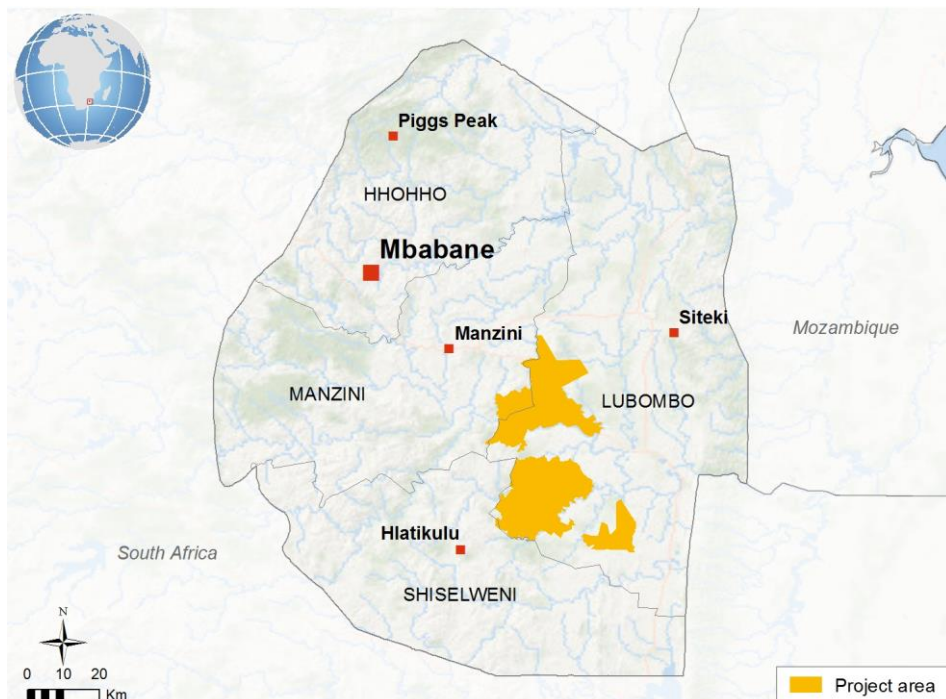


SWAZILAND

Lower Usuthu Smallholder Irrigation Project (LUSIP)



The designations employed and the presentation of the material in the map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IFAD concerning the delimitation of the frontiers or boundaries, or the authorities thereof.

ISSUES

Although small in size, Swaziland is characterized by a great variation in landscape, geology and climate, with landforms ranging from plateaus, hills and mountains, to foot slopes and plains. The country is classified into six agro-ecological zones: highveld, upper middleveld, lower middleveld, western lowveld, eastern lowveld and Lubombo Range.

The southern lowveld is experiencing severe food insecurity due in part to the cumulative impact of at least four years of drought. Nationally, over half of the population is receiving food aid after the worst maize harvest on record in 2007. The lowveld has the lowest annual rainfall in Swaziland (around 600mm), and rainfall patterns are highly unpredictable.

The main land use in Swaziland is extensive grazing: communal grazing covers 50 per cent of the country and commercial ranching covers 19 per cent. Under the local uncontrolled system, each homestead can graze as many cattle as it can afford to buy, a system which results in overstocking and overgrazing. The area suitable for cultivation is restricted to the terrain conditions (inter alia topography, soil type and quality).

The increasing human and animal pressures have already led to intensification of land use and the adoption of unsustainable practices found across semi-arid Swaziland. The impacts include loss of natural resources, changes in natural habitats and ecosystems, loss of biodiversity, decreases in water quality and availability, decreases in productivity (arable and rangeland), poor living conditions and poverty.

ACTIONS

The Lower Usuthu Smallholder Irrigation Project (LUSIP) is located between Siphofaneni and Big Bend in south eastern Swaziland, extending along the



The Global Environment Facility (GEF) brings together 183 countries, the private sector, civil society organizations and international institutions to address global environmental problems. The GEF-IFAD partnership promotes win-win solutions to deliver both global environmental benefits as well as significant gains for rural poor people.



