In Mbarali, the established plots have reduced tillage and CA practices. Tree species intercropped included Calliandra, Leucaena and Gliricidia. In Rwanda, the sites that were established used maize as the main crop and beans as the cover crop but also use the same tree species. In each of the two countries the demonstration plots have been established with data collection agenda but extension staff have also established other plots in areas for removed from the main plots so that farmers are able to learn.

e) Establishment of evergreen agriculture associated enterprises and linking farmers to markets.

A scoping exercise was conducted which entailed key informant interviews and brainstorming sessions with 47 and 22 stakeholders in two separate workshops in Machakos (December 2012) and Mbarali (February 2013) in Kenya and Tanzania, respectively, to identify possible project interventions. The stakeholders were selected on the basis of the functions they perform along the value chain such as input supply, production, and processing. In addition, stakeholders from public and private institutions, such as the Ministry of agriculture and NGOs, that provide business services such as rural advisory services and financial services like commercial banks, microfinance institutions and SACCOs formed part of the workshops. The main interventions that emerged are those that focus on linking farmers to markets, building technical, entrepreneurial and financial management capacity of farmers and strengthening of local institutions and policy enforcement mechanisms. However, identification of value chain upgrading strategies will require comprehensive analysis of key value chains, such as the mango value chain in Machakos and the dairy and fuelwood value in Mbarali, which were identified by the stakeholder to have the potential to stimulate adoption of CAWT. Whereas our main focus will be on capacity building in entrepreneur-ship and linking smallholder farmers to output markets, provision of enabling environment by strengthening local institutions to encourage investment in improved technologies and streamlining national policies and strengthening partnership among key institutions to improve coordination and efficiency in the delivery of support services need to be taken into account when implementing the intervention. Towards this end, a feed assessment workshop was held in Machakos on 18th and 19th June 2013 to gather information that will be useful in the process of implementing the dairy intervention in the area and is soon to be held in Mbarali, Tanzania. The workshop uses the Feed Assessment Tool (FEAST) to estimate feed resources availability and use in a site and to train participants on how to undertake the exercise in their own activities. An exercise to train farmers on entrepreneur-ship using the draft manual is underway in Machakos.

Component 4: Development of knowledge and information sharing products.

The website is a significant communication platform that the Evergreen Agriculture project has given priority in its bid to share knowledge with the public. There are ongoing plans to populate the already setup website with content that can help the public familiarize with the project progress and activities. Furthermore, the project communication strategy has been finalized and is ready for implementation as prepared in a participatory manner by project stakeholders in the sites in July 2011. In 2012, a show was hosted by the popular Kenyan Television Network (KTN) and radio programmes were prepared by WREN media to be shared by various media outlets globally in 2013. Other knowledge products are scheduled to be produced as the project nears completion as guided by the project document and the communication strategy that was developed with stakeholders. On the other hand, Baseline study reports are almost ready as they wait to be refined into journal publications. Concerning Manuals, The Conservation Agriculture with Trees manual for extension staff; Enterprise manual and the Nursery Management Manual are nearing completion together with associated farmers brochures and leaflets. How to do logbooks for farmers and nursery operators as well as a healthy learning booklet for schools—all are ready apart from nursery logbook that is nearing completion. Journal papers and policy briefs—will form the bulk of the remaining phase.

About Evergreen Agriculture

Declining soil fertility, extreme climatic conditions, high costs of farm inputs and lack of capacity have been persistent problems that farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) have continued to face. Such factors have in turn translated to high levels of poverty and food insecurity due to poor performance of the agriculture sector.

The prevailing situation in SSA calls for innovative approaches including those related to agroforestry and conservation agriculture. Identifying low-cost, sustainable ways to attain food security and sustainable environment for millions of smallholder farmers in SSA remains a major development challenge. Agroforestry practiced in tandem with conservation agriculture offers an opportunity to meet this challenge. Two decades of research in SSA clearly demonstrate that agroforestry reduces poverty and increases returns to labor and land productivity.

