

AGLC SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT

PERIOD: OCTOBER 1, 2015 TO MARCH 31, 2016

**FEED THE FUTURE AFRICA GREAT LAKES REGION COFFEE SUPPORT PROGRAM
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1. Executive Summary: Key Accomplishments and Challenges

During this 6-month reporting period the AGLC project was, overall, highly successful in achieving its major outputs and deliverables, though for some of the field-based activities a modest adjustment in the timeframe was required. The project is fully on track to achieve all major activities included in the Year 1 Work Plan by the year's end.

AGLC had a successful launch with kickoff events in Rwanda and Washington, DC and a series of initial consultations with stakeholders. From there the project teams quickly shifted gears in developing and fielding the baseline survey of 2,048 coffee growers in Rwanda and Burundi surrounding a total of 32 coffee washing stations, half cooperatively owned and half privately owned. The focus of the baseline was on farmer investments in their coffee plantations, cost of production, and awareness and practices to control antestia/PTD. Though the baseline survey took longer than anticipated to implement, the quality and extensiveness of the data are extraordinary and will help to set the stage for upcoming policy advocacy roundtable discussions scheduled with coffee sector stakeholders. Additional data

collection activities completed during the reporting period include the setup of the 64 experimental fields in each country and in Rwanda the implementation of key informant interviews with leaders of the main coffee stakeholder groups. Farmers have been organized into 32 CWS-based groups, each with a series of experimental demo plots that will serve as the basis for farmer capacity building activities in the coming months of the project.

2. Program Description and Introduction

The long-term viability of the coffee sector in the Africa Great Lakes region, the main source of cash income for millions of smallholder farmers and families in the region, is threatened first by increasingly prevalent antestia bug infestation (and associated potato taste defect—PTD), and second by coffee yields that are among the world’s very lowest. AGLC is a three-year, USAID Feed the Future initiative led by Michigan State University that meets these combined challenges through an integrated program of applied research, farmer capacity building and policy engagement. The solution requires a public-private sector coordinated response across the entire value chain, including producers, washing stations, dry mills, exporters and the government agencies that support the sector’s growth. The goal of the program is to dramatically reduce the effects of antestia/PTD and raise farm-level productivity, two changes that will in turn improve smallholder farmer incomes and help to sustain the Africa Great Lakes region’s reputation for producing among the highest quality coffees in the world.

AGLC is designed to meet these challenges through a set of core program components, identified as the following:

1. *Applied policy, household, and agronomic (field-level) research* to serve as the basis for smallholder capacity building and policy engagement aimed at reducing potato taste defect and low coffee productivity and profitability in the Africa Great Lakes Region.
2. *Capacity building/farmer training & outreach* with project partners in the Africa Great Lakes Region to train coffee producers and processors on potato taste/antestia control and other practices that will increase productivity and farmer incomes.
3. *Policy engagement* to help create an enabling institutional environment to debate, formulate and adopt policies that will motivate producers and other actors in the coffee value chain to invest their labor, land and capital in ways that will increase smallholder farmer incomes.

The AGLC initiative will fill important gaps in our knowledge base on controlling PTD, improving coffee farm management practices and creating a policy environment that is fully supportive of farmer and other stakeholder investment in the sector.

3. Activity Implementation Progress

This section reports on the various activities of the project in all three of its major components: applied research, capacity building and policy engagement. It closely follows the Year 1 Work Plan, summarizing the implementation status of main activities planned for the project’s first year. Special attention is given to reporting on challenges faced during the reporting period. Annex 1 provides a quick reference on the activity updates provided in this section, along with an estimate of the “percentage completed”

for each activity. The section concludes with an update on the M&E plan and how AGLC has progressed against the seven core project indicators.

3.1. Implementation Status

Implementation of the AGLC project has progressed well overall, though with a few delays in some of the program's component areas. Summarized below are the steps taken to date in the activities scheduled for implementation during the first 6 months of the project.

3.1.1. Start-up activities

Beginning in October, 2016, AGLC worked closely with USAID on a series of project start-up activities organized to give some initial exposure to the project and to help build relationships and set the stage for the program implementation that followed. These start-up activities involved introductory events in Washington, DC and in Rwanda, as well as the preparation and approval of key project planning documents (Year 1 Work Plan and M&E Plan) that helped to set in motion the implementation of the larger AGLC program.

Coffee Kick-off event in Washington, DC. USAID and MSU organized and sponsored a kick-off event at the Bourbon Coffee Shop (Capitol Hill) in Washington D.C. The event was well attended by coffee industry representatives in the DC area. A series of presentations and speeches were given to introduce AGLC to the attendees and we engaged in a Q&A session and social hour following the formal program.

Press release on AGLC. USAID and MSU issued a joint press on AGLC on October 1, 2015 (International Coffee Day). The press release was designed to introduce the USAID-MSU partnership through public media and to provide readers an opportunity to reflect on how the coffee in their cups is connected to the lives of smallholder farmers in low income countries around the world.

