

SAFE-World Project/Initiative Summary

Country: Kenya

Project/Initiative Title: Ministry of Agriculture - Soil and water Conservation Branch – Catchment Approach

Nos. farmers: 900,000

Hectares: 450,000

Agro-Ecological Zone: III

Improvement types

1x	2	3x	4	5x	6x	7	8	9
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A. Key Impacts

A1 – Productivity

Nos. farmers:	Hectares:	Crop	Before/With out	After/With	% change
50,000	25,000	Maize	1500 kg/ha	3750 kg/ha	150
100,000	50,000	Maize	1500 kg/ha	3000 kg/ha	100
200,000	100,000	Maize	1500 kg/ha	2250 kg/ha	50
550,000	275,000	Maize	1500 kg/ha	1875 kg/ha	25

A3 – Impacts on local community (social capital)

4500 groups (3000-5000) formed

A5 – Key changes in farm / regional system

50,000	farms improved maize yields by 150% (1500 – 3750 kg/ha)
100,000	“ “ “ 100% (1500 – 3000 kg/ha)
200,000	“ “ “ 50% (1500 – 2250 kg/ha)
550,000	“ “ “ 25% (1500 – 1875 kg/ha)

B. Types of Sustainable Agriculture Improvements

Type 1: Better use of available renewable natural capital

Type 2: Intensification of single sub-component of farm system

Type 3: Diversify by adding new productive natural capital and regenerative components

Type 4: Better use of non-renewable inputs and technologies

Type 5: Social and participatory processes leading to group action for making better use of natural capital

Type 6: Human capital building through training-learning programmes

Type 7: Access to Finance

Type 8: Add value by processing to reduce losses and increase returns

Type 9: Add value by direct or organised marketing of produce to consumers

	Yes/No	Narrative
Type 1	x	
Type 2		

Type 3	x	
Type 4		
Type 5	x	
Type 6	x	
Type 7		
Type 8		
Type 9		

D. Contact Point for Project/Initiative

J K Kiara, SWCB, MOALDM, Kenya

E. Project Narrative

The Catchment Approach of the Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya

Conservation programmes in Kenya have long produced only patchy and unsustainable conservation of soil and water. In the 1980s, the government recognised that the only way to achieve widespread conservation was to mobilise people to embrace resource conserving practices on their own terms. The Catchment Approach was adopted in 1988 as a way of concentrating resources in a specified catchment (typically 200-500 hectares) for a limited period of time (generally one year), during which all farms are conserved. Maintenance would then be carried out by community with the support of local extension agents. All financial subsidies were stopped, and resources allocated instead to training, tools and farmer trips.

The Soil and Water Conservation Branch, supported by SIDA, adapted a range of methods from PRA into the planning phase of the Catchment Approach. Interdisciplinary teams drawn from various government departments, together with staff of local and international NGOs actively working locally, work for about a week in a catchment. There is usually 3-4 days of intensive fieldwork, in which the teams work with farmers to build up a rich picture of local skills, knowledge and perspectives. On the final day, a public meeting, or *baraza*, is held, during which findings are presented in visual form for those present to comment on and suggest changes. Following these exchanges, a Catchment Committee of farmers is elected as the local institution responsible for coordinating implementation. The team constructs a detailed map of the catchment, and with the committee plans and implements the soil and water conservation measures for each of the farms.

The number of farms fully conserved each year in Kenya with various conservation measures has risen with the implementation of the Catchment Approach from 59,450 in 1988 to 97,650 in 1991-92. In addition, each year some 500,000 - 800,000 metres of cut-off drains and 50,000 - 100,000 metres of artificial waterways are constructed, some 1250-2700 gullies controlled, and 1780-3600 km of riverbanks protected.

It has become clear that where there is mobilization of the community, support to strong local groups, committed local staff and collaboration with other departments in interdisciplinary planning and implementation, there is increased agricultural productivity, diversification into

new enterprises, reduction in resource degradation, enhancement of water resources, improvement in the activities of local groups and independent replication to neighbouring communities. These improvements have occurred without payment or subsidy, and therefore are more likely to be sustained. Output growth has been highest where there has been interactive participation. Thus, increased yields has been achieved by local people with support from an external institution now concerned with facilitating local efforts rather than directing them.