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CASE STUDY

Rwanda

ENHANCING INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR PLANNING

PROJECT NAME
Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Agriculture Sector in Rwanda

PERIOD
2012

TOTAL COST
€ 168 102

BENEFITING ZONE
Rwanda

PARTNERS
- Government of Rwanda
- European Union
- Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI)

KEY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES
- soil erosion and acidity;
- increase in the use of inorganic fertilisers and pesticides;
- crop and variety selection,

CONTEXT

For many years the European Union has been providing assistance to Rwanda´s rural development, which is heavily dependent on the agriculture sector's contribution to the economy, potential for growth, and role in sustaining livelihoods. During the formulation phase of Rwanda's Strategic Programme for the Transformation of Agriculture III (SPTA3) for the period 2013-2018, a Strategic Environmental Assessment was promoted by the EU Delegation to Rwanda, the Government of Rwanda — through its Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) —, and other donors.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the SEA was to ensure that environmental concerns are appropriately integrated in the agriculture sector — and in the rural feeder roads subsector — throughout the decision-making, policy development, implementation and monitoring processes of all development actors involved.

The scoping phase was aimed at identifying the key environment and climate change issues in the agriculture sector to be addressed by the SEA, taking into account both the effects of degraded natural resources and of climate change on the sector's performance as well as the existing potential impact on the environment and on climate vulnerability associated with actions in the agriculture sector.

The SEA study phase was aimed at assessing all key issues in detail and identifying options to address them and generate opportunities.

accentuating vulnerability to climate variability;
- enhancement of standards for construction and maintenance of rural feeder roads;
- enhancement of monitoring & evaluation system to follow up environmental and climate change issues;
- need to boost effectiveness of the EIA system.

KEY BENEFITS OF ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRATION

- Recommendations for:
(1) soil and water conservation;
(2) soil acidity and nutrient management;
(3) crop and variety selection;
(4) pest and disease management;
(5) rural feeder roads;
(6) monitoring and evaluation systems; and
(7) environmental impact assessment system.

- Influenced a EUR 200 m contract to enhance the agriculture sector's sustainable use of land and water resources, value creation and contribution to nutrition security.

IMPACT

Rwanda's SEA recommendations were tailor-made for each development actor and relevant policy: MINAGRI, non-agriculture sector institutions, Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), Common Performance Assessment Framework (CPAF), and the European Commission. Some of the recommendations went beyond the boundaries of the core agricultural sector institutions, e.g. opportunities to enhance environmental performance in the agriculture sector that are better handled by the Environment and Natural Resources competent authorities, including the strengthening of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) system and opportunities to enhance environmental enforcement capacities.

Recommendations addressed specifically to the EU Delegation to Rwanda included developing performance indicators for the disbursement of variable tranches; addressing a number of issues with the national partners through policy dialogue, such as the multi-sectoral harmonisation of environmental indicators relevant to the agriculture sector; and strengthening the formulation of the Sector Policy Support Programme for Rural Feeder Roads with regards to environmental sustainability and climate resilience of roads.

The first key issues identified were discussed and validated at a stakeholders' workshop, generating the following recommendations to improve the environmental sustainability of SPTA-3:
- promoting soil and water conservation as an integral policy focus;
- objective monitoring of soil erosion with comparable reporting across the country;
- focusing on increasing yields with optimisation in use of inputs rather than increased application of inorganic fertilisers, including management of nutrients, soil acidity, pests and disease, and optimised use of fertilisers based on nutrient needs;
- and building flexibility into the Crop Intensification Program to enhance environmental performance and climate resilience.

Issues at a local level were verified through field visits and consultations with local stakeholders. The assessment and recommendations helped to shape the design of the EUR 200 m sector reform contract (SPTA3) to enhance the agriculture sector's sustainable use of land and water resources, value creation and contribution to nutrition security.

The SEA has become an important reference for both central- and district-level spending on feeder roads and the ongoing design of feeder road development policy and strategy.

TESTIMONY: KEY SUCCESS FACTORS OF RWANDA'S SEA

A number of elements contributed to make this a successful SEA. Amongst these we can highlight:

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- *the **timing** of the exercise; the SEA took place during the Government´s own planning cycle, but also coincided with the formulation of the EU´s support to the sector, feeding thus into both planning processes in a timely manner;*
- *high degree of **ownership** by the Government and the EU, allowing the process to be steered so as to satisfy their analytical needs and interests;*
- *the scope and approach to the SEA was also **coordinated with other donors** active in the sector, ensuring a single exercise useful to all;*
- *meaningful opportunities for **participation** were given throughout the SEA, allowing insights to be gathered by a wide range of actors, but also encouraging relevant discussions and exchanges between national actors; **targeted recommendations**, distinguishing technical from systemic issues, allowed a more structured analysis of findings by each institution concerned;*
- *recommendations covered **crosscutting sectors**, such as Environment and Natural Resources (ENR), local government and transport infrastructure;*
- ***results were meaningfully discussed** with the national partners, so the SEA recommendations could find their way into the relevant policies and support programmes;*
- ***broad dissemination of results** ensured the SEA could have an ongoing impact, by establishing itself as a reference document in the sector.*

Juan Palerm, Environment and Climate Change Mainstreaming Facility expert

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