Zomba Area Stakeholder Panels

Baseline Survey

October 2008

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Area Stakeholder Panels Baseline Survey

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

According to the implementation plan, MRIU is expected to work with two Area Stakeholder Panels (ASP) in Zomba District (Malemia and Mlumbe) to bring together key stakeholders in agricultural sector at community level to deepen decentralisation of agricultural activities. Before MRIU begins to work with the Stakeholder panels, it was important that a baseline study in the two areas be conducted. The main aim of the study were: firstly to understand the key issues in the area relevant to the RIU programme, with a view to identifying possible interventions for RIU in these areas; and secondly to provide the RIU team with insights both into the relevance of particular platforms, and the extent to which ideas discussed at national level are likely to result in real change on the ground.

1.2 Methodology

First a survey form was designed (See Appendix 1) which included questions of relevance to each platform which the RIU has identified at the national level. The particular questions related to the initial situation in the Area in relation to these issues, and what might be expected to change as a result of RIU's interventions.

Before the survey, the National Process facilitator organised a one day training for the two Area Stakeholder Panels covering: deepening understanding of stakeholder panels; functions of a stakeholder panel; roles and responsibilities of stakeholder panel members; characteristics of an empowered farmer; and linkages between stakeholder panel and national platforms

Following the initial day of training with ASP members, there was a brief meeting with the entire ASP, but then the ASP was divided into smaller groups of between 3 and 6 members for focussed group discussions on particular topics. A wide range of issues was discussed in these smaller groups.

The limitations of the methodology were that the survey had to rely on the knowledge and opinions of the ASP members, and there was no opportunity to substantiate what Panel members informed the study team. In addition there was no opportunity to collect data from stakeholders not represented in Area Panels. There was a strong male bias in both panels, with only about 10% of the members being women. Also some Panel members may have had some expectations of future assistance from RIU and this may have coloured their answers.

2. Key findings of Baseline Survey

2.1 Population and Land characteristics

The total population for Malemia is 62,213 while that of Mlumbe II is 56,002 (see table below). In both areas, women comprise 51% of the population. Out of 12,954 households in Malemia, 25% are female headed whereas 19% of the 11,666 households in Mlumbe II are female headed.

Area	Population			Number of Households		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male headed	Female headed
Malemia	62,213	30,485	31,728	12,954	9,713	3,241
Mlumbe II	56,002	27,442	28,560	11,666	9,366	2,300

In Malemia, average land holding size is at 0.4 hectares. Although Malemia has 40,000 hectares of cultivatable land, only 22.5% (9,000 hectares) is under cultivation. The entire irrigatable land of 1,587 hectares is under irrigation. There are no commercial farmers in the area. About 22 % of households run out of food by October each year after harvesting in April.

With an average land holding size of 0.8 hectares, households in Mlumbe II have twice as much land as those in Malemia. The area has 40,000 hectares of cultivatable land, 39,000 hectares of which is under cultivation. Irrigatable land is 700 hectares and the entire land is under irrigation including another 2,000 hectares of arable land. There is one commercial farmer in Mlumbe II who own 200 hectares.

About 26% of the households in Mlumbe II run out of food by October each year.

2.2 Malemia

2.2.1 History of previous development interventions

2.2.1.1 Horticulture

The European Union's Income Generation Public Works Programme, Direct AID from People to People (an NGO) have been actively involved in horticulture in Malemia from 2004 up to 2007 while the Ministry of Agriculture through extension department has been engaged in the area for a long time.

The Income Generation and Public Works Programme introduced canal and treadle pump irrigation in 2004 and 2005 respectively while DAPP introduced vegetable growing. The Ministry of Agriculture brought in maize and vegetable growing.

Horticulture crops grown in the area are tomatoes, onions, cabbage, banana, oranges, mangoes, avocado pears. Farmers are still practising horticulture in these crops.

Since the canal irrigation requires cementing canals, only farmers living along the cemented canals are benefitting from the innovation while those away from cemented canals have not benefitted.

2.2.1.2 Legumes

A church NGO, Blantyre Synod introduced legume farming in Malemia at Naming'azi farm in the period 2002 to 2005. The programme introduced improved beans, pigeon peas, groundnuts and soya beans seed varieties.

Since the programme phased out in 2005, very few farmers are growing legumes using the improved seed varieties due to unavailability of seed.

2.2.2.3 Fish farming

The Income generation and public works programme has been involved in fish farming in Malemia. It facilitated in dam construction and procurement of fingerlings.

There are 300 fish farmers in Malemia and they all belong to Zomba Fish Farmers Association. Out of these 20 are innovative fish farmers.

