

## Strengthening Agricultural Water Efficiency and Productivity

# Saving water and improving livelihoods by enhancing agricultural water efficiency and productivity in Africa



### Country/Region

Burkina Faso, Morocco, Uganda

### Partner

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), Agricultural Water Partnership for Africa

### Background information

The agricultural sector is the biggest user of water: it accounts for 70% of global freshwater withdrawal. To avert a global water crisis, agriculture has to produce more food with less water.

### Project objectives

Agricultural water management is improved in target countries and knowledge is mainstreamed in policy and practice on the African and global level.

### Beneficiaries

Smallholder farmers, extension agents, water use planners and decision makers

### Costs

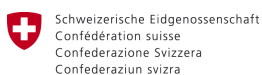
CHF 3,850,000

### Duration

12.2014 – 12.2018

### Contact

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Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Enhancing agricultural water efficiency and productivity is imperative to mitigate water scarcity and to increase food security and income of small scale farmers in the developing world. Implemented through FAO and the Agricultural Water Partnership for Africa, this project will establish evidence based policy, good practice and investment in sustainable agricultural water management in Burkina Faso, Morocco, Uganda and globally by linking catalytic activities to national and regional policy processes.

### Agricultural water management in Africa

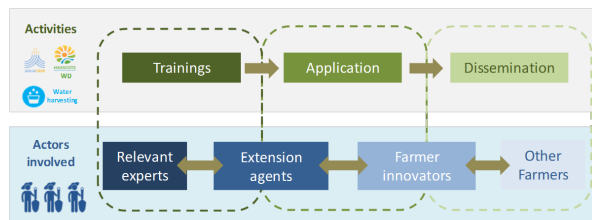
Africa is a rural continent where agriculture plays an important role in its social and economic development. Notwithstanding the importance of the sector, productivity levels are far from reaching its full potential. In rainfed areas, reliance on irregular and unreliable rainfall is one of the major causes behind the low crop yields that characterize African agriculture. In irrigated areas, the lack of modern irrigation systems and the bad state of infrastructure lead to considerable water losses. This, coupled with inadequate farming management practices, has resulted in low water productivity and use efficiency in both irrigated and rainfed areas.

Improved Agriculture Water Management (AWM) can play a key role in increasing water use efficiency and productivity. Within rainfed agriculture, AWM includes the more efficient use of soil moisture, developing water harvesting capacity and using supplementary irrigation techniques. For irrigated agriculture, improved AWM aims at reducing water losses from drainage and non-productive evaporation.

### Mainstreaming improved agricultural water management in policy and practice

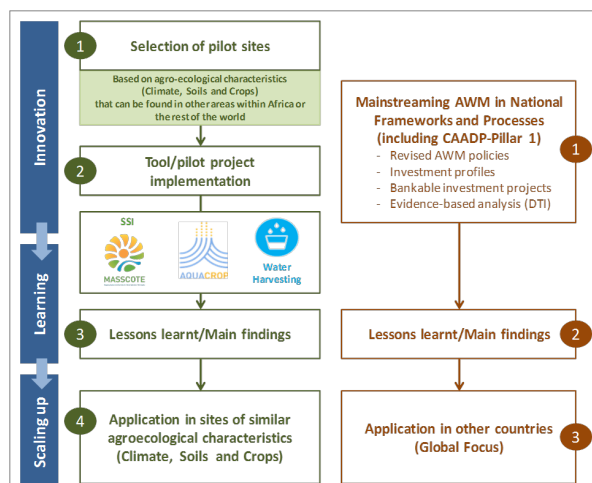
The project aims at reducing hunger and poverty in three African countries (Burkina Faso, Morocco and Uganda) by focusing on the improvement of AWM and mainstreaming AWM in national frameworks and processes. The project is in line with the objectives of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) of promoting agriculture growth on the African continent and in particular with its Pillar 1, that aims to extend the area under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems.

The intervention approach is to work closely with relevant government officials, extension agents, research institutions and farmer representatives:



On the practice level, relevant experts and extension agents in related ministries as well as farmers' representatives are trained on the use of tools to enhance water productivity (AquaCrop), tools to improve the performance of small scale irrigation systems (MASSCOTE) and methods to enhance water harvesting. The project has a case study approach to apply the tools and methods on pilot sites. Once improvements on crop water productivity, water irrigation efficiency and water harvesting are attained, lessons learned and key results will be disseminated to reach a wide community of small scale farmers.

On the policy level, national water audits are conducted: This detailed analysis of agricultural water use and other water uses gives countries a baseline to adapt water policies and improve water management plans. Findings of the case studies and the water audits will result into revised AWM policies and also feed into the development of investment profiles and the formulation of bankable investment projects. This intervention and scaling-up strategy is shown in the figure below:



Additional information:  
[www.fao.org/nr/water/agwa](http://www.fao.org/nr/water/agwa)