

Monthly Update – November 2013

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

OVERVIEW

USAID-TAPP is increasing incomes for smallholder farmers, improving nutrition, and expanding markets through agricultural innovation and commercialization. The program is part of Feed the Future, the US government's global hunger and food security initiative to break the cycle of hunger and poverty in the developing world. Feed the Future is focusing on the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT), a region the Tanzanian government has identified as the most conducive for agricultural growth. Working with our partners and the Government of Tanzania, USAID-TAPP is concentrating efforts on selected crops and regions to help transform the country's food security.

TISSUE CULTURE ENTERPRISE IMPROVES HEALTH AND NUTRITION FOR FARMERS

EcoAgriConsult established the country's first ever private sector tissue culture laboratory. With USAID-TAPP's support, the organization has begun producing clean banana and orange flesh sweet potato (OFSP) planting material for rural entrepreneurs. This field-ready material will be sold to smallholder farmers in areas where USAID-TAPP has activities. To increase access to foods with high nutritional value, five project sites in Iringa, Njombe, Mbeya, and Morogoro have been identified as demonstration plots and 10 farmers from each region were given trainings on banana garden establishment. Banana is the world's fourth most important food crop after rice, wheat, and maize in terms of total value of production. It is a starchy staple food crop, rich in vitamins A, C, and B6, as well as an easily produced source of energy. Compared to other staple crops, banana is cheaper to produce year-round in different environmental conditions, and highly suited to intercropping and mixed farming systems with livestock. The crop is an important subsistence food for low income families, providing food security, nutrition, and energy for hundreds of millions of people in tropical and subtropical countries. Through USAID-TAPP's community education trainings and technical assistance in household food production, small kitchen gardens were set up to grow vegetables and OFSP vines for home consumption. To ensure a constant supply of clean planting material to smallholders, EcoAgriConsult has 12,000 banana and OFSP plants under incubation in lab growth rooms. These virus-free plants will be produced in an environmentally friendly manner without the use of pesticides, while using organic matter with minimum amounts of synthetic fertilizers. Through this partnership, USAID-TAPP will also support training of local farmers and project partner personnel in program management, work planning, and monitoring and evaluation systems. Local partner capacity will be strengthened by promoting the cultivation, processing, and sale of clean banana and OFSP plants with smallholders.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

EcoAgriConsult has 12,000 banana and OFSP plants under incubation in lab growth rooms.

BUSINESS TRAINING FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In many developing nations, agriculture still holds the key to reducing poverty and increasing the security of livelihoods. With the aim of reducing the growing challenges in rural development, USAID-TAPP has extended its business skills training program to work with funders and trainers in hopes of building the necessary capacity that rural agricultural producers desperately need. During this month, USAID-TAPP worked with nine financial institutions in developing financial products that are sustainable for smallholder vegetable farmers. USAID-TAPP and the financial institutions will allow an initial 770 farmers or farmer groups, mostly from the SAGCOT Regions to access loans for their horticulture production. These financial institutions have agreed to disburse over \$400,000 to USAID-TAPP assisted farmers, as an initial trial. The financial institutions are willing to allocate more funds if the loans prove to be successful.

USAID-TAPP has selected six farmer groups from Iringa, three from Kilolo, another three from Mufindi and 10 from Njombe for the pilot project. In addition to this, a total of 35 farmer groups in these regions were trained on record keeping, business management, and capacity building. In the Northern zone, USAID-TAPP signed nine MOUs with SACCOs including: Muungano, Babati, Mshikamano, Nshara, Meru Community, Arusha Soko Kuu, Arusha, Mkombozi and Galapo.

NEW GROUPS BENEFIT FROM AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

To improve on market linkages, support services, and infrastructure for both farm producers and buyers, USAID-TAPP has extended its marketing program to two new districts in Dodoma and Morogoro regions. A total of 157 farmers in Kilombero, Morogoro and 130 farmers in Mpwapwa, Dodoma, have received introductory trainings on market requirements and product selection. Being positioned within the vicinity of major market outlets, farmers from both Mpwapwa and Kilombero are only an arm's length away from potential buyers. To adapt to market conditions, USAID-TAPP has also supported farmers with additional trainings on crop production to ensure that agricultural products are in their best quality and that farmers get higher selling prices at the markets.

COASTAL REGION FARMERS REAP BUMPER HARVESTS



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Salum Seif standing in front of his new car which was bought from the profits made from his harvests and past savings.

Before the start of the festive season, some farmer groups are already counting their blessings and smiling to the banks given the bountiful harvests recorded in some of the major crops along the coastal region. USAID-TAPP's ambassador pineapple grower, Mr. Salum Seif at Ndagaa in Zanzibar saw a bumper harvest of 4,000 kgs of pineapples that brought him a profit of Tsh 2,600,000 (\$1,656), while watermelon productions brought farmers along the coast of Dar es Salaam with hefty profits from this sweet fruit. The Udugu Farmers Group harvested 12,500 kgs of watermelon and profited with Tsh 6,800,000 (\$4,331) and the Saire Farmers Group also profited from a hefty harvest of 17,500 kgs of watermelon and profited with Tsh 7,200,000 (\$4,596). The plentiful harvest have enabled farmer groups to make personal investments in

agricultural equipment, including infrastructure and inputs. The Udugu Farmers Group made a total investment of Tsh 5,630,000 (\$3,586) in drip irrigation kits and solar panels, while the Uvumbuzi Farmers Group invested Tsh 850,000 (\$541) in drip irrigation kits and a water pump. The Mlembea Farmers Group invested Tsh 5,500,000 (\$3,503) in a one acre drip kit system, and in the construction of a water tank and borehole. These investments will enable these groups to continue expanding their agriculture operations and uplifting their livelihoods.

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

“Increased food security through enhanced productivity”

USAID-TAPP is a five-year program implemented by Fintrac Inc. to increase smallholder farmer incomes through enhanced productivity, crop diversification, and improved market access. Visit www.tanzania-agric.org for more information on upcoming activities and to receive copies of monthly bulletins and success stories.

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