

Coopers
& Lybrand

VISAID COPY

PN. ABZ-097
91461

**COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION
AND MARKETING PROJECT**

CAPM - SWAZILAND

SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION AND MARKETING (CAPM) PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The CAPM Project is managed by Chemonics International and is sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Swaziland. The Project has been in operation for some four years and during this period it has, for various reasons, undergone a shift in direction to ensure that local needs are met.
- 1.2 Whilst it may be argued that a project is a project and that the objectives of a project should be adhered to, agriculture remains very vibrant and is subjected to a number of influences which may not have been foreseen originally. Some of these influences, *inter alia*, are drought conditions and the political and economic developments in Southern Africa. Such changes have, for example, been very noticeable in Counties bordering on Swaziland
- 1.3 Currently, the main thrust of the Project is the development of two farmer co-operatives, Hhohho and Siphofaneni, to be self supporting, viable and efficient production and marketing units.
- 1.4 The CAPM Project has reached certain milestones and progress is evident. Much, however, still needs to be achieved to reach the objectives of the current project thrust.
- 1.5 Indications are that USAID funding for the project might no longer be available after the end of 1995. For this reason the CAPM Project Team decided to host a workshop to discuss the Project and its future sustainability.

2. SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP PLANNING

- 2.1 Coopers & Lybrand Management Advisory Services (Pty) Ltd (C&L) was contracted to assist the CAPM Team with planning the Sustainability Workshop. It was decided, for a number of reasons, to utilise the services of the CAPM Project Team as far as possible.
- 2.2 To ensure that the members of the CAPM Project Team could effectively manage an anticipated eighty workshop participants, a pre-workshop training programme was designed, developed and presented by C&L to selected members of the CAPM Project Team.
- 2.3 The training programme is attached as Annexure A.

3. THE SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP

3.1 The CAPM Project sustainability Workshop was held on 21 and 22 February 1995 and was attended by some seventy participants, covering a variety of interest groups.

3.2 Four themes were selected for discussion during the Workshop, these were;

- * FARMER ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT
- * PRODUCTION SERVICES
- * MARKETING SERVICES
- * PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR SUPPORT TO SMALL FARMER ORGANISATIONS

3.3 To ensure effective feed-back, the participants were divided into four discussion groups and two groups discussed the same theme. The format for report-back was fixed and groups used overhead projector transparencies to advise the plenary session of the outcome of the group discussions and conclusions.

3.4 The CAPM Project Sustainability Workshop Programme is attached as Annexure B.

3.5 The discussion groups were requested to discuss each theme under the following headings:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How do we get there? - What must be done?

3.6 To assist deliberations, members of the CAPM Project Team gave a brief introduction for each theme sketching, in the main, what has been achieved to date.

4. WORKSHOP CLIMATE

4.1 It was evident that the Workshop was held in a good spirit. This indicated that those who attended the Workshop perceived the CAPM Project to be important and that the Project is making a contribution to the development and the welfare of the people of Swaziland.

4.2 The aforementioned is important as it provided a climate for positive and constructive contribution. As is any workshop situation, there were a few participants who arrived with their own agenda. Group pressure, however, succeeded in maintaining focused discussions.

5. REPORT FORMAT

5.1 This Final report has been divided into three sections, namely:

- * An Overview of the Sustainability Workshop
- * The Workshop Summary
- * Project Planning Document

6. AN OVERVIEW OF THE SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP

6.1 The relevance and importance of the current CAPM Project should not be underestimated. Reference has already been made to the positive contributions by participants.

6.2 With hindsight, it is perhaps a pity that such a workshop was not held twelve months ago to ensure a longer period for the implementation of the suggestions and recommendations. But then, it can also be argued that the climate for such a workshop may not have been right and that the same measure of success may not have been achieved.

6.3 As with any workshop, the real benefit lies with the implementation of the recommendations. The views and opinions expressed at the workshop is to the benefit of all those who attended, in that they were able to share in a variety of experiences and knowledge. The exposure to this will, I am sure, impact positively on their own decisions and actions within the environment of their influence and place of work.

6.4 Certain expectations have now been created, intentionally or otherwise, and a plan of action is now required to achieve some or all of the goals set during the workshop. This is the most difficult part of the workshop and, without doubt, the most important.

6.5 The Sustainability Workshop still requires two major phases to bring it to a successful conclusion, namely:

- * a well defined, practical and affordable ACTION PLAN
- * a systematic and measurable IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

7. THE ACTION PLAN

7.1 The following three major areas requiring action, for each Co-operative, were identified:

7.1.1 The development of the Co-op organisation and management;

- * Effective Committee structures
- * Member support and loyalty
- * Management training - personnel and members
- * Financial and accounting structures and systems
- * Administrative and communication structures and systems

7.1.2 Production planning and extension services

- * Producing the quantity and the quality required by the "market"
- * Availability of suitable planting material
- * Crop husbandry and effective farm "housekeeping"
- * Financial assistance - bridging finance
- * Irrigation - availability and methodology
- * Quality standards and controls

7.1.3 Marketing, distribution and transportation

- * Identification and development of marketing and distribution channels
- * Packaging techniques, standards and materials
- * Market surveillance and market intelligence/information - national, regional and international
- * Transportation systems
- * Sales promotion and advertising

7.2 The majority of the aforementioned areas have been addressed in some way or another. The Workshop, however, highlighted that much still needs to be done and at a far more rapid pace. The CAPM Team alone cannot effectively impact on all of the above and the other major role-players need to action a deliberate plan to meet the needs and aspirations of the farmers.

7.3 The major role-players referred to have been identified as:

- 7.3.1 The Farmers
- 7.3.2 The Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives (MOAC)
- 7.3.3 Financial Institutions/Banks
- 7.3.4 The Encabeni Market Management and Market Agents
- 7.3.5 CAPM Project Team and Funding Agencies
- 7.3.7 Commerce and Industry - Agricultural sector

- 7.4 A Task Team/Working Group/Steering Committee consisting of representatives of the above and with clearly defined terms of reference needs to be established. One of the tasks of the Group will be to establish the plan of action to ensure achievement. The Group would also need to establish a system of networking.
- 7.5 Whilst it may be advantageous to request the MOAC to take the lead to implement the above, it is suggested that the CAPM Team offers to undertake, in close association with MOAC, the formation of the above Group and to facilitate the initial meetings. Once the plan of action have been agreed upon, MOAC, if it so desires, can play the leading role to ensure future sustainability.
- 7.6 A further alternative would be the formation of a separate Association, with inputs, financial and otherwise, from the aforementioned major role-players to achieve the above. The formation of such an Association might be time consuming, which the Project cannot afford at this stage.

8. THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- 8.1 Once the plan of action has been agreed upon, the Group must formulate and develop the Implementation Plan which must be well documented with clearly defined milestones. The Group must regularly monitor progress of the Plan.
- 8.2 It is important that the Implementation Plan be "all inclusive" and that it has the support and commitment, both monetary and otherwise, of all the role-players.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 C&L wishes to thank Chemonics International for the appointment to facilitate the Sustainability Workshop.
- 9.2 We are of the opinion that the current CAPM Project is very worthwhile and should be further developed to bring the objectives of the project to fruition. As mentioned earlier, the Workshop can be viewed as a success but the important tasks of action planning and implementation is vital to the overall success of what the CAPM Team has set out to achieve.
- 9.3 We will be pleased to offer any further assistance you may require in any of the aforementioned actions.