

Monthly Update – February 2014

# 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.

## EASY ACCESS TO LOANS EMPOWERS SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

In February, USAID-TAPP identified nine financial institutions to link smallholder farmers to. With the aim of turning small holder farming into a business enterprise, USAID-TAPP has launched a credit pilot support program starting in November 2013.

After signing Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the financial institutions, the respective loan officers and managers were trained on a Cash Flow Tool to be used in farmer's loan appraisal. 13 farmer groups (260 farmers) also received training on savings and credit management, business skills, farming as a business, record keeping, and cost of production and marketing. These groups received technical advice on production planning. Some of these farmers began opening their accounts with the financial institutions and kept savings

required to qualify for accessing credits.

The selected financial institutions span Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Morogoro, Iringa, Njombe, and Mbeya. This pilot has expanded to 400 from the 100 smallholder farmers in November last year. Organized in groups, the farmers are expected to access loans with total value of Tsh 845,000,000 (\$528,125) from November 2013 to October 2014. The credit pilot continues with trainings to additional farmers and facilitates the meeting of preconditions for accessing credits from the financial institutions whereby some of the farmer groups have already started receiving their loans.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

*Meru Community Bank Loan Officer explaining credit preconditions to Mwangaza group in Mbuguni village*

## MED FOODS BOOSTS SPICE FARMING IN TANZANIA

The consumption of spices in Tanzania and the demand from international markets has led to the involvement of Med Foods in smallholder farmer spice farming. Med Foods has managed to introduce the project to farmers in Lushoto (black pepper and cardamom), Same (ginger), and Mbulu (garlic). A total of 144 farmers (101 men and 43 women) have been trained in agricultural technologies most conducive to spice farming by USAID-TAPP.

Med Foods is also a Tanzania Food and Drug Authority (TFDA) certified company after completing the final TFDA inspections. The efforts of Mrs. Joseph Mmari, Director and Owner of Med Foods, have allowed the company to acquire regional and national markets in Tanzania and abroad.

With the help of an agronomist from USAID-TAPP, Med Foods is identifying more farmer groups who will engage themselves in the production of ginger, garlic, black pepper, and cardamom.

Recent progress has included the purchase of a garlic peeling and powder packing machine to increase the production of processed garlic and packing of powder spices. This will add value to the various spices produced and packed in the company as well as providing a ready market to the farmers who grow the spices.

The introduction of spice farming will reduce the dependence on maize and beans as the principal crops by the smallholder farmers in Tanzania. Med Foods has reduced the food insecurity and has maximized the household income by encouraging farmers to implement modern farming strategies with assistance from USAID-TAPP's technologies.

## VINE DISTRIBUTION ENCOURAGES HEALTHY CHOICES BY FARMERS

In February, a total of 93 farmers' groups/villages were visited and 2,209 participants (1,140 men and 1,069 women) were trained on nutrition and kitchen garden establishments. During this time a total of 13,888 orange-flesh sweet potato (OFSP) vines were distributed, majority of which went to 38 farmer's groups.

The healthy crop has been essential to reducing Vitamin A deficiency in children throughout Tanzania. Also beneficial for pregnant women and young children, the crop has become a popular choice because of the nutritional advantages it offers.

## NEW PARTNERSHIP INCREASES AVAILABILITY OF HIGH QUALITY AGRICULTURE INPUTS

Under a new partnership, USAID-TAPP agronomists will work closely with A to Z Textile Mills Ltd—a family owned and operated company located in Arusha. Originally a major producer in polyester and Long-Lasting Insecticidal Bed Nets (LLINS) to combat malaria, A to Z now operates 11 companies which offer a wide variety of products and services in both local and international markets.

The company is currently producing items such as plastic netting, plastic row covers, seedling trays, and improved postharvest onion bags and crates. The company has identified 16 demonstration plots of tomatoes and cabbage to implement these technologies, of which half are in the south (Iringa and Morogoro) and half in the north (Arusha and Lushoto).



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Unguja Ukuu farmers pick up OFSP vines at a field day to replicate on their own plots.

### 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](http://www.tanzania-agric.org) for more information on upcoming activities and to receive copies of monthly bulletins and success stories.

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