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By Alfayo Maungu

TIP for Sustainable Irrigation in Lushoto

Q: Can you briefly explain TIP and its mission?

A: The Traditional Irrigation Improvement Programme (TIP) is a programme funded by the Netherlands Government for the development of traditional irrigation systems in Tanzania. The TIP involvement and interventions in the country have been at district level, and include the districts of Lushoto, Same, Mwanga, Arumeru, Iringa, Kilosa, and Mpwapwa. In Lushoto, TIP was started in September 1998 by a contract between SNV and Lushoto District Council. Implementation of project started in November 1998.

Q: What are TIP's objectives?

A: To improve the standard of living of the population in Tanzania, through sustainable development of catchments with regard to irrigation, soil and water conservation and improved efficiency of land use and water resources.

Q: Can you explain the project activities in Lushoto?

A: The implementation of the project has been in phases. Phase one lasted from September 1989 to June 1992; phase two July 1992 to June 1997; and phase three began in July 1997, and will end in June 2000. The first two phases introduced the TIP package. Over 80 per cent of the small-scale traditionally irrigated area in Lushoto district is in the steep slopes of the Usambara Mountains. Soil and water conservation was, therefore, an important input of water users.

Q: Can you elaborate in TIP approaches in implementing the said package and specific concerned areas in the district as you said currently the project is not district-wide?

A: The district's potential irrigation area was divided into three main zones. These are: the Soni River Basin covering the Lushoto and Soni Divisions, the Bage River Basin in Mgwashi and Bumbuh Divisions, and the Uмба River Basin in the divisions of Mtae, Mlalo, and Uмба. The TIP approach was done step-by-step, involving introduction, request, intake evaluation, agreement, implementation, conclusion, and follow-up.

Q: What are the inputs provided by TIP to water users?

A: These are organizational strengthening; formation of Water User Groups (WUGs); training group leaders in leadership aspects, awareness creation, gender issue, and soil and water conservation.

Secondly, there is soil and water conservation input which involves technical advise to the users; lay-out of physical conservation structures; training water users on tree nursery establishment and planting; training of village technicians (para-professionals); farmers training in layout of conservation structures; providing hand tools and materials to water users; farmers excursions; tree seeds and polycups.

The last input is in irrigation itself, which involves technical services; the provision of construction materials, which are not locally available; transportation of the materials; masonry; training water users in water management, and low pressure sprinklers.

Q: Can you name some achievements so far?

A: TIP Lushoto has been involved with 75 WUGs, 12 of which have received a full project package. The rest (63 WUGs) have received partial sectoral project packages. Nine dams have been constructed, as have 8 irrigation intakes, 20 irrigation channels have been rehabilitated, as well. Others are the construction of one aqueduct at Mwanjoi; an installation of one low-pressure sprinkler at Magila Kwasimba; and the construction of one domestic water structure at Magila Kwashimba.

Crops grown by the water users have changed from low value to high value; and crop production – especially beans, Irish potatoes and vegetables, has risen by from 50 to 100 per cent in places.

Q: What has been done in the ongoing phase?

A: The agreed objectives and targets in this phase include the lessening of dependence on donor support, improvement of the economic viability of WUG by enhancing contributions, improving the technical capacity at WUG level, etc., so as to further explore and exploit the irrigation potential in the district. Others are to re-invest a substantial portion of revenue accrued from irrigation in irrigation improvement and to enhance gender balance access to irrigation benefits.

With regard to phase three, 1997 was the transition year from phase two to phase three. So all agreed changes have been taken into consideration. The WUGs have agreed to cost sharing.

The year 1999 is a key year for the implementation of the phase three concepts, including enhancing the ownership roles of both the district council and WUGs. The district council is to become the effective owner of the TIP package and philosophy in the district; and the TIP team will be fully integrated in the council structure.

Q: Can you name some notable successes in this phase?

A: TIP phase three concept has been introduced to the district and the WUGs have been fully accepted. A reservoir has been constructed at Kwedau; three irrigation water intakes have been constructed in Tema-Chini, Tema Majini and

Butui Mamboleo. Capacity building at water user group level has been done for 16 WUGs. Twenty village technicians (including 9 females) have been trained; 400 hectares in the irrigation areas have been conserved benefiting 1,630 water users, out of whom 837 are females.

Q: Is there any problem in project implementation?

A: TIP is not widely extended in the district as it is based in Lushoto town and semi-urban centers. So, sometimes, water users have to travel to those centers so as to reach us.

In some places, people have been reluctant to accept our advice. Again, there is low participation by women in TIP initiatives.

Other problems include the difficulty in obtaining farm inputs due to change from low value to high value crops, marketing of farm products – they are sometimes sold at a loss, having been transported to markets at a high cost. Again, the El-nino rains played havoc with farming.

Q: How has TIP tackled those problems?

A: TIP has been advising people to form groups and establish their own farm input shops. They should hire trucks collectively to carry their product to urban centers where there are good markets instead of selling them through middlemen.

Moreover, there are several practical training sessions and farmers exchange tour programmes where farmers from different areas in the district visit each other to see how irrigation is being carried out.

Q: What is the relationship between TIP and other institutions and authorities in the district?

A: TIP Lushoto has a close relationship with other projects especially in areas where similar projects are in progress, so as to avoid duplication of inputs, etc. For instance. The soil Erosion and Agro-forestry Project (SECAP) a soil conservation and Afforestation programme, collaborates with TIP Lushoto in various soil conservation and Afforestation activities, such as technical assistance in forestry, and joint training of village technicians.

Other projects are Buffer Zone, and the Cultural Tourism Programme (CTO). In cultural tourism, some of the irrigation areas (or WUGs) are used for tourism purposes.

Q: What are TIP's prospects?

A: To capitalize on the achievements and experiences as a learning process. TIP aims at widening its activities – at least, throughout the district – through training the current available groups, which can, later on, disseminate their knowledge to others in the district.

Our donors (SNV) will phase out this June, so beneficiaries in their groups must become self-reliant in terms of finance and labour. This is because donors mainly

finance capacity building – in terms of training – so as to make beneficiaries masters of their own activities.