

PROJECTS: International

CHANGING COURSE IN GLOBAL AGRICULTURE



Project

Today, almost one billion people are suffering from malnutrition and 70% of the poor in developing countries live in rural areas. This is largely attributed to unsustainable agricultural/environmental practices, weak nexus between science and policies as well as incoherent national policies.

In 2003 the World Bank and several UN agencies initiated the World Agriculture Report (IAASTD), based on the question of how agriculture in the year 2050 could provide for a growing world population in the most sustainable, equitable and healthy way. After four years of work over 400 experts came to the conclusion that “business as usual” is not an option for the future.

Essentially the report called for a radical paradigm shift in agricultural policies and practice to make the goals of reducing hunger and poverty and improving rural livelihoods reality. This paradigm shift included a stronger focus on small-holder farmers and on locally adapted cultivation methods, as well as on agriculture’s multifunctionality.

Sustainable agriculture is less input intensive and therefore more accessible for resource-limited rural people and has therefore a high potential for improving the livelihoods of a large group of rural poor and particularly women.

The project aims at strengthening the policy support for sustainable agriculture at national, regional and global levels. The project will implement three core activity lines on policy coherence, governance, and civil society strengthening. In three countries in Sub-Saharan Africa the project will support national or regional authorities in defining national policies and agricultural strategies that allow for effective, comprehensive and long-term planning of sustainable agricultural development.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development known as the “Rio+20” conference is held end of June 2012 and is the first important milestone within the project. The “Rio+20” conference provides an excellent opportunity to kick off international action for a transition of global agriculture.

Relevance

The well-being of smallholders and food security can be significantly improved by consistent and concerted international actions to further sustainable agriculture, based in particular on the findings of World Agriculture Report (IAASTD). Various assessments and reports have shown that food security, rural welfare and environmental sustainability can be improved through the implementation and increased uptake of sustainable agriculture innovations.

Development Goal

Ensuring food security and sustainable use of natural resources through a paradigm shift in global agriculture towards more ecologically and socially sustainable agriculture based on the findings of the IAASTD.

Project number:
BV IS-10

Project start date:
1st January 2012

Project end date:
31st December 2014

Budget 2012:
674'300 CHF

Project Coordination:
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Program responsibility:
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Dr. Hans Herren – president of Biovision – and Co-chair of the World Agriculture Report at the presentation of the same.

Beneficiaries

End beneficiaries of the project activities will be smallholder farm families, farmer groups, community-based organizations (CBOs), and especially women and youths and their groups in areas of concern for food security. The project itself mainly targets decision makers in politics, civil society and business.

Expected changes for end-beneficiaries include:

- Better access to resources (especially to relevant information and knowledge)
- Wider dissemination of ecologically sustainable and economically profitable agricultural practices
- Higher resilience of agricultural practices to climate change
- Improved food security and rural welfare

Goals

1. To assess the status, challenges and potential solutions for the implementation of sustainable and discuss results with relevant stakeholders
2. To establish a partnership for sustainable agriculture with 5 governments, 50 NGOs, 10 businesses, 5 scientific institutions, 10 farmers' associations' and to mobilise key stakeholders
3. To advocate for international action to implement sustainable agriculture based on the findings of the IAASTD
4. To assess the need, benefits and challenges of a scientific panel on agricultural knowledge, science and technology and develop arguments for its promotion
5. To support three national or regional authorities to endorse national policies and agricultural strategies that allow for effective, comprehensive and long-term planning of sustainable agricultural development
6. To assess deficits of existing binding agreements (e.g. UNCBD, UNFCCC, UNCCD) and opportunities for a new binding agreement to promote sustainable agriculture



Side-Event at the Rio +20 Regional Preparatory Conference for Europe in Geneva:

Dr. David Nabarro, Special Representative of the Secretary General on Food Security and Nutrition in New York, highlighted in his speech that sustainable small scaling farming is more resilient to climate change and helps to empower farmers.

Partner organisation

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

www.sdc.admin.ch,

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