



AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

AGRICULTURE – STIMULATING GROWTH
IRRIGATION – MANAGING A SCARCE RESOURCE
LANDMANAGEMENT – SHAPING THE FUTURE
RURAL DEVELOPMENT – INTEGRATING THE POOR
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN AGRICULTURE



AGRICULTURE – STIMULATING GROWTH



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CHALLENGES

Three out of four poor people in developing countries live in rural areas, and most of them depend directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihood.

Thus, sustainable agricultural development is a strong factor in stimulating growth, reducing poverty, and enhancing food security. Enhancing agricultural productivity is also vital for spurring growth in other parts of the economy.

GFA INTERVENTION OPTIONS

With rising land and water scarcity and the added pressures of a globalizing world, the future of agriculture is intrinsically tied to better stewardship of natural resources. GFA has contributed to empirical evidence that, given the right incentives, investments and policies, agriculture's environmental footprint can be lessened in order to protect watersheds and to safeguard biodiversity.

Today, many exciting opportunities come up to promote rural and overall development through realizing agriculture's potential: rapidly expanding domestic and global markets, institutional innovations in markets, finance and collective action, as well as revolutions in bio- and information technology. GFA has taken up these challenges and opportunities. The company's approach to raise agricultural productivity is based on several pillars which are briefly highlighted below. Additional information is presented in separate profiles on 'Rural Development', 'Irrigation' and 'Land Management'.

GFA teams support technology adoption to reduce the significant gap between yields achieved in farm trials and average national yields, and to focus on improving the relevance and effectiveness of agricultural advice through improved demand-led extension services to farmers. With regards to promoting efficient agricultural services, GFA focuses on developing and strengthening food and nonfood value chains in agribusiness.

Farmers still face enormous hurdles in gaining access to markets and inputs. GFA regards creating an enabling environment the most promising option to boost agricultural productivity. This can be achieved by linking farmers to markets more effectively through targeted investments in market places, rural roads, market information, and increasing access to finance. We provide in-depth analysis and sound advice with regard to effective trade and market policies, including issues such as access to European Union markets.

Efficient land markets are a cornerstone of raising productivity. GFA has developed long-standing experiences in land management. Our competence is based on consulting services in establishing clear legal tenure and property rights, setting up reliable land registries and introducing cadastre systems, as well as utilizing GIS-based land use planning.

Climate change has led to rising uncertainties in rain-fed agriculture. Hence, access to water and irrigation becomes an ever more important determinant of land productivity, the stability of yields and the adaptation to the effects of climate change. GFA's approach to irrigation reflects the principles of integrated water resource management as well as participatory irrigation management.



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IRRIGATION – MANAGING A SCARCE RESOURCE



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CHALLENGES

Water has always been a limited resource, but due to climate change effects its scarcity and value have increased in many areas worldwide. Undoubtedly, irrigation allows for improved quality and quantity of food production, but water for irrigation is in competition with other types of use. Therefore water use efficiency and effective management of irrigation infrastructure and water remain key challenges even though innovative techniques, tools and materials have been developed.

GFA CONCEPT AND SERVICES

GFA offers services along the entire project cycle, from feasibility studies to the implementation of irrigation projects, specific support services such as set-up of water user groups, training of maintenance service providers, determination of water doses and tariffs, and evaluations. We promote holistic approaches including water harvesting, water quality treatment, irrigation and drainage and reuse as essential parts of water management.

We understand participatory irrigation management (PIM) as a planning process that takes upstream and downstream situations of any irrigation scheme into account and gives all stakeholders a voice. Appropriate techniques have to be identified for each locality, and ownership among the beneficiaries who are to sustainably maintain and manage a given management system is a crucial success factor. From scratch, our experts have a project's exit strategy in mind and prepare beneficiaries and supporting entities for related post-project management and organizational tasks.

For preparing and implementing irrigation projects, GFA cooperates with specialized engineering firms. While we have long-standing experience and knowhow regarding irrigation hardware, GFA is specialized in supporting measures. These can be activities that protect irrigation infrastructure from erosion or floods or support to beneficiaries in efficient water use for agricultural production. Other services are related to organizing water user groups and cooperatives, water management, tariff setting and negotiation of by-laws, and the maintenance of irrigation infrastructure.



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LAND MANAGEMENT – SHAPING THE FUTURE



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CHALLENGES

Land, as a limited resource, and the tenure of land are of crucial importance for socio-economic transformation and sustainable development. Existing limits to individual and economic freedom with respect to land ownership are given in land policies and institutions for land management and administration. Ideally, these are based on a broad consensus on development goals and good governance principles. Conflicts related to land access and land use rights can significantly reduce the productivity of land, lead to social unrest and political instability that affect social and economic development and welfare. Therefore, responsible governance of land tenure is vital for poverty reduction, food security and economic growth.

