



Policy Advocacy in Post-Harvest Management

Lessons from the Grain Post-Harvest Loss Prevention (GPLP) Project
in Tanzania (2013 – 2020)



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Key Messages

- *The GPLP project has been instrumental in the development of the National Post-Harvest Management Strategy.*
- *Policy advocacy work on post-harvest management has been a multi-stakeholder affair conducted in a participatory manner*
- *The project's close links with farmers, agro-dealers and further stakeholders in the field allowed getting much needed insight and creating the evidence required for successful policy advocacy.*

1. Background

The Grain Post-Harvest Loss Prevention (GPLP) project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has been implemented between 2013 and 2020 by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation and its partners in four regions of the Central Corridor of Tanzania. GPLP aimed to increase food security and incomes of farming households through improving post-harvest management (PHM), mainly post-harvest practices (PHP) and technologies (PHT) for maize. The project applied a market systems development approach and facilitated the improvement of policy framework conditions on PHM; the latter with the aim that: the Tanzania Post-Harvest Management Platform and District Forums are engaged in PHM, policy dialogue and advocacy; its national PHM strategy and district by-laws are introduced and implemented; and the Ministry of Agriculture leads effective co-ordination amongst PHM stakeholders.

2. Key lessons learned

- 1) **Start from what you have to what you want.**
The PHM policy advocacy pathway taken by GPLP was shaped by the conditions the project found within the PHM policy context. Since the

Agricultural Act was just completed in 2013, there was no room to immediately review this Agricultural Act 2013. However, the stakeholders were able to push on with the PHM advocacy agenda in 2015, focusing on a national level strategy on PHM for a period of ten years. The draft of the National PHM Strategy (NPHMS) and PHM by-laws were completed by 2018 and success was reaped when the NPHMS was approved in July 2019. A policy-making process that includes the implementors themselves ensures focus and ownership. GPLP used this approach during the development of the by-laws and NPHMS. Staff from the government were key drafters of the document making the process long but worth as it created the required ownership.

- 2) **Create awareness and ensure participatory evidence-based decisions.** The GPLP project was extensively engaged in facilitating PHM awareness and capacity building amongst a wide range of stakeholders. Awareness creation and training formed the base for an enabling policy environment. Farmers and key actors within the communities in the targeted districts were made aware of PHM matters, and as a

result, became more involved in contributing to the policy processes. GPLP observed that during awareness and education sessions, addressing communities had a wider reach and larger effect than focusing on small groups only. This further facilitated the approval process of the by-laws in the project areas. Farmers demanded the approval of the PHM by-laws to ensure smooth enforcement. In addition, the project facilitated and was involved in gathering research findings on PHM matters by engaging higher level education and research institutions. The collected evidence contributed to making well-informed decisions and well-researched propositions concerning PHM. It also contributed to making compelling presentations to decision makers. Any future project involving in policy advocacy should consider investing in evidence-creating activities such as research and analysis, gathering on-farm information, farmers' experiences and expert testimonies, and documenting them.

- 3) **Ensure multi-stakeholder involvement to create ownership.** GPLP's contribution to the NPHMS included calling for meetings and inviting stakeholders involved in PHM from different backgrounds. Besides government officials at both national and local level, wholesalers and distributors of agricultural inputs and commodities including PHT, research & development officers, extension workers, policy makers and scholars were approached. Such multi-stakeholder involvement allowed coordinating the national PHM policy advocacy efforts through the Tanzania Post-harvest Management Platform (TPMP). GPLP alimented the meetings of the PHM Policy Advocacy forum which led to the TPMP. Following a collaborative approach where everyone had a role to play was crucial to increase ownership of the process. GPLP has been successful in setting up a process that will continue beyond the life of the project, with focus on the implementation of the NPHMS plan. As part of this process GPLP recognised that special attention must be put on monitoring and follow-up of the decision-making authority to ensure they are well informed on the policy advocacy progress and the intended outcomes.
- 4) **Ensure the policy development process to flow by taking swift and adequate decisions.** Playing a facilitative role as a project team requires well thought through strategies. Complicated and delicate implementation roles and positions of partners can pose a challenge.

Sensitive key tasks within the policy advocacy process should therefore be shared by more than one stakeholder to spread the responsibility and improve efficiency and goal delivery. In addition, district legal officers have a crucial role to play in developing district level legal processes such as developing the PHM by-laws. To reduce the impact of frequent government staff turnover which affects this crucial role, they could be paired up with an assistant to enable them to carry out their tasks efficiently.



