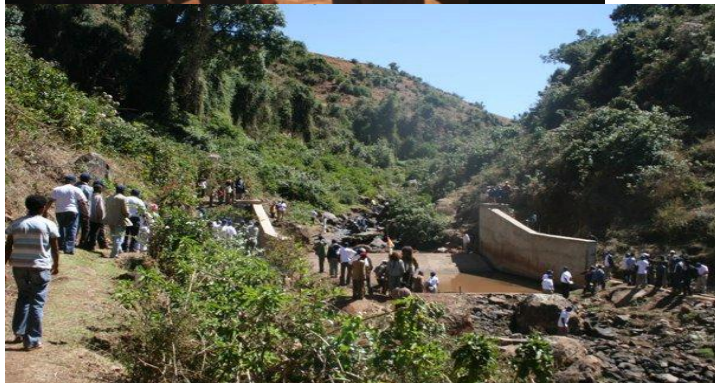


A story of partnership

FAO HANDS OVER IRRIGATION, STORAGE AND DAIRY BUSINESS FACILITIES TO ARSI ZONE COMMUNITIES



It was a day of celebration as FAO handed over irrigation and storage facilities to the Digelu Tijo Woreda. The people of Asella and surrounding towns in Arsi zone came in droves, many of them astride horses, and some of them wearing the traditional Oromo regalia for the occasion.

Eight woredas in Arsi zone had three good reasons to celebrate in early 2011 as FAO handed over to the communities the Mankula irrigation scheme, nine small-scale milk collection, processing and marketing units, and two diffused lights storage (DLS) facilities. The event was the culmination of the strong partnership between the communities and FAO through the years. FAO Coordinator for Subregional

Office for Eastern Africa and Representative in Ethiopia, to AU and ECA, Castro Camarada noted: “FAO and this community have a long history. I remember visiting this project site four years ago when I was still FAO Representative in Kenya. I would love to be back someday and see that the communities have prospered from this project and have made the best use of these facilities.”

Under the FAO “Crop Diversification and Marketing Development Project,” the Mankula irrigation scheme was upgraded and now has the potential to irrigate 120 hectares of land (previously, it reached only 50 hectares of land). Total cost of upgrading was 5.1 million Birr. It is now ready for the production of different vegetable crops, especially potatoes, directly benefiting 240 households. The Mankula traditional irrigation scheme was originally developed by the Arsi zone communities by diverting a spring a few years ago. Its upgrade was initiated by the community and Arsi zone water resource office, and was supported by FAO. The FAO project is looking to upgrade four other irrigation schemes in the zone.

In anticipation of greater production resulting from the upgraded irrigation scheme, the project also supported the construction of DLS facilities in two peasant associations (PAs), namely Mankula and Tite waji, for proper storage of potato seed tubers produced by farmers. The DLS will help maintain seed quality over a longer period of time (up to eight months in higher altitudes). The two DLS facilities were constructed with a total cost of 81,000 birr, of which 18.5 percent was contributed by the community in the form of materials and labour.

Lastly, FAO inaugurated nine milk collection, processing and marketing units constructed in the five project woredas (Tiyo, D/Tijo, Munessa, L/Bilbilo and H/wabe) of Arsi zone. The centers will help improve milk collection and facilitate improved selling arrangements for producers’ associations in the area. The construction costs (862,905.70 birr) were split evenly between FAO and the community (with 52 percent covered by FAO and the other 48 percent by the community). The project also supplied milk handling and processing equipment to the units.

*The **Crop Diversification and Marketing Development Project** is implemented by FAO in collaboration with Ethiopia’s Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and Oromiya Regional State in Arsi zone . It is financed by the Government of Italy and Catalan Development Agency. The project, which started in 2006, is now at its second phase, which is scaling up of well-demonstrated activities. The project focuses on strengthening commercialization of smallholder farms in areas with recognized market potential by providing technology that could boost production and productivity sustainably.*