

## **Concept Note 2**

### **Provision of Farm Mechanization to FBO**

#### **A. Strategic context of the project**

The Government of Sierra Leone launched its second Poverty Reduction Strategy paper for 2008-2012 (PRSP II) the “Agenda for Change,” with a focus on four key priorities: energy; transportation; agriculture; and human development. Following the commencement or completion of several large road and energy infrastructure projects, agriculture has been identified as the President’s top priority. This has been reflected in steadily increasing public investment in the sector, with a budget allocation at 9.9 percent in 2010 and expected to increase to 10 percent in the near future. In September 2009, the Government launched NSADP, the Country Compact under the CAADP. The vision of the NSADP is to make agriculture the engine for socioeconomic growth and development through commercial agriculture. More specifically, its aim is to provide short, medium and long term Investment Programmes to increase commercialisation of the sector and promote “farming as a business.” The Smallholder Commercialisation Programme (SCP) is identified as the priority to delivery this goal.

In addition to the CAADP and NSADP, the Government has in place a number of other policies to support the agriculture sector. The Decentralisation Policy has been revised and the Local Government Act (2004) approved into law, to accelerate the transfer of power to local communities and chiefdoms, and enhance service delivery to small farmers through an ongoing process of devolution of technical and financial resources. With a view to supporting small farmers to make the transition toward commercialisation, the Government’s Private Sector Development Strategy has been put in place, focusing on (i) improving access to finance; (ii) improving the legal and regulatory framework; (iii) promoting and supporting entrepreneurship; (iv) making markets work better; and (v) improving physical infrastructure. Agriculture is also one of the key target growth sectors in the National Export Strategy (2010-2015), including through the mobilisation of Sierra Leone Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SLIPA). The Government has also made significant efforts to support its young population through establishing a number of initiatives to promote employment, such as the Youth Agricultural Farm Scheme.

Over the last decade, donor activity has been making a transition from post-conflict and emergency relief to longer-term development. After the war, donors and NGOs were primarily focused on resettlement and rehabilitation of farming land and rural communities, using project-based approaches. More recently donors shifted to more programmatic designs, and refocused activities towards building rural infrastructure including feeder roads.

## **B. Justification**

Inland valley swamps (IVS) play a major role in the restoration and increase of agricultural production through their potential for cropping intensification of rice and vegetables. IVS exist throughout the country in all the main drainage lines. It is estimated that 65 000 ha out of a total of 300 000 ha of IVS are used for rice production. The cultivation of most swamps was abandoned during the civil war, including swamps that were traditionally cultivated or swamps that were previously developed by irrigation. Weeds and bushes have been growing for several years and are difficult to wipe out with traditional tools. Dikes, canals, drains and weirs in previously developed swamps have not been maintained for years. In spite of the high potential for production in the IVS is negatively affected by: (a) inadequate drainage and flash flooding; (b) irregular flooding due to lack of water management; (c) low fertility levels and iron and aluminium toxicity; and (d) inadequate residual moisture and water supply during the dry season. Irrigation schemes for smallholder production in IVS exist but only at minimal levels. There is high potential to maximize production in irrigated zones, up to double the current yield which is about 1.8 t/ha of paddy. MAFFS has identified some 241,600 hectares of potential development of irrigable land area using surface or underground water management techniques and 28,000 hectares using perennial swamp surface water management techniques.

## **C. Potential intervention zones and target groups**

The strategy for increasing rice production is two pronged: (1) increase in area cultivated, mainly in the lowlands where there is much underutilised capacity, and (2) increases in productivity per unit area in all ecosystems. Area expansion will mainly be in the lowlands due to its existence in all parts of the country coupled with its potential for sustainable production.

## D. Main Objectives of the Project

**Global objective:** To promote commercial rice production

### Specific Objectives:

- Increase area under cultivation
- Promote commercial rice production
- Promote private sector investment in the rice subsector

## E. Description of the Components, Outputs and Activities

Component 1: Provision of mechanical power to replace some of the labour required in agricultural pursuits,

<b>Component</b>	<b>Output</b>	<b>Activity</b>
To provide mechanical power to replace some of the labour required in agricultural pursuits.	1. Farmers have access to mechanical power.	1. Ploughing and harrowing of farmers' fields.  2. Facilitate expansion of cultivated area  3. Training of machinery operators and mechanics.
.		

## **G. Implementation Strategy of the project**

The approach will be in two folds: to provide mechanical power to replace some of the labour required in agricultural pursuits, thereby increasing the productivity of labour, reducing the drudgery of agriculture, and encouraging youth to stay on the land; and to facilitate expansion of cultivated area in ecologies where labour bottlenecks limit production potential.

The government will promote and facilitate the involvement of the private sector in the mechanization of the agricultural sector. In this regard, the MAFFS shall work in close collaboration with entrepreneurs and farmers' associations: ensure that equipment imported into the country are suitable for the intended agro-ecologies, encourage the standardization of machines imported, thereby making the stocking of spares easy; and ensure that machinery operators and mechanics are adequately trained. Also, the Project will encourage and give support to research institutions to accelerate the development and local fabrication of suitable equipment for use by small scale and intermediate farmers. The participation of the private sector in the development and eventual commercialization of prototypes will be actively pursued.

## **H. Project Organization and Management**

- MAFFS assumes overall responsibility for the project implementation
- SLARI, Njala University and the Agricultural Engineering Unit of MAFFS will provide technical support to the project
- District councils will provide oversight

### **I. Monitoring and Evaluation**

MAFFS and SLARI will provide quarterly technical report.

The District Agricultural Officers will produce monthly reports based on submissions of M&E officers in the District.

Local councils to carryout independent assessment of progress and report appropriately.

### **J. Risks**

- Willingness of the communities to participate fully in the project
- Favourable political climate for the implementation of the project
- Timely release of funds
  - Social conflicts.

### Logical Framework

Project/Program	Objectively Verifiable indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions/ Risks
1. Global objective:			
To promote commercial rice production	<p>Machinery available for use by farmers</p> <p>Operators and mechanics trained.</p> <p>25% increase in area under rice cultivation.</p>	<p>Machinery present</p> <p>Area under cultivation.</p>	<p>Available land for cultivation</p> <p>Timely availability of fund.</p>
2. Specific Objective			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Increase area under cultivation</b></li> <li>- <b>Promote commercial rice production</b></li> <li>- <b>Promote private sector investment in the rice subsector</b></li> </ul>		Progress reports	Funds are made available
3. Outputs/Results			
1. <b>Component1:</b> Provision of mechanical power to replace some of the labour required in agricultural pursuits,			
4. Ploughing and harrowing of farmers' fields.		Progress reports	
5. Facilitate expansion of cultivated		Progress reports	

area Training of machinery operators and mechanics.		Survey map report Progress reports	
--	--	---------------------------------------	--