional research on member equity and identify challenges encountered during implementation. Co-create a set of learning questions to be further explored and addressed in future program cycles. Learning questions should be geared toward defining why building member equity is important and providing successful examples or approaches for how to achieve it.

Take steps to support improved collection, use, and reporting of monitoring data. One component of this is to encourage implementing partners to allocate appropriate resources within their approved budgets for monitoring, evaluation and learning functions and internal capacity building. USAID could also consider whether additional resources (such as monitoring, evaluation and learning support contractors) could be made available to implementing partners to supplement the support that USAID provides directly. Also worth considering is whether to refine some of the indicators or improve reporting processes to better reflect what success looks like. Most of the CDP custom indicators, such as the dollar value of income and/or services delivered to members by cooperatives and credit unions, the value of member equity in a cooperative or credit union, and the number of cooperative members benefiting from services and resources delivered through cooperatives and credit unions can capture increased values simply by working with more cooperatives (obscuring actual improvements within cooperatives). Two ways to address this would be to include the number of cooperatives worked with as a required disaggregate for those indicators, and establishing controls during the annual USAID reporting process to account for increases or decreases in the number of partner cooperatives.

Continue leveraging the unique role and capabilities of OCDC as a convener and advocate, and collaborate with them on refining the research function. It was clear throughout the evaluation that the CDP implementing partners value collaboration and knowledge sharing and that OCDC holds an important role in facilitating those things. Consider the balance of needs between different stakeholder groups and how to best serve them.

Implementing Partners

Continue supporting improvements to cooperative management, governance, and business performance. These are areas in which CDP demonstrates considerable strength and plays a unique role in the development landscape.

Place a stronger emphasis on capacity strengthening for actors in the cooperative ecosystem, including government, apex organizations, community-based organizations, local training institutes, accounting firms, and other service providers.

Continue customizing support as much as possible to the specific needs of each cooperative. For example, some cooperatives requested more support with marketing and growing their customer base. Some of the producer cooperatives expressed interest in venturing into processing and value-addition. Other cooperatives were eager to work with implementing partners on digitizing their financial and management processes. A few, especially in Peru, noted that research on topics such as dairy markets and agricultural techniques in the context would be helpful.

Support institutionalization of improved knowledge and practices and ensure that training models support long-term sustainability of changes. Consider the key roles in behavior change for improved organizational performance across cooperative boards, staff, and members. Target and tailor interventions accordingly to each audience and consider turnover rates for each position. In addition, encourage cooperatives to update bylaws and policies to reflect newly adopted processes and practices. Consider ways to promote knowledge transfer from one generation of leaders to the next.

Outside of startups and extreme market shocks, the program should try to avoid covering operational costs. Activities should continue to build the financial resilience of cooperatives and support them in accessing affordable capital. Conduct research on models of financial sustainability for service cooperatives and decide whether USAID and implementing partner expectations for their financial self-sufficiency should be relaxed.

Conduct comprehensive gender analysis and action planning and invest in learning activities to inform locally and sectorally relevant youth integration strategies.

Conduct system-level mapping of enabling environments in each country and determine how best to work in alignment with local systems, expectations, and norms, especially when working in legal and regulatory reform. Invest time and resources into actors and processes that will provide the highest impact. Be mindful of different expectations among government entities and implementing partners to avoid friction and frustration.

Consider additional research on the linkages between member engagement, social capital, and resilience. Consider additional research on the linkages between member engagement, social capital, and resilience. Assess cooperatives' resilience and tailor interventions to further bolster the role of cooperatives as a source of economic and social stability for members and communities during shocks and stressors.

Consider ways to increase engagement with the broader development community to amplify project learning and expand its network. This could happen at a country level through direct engagement, at the international level through development industry working groups, or other channels.

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ANNEX A. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The full text of evaluation questions and sub-questions the evaluation addressed is as follows:

- 1. To what extent has the project contributed to facilitating more sustainable cooperative systems that deliver value to their members?**
 - a. What factors at the whole-of-project level are enabling and/or preventing the achievement of more sustainable cooperative systems that deliver value to their members across CDP activities?
 - b. How has the CDP contributed to facilitating more sustainable cooperative systems at the activity level, particularly through local ownership of activity design and implementation by partner cooperatives?

