

Agricultural Institute of Canada

International Twinning Partnership Program

End of Program Report Executive Summary July 2011



This summary provides the highlights of the End of Program Report for the Agricultural Institute of Canada's International Twinning Partnership Project 2006-2011, including results, sustainability, lessons learned, the environment and gender equality cross cutting themes and public engagement. The full report is a thorough review of the program which follows the content and format as specified in the Contribution Agreement from CIDA.

To plan, implement, assess and evaluate this program, the ITPP used a unique and effective partnership working with Canadian and Southern scientific society members who brought scientifically proven, environmentally sustainable technology and applications, and joined with the work of strategically chosen government departments, NGOs and community groups to initiate, support and complement extension activities, technology and methods with rural beneficiaries.

This built a cohesive initiative that recognized each project group's beneficiary input and direct knowledge of the local context – cultural, political, economic, geographic and climatic - and was based on the scientific expertise and knowledge of members of all partner organizations.

The results are impressive. Farming moved from subsistence to a source of income and diversification of agricultural production minimized risks. The more sustainable and secure sources of income have given beneficiaries the capacity to pay school fees and medical costs, to improve their housing and to provide better nutrition for their families.

The mutual trust which has built between farmers and project workers over the five years has been a significant factor in increasing the adoption rate of new beneficial management practices.

The enhanced collaboration which has built among researchers, Ministries, traditional leaders, organizations and agencies has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of implementing activities and provided mechanisms for the sustainability of results.

Community run organizations now have skills, knowledge and confidence to provide support, encouragement, information and skills to a greater number of their community members.

Networks in project countries are stronger and now support project delivery and extend the knowledge and skills to a wider reach of beneficiaries.

Outcomes

The program produced measurable results in all five outcome areas.

1. *Demonstrated results show that food security and food access for poor communities has increased, including for people impacted by HIV/AIDS.*

- A two fold increase in vegetable production, greater diversity in crops produced and reduced post harvest losses (Ghana)
- Collaboration between the two partners in Ghana increased the availability of vegetables and meat in participating communities and diversified peoples' food sources.
- Average yield increases of:
 - 60% paddy rice, 55% tomato, 70% maize and 41% cassava (Tanzania)
 - 15% to 30% general and 40% to 60% rice (Sri Lanka)
 - 19% to 24% rice, 23% to 42% corn, 34% to 42% winter vegetables, 34% to 46% soybean and 31% peanut (Vietnam)

2. *Demonstrated results show that rural household income has increased.*

- Average annual incomes increased 28-66%. (Ghana, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Vietnam).
- 98% of those surveyed reported positive changes with 70% reporting increased income for household needs. (Ghana horticulture)
- 84% of women beneficiaries were able to meet household needs due to agricultural income. (GSAP)
- 100% of participants secured incomes above the international poverty line (US\$1.25 per day) (Tanzania)
- Average income per capita rose 28-36% and households living in poverty reduced by 47-52% (Vietnam)

3. *Demonstrated results show that successful environmentally sustainable agricultural practices have been implemented*

- All projects successfully promoted the adoption of Beneficial Management Practices. Examples of adoption rates are: 94% appropriate nutrient application, 90% mulching, 87% composting and 83% bucket kit irrigation (Ghana) and 100% appropriate nutrient application and soil amendments, 95% new rice varieties, 80% vegetable cropping system (Sri Lanka).

- Documents from workshops now form the basis for developing new agronomic recommendations and strategies for climate change mitigation (Ethiopia)

4. *Demonstrated results show that strong professional agricultural organizations have had a positive impact on national regulatory frameworks*

- All southern partner organizations completed organizational assessments and are acting on recommendations for strategic planning, sustainability and engagement of youth and women.
- Members with scientific research backgrounds now know how to engage rural farmers to adopt improved agricultural practices and members in extension now have better access to agricultural innovation information.
- All partner organizations generated collaborative relations with government departments, research and academic institutes, local agencies and NGOs fostering sustainability of community-level project endeavours.
- The formation and adoption of standard tools and systems for financial management, organizational assessment, project monitoring and reporting established expected standards for all partners, and increased their effectiveness as project managers and agents of development.
- Partner organizations now make presentations and briefing notes for Ministries and senior government officials, publish agricultural research of their members, serve on national boards and in senior roles in government and the private sector and are sought by government for input to the resolution of agricultural challenges.

