

GIAHS in East Africa – Project Summary

In 2008, the Federal Republic of Germany through the Federal Ministry of Food, agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV) approved a project to extend the GIAHS Initiative to East Africa in order to establish GIAHS sites in Kenya and Tanzania and to support the food security and reduce poverty of the local communities in selected GIAHS areas.

The project titled “Supporting Food Security and Reducing Poverty in Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania through Dynamic Conservation of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS)” focuses on two different indigenous agricultural systems, typically found in East Africa: Upland-agro-forestry systems and pastoral systems. Many of these meet the requirements of the GIAHS Initiative: customary use and adaptive management of biological and natural resources compatible with conservation and sustainable use requirements, a substantive contribution to local food security and rural development, as well as social and cultural features significant to the cultural diversity and identity of their countries. Additionally, these historic East-African agricultural systems display management practices and biological diversity of great relevance to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Project objectives

The project’s objectives, in summary, are:

- To identify the extent and significance of indigenous upland agro-forestry systems and pastoral systems in Kenya and Tanzania under the criteria of the GIAHS Initiative
- To rally support of policy-makers and professionals in relevant sectors for the dynamic conservation of indigenous upland agro-forestry systems and pastoral systems in Kenya and Tanzania that meet the GIAHS criteria
- To select, through a consultative process, pilot areas to test dynamic conservation measures for the selected systems
- To learn and share lessons from the dynamic conservation efforts in the selected pilot areas
- To prepare the upscaling of GIAHS efforts in Kenya and Tanzania through national policy and further donor funded initiatives
- To share lessons learnt between the stakeholders of the project and other countries participating in the GIAHS Initiative, as well as with other initiatives.

A Partnership

The project is implemented through National Focal Point Institutions in the Governments of Kenya and Tanzania and the communities in the selected project sites, in close collaboration with other government partners, civil society organizations and international organizations. A project facilitating

committee was established to coordinate the project's efforts across sectors and to incorporate different stakeholder perspectives. While the National Focal Point Institutions have broad coordinating and implementing roles, other partners provide technical advice and/or implement specific project activities in areas of their expertise.

In Kenya, the National Focal Point Institutions are the National Museums of Kenya (NMK) and the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development (MLFD) supported by the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), the Pastoral Community Development Alliance (PCDA) and Duputo-e-Maa, as well as relevant district and local authorities.

In Tanzania the National Focal Point Institutions are the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives (MAFC) and the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development (MLFD) supported by the National Environmental Management Council (NEMC), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT), the Tanzania Tourism Board (TTB), the Kilimanjaro Native Cooperative Union (KNCU), the Tanzania Indigenous Poverty Eradication Initiatives (TIPEI), the Traditional Irrigation Project (TIP), the Ujamaa Community Resource Team (UCRT) and the Tanzania Natural Resource Forum (TNRF), as well as relevant district and local authorities.

International partners include UNESCO, ICRAF and ILRI.

Step-by step Implementation

The project is implemented through the following steps:

1. Awareness raising on the concept of GIAHS and formulation of (bi)national implementation arrangements
2. Assessment of potential project sites in Kenya and Tanzania and selection of the pilot sites.
3. Formulation of site specific action plans for the dynamic conservation of the pilot sites
4. A "Free Prior Informed Consent" procedure to establish a long term working relationship with communities in the pilot sites
5. Implementation of the site specific action plans
6. Concurrent efforts to prepare the upscaling of the project's efforts through policy dialogue and continuous (cross-)learning

Pilot Sites in East Africa

Under the GIAHS project for East Africa, funded by the Federal Ministry of Food, agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMELV) of the government of Germany two specific examples of outstanding indigenous agricultural systems were identified: Pastoralism by the Maasai people of Kenya and

Tanzania and Upland Agro-forestry Systems in Tanzania. Subsequently, three pilot sites were selected:

- Shimbwe Juu Village in the Kilimanjaro Region of Tanzania, representing the 800 year old “Kihamba” agro-forestry system of the Chagga tribe on the Southern slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro <link to file>
- Engaresero Village in the Arusha Region of Tanzania, representing Maasai Pastoralism on the shores of lake Natron <link to file>
- The Oldonyonyokie and Olkeri Group Ranches combined in the Kajiado District in Southern Kenya, also representing Maasai Pastoralism <link to file>

How were these sites selected?

For the specific purpose of the project, the definition of GIAHS and its requirements for the identification of sites, were cast into project specific site selection criteria, deemed relevant for its specific conditions <link to document 1>

Subsequently, a shortlist of potential sites was put together through consultations by the Project Facilitating Committee and other experts. Field visits were then carried out to those sites to rank the sites according to the criteria. In following, Free Prior Informed Consent procedures were carried with the communities in the sites that topped the list of eligible sites. Upon receiving the consent of the communities the site selection was confirmed by the Project Facilitating Committees. The experience with site selection in the project informs the further elaboration of the GIAHS concept and methodology, through feedback to the Global GIAHS Initiative.

The role of Free Prior Informed Consent in the selection of pilot sites

As many other indigenous or traditional communities world-wide, the project’s pilot communities face stark choices about their future, including regarding their agricultural production methods, their social and economic development, as well as their cultural identity and practices. Generally, these communities are economically, socially, culturally and politically marginalized in the context of their nations’ aspirations for development. These multiple aspects of poverty lead communities to consider opting out of their traditional livelihoods and adopting other agricultural practices and ways of life, often at great expense to sustainability and resilience, biodiversity, traditional knowledge and cultural identity. They are at a cross-road.

The GIAHS project aims to offer an alternative to these communities by devising ways to combat poverty and marginalization, while retaining their

traditional agricultural ways. This is also expected to create benefits at the national level. The project aims for the participation of the communities and the national governments to be a choice for the long term dynamic conservation of the GIAHS sites. This often implies that communities, while expecting benefits from such a choice, have to forego other development options, such as the conversion to less sustainable, but perhaps more immediately profitable uses. The Free Prior Informed Consent procedure, through full disclosure of the project's goals, methods and activities, aims to allow the communities to make a fully informed and independent choice to participate in the project.

As part of this process, all project documentation was made available to the three communities. Preparatory visits were held with local government officials and traditional elders, as well as women's representatives. The local and traditional leaders held internal meetings in accordance with government or customary practice. During these meetings many questions were asked, mostly associated with the risks of participating in the project. Following this, day-long village general assemblies were organized for all community members to raise concerns. During these, representatives of all project partners were present to respond to queries regarding areas of their government mandates or expertise. Finally, the participation in the project was put to a vote to all community members. The Free Prior Informed Consent process served as a major source of information to finalize the dynamic conservation action plans for the pilot sites.