Support to Small-scale Farming through NALEP

The Swedish support to to small-scale farming in Kenya is channelled through NALEP, the National Agriculture and Livestock Extension Programme. The overall objective of NALEP is to contribute to social and economic development and poverty alleviation in rural areas through advisory services to smallholders. In the first three-year period NALEP would serve more than 300,000 farmers in about 900 focal areas, FAs, in 42 selected districts.

The majority of the Kenyan people are small-scale farmers and livestock keepers. Most of them live in the densely populated parts of western and central Kenya and they usually have very small land holdings, often only around a hectare.

Due to the general stagnation of the Kenyan economy there are few new employment opportunities outside agriculture. Since there is a relatively fast population growth, land shortage is becoming a serious problem in many parts of the country—farms are being subdivided and continue becoming smaller with each new generation. Intensive cultivation, overgrazing, deforestation and soil erosion has lead to decreasing soil fertility, lower crop yields and thus lower income for farmers. The collapse of most agriculture orientated parastatals has lead to low prices and marketing problems for the farmers. Poverty in rural areas is becoming more common.

Background to the establishment and design of NALEP

The National Soil and Water Conservation Programme (NSWCP), a nationwide land husbandry programme implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, MoA, started 1974 and has been supported by Sida from the start. The programme is considered a success reaching over 1.5 million farmers and leading to decreased soil erosion as well as considerable production and productivity increases. NSWCP worked out a successful method for mobilisation and people's participation and had well trained, motivated and physically mobile staff reaching out to the farming communities.

NSWCP is generally regarded as a very effective rural development programme. At the same time the Ministry's conventional agriculture extension programme was inefficient and a disappointment. Towards the end of the 90'ies Government budget constraints lead to retrenchment of GoK staff and thus fewer extension officers as well as less funds for activities and transport, making the agricultural extension even less effective.

At this time a new strategy for agricultural extension was developed. Many aspects were directly adopted form the NSWCP. A new National Agriculture Extension Policy (NAEP) and the National Agriculture and Livestock Extension Programme framework NALEP were adopted and the NSWCP was closed down in year 2000.

A brief presentation of the Programme

The overall objective of NALEP is to contribute to social and economic development and poverty alleviation in rural areas through advisory services to smallholders. NALEP is meant to be a transition from conventional agricultural extension to a broader and more farmer-oriented and demand driven extension better equipped to meet the needs of the small-scale farming population. The project will mainly focus on poverty reduction measures and empowerment of small-scale farmers and with strengthening the capacity of extension staff in meeting farmers' needs.

To ensure that the staff is well equipped with necessary skills, staff training covers many subjects: from project management and specific technical subjects to issues related to day to day interaction with farmers, e.g. communication skills and problem solving techniques. The training programme is based on the experiences of the NSWCP.

In the first three-year period NALEP would serve more than 300,000 farmers in about 900 focal areas, FAs, in the

42 selected districts. As a starting point these FA communities are appraised in participatory sessions using various PRA-tools. Together with the MoA field staff, the farmers will draw a Community Action Plan (CAP), which defines roles and responsibilities among the community itself as well as among the extension providers, including commercial companies and NGOs. A Focal Area development committee will be democratically elected for each FA and undergo specific training.

In the next step each farm in a Focal Area will be visited and a farm specific action plan will be developed jointly with the farmer, looking at challenges and opportunities to improve the farm enterprises. This will result in about 120,000 farm specific action plans every year. In addition, new technologies adapted to the local needs and conditions will be demonstrated in field days involving more than 100,000 farmers per year.

The extension messages are obviously centered around agriculture and livestock production and marketing as well as soil and water conservation and agroforestry but also include socio-economic related issues like gender, HIV/AIDS, drugs/alcohol and problems facing the rural youth.

In order to ensure that appropriate interventions are promoted, NALEP has integrated two specific research components: (1) The National Agroforestry Research Programme (NAFRP), implemented by KARI-Embu, and (2) The Improved Land Management in Lake Victoria Basin, implemented under the lead of ICRAF. NALEP also includes an advocacy-component aiming at informing rural populations of their rights and responsibilities with regard to the use of land, forests and other natural resources. The advocacy is carried out by three NGOs: Forest Action Network (FAN), East African Wildlife Society (EAWLS) and Resource Project Kenya (RKP).

The Ministry and Sida have agreed on strict control of funds through intensive auditing by an international audit firm (PriceWaterhouseCoopers).

Achievements to date

NALEP is a new programme, just over two years old. It is still too early to expect any major impact with regard to the main goal of social and economic development and poverty alleviation in the rural areas. After a somewhat slow start the Programme has gained momentum and is today regarded as the most efficient rural development programme of MoA.

A mid-term review was carried out in November 2002 by a Sida-contracted external team. The team found that:

- NALEP has been successful in achieving its short-term specific objective of adapting the concepts of NSWCP – focal area, PRA, local farmers' committees and groups and that the extension service has become considerably more effective and efficient.
- The increased efficiency has been achieved through good utilisation of staff capabilities, reinforced by training in facilitation and management techniques and through restoration of mobility at field level. Efficient utilisation of resources has also been ensured by effective procedures for budgeting, accounting and auditing that have combined to significantly reduce waste and misuse of resources.
- The activities have been relevant in addressing the production constraints of particularly the better off farmers but less relevant to poor and vulnerable families, including women headed households and households with family members affected by HIV/AIDS. The project needs to develop menus of actions specifically suited to the needs of the poor and vulnerable.

The agreement on the first programme phase has been extended by twelve months, up to June 2004, to give time for proper planning of a new phase. The recommendations of the Mid-Term Review, the findings of the Poverty Baseline Survey as well as the Government's Rural Development Strategy and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (expected to be revised amd finalised during the first half of 2003) will form the basis for the planning for the next phase.

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BASIC FACTS

Agreement period
First Phase: 00-07-01—04-06-30 (4 years)

Budget
Total for 4 years:
Approximately 1,500 million KES
(approximately 165 million SEK)
From GoK: (staff, offices, recurrent exp.)
500 million KES
(approximately SEK 55 million SEK)
From Sida: 110 million SEK
(approximately 1,000 million KES)

Sida Disbursements 2002
29,0 million SEK

Sida Disbursements 2000-2002
70,2 million SEK

Implementing organisations
Ministry of Agriculture, MoA
in cooperation with:
KARI, Kenya Agriculture Research Institute
(Embu Station)
ICRAF, International Centre for Research in
Agroforestry (World Agroforestry Centre),
3 Advocacy Groups (NGOs):
FAN (Forest Action Network)
EAWLS (East African Wildlife Society)
RPK (Resource Project Kenya).

Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.

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