5. *Demonstrated results show that Women are now active participants and beneficiaries of agricultural endeavours*

- International engagement in task teams and working groups advanced gender equality mainstreaming in both developmental and institutional areas.
- All projects gave particular consideration to women, youth and vulnerable groups through direct project focus or designed activities, materials, timing and location to increase participation.
- Increased female membership in SPOs and in rural organizations created a more supportive environment for women to participate and become decision makers. This is evidenced by the number and proportion of women who were elected to leadership positions by members within their individual scientific societies and organizations.
- Involving more rural women beneficiaries within projects increased their capacity to participate in projects and benefit from agricultural endeavours. Women farmers are peer trainers, contributors to radio broadcasts, adopters of new technologies, group members and leaders, entrepreneurs, marketers and participants in field days, field visits, and farmer participatory research.

The program did experience setbacks.

SRICANSOL was unable to conduct activities in the conflict zone during the war, however they selected an alternate area which focused on growth in the fruit sector and in doing so engaged more female participation.

There were also unexpected positive results.

When TSAEE used oral communications in lieu of written training materials where literacy levels were insufficient for text, it improved language functionality. In 2006, the group in Lubuga Village knew only their tribal language of Sukuma. By the conclusion of the project they were also reading, writing and speaking Kiswahila.

Some results were more difficult to measure accurately.

Improved health was a difficult area for projects to measure with quantitative indicators because baseline data was often lacking and local health statistics were not always accessible. This necessitated using indirect and qualitative indicators when assessing improved health results.

Sustainability of Results

Variances from expected results are limited because the partners developed mechanisms to avoid many risks identified in CIDA's 2005 program evaluation. These included ensuring clear roles and responsibilities, promoting and protecting the good reputation of all parties, improving monitoring and reporting, addressing climate change, reducing the high dependence on key individuals and working closely with government to be more aware of upcoming policy and program changes. These mechanisms also strengthened the sustainability of results.

Southern partner organizations were thoroughly involved in the design, delivery, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of projects in a process that enhanced ownership and improved sustainability of the results.

In each of the project countries, Southern partner organizations collaborated with government agencies, academic and research institutes, NGOs and community based organizations for the delivery and implementation of project components. In many cases, the relationships and responsibilities were formalized by signing memoranda of understanding (MOU) which supported current endeavours and ensured sustainable results through the adoption of project approaches into ongoing government or NGO programs.

At the community level, individual projects built sustainability by focussing on providing skills training to farmers and to extension officers working within the community sites, and by teaching skills to rural beneficiaries and providing resources on a cost-recovery basis.

Rural beneficiaries expanded their operations to include new agricultural and processing activities and technologies. This diversification has improved stability and resilience in both agricultural production and income generating opportunities.

The skills and proven expertise to plan, implement, monitor and report on projects has improved the capacity of SPO members to develop proposals to local and international funders for support to strengthen and maintain their scientific, community and farmer organizations, and to conduct rural and agricultural development.

Southern Partner Organizations (SPOs) strengthened their financial sustainability by increasing membership numbers which increased revenue and their human resource capital. By increasing members' skills, some SPOs are positioned to generate income by providing training programs, advisory services, publications, lectures and workshops at a fee to other organizations and non-member individuals.

Organizations considered succession planning in their operations, diversifying their membership through attracting and maintaining female, student and senior scientist members and those from more remote geographic and varied technical areas.

The increased understanding of gender equality mainstreaming within and among SPOs, CPOs, rural stakeholders, and AIC has increased sustainability in the recognition and involvement of female members and beneficiaries in all facets of the program.

Outcomes that are most sustainable have tended to be low cost and primarily dependent on knowledge and skills acquired from the project and local inputs and resources.

The least sustainable outcomes affecting partner organizations are those which rely heavily on external funding, external technology and external expertise. The impact of climate change and domestic inflation rates could negatively impact the sustainability of some program results in future.

Lessons Learned

All partners learned lessons about the definition of needs, accountability, roles and responsibilities, complementary skills areas, participation and supportive tools and methods.

Identification of needs for rural/agricultural development includes a respect for indigenous knowledge and working in partnership with rural beneficiaries when determining which needs can be realistically and successfully addressed. It takes into account the demographics, skills and abilities of the group and the scientific technology and methods available. The beneficiaries and the scientific society members both have a role in determining how the science can be adapted to the locality and the group to be most successful in meeting the expressed needs.

