



Effective Grain Storage For Improved Livelihoods II

Duration: 4 Years (2012-2015)

Budget: CHF 7.1m

Implementing Agency: CIMMYT
Nairobi

Partners: Private Sector,
governments, SADC and local NGOs

Project location: Kenya, Malawi,
Zambia and Zimbabwe

Contacts

**Swiss Cooperation Office
South Africa (Pretoria)**
165 Lynnwood Road, Ozmik House
P.O. Box 1964, Brooklyn Square 0075
Pretoria, South Africa
E-Mail: pretoria@sdc.net
Internet: [www.swiss-cooperation.
Admin.ch/southernafrica/](http://www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/southernafrica/)

Current Situation

Lack of appropriate grain storage technologies and management causes on an average 25% grain losses. Because of lack of awareness and access to appropriate technologies, farmers end up selling their maize soon after harvest to avoid losses, only to buy it back at more than twice the price later in the season to meet their subsistence needs. This results in a continual poverty trap. For maize, storage losses are estimated to exceed \$100 million per annum in the eight major maize producing Southern African countries. In most of Africa, grains with a value estimated at over US\$ 2 billion are lost after harvest annually. Large-scale grain storage capacity is increasing in Southern African countries, principally through government and private sector funding, but for the smaller producers and especially women, technology for keeping their production safe is limited. The main contributors to food loss in the region are spoilage and insect infestation along the value chain. Investing in reducing post harvest losses has the potential to save household food reserves that would otherwise be lost. In the SADC region the policy and institutional environment is varied, and often not conducive to allow coordinated responses and private sector to invest in sustainable post harvest solutions. Due to this lack of post harvest solutions, smallholders farmers therefore continue to use traditional methods of storage that are not effective in controlling insect infestation, rodents, mice, rotting from humidity and other means of grain losses. This perpetuates food insecurity and entraps the affected populations in poverty.

Swiss Objectives

The overall objective is that post harvest losses are reduced and food security and incomes for target farmers' households are improved through informed policy, capacity building and appropriate technology. This project will deliver 3 outcomes:

1. Target farmers increase uptake of metal silo technology building on the lessons learnt in Phase 1
2. Post harvest policies in Southern Africa are conducive and harmonised in the long term.
3. Poor farmers, especially women use alternative technologies to store food crops. These will essentially reduce the food insecurity for the households accessing the technologies.

What will change?

Several changes are expected as a result of this project. Firstly, changes in the current policy environment will be introduced in order to remove the policy related barriers to investments and innovations in providing technological solutions to post harvest losses. These include adjustments in tariffs for post harvest related raw materials and other incentives that encourage new agricultural investments. This will encourage innovation for post harvest solutions. Secondly, targeted populations will improve their household food security. By securely storing maize for a long period of time, the targeted households' food security situation will change in several ways:

- They have more grain available for household use by saving it from loss
- Households do not have to sell their grain immediately after harvest to avoid post harvest losses, and therefore they can save on income that they would have bought the food back later at higher prices.
- Selling off their surplus at a date much later after harvest to get a maximum price for their grain.

Poor women in target areas will access super grain plastic bags that have been shown to be effective in controlling insect infestation in maize through suffocation as no oxygen can get in when securely fastened. Women, who are traditionally responsible for household food security in the region, will use these bags to store grain longer and reduce their food insecure period between harvests. A single bag can carry 50kg of grain for upto 5 months, saving the household food that would have otherwise have been sold immediately after harvest, or would have been destroyed by insects and other means of post harvest loss.