- 2. Regarding IR 1, to what extent has the project contributed to any change in cooperative performance, management, and governance over time?**
 - a. What changes have occurred in cooperative business performance and cooperative management and governance according to CDP performance monitoring data and cooperative-level data?
 - b. What changes do cooperative leaders and members perceive in the areas of cooperative business performance, management, and governance? How do these perceptions compare to the changes observed in monitoring data?

- 3. Regarding IR 2, to what extent has the project contributed to improvements in country-level cooperative enabling environments?**
 - a. What have been the major achievements of the project in terms of improving the enabling environment, including improving access to services and resources, and improving the legal and regulatory framework for cooperatives? What programmatic or contextual factors enabled and/or prevented these achievements?
 - b. What have been the biggest challenges to improving the cooperative enabling environment? Do these challenges suggest any implicit or explicit assumptions that are missing from the program logic?

- 4. Regarding IR 3, to what extent has the project contributed to enhancing the development community's support to cooperatives?**
 - a. What have been the major achievements of the project in terms of behavior change within the development community in support of cooperatives? (This may include more effective programming, increased dissemination of learning, and strengthening collaboration among CDOs and the development community, among other changes.) What programmatic or contextual factors contributed to these achievements?
 - b. What have been the biggest challenges to improving the development community's support to cooperatives? Do these challenges suggest any implicit or explicit assumptions that are missing from the program logic?
 - c. What factors contributed to major achievements or challenges related to behavior change in the development community that supports cooperatives?

- d. To what extent has the U.S. Overseas Cooperative Development Council's community of practice and coordination among the different CDP activities contributed to the project purpose? What are the main benefits or challenges to coordination between CDP partners? How can these challenges be addressed?

5. To what extent has support provided by USAID/Washington and Missions to implementing partners contributed to the project purpose?

- a. What are the main challenges or achievements in creating and fostering effective partnerships between USAID/Washington Agreement Officer, Agreement Officer's Representative, MEL staff with implementing partners?
- b. What are the main challenges or achievements in creating and fostering effective partnerships between Country-level Mission Points of Contact and implementing partners?

ANNEX B. METHODS

Contribution analysis

The first step in this approach was working from a defined theory of change. In this case, the evaluation team started with the CDP results framework and then examined project documents from all nine implementing partners to understand their individual theory of change and how their activities were meant to feed into the IRs and the sub-IRs. The evaluation team created visual depictions of our understanding of each implementing partner's theory of change and reviewed it with them during a virtual consultation, making updates as needed. The evaluation team eventually coded and aggregated the elements of each partner's theory of change to construct a whole-of-project theory of change that represents, at a high level, the key intended inputs and activities, outputs, and outcomes for the project as a whole.

