



Date: 2/23/2021  
To: Berta Heybey, Managing Director Monitoring and Evaluation  
From: Jack Molyneaux, Evaluation Lead (Agriculture) and Patrick McWeeny & Carolyn Perrin, Program Monitors  
CC: Shreena Patel, Senior Director Evaluation, and Jennifer Sturdy  
  
RE: Cancellation of IPA's independent evaluation of the Mali Alatona Irrigation Project

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This memo describes the decision to cancel IPA's evaluation of the Alatona Irrigation Project (AIP) under the Mali Compact.

***Evaluation Management Committee Decision to Cancel the Evaluation – July 15, 2016***

In response to ongoing insecurity and attacks in Mali and information from the US Embassy in Bamako, the EMC felt it would not be prudent to send personnel, MCC staff or contractors, to the region to conduct site visits and field work. As a result, the decision was made to restrict the independent evaluation of the Alatona Irrigation Project (AIP) to an Evaluability Assessment and desk review.

***Overview of Evaluation***

In February 2008, MCC contracted Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) to “design and implement a rigorous evaluation of the Alatona Irrigation Project of the Millennium Challenge Account Program in Mali”.<sup>1</sup> MCC entered an initial contract with IPA with a period of performance from February 2008 to July 2012 with a contract ceiling of \$1,132,894.84. In August 2008, the ceiling of the contract was increased by \$120,209 to aid data collection efforts. In July 2012, the contract end date was extended from July 2012 to January 2013, at which point IPA delivered their Evaluation Report. While this report came at the end of the contract, delays in implementation, contracting, project design, and evaluation design issues prevented IPA from appropriately measuring final project effects at this point. The report was treated as an interim report despite no further funding or time on the contract because the report's timing was better suited to an interim report rather than a final evaluation report. In particular, the timing of the report was not aligned with the exposure period necessary to achieve the impacts targeted by the Project. The report received VP Approval, but the contract was not extended to include a final report, both due to instability in Mali and methodological concerns with IPA's impact evaluation. MCC monitored the situation in Mali before reaching the EMC decision described above.

***Description of the Risk(s)/Risk(s) Mitigation***

Several months ahead of the Compact End Date, Mali experienced a coup d'état in March 2012. The MCC Board authorized the termination of the compact in May 2012, and the compact was officially terminated on August 24, 2012. Continuing instability in Mali, and specifically in project areas, made

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<sup>1</sup> MCC authored Statement of Work in contract #MCC07-0123-CON-91-TO01



travel to the area impossible for US Government personnel. While non-US Government personnel could have traveled to the project areas, such travel would have been extremely risky and prohibitively expensive after accounting for required security for travel in the area. Instability in project areas also directly affected value chains and regional markets, fundamentally altering the program logic and foundation of the evaluation. MCC monitored the situation in Mali for several years in search of possible risk mitigation options in continuing the in-progress evaluation, but the in-country situation never presented an opportunity. MCC determined that the best available risk mitigation was procuring an evaluability assessment and desk review of the uncompleted evaluation, as reflected in the July 2016 EMC decision.

***Relevant Evaluation Materials***

For the Alatona Irrigation Project, the evaluability assessment recommended by the EMC has been subsequently completed and is posted to the evaluation catalog. It received VP Clearance and was posted in October 2020. It can be found [here](#).

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Approved M&E Managing Director  
2/23/2021