

SITAM

Sustainable Intensification: Trade-offs for Agricultural Management

An action research project seeking to understand how smallholder farmers in Africa manage the trade-offs between production, sustainability, and other socioeconomic and environmental factors



In brief

Over 42 months the SITAM project will address the challenges and opportunities of smallholder farmers, in particular poor farmers and women farmers, in managing the trade-offs between production, sustainability and other socioeconomic and environmental factors. The project will co-generate research findings with communities and local stakeholders in eastern Burkina Faso, northwest Ghana and central Malawi, using household and community level processes. The project will engage with decision makers via National Learning Alliances in order to bring about changes in their knowledge, awareness, attitudes and capacities.

Why now?

With climate change, population growth and changing diets increasing pressure on the natural resource base, smallholder farmers are faced with difficult choices about how they allocate their assets (land, labour, capital, knowledge and so on) to achieve multiple household objectives. Programmes aiming to increase agricultural productivity often do not consider farmers' perceptions of trade-offs and synergies, and many interventions have not reached some of the poorest and most vulnerable farmers, including women. However, these farmers are able to 'produce more with less' by intensifying their production

in a sustainable way that also increases their resilience to shocks and stresses, for example by using agroecological approaches to intensification that build on farmers' knowledge and make use of locally available resources. Decision makers working in agricultural development and research need to better understand household, intra-household and community-level decision-making processes on sustainable intensification of agriculture (SIA) and how these are influenced by the enabling environment in order to design more supportive agricultural policies, programmes and investments.

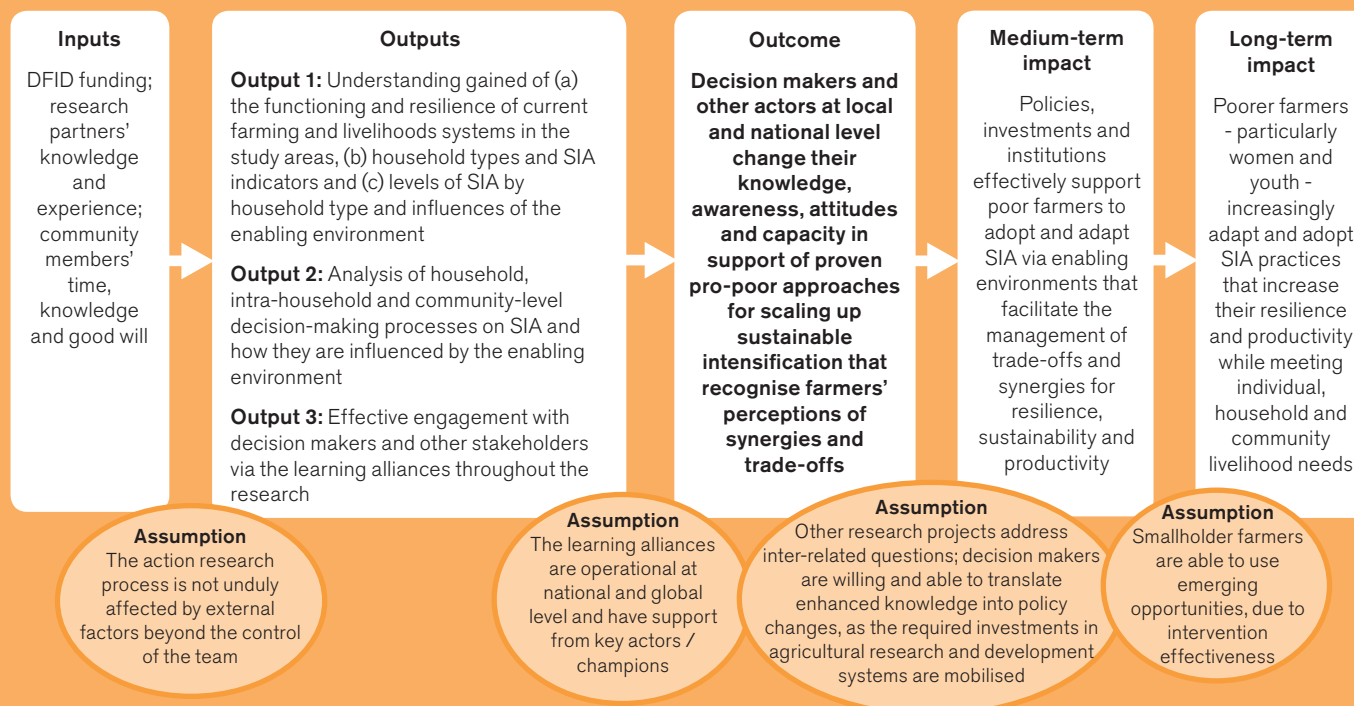


Outputs and outcomes

The expected outcome of SITAM is that:

“Decision makers and other actors at local and national level change their knowledge, awareness, attitudes and capacity in support of proven pro-poor approaches for scaling up sustainable intensification that recognise farmers’ perceptions of synergies and trade-offs.”