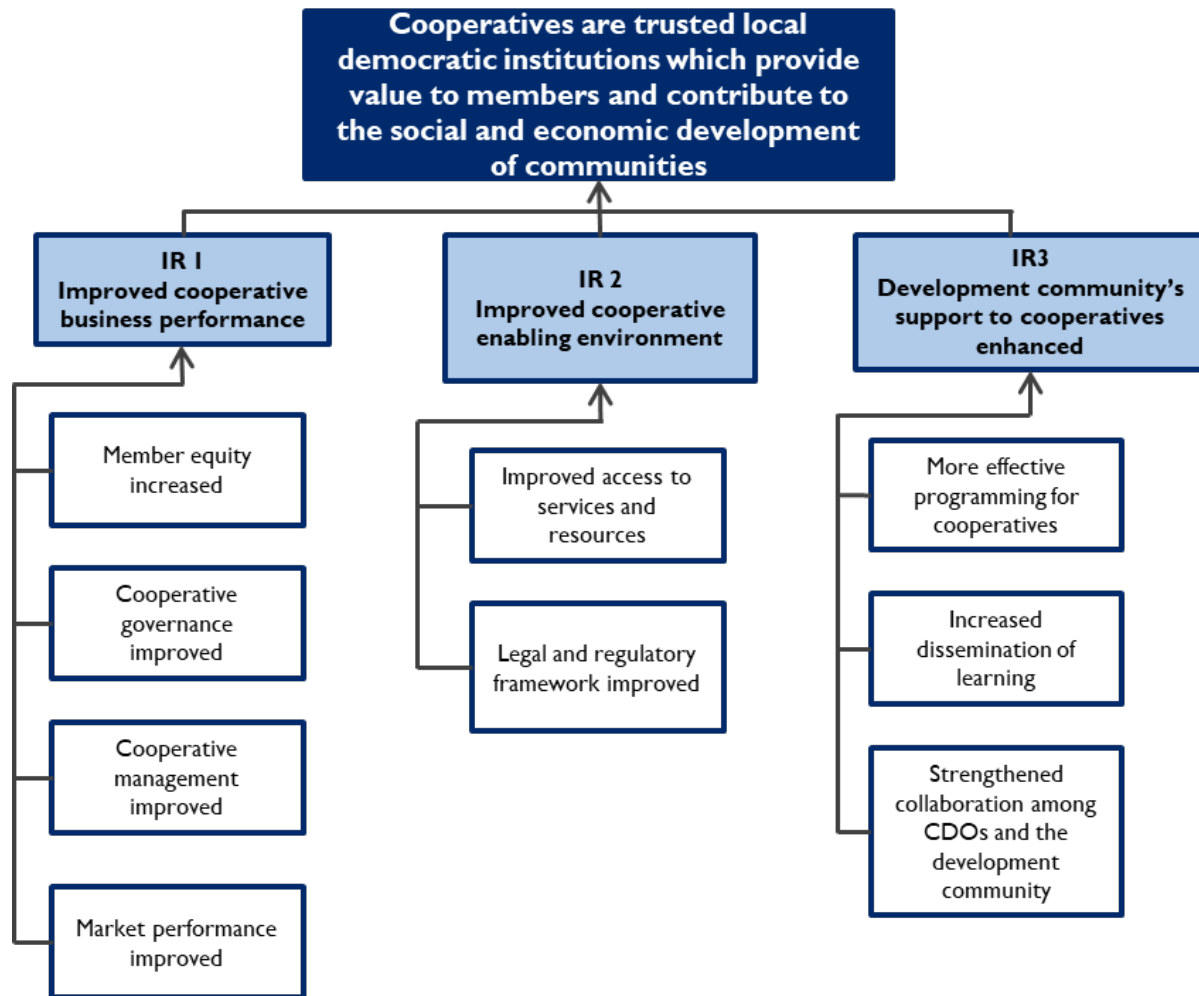
Then, data gathering activities were focused on the intended linkages and assumptions underlying the theory of change. The evaluation team used data from multiple sources to triangulate findings for each evaluation question. All data gathering instruments included questions both on what changes respondents perceived in response to CDP support, but also how external factors beyond project or implementing partner control impacted the achievement of intended results.

Following data analysis, the evaluation team conducted a series of discussions to synthesize findings and assess the extent to which the evidence supports the assumed linkages in the theory of change. For each linkage, the team considered the findings from quantitative and qualitative analysis and what they told us about the program and implementing partners' contribution to intermediate and sub-IRs, taking into consideration the external factors that stakeholders noted may have helped or hindered the achievement of results. The evaluation team also critically considered the extent to which activities were implemented as planned, noting areas of the results framework that saw a lower level of implementing partner activity.

Cooperative leader survey

The survey was programmed in Open Data Kit (ODK) and run using ONA, a survey data collection web application. On average each interview took between 15 and 25 minutes, with some outliers due to internet connectivity issues and technical errors. Survey enumerators followed a strict protocol for call attempts, making a maximum of three attempts for each coop per day (once in the morning, afternoon, and evening), and no more than five call attempts for each cooperative in total. If the team was unable to reach a cooperative after five calls, the cooperative was dropped from the final analysis. Members of the evaluation team conducted daily quality checks and cleaned the survey data using Stata software. Data cleaning included filtering out incomplete surveys, resolving any issues resulting from poor network connectivity, translating open-ended question responses to English, and reclassifying miscategorized data.

ANNEX C. CDP RESULTS FRAMEWORK



ANNEX D. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review summarizes the current cooperative landscape, focusing on existing evidence that relates to the CDP's theory of change. In particular, we focus on IR 1 (improved cooperative business performance) and IR 2 (improved cooperative enabling environment) because of their broader applicability and evidence base beyond the CDP project itself.