Kick-off conference. The project held a successful kick-off conference on the 13th of October, 2015 at the Lemigo Hotel in Kigali. The launch event was designed to align all major stakeholders behind the approach and plan of AGLC activities. It was hosted by project partner, the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) and co-hosted by Global Knowledge Initiative (GKI), Michigan State University (MSU), and the University of Rwanda (UR). Amb. George Kayonga, the CEO of the National Agricultural Export Development Board, and (then) Acting USAID Mission Director Marcia Musisi-Nkambwe gave keynote addresses to the 48 conference participants representing all of the major coffee stakeholder groups in Rwanda.

The AGLC team introduced the project in a series of presentations, then the participants worked together to identify 11 critical challenges in controlling antestia/potato taste and improving productivity and 40 resources that they can contribute to this effort. MSU students digitized outputs of this event, which the team then used to identify policy questions for in-depth key informant interviews with stakeholders in the sector.

Work Plan development and approval. The Year 1 Work Plan was developed and approved after several iterations with USAID. It covers the period Oct 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016, putting the project on the USAID fiscal year and reporting cycle. The work plan was broken out along the three main components of the project (applied research, capacity building and policy engagement). An estimated

timetable was also included in the work plan and that timetable provides the basis for marking progress and each activity's completion percentage shown in Annex 1 of this semi-annual report.

The work plan reflects input from the Rwanda and Burundi teams on both the overall programmatic approach and on the individual roles that each partner will play. Scopes of work (SOWs) for UR and IPAR (in Rwanda) and for PUG and UNG (in Burundi) were mapped out for purposes of the work plan as well as for their individual sub-recipient contractual agreements which MSU has subsequently established. Several Rwanda-based public and private partners to AGLC were also engaged in the development of the draft Year 1 Work Plan concerning their priority needs as well as their agreed-upon responsibilities in the research, capacity building and policy engagement domains of the project. Included in these consultations were the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), the National Agriculture Export Development Board (NAEB), the Coffee Exporters & Processors Association of Rwanda (CEPAR), and AgroPy (formerly Agropharm).

M&E Plan development and approval. During the first half year, the M&E plan was drafted and reviewed by all partners at the October 2015 kick-off event. The initial plan was submitted as required before October 18, 2015. Based on USAID comments, revisions were made and the plan was re-submitted Nov. 16, 2015. Due to further concerns from the USAID office in Washington D.C., the plan came back to AGLC for further work on December 31, 2015. Three additional iterations continued through January, with final approval from USAID coming on Jan. 27, 2016. Now the plan includes a thorough results framework, log-frames for both the Rwanda and Burundi USAID missions, and seven core indicators and targets, including three Feed-the-Future indicators and two related to the strategic results of the IFP-IL Leader Award. Baseline values and targets for the indicators were submitted to the USAID Rwanda mission on April 18. A more detailed review of the M&E plan is provided in Section 3.3, Monitoring & Evaluation Plan Update, along with a summary table of indicators and targets for future years of the project

3.1.2. Applied policy, household, and agronomic (field-level) research

During this first six-month period the applied research component received more attention than others as its primary goal is to provide an objective, empirical basis for both the capacity building and policy engagement activities of the project. It is designed to inform coffee sector stakeholders in Rwanda, Burundi and elsewhere in the region concerning the most effective practices for controlling antestia/PTD and for establishing a policy environment that will provide the necessary incentives for coffee producers to invest their labor, land and cash resources in these practices.

Two major sets of activities were planned and implemented during this period; they are the baseline household survey and the launch of the experimental field-based data collection system, both of which are summarized below.

Baseline household survey

Survey sample. The baseline survey of coffee growers was successfully implemented in both Rwanda and Burundi. In Rwanda the survey was conducted in four major coffee-growing districts representing Rwanda's four agricultural provinces. The selected districts are Rutsiro (Western Province), Huye (Southern Province), Kirehe (Eastern Province), and Gakanke (Northern Province). From each District, and with the assistance of NAEB collaborators, the team select four high volume coffee-producing

Sectors and one coffee washing station (CWS) from each. Thus in each District there are four CWSs/Sectors selected, two of which are cooperatively owned and operated and two of which are privately owned and operated. From the farmer listings at each of the CWSs 64 farmers were randomly selected for study, totaling 1,024 (16 CWS x 64 HH) coffee producing households in all.

In Burundi the design has mirrored the approach in Rwanda, with four provinces being selected, (Kayanza and Ngozi in in the northern coffee-growing region and Karusi and Gitega in the central region, with a total of 1,024 producer households randomly selected from 16 CWS listings in those communes).

Survey instruments. The survey instruments were developed at the farm household and field levels and then translated to Kinyarwanda, programmed for Samsung 7" tablets, and pretested in the field in December, 2015. Enumerators were hired from the IPAR roster and were trained just prior to the pretest. Immediately following the pretest a series of debriefing sessions were organized and the survey instruments were revised based on the pretest results. The Rwanda team was able to be in the field starting December 20. The baseline survey was delayed approximately one month in Burundi as additional time was required to translate the survey to Kirundi, upload it to tablets, train enumerators there and pretest the translated version in the selected communes in central and northern coffee regions in Burundi.

