



AGRICULTURE SUPPORT PROGRAMME (ASP)

PRINCIPLES AND PILLARS

PRINCIPLES

Underlying ASP 2003-2007 are 13 guiding Principles as follows:

- Principle 1:** **5 years.** Emphasising that ASP has a maximum 5 year life (subject to Principle 11 not having to be imposed).
- Principle 2:** **Sustainability.** Emphasising that sustainability of interventions is expected. ASP personnel, structures and financial resources are temporary and will be phased out and end after five years at the latest.
- Principle 3:** **ASP cannot offer credit/loan facilities.** Emphasising that ASP does not involve credit or loan facilities, however, the making of linkages to existing facilities is prioritized and shall be emphasized.
- Principle 4:** **Demand-driven, participatory, business focus.** Emphasising that ASP's basic approach is one of demand-driven, participatory development with a business focus. At the heart of this approach is the ASP Facilitation Cycle.
- Principle 5:** **Not starting from scratch.** Emphasising that a wealth of experience – both positive and negative – exists from previous phase projects (CFU, EEOA, LM&CF, MDSP and SHAPES).
- Principle 6:** **ASP Facilitation role.** Emphasising that ASP's role is one of facilitating and brokering linkages and offering assistance and support, to promote, stimulate and enhance participatory agriculture sector development.
- Principle 7:** **Farmer Contributions required.** Emphasising that ASP's basic approach requires ownership and commitment from participating farmers in the forms of time, initiative, inputs and monetary contributions.
- Principle 8:** **Tri-partite partnership.** Emphasising that ASP's approach focuses on a tripartite partnership that involves and at the end of the day depends on a) farmers, b) local authorities and c) the local private sector
- Principle 9:** **Lasting mutually beneficial relationships.** Emphasising that, through effective linking. ASP's aim is to create long term mutually beneficial relationships between "farming as a business" stakeholders.
- Principle 10:** **Written agreements:** Emphasising the business nature of farming. ASP will require the signing of written agreements between parties defining responsibilities and containing penalty clauses whenever obligations with financial implications are involved/incurred.

- Principle 11: Transparent walk away policy.** Emphasising that the Programme cannot stay in an area where non-rectifiable “killing factors” are found to exist. (“Killing factors” are existing negative conditions that are so severe and grave that they kill any possible chances of ASP’s success within stipulated rules and stipulated time frames. Examples could be no interest by farmers to participate in initial Facilitation Cycle activities or no farmer commitment later on in the process (ref. principle 3)). Walk-away will not be an abrupt unilateral decision suddenly taken by the Programme, but rather a decision arrived at openly and transparently.
- Principle 12: HIV/AIDS, gender and environment mainstreamed.** ASP views the pandemic of HIV/Aids as so serious and prevailing that it deserves appropriate responses as part of integral Programme interventions, therefore the issue of HIV/AIDS shall be crosscutting in all work. Similarly, gender and environment are strongly linked to sustainable development and therefore shall also be mainstreamed into the Programme.
- Principle 13: Learning incorporated.** Learning is important and therefore ASP shall make every effort to systematically learn lessons and gain experiences to a) stimulate its own self-improvement, and b) share with other/future agriculture sector projects and Programmes in Zambia (through ACP in the first instance).

Principles 1 and 2 emphasise that the Programme period is fixed and that making optimum use of the time available to achieve maximum results and ongoing sustainability must be built in from the beginning. Principles 3 to 11 emphasise the operational philosophy of the Programme and prescribe the way in which Programme staff will work (i.e., as facilitators not implementers). Principle 12 emphasises that the themes HIV/AIDS, gender and environment are part and parcel of the Programme. Principle 13 states that learning will be incorporated in ASP 2003-2007, i.e., it will be a learning Programme.

PILLARS

The Programme is constructed on 10 Pillars. These are outlined below:

Pillar 1: The Programme area. Comprises the geographic areas shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: ASP Programme area

Province	Districts with high agricultural potential	Districts with threatened resource base	Districts with high no. of female headed hhs
Central	Mkushi, Mumbwa	Kabwe, Kapiri Mposhi	Chibombo
Northern	Kasama, Mpika	Isoka, Mungwi	Mbala
Eastern	Chipata, Petauke	Chadiza, Katete	Nyimba
Southern	Choma, Monze	Gwembe, Livingstone	Kalomo

This includes the primary target group – small scale farmers – and other stakeholders of the “farming as a business” model (e.g. the private sector, marketers, local authorities at District and lower levels, non governmental organizations (NGOs), and community based organizations (CBOs)).