- 5) **Knock on the right door.** GPLP experiences showed that right from the beginning, it is a must to engage top decision-makers from the private and public sector. The persons who will approve the policy, strategy and by-laws must be there from the beginning. Constant changes in the decision-making unit means continuous pitching of the whole process. Finding mechanisms to keep key decision makers involved and informed is paramount to making similar initiatives a success. Policy advocacy needs strong allies; something GPLP managed to secure and which allowed entering into PHM policy advocacy. The project has chosen key partners who were well established and well placed in different networks. For policy advocacy political networks and links are crucial.
- 6) **Adhere to a structured process with clear roles and milestones.** One issue that emerged was that the process of policy advocacy is a long process, not necessarily contained to the limits

of a project period. Different factors contribute to the length of such a process. Setting timelines and signing memorandums with implementing partners were not sufficient to control the outcome. Following governmental processes, working closely with the public sector, engaging the farming community, spreading awareness, and avoiding taking shortcuts and skipping steps were important strategies of GPLP to achieve the desired outcome and more sustainable results.

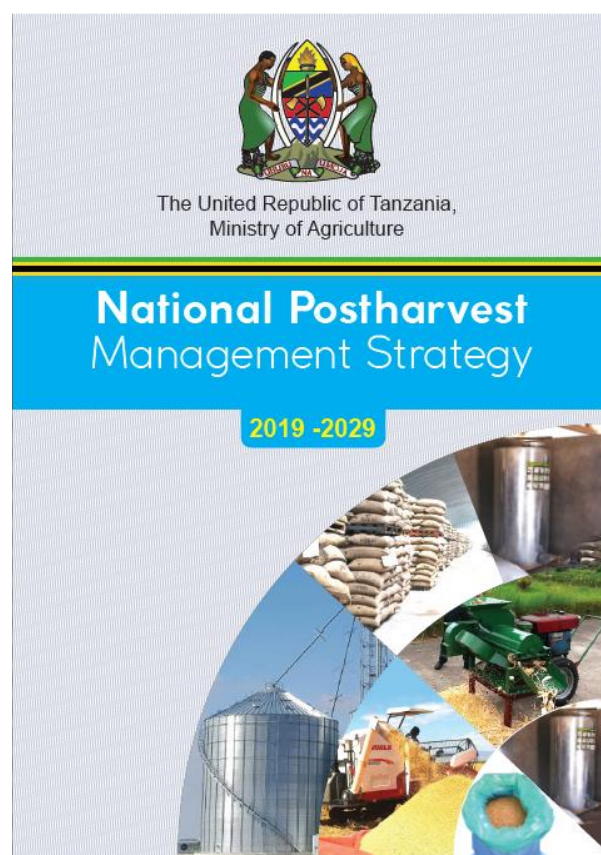
- 7) **Secure the required resources.** Policy advocacy needs resources; from financial resources to fund meetings and awareness creation activities to human resources to implement policy activities. Engaging in cost-sharing wherever possible, the GPLP project experienced the challenges during implementation of this multi-stakeholder policy advocacy process, when cost-sharing has not been agreed on from the onset. Later, when it was difficult to convince and agree on cost-sharing by public and private partners, the project decided to carry out some of the activities in a more direct way involving its own staff. Though not the most ideal way, the frequent interaction with governmental partners ensured that the policy process moved on. Coster Karoli, artisan from Kongwa district showing small metal silo for demonstration

3. Conclusions

The Government approved the National Post-Harvest Management Strategy in 2019 and several district level post-harvest management by-laws in 2019 and 2020, and their implementation started. Having been involved throughout the entire strategy development process, the GPLP project played a considerable role in these achievements. Yet, questions will remain: Will PHM continue enjoying the attention it requires? Will there be continuous allocation and disbursement of funds at the national and local levels to ensure the implementation of this strategy and by-laws? Will the established district forums as well as the Tanzania Post-harvest Management Platform be sustainable and take up their assigned roles? Nevertheless, to start with, the

required enabling policy environment for PHM has been created with support from the GPLP project.

GPLP contributed to a large extent in improving the PHM system environment, as the project allowed for a diverse stakeholder engagement. It got stakeholders paying attention and discussing PHM policy advocacy issues, and it was able to solicit political will. GPLP contributed significantly to the sustainability of PHM on the political agenda. Formation and registration of national and district platforms that are solely dedicated to PHM policy and advocacy mean this initiative will be ongoing in years to come. GPLP has also enabled the targeted communities, the districts as well as the country to adjust their focus and concentrate not only on agricultural matters involving productivity and production, but also on post-harvest loss and post-harvest management matters.



A cover page for the approved NPHMS 2019-2029

You may also be interested in the other GPLP CAPEX briefs: Access to Finance Model to Boost Investment in Improved On-farm Post-harvest Storage Technologies / The Post-Harvest Management Business Model / Introducing a New Grain Storage Technology in Tanzania - The Case of Metal Silos at Household Level / Adoption of Improved Post-Harvest Management Practices and Technologies in the Central Corridor of Tanzania. They can be found under <https://www.helvetas.org/en/tanzania>