CSPro training. Prior to the interviewer training MSU's Aniseh Bro provided a training program in CSPro Mobile, a public domain software package for entering, editing, tabulating and disseminating census and survey data. The training program introduced to AGLC partners in Rwanda and Burundi to tablet-based data collection and the participants learned how to program a survey instrument into CSPro by defining and labeling variables, programming skip logic, adding new languages, writing survey questions, and defining variable types. For most, if not for all, this was the first time learning about tablet-based data collection.

Data collection. The IPAR team led the baseline survey data collection effort in Rwanda. Fielding of the survey took approximately 52 working days, which was close to 40% longer than originally anticipated. The main reason for the extended period was the length of the survey questionnaire. The survey instrument was comprehensive and included over 400 questions and the coffee fields section of the instrument required interviewers and farmers to walk to the coffee fields to collect data on the physical characteristics of each field. The average interview took close to three hours to administer, so in most areas each interviewer was able to complete only two interviews per day, rather than three, as originally planned. A second reason for the reduced interview rate was that the randomly selected households were not easy to locate and were sometimes located far from one another. The enumerators reported a high degree of cooperation from the selected farmers, a critical aspect of the survey's success.

Team members from Burundi report similar results in their implementation of the data collection phase. There, too, the fieldwork took longer than planned but has now been completed, yielding 1,024 successful interviews.

Data processing. After the field implementation, the data were uploaded from the tablets to a Dropbox folder for access by the project's IT staff. In both Rwanda and Burundi data were uploaded and backed up regularly through the data collection phase, usually once or twice a week. Next the data were aggregated into a unified (one for each country) Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) file for cleaning, coding and transformation. Dan Clay and Aniseh Bro conducted a one-week training/work session in Rwanda with colleagues from IPAR and UR. During this period, and beyond, the data were

cleaned, open-ended questions were coded, and many variables were aggregated and otherwise transformed to put the data in useable form for analysis and reporting by the team. This data processing phase is still under way in Burundi due to the delays in data collection mentioned above.

Data Analysis. The data analysis phase has just begun so this phase will be discussed mainly in the next semi-annual reporting period. However, an important preliminary step in this phase was initiated by GKI and other partners in October-November of the present reporting period, and that is a comprehensive review of available research literature on the frameworks governing coffee in Rwanda, on issues related to productivity, and issues related to the antestia bug/potato taste defect. During this same period, MSU organized a team of student interns to develop a review of data and findings on coffee price trends among coffee growing countries in East Africa, including Rwanda and Burundi. These results will be presented and discussed at the upcoming (May) series of the policy roundtables with coffee sector stakeholders.

Applied experimental fields research

The applied research on experimental fields is designed to empirically inform coffee sector stakeholders in Rwanda and Burundi concerning the most effective practices for controlling antestia/PTD and for reducing low and fluctuating coffee production. Our approach is to build on current knowledge to isolate the principal causes of the combined problems of antestia/PTD and low coffee productivity/cyclicality and identify the most effective measures for reversing their detrimental effects.

During this first reporting period our plan was to have the experimental fields research designed and data collection instruments finalized. We also planned to have all of the experimental fields identified and marked, and to have field assistants hired and in place collecting weekly/monthly data. Nearly all of these initial steps have been completed (exceptions noted below), albeit somewhat later than originally expected.

The applied field research instruments were developed during the first quarter immediately after completion of baseline instruments. This involved mapping out the experimental design, including agreement on treatments, types of data needed, frequency of data collection, categories of farmers and the number to select from each of the sampled CWSs. This activity was conducted jointly with the Burundi team and RAB to make sure that the applied research methodologies would be comparable across the two countries and consistent with RAB protocols and ongoing research efforts.

Farm/field/plot selection: The next step was to implement the field selection and plot set up for the 64 fields across the four study districts in each country. The on-farm field-based research was established, as planned, in existing coffee fields. Four fields were drawn from among the sampled farmers at each coffee washing station using a participatory process. The process included a presentation of the research objective and a request for volunteers to volunteer their fields for experimental purposes for two and a half years. In Burundi, all 64 experimental fields and lead farmers have been selected.

In Rwanda, the UR team has selected 62 of the 64 farms/fields (97%), including 16 in Huye, 16 in Gakenke, 15 in Rutsiro and 15 in Kirehe. There were some complications with the initial selection of two fields (one in Rutsiro and one in Kirehe), so two replacement fields will be selected and marked during the planned field activities in May, 2016. For the remaining two fields, in Rutsiro District at KOPOKAMA CWS, the volunteer farm's field did not have enough trees to meet the requirement of the research design and time did not permit an immediate replacement. In the case of Kirehe, one of the volunteer

fields was not accessible during the time allocated, leaving insufficient time to find a replacement. Despite this minor, temporary setback, it was encouraging to see the willingness of farmers to participate in the applied field research, and the motivation of the UR students who are serving as agronomic assistants in the implementation of this phase of the activity.