Fish farming has been static because farmers have not taken it as a business. Fish harvest is normally sold within the local community due to high demand and low productivity.

Fish farming extension is provided by DFO staff and National Aquaculture Centre who are well trained. However, they are few in number.

2.2.2.4 Livestock

Livestock development initiatives have been introduced in Malemia by three organisations: European Union through a local CBO – dairy pass on programme; Direct AID from People to People (DAPP) – piggery; and Gift of Givers through local CBO – broiler chickens.

The EU programme gave out 10 cows to Domasi Milk Production CBO with 10 members. SHIMPA volunteers provided technical services to the CBO by among other things promoting Artificial Insemination.

In terms of marketing, the area is disadvantaged since it does not have any livestock buying centre. There are no proper slaughter slabs and the common practice is to slaughter livestock under a tree shed on a bare ground. Livestock products are usually ferried on bicycles or wheelbarrows.

Although there are no restrictions on pig movement in Malemia, there has been no incidence of African swine fever in the Area. Livestock farmers are not linked to any pharmaceutical companies. In times of need, farmers have to visit veterinary shops in Zomba town.

Dairy and piggery farmers received training in general livestock management including calf rearing, feed formation and feeding, and heat detection. The dairy training was organised by EU while the piggery one was conducted by DAPP. However, it was noted that despite the trainings, piggery farmers lacked some basic livestock care. The NGO needs to link with and engage services of other piggery experts to train its piggery extension staff.

Livestock is usually fed on local maize husks and locally found vegetables.

2.2.2 Coordination of initiatives

The level of collaboration among different institutions/organisations working in Malemia is good. Government, NGOs and CBOs hold meetings together to share information and work jointly in addressing technical issues. However, these organisations are not evenly distributed and mostly operate in the western part of Malemia.

2.2.3 Extent to which farmers are organised

Farmers in each village were organised into farmer clubs under the Income Generation and Public Works Programme. The clubs served as platforms for IGPWP assistance which was mainly form of farm inputs provision.

Apart from the clubs, farmer associations and groups also exist in Malemia. There is one poultry association and one fish association. However, the poultry association is not functional. Currently there are 2 livestock farmer groups and 10 mushroom growing farmer groups.

2.2.4 Major production constraints in different commodity platforms

Horticulture	**Legumes**	**Livestock**		**Fish farming**
		Piggery	**Dairy**	
Use of recycled seed because of unavailability of certified seed. In cases where certified seed is used like onions and tomato, the seed is imported and not suitable for local conditions which lead to high non-germination rate	Access to improved seed for soya, beans, groundnuts, pigeon peas and cow peas	Lack of organised markets/scarcity of improved feeds & drugs	Inadequate dipping facilities/Limited access to grazing land/high price of feeds and drugs	Unreliable water supply for about 3 months of dry season/lack of extension/shortage of skilled lablour
Lack of appropriate	Lack of credit	No access to credit	Lack of organised	No access to credit facilities for feeds

information which led to farmers using local knowledge			markets	
Marketing - since most of horticultural produce is perishable, delays in selling produce lead to major post-harvest losses	No reliable market especially for soya beans	Disease and parasites	Labour shortages/scarcity of improved feeds	Low quality fingerlings/inbreeding in ponds
		High price of feeds & drugs	Lack of extension services	Unavailability of improved feed and lack of knowledge in feed making
		Lack of extension services		

2.3 Mlumbe II

2.3.1 History of previous development interventions

2.3.1.1 Horticulture

World Vision International and Chinrad are two organizations that have been involved in horticulture in Mlumbe II since 2006 and 2007 respectively. World Vision International introduced mango, pawpaw, avocado and banana fruit trees to farmers while Chinrad introduced improved vegetable seeds.

To date all these innovations have been adopted by farmers. After the introduction of fruit farming in the area, fruits are now readily available in Mlumbe and no one imports fruits into the area. This has resulted in improved nutritional status in the area.

2.3.1.2 Legumes

World Vision International and Blantyre Synod introduced legume initiatives in 2003 in Mlumbe II. The initiative was in seed multiplication for CG7 ground nut, seed beans, soya, cowpeas and pigeon peas.

There was no uptake for the seed multiplication initiative among farmers in the area. The seed multiplication practise stopped after the WVI seed multiplication project phased out because there were no sustainability mechanisms put in place for continuity of initiatives at post project phase.

2.3.1.3 Fish farming

A number of organisations have been engaged in fish farming programmes in Mlube II (World Vision International, C-Fish, ARDEP and World Fish Centre) mainly focusing on fingerling and feed production.

