

Development of a Sustainable Agriculture Approach in Swazi Rural Communities

COSPE¹

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Abstract

The objective of the project is to identify, implement, and test a sustainable agriculture approach in Swazi rural communities. The project is carried out in collaboration with two farmers' associations of two Swazi rural communities.

In the last 5 years, the farmers have been trained in conservation agriculture and organic agriculture principles, and demonstration plots have been established for testing the sustainable approach. At present, the farmers are collaborating in identifying the best techniques which can guarantee the sustainability of the farming approach.

Thirty test and validation units have been established and are managed by the 30 farmers involved in the project. In the plots, a conservation agriculture approach combined with organic agriculture techniques is applied. Agronomic data from the different plots are periodically collected and elaborated.

The main elements of the farming approach adopted are: use of local seeds varieties and reintroduction of local drought resistant crops; implementation of the conservation agriculture approach (no till, crop rotation, permanent soil cover); and adoption of organic agriculture techniques (use of organic fertilizers and organic pesticides).

The farmers' associations have been provided with centers to store the equipment and seeds and to sell their products. Indeed the, farmers are starting to commercialize their products (cereals and legumes) inside and outside their communities.

In the next years, the project will continue experimenting with the approach, will spread it to new communities in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, and it will promote the use and commercialization of the seeds produced by the farmers.

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