

### 3.3 Innovator support

Powering Agriculture continued to provide various types of support to both Innovator cohorts in order to enhance the chances of the successful deployment of their clean energy solutions.

During the reporting period, Powering Agriculture expanded usage of the following tools to streamline communication and reporting:

- The **Powering Agriculture Requests and Reminders Bulletin (PARRB)** is disseminated via email monthly and updates Innovators on Powering Agriculture developments, informs them of upcoming deadlines, events, funding opportunities and requests any required information.
- **WebMo** is the Powering Agriculture online project monitoring platform where Innovators can upload required milestones, reports and data which can be then be accessed by all Powering Agriculture Partners and their contractors. The WebMo platform has credentialed access (user code/password) which ensures that the individual Innovators can only access their data.

#### 3.3.1 Implementation Support

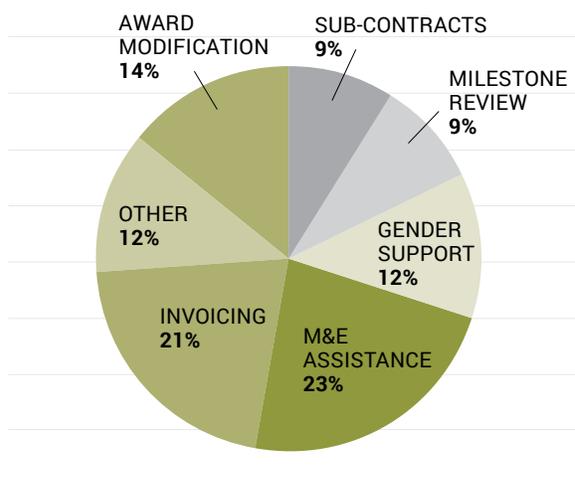
Powering Agriculture continued to use the Powering Agriculture Support Task Order (PASTO), which is implemented by USAID contractor, **Tetra Tech**, to provide a variety of support, including:

- 21 instances of implementation assistance such as feedback on milestones, guidance on M&E
- 23 instance of assistance with compliance with USAID policies and procedures including award modification

- development of 9 templates/manuals/guides for Innovators' use
- site visits to 9 Innovators in 12 countries to verify progress and document impacts on beneficiaries
- Promotion of Innovator progress on the website, on social media (Facebook and Twitter), at conferences, and to the media

Figure 3.1 illustrates the breakdown by type of assistance provided by PASTO to the Innovators.

Figure 3.1 Innovator Assistance by Type



#### 3.3.2 Business Acceleration Support

Powering Agriculture expanded acceleration support to its Innovators by retaining **VentureWell**, in association with **Investors' Circle** through the PASTO contract in September 2015, to provide Powering Agriculture Innovators with biz-tech development services, investment, and market partnership facilitation in a structured program called the Powering Agriculture Xcelerator - PAX. The program provides:

- Needs assessment, involving intake survey, scorecard, in-person strategy workshop and facilitator feedback

- Portfolio managers who work through customized work plans and monthly calls on business model validation and market-partnership facilitation and draw on the PAX advisory board
- Peer mentoring through cohort groupings
- Investment facilitation focused on investor-readiness assessment, investor preparedness coaching, and investor linkages

Powering Agriculture Xcelerator was formally launched during a four-day workshop in Arlington, VA, November 16-19, 2015 during which representatives of 21 Powering Agriculture Innovators participated in sessions on topics ranging from how to comply with their USAID award to strategy development and risk management. The workshop was facilitated by VentureWell and Investor's Circle, the contractors for the PAX Program.

The Xcelerator in-person workshop was primarily focused on several aspects of an Innovator's strategy to market while one day was focused on how to comply with the terms of their Powering Agriculture funding issued as an USAID grant or cooperative agreement. First, the content modules helped the Innovators focus on the most critical components of their strategy. Second, Innovators valued the dedicated team planning time to align their approach. Lastly, the workshop created valuable networking and community building opportunities that may also lead to future partnerships among the Innovators.

- **Day 1 – Monday, November 16, 2015**, was focused on introductions and understanding how to comply with the terms of the award issued to the Innovators by USAID. The

Powering Agriculture Founding Partners each made remarks following by presentations on PASTO, communications, gender integration, compliance with USAID regulations, invoicing and accruals, environmental compliance, monitoring and evaluation, reporting, and the Powering Agriculture WebMo platform. The first day ended with a meet and greet event where the Innovators, the Powering Agriculture Partners and PASTO staff could mingle informally.