Plot set up and treatments. In each of the selected fields, the Rwanda and Burundi teams marked five plots, each plot having 36 trees. Each plot of 36 trees was marked by four pegs, one at each corner, and all border plants were marked at the base of the tree trunk by colors. Each plot has a different color from the others. Out of 36 trees, the teams will collect yield and growth data from just 20, the others being border trees. Antestia scouting will be conducted on eight plants in each plot, four on the border and four in the middle. See Annex 2 for a diagram of the experimental field layout. In Burundi and Rwanda the field teams either have completed (or in the future will complete) the initial plot-level pesticides and GAPs treatments following all recommended safety protocols including use of boots and gloves in compliance with the AGLC PERSUAP.

Enumerator/field research assistant recruitment and training. In Rwanda, the project identified 16 agronomy students from UR to work as temporary field research assistants (FRA) and set-up the experimental fields, while the process of recruiting permanent, local assistants at each CWS went on. Once the recruitment process is complete (a long process in the UR system) project staff will train the assistants for one week in Huye using RAB-Rubona fields and study plots in Huye district. In Burundi the recruitment and training of agronomic assistants has been completed and they are currently deployed in the field.

Soil sampling. In each selected field, the teams collected composite soil samples for analysis of major nutrients and soil acidity. The samples will be analyzed by technicians in the UR and PUG laboratories and results are expected to be available during the next quarter, slightly behind our Q2 projection for this activity.

Data collection. After training the students/assistants the Rwanda and Burundi teams began the weekly/monthly data collection process using the research instruments designed for that purpose. We currently have data coming in on coffee physical parameters, antestia knockdown, living antestia counts, and coffee productivity. The experimental field setup has taken a considerable period of time to complete. As a result the start of the field-based data collection has been staggered. May will be the first month in which full data will be available for all experimental fields.

3.1.3. Policy engagement

The principal policy engagement activities scheduled for the first half of Year 1 include the initial Kick-off Conference (reported on at the start of Section 3), a series of key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

Kick-off Conference. At the October 2015 AGLC Kick-off Conference different government, NGO and private sector decision makers were engaged in an initial series of discussions about the project goals and the priority challenges affecting the coffee sector in Rwanda. Participants at the conference identified areas of opportunity to increase coffee productivity and eliminate potato test defect. These initial discussions have helped to orient subsequent stakeholder interactions, particularly the interview guide for the key informant and the upcoming focus group interviews.

Key informant interviews. With GKI's assistance in designing the interview methodology and identifying interviewees, IPAR conducted 12 key informant interviews with individuals with government agencies (NAEB, Ministry of Agriculture, RAB, etc.), a farmer organization (RWASHOSCCO), and private sector stakeholders (Starbucks, CEPAR, KZ Noir, and others). These interviews focused on challenges identified during the October 2015 kick off meeting in Kigali. They provide insights on areas of convergence and disagreement between key specialty coffee sector actors on issues such as coffee prices, quality, farmer incentives, and other critical elements. When combined with data from the farm and coffee washing station level baseline, these interviews also provide information on areas of convergence and disconnect between high level stakeholder perspectives and the experiences and behaviors of coffee producers. These interviews serve both as a baseline on influential actors' views early in the AGLC project, and as an input into Policy Advocacy Roundtables and other policy activities (e.g. Policy Briefs, focus groups, etc.) scheduled for implementation during the second half of Year 1.

Focus group discussions. With a similar goal in mind, GKI and IPAR developed an approach and identified target groups for a series of focus group discussions with key stakeholder groups including farmers, CWS managers, exporters and others. The first wave of focus group discussions is scheduled for early-May and will provide critical input for the policy roundtables scheduled for later in the month. This is a shift in timing of about 6 weeks as the focus groups were scheduled for completion in Q2. The reason for the delay is that IPAR had all hands on deck for the baseline survey, which for reasons explained above took longer to complete than originally expected. We do not see any particular issue with the delayed start of the focus groups as most will be completed before the policy roundtable discussions in May.

3.1.4. Capacity building/farmer training & outreach

Focus of the AGLC capacity building component is on increasing farmer awareness and reducing the effects of antestia/PTD and low productivity at the farm level. Demonstration plots, farmer training and media messages are the primary vehicles for building capacity at the producer level. Per the Year 1 Work Plan the early focus of the project has been disproportionately on the applied research and policy engagement components. The intention is that the research results will strongly inform the capacity building approach, particularly in the control of antestia.

Training trainers. The teams have made progress in two areas during the second quarter of the project. The first is in building capacity among students both in Rwanda and Burundi where student teams have been introduced to antestia bug issues in coffee production and trained in measuring and recording the impacts of antestia. This is an important initial step as these students will serve as trainers in the second stage of the capacity building program which is to train the coffee farmers in the intervention areas. These student trainers have participated in the experimental farm and demonstration plot selection, marking and treatment. They will continue through the end of the present semester with literature reviews on quality coffee production, antestia bug and potato taste control. In May they will begin working directly with farmers on extending best practices, engaging lead farmers and using the demonstration plots for instructional purposes. In a second important step, 64 farmers around each of the 32 coffee washing stations in Rwanda and Burundi have been organized into groups and briefed on the upcoming practical steps in the AGLC capacity building program.

Radio messages. During the 1st quarter, the UR team contacted the management of Rwanda's Radio Salus and secured their support for the project for broadcasting messages to their broad listener base.

