

Afar Soil Rehabilitation Project (ASRP)

Enhancing resilience to environmental change and degradation of natural resources

The challenge

The lowland Afar Region is one of the least developed regions in Ethiopia. It has a population of almost 1.8 million people, over half of whom live below the absolute poverty line.

Annual temperatures range from 25°C to 50°C. Half of the soils is categorized as marginal; the rest is largely dry savannah. Rainfall hardly exceeds 300 mm per year and is highly variable, both in quantity and geographical distribution.

Economically and socially, the people of Afar Region depend almost exclusively on pastoralism. This is currently coming under pressure, as livelihoods are mainly based on herds of camels, cows, sheep and goats, whose sources of fodder and water are increasingly at risk due to degrading natural resources and encroaching invasive plants.

Recurring droughts and heavy floods, which erode the land as much as vegetation, are continually on the rise. Local population lacks the capacity and adaptation mechanisms to respond to these changes in climate and of their environment.

Our approach

The Afar Soil Rehabilitation Project (ASRP) is part of the Strengthening Drought Resilience in Arid and Semi-Arid Lowlands Programme (SDR-ASAL).

It is also part of the Global Programme Soil Protection and Rehabilitation for Food Security within the Special Initiative 'One World – No Hunger', launched in 2014 by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

ASRP project operates in eight woredas of two administrative zones, located in central Afar Region. The elements of the approach are:

Systemic approach: Jointly with its regional and local government partners, it contributes to a systemic rehabilitation of dry valleys and their productive use approach (DVRPU), using

Project name	Afar Soil Rehabilitation Project (ASRP)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Partner organizations	Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)
Project region	8 Districts in Afar Region, Ethiopia
Lead executing agency	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
Duration	02/2015 – 09/2021

adapted techniques like water spreading weirs (WSW) or dry-stone measures (DSM). These physical erosion control measures reduce velocity of sporadic flash floods, which helps to arrest soil loss and accumulate soil moisture. As a result, the WSW and DSM structures increase the productive potential of the rehabilitated land.

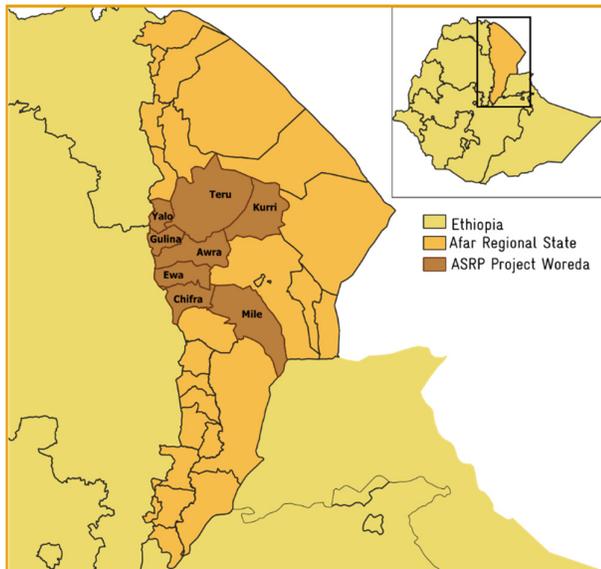
Flood-based cropping systems: In cooperation with the International Crops Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), the project supports pilots for appropriate flood-based cropping systems.

Participatory land use planning: Beneficiary communities receive guidance in improved land use management through participatory land use planning. Livelihood activities are closely coordinated with the Improved Food Security through Transitional Aid for Resilience (IFTAR) project.

Capacity development: In collaboration with the Capacity Development for Strengthening Drought Resilience (CDSDR-II) project, learnings are translated into training contents and policy recommendations to promote enabling environments for soil protection in the lowland areas. Therewith, ASRP as part of the SDR-ASAL programme supports its partners to improve natural resource management and adaptive capacities to climate change.

Knowledge exchange: The project also contributes to the exchange of knowledge through national and international networking.





Our Goals

ASRP contributes to sustainable soil protection and soil rehabilitation, broadly implemented in the Ethiopian Afar region. These goals are achieved by

- Implementing innovative resource management methods adapted to the environmental and social contexts;
- Further capacitating MoA stakeholders for improved planning and providing extension service regarding alternative land use options.

Our Achievements

Based on participatory activity plans and use agreements developed with the local communities, 11.000 ha are protected. Women are in an integral part of the community activities and discussions.

- Since early 2015, the construction of WSW and DSM has helped rehabilitate 4.200 ha of land, with 34.000 people benefitting;
- Altogether with other SDR-ASAL projects, 57 WSW and 40 DSM were constructed in 16 dry valleys of the lowland. In the previous season, ASRP supported the construction of 5 weirs in masons' trainings, another 5 weirs together with the IFTAR project and 10 weirs under direct contracts;
- Together with ICRISAT, the project has piloted adapted food and fodder cropping systems on 70 ha in three sites;
- Improved food and biomass production on pilot sites by community members achieved approximately triple the yields of maize and sorghum in comparison to rainfed production in Afar Region. Under real livelihood conditions, the projected increase of biomass production is still 50%;
- More than 25 Ethiopian decision makers from national and regional level could broaden their expertise and institutional networks through international exchange events, facilitated by the project;
- WSW and DSM are now incorporated into the national watershed management guidelines as a model practice for soil and water conservation in the lowlands.

Published by

Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

GmbH Registered offices Bonn and
Eschborn, Germany

Afar Soil Rehabilitation Project (ASRP)
GIZ Office
P.O. Box 100009, Addis Ababa
Phone +251 11 6629 983 / +251 11

5540 764

giz-aethiopiengiz.de www.giz.de

As at

March 2020

Printed by

Savannah Press, Addis Ababa

Design

Ejjig Design Plc, Addis Ababa

Photo credits GIZ/ SDR-ASAL

Text Christina Ketter

GIZ is responsible for

the content of this

publication. On behalf of **Federal**

Ministry for Economic

Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

In cooperation with **Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)**