OVERALL FRAMEWORK AND COMPONENTS

In collaboration with anticipated local implementing partners Fair Trade Lebanon (FLT) and the Lebanon Agrifood Innovation Cluster (QOOT), Land O'Lakes Venture37 (Venture37) presents the Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) LWA Empowering Local Systems in Agriculture (ELSA) project. ELSA aims to establish sustainable local systems that provide affordable and consistently available agricultural inputs and create inclusive market channels in the agricultural sector. To achieve this, ELSA will build implementing partners' capacity and provide direct technical assistance (TA) to **input suppliers** to improve input distribution and **agribusinesses'** market access. Venture37 will supplement this TA with co-investment grants for selected agribusinesses to reduce the risk of their investments. Figure 1 shows the ELSA results framework.
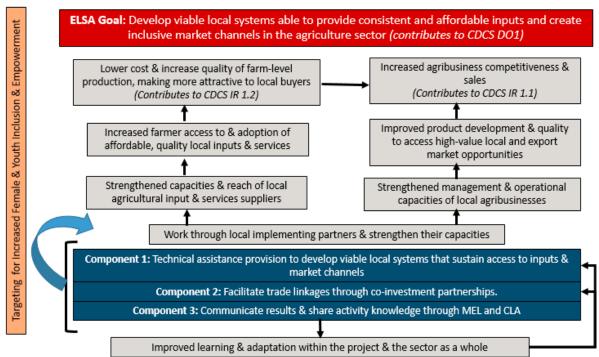
Figure 1: ELSA Results Framework

Component 3: Communicate Results and Share Activity Knowledge Through Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) and Collaboration, Learning and Adapting (CLA)

The draft MEL plan later in this proposal details how ELSA will define and measure project progress and success. This section focuses on ELSA's high-level plan for CLA and communication of results and knowledge.

Activity 3.1: CLA for Data-Driven Adaptive Management

Venture37 will periodically analyze MEL data and use the findings to continuously course correct ELSA activities, as needed, in collaboration with partners and stakeholders. Elements of the CLA plan include:

Learning questions: In collaboration with partner organizations, USAID/Lebanon, and other stakeholders in the sector, we will define a list of questions to focus on throughout project implementation. These questions will be answered using qualitative and quantitative MEL data, and subsequent reports and meetings will often center around the answers to these questions and their implications.

Regular partner meetings: ELSA staff will meet with implementing partners monthly and with market sector partners every quarter. During these meetings, they will review and discuss MEL results to guide changes in tactics and gather qualitative input on what is going well in project implementation and what could be improved.

Semi-annual Pause and Reflect sessions: ELSA staff, implementing partners, and select market sector partners and stakeholders will convene twice yearly to review ELSA's progress, including MEL results. During these collaborative, data-driven sessions, participants will decide how to adjust program implementation in the next period. This may include new RFA topics, scaling up specific TA or grant models, supporting partner scale-up of promising new products, or operational changes.

Quarterly USAID Partner Meetings: When USAID/Lebanon convenes all active projects (ELSA, TIF, DWERR, ARE, and others), ELSA project leadership will share important lessons learned and recommend ways projects can work together complementarily to benefit the agricultural sector.

Activity 3.2: Outreach and Media Plan

ELSA's communications specialist will implement the outreach and media plan, disseminating valuable information about the project to a broad audience within Lebanon and the United States. The plan aims to share learnings to guide future programming and attract interest for future support. All content will be cleared with USAID/Lebanon before dissemination.

ELSA will reach out to its audience through various means, such as maintaining a Facebook page, posting on other social media platforms, conducting press releases or press conferences to commemorate program milestones and launches, participating in food trade shows like HORECA, and giving radio interviews. Additionally, the organization will share fact sheets, fliers, and volunteer success stories within its network. It will provide training sessions led by volunteers and program staff for enterprise partners and stakeholder institutions.

Within the U.S., Venture37 will publicize the program and the American people's support through social media, blog posts, guest commentaries, or success stories from partners and volunteers/STTAs. In addition, Venture37 will include a section about the ELSA activity on our F2F fact sheet and post success stories and other publications through Land O'Lakes Inc., which will expand our volunteer recruiting efforts and networks.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN

This draft Activity Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plan (AMELP) outlines Venture37's strategy for monitoring activity performance, evaluating project outcomes, and using the results to adapt our management of collaborative programs and share useful learnings more widely. All proposed MEL interventions follow USAID's procedures as outlined in ADS 201. Venture37 will work with USAID/Lebanon to finalize the AMELP within 90 days of award.

Monitoring

ELSA will collect monitoring data at each project activity to measure the output indicators defined in Table 7. ELSA's MEL specialist will develop monitoring tools tailored to the activities to ensure that all necessary data is collected. ELSA staff, implementation partners, and market sector partners will collect data on the activities they implement, respectively. Market sector partners will also periodically submit data on practices, sales, investment, and employment changes. To ensure partners collect appropriate, quality data, their agreements will include quarterly data submission requirements, and the MEL specialist will conduct training sessions and do spot checks on the data collected. All data will be entered into Venture37's electronic data management systems, IMPACTS, on the TrackVia platform.

