

Spate Irrigation for Rural Growth and Poverty Alleviation Project – Ethiopia

Background: Spate irrigation is getting focus in Ethiopia largely due to frequent crop failure in mid-lands where rainfall is the only source of moisture for agriculture. The fact that water is the centre to sustain life and settlement of nomads at low-land areas is also causing the spate resource development in such marginalized areas to get more attention. The request from the governmental and non-governmental implementing organizations for training of their implementers so that the knowledge gap for harnessing the spate resources can be filled – is also an indicative that this resource is getting focus.

This makes the *Spate Irrigation for Rural Growth and Poverty Alleviation Project* to play great roll in alleviating poverty and bringing about growth for the rural people. Most importantly the project will be timely in supporting the developmental effort and curbing the current tragedy at the Horn of Africa which is reported to be the worst drought in the last 60 years.

A. Project goal and objectives

The project endeavor to feed its citizens and sustain life at the mid-land and low-lands of the country. Under the project, four work plans are being implemented to play great roll in alleviating poverty and bringing about rural growth in four-year duration (2011 to 2015). The objective of the project is to strengthen spate irrigation network in the country and to develop, manage and share knowledge among spate resource implementers so that to build the capacity of the country in general, and of the rural area and/or low-lands in particular.

B. Major activities and achievements

The project has four main work plans. One of these is Work Plan – 1: Strengthening the Spate

Irrigation Network. Under this work plan data base of members of the country Spate Network Specialists was developed. The National workshop has been used to get and register full contact details of 22 spate irrigation network members.



Figure 1: Participants of the workshop and now registered members of Ethiopia Spate Network.

Work plan-2: Undertaking Innovative Action Research Projects. Under this work plan reconnaissance survey was made to prioritize and select research topics. Eventually, two research topics that make their case study at Bililo and Boru Dodota Spate Irrigation Schemes were selected. The research topic on Bililo Scheme is “Problem identification and rehabilitation of Bililo Spate Irrigation Scheme” and on that of Boru Dodota Scheme is “Optimum operation of flow control structures to minimize the effect of sedimentation in the conveyance system”.



Figure 2: Sediments in the conveyance system of Boru Dodota Spate Irrigation Schemes

Work plan-3 is on Capacity building, Continuous Knowledge Development and Dissemination. Under this work plan, training workshop on spate irrigation as part of River

basin water management was undertaken. The workshop was held at Adama, Ethiopia from 8th to 14th February 2011. Including the self sponsored one, 22 participants among whom two females were participated in the workshop.



Figure 3: Participants of the workshop, 8th to 14th February 2011 at Adama, Ethiopia.

Lectures, discussion and site visit were made at the workshop for capacitating and knowledge development of participants from Universities and other higher education institutions, government organizations and relevant private companies. Development of spate irrigation course/module syllabus and commitment by at least one institution to incorporate the spate course into its curriculum is key outcomes of the training. In addition, a handbook detailing among others the syllabus for a Joint Haramaya University - UNESCO-IHE MSc programme on Agricultural Water Management in collaboration with UNESCO-IHE staff was prepared.



Figure 4: Site visit (Hydraulically regulating cross-drainage structure at Main canal of Boru Dodota Spate Irrigation scheme)

Work plan-4: Expert pool support to IFAD projects and country programmes. With this respect frequent discussion was made been the Spate network experts and IFAD officials in Ethiopia. It has been reached in general consent that practical training for IFAD experts and consultancy services on the low-lands and other parts of the country where spate irrigation is being implemented will be given.



Figure 5: Site visit (Headwork at Bililo Small Scale Spate Irrigation)