**Timor-Leste**

**Agricultural Rehabilitation, Economic Growth and Natural Resources Management**

**APPROACH**

Participatory rural appraisals (PRA) were carried out in January 2004 with communities in Venilale (high elevation), in Garinai (mid-level elevation) and in Seicai (low elevation) by a team consisting of MAFF staff and social and biophysical scientists from the University of Hawaii. From information gathered during the PRA, plans and activities were implemented for a two year period.

Initial efforts have been focused in the Seicai watershed of the Baucau district with rural communities situated at low, medium and high elevations.

**PROBLEMS**

- Widespread food shortage, low soil fertility
- Low income (< $400/year), high unemployment
- Severe soil degradation

**FOCUS**

- Increase agricultural productivity and food security
- Diversify and intensify crop production to generate new income and employment opportunities
- Improve watershed productivity and sustainability through the adoption of sound natural resource management practices

**OUTCOMES**

- **Agricultural productivity**
  - MAFF staff diagnoses soil fertility deficiencies (nitrate, ammonia, phosphorus, potassium, pH) across the country with portable Soil Test Kit
  - Fertilizer recommendations generated from PDA-software based on NuxMas algorithm
  - MAFF staff trains rice farmers on method that produces 1-2 tons/ha more rice without added inputs

- **Income generation**
  - Relationship between crop/livestock production and biophysical/economic factors were studied to predict the feasibility of income generating businesses from site-specific information
  - MAFF staff assists local farmer groups to produce and market vegetables, chickens, goats, fish, bamboo, and candlewax

- **Natural resource management**
  - MAFF produces healthy tree seedlings for distribution to local communities
  - MAFF encourages farmers to enclose livestock and use tree fodder for feed
  - MAFF currently producing soil resource map for sustainable land-use strategies

**WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

Agricultural intensification that leads to income and employment generation without compromising environmental quality. The participation of the farming community is essential. Past efforts show the key to success is to promote practices that are economically beneficial for the adopters. Training and institutional capacity building components that promote the application of a participatory approach offer farm households' options and enable them to exercise choice in attaining sustainable land management

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Project website: [http://tlls.hawaii.edu/tl](http://tlls.hawaii.edu/tl)