Relating needs to tangible goals was particularly successful. Tangible goals are easily identified improvements in livelihoods which can also be measurable indicators of larger goals such as food security and poverty alleviation.

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities enabled faster decision and action with the SPO and amongst partners. This was especially important when working with several partners, community organizations, government agencies and NGOs. Partners found that role definition helped to promote disciplined, timely and dependable action and monitor compliance to agreed upon budgets, standards, timelines and expectations. It was particularly effective to separate the roles and responsibilities of project implementation from those of organizational management and governance.

Participatory processes created support from stakeholders, commitment from beneficiaries, built the team spirit of a global network of project partners and developed a true ownership of the program by all participants.

While implementing the projects, partners also learned that skills and knowledge in non agricultural areas such as financial management and analysis, record keeping and group formation, facilitation and dynamics, can greatly assist in the adoption of agricultural beneficial management practices.

Partner organizations learned to focus on their areas of expertise and found it more effective to collaborate with government or non-government organizations that provided complementary assistance such as small producer loans or breeding stock or seeds.

Based on the success of previous programs, AIC developed and provided project coordinators with common reporting templates. All partners recognized the efficiency and effectiveness of standard procedures, and forms for gathering, recording and reporting information.

SPO and CPO partners also increased their understanding of the need for accurate data to enable them to strategize, plan, measure, assess and evaluate. Standard forms and methods for data collection would be beneficial tools to develop for future project implementation.

Environment

All ITPP projects followed the principle of appropriate agricultural production in relation to the environment and moving from environmental soundness to economic linkages and growth. To accomplish this, the ITPP put into practice its assembled knowledge of the direct connections between natural resources, land management, productivity, livelihoods and poverty alleviation in rural communities.

Expertise within ITPP projects identified and appropriately addressed existing and potential environmental conditions, impacts, constraints, and opportunities. Project partners used benchmark data and results to assess, select and manage appropriate project locations and monitored results to ensure the immediate local containment and remediation of any negative consequences and the wider promotion of beneficial agro-environmental practices through responsive programming.

Southern partners researched, monitored and reported on environmental effects, Canadian volunteer members assisted with recommendations based on relevant professional experience and current research and AIC monitored environmental impacts through project reports, and verified conditions during project monitoring trips.

AIC drew on the wealth of program partners' scientific skills and knowledge related to climate change to form the AIC Climate Change Task Team (ACT2) which will ensure that AIC and project partners build on the knowledge and expertise of scientists and indigenous knowledge of rural beneficiaries when developing appropriate and sustainable responses to climate change in program and project plans.

Given the influence of climate change on basic food security reliable and accessible information for project partners was highlighted as an important area of need. Under the guidance of the ACT2, country specific resource handbooks were produced which include the use of introductory principles in climate change, current and climate change projected crop calendars, projected climate impacts and appropriate responses in sustainable agriculture, introductory participatory adaptation tools, and links to country specific reports.

Individual ITPP projects achieved different levels of results that had a positive environmental effect. Rural beneficiaries quickly saw an improvement in the local environment, partner organizations gained skills and expertise that improved reporting, analysis and recommendations, those making policy decisions are more informed and aware and project partners have made scientifically based recommendations to policy makers that will have regional and national impacts.

Gender Equality

AIC and its programming partners took a proactive step when they determined the ITPP objectives "to advance the representation and voice of women as participants and beneficiaries of agricultural endeavours".

Leading by example, AIC committed itself to work on Gender Equality in its own administration, governance, activities and programs, and became a leader amongst organizations in doing so.

In 2007, AIC began to examine whether the current gender profile of the profession was correspondingly reflected in its own membership, structures and programs.

The ITPP called for volunteers to participate in a short term Gender Equality Task Team which hired consultants to conduct an institutional audit, organized a Gender Equality Roundtable in conjunction with the 2007 IPM and AIC's AGM, developed a strategic plan for gender equality in AIC, created a gender equality policy and initiated the establishment of the long term group, the Gender Equality Mainstreaming working group.