Pillar 2: Farmers’ concerns. Comprises the problems and concerns of Programme Area small-scale farmers that currently prevent them from achieving food security and/or growing and selling traditional and non traditional agricultural products at a profit. Problems relate not only to agricultural production (e.g. seeds and land management) but also to access to credit, understanding farming as a business, business skills, marketing opportunities, processing, favourable operating environments and HIV/Aids.

Pillar 3: Other stakeholders’ concerns. Comprising the sector – and marketing – related problems and concerns of other important stakeholders, that in conjunction with those of farmers currently prevent the “farming as a business” model from happening/working. The concerns will be many, but an important question is the one private/commercial sector stakeholders will ask. “What’s in it for me?” (The answer being – and what the Programme must strive to facilitate, linkages to make it happen for all concerned – “It’s good business”).

Pillar 4: ASP Principles. These comprise 13 guiding Principles for the ASP Programme.

Pillar 5: Past experience. It comprises points of departure for ASP interventions based on Land Management and seed sector experiences, methodologies and approaches from CFU, LM&CF, MDSP and SHAPES Projects of the past phase. It also includes the facilitation process, business focus and REEF concepts from the EEOA Programme.

In addition to identifying points of departure from previous phase projects, it is intended that other past and current sector experiences are incorporated into the Programme. Particularly through use of, wherever appropriate existing entities, resource bases and previously successful business linkages, e.g. MACO, ZNFU, the ongoing CFU and SHAPES Projects, training centres, NGOs that have been involved in sector activities before (e.g. PAM), ZAMSEED and seed associations, credit/loan schemes, out grower schemes, CLUSA, etc.

Pillar 6: Facilitation Cycle.

Comprising the heart of the ASP approach to promote demand driven, participatory development, with a business focus. Based on participatory methods, to work with stakeholders of the tripartite partnership (i.e. farmers, local authorities and the private sector) to realize the objectives of the Programme in a sustainable way.

It is intended that three cross-cutting themes HIV/AIDS, gender and environment be built into the Facilitation Cycle to ensure that relevant problems and appropriate responses within the scope of the Programme emerge. Sustainability of interventions resulting from the Facilitation Cycle after five years is expected; meaning that phasing out and ongoing sustainability are important aspects that must be addressed throughout the Facilitation Cycle work.

Pillar 7: Linking to existing entities. It should comprise all work and activities associated with facilitating linkages. Particularly: 1) between primary target small-scale farmers and other key stakeholders of the “farming as a business” model, 2) between primary target small-scale farmers and credit or loan facilities, 3) between various stakeholders making up the tripartite partnership and 4) between tripartite partnership stakeholders and other individuals, groups and organizations whose inputs and assistance are important for the success of ASP.

It is recommended that productive linkages for appropriately responding to HIV/AIDS, gender and environment issues raised during the facilitation cycle be made. It is also intended that linkages and complementarity with other Sida-supported projects/Programmes in other sectors (e.g., roads, health, education and HIV/Aids be sought).

Pillar 8: Assistance and Support. Comprising the additional technical assistance, development of methodologies and approaches, and financial support to supplement and further promote, stimulate and re-enforce the “farming as a business” model when linkages under pillar 6 are non-existent or not enough. Examples of assistance/support that can be offered under the Programme are: Information centres, demonstration plots and visits to them, participatory extension approaches, market days at various levels (organizing such days initially as a kick off measure), information fora between farmers and private sector interests, training and capacity building for key stakeholders, research and specific purpose funds, one off support, crop diversification, land management and conservation farming, sustainable production methods, seed associations, foundation seed, organic farming, active lobbying for small-scale farmer interests etc.

Included under this pillar is an infrastructure fund for small community level infrastructure projects.

Also included under this pillar is “external” advisory and institutional support engaged under the Programme, but not contracted directly under pillar 9 (Facilitation Set-up, ref. Management Unit (MU) and Facilitation Teams (FTs)). Engagement and supervision of all such support shall be responsibility of the MU of the Programme.

