

Monthly Update – April 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.

PARTNERSHIP TO IMPROVE NUTRITION

In the fight against hunger and malnutrition in Tanzania, USAID-TAPP is collaborating with EcoAgri Consult to promote the use of clean planting materials of orange-flesh sweet potatoes (OFSP) tubers for nutrition purposes.

In April, a number of OFSP multiplication tunnels were constructed to enable the establishment of seed systems among communities. OFSP-related trainings have been conducted to farmers at the household level and vines have been distributed to farmers to improve dietary diversity in their home gardens. The purpose of doing this is to build awareness, increase demand, and introduce OFSP's benefits to communities in Tanzania. In promoting OFSP tuber production, USAID-TAPP is partnering with private companies like Serengeti Fresh Ltd to commercialize the crop to meet local and international market demands.



Photo by Fintrac Inc
Healthy OFSP tubers (Kabode-Nasport 10 variety) from an EcoAgri Consult plot as a result of disease-free planting tubers.

The month of April saw trainings aimed at promoting the production and utilization of OFSP to address the vitamin A deficiency at the organizational and household level. The trainings were conducted in Arusha (Ekenywa village), Hai (Kware village), Moshi (Majengo), Iringa urban (IMO farmers), and Njombe district councils (Igwachanya village).

CLIMATE ADAPTION: RAISED BED SYSTEM SAVES CROPS FROM FLOODS

The recent rains which started earlier this year have led to massive destruction in the areas around Morogoro and Dar es Salaam. The rains have resulted in many farmers losing much of their crops in floods. Farmers who have practiced good agricultural practices (GAPs), specifically the use of raised beds and drainage systems, were able to withstand the weather and save much of their crops.

Despite the long rains and floods, the Jitihada farmers group in the Dumila, Morogoro region has been able to harvest their plot of sweet pepper. Kibwana Salum, one of the members of the farmers group, said that the technical skills from USAID-TAPP agronomists have given them ideas which enabled their farm to withstand the heavy rains and floods "If we used our old way of farming using the sunken beds all our crops would have been swept away by the rains. USAID-TAPP's technical assistance has been very helpful" said Salum.

The crops on raised bed systems in many USAID-TAPP supported plots have survived the floods and the farmers are on track to produce good yields despite the heavy rains. The technical support provided by USAID-TAPP agronomists has been impactful and helpful to the farmers.

Most of the affected plots use sunken beds which often result in crops being swept away by the floods. This has been seen mostly around areas located near rivers and streams. In Morogoro, the overflow of the rivers has caused flooding in more than 100 plots.

FARMERS BEGIN RECEIVING CREDIT FROM FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

In April, the Tujiamini Farmer Group in Kilombero and the Imani Msagani Farmer Group in Malolo Village, Kilosa District—both located in Morogoro—received their first loans from Green Light SACCOS in Mikumi. The loans were an outcome of a USAID-TAPP credit pilot facilitation.



Photo by Fintrac Inc

Farmers from the Imani Msagani group in Malolo village, Morogoro with USAID-TAPP consultant Lorna Grace and BDS specialist Sylilinga Mwalla.

Green Light SACCOS is the first among nine financial institutions in the credit pilot scheme to give credit to farmer groups. Six members from Tujiamini Group received 1,500,000 TZS (\$920) for financing production of ½ acre of sweet pepper and ½ acre of tomato.

Four members from the Imani Msagani group received 5,000,000 TZS (\$3,067) for financing the production of two acres of watermelon and one acre of onion. The loans will allow the farmers to purchase fertilizers, crop protection inputs, and fuel for irrigation which are costs they have been unable to finance from their own pockets. In the Southern Highlands, 80 farmers from six groups applied for credit of 39,550,000 TZS (\$24,263) from three financial institutions, while 22 farmers from four groups applied for credit with a value of 33,000,000 TZS (\$20,245) from three financial institutions in the Northern Zone.

These loans will be used to help finance crop production and expanding the farmers' operations. Access to credit has been one of the biggest challenge horticulture farmers have been facing and USAID-TAPP is linking financial institutions to farmers to address this challenge.

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“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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