There are 2,045 fish farmers with 1,085 fish ponds in the area. With local fingerling production, fish farming has been on the increase over the years. The farmers have organised themselves into Chingale Integrated Aquaculture Farmers Association.

There is no proper fish marketing system in the area. Fish harvest is usually sold locally to community members.

The area receives fish farming extension services from government staff from fisheries office, World Fish Centre, ARDEP and WVI. Only Government staff is well trained in fish

farming. Fish farming information is sourced from extension staff, radio programmes and fish farmer's clubs and association.

Level of private sector involvement in fish farming is high through ARDEP, C-Fish, World Fish Centre and UNDP. However, local banks and Micro Finance institutions are not involved in supporting fish farming.

2.3.1.4 Livestock

Three organisations (WVI, ARDEP, Chingale/Neno Recovery Development) introduced livestock innovation in Mlumbe II. WVI and ARDEP introduced pigs, goats and poultry in 2006 while Chingale/Neno recovery development programme gave out 300 goats on pass-on basis.

In addition, Chipini health centre gave out goats, poultry and pigs to some farmers but since the project phased out, there is a decline in stocks.

The area has a pig association comprising 19 farmers but currently it is not functional because farmers have not received pigs.

There are no livestock buying centres or milk markets in the area. There are three slaughter slubs for goats and cattle. Feeding practices are mainly traditional i.e madeya and sweet potato leaves.

Disease control measures included enclosure, de-wormer and spray. In pigs, movement is restrictive to avoid African swine fever outbreak. There has been low incidence of African swine fever due to travel ban and slaughter controls.

Livestock farmers are linked to the veterinary assistant drug box and not pharmaceutical suppliers.

WVI trained pig, goat and poultry farmers in livestock management.

2.3.1.5 Cotton

Cotton farmers face a number of challenges in Mlumbe II. The type of cotton seed used in the area keeps changing since there is no specific cotton for the area.

Although Malawi follows a liberalised crop price system, cotton prices are pre-set by the cotton companies, which traditionally cover all inputs but contract with the farmers to return to them all the cotton they produce at this price.

Cotton farmers complain that they access seeds and other inputs late, and that this year will be no different, as there has been disagreement between the Companies and the government over which

type of seed to plant (the type of issue which could notionally be resolved within the cotton platform). Since the area is difficult to access during the rainy season, delays in distribution of cotton inputs affects cotton farming in the area.

Currently two Companies buy up the cotton from Chingare Area – Great Lakes & Cargill. Farmers much prefer Great Lakes Company as it is seen as more accessible. Extension is only provided in the short 'window' of time once seeds have been distributed.

Cotton farmers suffer from relatively low cotton yield (currently only about 800kg per hectares against a potential yield of 2500kg) mainly attributed to lack of appropriate extension and lack of demonstration plots, late planting, lack of timely thinning and weeding, lack of timely spraying and lack of working sprayers.

It was also learnt that Cotton companies are not always ready to attend meetings with farmers.

While farmers complain of a lack of credit, companies have had bad experience with credit – Great Lakes only got back about 40% of the credit they had given out, and farmers sometimes take inputs on credit from one company and sell the crop to another one.

Regarding marketing, the farmers do not at present have sufficient incentive to grade cotton effectively.

2.3.2 Coordination of initiatives

Collaboration among different organisations in Mlumbe II is generally good because each organisation was given a catchment area to focus on. Regular joint review meetings are held for all organisations including Government. However, there are some organisations that tend to protect their initiatives to claim success and tend to be reluctant to work with other organisations in the area.

There have been cases where NGOs have taken over Government projects without following proper channels.

Within the government structures, the allowance syndrome tend to negatively affect participation of government staff in certain cases.

2.3.3 Extent to which farmers are organised

The area has a number of commodity specific and general farmer organisations and farmer clubs. The main associations are: horticulture association, cotton association, Chingale pig farmers association, Chingale smallholder association and Chingale integrated aquaculture farmers association.

There are farmers clubs in each and every village which were formed by WVI.

Among the farmer organisations, the fish association is the most effective one. Its strength is in the existence of functional committees and organisational training they received. They also have constitutions. Although the other FOs have committees and constitutions, committees rarely meet and application of the constitution is very minimal.