Evaluation

ELSA will conduct a mixed-methods, repeated cross-section evaluation to measure progress on outcome indicators in Table 7. ELSA will use a competitive process to select an external evaluator for the baseline, midterm, and final evaluations. The

evaluation will include a producer survey conducted with a representative, random sample of supported farmers. The survey will include questions about access to and adoption of inputs and practices promoted by the project, changes in sales of commodities grown using those inputs/practices, and changes in the cost of production for the related commodities. The evaluation will also include focus group discussions with the farmers to understand how and why they are accessing inputs and changing their practices. In addition, we will conduct a partner capacity assessment with implementing partners to define key organizational dimensions and assess progress in financial management, strategic planning, risk management, gender and youth inclusion, and other areas. The evaluation will also include an enterprise survey with a census of market actor partners, providing information on progress toward Acceleration Plan goals and a summary of annual business performance outcomes. To establish a baseline, the ELSA team will conduct this survey on a rolling basis as market actors join the project. In subsequent years, the enterprise survey may confirm quarterly data collected on practices, sales, investment, and employment as part of monitoring, or it may replace the quarterly data if there are gaps or errors. Lastly, the evaluation will conduct key informant interviews with stakeholders such as project staff, implementing partner and market sector partner representatives, and government officials to understand the project's progress, implementation feedback, and improvement ideas. In addition to the baseline, midterm, and final evaluations, ELSA staff will conduct internal producer surveys, enterprise surveys, and partner capacity assessments in years 2 and 4 to measure progress toward outcomes.

Data Quality and Partner Data Management Capacity Building

The ELSA MEL team will provide capacity-building training and support to both implementing and market actor partners to ensure quality data collection. This will include data collection templates, initial training, and direct observational visits with coaching during the initial years.

All data the ELSA team collects will be entered directly into the IMPACTS system via tablet. Data from partners will be entered into the system on computers. The system automatically validates data during data entry to reduce quality issues. Data quality will be further assured through training of staff and partners on the proper use of data collection tools, regular field visits by the MEL manager, back-checks, data cleaning using systematic processes and scripts, and official internal data quality assessments conducted annually starting in Year 2.

Collaboration, Learning, and Adaptation

ELSA's CLA approach will include the following components, which are also discussed in Component 3. This section provides additional details:

Learning Questions: Following the baseline assessment and market systems analyses, ELSA staff, partners, and stakeholders will collaboratively define a set of learning questions for the project. Potential learning questions include:

1. What are the most crucial capacity-building needs for agribusinesses in Lebanon? What are the best ways to build agribusiness capacity in these areas to promote self-reliance and resilience?
2. What are the most promising new local agriculture input products that increase productivity and decrease producer costs? How can these best be scaled up?
3. What are the most successful new retail market products or operational changes that increase agribusiness sales volumes and values or decrease production costs? How can these best be scaled up?
4. What activities are most impactful in reaching women and youth, promoting the adoption of improved practices, and increasing productivity and sales for these groups? How can those best be scaled up?

The ELSA MEL team will answer these questions using data derived from the quantitative and qualitative monitoring and evaluation processes described above. ELSA may also conduct special studies on 1-2 priority learning questions based on collaborative discussion of results. For example, one potential option is a detailed analysis of production costs for a sample of market sector partners to develop strategies for reducing costs. Studies will be designed collaboratively and included in TA or grant agreements.

Performance Indicator Table

Table 7 shows the key output and outcome indicators that will be tracked to measure ELSA project progress. All variables related to individuals and organizations will be disaggregated by sex and age group to enable quick visualization of differential impacts for those target groups. Baseline and target values are based on estimates from document review and field visits, but they will be adjusted following the baseline analysis in collaboration with USAID/Lebanon.

Table 7: Project Performance Indicator Table

INDICATOR NAME		BASE-LINE	TARGETS					
			LOP	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
Output Indicators								
# of MSMEs, including farmers, receiving non-financial business development services **(EG.4.5.2)** [1]		0	**530**	3	77	180	249	202
# of individuals participating in USG food security programs **(EG.3-2)**		0	**4,700**	0	606	1,449	2,079	1,609
% of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources **(GNDR-2)**	Farmers	0	**10%**	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
	Others	0	**30%**	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%
% of participants who are youth (15-29) in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources **(YOUTH-3)**	Farmers	0	**15%**	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
	Others	0	**20%**	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
Value (USD) of private-sector resources leveraged by the USG to support U.S. Foreign Assistance Objectives **(PSE-4)**		0	**$2 million**	$0	$400,000	$600,000	$800,000	$200,000
Outcome Indicators								
% of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance **(CBLD-9)**		0%	80%	0%	50%	60%	70%	80%
# of MSMEs, farmers, and other organizations benefiting from new horizontal and vertical market linkages **(Custom 1)**		0	288	0	29	77	128	124
#of individuals in the agriculture and food system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USG assistance **(EG.3.2-24)**		1,862 [2]	3,938	0	424	1,071	1,481	1,110
# of people with improved incomes as a result of USG assistance **(Custom 2)**		0	1,650	0	152	419	624	531
# of new/improved products and services for sale by supported businesses **(F2F 15)**		0	45	0	8	13	18	6
# of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs created with USG assistance **(EG.3-9)**		0	52	0	6	13	18	6

[1] Counts 10% of all farmers reached by the program and all 61 organizations expected to receive TA: 3 implementing partners and 58 market actor partners, currently projected to be 18 nurseries or other input suppliers, 10 compost makers, 25 downstream SME agribusinesses, 3 universities and/or labs, 2 other extension partners (likely chambers of commerce).

[2] This is an estimate of total LOP participants in the program who adopted improved practices before participating.

% of jobs retained [since baseline] as a result of USG assistance **(Custom 3)**		629 [3]	80%	n/a	95%	90%	85%	80%
Value (USD) of incremental sales as a result of USG assistance	Firms **(Custom 4)**	TBD	+20%	+0%	+5%	+10%	+15%	+20%
	Farmers **(EG.3.2-19)**	TBD	+10%	+0%	+3%	+6%	+8%	+10%

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[3] This is an estimate of the baseline number of jobs (FTE) across all organizations supported over LOP. This will be updated based on the rolling baseline with partners as they join the project.