The GEM Working Group further demonstrated strengthened knowledge and capacity to do gender analysis within AIC. The GEM provided guidance to AIC on AIC's Gender Equality case

study, its honours and awards process, Gender Equality Strategic plan, the gender equality crosscutting theme for project proposals, AIC's Climate Change Task Team (ACT2), and the *Sustainable Futures* magazine.

AIC also expanded its communication methods and increased awareness amongst members and organizational decision-makers about gender equality mainstreaming by adding a Gender Equality button to its website home page with links to background information, resources, and the AIC gender equality policy and by posting a monthly news digest produced by members of the GEM Working Group.

ITPP project coordinators and GE reps monitored gender equality results against established indicators and reported every six months to AIC. AIC staff reviewed Narrative and Results Based Management (RBM) reports from all seven international projects from a gender equality perspective and provided feedback to project partners to support them in mainstreaming gender equality.

SPOs demonstrated increased capacity to do gender analysis. In their end of project reports, they collected data on economic, environmental and social indicators and analyzed it from a gender perspective. GHIH analyzed 40 tables of data, GSAP analyzed 24 and VIETCANSOL analyzed 21.

This data was analyzed by project coordinating committee members with particular attention to Decision Making, Rights, and Resources and Benefits, which includes livelihoods, institutional capacity, policy change and well being and basic needs.

Rural women's independence within the rural context was described in end of project reports as increased respect, greater appreciation for women's workloads, sharing of benefits/income, participation in household land planning and increased access to improved technologies which created greater opportunity for engagement in productive income-generating activities.

Gender equality training at the community level increased men's and women's awareness of and legal rights related to land ownership and fair division of labour.

Public Engagement

The ITPP budget for programming in Canada was not high but thanks to the voluntary contributions of our Canadian program partners, the activity level was robust and reached thousands of Canadians on an annual basis.

AIC members and members of Canadian partner organizations live throughout Canada and have many contacts with rural and urban community organizations, professional groups and work sectors. Through these networks, AIC members shared success stories about the International twinning Partnership Program and its activities.

Volunteers worked with individual and organizational members of AIC to increase awareness of the contributions that AIC's partner organizations make to international development and to

promote opportunities in scientific learning and skill development. They worked with the scientific societies to apply professional science in context specific settings and to promote innovations in agriculture which improve household food security and alleviate poverty. They also worked with community organizations to create awareness about the need for innovations in agriculture, improved household food security and the alleviation of poverty.

The longer term goal of the Program is embodied in the ITPP impact statement: *Human well-being, livelihoods and equity are advanced through economic, environmental and social sustainability of rural communities.*

The program can be credited with contributing substantially toward the successful achievement of this goal. ITPP project beneficiaries in rural communities now have improved economic, environmental and social conditions.

Improved crop yields, better animal production practices, marketing and value added processing have reduced the number of households living in poverty and given all beneficiaries a greater capacity to meet household needs. There is a decrease in, and safer use of agricultural chemicals, improvement in soil properties and a greater protection of indigenous forage species. Younger people are farming, there is strong, skilled local leadership, and strong supportive community groups actively involved in community well being. Women have an improved status due to their increased income, more opportunity for involvement in activities and decision making and a more equitable share of community and household benefits. Families have improved nutrition and health, more children (girls and boys) are attending school and have enhanced ability to improve their housing, reduce their labour (bicycles, carts) and increase their knowledge and opportunities (radios, phones).

Partners and beneficiaries have celebrated the success of the ITPP. It has increased people's opportunities and confidence and it has changed lives and communities.

Partners have skills, experience and networks to continue to make positive changes and are eager to begin implementing a new project which will use the results from the 2006 to 2011 ITPP as baseline data for future endeavours.

The driving force of the ITPP was volunteers from scientific societies who gave their skills and knowledge through in kind contributions of their time. In kind contributions totalled 1.4 million dollars from Canadian scientists and 3.5 million dollars from southern scientists. AIC is indebted to the many volunteers who participated in the program, gave it direction, momentum and guidance.

AIC is grateful to CIDA which provided the funding necessary to accomplish the many results outlined in this report and to the CIDA Program Officers who provided guidance, encouragement and information on procedures, policies and requirements.

To view the full report to CIDA, visit

[http://www.aic.ca/international/pdf/AIC ITPP Program Report 2011.pdf](http://www.aic.ca/international/pdf/AIC_ITPP_Program_Report_2011.pdf)