



REPORT PERIOD: April 2012 – June 2012

MAJOR ACTIVITIES IN THIS PERIOD

Apr.: Survey of the impact in each training theme

May : LFs' plenary meeting

Jun.: COVAMS Project Final Evaluation

Survey in maize garden conservation

An area survey for 2011 / 2012 planting season was conducted from Dec. 2011 to Apr. 2012. The survey was done by LFs by asking the practicing farmers the quantity of the maize seeds used in the conserved gardens. The data shows that 9,367 households have practiced in the season with 2,367ha. The rate of practicing farmers against the entire households of the target area is 28%. The protected soil of the conserved gardens in this season was in a range of 12,426m³ to 87,729m³. This was figured out with the result of project demonstration plots in Chuma and Chiwalo.

Tolerance in the distance between the ridges contributed in increasing the number of practicing farmers. The rate of the farmers who used the distance more than 75cm shared 21% of the total practiced farmers.

It was observed that the farmers of 169 villages which have experienced having COVAMS training for more than 2 years increased the area conserved. The increase was about 1000m² in average per household, and the total area conserved with the villages became more than twice in this single year. The number of practicing farmers was also increased to around 1,700 households.



Maize Harvest

Achievement survey in Tree growing and Gully control

A survey in tree growing and gully control was conducted in May 2012 to assess the achievement of COVAMS project. The survey was conducted with interview to all households in the target area by respective village heads. The actual interviewers were clan leaders and COVAMS LFs. The data was collected from 241 villages.

In tree growing, the survey shows that around 24,000 households planted tree seedlings of about 400,000 in total. Apart from the seedling planting, 19,000 households tried direct sowing method which COVAMS project promoted in the last planting season. The number of pits for this method reached 200,000, although the germination was not so good according to the farmers. This outcome could be attributed to poor viability of the seeds the project procured, since locally collected seeds by the farmers germinated well. Having experienced good germination from locally collected seed, farmers seem encouraged to try again this method next season.

In gully control, about 10,000 households constructed small check dams around their gardens using locally available materials such as brush wood and stones. As a result, 17,298 check dams were constructed.

Terminal Evaluation of COVAMS project

Terminal evaluation was carried out in June 2012 to evaluate the progress and achievement of COVAMS project. The evaluation process was JICA's formal procedure within the project cycle management in the final year of cooperation period. The evaluation framework was designed based on the latest project design matrix with the five (5) evaluation criteria, such as relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. Main points of evaluation were achievement and process of implementation.

The evaluation was carried out by the joint evaluation team consisting of four (4) Japanese members and four (4) Malawian members. The team worked very hard despite the limited duration of the survey and discussion. The team came out with the result of the high side of evaluation in relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and impact and fair in sustainability. In general it was fair evaluation for the project.

The result of the evaluation was presented to Joint Coordinating Committee Meeting on 20th June 2012. JCCM members acknowledged significant achievement in soil erosion control and tree growing activities and positive impact within the target villages. One issue discussed at the meeting was trainers' fee for lead farmers. In general understanding, lead farmers should work voluntarily without salary. COVAMS lead farmers are receiving trainers' fee after conducting training, therefore, trainers' fee is different from salary and it has good justification to be paid in COVAMS activity for rapid extension to large number of target villagers with relatively small cost. It might need some more clarifications on trainers' fee for better understanding on COVAMS active extension method through training.

It is a hope that COVAMS extension method, so called SVTA will be accepted widely by various organizations and accelerates soil conservation activities in Middle Shire area for securing electricity in the country by mitigating siltation into Shire River.

LFs' Plenary Meeting 2012



Unlike in previous years, 2009/10 and 2010/11 when Traditional Leaders and their Lead Farmers were ferried in buses to town for the certificate presentations and sharing of their achievements and challenges made in training fellow farmers, this year, such ceremonies were held locally at four designated sites but still with pomp.

The Guest of honour for the award of the first lot of certificates for TA Kapeni Lead Farmers was the Programme Manager for Blantyre ADD Mr. N. Mataka. He presented the certificates at a ceremony held in GVH Manesi Kapeni on 7th May, 2012. The other ceremony in TA Kapeni took place at GVH Nsambuza for both Undani and Nsambuza Lead Farmers which was presided over by the Project Management. On the other hand, TA Kuntaja presided over the second ceremony at Khombwe school in his traditional authority on 15th May. The first ceremony was assigned to the Group Village Headman .

The Guests of Honour urged the Lead Farmer to continue assisting their fellow farmers in applying the technologies they were trained in, namely, tree growing, soil erosion control in the farming fields and gully erosion control. It was also pleasant to note the acknowledgement from the Lead farmers' Representatives that soil erosion control practices had assisted them in increasing their harvest. On the other hand, they also appreciated what COVAMS had done in training them in several technologies of tree growing including natural regeneration and direct seed sowing which reduced the work load that they had in caring for tree seedlings in the nursery for several months.

On their part, the Traditional Leaders who spoke, urged Extension Staff to continue their task of frequent contacts with Lead Farmers as a way of encouraging them and supporting their efforts. A total of 148 and 223 received certificates in TA Kapeni and Kuntaja respectively.

Internship of JICA to COVAMS project

My name is Masahiro Abe, a postgraduate school student of TOHOKU University in Japan. I came here as an intern of the project of COVAMS. My major is Environmental Economics and more



specific field is "Environmental Evaluation", in which we evaluate the economic value of the environment. However, the evaluation methods I use in environmental valuation field can be applied to a variety of projects. So I would like to contribute to this project by the research of the economic impact of this project by using an evaluation method of my study field.

On the first Friday after arrival, I reviewed training of farmers for contour ridging at Nselemu in the Middle Shire River area. I felt the Lead Farmers and other farmers were really enthusiastic to teach and learn the contour ridging method.

Hereafter, we are going to implement questionnaire researches to the farmers to evaluate COVAMS. This means that the farmers' cooperation is indispensable. Because of the farmers' positive attitude to the workshop, I believe we can get cooperation from them and get good results of our researches.



For further information and questions, please contact

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