Literature on cooperatives supports the CDP's foundational notion of cooperatives as important vehicles for economic and social development in low- and middle-income countries. The literature on cooperatives notes a range of benefits to members, including social welfare services that may not be available elsewhere, access to credit, land, agricultural inputs, and information (Kwakyewah 2016). One study on the impact of cooperative membership on agricultural performance for rural households in Rwanda found that cooperative membership in general has a positive impact on various farm performance indicators including gross farm revenue, net farm income and farm income per worker (Verhofstadt and Maertens 2014). Minah (2022) studied the impacts of farmer organization membership in Zambia, where most farmer organizations are organized as cooperatives and where government input subsidies are channeled through such organizations. Membership led to higher farm performance across a number of metrics, even for farmers who do not receive government subsidies through their cooperative membership. Existing research also highlights the important role of non-agricultural cooperatives. For instance, in Kenya the Mwalimu Savings and Credit Cooperative Society is one of the most profitable cooperatives in Kenya with an annual revenue of nearly U.S. \$100 million (Kwakyewah 2016), and Savings and Credit Cooperatives in Peru are supplying financial services to address the lack of financial tools for medium- and low-income households (Funes 2019). The economic benefits of cooperatives are not found universally across the literature, however; for example, one study in Cambodia did not find evidence of income benefits for vegetable cooperative members, though the authors posit that cooperative members may benefit from services the cooperative provides (Ofori et al 2019).

The literature generally supports a link between strong management and performance among cooperatives, in line with the CDP's theory of change (Ragasa and Golan 2014; Meador et al 2016). For example, buyers in one study agreed that one of the factors for choosing to do business with a cooperative is their confidence in its manager and board of directors (Donovan et al 2017). In turn, if the management of a cooperative has well-established relationships with buyers, then the cooperatives' ability to enter into contracts with that buyer will increase, thus increasing the revenue for the cooperative (Donovan et al 2017). Another study in Kenya points to the importance of managers' experience in sustainably maximizing cooperative income (Sabari et al 2020).

An argument also exists that in order to remain competitive in international food systems with long supply chains, financial performance is inherently opposed to the democratic governing principles around which cooperatives are founded (Ajates 2020). While this argument was specific to the European context, one finding from Peru highlights the same tension: while people view cooperatives as fair and local, they do not perceive them as innovative, profitable, global model businesses (Funes 2019). Since the CDP's theory of change includes an assumed causal link between improved cooperative management and business performance, the literature suggests it would be useful for the evaluation to further assess this relationship across CDP activities and contexts.

The literature shows an important relationship between the local enabling environment and cooperative performance. It suggests a need for balance in governments' policy approach. Some types of government involvement has been beneficial to cooperatives. For instance, the Peruvian government has played a role in the improving enabling environment through legislation and policy change (Funes 2019), and the Rwandan government also played a role in the enabling environment by land consolidation, cultivating the marshlands and by distributing fertilizer application through rural cooperatives at subsidized prices

(Verhofstadt and Maertens 2014). At the same time, some work suggests that too much government involvement is detrimental to cooperatives. Notably, in countries like Tanzania and Burkina Faso where there was an extensive period of state controlled cooperative development, cooperatives grew through government support or even mandates, rather than value delivery to members. This resulted in an eroded sense of ownership among members and low morale, which in turn also negatively affected management and performance (Kwakyewah 2016).

While not officially part of the CDP theory of change, there is a strong undercurrent of equity and inclusiveness as important to achieving the overall CDP purpose. Existing evidence suggests mixed or lacking equity and inclusion of women, youth, and other vulnerable groups across the cooperative landscape. For example, there is evidence that as agricultural cooperatives get larger or more market-oriented, they may become less inclusive of smallholder farmers (Bijman and Wijers 2019). Maleko and Msuya (2015) note that women's and youth's strong contribution to the agriculture sector in Tanzania is not reflected in agricultural cooperative membership figures. Similarly, a 2012 study estimates women's participation in cooperatives in East Africa at 30 percent (Majurin 2012). While this estimate is now dated, the evaluation team has not seen evidence in the literature of substantial increases in women's meaningful participation in the cooperative sector as a whole. Thus, the evaluation will assess inclusivity as an (implicit) goal of the CDP project but not take it as a given.

Finally, consistent with the CDP purpose, the literature points to the importance of local, bottom-up support for cooperatives to be successful. The example above of government-driven cooperative growth illustrates this point, as do the findings of Meador et al (2016) who noted the importance of local ownership in producing sustainable agricultural cooperatives in Kenya in the context of a previous Land O'Lakes program. That said, Ragasa and Golan (2014) also find that assistance from outside entities during set-up, such as setting up groups, building community awareness, and mobilizing collective action, positively impacted the performance of producer organizations in the Democratic Republic of Congo, suggesting that top-down or external support can also be important, at least in certain contexts.

