

# Enabling rural transformation and grassroots institutional building for sustainable land management and increased incomes and food security

## Grant factsheet

### Programme goals and objectives

The enabling rural transformation and grassroots institutional building for sustainable land management and increased incomes and food security, referred to as the Strengthening Rural Institutions (SRI) project was undertaken by the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) Eastern and Southern Africa Region since 2011.

The project aimed to catalyze a sustainable rural transformation process through developing the requisite 'institutional infrastructure' for Integrated Natural Resource Management (NRM), food security and poverty alleviation. Based on the Landcare experience in fostering collective action, it contributed directly to IFAD's target outcomes and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that include environmental sustainability, gender equality and partnerships for development.

The project's main goal was to foster support for variants of grassroots organizations, to meaningfully participate in governance processes where their livelihoods and well-being, and the environment are at stake, with the main purpose of developing a model for strengthening grassroots institutions for effective engagement in policy processes that enable poor rural households to aggregate, mobilize, and access rural services.

Specifically, the project had the following objectives:

- 1) Enhance capacity of variants of grassroots institutions and provide support to harness broader collective action for rural service delivery;
- 2) Improve Enterprise Development within the context of conservation, and community level asset accumulation;
- 3) Build a regional institutional platform for knowledge sharing, scaling up, and representation/participation in Sustainable Land Management (SLM) policy making and development processes in East Africa.



Photo from the ICRAF project site



Map outlining project sites across Kenya Uganda and Tanzania

**At a glance** (GRIPS ID 1000003833):

**Grant Implementing Agency:** World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF)

**Theme:** Institutional Stability, Community Development, Knowledge Management, Micro-enterprise support and Policy Dialogue

**Benefitting Countries:** Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania

**Total Programme Cost:** USD 1,871,100

**IFAD Contribution:** USD 1,500,00

**Co-financing (other donors):** USD 371,100

**Partners:** SARI, ALN, KADLACC

**Effectiveness and duration:** 4 years (2010-2014)

## Target group/beneficiaries

The project mostly benefitted farmer organizations at multiple levels including: rural households, women and marginalized groups. Up to 65 (approximately 2,300 households) and 519 farmer groups benefitted from project activities directly and indirectly respectively.

## Major results



Findings from the both an IFAD supervision mission and an independent external review carried out in August 2014 concur on the fact that the project provided substantial support to smallholder organizations in the context of organizational development. Institutions in the three countries have benefited from the participatory action research approach of the project. For example, Embu and Bungoma (Kenya) benefited extensively from the capacity development initiatives that resulted in improved organizational capacity, increased group cohesiveness and improved

linkages among institutions. Considerable progress was made in terms of increased market access and returns due to adoption of bulk marketing, greater group cohesiveness, and increased knowledge dissemination among groups, improved dairy and horticultural production from adoption of value addition. In Uganda, the target groups integrated identified gender specific aspects of the training provided by the SRI that influenced changes in entrenched cultural norms. In Tanzania, there was improved lending capacity among the savings and credit groups (SACCOs) to community members and improved household investment in high value assets. There was also increased participation of women in income generating activities and contribution to household incomes.

The project was lauded for its efforts in ensuring gender inclusiveness and improved linkages which provided a platform for knowledge dissemination among farmer groups especially in the domains of technology adoption and sustainable land management practices resulting in increased agricultural production and food security. Empirically, the following results were captured by the external review:

1. 61% of the groups started new Income Generating Activities and had adopted new farm, livestock and business management practices
2. 25% of these groups had accumulated high value assets (e.g. land cattle dip, water tanks, biogas plants, milk coolers)
3. Up to 53% had achieved between 75% to 100% of their planned overall targets
4. 55% indicated improvement in trust, cohesion, transparency and conflict management through adoption of better governance mechanisms
5. 70% indicated a 40% increase in membership (as well as increased participation of young farmers and vulnerable individual farmers)
6. 70% had improved market access by engaging in various activities with partners (e.g. contract marketing, milk value addition and joint input purchasing)

The project was able to accomplish its objectives as by putting forward a workable model that involves farmer organizations, the government and other stakeholders in the entire agricultural supply value chain. The model<sup>1</sup> details a graduation process of smallholder organizations and provides a methodology to map, analyse, strengthen and monitor the capacity of smallholder organizations through a participatory approach. Accomplishments also include: (i) enhanced social infrastructure that eventually led to the realization of strengthened rural institutions; (ii) improvement in leadership and management of groups e.g. record keeping, transparency and accountability; and (iii) improved enterprise development within the context of conservation, and community level asset accumulation. This was accomplished through training of group members in areas where they had gaps.

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<sup>1</sup> The model can be downloaded at <http://www.worldagroforestry.org/regions/eastern-africa/our-projects/strengthening-rural-institutions/project-outputs>

## Knowledge generated

The project generated several knowledge products, including the Model (which is the overarching guiding paper documenting the whole graduation process); one policy brief, two hands-on manuals for practitioners (Capacity Needs Assessment Manual and Rural Facilitators Manual for Strengthening Rural Institutions); two specific analysis framework (Enterprise development framework and a Platform development framework & manual); several journal papers; posters, brochures and fliers for wider dissemination and contributions to the PTA Toolkit on Strengthening smallholder institutions and organizations.

