

Præsentation af projekt i Sierra Leone, Afrika

Project title: Increasing groundnut production and processing in Kambia district

Project highlight

This project will be established in Kambia and will directly benefit 1,000 farmers and number of indirect beneficiaries will be above 6,000 people, most of whom are women and children. The project will contribute to the following;

- Introducing cooperative approach to groundnut farming
- Farming for business - Increased groundnut production based on environmentally friendly farming methods,
- Supporting farmers to market their produce (groundnut) for greater profitability to project.
- Introduction of industrial-scale groundnut processing system in the region.

Total cost of this intervention for 1 year (2021) is (budget details in attached document)

Background

Kambia district is located northwestern Sierra Leone. The southern part of the district towards the coastal areas is well drained with fresh water streams and brackish water on its coastal areas. The southern area is very suitable for fishing and large-scale rice cultivation and vegetable. The ecology in the northern part of the districts is different from the south. Although the north has inland valley swamps and streams, they are seasonal, making the region drier compared to the south. The northern part of the districts is therefore suitable for groundnut cultivation, making Kambia district one of the highest producers of groundnut in the country. The variety most suitable for cultivation in the district is *arachis hypogea*, as it grows well in the semi-arid nature of the district. Groundnut is therefore the major livelihood of most households in the district and with support (viable seeds, improved agronomic techniques and extension) to growers,

groundnut can be produced in large quantities for value addition and for processing into groundnut oil and paste/butter.

The cultivating season for most groundnut farmers in the region is April/May to be harvested in July/August. Farmers who have access to inland valley swamps also cultivate the second cropping season in October but this second season is practiced by only a few farmers.

Aim/objectives and targets

The aim of the project is to cultivate groundnut on a large-scale for value addition and for processing into products like groundnut paste/butter and cooking oil. The intervention will therefore lay the foundation for farmers to organize themselves into cooperatives and grow more for commercial purposes for increased income in the area. The specific objectives of the intervention are as follows.

- 1,000 farmers organized into 50 cooperatives or production groups,
- Improved nutrition for 3,000 children and pregnant and lactating mothers,
- 1,000 farmer households have secured employment and increased incomes through access to improved farming and marketing techniques.
- 1 groundnut processing center established for value addition and groundnut processing in Kambia district.

Intervention and implementation strategy

This project will be divided into two phases, namely, phase 1 (groundnut production) and 2 (value addition and groundnut processing). This section will discuss groundnut cultivation and production phase. From the objectives above, this proposed intervention introduces a cooperative farmer approach to farming, provides employment and increased income for 1,000 farming households and increases access to improved nutrition for children and women, especially pregnant and lactating mothers. This intervention therefore initiates farming for commercialization and value addition, rather than the ongoing subsistence which always leaves the farmer in debt at the end of the harvest season. To achieve this aspiration, project implementation will adopt the following strategies.

- **Mobilize farmers and organize them into groups** – In the early to mid-1990s, some farmers in Kambia districts were organized into farming groups by a non-governmental organization and supported with improved seeds (groundnut and rice) varieties. The scheme operated to encourage farmers to develop seed banks in their communities and to ensure that every farmer had access to seeds for cultivation at the planting season. Although the scheme, especially the produce was destroyed by the civil war (1991 -2002), it left farmers with skills for cooperative farming and commercialization. Farmers therefore acquired some basic skills and experience to participate in the proposed project. Moreover, they need financing for seeds, tools, and training on emerging farming techniques (agronomic and post-harvest practices) and environmental considerations in farming. 1,000 farming households will therefore be mobilized and organized into cooperatives.
- **The cooperative and seed revolving approach for farming** – The cooperative or group approach will be adopted for groundnut farming in this project. As stated above, 1,000 farmers will be organized into 50 cooperatives of 20 members each across the district. Each cooperative will have a management structure with key functions like chairman or leader, secretary, treasurer, auditor, etc. Cooperatives will receive training in group management, record keeping (with basic numeracy) and conflict resolution. Every cooperative group will receive 20 bushels of seed groundnut to be cultivated as a group.

Based on local yield predictions, it is estimated that 20 bushels of seed groundnut will yield an average of 120 bushels per cooperative at harvest time (August/September). All 50 cooperatives will therefore have a total combined yield of 6,000 bushels, which is equivalent to 150,000 kg of unshelled groundnut. For the first year, cooperatives are expected to return a one off 20% of what they received in seeds. Based on these yield assumptions, the following calculations are made in the table below.

No	Variable	Cooperative group (1)	50 cooperative groups
	Total groundnut yield (bushels)	120	6,000
	Less 20% return to project for processing	20	1,200
	Reserve with cooperative	100	4,800
	Less seed reserve for the next season planting season	20	1,200
	Balance available produce for farmers to share	80	4,000

From the table above, each farmer cooperative will reserve enough seeds for the next planting season and will not have to worry about how and where to procure seeds. In addition, each cooperative will have a balance of 80 bushels (4,000 bushels) to either share or sell and share the proceeds among members. They will however be encouraged to sell proceeds to the project at the prevailing market price, rather than the low farm gate price paid by middlemen.

- **Gender and youth considerations** - This project will ensure that 50% of targets are women and youths. Although some women and youths may have limited access to arable land, advocacy action will be undertaken by project staff and local authorities to ensure that disadvantaged targets acquire land for this project.
- **Procure inputs** – The deteriorating economic situation in the country had affected rural communities to the extent they lack the required capital to procure improved and viable seeds and tools. This intervention will support farmers with improved seeds and the tools required for productive cultivation. These inputs will be delivered at the clusters or in their homes.

Farmers in the region often sell their produce in the primary form, which brings them very little income. In addition, middle men often buy harvested groundnut from farmers at farmgate prices which brings little or no profit and keeps the farmers in a perpetual state of indebtedness and

Groundnut processing – Value addition and processing groundnut is the second phase of this project. In addition to groundnut secured from farmers, more seeds will be procured from other farmers elsewhere to feed the processing plant. The project will endeavor to pay prices above those paid by middle men. Groundnut paste is nutritious and is a major ingredient of the diet of most households in Kambia district and other parts of the Sierra Leone.

Though groundnut is important for household income and diet, it becomes a scarce commodity in Kambia district a few months after harvest as farmers pay off production loans and sell surpluses. The groundnut processing initiative will aspire to package the paste in various sizes for sale to the community. The processing team will also develop a system to process farmer's own groundnut for an affordable fee.

Monitoring and reporting – The project will be staffed by 9 personnel as follows – project director (PD), project coordinator (PC), admin & finance officer, extension officer (2), drivers (2) and security guards (2). The PD will oversee policy and administrative issues, while the PC will be more involved in field operations, supervising the extension officers and consultants. The PM will also prepare and submit to the PD and partners. Monthly meetings will be held to plan activities and receive reports for the previous month.

It is expected that the partner will make two visits, for monitoring at planting time and evaluation in October 2021 for groundnut processing and interacting with cooperatives.

The local partner of the project – This project proposal is presented by Honourable Foday Mario Kamara, who is an entrepreneur and model farmer in Kambia districts. Honourable Foday Kamara currently have 100 acres of oil palm and 20 acres of acacia tree plantations in Kambia district. Although processing of oil palm is still done by local methods, Honourable Foday Kamara's plantation is a major supplier of palm oil to households in Kambia district.

The proposer therefore has the skills required to be a reliable partner for the implementation of the proposed project, which will eventually introduce mechanized groundnut processing in the northern area of Sierra Leone.