Investing in rural people

PROJECT SUMMARY

Total cost: US\$12.4m
GEF Financing: US\$1.9m
IFAD loan: US\$8.7m
Government of Swaziland: US\$1.5m
Beneficiaries Contribution: US\$0.28m

Project period:
2011-2015

Executing agency:
Ministry of Agriculture,
Swaziland Water and
Agricultural Development
Enterprises (SWADE)

Project objective: to
reduce land degradation,
biodiversity loss and
mitigate climate change in
the Lower Usuthu River
Basin through the
application of sustainable
land management
practices.

the southern bank of the Great Usuthu River. The project is providing irrigation water to smallholder farmers to transform rainfed subsistence agriculture to irrigated commercial cash crop production. This is being achieved through the provision of physical infrastructure to irrigate 12,500 hectares of Swazi Nation Land.

GEF finance was allocated to help land users living around the LUSIP with no land, who may face greater pressure on their access to grazing lands as a result of the project. The LUSIP-GEF incremental project has enabled these land users to convert their farming systems into sustainable, productive smallholder and agro pastoralist enterprises while protecting the wider agroecosystem.

Sustainable land management plans implemented. This component aimed to help local people better plan and manage their land resources, based on the unit of chiefdoms. Activities in this component concentrated on raising SLM awareness, skills and ecological literacy of local people. The LUSIP supported the preparation of Chiefdom Development Plans (CDPs), including environmental protection measures such as soil conservation, land reclamation activities, rangeland management and rehabilitation, as well as establishment of conservation areas and ecotourism opportunities.

The project promoted new strategies to restore degraded lands, inter alia reducing herd sizes by selling old and less productive cattle, and maintaining zero grazing/feedlots where locally produced fodder and forage is available.

Alternative Livelihoods Promoted. Rural enterprise development is recognised as a source of economic salvation amongst poorer households, providing them opportunities for economic growth and employment generation. Most entrepreneurial activities in rural areas are based on agricultural and natural resource products, thus farm families can broaden their income opportunities by diversification into higher value enterprises (both on and off-farm). The project supported local people to undertake economic activities such as beekeeping and marketing for honey and other products at the community level, milk production, agro-processing and agribusiness, the commercialization of

native fruits/medicinal plants, and the set-up of ecotourism and leisure businesses in the area.

IMPACTS

Sustainable land management plans implemented:

- 10 Chiefdom Development Plans implemented.
- 68,000 hectares have been brought under SLM practices.
- 50 hectares gullied land rehabilitated/under restoration.
- 1,400 men and 3,000 women participated in a training programme to build capacity on SLM.
- Teachers trained in introducing permaculture into school curriculum at national level.
- A package of SLM-based, income earning technologies is now ready to be spread more widely throughout Swaziland. This can be based around home gardens ('permaculture') including fruit trees, beekeeping, indigenous chickens, roof tanks for water harvesting, hay making and nutrition gardens – with associated integrated fertility management.

Alternative Livelihoods Promoted:

- Promotion of livelihood initiatives (bee-keeping, indigenous chicken raising) for more than 400 farmers achieved.
- 58 households constructed water harvesting tanks and set-up backyard vegetable gardens.
- Groups of artisans formed to satisfy growing demand for tanks.
- 30 youths have become involved in beekeeping at their schools.

CONTACTS

Thomas Rath
Country Programme
Via Paolo di Dono 44
Rome, Italy
IFAD
Tel: +390654592069
trath@ifad.org

Stephen Twomlow
Climate and Environment
Specialist (ESA)
IFAD
Via Paolo di Dono, 44
Rome, Italy
Tel:+390654592681
s.twomlow@ifad.org



International Fund for
Agricultural Development
Via Paolo di Dono, 44
00142 Rome, Italy
Tel: +39 06 54591
Fax: +39 06 5043463
E-mail: ifad@ifad.org
www.ifad.org
www.ruralpovertyportal.org

 ifad-un.blogspot.com
 www.facebook.com/ifad
 instagram.com/ifadnews
 www.twitter.com/ifadnews
 www.youtube.com/user/ifadTV