2.3.4 Major production constraints in different commodity platforms

Horticulture	**Legumes**	**Livestock**				**Fish farming**
		Piggery	**Goats**	**Cattle**	**Poultry**	
Access to improved seed	Access to improved seed /fertilizer and marketing	Lack of organised markets/scarcity of feed and drugs/lack of access to credit	Lack of credit for drugs and feeds	Lack of organised markets/no access to credit facilities for drugs and feeds	Theft/access to credit for drugs and feed/disease and parasites	Lack of information (including recommended pond size) and lack of access to credit for feeds
Lack of organised markets	Access to affordable credit	Diseases and pests (African swine fever, ticks and worms)	Theft/lack of organised markets	Theft/inadequate dipping facilities	High price of feed and drugs	Shortage of water in dry season (3 months)
	Access to timely and reliable information	Lack of extension services/high cost of feed and drugs	Limited grazing land during wet season	Access to grazing land during wet season	Scarcity of improved feeds and drugs	High parasite (alligator) attack
		Inadequate dipping facilities and labour shortage	Dipping facilities	Labour shortage	Lack of organised markets	Lack of organised markets, scarcity of fingerlings and theft

			Diseases and parasites		Lack of extension services	
			Labour shortage/scarcity of feeds and drugs			

3. Overall conclusions from RIU Team on both the Baseline survey, and its implications

Farmers in the two areas panels are engaged in various agricultural activities including horticulture, legumes, livestock and fish farming. Although a number of organisations including government have had agricultural development programmes within the panels, their impact has been minimal. Farmers still face many challenges which mirror those identified at national level for each platform.

Thus the area panels provide a more focussed opportunity for MRIU to test the innovations approach strategies being suggested for each platform at the national level.

Since the baseline has provided a benchmark picture in the two areas, it shall be easy to evaluate the impact/changes brought about by MRIU at a later stage.

4. RIU's future work in relation to Area Stakeholder Panels

Following this survey MRIU will have to take some decisions regarding its future work in Zomba District. This will have to be based on a realistic assessment of what the RIU team believes the two panels will be able to achieve. The panels are in line with 2007 Government of Malawi's Agricultural Development Programme (ADP) which stressed the importance of increasing the voice of giving farmers/producers a greater 'voice' in local planning and the design and implementation of agricultural programmes in order to improve the relevance and responsiveness of services that they need. [1] The first MRIU

[1] ADP- Zero Draft – Oct 22 2007-p.45

report on the panels said that their main function *is to empower farmers to demand extension as a result of issues identified from farmer meetings.*

However there would appear to be a number of difficulties associated with this role. First there is the issue of who is, and who is not, represented on the panels. While smaller farmers may need greater 'empowerment', the larger, and more articulate farmers (including many currently in the Panels) are already quite empowered, but have expectations of further inputs and support from the Government or RIU. Women and poorer people do not seem to be well represented on the current panels.

A second difficulty faced by the Panels is that it is not clear, even if they are able to articulate their demands for extension services more effectively, whether or not the MOAFS would be able to respond positively to these demands. The Agricultural Extension service has been getting weaker for many years in spite of different attempts by donors to revive it, and according to the ADP, 45% of agricultural extension posts in Malawi are currently vacant. Unless the overall number of Extension workers can be improved, MRIU interventions might mean that more extension staff would be diverted to the two Areas where the Panels are working, at the expense of other areas in Zomba District. Even if manpower is increased it is unclear whether farmers will really benefit as the communication methods they use may not be effective: the current Information & Communications consultancy should provide valuable data on this point.

From an M & E perspective MRIU needs a better understanding of the actual capacity of the two Panels involved, and the impact of relatively short training courses of the type recently offered by RIU. It is most likely that several more such courses would be needed before the two Panels would be able to constitute an effective RIU 'platform'. One problem is that the panels appear to have been set up as a representative, rather than executive structure: from the perspective of implementation they are too large to be really effective, and it may be difficult to pin down responsibility to a small core team which will really take ownership. Before proceeding to implementation we would also need to have a better understanding of how these panels work with other local structures, especially the Area & District Development Committees, the mandate of which at first sight seems to overlap with that of these panels.

A further issue is whether the MRIU, with a national team of 3 staff, is in a position to implement programmes at the area level. It is extremely useful for MRIU to have insights into local issues and contacts at this level, but in view of the difficulties of implementation it may be worth exploring the feasibility of RIU working at the District, rather than the Area level. A further possibility might be for RIU to work through an existing NGO like World Vision, which is already well established in the area.

Appendix 1: Baseline Guiding Questions

Malawi Research Into Use

AREA STAKEHOLDER PANELS - BASE LINE GUIDING QUESTIONS – revised Oct 15

(Sources of Information: Area Stakeholder Panels, individual members, Farmers Organisations, NGOs, Other informants.)

