Rwanda launches Irrigation Master Plan

Rwanda's economy mainly depends on the agricultural sector, particularly food crop production. Poverty reduction therefore largely depends on efforts made on the modernisation of this sector.

Although Rwanda possesses considerable water resources, they are not evenly distributed. For example, while water is abundant in the marshlands, facilities for storing it elsewhere for irrigation purposes are lacking. Farming during dry seasons is thus limited in most parts of Rwanda. Agriculture and livestock in the eastern parts of Rwanda, where rainfall is lowest, are especially affected. This situation created a need for a full, efficient and sustainable exploitation of water resources that can help to ensure the sustainable production of food, cash, export and industrial crops.

One of the best options of achieving food security and improving people's living conditions is through the use of modern irrigation technologies. It is from this recognition that the government of Rwanda commissioned Ebony Enterprises Limited, an Israeli firm, for the development of an Irrigation Master Plan (IMP) to facilitate the management of water resources, promote irrigation and improve food security. Ebony subsequently partnered with the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) to undertake this task in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI) and Rwanda Agricultural Development Authority (RADA). The aim of Rwanda's IMP is to develop and manage water resources to promote intensive and sustainable irrigated agriculture and improve food security in Rwanda. Specifically, the objective of the IMP is to provide Rwanda with a planning tool for rational exploitation of its soil and water resources as represented by the respective domains (see Figure 1) at both national and district levels. This tool is intended to lead to an increase in crop production for local consumption, as well as to promote production of high-value crops.

In order to produce the IMP, ICRAF developed a flow chart matrix that identifies potential irrigation areas and water sources by mapping biophysical and socioeconomic parameters. Details of this work are provided in the IMP document which was launched on the 17th September 2010 in a ceremony graced by the Right Honourable Prime Minister of the Republic of Rwanda and the Honourable Minister for Agriculture and Animal Resources, Dr. Agnes Kalibata. In her remarks, Hon. Kalibata, commended ICRAF and Ebony for a job well done. A number of organizations from diplomatic missions, international research institutions, local NGOs and the community were represented during the launch of the IMP.

Click this link for more detail on the Irrigation Master plan: [http://intranet.icraf.org/docs/IMP_poster.pdf](http://intranet.icraf.org/docs/IMP_poster.pdf)

![Figure 1. Rwanda's total irrigable area and size of each irrigation domain](http://www.worldagroforestry.org)

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**Article by Charles Gachene, Alex Oduour, Cherogony Kipruto and Maimbo Malesu**

The Collective-Action underpinning this project involved collaboration between the Rwandan Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources (MINAGRI), the Rwanda Agricultural Development Authority (RADA), Ebony Enterprises Limited, and the World Agroforestry Center's East African Regional Office.