It is intended that assistance and support for appropriately responding to HIV/AIDS, gender and environment issues raised during the Facilitation Cycle be given under this pillar. Sustainability, being Principle 2 of the Programme, applies to interventions initiated under this pillar, as well as those initiated under pillar 6 (Facilitation Cycle).

There is a close link between this pillar and pillar 5 (Past experience) and principle 5 (Not starting from scratch), as this pillar reflects the point of departure for agricultural production experience and methodologies on which ASP can build further through provision of technical and financial assistance.

Pillar 9: Facilitation Set-up. Comprising the ASP implementation structure, to apply for the period 2003-2007. The structure is made up of eight Facilitation Teams (FTs), one Management Unit (MU) and one Steering Committee (PSC).

Pillar 10: Learning. ASP will be a learning Programme, which is principle 13 of the Programme. The pillar is set up with learning in mind, and the MU is specifically charged with ensuring that learning takes place. There are a number of learning opportunities envisaged under this pillar, including but not limited to the following:

- Comparison between methods and cross-comparison of achievements and costs in different category camps
- Comparison between methods and cross-comparison of achievements and costs in different category districts
- Comparison between methods and performance of Facilitation Teams
- Comparison between methods used by the Management Unit
- Comparison of different types of extension systems and services utilized
- Assessment of the importance and significance of such factors as initial commitment by local authorities, types of private sector opportunities initially available in a district, presence of other schemes/projects/Programmes, etc.
- Extraction of lessons learned/experiences gained related to environment, gender, empowerment, democracy, HIV/AIDS, etc.
- Evaluations of completed interventions and assessments of different methodologies and approaches tried/being tried.
- Periodic internal and external reviews/audits
- Annual and Mid Term reviews
- The Post – ASP 2003-2007 Evaluation
- Spontaneous multiplication of ASP approaches outside the Programme area
- Replication of ASP approaches in other projects/Programmes

It goes without saying that positive aspects of lessons learned/experiences shall be incorporated into the Programme, while negative experiences shall be mitigated/avoided once known.

Included under this pillar is the “external” advisory and institutional support engaged under the Programme, but not contracted directly under pillar 9 (Facilitation Set-up, ref. FTs and MU), to support the learning component of the Programme (carrying out baseline surveys, comparative studies, assessments, etc.). Engagement and supervision of all such support shall be the responsibility of the MU in the Programme.

It is important that the institutional memory is part of the learning process, in particular through the strengthening of local authorities and by bringing forward lessons learned into the Steering Committee and policy issues to the Policy and Planning branch of MACO (see also Principle 13 “Learning incorporated”).

Also included under this pillar is budgetary provision for consultants and other costs associated with Annual and Mid Term Reviews.

Pillars 1 through 5 are the starting points for the Programme, whereas Pillars 6 through 10 represent the Programme itself in terms of implementation. In particular, pillar 5 represents the positive and negative experiences, lessons learnt, and successful methods and approaches gained from the CFU, EEOA, LM&CF, MDSP and SHAPES Projects that ought to be incorporated into the Programme through assistance and support provided under pillar 8.

It is anticipated that the bulk of financial resources for the Programme will likely be spent in relation to Pillars 8 and 9. In terms of the Programme’s human resources (with the exception of time used for management, financial control and monitoring/reporting under pillar 9), contracted technical assistance will be most wholly devoted to activities falling under Pillars 6, 7, 8 and 10. It is anticipated that outsourced external support will by and large relate to work carried out under Pillars 8 and 10. Provision for consultants engaged for annual and mid-term reviews are included under pillar 10.

Incorporation of Key Themes and Concepts

A conscious effort has been made in Programme design to incorporate and mainstream a number of key themes and concepts, e.g., HIV/AIDS, gender and environment, as well as address typical development cooperation concerns, e.g., sustainability, accountability and parallel structures.

The Principles and Pillars are important cornerstones of the Programme. The intention of specifying them clearly from the beginning is that all stakeholders of the Programme at all levels understand what the Programme is about, what it can and cannot do, and who bears what commitments, obligations and responsibilities at what points in time. Because the process is transparent, the intention is that everyone makes the best use of opportunities the Programme provides and does their part to make them sustainable and successful within the time frame allowed.