

Strengthening Rural Institutions Project Focal Point Persons Workshop, Limuru Kenya



The Strengthening Rural Institutions (SRI) Project conducted a Focal Point Persons Workshop at Brackenhurst Conference Centre, Limuru on 21st and 22nd February 2013. Three representatives of different stakeholder groups, one being the elected Focal Point Person (FPP), were invited from each of the six locations the Project operates in (Bungoma and Embu in Kenya, Kapchorwa and Masindi in Uganda, Pemba and Lushoto in Tanzania). In addition, the Workshop included various SRI Project members from the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF), ICRAF staff of country offices in Uganda and Tanzania, and the IFAD Tanzania Country Program Officer.

The Project Leader, Joseph Tanui, highlighted some of the present challenges rural institutions face in the region and the Project approach in addressing them. Dr. Jeremias Mowo, Regional Coordinator for East Africa at ICRAF, further explained the importance of working with rural institutions to achieve sustainable land management, and stressed the need for developing the capacity in rural institutions to adopt technologies and overcome project dependency. He emphasized that ICRAF is not a donor, as well as the need for the Project to link with other regional and local institutions and governmental agencies to ensure sustainability of the ongoing activities at the end of the Project.

As part of the process of getting inputs into the future plans of action for the Project, the Workshop participants undertook site specific work planning, with the help of a 'tool box', assisted by ICRAF representatives. Each site team selected activities group strengthening, identified partners, service providers and extension methods to provide those activities, and pinpointed the challenges and advantages posed by the context in which the Project operates. Finance officers Nancy Oseko and Samuel Omondi defined the role the ICRAF Finance department plays with respect to the Project. The participants also finalized draft site-level M&E plans highlighting the measures of progress for the respective sites, the composition of the M&E committee, selection of representatives, and frequency of reporting to ICRAF, which will be further refined, finalized, and distributed by the end of March 2013. Platform and Enterprise Developments were also discussed and the participants listed examples of the same according to their respective sites.

One of the key upcoming events in the project is an IFAD review mission slated to take place in June 2013, to evaluate progress that the Project has made, and to solicit feedback from key stakeholders. The progress made thus far under the Strengthening Rural Institutions project is a testament to the efforts of all the stakeholders involved. A true collaboration of knowledge, skills, and expertise, the success of the Project will therefore depend on continued efforts to ensure that the core objectives are met. As an action research project, there is always the need for further inputs and contributions from all stakeholders, and the Project team at ICRAF welcomes any such inputs and contributions at any stage of the Project.