The project team in Rwanda has since developed two radio messages, one an introductory message on the goals and activities of the AGLC program, and a second focusing on increasing awareness of antestia and steps required to control it. Unfortunately they have not yet received final clearance from the various levels required, notably USAID, NAEB and MINAGRI. Working through these clearances has required multiple iterations at each level, and the approaches and concerns of the various levels are not necessarily compatible with one another. Though initially drafted in early March, we are yet to have the first message finalized as we wait for a second round of feedback from the Minister of Agriculture & Animal Resources. We recognize that PTD is a sensitive topic in Rwanda and will continue to engage with all concerned parties to finalize the messages as soon as possible.

In Burundi, PUG has contacted two radio stations broadcasting in their regions of intervention (FM HUMURIZA and STAR FM), about working with AGLC to broadcast key messages to farmers. Both have agreed to support the effort and will be called upon in the coming quarter to broadcast modified versions of the two messages developed (but not yet cleared) for Rwanda

SMS messaging platform. MSU and UR have jointly developed a proposal for an SMS messaging system that enables out-going and in-coming messages. The primary purpose of the tool is capacity building with the farmers over the three year timeframe. Content will initially focus on promoting the adoption of available technologies and techniques for antestia control and productivity improvements. As the project develops, research teams will condense lessons and insights from project results into instructional SMS messages.

Broader communication goals comprise a secondary purpose for the SMS system. After the system is set-up and testing is complete, the team will test and explore how the technology can improve relationships between farmers and CWSs, or NAEB or other significant groups, such as CEPAR.

AGLC has gathered some lessons learned regarding SMS messaging research from other projects in agriculture in East Africa and these have been incorporated into the AGLC's key system requirements. AGLC staff at MSU and UR have approached two groups, Carnegie Mellon University in Kigali and KLab, an information technology incubator in Kigali, for pro forma cost estimates to implement the system, and both groups have expressed great interest. While development of this platform was scheduled for completion in Q2, its development is still in progress as the team works through the details of the system and anticipated cost estimates from the interested parties. AGLC expects to select the implementing partner and to begin building and testing the system in Q3, with the goal of having the system up and running during Q4.

3.2. Implementation Challenges

Overall, AGLC remains on track but there have been several challenges that have slowed down the implementation of certain activities. One overarching challenge that has slowed down progress has been how overwhelmed our partners were, both in Rwanda and Burundi, in conducting the baseline survey. Much of the problem was tied to the fact that the survey took six weeks longer to field than we anticipated, for the combination of reasons detailed earlier in this report. Consequently, these same partners were delayed in making greater progress on some of the capacity-building activities as well as on the setup of experimental fields, conducting the key informant interviews and focus group discussions, and developing a system for SMS messaging. But all of these tasks are now moving forward and we are still on track relative to the overall Year 1 Work Plan.

A second important challenge is more of a technical issue and lies in the selection of the 64 experimental fields (in each country). This is an exciting step because it will generate vital data on yields, antestia bug counts and potato taste, but it was equally a difficult task given that the farms are widely dispersed across the mountainsides and in very remote areas. Little prior information was available on the selected farms and the teams had to work hard to stay on track in the time they had in each region. They persevered through long days of rigorous travel on foot and on roads where vehicles frequently got stuck in mud or were unable to pass and had to turn back or find an alternative route, sometimes on foot. Burundi partners reported problems of heavy rain and inaccessibility in several of their selected areas. The up side is that the experimental plots are now in place on farms that are widely diversified (by design) in terms of location, farm management practices, and age of trees. This will generate the desired diverse data set over the coming two and a half years of the project.

A third challenge that should be mentioned is that the administrative procedures of the University of Rwanda, as a public institution, are long and complicated, involving many stages of approval and requiring weeks of meetings and phone calls for the AGLC project staff. Examples in the first half-year include a delay in the contractual transfer of funds to UR, a lengthy process in formalizing the AGLC project and appointment of UR staff, travel clearances, procurement approvals, and delays in hiring enumerators, all of which are symptomatic of a large bureaucratic institution that has recently undergone a massive restructuring of campuses and responsibilities. We are hopeful that as the new structure evolves these delays will be reduced. Meanwhile our approach is one that has put an emphasis on giving long lead times to those UR activities that are particularly vulnerable to bureaucratic delays.

3.3. Monitoring & Evaluation Plan Update

During the first quarter, the AGLC staff drafted the M&E plan for the project and reviewed it with project staff at the kick-off meeting in October 2015. Understanding, describing and diagramming the relationships of the core indicators to the project's various affiliated programs was challenging. In the end we succeeded in creating log frames and tables that show how the project will deliver impact for:

4. The IFP-IL as our leader award
5. The FtF program
6. The USAID Rwanda Mission
7. The USAID Burundi Mission

The plan was submitted to USAID as required before Oct. 18, 2015. Based on USAID comments, revisions were made and the plan was re-submitted Nov. 16, 2015. Due to further concerns from the USAID office in Washington D.C., the plan came back to AGLC staff for further revisions on December 31, 2015. Three further iterations continued through January, with final approval from USAID coming on Jan. 27, 2016.

