

Managing Agro-Biodiversity for Sustainable Livelihood

Context

Timor-Leste's agro-biodiversity (ABD) is increasingly under threat due to human exploitation, soil degradation, monocultures and invasive alien species. The diversity in agriculture, contributing to food security, resilience to climate change and bearing genetic resources for the future, might be lost. ABD is not anchored institutionally and general awareness on ABD is low.

Objective

The project aims at building institutional and human capacities for protecting and sustainably managing ABD and thus contributes to improved livelihoods, food security and provision of ecosystem-services. The project thereby contributes to the implementation of Timor-Leste's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) in the agricultural sector.

Approach

The two components of the project are jointly implemented by staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) and technical staff of the German implementing agencies. Based on the assessment of ABD in pilot villages, component 1 (mainly implemented by *AMBERO Consulting*) focuses on the sustainable use of ABD through capacity building of intermediaries, extension workers and farmers as well as through promoting biodiversity-friendly farm practices. Component 2 supports the development and dissemination of innovative approaches for improving food-security through sustainable cocoa production. By intercropping with food crops and use of shade trees farmers are supported in establishing and maintaining new commodities for a more secure and environment-friendly income generation.

Current achievements

Component 1 of the project was officially launched in October 2012 and has identified governmental and non-governmental partners and stakeholders since. In addition, 30 sucos in five districts (Bobonaro, Manatuto, Viqueque, Baucau, Lautem) have been identified and selected for pilot activities. Sensitization meetings have been conducted at national, district and suco (village) level. Component 2 has focused on supporting 170 farm households in planting 45 hectares of cocoa in Viqueque and Manatuto, assisted by the Agricultural High School in Nartabora.

Future prospects

By the end of 2014, 750 farmers will have established 150 hectares of cocoa plantations. By the end of 2015, 75% of the trained extension workers will disseminate messages on biodiversity-friendly farm practices, and farmers in 30 sucos will participate in their implementation. A national implementation guideline as well as a monitoring and evaluation system (M&E) for ABD will be developed and used.



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