This will be achieved via three outputs which will involve co-generating research findings with communities and decision makers at different levels, based on rigorous and inclusive methods. The flow-chart here shows our ‘theory of change’.



Who's who

SITAM is implemented by a partnership of ten organisations who share a common vision of sustainable agriculture that leaves no one behind. We are:

IIED, United Kingdom

The International Institute for Environment and Development promotes sustainable development, linking local priorities to global challenges. It supports some of the world's most vulnerable people to strengthen their voice in decision making. IIED is leading the SITAM partnership with overall responsibility for delivery, research methodology and project management.

ANSD, Burkina Faso

The Association Nourrir sans Détruire ('feeding without destroying') is a rural development support organisation aiming to contribute to the socioeconomic development of marginalised populations and support them in their fight against food insecurity. ANSD is carrying out SITAM research in Burkina Faso, working closely with INERA.

INERA, Burkina Faso

The Institute of Environment and Agricultural Research is the national agricultural and environmental research organisation of Burkina Faso. It is leading the SITAM research design in Burkina Faso, working with ANSD on data collection, analysis and reporting.

CIKOD, Ghana

The Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development is an NGO whose main purpose is to develop methodologies to strengthen traditional authorities and civil society organisations to facilitate sustainable grassroots development that gives a voice to the poor and to vulnerable rural families. CIKOD is carrying out SITAM research in Ghana, working closely with UDS.

UDS, Ghana

The University for Development Studies is based in Tamale, northern Ghana. It is leading the SITAM research design in Ghana, working closely with CIKOD.

LUANAR, Malawi

The Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources is based in Malawi. It is leading the SITAM research design in Malawi, working closely with TLC.

Practical Action Consulting, Malawi and Senegal

Practical Action uses low cost, appropriate, small-scale development solutions to help people to help themselves. Practical Action Consulting is in charge of the participatory research component of SITAM, and coordinating research in Malawi.

TLC, Malawi

Total LandCare is a non-profit NGO in Malawi with a mandate to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers with a focus on community-based approaches to increase agricultural production, food security and incomes while ensuring sound management of their natural resources. TLC is carrying out SITAM research

in Malawi, working closely with LUANAR.

WUR, The Netherlands

Wageningen University, Department of Plant Sciences is a collaboration between Wageningen University and the DLO foundation. Its mission is 'To explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life'. WUR provides technical advice for SITAM, focusing on indicators of SIA and methods to understand farmers' perceptions of trade-offs.

Groundswell International, USA

Groundswell is a global partnership of civil society organisations, NGOs and resource people in Africa, Latin America and Asia, strengthening rural communities to create and spread healthy food and farming systems from the bottom up. In SITAM, Groundswell supports research design and policy engagement, focusing on processes of social learning and strengthening the capacities of community-based organisations.



Timeline

2016

- Inception workshop (June 2016) and team building
- Stakeholder analysis and communication strategy
- Initial learning alliance engagement
- Livelihoods, farming systems and resilience analysis

2017

- Definition of SIA indicators
- Baseline survey design, data collection, analysis and write-up
- Development of methodology for household case studies
- First round of in-depth household interviews on trade-offs

2018

- Household case studies continued (with analysis and write-up)
- National and Global Learning Alliance engagement
- Validation of emerging findings at community and NLA level
- Adjustment of household case study methodology

2019

- Household case studies continued (with analysis and final write-up)
- National and Global Learning Alliance engagement
- Validation of research findings at community and NLA level
- Co-development of recommendations

Get involved

If you would like to find out more about the project or if you work in agricultural policy in Burkina Faso, Ghana or Malawi and are interested in becoming involved, please contact us using the details below.

Visit our webpage

www.iied.org/trade-offs-in-sustainable-intensification

Get in touch

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Project Materials

Food and Agriculture

Keywords:

Smallholder agriculture, climate change adaptation, action research

About our funders

The SITAM project is funded by the Sustainable Agricultural Intensification Research and Learning in Africa (SAIRLA) programme. The SAIRLA programme is funded by the UK Department for International Development and managed by WYG International Ltd and the Natural Resources Institute, University of Greenwich.

The SAIRLA programme seeks to generate evidence and design tools to enable governments, investors and other key actors to deliver more effective policies and investments in sustainable agricultural intensification that strengthen the capacity of poorer farmers, especially women and youth, to access and benefit from sustainable intensification in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia.

Funded by:



Managed by:



Photos

Cover: Zai technique demonstration, Burkina Faso (Credit: ANSD)

Page 2: FMNR demonstration, Ghana (Credit: CIKOD)

Page 3, left to right: Woman using compost, Burkina Faso (Credit: ANSD); Earth bunding, Ghana (Credit: CIKOD)

Page 5, left to right: Women watering vegetables, Burkina Faso (Credit: ANSD); One-on-one interview, Burkina Faso (Credit: IIED); Relay cropping, Malawi (Credit: TLC)