

IASS ACCOMPANYING RESEARCH: SOIL PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION FOR FOOD SECURITY IN KENYA

Under its special initiative “One World, No Hunger” (SEWOH), the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is prioritizing efforts to deliver food security and enhance the management of natural resources. The protection and rehabilitation of agricultural land managed by smallholder farmers are central to this dual agenda and form the objectives of a GIZ programme implemented in five countries. Seeking to explore new forms of development cooperation, SEWOH mandated the Global Soil Forum (GSF)

to accompany the work of the GIZ through transdisciplinary research. The accompanying research project focuses on the socio-economic and cultural factors that constrain the uptake of sustainable land management (SLM) techniques by smallholder farmers. The GSF’s approach stresses co-development and the pursuit of research themes with local partners, including researchers, policymakers, actors of development cooperation, civil society organisations, and farmers.

2015

May – October 2015: Project inception: Exploratory missions to western Kenya; interviews with farmers, researchers, project implementers, and policy makers, focus group discussions (FGDs) with farmers.

Since November 2015: Collaboration with the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) in Kenya to conduct land degradation assessment. The aim is to align soil rehabilitation interventions to bio-physical and socio-economic context of western Kenya’s smallholder farmers. Kick-off workshop end of August 2016 with western Kenyan experts and county decision-makers.

2016

November 2015 – May 2016: Stock-taking phase: Baseline study on experiences with SLM conducted on a selection of 10 SLM projects implemented in the last 10 years in western Kenya.

February/March 2016: Two Lessons Learnt workshops, one with SLM project beneficiary farmers and another with SLM institutional actors. A workshop report with consensus research themes of importance to the region’s stakeholders is available.

November 2016: African Soil Seminar in Nairobi co-hosted by the Kenyan Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, and agricultural ministries from Benin, Bukina Faso and Ethiopia

2017

April-December 2016: Research themes developed into full projects together with stakeholders. Extension service delivery is the first research package to be executed. A concept note is in process of being discussed with county stakeholders. A steering team led by IASS, GIZ and County Ministries of Agriculture will guide the operationalization of the research themes.

Baseline Study



Objective: Learning from past experiences with SLM promotion in western Kenya

Partner: Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

Guiding question: What were successes and challenges in past SLM promotion projects in western Kenya? What lessons can be learned?

Focus areas: Selection of target groups; selection of SLM technologies; approaches to diffuse SLM technologies; enabling conditions for enhancing adoption; results, constraints and success of SLM technology diffusion

Method: Inventory of 20 projects with significant SLM components; close analysis of 10 selected projects through interviews with project implementers and key informants and FDGs with farmers

Findings:

Selection of SLM technologies

- SLM technologies identified before project implementation/interaction with beneficiary farmers
- Uniform SLM technologies promoted over a wide area without consideration of unique circumstances of specific areas

Approaches to diffuse SLM technologies

- On-farm demonstration hosted by model farmers is the most common approach; model farmer perceived by neighbor farmers with mixed reactions; outreach and adoption beyond them remains constrained
- Farmer-to-farmer extension based on volunteerism is not working
- Farmer groups as entry points of interaction with farmers; self-selection or working with existing groups sometimes has exclusionary outcomes

Enabling conditions and adoption of SLM technologies

Agricultural extension: Reaching resource-poor farmers remains a challenge. They are not always covered through the group strategy; they don’t reach out for assistance

Market inputs: Limited access to specialized SLM inputs (high cost; physical availability) hinders SLM adoption, e.g. Biofix, lime, Conservation Agriculture equipment

Youth, SLM and agriculture: Without security of access and control of land resource, looping in youth to SLM remains a mirage

Farmer organizations are indispensable in promotion and adoption of SLM. But they are short-lived without well-thought institutional and economic viability

Market outputs: SLM crops without immediate household consumption demand must have a viable market/sale outlet for higher level of adoption. e.g. soya beans

Lessons Learnt Workshops

Objectives: Jointly drawing lessons from past SLM projects with the stakeholders and farmers that were involved

Setting: Two stakeholder workshops: one with SLM projects beneficiary farmers; the other with project implementers and other institutional stakeholders in western Kenya

Guiding question: What works and what does not work in SLM promotion?

Method: Close analysis of four to six projects through participatory workshop methods (break-out groups, World Café, etc.)

Outcomes: Research themes co-identified by the mix of stakeholders as essential for successful SLM promotion; to be pursued over the project period

- Making extension services work for food insecure farmers
- Local innovations for youth in agriculture
- Farmer organizations



Co-developed Research Package 1: Making Extension Services Work for Food Insecure Farmers

Objectives: Facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue for options on:

- How best county-based extension system can cater for the needs of the most disadvantaged farming households
- How best county-based extension system can achieve effective promotion of more sustainable land management

Partners: A steering team led by IASS and nominees from County Ministries of Agriculture and GIZ Kenya West, including representatives from farmers, KALRO and local universities as well as national experts and research assistants

Setting and methods:

- Document analysis
- Expert, practitioner and key informant interviews
- Farmer interviews and focus group discussions
- Workshop meetings with extension service delivery actors
- Multi-stakeholder dialogue meetings

Focus and steps: first step: formation of a steering team from the counties, GIZ, experts and farmer representatives – for elaboration of the research component design

