ESWATINI: Climate Smart Agriculture for Resilient Livelihoods

Lynn Kota: National Project Director
COVID-19 status and implications for projects efforts

Like in many countries worldwide, the COVID 19 pandemic has had many adverse effects on the livelihoods of rural communities. Vaccination efforts are currently at 31% of the population. The following are some the effects of the pandemic in Eswatini:

- The sudden changes in the output markets, as a result of movement restrictions, have disrupted the cash flow of some smallholder producers, leaving them unable to afford inputs, like seeds and fertilizers to continue production into the next season.

- It has been quite difficult for the project to provide the much-needed coaching and mentoring of farmers to realise increased yields.

- Support in the form of inputs will provide a much-needed stimulus to continue production and recover from the initial impact of COVID-19.

- Considering the seasonality of food availability, it is important for farmers to be supported with measures to protect their harvest to ensure food availability beyond the post-harvest season.

- This is particularly important for increasing household access to nutritious foods for boosting immunity and increasing the body’s defences against viruses such as COVID-19.

- Lack of such support will result in a domino effect rendering rural communities more susceptible to such viruses, and defeating the whole effort of improving livelihoods.
Highlights from June 2020 – August 2021

- Using Solar powered irrigation infrastructure to irrigate previously degraded land
- Zoning rehabilitated lands for different land uses according to suitability
- Capacitation of user groups for sustainability of rehabilitation initiatives
- Acquisition of political will from both Traditional Authorities and Government to support rehabilitation effort
Using Nature-based solutions to achieve an integrated approach for the implementation of the 3 Rio conventions and SLM

Wetland Restoration for Increased Water Availability for Livelihood Enhancement and Biodiversity Conservation

Increased Pollinators for Increased Agricultural Productivity for Livelihood Enhancement and Avoided Deforestation
Innovative approaches for irrigation using solar powered energy
Engaging and Zoning
Project approach and accomplishments related to gender/youth transformation and mainstreaming

Gender disaggregation is observed, and women’s land and to women’s empowerment security are enhanced through the Chief’s Letter of Consent.

More women accessed rainwater harvesting (338%) and women’s participation in the CDP process increased by 131%.

Women are well represented in NRMCs (48%), RMCs (40%), CDCs (58%), Inner Councils (32%), and erosion control groups (61%).

While recognising good implementation progress of the Women in Agriculture Index (WEAI) outcomes, the project aims to hold a pro-WEAI virtual workshop to enhance better analysis of project’s contribution to empowerment and transformation.

The inclusion of the youth in the project is still a challenge because of lack of access to land and their volatility.

The honey value chain is specifically being developed for the youth in terms of production and processing.

An MoU with the UNDP has been signed to that effect.
Challenges faced and how they were addressed

- The impact of COVID 19 has contributed to the delays in project implementation.
- The use of an Agricultural Information Management System has been heightened through providing internet connectivity to Rural Development Areas in the Project Area, for both extension officers and farmers to have access to the web-based system.
- An SMS platform was also created to disseminate information to all farmers as required.
- Civil unrest in the country also resulted in delays in project implementation. Project logos were removed from project cars to enable some degree of project implementation continuity, particularly during planting and harvesting times.
- Inadequacy of suitable and qualified business development service providers in Eswatini has adversely reduced the speed towards access to finance for market ready farmers.
Most important lessons learned from the project

• In order to achieve sustained project initiatives, it is imperative to transfer skills and knowledge to communities through the engagement of community-based facilitators during the life of the project.

• It is imperative that projects receive strong political will from both Traditional Authorities and Governments from the design stage and throughout implementation, and their roles and responsibility clearly defined.

• Beneficiary contribution strengthens community ownership of projects and thus their sustainability.
What part of your project would you want to feature as a case study for RFS to inspire others?

Using solar powered irrigation infrastructure for previously degraded lands, and re-introduction of “the forgotten foods”

Re-shaping of gullies in severely degraded lands and zoning for different uses

Restoration of Wetlands for Biodiversity Conservation and for Economic Use value.

Establishment and Training of Community-based Natural Resource Management Committees for sustainability of interventions, skills and knowledge transfer.
Planned activities 2022

The Main focus to be on market linkages and access to finance as key drivers of change
Lynn Kota
National Project Director
ESWADE – Smallholder Market-Led Project/Climate-Smart Agriculture for Resilient Livelihoods (SMLP/CSARL)
Lynnk@eswade.co.sz
lynnkota@gmail.com
+268 76063609
www.eswade.co.sz

resilientfoodafrica.org

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

LIFAD
Investing in rural people

Natural Agriculture

Biodiversity

UN environment

THE WORLD BANK

UNIDO

AGRA

CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL