



Resilient FOOD SYSTEMS

Enhancing the Resilience
of Agro-Ecological
Systems Project (ERASP)

Malawi

Resilient Food Systems is one of the three Integrated Approach Pilots funded by the Global Environment Facility. Implementation is led by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, in collaboration with 12 African countries and several regional partners. The five-year programme is committed to **fostering sustainability and resilience for food security in sub-Saharan Africa.**

As an integral part of this regional initiative, the **Enhancing the Resilience of Agro-Ecological Systems Project** in Malawi is contributing to the collective impact of the Resilient Food Systems Programme.



Context

Malawi is vulnerable to a number of climatic hazards, the critical ones being floods, droughts and dry spells, strong winds, hailstorms, pest infestations and disease epidemics. In addition to the challenges of land degradation and deforestation caused by population growth, as well as by rural energy and agriculture factors, together with IFAD and Resilient Food Systems (RFS), the Government of Malawi is implementing ERASP, building primarily on the Programme for Rural Irrigation Development (PRIDE), which is the co-financing baseline investment. In addition are programmatic links with another IFAD-funded intervention, the Sustainable Agriculture Production Programme (SAPP).

This intervention project supports rain-fed agriculture and research and extension services for the adaptation and adoption of Good Agricultural Practices, in particular conservation agriculture. ERASP applies an ecosystem-based approach to improving food security, which complements the infrastructure-based approach undertaken by PRIDE.

Objectives

The overall project objectives are to enhance the provision of ecosystem services and improve the productivity and resilience of agricultural systems of vulnerable rural people.

These objectives encompass the three sub-objectives of addressing;

- Land degradation
- Loss of agrobiodiversity
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation



Project area for Malawi

Global Environmental Benefits GEBs

 35,000 (ha)
land under integrated and
sustainable management

 1,774,907 (MtCO_{2e})
GHG emissions avoided
or reduced

Key components

The project is delivered through three components in line with the RFS framework:

1. A multi-stakeholder institutional framework for integrated catchment area management;
2. Scaling up catchment-level, sustainable land management (SLM) practices; and
3. Monitoring and assessment of ecosystem services, resilience and food security.

ERASP promotes interventions in three districts covering an estimated 35,000 hectares and involving 25,680 farmers. The approach focuses on a comprehensive landscape planning process for the sub-catchments, adding an agroecological approach to improving food security, and raising agricultural yields on rain-fed farming systems through climate-smart and conservation agriculture techniques. Credit provision through village lending and savings clubs provides support. Cross-cutting aspects related to value chains, capacity building and knowledge management are enhanced through direct support from the Regional Hub project.

Expected impacts



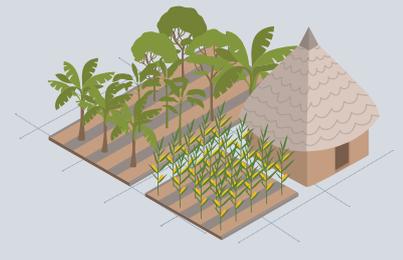
Multi-stakeholder institutional framework for integrated catchment area management:

- Informed natural resource management (NRM) and SLM decision-making based on improved evidence base
- Effective NRM planning and coordination mechanism established through the operational Catchment Management Committees involving upper, mid and downstream communities



Scaling up catchment SLM practices:

- Increased sustainability of farming system productivity and improved resilience to droughts and floods
- 16,600 farmers with sufficient water for crop and livestock production needs



Monitoring and assessment of ecosystem services, resilience and food security:

- Land degradation prevalence reduced from 46–60% to less than 40%

Enhancing the Resilience of Agro-Ecological Systems Project (ERASP)

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Innovation

Sustainability of the project approach is generated through a strong incentive framework, and the adoption of sustainable land management practices is promoted through supporting a motivated and knowledgeable extension service. This is achieved through recruitment of facilitators to fill the gaps, greater technical support from the extension network, and by investing in work 'enablers' at the extension level to secure greater involvement in monitoring and reporting results. In addition, advocacy and knowledge management are essential to scale up the ecosystem-based approach of food security strategies. These strategies of knowledge management reporting and of dissemination are built into the project components.

Stakeholders engaged

- At national level, key stakeholders during the design phase are:
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development
 - Department of Climate Change and Meteorological Services
 - Ministry of Natural Resources, Energy and Mining, which houses the Environmental Affairs Department
 - Ministry of Finance
- Government agencies include:
 - Department of Land Resources and Conservation
 - Department of Forestry
 - Department of Fisheries
 - Department of Animal Health and Livestock
 - Department of Agricultural Extension Services
 - Department of Disaster Risk Management
- Other stakeholders include:
 - Local universities
 - CSOs
 - Local-level authorities in the target landscapes

Target Beneficiaries

Engagement
increase

 32,174
Farmers

 16,381
Woman

 15,793
Men

