

Success Story for World Bank Development Report 2006 CIDA's Support to Agriculture in Rwanda

Canada's relationship with Rwanda began in 1963. Since that time, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has contributed over \$500 million to Rwanda. Among CIDA's early programs of support were rural development projects, including a series of initiatives to develop the Mutara Valley. The Mutara projects totalled approximately \$24 million CDN and were implemented by a variety of Canadian partners, including EXPERCO, SODEVCO, CÉGIR and Société de Développement international Desjardins, as well as Rwandan partners, including the ministries responsible for land and agriculture.

CIDA's long-term involvement with an integrated approach to rural development made a real difference for the people of the Mutara Valley in eastern Rwanda. With CIDA's initial involvement in the late 1970s, activities were focused on irrigation infrastructure, agricultural trials, and establishing farmers in an irrigated perimeter of the valley. Emphasis then turned to improving the living conditions of the farmers through capacity building in irrigated agricultural techniques, namely rice production and processing, and better access to water, health and education services. It resulted in some 600 ha of irrigated land and 920 families relocated to irrigated perimeters and trained in irrigated agriculture techniques. The quality of life of families living in the valley was improved by access to more productive rice varieties, increased food security, a rice processing and marketing unit, and access to newly built houses, schools, and a nutrition centre. Local ownership is a factor contributing to this project's success: the training and coaching of farmers was undertaken primarily by Rwandan agronomists, mostly from the Rwandan Institute of Agronomy Sciences, and rice production and processing activities were taken on by the local population through the creation of a rural cooperative.

In the early 1980s, a Master Plan for the development of the entire Mutara Valley was developed. It included irrigated agriculture, rain-fed agriculture, cattle raising, community services and coordination and supervision. This Plan was the centerpiece of an early attempt at donor coordination in Rwanda. As the responsibility for managing the Master Plan was devoted to the Rwandan authorities, programs for building their capacity to promote and coordinate donor support for the implementation of the Master Plan were provided. A Regional Coordination Committee, including a Permanent Secretariat, was established and local capacity to carry out agricultural research and environmental management was increased. As a result of this initiative, many other donors made significant financial commitments to implement the Master Plan. By 1990, there was a financing plan in place for the creation of a 1500 ha irrigated perimeter and the settling of over 1700 families in 4 villages with access to social services.

Unfortunately, the devastating civil war and genocide of 1994 made it necessary for CIDA to suspend activities in Rwanda, including the initiatives in Mutara. But even during this period of conflict, the farmer cooperative continued producing, processing and marketing rice and generated revenues for the thousand families established in the

Valley. The cooperative and the research station are still active and pursuing their mission. Other donors, such as China and Italy, are providing assistance to the development of other sectors of the Valley as foreseen in the Master Plan. The experience gained in the Mutara Valley helped shape the development of rice production and low-land management across Rwanda.

Having emerged from this period of conflict and instability, Rwanda is now pursuing an ambitious plan to become a middle-income country by 2020. CIDA's current programming framework for Rwanda, which covers the 2005-2011 period is aligned with Government of Rwanda's plans and priorities. The two focus areas for programming are rural development, particularly rural infrastructures, and local governance. Therefore, CIDA is building on its past experience, including its experience with long-term support for the Mutara Valley.