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CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT TO STRENGTHEN COORDINATION BETWEEN AGRICULTURE AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

May 2020

SDGs:



Countries:

Zambia

Project Codes:

TCP/ZAM/3602

FAO Contribution

USD 199 000

Duration:

1 June 2017 – 30 November 2019

Contact Info:

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Implementing Partners

The Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services.

Beneficiaries

Staff from participating Government ministries and poor smallholder farmers.

Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

Output 2.1 (Improved capacities of government and stakeholders for developing policy and regulatory frameworks and strategies for improved management of natural resources).



BACKGROUND

Over the past decade, Zambia has achieved notable levels of macroeconomic stability and growth, and it has also become classified as a lower middle-income country. The economic growth, however, has primarily been driven by capital-intensive sectors in urban areas, such as mining, construction and transport, meaning that it has largely been non-inclusive. Consequentially, Zambia has only seen marginal decreases in rates of poverty and malnutrition, with levels of inequality on the rise. Poverty is unevenly distributed throughout the country, being estimated at 74 percent in rural areas, which is more than double the urban poverty rate of 35 percent. Moreover, extreme poverty is estimated at 58 percent in rural areas and only 13 percent in urban areas. Despite the absence of major shocks since the global economic crisis (2009–2010) and consecutively good harvests from then until 2014, rural households frequently experienced both absolute and seasonal food shortages, money shortages, the loss of assets, increased food prices and poor health.

In addition to focusing on increasing agricultural production and productivity, efforts to combat poverty and hunger also need to ensure coverage of the rural poor through social protection interventions. In general, smallholder family farmers in developing countries are prone to shocks and face difficulties in accessing markets. In turn, they tend to adopt “low risk, low return” livelihood strategies that ultimately hinder their earning potential. The rural poor are also confronted by a unique set of investment decisions that affect income generation and can perpetuate cyclical poverty. They are often required to spend more money on food and more time on producing food rather than investing in their health and education. In addition, many children are required to work and are therefore unable to attend school.

Importantly, well-coordinated agriculture and social protection policies and programmes can support smallholder family farmers and break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. For example, social cash transfers can provide liquidity and a degree of certainty to farmers, encouraging their investment in improved agricultural methodologies, human capital and social networking. This can lead to more profitable livelihood and agricultural opportunities. Additionally, social protection benefits can, in the short-term, minimize the impacts of shocks and disasters. Likewise, agricultural investment can improve the productivity of small-scale farmers by addressing constraints that limit their access to land and water resources, financial and advisory services, production inputs and markets.

When social protection measures increase the demand for food, as well as other goods and services, agricultural interventions can be used to support the supply response, bolster the local economy and prevent inflation. More specifically, agricultural growth can generate employment opportunities, increase food availability and stabilize food prices. In the long term, this has the potential to secure livelihoods and support ascension out of poverty.

On a global level, policy-makers and programme implementers have been exploring ways to combine social protection and agricultural interventions. Although this is a relatively new approach, evidence suggests that the impact of combined interventions is greater than single intervention approaches.



An FAO case study on combining social protection and agriculture in Zambia found that the responsible Government ministries, despite having similar goals in terms of food security, nutrition, income generation and livelihood support, had notably different strategic approaches. More precisely, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL) were focusing more heavily on commercial farmers, while the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MoCDSS) was focusing primarily on the poor. Moreover, technical assistance was deemed necessary for the operationalization of the National Social Protection Policy, which called for collaboration among these ministries. Importantly, there was a need to strengthen the complementarity of these approaches, especially because of the limited agricultural support being provided to “vulnerable” and “vulnerable but viable” farmers.

Until recently, national-level dialogue between the MoA, MoFL and MoCDSS had been limited. This TCP project was designed to enhance understanding within participating Government ministries on the benefits of coherence between agricultural and social protection interventions. In addition to increasing knowledge on the subject matter, the project also aimed to develop national capacity on how to strengthen coherence between agriculture and social protection in practice.

IMPACT

The project was designed to support the livelihoods of poor small-scale farmers in Zambia by enhancing coherence between agriculture and social protection policies and programmes.



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

Overall, the project greatly enhanced the potential for stronger coherence between agriculture and social protection programmes in Zambia. This was largely achieved through the development of national capacity to support coherence across these intervention areas.