ANNEX E. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

CDP Cooperative Leader Key Informant Interview Guide

SECTION 1: RESPONDENT BACKGROUND

First, we would like to start with some general information on your background with your cooperative.

Can you please tell me about your role in this cooperative?

How long have been in a leadership role with this cooperative?

How long have you been a member of this cooperative?

SECTION 2: GENERAL INFORMATION ON COOPERATIVE STRUCTURE & ACTIVITIES

Next, we'd like to learn more about this cooperative and its activities.

In the simplest terms, what are your cooperative's primary activities? (Probe: business activities, community development activities, ancillary businesses?)

Can you please describe the membership of your cooperative? (Probe: how many members? How many men/women, youth/non-youth?)

How did your cooperative originally form?

SECTION 3: ENGAGEMENT WITH CDP IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

Now, we would like to talk more specifically about the [implementing partner] activities you have been involved with.

How long have you been working with [implementing partner]?

What are the main activities you have worked on or support you have received from [IP?] (Since 2019 or the date they mentioned above)?

Now, I'd like to ask you about the process of designing and selecting CDP activities. First, who contributed to the initial design and selection of activities? (How specifically did you and other cooperative members work with [implementing partner] on the activity design?)

Probe: Which parts of the activities do you feel are driven by the [implementing partner] staff?

Probe: Which parts do you feel are driven by your cooperative?

How well do the activities align with your overall priorities as a cooperative?

To what extent do you feel a sense of ownership of these activities?

Who contributed to any changes/pivots/shifts in the design (if applicable)?

SECTION 4: PROJECT SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

For these next questions, we want to learn more about your opinions about your cooperative's greatest success and biggest challenges while working on this program.

In thinking about the value or benefits you get from working with your cooperative, has working with [implementing partner] made it more valuable to you to be in this cooperative? (How so?)

What were your cooperative's biggest achievements during your work with [implementing partner]?

Probe: What factors have contributed to that success?

What were the biggest challenges your cooperative faced during your work with [implementing partner]?

Probe: What factors contributed to these challenges?

Probe: What actions were taken to overcome those challenges?

Probe: In what ways could [implementing partner] help to alleviate these challenges?

Did you observe any unanticipated or surprising outcomes related to this project (either positive or negative)? If so, can you please describe them?

How have [implementing partner] activities impacted some types of people within your cooperative differently than others? (Probe: women vs men, youth vs non-youth, other relevant groups)

SECTION 5: PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES TO CDP IRs

Next, we want to hear about any changes that have taken place in your cooperative since participating in this program.

How would you describe the management and internal governance of your cooperative? Has cooperative governance changed since you began working with [implementing partner]? If so, in what ways?

Probe: If you were not working with [implementing partner], would management and internal governance be the same as it is now? Why/why not?

How would you describe your cooperative's business performance? Has financial performance changed since [year they began working with implementing partner/2019]?

Probe: Are there any financial records or documents you are able to share with us?

Probe: If you were not working with [implementing partner], would business performance be the same as it is now? Why/why not?

Probe: Has member equity changed since [year they began working with implementing partner/2019]? If so, in what ways? (Has [implementing partner] played a role?)

How would you describe your cooperative's ability to access and provide services and resources that the coop and your members need to be successful? Has your cooperative's ability to access services and resources changed since [year they began working with implementing partner/2019]?

Probe: If you were not working with [implementing partner], would access to services and resources be the same as it is now? Why/why not?

How would you describe the enabling environment for cooperatives to operate in [country], such as laws and policies that either support cooperatives like yours or make it more difficult for them to function?

Are you aware of any changes to laws and policies as it relates to your cooperative since you began working with [implementing partner]?

Probe: What has enabled or prevented changes to these laws and policies? (Has [implementing partner] played a role? What about contextual factors like politics, the economy, social movements etc.?)

What other donor or government-funded organizations has your cooperative worked with since 2019? (Probe: what about federations, unions, other apex organizations?)

Probe: Have you noticed any changes in whether or how other donor government-funded organizations engage with cooperatives since 2019? If so, what are these changes?

