



TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURAL WATER MANAGEMENT IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: A COLLABORATIVE PROGRAMME

The African agricultural water investment initiative

A rethink is needed on how to substantially increase investments in agricultural water in sub-Saharan Africa. If viable agricultural water projects are not put forward, the region faces greater poverty and food shortages.



“Political will to fight hunger on a sustainable basis and a firm commitment to invest in agriculture and rural development are critical elements of any effort aspiring to achieve sustainable alleviation of hunger and poverty in Africa.”

Dr. Jacques Diouf,
Director-General of FAO,
ECOSOC High-Level Panel, New York
27/4/2001



Low levels of agricultural water investment: A threat to food security and poverty alleviation in sub-Saharan Africa

Efforts to reduce poverty and ensure food security in sub-Saharan Africa face a crucial dilemma. Increased agricultural water development has been identified as a key factor in improving people's livelihoods, but past experiences with ineffective projects have slowed down the already relatively low levels of investment.

The Collaborative Programme has been led by key international organizations active in agricultural water and rural developments, with the support of the NEPAD. Its goal is to study past trends and shortcomings of agricultural water investments, and recommend the way forward. The initiative will highlight best practices, document approaches that have worked and failed and make recommendations for action to development actors and governments.



African agricultural development specialists and members of international organizations are studying approaches suitable to meet the food security needs of sub-Saharan Africa's present and future populations.

The Africa Water Vision for 2025 and its Framework for Action envisions a doubling of the region's irrigated area. It also calls for a 60 percent increase in the productivity of water from rain-fed and irrigated agriculture to meet this need.

Similarly, FARA (the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa) estimates that agricultural production needs to increase at an annual rate of 6 percent to meet its annual population growth of 3 percent and achieve food security (FARA 2003).

In addition, the FAO (FAO 2003) estimates that by 2030 some 75 percent of the required growth in crop production in sub-Saharan Africa will have to come from intensification in the form of yield increases (62%) and higher cropping intensities (13%). The remaining 25 percent will come from the expansion of arable land.

How to convince the donor community, sub-Saharan African governments, and the private sector to increase and improve investments?

Food security and poverty reduction cannot be accomplished without substantial donor support for agricultural water development and management. But the fear of poor returns and unsustainable investments have resulted in very low and even declining donor investments in agricultural water projects throughout Africa.

The Africa agricultural water investment initiative brings together international development and research organizations. The partners are pooling their knowledge to develop a strategy to encourage donors, governments, and the private sector to increase investments in agricultural water development for sub-Saharan Africa.

The partners are: the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) with the African Development Bank (ADB), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), and the World Bank. They are reviewing past experiences, examining lessons learned and seeking to improve the quality of African government programs for public and private investment in agricultural water development.

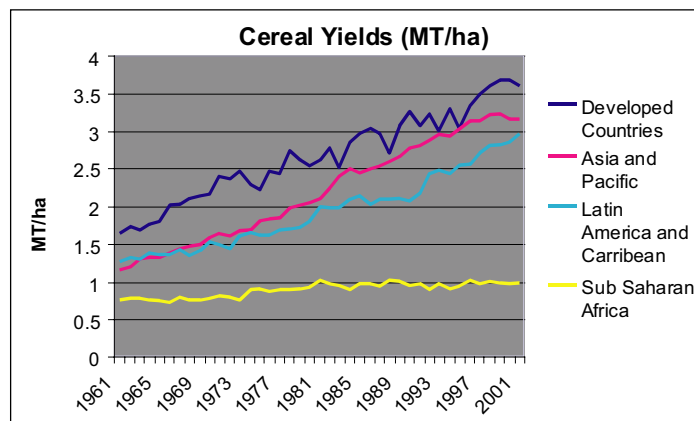
The initiative emerged from a workshop on agricultural water use held in Harare, Zimbabwe in 2001. The partners identified eight strategic issues where the performance of investments in agricultural water can be improved.

A program of eight investment studies will be completed in early 2005. They will offer a diagnosis of current trends and opportunities for innovative investment. These findings will be synthesized in a guide for African policymakers, the donor community, and the private sector to identify sustainable and cost-effective approaches to agricultural water development. The five international agencies are contributing US\$1.235 million to finance this initiative.

Eight strategic studies of irrigation investment in Africa

- Regional Demand for Products from Irrigated Agriculture—financed and implemented by FAO.
- Review of Irrigation Project Planning and Implementation Process—financed by ADB and implemented by IWMI in collaboration with ADB.
- Constraints and Opportunities for Private Sector Participation in Agricultural Water Development and Management—co-financed by ADB and IWMI, and implemented by IWMI in collaboration with ADB.
- Agricultural Water Use from a Basin Perspective—implemented by IWMI.
- Agricultural Water Development for Poverty Reduction—co-financed by IFAD, ADB and IWMI, and implemented by IFAD and IWMI.
- Irrigation Cost Study—financed by the World Bank and implemented by IWMI in collaboration with the World Bank.
- Health and Environmental Aspects, which include livestock-water interactions—co-financed by ADB and IWMI, and implemented by IWMI in collaboration with the ADB and ILRI.
- Assessment of Potential for Improving Agricultural Water Management—financed and implemented by IWMI in collaboration with IFPRI, through the Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture.

For more information about the African agricultural water investment initiative, please contact Tefera Woudeneh at t.woudeneh@afdb.org (ADB), Jacob Burke at jacob.burke@fao.org (FAO), Tony Peacock at tpeacock@mweb.co.zw (IFAD), Arlene Inocencio at a.inocencio@cgiar.org (IWMI), IJsbrand de Jong at idejong@worldbank.org (World Bank) or visit our website www.iwmi.org/africanwaterinvestment.



Source: FAOSTAT

NEPAD targets for 2015

- Develop small-scale water control (14.2 million hectares, US\$14.4 billion)
- Rehabilitate large-scale irrigation systems (3.6 million hectares, US\$8.9 billion)
- Develop large-scale schemes (1.9 million hectares, US\$13.6 billion)
- Create a strong policy and institutional environment
- Use experience from lessons in the past; identify innovative best practice

Sub-Saharan Africa agricultural water investment initiative

Key objectives:

- Identify changes in the current global development context and formulate an agricultural water investments strategy in SSA within this context.
- Identify innovative technologies and approaches for improved agricultural water use and development.
- Propose appropriate policy and institutional changes toward more efficient and effective agricultural water development projects in SSA for reducing food insecurity and poverty.



We gratefully acknowledge the support of
InWent – Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gemeinnützige
GmbH (Capacity Building International, Germany), in the production of this
brochure and the setting up of the Collaborative Programme website.