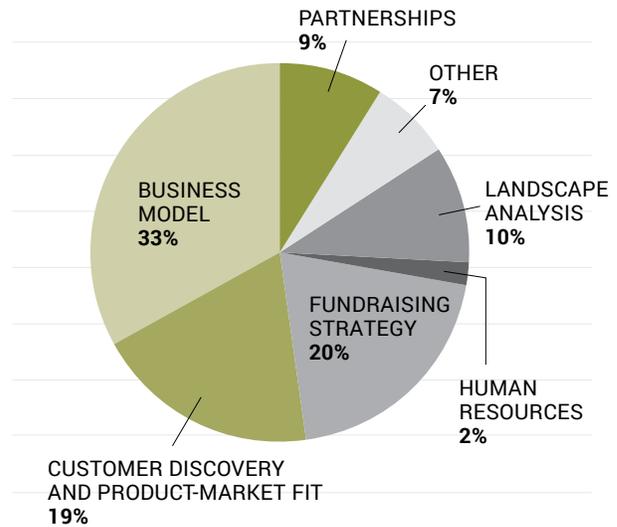
- **Day 2 – Tuesday, November 17, 2015**, was focused on understanding (for the 2013 Innovators) and / or confirming (for the 2015 Innovators) the product – market fit. For both groups, the morning content modules included product/service utility map and the value proposition canvas. In the afternoon the Product - Market Fit group worked on their strategy maps and a round of peer review of their maps. The Business Model Validation group was introduced to the business model canvas and had discussions about each of the components of the map. This group also built their strategies in to life-sized business model canvases that hung on the wall.
- **Day 3 – Wednesday, November 18, 2015**, the two Innovator groups spent much of the day working intensely on their strategies. Group 1 focused on identifying partnership needs along the value chain, further mapping their strategy to validate their market, understanding target audience's perspective and barriers to change, teams work on interview questions to ask potential partners. Group 2 further developed hypotheses around their key components and relationships, starting with their Value Proposition and customer segments. They

then moved in to mapping the customer or end user experience, the impact on their value proposition and customer segments and how to prioritize the multitude of competing needs. Finally, there were small group discussions on channels and revenue streams. Both groups ended the day working on their storytelling & pitching their innovation in preparation for the day 5 showcase.

- Day 4 – Thursday, November 19, 2015,** opened with a rich discussion on financial sustainability and a focus on sources of revenue. This segued in to a discussion about risk, and risk mitigation strategies in small groups. The teams were able to share valuable lessons from previous ventures as well as their current work. There were several mini-labs in the afternoon, including a small- group presentation for the solar irrigation Innovators by GIZ, office hours with Investors’ circle, pitch prep for the Innovator showcase, filming for the Innovator videos, and office hours with the PASTO team.

Through PAX, Innovators have received 95 instances of assistance on business issues and 49 referrals/linkages/partnerships/connections over the reporting period. See Figures 3.2 and 3.3 for the breakdowns of the type.

Figure 3.2: Types of Assistance Provided by PAX



**Business Model** – Advice on revenue, costs, channels, activities, resources, partners, customer segments, and value proposition, how they all work together, and how to communicate the business model (and elements of it) to third parties.

**Customer Discovery and Product-Market Fit** – Support on analyzing findings and feedback from engaging with potential customers and understanding how that impacts product-market fit, such as adjusting the product or the market accordingly.

**Human Resources** – Advice and resources on hiring, defining roles, organizational structure, and professional development.

**Landscape Analysis** – Discussions and resources on understanding and analyzing the value chain in which the Innovators are operating and what other stakeholders are doing.

**Fundraising Strategy** – Discussions and resources on funding types, needs, uses, potential sources, and implications.

**Partnerships** – Supporting and navigating partnership development, providing feedback on potential partners.

Figure 3.4 Referrals and Partnerships Facilitated by PAX



### 3.3.3 Gender Integration Support

Powering Agriculture Partner Sida, engaged [International Law and Policy Institute \(ILPI\)](#) to conduct a gender analysis of the 2015 Innovators. ILPI used the analysis to develop individualized recommendations for each Innovator on how to address gender equality and potential performance indicators to measure how technology is reducing inequality gaps between the genders.

In June 2016, Powering Agriculture expanded its support to provide tailored gender support by adding a gender integration specialist to provide targeted technical assistance and support to the Powering Agriculture Innovators at the project level. To date, individualized demand-driven technical assistance has been provided to five Innovators to provide resources, strengthen gender in data collection tools, and review marketing materials. Topics covered included integrating gender into surveys and M&E plans, marketing to female customers, working with women's agricultural cooperatives, and supporting female entrepreneurs.