SECTION 6: EXTERNAL FACTORS

We know that sometimes there are other factors that can affect your lives and how you work with your cooperative. Next, we want to hear more about those things in the external environment that have played a role.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the ability to work with [implementing partner] to bring value to cooperative members?

What other external factors may have impacted the ability work with [implementing partner] to bring value to your members? (Positively or negatively, such as political, social economic or other contextual factors)

SECTION 7: CONCLUDING

How satisfied are you with the support your cooperative receives from [implementing partner]? Why?

If you were to join a project like this again, what would be your top two suggestions for improvement to increase value to cooperative members?

What else do you think we need to know about this project?

Do you have any questions for us about this evaluation?

CDP Cooperative Member

Focus Group Discussion Guide

(Ask as many of the primary questions as is feasible given the time constraints and as are appropriate for the respondent. Ask probe questions as applicable. If running short on time, priority questions are in bold. Questions do not have to be read exactly as written.)

SECTION 1: RESPONDENT BACKGROUND

First, I would like to know a little bit more about each of you.

Can you all share your name, and how long you have been a member of your cooperative?

SECTION 2: ENGAGEMENT WITH CDP IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

Next, we want to know more about how your cooperative has worked with [implementing partner].

We understand that your cooperative has worked on [xyz] with [implementing partner]. What has that been like, and what has that meant for you as cooperative members?

What has been the level of input cooperative members had in CDP-related activities and the implementation of those activities?

To what extent do you as cooperative members feel a sense of ownership of these activities? How much power do you have to make decisions over this coop's activities?

SECTION 3: PROJECT SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

For these next questions, we want to learn more about your opinions about your cooperative's greatest success and biggest challenges while working on this program.

In thinking about the value or benefits you get from working with your cooperative, has working with [implementing partner] made it more valuable to you to be in this cooperative? (How so?)

What were your cooperative's biggest achievements during your work with [implementing partner]?

What factors have contributed to that success?

What were the biggest challenges your cooperative faced during your work with [implementing partner]?

What factors contributed to these challenges?

SECTION 4: PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES TO CDP IRs

Next, we want to hear about any changes that have taken place in your cooperative since participating in this program.

How would you describe the management and internal governance of your cooperative? Has cooperative governance changed since you began working with [implementing partner]? If so, in what ways?

Probe: If you were not working with [implementing partner], would management and internal governance be the same as it is now? Why/why not?

How would you describe your cooperative's business/financial performance? Has financial performance changed since [year they began working with implementing partner/2019]?

Probe: If you were not working with [implementing partner], would financial performance be the same as it is now? Why/why not?

Probe: Has member equity changed since [year they began working with implementing partner/2019]? If so, in what ways? (Has [implementing partner] played a role?)

Has your cooperative's ability to access services and resources changed since [year they began working with implementing partner/2019]? If you were not working with [implementing partner], would access to services and resources be the same as it is now? Why/why not?

How would you describe the enabling environment for cooperatives to operate in [country], such as laws and policies that either support cooperatives like yours or make it more difficult for them to function?

Probe: Are you aware of any changes to laws and policies as it relates to your cooperative since you began working with [implementing partner]?

Probe: What has enabled or prevented changes to these laws and policies? (Has [implementing partner] played a role? What about contextual factors like politics, the economy, social movements etc.?)

Next, we want to learn more about how specific groups of people in your cooperative, like women, youth, and marginalized groups such as [XYZ—country specific] have been a part of your cooperative's activities with [implementing partner].

Has the work with [implementing partner] affected women, youth, and other marginalized groups differently than other members? (If so, how?)

Probe: Has the work with [implementing partner] changed the way women, youth, or other groups are involved with the cooperative?

Were there any surprises or anything unexpected or surprising about your cooperative being involved in this project, or the impacts that has led to? If so, can you please describe them?

SECTION 5: EXTERNAL FACTORS

We know that sometimes there are other factors that can affect your lives and how you work with your cooperative. Next, we want to hear more about those things in the external environment that have played a role.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the ability to work with [implementing partner] to bring value to cooperative members?

What other external factors may have impacted the ability work with [implementing partner] to bring value to your members? (Positively or negatively, such as political, social economic or other contextual factors)

SECTION 6: CONCLUDING

Thank you so much for your participation. We are just a have a few final questions before we finish for today.