With a meeting at USAID's office in Kigali on Mar. 15, AGLC staff discussed the finalized seven indicators with Mr. Emmanuel Gasana, Senior Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist for the USAID Rwanda mission. Mr. Gasana gave an orientation to the AidTracker+ system and following this meeting access for project staff to the system was secured. Baseline values and targets were, unfortunately, delayed due to the fact that values for five of the seven indicators were coming from the baseline survey. So baseline values and targets for the Rwandan indicators were just submitted to USAID. Mr. Gasana said he will let project staff know soon about which system will be used to track indicators for Burundi.

In summary, the seven core indicators that will be tracked over the course of the AGLC program are: 1) incidence of PTD/Antestia in fields; 2) hectares under improved technologies; 3) number of farmers who have applied improved productivity and/or PTD mitigation technologies; 4) gross margin per hectare under improved technologies; 5) number of policy instruments (briefs, presentations, reports) on target issues; 6) number of new data sets informing food security policies available for public use; and 7) percent of total kg producer cherry processed through fully-washed channels.

Overall, as the reports above have detailed, the project has succeeded in the first half of Year 1 with accomplishing the planned activities and establishing a strong set of indicators and milestones on which the next phases of the program can be evaluated (see Annex 3). In this period the project has been strongest in implementing activities of the policy engagement and the baseline household survey in Rwanda, and the set-up of the agronomic study fields in Burundi. Components such as set-up of agronomic fields in Rwanda and implementation of the baseline household survey in Burundi were modestly delayed compared to the work plan calendar of activities, but for legitimate reasons and with minimal impact on the projected outcomes of the project.

4. Management and Administrative Steps and Issues

During the reporting period several important administrative steps were taken and issues addressed in the implementation of the Year 1 Work Plan. These are summarized below.

Contractual steps. The management model adopted by MSU for this project is one that works entirely through local partners in Rwanda and Burundi. MSU does not maintain in-country project offices, but MSU project staff do travel to Rwanda as often as needed to provide leadership and technical and administrative support to the project.

Early in the reporting period MSU established subcontracts with all of the implementing partners. This includes the University of Rwanda and IPAR in Rwanda, the Universities of Ngozi and Gitega in Burundi and the Global Knowledge Initiative in Washington, DC. Funding advances were provided to all five institutions.

Project communication. GKI has held monthly Skype or conference calls with the full partnership since November, and has disseminated notes for each call. These calls have been useful for keeping all (highly dispersed) partners together and informed. Also, the monitoring and evaluation activity includes a quarterly report that is shared with all partners, and an informal WhatsApp group enables easy sharing of photos and brief comments to the group. MSU has created a set of Dropbox folders for sharing project documents and data and all partners are included through access to the shared folders. The baseline survey data have been set up in their own set of folders for Rwanda and Burundi so all partners now have instant access to the most recent data files as needed. This has proved to be invaluable as all partners are currently participating in various parts of the data analysis, preparing for the policy roundtable discussions and drafting briefs and special reports for broader dissemination.

USAID site visits. Two site visits have been arranged, enabling USAID to project staff to see first-hand how the field work has progressed during this first two quarters of implementation. Both site visits were jointly organized and attended by IPAR and the University of Rwanda. The first took place in late January with a visit with the baseline survey and experimental field teams in Kirehe district. The visit also

included meetings with local authorities, washing station personnel and with coffee farmers. The second was similar in structure but took place in Huye district. During the second site visit the Desk Officer from Burundi was able to participate as well.

Limitations in Burundi. Due to the continuing unstable political environment in Burundi, AGLC project activities during Year 1 have so far been limited to those in the applied research component of the program. The two Burundian partners, the Universities of Gitega and Ngozi, are both private universities and have been fully engaged with the larger team on the baseline and experimental fields research. Their work has been largely successful to date, though delayed by approximately six weeks due to the sequencing of activities first in Rwanda and then in Burundi. Fortunately the Burundian key technical personnel have been able to travel to Rwanda to participate in the various planning, training and development activities, then have returned to Burundi to implement the same activities with staff in Gitega and Ngozi. Overall, this has worked reasonably well thanks in large part to the dedication and hard work of the partners from both Burundian institutions. They are very good partners making the best of a difficult situation.

5. Lessons Learned

The use of hand-held devices (tablets) for data collection is still not well known in Rwanda or Burundi. It was the first time that local partners had employed this methodology and they relied a great deal on MSU's experience with the technology. The experience was a good one, overall, but the training in its use took longer than anticipated. In using tablets for data collection we eliminated the need for a separate data entry phase and made skip patterns in the interview process automatic, both of which dramatically lowered error rates as a result. It was originally hoped that much of the programming would be done by Rwandan partners but even with a one-week dedicated training we found that MSU had to take the lead in this effort. For a follow up data collection effort scheduled for Year 2 we will have more time to work with and hopefully will be able to transition the CSPro Mobile programming to our in-country partners.

As evidenced by the kick off meeting, specialty coffee stakeholders in Rwanda see substantial value in taking action on productivity and potato taste/antestia. Participants showed great enthusiasm, especially those from the private sector, and were eager to find opportunities to collaborate with the AGLC project.

