

Supporting Farmers' Networks



Project full name:

Strengthening of
MVIWATA

Domain:

Employment and
Income

Phase I:

2013–2019

SDC contribution:

CHF 2,945,000

Total phases budget:

CHF 4,940,000

Implementing partner:

MVIWATA

Other partners:

Irish Aid

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Project overview

MVIWATA is a network of small-scale farmers' groups active all over Tanzania. The project aims to support capacity strengthening of the network in order to empower its members technically, economically and politically in farming matters. Through MVIWATA farmers can also contribute to independent problem solving and advocate for policy change.

Switzerland is providing a core contribution to MVIWATA as it believes networks are essential for smallholder farmers to increase their production, income, and voice on issues that affect them. This view is underpinned by MVIWATA's long standing activities in advocating for farmers in all the appropriate decision-making bodies, from village to national level. MVIWATA supports its members with economic improvement interventions, and provides technical assistance in improved farming techniques, access to quality inputs such as fertilizer, and assistance with product marketing and land tenure related issues – common challenges that farmers face in increasing production and growing their businesses.

Overall goal

Improve the capacity of smallholder farmers to effectively represent their interests and increase their income through local and regional networks.

Opportunities

Switzerland believes that agricultural growth interventions should focus on smallholder and not large scale commercial farming. This is

because 80% of Tanzanians rely on farming for food and income, and the majority of these are smallholder farmers. Large-scale commercial farming may pose a threat regarding future land availability as shown by the number of land-grabbing incidents across Africa.

Agriculture provides huge potential for poverty reduction but will remain untapped if farmers are not able to self-organize and speak with one voice. Switzerland's contribution to MVIWATA will improve the network's capacity to organize smallholder farmers to lobby and advocate for their rights, and implement economic empowerment activities. It will also contribute to improving the network's overall organizational and operational capacities.

Focusing on these outcomes will improve production and income for farmers, their influence in decision making, and their adaptation to climate change and HIV and AIDS. It will also support gender equality.

Grassroots advocacy

Catherine Gabriel, a member of a farmers' group in Tarime District, received training on gender, land rights, civic rights, leadership, and on the new constitution review process through MVIWATA. She was elected as a member of the district's constitution council and subsequently appointed to the Constitutional Assembly. During the constitutional review process at the parliament, she and others from different farmers' groups succeeded in shaping provisions in the constitution that will benefit smallholder farmers.

Main activities of the phase

- An overall organizational strengthening plan is established and implemented;
- A new and SMART strategic plan with a Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation System is approved and in use;
- A membership database is created and updated;
- A Long-term funding strategy is approved and implemented.

Beneficiaries

MVIWATA members (smallholder farmers), staff and board; private sector actors operating in and around MVIWATA market access and value chain projects and activities; and local government authorities.