

APPLICATION OF STDM IN RURAL UGANDA



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IFAD supported Vegetable Oil Development Project

TSLI-ESA

INTRODUCTION

The Vegetable Oil Development Project Phase 2 (VODP2) is an International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) supported investment programme of the Government of Uganda (GoU) that is implemented under the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF). VODP2 is aimed at increasing national production of edible vegetable oils through increased production and processing capacity with the objectives to minimize reliance on imports of vegetable oils, raise incomes of rural smallholder producers, and increase the supply of affordable vegetable oil products for Ugandan and regional consumers. The project has two components: a) Oil Seeds Development- where smallholder farmers in 51 districts of Eastern, Northern, and West Nile regions of Uganda are supported to produce sunflower, soybeans, ground nuts and sesame and linked to other value chain actors, b) Oil Palm Development.

Under the oil palm component, an innovative public-private partnership (PPP) was initiated in Kalangala and Buvuma Districts to support the

establishment of oil palm processing facility and oil palm plantations in a nucleus estate model where smallholder farmers are supported through a farmers' trust to grow and sell/supply oil palm fruits to the privately managed processing plant. In Kalangala, GoU leased 6,500 hectares of land to a private investor, BIDCO, for establishment of an oil palm nucleus estate and supported 1,700 smallholder farmers (36% female) to plant 4,277 hectares of oil palm. GoU has provided loans worth US\$ 11 million to the smallholder farmers for planting and maintaining their palms and so far, US\$ 1.4 million has been paid back. By the end of June 2015, the smallholder farmers had harvested 43,069 tons of oil palm fresh fruit bunches valued at US\$ 5.2 million from 1,900 hectares of mature gardens. To ensure effective project support and management of both the cash and in kind loans to smallholder farmers, the project created the Kalangala Oil Palm Growers Trust (KOPGT) and Kalangala Oil Palm Growers Association (KOPGA). Both organizations ensure farmers receive project services that include oil palm seedlings, high quality fertilizers, extension advice and training.

LAND TENURE SECURITY CHALLENGES SMALLHOLDER FARMERS FACE

Notwithstanding the VODP2 gains to date, land issues remain contentious as over 80 – 90 percent do not hold land titles for where they have built their homes and grow their palms. Most of the farmers reside on and occupy private Mailo land, and public land, and land that was recently returned by the GoU to the Buganda Kingdom as Kibanja holders. Most of the farmers on private Mailo land are considered ‘squatters’ who know not who owns the land on which they have interests as they have built their houses and grown oil palms, but nonetheless, have constant fear that their the ‘land owners’ will come and repossess the land and property on it. Farmers on public land, face the same problem as they too are not sure whether and when government will provide land titles. Most of the farmers who are current Kibanja holders have agreements with the previous Kibanja holders but do not

have any established relationships with their landlords.

Lack of clearly demarcated or marked boundaries of gardens and homes between neighbouring farmers is also a common source of conflicts among farmers. These land tenure contestations and conflicts, have in part, been driven by increasing land value since the introduction of the VODP. For example, in Kalangala value of land has increased from USD 20 an acre in 1990 to USD 1,200 an acre in 2015 (Kabuleta, et al., 2015*). As such, smallholder farmers are seeking to secure the land, on which they have invested over year with the palm trees, from which they expect to harvest and sell oil palm fruits for as long as 25 years, from the other claimants.

*Kabuleta, R.N., Masaba, C.M., Antonio, D., Gitau, J., Mkumbwa, S., Mabikke, S., Liversage, H., (2015), Scalable Approaches To Improving Tenure Security For Smallholder Farmers in Uganda, 2014 World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, March 23-27, Washington D.C., United States.



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SOCIAL TENURE DOMAIN MODEL AS A SOLUTION

The VODP2 is partnering with the Global Land Tools Network (GLTN) and the IFAD under the Land and Natural Resources Tenure Learning Initiative for East and Southern Africa (TSLI-ESA), through the MAAIF launched the “Farmer Driven Enumeration (FDE)” project. The FDE uses a GLTN’s tool, the Social Tenure Domain Model (STDM) – a package composed of participatory enumeration, and appropriate, affordable and pro-poor geospatial technologies, to map land and natural resources tenure rights for the smallholder oil palm out-growers in Kalangala District. GLTN provided STDM software and trained the staff of VODP and KOPGT, and farmers on the use and application of STDM, spatial and attribute data collection, database management, data analysis and production of reports.

Although the implementation of STDM is still at an early stage the tool is providing maps that documents farmers’ tenure insecurity. The STDM tool is helping to document farmers’ tenure rights and resolving boundary conflicts. Over lapping land claims have been greatly reduced as neighbours are able to re-trace the original boundaries of their land. The tool’s database captures input – output information on oil palm smallholder farmers in Kalangala with geo-referenced data of the households, which is used by

the KOPGT and VODP2 to analyze the impact of oil palm farming and assess productivity of the palms in relation to farmers’ socio-economic factors. STDM produces reports from the information the project and the stakeholders continuously require. This tool allows for participatory monitoring and evaluation by ensuring the smallholder farmers are able to easily validate their information. With the implementation of STDM KOPGT and farmers are able to get an accurate measure of the sizes of their gardens which helps increase productivity per acre, which also ensures that when farmers apply for cash and in-kind loans, it is based on actual farm size not rough estimates. As the farmers themselves participated in mapping their gardens they take ownership of the exercise. For women the STDM implementation was a boon for them as they could identify boundaries of their own portion of gardens which helped them improve maintenance and harvests from their gardens. The FDE initiative has now led to initiatives to improve tenure security in Kalangala and contributed to initiatives on environmental protection as forest reserves have also been demarcated. This initiative has provided a better understanding of what is required to initiate effective planning and policy for smallholder oil palm growers that ensures their security of tenure.

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