Early analysis of key informant interviews points to a number of areas of disagreement in terms of critical challenges and opportunities within specialty coffee (e.g., in the dynamics of coffee quality, financing, potato taste, and other issues). We will compare these perspectives with data gathered through the baseline survey, and delve further into these issues during policy advocacy roundtables.

A few statements coming from our partners from their experiences in fielding the baseline survey and in setting up the experimental fields struck us as particularly noteworthy in terms of lessons learned:

“The experimental plots will generate good data to address key issues in the coffee sector. The farmers who own the plots are investing a lot in production and harvesting activities. There is clearly a need to generate data for cost of production and to ensure that prices at least cover the minimum cost. Setup staff could readily identify that coffee remains the major source of

income in the rural communities where we are working. Access to fertilizer and pesticides and low prices are the major constraints reported by all farmers when staff talked with them during farm selection.”

“Through the project work in the fields, it is clear that Burundian coffee farmers work hard but gain little. They do not have enough inputs (manure, fertilizers, land, etc.) or the means for performing the work satisfactorily. Hence they produce just the minimum that does not even allow them to meet their basic needs.”

“During implementation, we saw that women participated actively in this project because they want to enhance coffee productivity and quality. We learned also how to work hard and according to the allocated time we have.”

6. Planned activities for next quarter/upcoming events

During the second half of Year 1 the project will stick close to the Work Plan activities and schedule. Immediate attention is focused on delivering five roundtable sessions with government and private sector decision makers. The discussions will be supported with information and data obtained from the baseline survey, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The roundtables discussions will focus on the policy constraints observed and options for an enhanced environment for coffee production, processing, and marketing. After these roundtables the team will turn its attention to a full array of activities in all three components; they are summarized as follows:

1. Analysis of baseline survey and experimental field data base.
2. Development of multiple policy briefs based on the extensive coffee database generated by the project together with the conclusions emanating from the five roundtable discussions.
3. Two additional roundtable discussions based on the policy briefs.
4. Continued data collection on the experimental fields
5. CWS data collection for the 16 CWSs sampled in the baseline survey.
6. Continue focus group discussions with key stakeholder groups.
7. Capacity-building/training of coffee farmers based on results from the baseline survey and experimental fields
8. Capacity-building/training of coffee farmers using data from experimental demo plots.
9. Continue to develop radio messages
10. Complete development and testing of an SMS system for communications between project staff and farmers initially, and later to be tested as a communication tool for CWSs, and possibly NAEB, CEPAR and other groups.
11. Assist in arranging USAID site visits, as needed.
12. Complete at least two issue-oriented special reports based on data analyses and policy roundtable discussions.
13. Develop and submit Year 2 Work Plan.
14. Convene year-end stakeholder workshop to present findings, debate major policy issues, and set the course for AGLC Year 2 activities.

Annex 1: AGLC Year 1 Activities and Percent Completed

Activity/Outcome	Quarter Due				% Completed for Mar 2016 Semi-Annual Report
	1	2	3	4	
Project Start-up Activities/Outcomes					
Establish partner SOWs	■				100%
Establish subcontracts with partners	■				100%
Prepare initial reports/PPTs for Kick-off Conference	■				100%
Kick-off Conference (Kigali, IPAR/GKI convene)	■				100%
Work plan development and submission	■				100%
M&E development and submission	■				100%
Procure tablets for data collection	■				100%
Applied Research Component Activities/Outcomes					
Research design	■				100%
Sample frame development	■				100%
Field sample frame development (incl CWS)	■				100%
Define technology packages for field implementation	■				100%
Training and setup of CSPro Mobile	■				100%
Recruit enumerators	■				100%
Letter from IPAR/NAEB and into in Districts	□				100%
Develop Baseline Survey Instrument	■				100%
Develop Field-based Instrument	■				100%
Develop CWS and owner Instrument	■				100%
Listing of producer HHs in 16 CWSs	■				100%
Sample selection of 4 x 16 farms for Agronomic data	■				100%
Convert instruments to CSPro	■				100%
Pretest and revision of instruments	■				100%
Enumerator field training	■				100%
Experimental/demo field selection process	■				100%
Train experimental farmer (N=64)	■				100%
Field-based Survey data collection (N=64)	■	■	■		100%
Soil sample analysis on sampled fields		■			100%
Compile climate data (rainfall, temperature, elevation, moisture, etc.)		■			100%
Baseline Survey Implementation					
Baseline Survey data collection (N=1024 in each country)	■				90%
Baseline CWS data collection (N=16 in each country)	■	■	■		10%
Compile baseline survey data in CSPro	■	□			100%
Convert baseline data to SPSS/Stata	■	■			50%