If your cooperative was to be involved in a project like this again, what would be your top two suggestions for improvement to increase value to cooperative members?

What else do you think we need to know about this project?

Do you have any questions for us about the evaluation?

**CDP Cooperative Stakeholder
Key Informant Interview Guide**

SECTION 1: RESPONDENT BACKGROUND

First, we would like to start with some general information on your organization and your role. *[note for interviewer]: If this person was referred to you by another key informant, describe here why you were hoping to talk to them.*

Can you tell me the name of your organization and role within it?

How long have you been in that role?

How does your organization support cooperative development?

In what ways have you been involved with the CDP project's activities, activity design or implementation?

SECTION 2: PROJECT SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

What have been the CDP's biggest achievements in [country]?

What factors have contributed to that success? How did CDP leverage these factors to succeed?

What have been the CDP's biggest challenges in [country]?

What factors created these challenges?

What actions were taken to overcome those challenges?

SECTION 3: PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES TO CDP IRs

Now, we'd like to talk about some of the key areas the CDP tries to influence and any changes you have observed since 2018 in those areas.

How would you describe the management or governance of cooperatives in [country]?

Probe: Is cooperative management/governance generally improving worsening, or staying the same? Please describe what may be causing this change or the lack of it.

Probe: In what ways has business performance changed for the cooperatives working with the CDP since the beginning of the CDP project? (To what extent did the CDP project play a role?)

How would you describe the business (financial) performance of cooperatives in [country]?

Probe: Is cooperative business (financial) performance generally improving, worsening, or staying the same? Please describe what may be causing this change or the lack of it.

Probe: In what ways has business (financial) performance changed for the cooperatives working with the CDP since the beginning of the CDP project? (To what extent did the CDP project play a role?)

Can you please describe any services or resources that cooperatives can access, provide (or try to provide) to their members in [Country]?

Probe: In what ways has access to [services and resources] changed for cooperatives working with the CDP and their members since the beginning of the CDP project?

What has enabled or prevented changes to cooperatives members' access to services and resources?

To what extent did the CDP project play a role? Can you please describe how?

How would you describe the laws and policies that relate to cooperatives in [country]? (Are they enabling/disabling, comprehensive, confusing, accessible?)

Are you aware of any changes that have been made to the laws and policies as cooperatives since the beginning of the CDP project (2019)? If so, what changes?

What has enabled or prevented changes to these laws, policies, or other regulatory frameworks? (To what extent did the CDP support these changes?)

How would you describe the level of support for cooperatives within the development community (donors, NGOs, etc.)?

How would you describe changes in the development community's support for cooperatives in recent years, if any?

To what extent did the CDP play a role in those changes?

Given your understanding of the CDP, do you think it should do anything differently (more, less?) when it comes to the development community's support for cooperatives?

SECTION 4: EXTERNAL FACTORS

Our evaluation seeks to understand not only what the CDP itself achieved, but also what external factors may have supported or hindered its ability to achieve results. So next we'd like to ask a few questions about contextual factors outside the program's control.

How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the CDP's ability to achieve its intended results?

What other external factors have affected the CDP's ability to achieve its intended results, either positively or negatively?

What other groups are working with cooperatives or doing advocacy work on the enabling environment in [country]? (ex. Cooperatives themselves, unions, apex organizations, federations, trade associations, other development partners)

Have you observed any unanticipated or surprising outcomes (positive or negative) related to CDP activities in [country]? If so, can you please describe them?

CDP implementing partners only work directly with a limited number of cooperatives. However, we expect that some practices promoted by CDP partners may be adopted by cooperatives outside the CDP project. Have you seen any examples of this type of spillover effect?

SECTION 5: CONCLUDING

What would be your top two suggestions for improvements that CDP could make to its programs to increase value to cooperative members in [country]?

What else do you think we need to know about this project?

Do you have any questions for us about this evaluation?