Under the project, policy dialogue on pro-poor agriculture was facilitated. Three studies that both provided supporting evidence for and increased awareness on the need for coherence between agriculture and social protection were completed, namely “Impact Evaluation of the HGSP and Conservation Scaling Up Programmes (CASU) in Zambia,” “Capacity Needs Assessment: Building Coherence Between Agriculture and Social Protection” and “Issues and Opportunities for Making Agriculture Programs More Pro-poor in Zambia. A Qualitative Study.” The reports on these studies were developed through a series of validation workshops and bilateral discussions. Subsequently, information dissemination sessions were held between the FAO representative and the permanent secretaries of the MoA and MoCDSS. Moreover, in Eastern Province, a sensitization workshop was held for district and provincial staff from the MoA, MoFL and MoCDSS.

Specialized capacity development training on social protection was delivered to various ministry staff under the project. In 2016, 2017 and 2018, two staff members (six in total), one each from the MoA and MoFL, received training from the Academy on Social Security at the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC-IL) in Turin, Italy. One staff member from the MoA also received specialized “Evidence Building for Social Protection Plus” training from the Economic Policy Research Institute in Chiang Mai, Thailand during October 2018. In addition, a subnational capacity building session on enhancing coherence between agriculture and social protection was held in Eastern Province during June 2019, which reached 39 provincial and district officers from the MoA, MoFL and MoCDSS. Finally, three staff members from the MoA took part in a study tour to Kenya that focused on the implementation of agricultural insurance. A wide range of stakeholders were engaged as the study tour sought to identify lessons that could be applied to the Zambian context. These stakeholders included members of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Kenya Crop Insurance Programme (KCIP), the Kenya Livestock Insurance Programme (KLIP), the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KARLO), APA (the insurance company), Equity Bank Limited (a leading financial institution that is also engaged in private agriculture insurance bundled with credit products) and the County Government of Meru, as well as farmers from Meru County.

Key agriculture programmes were mapped through the “Issues and Opportunities for Making Agriculture Programs More Pro-poor in Zambia” study. Three programmes were selected for an analysis regarding the extent to which they supported pro-poor initiatives, with the wider goal of using the lessons learned to strengthen national agriculture programmes. The programmes selected were (i) the Food Security Pack (FSP), (ii) the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) and (iii) the Enhanced Smallholder Agribusiness Promotion Programme (ESAPP). The analysis revealed that the programmes could each benefit from a systematic poverty analysis in order to outline how they can address poverty through their respective interventions. Additionally, the study established that knowledge and extension services on effective agricultural practices were lacking and that farmers had limited awareness of their rights and responsibilities, which hindered their ability to push for the services they required through existing programmes. Addressing these concerns will allow agriculture and social protection programmes to better reach poor small-scale farming households and ultimately help alleviate poverty.

In 2017–2018, FAO conducted an assessment of the MoCDSS’s Food Security Pack (FSP), which delivers agricultural inputs to poor small-scale farmers. A pilot project was then developed to test the recommendations from the assessment prior to their rollout on a national scale. Following approval from the MoCDSS, certain pilot activities were undertaken, including the development of an FSP module on the Zambia Integrated Social Protection Information System (ZISPIS). Importantly, the processes involved in developing the FSP module fostered discussion over the best approaches for supporting poor small-scale farmers through management information systems.



IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN

All project activities were successfully carried out, with both an 11-month no-cost extension and a budget revision being approved to account for the delays experienced. In particular, the capacity building component of the project was delayed due to difficulties in negotiating the pricing of training efforts and in engaging a suitable service provider. Importantly, the project was carried out within the originally allocated budget. Risks to the successful implementation of the project were monitored regularly and managed through continued Government engagement, which ensured sufficient political commitment to the project. The concept of institutional memory was reinforced, highlighting the effectiveness of capacity building efforts and having trained staff pass on their knowledge to others. No social or environmental risks were identified.

FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

The sensitization of Government staff to the importance of stronger coherence between agriculture and social protection was central to the project’s success. To sustain this progress, further sensitization workshops and trainings are strongly recommended to reach additional ministry staff, particularly outside of Eastern Province. This will require the engagement of suitable partners that can sensitize Government staff, as well as finding opportunities for the practical implementation of the knowledge developed. Moreover, the findings of the studies carried out under the project need to be further disseminated and additional pilot activities should be implemented to demonstrate the impact of their findings. The report on the “Issues and Opportunities for Making Agriculture Programs More Pro-poor in Zambia” study needs to be finalized and the study’s findings used to influence the pro-poorness of agriculture programmes. Finally, the study’s findings need to be aligned with the FAO tool that was developed to inform the study.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The Seventh National Development Plan serves as a key policy document in Zambia, which outlines development priorities and approaches. Importantly, it recognizes the multiple factors that contribute to poverty, which is highly consistent with the project's approach of enhancing coherence between agriculture and social protection. Additionally, the project contributed to the E-governance objectives of the Zambia National Information and Communication Technology Policy through the development of the ZISPIS, by working towards an institutional coordination mechanism for information management. Moreover, the project upheld principles of the National Social Protection Policy, which emphasizes coordination as an important factor in addressing the cross-cutting issue of social protection and avoiding the duplication of responsibilities.

The ZISPIS, in particular, is expected to remain firmly embedded in organizational structures as it will be utilized in the ongoing implementation of social protection programmes beyond the project. More generally, efforts are already under way to better involve the agriculture sector in social protection policy and programme discussions, such as those observed at the social protection week and within the joint social protection annual review programmes.

Under the project, staff from the MoA, MoFL and MoCDSS developed an appreciation for being able to work alongside one another in order to address cross-cutting issues in the country. Without this coordination, the great potential of agricultural support in enhancing the impact of social protection measures is unlikely to be fully realized. This coordination is expected to persist beyond the project as the national poverty and vulnerability cluster, which is chaired by the MoCDSS, now includes the MoA and MoFL, among other ministries.

The project clearly strengthened the national capacity to support coherence between agriculture and social protection through the training of Government staff. While Zambia is certainly in a stronger position to develop and implement relevant policies and programmes than before the project, there is still a need for additional capacity development and sensitization efforts across the country, as well as for finding opportunities to demonstrate the impact of this type of coherence through pilot activities.

2. Gender equality

During its design phase, the project stipulated that it would consider how social protection interventions could be designed and implemented to enhance women's empowerment and improve their labour conditions. Furthermore, the requirement to examine the "Issues and Opportunities for Making Agriculture Programs More Pro-poor in Zambia" study in light of both gender issues and how gender differences should be applied, in terms of the crops grown, animals raised and access to services, was also emphasized. Consequently, the study assessed the gender components of programmes and postulated gender-specific recommendations. The capacity needs assessment, on the other hand, identified gaps in the coverage of women under certain social protection programmes.

Effective follow-up action on the recommendations generated under the project are expected to improve women's access to agricultural resources and to support other programmes in learning from the impressive efforts to ensure gender equality in the ESAPP programme. In addition, throughout the development of the FSP pilot project, gender considerations were mainstreamed, which will contribute to men and women benefitting equitably from the project.

3. Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability can be enhanced through capacity-building efforts that strengthen coherence between agriculture and social protection when environmentally friendly agriculture approaches are adopted. This includes practicing conservation agriculture, which promotes soil conservation and organic approaches to production. Additionally, conservation agriculture promotes the use of drought-resistant crops and animals to address climatic challenges. Social protection in agriculture aims to support the adoption of sustainable livelihood measures rather than measures that can lead to environmental degradation, which are often used by poor households. Hence, social protection in the agriculture sector is also likely to support poverty-sensitive approaches.



4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

Although the project did not directly address the advancement of human rights, the development of stronger social protection policy and programmes that better incorporate the agriculture sector will support the livelihoods of poor smallholder farming households.

5. Technological sustainability

The development of the ZISPIS is Government-led and the technology being used to create the system is home-grown and will not require external support once established. The same approach that was adopted for the development of the Zambia Integrated Agriculture Management Information System (ZIAMIS) is being utilized for the development of ZISPIS. Notably, the ZIAMIS is actively used by the MoA. The costs of creating and using ZISPIS are expected to be low, owing to its local development, Government ownership of the source code and the enhancement of local capacities for system management.

