An assessment of livelihood transitions triggered through Conservation Agriculture in different vulnerable productions systems in Central Mozambique

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Abstract

About 80% of the population in Mozambique are subsistence farmers who live in rural areas and depend on unsustainable exploitation of natural resources for their livelihoods. The population is poor with more than 70% living on less than US$1 per day. Many of these people are food insecure as their harvest cannot sustain them until the end of the next agricultural season. Agricultural scientists have suggested Conservation Agriculture as an alternative system to replace rotational cultivation, fallow periods and other "resource mining" systems with a huge potential to improve livelihoods. Schultz (1964) insisted that the principal source of growth in agricultural production in modern agriculture was reproducible resources through services of nature, land and water, would be essential for sustaining agricultural production, with the sources of growth based on new knowledge and new technology. Although the concept of conservation agriculture has been introduced by some organizations carrying out interventions in the area, the adoption by farmers is slow and the impact on livelihoods is yet to be realized. This study will use social science research methodology to investigate the problems and challenges faced by adopters and non-adopters of Conservation Agriculture in Manica, Sofala and Tete provinces of Mozambique. The research will analyze the link between the CA and SL and how this linkage contributes better standards of living and increased welfare among inhabitants. Results from this research will also help in designing appropriate agricultural policies that could accelerate innovation and rural development.

Research Objectives

This section of our proposal outlines the research objectives and questions central to this study. The main objective of this study is to assess livelihood transitions and contributions that have been triggered by conservation agriculture among adopters of this technology. In order to address this main objective the research will seek to answer the following five objectives:

(a) An assessment of conservation agriculture as a sustainable technology in Southern Africa.
(b) An assessment of Livelihood transitions or trajectories made through conservation agriculture in Mozambique.
(c) Identification of factors affecting livelihood transitions among Mozambican smallholder farmers practicing conservation agriculture.
(d) To analyze contributions (livelihood outcomes) of conservation agriculture to Livelihoods in Sofala, Monica and Tete provinces of Mozambique.
(e) An assessment of the existing policy framework and its support for positive Livelihoods transitions and contributions among farmers in vulnerably production systems in Mozambique.

In sum, this research seeks to assess the extent to which conservation agriculture has impacted on the livelihoods in Mozambique and whether this scenario can be replicated in other countries in the region.