Clean baseline data (range and consistency)		■			50%
Data coding (open-ended Qs to numeric data)		■			50%
Data transformation		■			90%
Data analysis	□	■	■	□	20%
Draft baseline HH report		■	■	□	10%
Field-based Experimental Research Implementation					
Field-based data collection (N=64)	■	■	■	■	20%
Compile field-based survey data in Excel		■			0%
Convert field-based data to SPSS		■			0%
Clean field-based data (range and consistency)		■			0%
Data coding (open-ended Qs to numeric data)			■		0%
Data transformation			■		0%
Analysis of field-based data	□	□	■	□	0%
Draft field-based research report	□	□	■	□	0%
Capacity Building Component Activities/Outcomes					
Develop training materials	□	■		□	0%
Organize farmers in modified FFS groups	□	■		□	50%
Hold training sessions on experimental fields	■	■	■	□	10%
Train broader sample of leader farmers in GAP (ABS)	■			□	0%
Develop and transmit radio broadcast messages	■	■	■	■	20%
Develop and pilot test system for farm-level SMS reporting of results	□	■	□	□	20%
Develop and transmit SMS messages	■	■	■	□	10%
Policy/Stakeholder Engagement Component Activities/Outcomes					
Identify and engage key policy actors in coffee sector	■			□	100%
Conduct policy analysis to identify primary constraints	■			□	100%
Engage policy makers in priority policy issues and research	■			□	20%
Hold 10-15 key informant interviews w/ gov't & priv. sect. dec. makers	■	■		□	100%
Hold 10-15 Focus group discussions w/ gov't & priv. sect. dec. makers	■	■		□	20%
Hold advocacy round tables with coffee sector decision makers	■	■		□	0%
Prepare policy briefs				□	
Policy brief on cost of production and farmer investments			■		20%
Policy brief on field-based PTD/antestia control and improved productivity research	□			■	20%
Progress Reports and Data Activities/Outcomes					
Semi-annual Progress Report (mid-year)	□	■	□	□	100%
Semi-annual Progress Report (end of year)		□	□	■	0%
Stakeholder/National Workshop to present research, capacity building and policy engagement results (UR/GKI will convene)	□		□	■	0%
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Reporting	□			■	0%

Annex 2: Field and Plot Layout for Experimental Fields

		Field lay out							
1 Red field		b	b	b	b	b	b	b	n: plants in the study
		b	b	b	b	b	b	b	b: border plants
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	Red letter: 8 trees for antibiotic counting
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	yellow background is border plants - not in study
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	Green background is net plot - red and blue trees measured for yield data
		b	b	b	b	b	b		
2 White field		b	b	b	b	b	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		b	b	b	b	b	b		
3 Blue Field		b	b	b	b	b	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		b	b	b	b	b	b		
4 Black field		b	b	b	b	b	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		b	b	b	b	b	b		
5 Yellow		b	b	b	b	b	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		n	n	n	n	n	b	b	
		b	b	b	b	b	b		
		b	b	b	b	b	b		

Annex 3: AGLC Indicators with Targets

(Rw) = Rwanda only – Burundi data to be combined here when available.

AGLC Core Indicator	Indicator definition	Unit of Measure (gender disaggregated when possible)	Data Source	Method of Data Collection	Reporting Frequency	Targets			
						Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Variable(s)
#1	Incidence of PTD/Antestia in fields	Avg. # of bugs/tree	Farmers & Experimental plots	Farmer surveys (N=2,048) & Field observ on exper. plots (N=128)	Annually	1.8 (Rw)	1.5 (Rw)	.9 (Rw)	Farmers: ANTPERTREE
									Avg. # bugs/tree in treated study fields.
#2**	Hectares under improved technologies	# of hectares under improved practices	Farmers	Farmer surveys (N=2,048)	Annually	199 ha (Rw)	210 ha (Rw)	220 ha (Rw)	Productivity: COFFEESQM2_sum BestProdPract
#3**	Number of farmers who have applied improved productivity and/or PTD mitigation technologies.	# of farmers in treatment areas exhibiting changed behavior	Farmers	Farmer surveys (N=2,048)	Annually	551 hh (Rw)	606 hh (Rw)	661 hh (Rw)	Productivity: BestProdPract
#4***	Gross margin per hectare ***	Value in US\$	Farmers	Farmer surveys (N=2,048)	Annually	\$530 (Rw)	\$543 (Rw)	\$556 (Rw)	USAID: CofGrossMargNOLA B
						\$374 (Rw)	\$383 (Rw)	\$392 (Rw)	AGLC: CofGrossMarg
#5****	Number of policy instruments (briefs, presentations, reports) on target issues	Number	Program partners	Research results	Semi-annually	2	8	12	
#6****	Number of new data sets informing food security policies available for public use	Number	Program partners	Research results	Semi-annually	2	8	12	
#7	Percent of total kg producer cherry processed through fully-washed channels.	Kg cherry processed as FW/total kg cherry processed	Farmers & NAEB	-Farmer surveys -Reports from NAEB	Annually	95%	97%	99%	Farmers: SALE15CHERKG CherToParchKG
						50%	65%	80%	NAEB:production data

**Indicators to be submitted to the FtFMS system.

***AGLC will calculate this indicator two ways. The indicator reported in FtFMS will be calculated as described in the FtF Handbook. The second version will be used by the project for monitoring, which will include a value for unpaid HH labor in the input costs. The FtF gross margin (which values unpaid household labor at 0) is not being used by the project but we expect it will increase as indicated.

****Indicators related to the FSP-IL leader award strategic results.