CDP Cooperative Leader Survey

1. What is your role in your cooperative?
 - a. Member or chair of the board of directors
 - b. Cooperative member (non-leadership role)
 - c. Manager
 - d. Other (specify)
2. Have you ever been in a leadership role in this cooperative?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. How long have you been in this role?
 - a. Open Answer
4. Is this a paid salaried position? Hint: only select yes for a salaried position (not a stipend).
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. Are you also a member of the cooperative?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. How many years have you been a member of the cooperative?
 - a. Open Answer
7. What type of cooperative is yours?
 - a. Producer / marketing Cooperatives
 - b. Worker cooperatives (service—shared space)
 - c. Housing cooperatives
 - d. Financial cooperatives (SACCOS)
 - e. Health insurance cooperatives
 - f. Consumer cooperatives (coop grocery)
 - g. Other (specify)
8. In what value chain(s) or sector(s) does your cooperative operate?
 - a. Dairy
 - b. Poultry
 - c. Cacao
 - d. Coffee
 - e. Maize
 - f. Horticulture (fruits/vegetables)
 - g. Health/medical
 - h. Finance
 - i. Housing
 - j. Energy
 - k. Manufacturing
 - l. Transportation
 - m. Hotel and hospitality
 - n. Other (specify)
 - o. Prefer not to answer
9. How many years has your cooperative been working with [implementing partner]?
 - a. Open Answer

10. What are the main areas on which your cooperative has received support from [implementing partner] (since 2019)?
- Cooperative management/governance
 - Financial management or accounting
 - Agricultural production
 - Value addition for agricultural products
 - Marketing of agricultural products
 - Member engagement
 - Gender inclusion
 - Youth inclusion
 - Cooperative registration
 - Legal or regulatory support
 - Risk assessment/ management
 - Other (specify)
11. What are the main ways in which [implementing partner] has provided support for the areas you mentioned?
- Training
 - Mentoring/coaching
 - Learning or exchange visits
 - Advocacy
 - Providing equipment directly (i.e., computers, agricultural processing machinery, etc.)
 - Providing grants or matching funds
 - Linking cooperative or members to financial institutions
 - Identifying/linking cooperative members to non-financial services or resources (technical advice, inputs, service providers, etc.)
 - Co-investment or joint venture
 - Assisting with project proposals or applications for external funding
 - Other (specify)
12. Did you participate in the selection or design of the activities on which you have received support from [implementing partner]?
- Yes
 - No
13. Did cooperative members (other than you) participate in the selection or design of the activities on which you have received support from [implementing partner]?
- Yes
 - No
14. How satisfied are you with the activities of [implementing partner] and the support your cooperative receives from [implementing partner]?
- Not at all satisfied
 - Slightly satisfied
 - Moderately satisfied
 - Very satisfied
 - Extremely satisfied
 - Prefer not to answer
15. Did any of [implementing partner] activities specifically target youth members?
- Yes

- b. No
16. To what extent do you agree that these activities were effective at strengthening participation of youth in the cooperative?
- a. Strongly Disagree
 - b. Disagree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Agree
 - e. Strongly Agree
 - f. Prefer not to answer
17. How have your cooperative's bylaws and policies changed since beginning to work with [implementing partner], if at all?
- a. Much Improved
 - b. Slightly improved
 - c. Unchanged
 - d. Slightly worse
 - e. Much worse
 - f. Prefer not to answer
18. How has your cooperative's management and governance changed since beginning to work with [implementing partner], if at all?
- a. Much Improved
 - b. Slightly improved
 - c. Unchanged
 - d. Slightly worse
 - e. Much worse
 - f. Prefer not to answer
19. How has your cooperative's financial performance changed since beginning to work with [implementing partner], if at all?
- a. Much Improved
 - b. Slightly improved
 - c. Unchanged
 - d. Slightly worse
 - e. Much worse
 - f. Prefer not to answer
20. How has your cooperative's access to services and resources changed since beginning to work with [implementing partner], if at all? *Hint: services and resources may vary by sector and country. Examples include access to financial services, inputs, technical advice, etc.*
- a. Much Improved
 - b. Slightly improved
 - c. Unchanged
 - d. Slightly worse
 - e. Much worse
 - f. Prefer not to answer
21. What external factors have **positively** affected your cooperative's ability to work with [implementing partner] to bring value to your members? *Hint: external factors means anything that is outside the control of the project itself, including COVID-19, economic/market shifts, political changes, etc.*

- a. Open Answer
- 22. What external factors have negatively affected your cooperative's ability to work with [implementing partner] to bring value to your members? Hint: external factors means anything that is outside the control of the project itself, including COVID-19, economic/market shifts, political changes, etc.
 - a. Open Answer
- 23. Do you have any other thoughts or comments you would like to share related to your involvement with the CDP and/or [implementing partner]?
 - a. Open Answer