1. How many households are in **your area**?

Total hhs	Male headed	Female headed	Child headed?

2. Population in the target area

Total Population	Male	Female	Orphans		Chronically Ill	
			Male	Female	Male	Female

2.1 What is average size of land holdings?

2.2 Are there any commercial farmers?

2.3 How much land do they own?

2.4 How much cultivable land is there in your area?

2.5 How much of this is being cultivated?

2.6 Of this how much can be irrigated?

2.7 How much of this land is irrigated?

(Seek Comments on overall land/food security situation & how it is changing)

3. Which Government agencies/donor-funded project/INGOs/local NGOs/other projects have introduced innovations in your area? (e.g: new crops/seeds; new technologies,)

Name of Organisation	**Type of Innovation**	**Date introduced**	**Current status**	**Comments**

(Encourage discussion by respondents about which interventions have been most & least useful & document on separate paper if required.

4. What is the level of collaboration/linkages among different institutions/organisations?

5. -How many farmer organisations are there in the area?

-Which FOs appear to you to most effective and why?

5.1 What are the strengths & weaknesses of FOs

6. **Production constraints**: Which is the greatest constraint on production, **where 1 = insignificant & 4 = highly significant;**

Crop*	**Access to improved seed & fertiliser**	**Access to timely & reliable information**	**Access to affordable Credit**	**Marketing**
1. Cotton				
2. Rice				

3. Irish Potato				
4. Soya beans				
5. Cowpeas				
6. Pigeon peas				
7. Beans				
8. Groundnut				
9. Tomato				
10. Cabbages				
11. Passion				
12. Paprika				
13. Garlic				
14. Bird eye chilli				
15. Onions				
16. Fruits(specify)				
17. Indigenous Vegetables(specify)				

*****Only crops relevant to current RIU platforms have been included.

7. Livestock Production

Livestock	No. of farmers keeping livestock	Is production increasing or decreasing?	Comments
Cattle			
Pigs			

7.2 How many livestock associations/groups in the area by type of livestock

7.3 Are there livestock buying centres in the area?

7.4 What are transport logistics for livestock?

7.5 What are livestock feeding practices in the area?

7.6. What are disease control measures/practices in the area?

7.7 Is there a livestock market or market for milk nearby?

7.8 Are there livestock slaughter slabs in the area?

7.9 If the area has pigs, what is the incidence of African swine fever?

7.10 Are there any restrictions on pig movement in the area?

7.11 Are livestock farmers linked to pharmaceutical suppliers?

7.12 Has there been any training in livestock management?

7.13 If yes what was covered in the training

7.14 If yes who benefitted?

7.15 Who offered the training?

7.16 Please prioritise the major challenges faced in livestock rearing (from 1-10 when 10 is the most significant challenge)

	Challenge	**Pigs**	**Dairy**	**Comments**
a)	Limited access to grazing land			
b)	No access to credit facilities for drugs and feeds			
c)	Lack of extension services			
d)	Inadequate dipping facilities			
e)	Labour shortages			
f)	Diseases and Parasites (Specify)			
g)	Lack of organized markets			
h)	Scarcity of improved feeds and drugs			
i)	High prices of feeds and drugs			
j)	Theft			
k)	Other (specify _____)			

8. Fish farming

8.1 How many farmers practice fish farming in the area?

8.2 How many of them are innovative fish farmers?

8.3 Is fish farming increasing or declining in the area?

8.4 What is the major market for the fish?

8.5 Does the area have access to fish farming extension services? If yes who provides it?

8.6 Are fish farming extension staff adequately trained?

8.7 What are the sources of fish farming information?

8.8 Do you get adequate information from these/this source

8.9 What is the level of private sector involvement in fish farming in the area?

8.10 Are local banks or MFIs supporting fish farmers in the area?

8.11. If yes which banks or MFIs are these?

8.12 How many farmers have benefited and how much?

8.13 Rank the major challenges faced in fish farming from 10- 1 (**where 10 is most major; 1 is least significant:**

	Challenge	**Ranking**	**Comment**
1	Unreliable water supply		
2	No access to credit facilities for feeds		
3	Lack of extension services		
4	Shortages of skilled labour		
5	Diseases and Parasites (Specify)		

6	Lack of organized markets		
7	Scarcity of improved fingerlings		
8	High prices of feed		
9	Theft		
10	Other (specify _____)		

9. Further Information needed from Farmers' Groups & Individuals

(After facilitated discussion with ASHP)What are the most significant changes (related RIU interventions) different members are expecting as a result of the ASHP??