Through the project, an enhanced understanding of the linkages between agriculture and social protection was developed among Government staff and other stakeholders. In addition, the studies undertaken are enduring and will continue to serve as reference points beyond the project. These two factors will contribute to the sustainability of project results as both the study reports and the trained staff members will ensure institutional memory. Moreover, many of the trained staff members were selected from planning and information departments, which play a central role in coordinating efforts both within and outside of Government ministries and departments. Importantly, the project also initiated efforts to facilitate subnational capacity building events, which provide cost-effective opportunities to enhance national awareness and develop knowledge on the importance of coherence between agriculture and social protection. This is a sustainable approach that can be used beyond project closure to expand the reach of the project. In general, many of the project initiatives can be continued in the future without further assistance. However, there is a requirement for the sensitization of more Government staff, particularly outside of Eastern Province, on the themes that were covered during capacity development efforts under the project.

6. Economic sustainability

During March 2020, through the efforts undertaken to develop the FSP module on the ZISPIS, the Government agreed to provide financial resources for the procurement of inputs for a pilot project that will test the system in three districts of Zambia. It is recommended that additional resources be mobilized for the development of staff capacities in order to implement the programme effectively, as well as for the rollout and hosting of the system, which includes securing servers.



DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

- ❑ Capacity Needs Assessment: Building Coherence Between Agriculture and Social Protection (policy brief). 10 pp.
- ❑ Impact Evaluation of the HGSP and Conservation Scaling Up Programmes (CASU) in Zambia (research report). 109 pp.
- ❑ Progress Update on Development and Implementation of ZISPIS. 11 pp.
- ❑ Issues and Opportunities for Making Agriculture Programs More Pro-poor in Zambia. A Qualitative Study (research report). 185 pp.
- ❑ Pilot Project of the Food Security Pack Programme (project proposal). 63 pp.



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	Increased coherence between agricultural and social protection policies and programmes		
Outcome	Staff in the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MoFL) at both national and local levels, as well as staff in the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare (MCDSW) and the Ministry of Finance, are better able to contribute to influencing policy, programming and institutional change to strengthen coherence between social protection, agriculture and food security		
	Indicator	Number of Government staff with improved capacities to interact and contribute to policy dialogue.	
	Baseline	0	
	End Target	6	
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	Seven staff members from the MoA and MoFL received training on social protection. In addition, a sensitization workshop was held for 39 officers from the MoA, the MoFL and the MoCDSS from Eastern Province of Zambia. Beyond the project, efforts to facilitate the sensitization of additional ministry staff from other provinces is recommended. In addition, mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that ongoing interactions among ministry staff and between districts can continue without the assistance of FAO.	
Output 1	Increased understanding and capacities to strengthen coherence between agriculture and social protection interventions		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of Government staff with increased understanding of coherence between agriculture and social protection	12	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	Two staff members from the MoA and MoFL received training during September 2016, September 2017 and September 2018 (a total of six staff members) from the Academy on Social Security at the ITCILO training centre in Turin, Italy. One staff member from the MoA also received training on social protection at the Economic Policy Research Institute in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The training was entitled “Evidence Building for Social Protection Plus.” Additionally, 39 district and provincial staff from the MoA, MoFL and MoCDSS in Eastern Province received training on enhancing coherence between agriculture and social protection. Finally, policy dialogue was undertaken based on the three studies carried out, which involved bilateral engagements, validation workshops and presentations at specific advocacy events, such as the social protection week. To further support the progress made under the project, efforts should be carried out to facilitate subnational sensitization workshops and trainings that reach more Government officers.		
Activity 1.1	Facilitate policy dialogue on pro-poor agriculture		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	<p>Three studies were completed to generate evidence for, and enhance awareness on, the need for coherence between agriculture and social protection. These included “Impact Evaluation of the HGSP and Conservation Scaling Up programmes (CASU) in Zambia,” “Capacity Needs Assessment: Building Coherence Between Agriculture and Social Protection” and “Issues and Opportunities for Making Agriculture Programs More Pro-poor in Zambia. A Qualitative Study.”</p> <p>In 2017–18, FAO conducted an assessment of the FSP, a programme within the MoCDSS that provides agricultural inputs for poor small-scale farmers. Based on the recommendations of the assessment, the project facilitated the development of a pilot project proposal. The pilot project aims to test the recommendations of the assessment before they are rolled out on a national scale. The pilot project proposal was approved by the MoCDSS and some of its components were implemented, including the development of the FSP module on the ZISPIS. The “Progress Update on Development and Implementation of ZISPIS” document was also prepared. More generally, the development of the FSP module on ZISPIS provided opportunities for discourse on how poor small-scale farmers can be supported through management information systems.</p> <p>The reports on these efforts were produced through validation workshops and bilateral discussions. Subsequently, the study reports were effectively disseminated. A provincial sensitization workshop on coherence was held in Eastern Province for district and provincial staff from the MoA, MoFL and MoCDSS, while information dissemination sessions were held between the FAO representative and the permanent secretaries of the MoA and MoCDSS. Beyond the project, there is a need for further dissemination of the findings of the studies. In addition, efforts should be made to seek out practical opportunities, such as pilots, to demonstrate the potential impact of the findings.</p>	