Evergreen Agriculture denotes the incorporation of selected tree species in annual cropping systems and ideally seeks to combine the practice of agroforestry with the principles of conservation farming. It is emerging as an affordable and accessible science-based approach to caring better for the land and increasing smallholder food production. The vision of success of the Evergreen agriculture program is rooted in reaching at least 1 million farmers in SSA over a period of 10 years.
The EC/IFAD Evergreen Agriculture project

The purpose of this project is to build the capacity of smallholder farmers in conservation agriculture and agroforestry practices for improved nutrition, household income and landscape health in Eastern and Southern Africa. This project aims at contributing to the Evergreen Agriculture (EGA) vision by reaching at least 10,000 farmers with EGA technologies by the end of 2013. During this period, the implementing partners seek to empower farmers with knowledge and practices on Evergreen Agriculture thereby contributing to increased crop and livestock productivity, soil nutrient replenishment, increased incomes and household asset accumulation leading to improved nutrition and food security. Increased tree and crop biodiversity will contribute to diversifying farmers’ options and their resilience to climate change while providing potential for carbon credits. The project’s specific objectives are to:

• Conduct baseline studies to identify the critical drivers of adoption of evergreen agriculture technologies and practices in sub-Saharan Africa
• Establish a robust infrastructure for the multiplication and supply of improved tree seed/seedling system and its integration with livestock production systems
• Build the capacity of smallholder farmers in accessing CAWT practices, credit and markets, and the capacity of development, research, and policy partners in support of the scaling up Evergreen Agriculture, and
• Generate, package and disseminate knowledge to various categories of smallholder farmers, partners and institutions.

The project has four (4) implementation components based on the above objectives and the progress is hereby reported based on these components.

Component 1: Baseline surveys and field activities

In line with Objective 1 of the project, surveys were conducted in five sites (Mwingi, and Machakos Counties in Kenya, Mbarali and Busega districts in Tanzania and Busigwa district in Rwanda). The sites were selected based on the food security situation in the countries and also the accessibility. The merits of the sites for further project implementation were later discussed during the inception workshop in March 2011 and participants agreed on further implementation limited to one site per country. The sites finally selected are Machakos County in Kenya, Mbarali district in Tanzania and Busega district in Rwanda.

Establishment of satellite nurseries and training of nursery operators

In Machakos County, satellite nurseries were established in six primary schools in three districts. These include Uasin and Mwala DEB in Mwala, Mvumundu and Mutemba in Machakos and Mw ABC and Kangundo DEB in Kangundo district. The nurseries are targeted to train school going children with nursery management skills. In addition, selected parents and teachers from schools were on May 2012 engaged in a Healthy Learning training workshop that aimed to give holistic health and environment management training approaches to which nursery management skills can be nested. Each school was later supported to setup tree nurseries that raised at least 1000 tree seedlings of various species. Fifteen private and group nursery operators, five from each of the three districts were trained together with participants from the schools that hosted the nurseries.

The training culminated with the formation of a 26 member Agro-care Community-Based organization (CBO) known as MWAMKA (Mwala Machakos Kangundo). Some operators report improved sales from their nursery enterprises as a result of the training and networking with others.

In October 2012, the project conducted a three-day training for nursery operators at Rujewa in Mbarali District, Tanzania. The training brought together 33 participants drawn from the private sector (individual and farmer groups), public institutions and representatives from the district headquarters.

Apart from Machakos in Kenya, four divisions in Tanzania were also selected for the establishment of satellite nurseries in Mbarali, Mzalidro, Igwusi, Chinuma and Rujewa. Unlike Machakos which concentrated on primary schools, private nursery operators will serve as the satellite nurseries in Mbarali.

Component 3: Building the capacity of smallholder farmers and partners for effective adoption of Evergreen Agriculture practices

This component is implemented in three approaches as follows:

i) Training of extension staff and farmers on evergreen agriculture technologies

ii) Establishment of demonstration plots cum participation trials

iii) Establishment of evergreen agriculture associated enterprises and linking farmers to markets

Training of farmers and extension staff on evergreen agriculture technologies

From 28th to 30th May, 2012, the project (ICRAF) partnered with Kenya Network for Dissemination of Agricultural Technologies (KENDAT) to conduct a three-day theory training for extension officers from the Ministry of Agriculture, Vision and Landcove representatives. The training was aimed at equipping the 39 extension personnel with skills on Conservation agriculture and agroforestry so that they can train farmers on the same. A similar program was also conducted in Tanzania with 23 extension officers trained in Mbarali district and later 20 agronomists in Busega, Rwanda. So far, the program has trained over 2000 farmers in the three countries through these extension staff. In early 2013 20 volunteer farmers in Machakos and 20 in Busega have been trained and have also been conducting training with more farmers. This training goes along with action research that seeks to compare the effectiveness and efficiency of the various extension approaches so as to come up with policy recommendations for scaling up EGA.

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