



**Enhancing National & Regional Market Potential for Agricultural
Products through Sustainable Land Management Practices.**

By

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Introduction.

The natural resources of the Kagera river basin support the livelihoods of some 16.5 million people, a majority being rural-based and fully dependent directly on farming, livestock production and fishing as their livelihood occupations.

Natural resource base and ecosystems facing pressure due to rapid population growth, agricultural & livestock intensification.

Intensification characterized by progressive reduction in farm sizes & traditional land use & management practices.

Basin's resource base including human population at serious threat:

- ✚ increasing land degradation,
- ✚ declining farm & rangeland productivity;
- ✚ deforestation; and
- ✚ encroachment into wetlands.

Kagera TAMP in close collaboration with stakeholders has devoted concerted efforts to address the threat;

Project will draw useful experiences & seek to scale up best practices emanating from other projects and programs such as:

- ✚ Lake Victoria Environmental Management Program (LVEMP-II),
- ✚ Nile Transboundary Environmental Action Project (NTEAP),
- ✚ East African Cross Borders Biodiversity project,

- ✚ Integrated Management of Critical Ecosystems (IMCE) project and others.

Some of the major stakeholders are:

- ✚ GEF TerrAfrica/Strategic Investment Program (SIP),
- ✚ Kagera TAMP countries (Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania);
- ✚ International organizations (IFAD, UNDP, UNEP);
- ✚ Global Mechanism;
- ✚ Bilateral agencies;
- ✚ Regional and Sub-regional African Organizations (AfDB, NBI, NEPAD);
- ✚ NGOs (International & local);

Enhancing Agricultural Products Market Potential through SLM.

Results of two related studies on *“Analysis of Agriculture Markets’ Dynamics and Opportunities in Rwanda and within EAC and CEPGL Framework & Development of a framework for the strengthening of market information systems in Rwanda”* revealed that Rwanda is not food sufficient & remains net food importer of food crop commodities;

Lack of adequate marketable surplus of agricultural commodities domestic & regional markets identified as key problem posing a serious setback to domestic & regional trade, and this results to negative impacts on Kagera TAMP partner countries’ economies, and general social welfare of her population.

Such a situation calls for concrete strategies to increase significantly the quantities of marketable surpluses to dispose to these market places.

Supply side of agricultural market is a function of increased agricultural productivity and overall production.

Key recommendation is the “Need to increase quantities of marketable surplus”.

Intensification efforts thru' CIP entail twin objectives of increasing available cultivable area under major staple food crop production, as well as increasing land productivity, as enshrined in Rwanda's medium and long-term planning policies and strategies.

According to NAP, seven (7) priority staple food commodities have been identified (i) Beans, (ii) Irish potatoes, (iii) Rice, (iv) Maize, (v) Wheat, (vi) Cassava, and (vii) Fruits & Vegetables.

Within Rwandan context, increasing area under cultivation means:

- ✚ Reclamation and valorization of marshlands, estimated as 219,791 ha;

- ✚ land consolidation.

- ✚ construction and maintenance of appropriate terraces (radical terraces along steep gradients and progressive terraces along gentle slopes);

- ✚ Application of other soil erosion control and mitigation measures;

- ✚ Promoting agro-forestry technologies;

- ✚ Crop-livestock integration; and others.

Wider application and scaling up of all the above mentioned best practices identified under the different Sustainable Land Management (SLM) technologies is a prerequisite for linking the envisaged development agenda of Kagera TAMP with the markets, domestic, sub regional and international.

Some useful examples of best practices in Rwanda include the following:

Situation before introduction of SLM practices along Mukungwa river basin Rwaza & Mukungwa sectors, Burera district.



Increased yield of climbing beans along the terraces constructed on hillsides of Mukungwa river. The bean yield over 5 MT/ha from 0 MT/ha on bare highly degraded hillsides along Mukungwa river.



Crop-Livestock integration (Dairy Cattle-Climbing beans-*Calliandra-Pennisetum*-bean haulms complex) Rwaza sector, Burera district. Friesian crossbreeds producing over 15 liters/day fed, *Pennisetum purpureum* (Elephant grass), *Calliandra calothyrsus* (Calliandra).



Hillside irrigation canal from Cyangwe river with fodder production.



Progressive terraces established with cabbages and protected by *Pennisetum purpureum*



Cattle drinking water along Muvumba before the project.



Farmers' fields prior to construction of radical terraces in Rulindo district.



Scenario post-construction of radical terraces with flourishing Irish potatoes in Rulindo district.