Activity 1.2	Prepare and deliver capacity development activities		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Specialized social protection training was planned and facilitated for Government staff from the MoA and MoFL. In 2016, 2017 and 2018, two staff members (one each from the MoA and the MoFL) travelled to the Academy on Social Security at the ITCILO. A total of six officers received training at the sessions held on 19–30 September 2016, 18–29 September 2017 and 17–28 September 2018. Additionally, one staff member from the MoA received specialized training on “Evidence Building for Social Protection Plus,” which was organized by the Economic Policy Research Institute and delivered in Chiang Mai, Thailand on 8–12 October 2018. A subnational capacity building exercise on enhancing coherence between agriculture and social protection was organized and facilitated. The exercise targeted all provincial and district officers in the MoA, MoFL and MoCDSS from Eastern Province and was conducted on 11–15 June 2019, reaching 39 officers in total.	
		Finally, the project supported a study tour to Kenya for three MoA staff, which covered the implementation of agricultural insurance. The purpose of the study tour was to identify lessons that could be applied in Zambia to improve the implementation of agriculture insurance, especially through the Farmer Input Support Programme. The study tour took place on 28–31 October 2019. Multiple stakeholders were engaged, including members of the Ministry of Agriculture, the KCIP, the KLIP, APA, the KARLO, Equity Bank Limited and the County Government of Meru, as well as farmers from Meru County. Beyond the project, efforts should be undertaken to facilitate the further sensitization of Government officers. This will first involve engaging and sensitizing partners, who in turn, will sensitize Government officers to the ongoing implementation of social protection and agriculture programmes. Following this, opportunities should be sought for the practical implementation of related initiatives, and their findings should be used for advocacy purposes, such as analysis of the ZISPIS and ZIAMIS and the rollout of the FSP pilot project.	
Output 2	Increased understanding of the scope for increasing the pro-poor impact of agricultural programmes		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	Number of staff with improved understanding of pro-poor features of agricultural programmes.	12	Yes
Baseline	0		
Comments	A study entitled “Issues and Opportunities for Making Agriculture Programs More Pro-poor in Zambia. A Qualitative Study” was completed under the project. The study is pending finalization and dissemination. Through the bilateral discussions held during the study, 25 Government staff, mostly from the MoA, MoFL and MoCDSS, engaged in discussion on pro-poor agriculture. Further discussions were held at a validation workshop, which involved 28 participants, including six Government officers. The study report needs to be finalized beyond project closure.		
Activity 2.1	Map agricultural programmes and prepare a summary report		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	The “Issues and Opportunities for Making Agriculture Programmes More Pro-poor in Zambia” study was completed. The study began in September 2018 and the final report was prepared in October 2019. Through the study, key agriculture programmes in Zambia were mapped and three programmes were selected for analysis. The analysis aimed to identify the extent to which the programmes were pro-poor, with a broader objective of using the lessons learned to strengthen both the programmes being studied and other agriculture programmes being implemented in Zambia. The programmes that were identified for pro-poor analysis included: (i) the FSP, (ii) the FISP and (iii) the ESAPP. The study was completed and was pending finalization at the end of the project’s implementation period. The findings still needed to be refined to ensure that they align with the FAO tool developed to inform the study. This is expected to be carried out in the future.	
Activity 2.2	Disseminate and facilitate the uptake of findings		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Twenty-eight participants, including six government officers, participated in the validation workshop of the study. The preliminary findings and recommendations were shared with the participants, focusing on how to enhance the “pro-poorness” of agriculture programmes. Following finalization of the study report, the results are expected to be disseminated further.	

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