

# Scaling-Up Conservation Agriculture in Tanzania

January 2020

## Program Highlights in Tanzania

- Over 7,500 farmers are practicing CA principles, of whom 3,963 are women.
- Partners have engaged the Ministry of Agriculture, including making key contributions to the national *Roadmap for Broadening Impacts and Integration of CA in the Industrialization of Agriculture*.
- Local service providers have begun offering services to CA farmers using scale-appropriate mechanization.
- 5,388 farmers have joined savings groups, of whom 67% are women.

**Scaling-Up Conservation Agriculture in East Africa** is a five-year program (2015-2020) of Canadian Foodgrains Bank with funding from the Government of Canada to enable 50,000 smallholder farmers in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania to practice conservation agriculture. Now in its fifth and final year, key areas of focus include building and strengthening support structures that will enable conservation agriculture (CA) to continue beyond the *Scaling-Up CA* program, including policy advocacy, training government extension officers, and facilitating strategic private sector linkages.

In Tanzania, this program is implemented by Tearfund Canada and World Renew in partnership with AICT (African Inland Church of Tanzania) Geita, AICT Mara and Ukerewe, and the Diocese of Central Tanganyika – Development Services Company. Program activities take place in the Mara, Mwanza, and Dodoma regions respectively.

### What is conservation agriculture?

Conservation agriculture is characterized by the practice of three principles: minimal or zero tillage, permanent organic soil cover (mulch or cover crop residues), and diversified crop production.

## Adoption and Innovation of Conservation Agriculture Farming Systems

In Tanzania, the three partners have trained 10,911 farmers in CA principles. Of these, 7,502 farmers (3,963 female and 3,539 male) have adopted at least two out of the three CA principles in their fields, representing 94% of the targeted 8,010 farmers practicing CA in Tanzania by September 2020.

The program is designed to facilitate local innovation and adoption of CA principles to fit local contexts. In Tanzania, shifting weather patterns demand a reorientation of farming practices. Partners have facilitated participatory research between farmers and extension officers to adapt to this evolving context. As maize does not adapt well to drought or excess rainfall conditions, partners supported farmers to innovate by growing crops such as bananas, sunflower, sweet potatoes, grain amaranth, cassava, and sorghum using CA.

Foodgrains Bank has partnered with Farm Radio International to facilitate the development of radio content to promote CA. Programming is broadcast weekly in Dodoma, Geita, and Mara. Farmers, program staff, government extension agents, and radio station staff contribute to the radio programs by sharing their practical

experiences and technical knowledge. Agriculture extension officers make follow-up visits with farmers who have learned about CA through the radio to provide mentorship and technical support.

### **Engaging the Ministry of Agriculture**

Foodgrains Bank and the program partner organizations were key participants in a national advocacy meeting organized by the Ministry of Agriculture to raise awareness for parliamentarians and share experiences about how to implement CA in Tanzania. The meeting was the result of a collaboration between the Ministry of Agriculture, the African Conservation Tillage Network (ACT), the Conservation Farming Unit, and Foodgrains Bank. The workshop contributed recommendations to the national government on their *Roadmap for Broadening Impacts and Integration of Conservation Agriculture (CA) in the Industrialization of Agriculture*. Stakeholders agreed on a resolution that government should invest in CA knowledge systems and skills at local and national levels.



### **Promoting Scale-Appropriate Mechanization**

Scale-appropriate mechanization is critical for the uptake and scaling up of CA. Partner organizations have collaboratively learned about options for mechanization and have held events for farmers and local entrepreneurs to learn about CA mechanization options. Now, local service providers are beginning to provide ripping services with ox-drawn rippers and two-wheel tractors. Farmers who had their land ripped expressed satisfaction from the reduced time and cost needed for land preparation and their subsequent ability to expand the area under CA.



### **Empowering Women Through Savings Groups and Discussion Forums**

In Tanzania, 5,388 smallholder farmers have joined savings groups through the program, of whom 67% are women. These groups enable participants to access loans, save money, promote community cohesion, and provide a forum for farmers to meet frequently. The groups also provide an opportunity for women to take on community leadership roles. It is expected that

these groups will continue to meet even after the program ends and will continue to provide a forum for peer-to-peer support between CA farmers.

CA partners are also taking other steps to address gender inequalities. AICT MUD, for example, integrated gender dialogues into CA training with 858 farmers (473 females and 385 males). Champion farmers, church leaders, and model couples identified by the community were trained to facilitate these discussions. Topics included unequal distribution of labour, decision-making, and the sharing of benefits. As a result, actions to balance workload and improve the sharing of decision-making and benefits are now being discussed within households. A gender manual is now being developed for CA champion farmers to provide an ongoing resource on gender issues.

### Supporting Market Linkages

Through CA, farmers are experiencing increased and more consistent yields. This has led to an increased need for improved post-harvest storage and marketing strategies. The *Scaling-Up CA* program has worked with partners to promote the use of hermetic bags and is linking farmers with suppliers of the bags. In Mara, for example, 1,325 farmers purchased and are using PICS bags. In Dodoma, airtight grain storage pits have been promoted. As a result, despite poor yields in 2018-19, farmers were able to continue to use grain from the previous season and were food secure until the next crop was harvested.

Partners are now mobilizing and training CA farmers in aggregation groups that are working together to determine which crops to grow for market and will co-operatively market products. Groups are now registering with their local government, which provides them access to government loans that enable them to start new business opportunities.

### Facilitating Multisectoral Co-operation

Program partners are networking with other like-minded organizations in the region including the government, to jointly promote and advocate for CA also contributes to sustainability by creating communities of practice that can support each other. In addition to strategically engaging governments, partners have worked to initiate and strengthen relationships with local research institutions, market actors, and other NGOs.

### For more information

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Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 Canadian churches and church-based agencies working to end global hunger through food assistance, nutrition, and sustainable food security programming. This program is being implemented by three Canadian Foodgrains Bank members: Mennonite Central Committee Canada, Tearfund Canada, and World Renew.

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