All project knowledge products can be downloaded from <http://worldagroforestry.org/regions/eastern-africa/our-projects/strengthening-rural-institutions/project-outputs>. IFAD specific knowledge products developed in cooperation with the SRI team can be downloaded from:

<http://www.ifad.org/knotes/institution/index.htm>

## Lessons learned

The project set out to enhance the capacity of variants of grassroots institutions and provide support to harness broader collective action for rural service delivery. Some of the lessons learned, include

1. Involvement of stakeholders and target groups from design to implementation stage is very important in enhancing the impact of the project and its sustainability. The participatory approach upheld by the project at every stage translated to increased ownership and impact. Groups are able to identify whom to link with after capacity building. Therefore, government extension can integrate their agenda with the priorities of the farmer groups.
2. Constant feedback between project sponsor at IFAD, project staff, implementers and target groups is important to increase impact of the project. A liaison person between ICRAF and IFAD provided consistent interaction and level of reflection on the project resulting in development of appropriate knowledge products for different audiences.
3. Joint facilitation for ongoing activities led to development of profound relationships and partnerships whereby communities are at the centre of the development process. However, better synchronization of grant activities with loan projects through contractual agreements would have eased coordination between SRI and IFAD projects.
4. Working with various actors within the Steering Committee (SC) – institutions set up by the SRI project to run operations in each of the six project sites- is very beneficial as it supports linkages and brainstorming opportunities and avenues for supporting farmer initiatives. The SC remains a relevant entity even after the SRI project phased out. Success of this project was enhanced by the fact that it was building on what the farmers and other stakeholders already had on the ground. This increased ownership and degree of sustainability.
5. The project has also shown that gaps that operationalize research for development agenda and sub agenda can be identified through participatory approaches. The project also highlighted the need for all development projects to be articulated in research and development agendas. The SRI project was flexible to engage research and development specifically local level gaps built into the global picture.
6. There is need to go beyond systems (for example agriculture systems), and include multi-level dynamics. Community development is not only about investments in technologies but also on institutional infrastructure, which aims at addressing the rural poor who form the bulk of the systems.

## Way forward

The project has developed a number of knowledge products, including a software<sup>2</sup> to perform maturity analysis of a large number of farmer groups as well as manuals that are suitable for development practitioners in the field. Demand for these products is high, as witnessed by two IFAD supervision missions, from IFAD projects inside and outside the SRI project area as well as from the private sector. In order to achieve greater impact, the ICRAF team will have to develop a dissemination plan to reach out to wider audiences. With this aim, the team will further work on the knowledge products, adapting them to a development-oriented objectives and simplifying the language to suit different users.

The ICRAF team will continue to nurture the good relationships built with local stakeholders in order to apply the Model generated under the project in IFAD projects as well as IFAD partners and other development practitioners in the countries where the project had already set up stable multi stakeholders mechanisms (such as the SCs).

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<sup>2</sup> The software is still in its testing phase. For further information and access to the software please contact the project leader, Mr. Joseph Tanui at [j.tanui@cgiar.org](mailto:j.tanui@cgiar.org)

## Grant linkages to IFAD investment projects

As mentioned above grant activities has been designed in close cooperation with the IFAD projects in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The activities were implemented jointly with IFAD projects which acted as incubators for the research results. Grant activities were involved the IFAD projects target groups who equally benefitted through partnerships and active engagement in the region. Specifically the following projects were included in grant follow:

In Kenya: Smallholder Horticulture Marketing Programme - SHOMAP; Smallholder Dairy Commercialization Programme - SDCP;) Mount Kenya East Pilot Project – MKEPP (later upscaled to Upper Tana Natural Resource Management Project- UTaNRM)

In Uganda: District Livelihood Support Programme - DLSP

In Tanzania: Agricultural Sector Development Programme - ASDP

## Links to grant documentation

- Grant Design Document:  
[https://rms.ifad.org/OfficialRecords/OP2/WAC/001228/\[0000225203\]%20ICRAF%201228.pdf](https://rms.ifad.org/OfficialRecords/OP2/WAC/001228/[0000225203]%20ICRAF%201228.pdf)
- President Report: <http://www.ifad.org/gbdocs/lot/2010/e/EB-2010-LOT-G-2.pdf>
- Project Completion Report:  
[https://rms.ifad.org/OfficialRecords/OP2/WAC/001228/\[0000225204\]%20Completion.pdf](https://rms.ifad.org/OfficialRecords/OP2/WAC/001228/[0000225204]%20Completion.pdf)
- Project website:  
<http://worldagroforestry.org/regions/eastern-africa/our-projects/strengthening-rural-institutions/>

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