

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Danida

Sector Programme Support Document

Soil and Water Conservation Project
Phase III

Iringa District
Tanzania

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

HIMA Iringa project is covering issues such as poverty alleviation, gender aspects and special attention to women specific problems, sustainable agricultural production and environmental protection activities and is based on a participatory approach, involving the main target group, the small scale farmers, in planning, decision making and implementation of project activities.

The major activities of the project is carried out within the fields of agriculture, forestry and community development. Soil and water conservation, soil fertility improvement, crop diversification, on-farm seed production, small animals production, fruit production and home gardening activities and reduction of post harvest losses are important agricultural activities. In addition, support to improvement of income and marketing opportunities are provided. Forest activities includes establishment of individual nurseries and village woodlots, community based management plans for government and district forest areas and beekeeping activities. Women specific issues are addressed by support to reduction of women workload, to income generating activities for women and by increasing awareness on land tenure and land rights aspects. Capacity and institutional building on village level and training of farmers, extension and district staff is furthermore important issues.

Iringa Soil and Water Conservation (HIMA) Project was initiated in 1989/90 and activities have gradually been implemented in 40 villages up to the end of the second phase, December 1997. During the first 8 years of the project, there has been great progress in natural resources conservation and soil and water conservation.

About 700 small scale nurseries for tree seedlings have mushroomed out of which 105 are at schools outside the project area. Thus, a spill over effects has been observed as all 66 villages in the current project area (Mazombe and Kilolo divisions) and schools in divisions outside Kilolo and Mazombe are now engaged in afforestation activities. Since inception of the project about 5.7 mio. seedlings have been raised and planted in 3,700 hectares. Nearly 300 km of contour bands have been constructed and almost 700 hectares of farmland conserved. 80 sub-catchment have been identified and 56 local wells have been constructed.

An increasing number of villages, which have been supported by HIMA, are now preparing relevant and consistent village plans on their own. Furthermore, certain community activities such as minor road repairs, tree planting programmes and construction of wells are to an increasing extent organised and implemented by the villagers themselves. Thus, institutional sustainability is gradually being obtained at village level.

Since there has been a good impact of the project activities in the two divisions, the activities should be expanded as follows:

1. In villages, where the project has been operating for more than 5 years, procedures for scaling down of project supported activities should be introduced.
2. The 26 villages which were not covered in phase I and II should be covered in the third phase.

3. The project will expand its activities to cover Isimani division.
4. Activities, which have proven viable in implementation, like tree nurseries can be implemented in villages outside the priority divisions during the third phase.
5. Training of extension staff in agriculture, community development and forestry activities should in future include all such staff in the district as a means to disseminate information to the whole district.
6. Women and women headed households will still get special attention when addressing the needs of the poor.

The project assumes that the Tanzanian government and particularly the District Council is able to secure sufficient manpower of extension and support staff to the project. Project staff and farmers need motivation and continuity to enable the project to appropriately address poverty reduction issues, gender equality, improved agricultural production and environmental sustainability.

Some constraints have also been experienced during the course of carrying out project activities. This include absence of a clear strategy on how the project can reduce its support to 'older' project villages and consolidate the support to the new project villages. This has resulted in a favouring of old villages.

Risks for the project include drastic government staff retrenchment in Iringa, particularly in the line departments, institutional and attitudinal barriers to team building and to a multi-sectoral approach in extension work; unrealistic expectations among villagers and their leaders, and inability of the project to develop/disseminate technologies which address basic constraints facing the environment and which can lead to improvement in farmers' living condition.

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