In recent decades, major efforts have been made to unleash the development potential inherent in land management and development. Land sector development is highly complex as it involves political, legal, economic and cultural aspects, often related to conflicts over land access and land use rights.

GFA INTERVENTION OPTIONS

Secure land tenure and land rights transactions are key aspects of responsible land administration and transparent land markets. The latter rely on functional and efficient cadastre and register systems, are tailored to a country's needs, and recognize individual and collective as well as formal, traditional and customary rights. Comprehensive consultation processes are necessary to obtain free, prior and informed consent before adopting administrative measures affecting indigenous people and territories. GFA assists its partners in designing and implementing specific land administration systems for responsible land governance.

Given the complexity of land management, GFA teams offer multi-disciplinary consultancy services which combine developing policies and institutional arrangements with decentralization, rural economic development and environmental conservation. Since land security is considered an important pillar of poverty reduction and peace, support to reliable cadastre and register systems are high on many countries' development agenda. Our experts focus on consulting the implementation of cadastral systems, reliable maintenance mechanisms and appropriate human resource development based on the latest technological developments, adapted to specific needs. GFA can draw on experiences from successfully implemented structural adaptation projects worldwide.

In many countries, an adequate legal framework for responsible land governance is yet to be developed, especially concerning the integration of formal and indigenous or customary land rights. Our proven expertise comprises the development of specific legal provisions for the regularization of land tenure under individual and collective as well as formal and traditional regimes. Decentralization processes and strong local government capacities in land management and land development are key conditions for creating transparent and effective land markets. Participatory and transparent development of land valuation systems will foster the acceptance of tax policies and compliance with tax liabilities and will boost local economic development.



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RURAL DEVELOPMENT – INTEGRATING THE POOR



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CHALLENGES

Economic development often entails high environmental costs and widening income gaps. Rural areas are mostly disadvantaged in their access to major markets. The majority of the rural population, in particular small farmers, women and minorities, are poor by national standards. These social groups only have limited options concerning their involvement in mainstream developments. Moreover, unsustainable production techniques threaten the prospects of future generations.

GFA CONCEPTS AND SERVICES

Sustainable development in rural areas requires a comprehensive and cross-cutting approach to achieve "pro-poor" and "green" growth. Because of the variety of conditions regarding natural and human resources, there can be no blueprints. GFA concepts are therefore based on sound and specific situation analyses. Selecting from a diversity of state-of-the-art tools and methods, GFA services are tailor-made packages of interventions that best meet rural development needs. Depending on the situation, the services we offer are modular combinations of several of the following intervention options.

POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Our teams of experts implement national poverty reduction and food security strategies at the local level. They integrate marginalized population groups and open gender-specific opportunities. GFA specialists foster participatory planning, community development, administrative decentralization and democratic institution building.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

GFA experts strive for the protection and sustainable use of natural resources in conservation areas and buffer zones, land use planning, and land management. Sustainability principles also rule community forestry as well as climate change adaptation and mitigation measures at local levels.

TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Through participatory assessments of competitive advantages, GFA assists boosting regional competitiveness as well as local economic development. To our teams, planning and implementing needs-based, smallscale rural infrastructure often is a point of departure.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GFA specializes in participatory agricultural extension, low-input strategies, and increasing agricultural productivity and market orientation in a sustainable fashion. Off-farm income opportunities and the processing of primary products from agriculture and forestry are crucial elements of our trade and marketing efforts. We also promote producer groups, associations and cooperatives by facilitating production clusters and local value chains and connecting these to international supply links. Similarly, GFA experts assist public and private service providers and small enterprises in rural areas, e.g. by facilitating small-scale credit programs or providing microfinance.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN AGRICULTURE



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CHALLENGES

The agricultural sector in most GFA partner countries needs to produce more and better food in order to safeguard food security of a growing population. While large proportions of the population in developing countries earn their livelihood in agriculture related activities, productivity and income generation in this sector remain low.

One of the core problems is the lack of knowledge about modern production and management techniques at the farm and the small and medium enterprise (SME) level. Therefore, the education sector in many countries needs innovative and flexible approaches to tackle these shortcomings.

GFA CONCEPTS AND SERVICES

GFA applies a collaborative approach in agricultural development and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) to cater for the specific needs of the largely non-formalized agricultural sector.

Our interventions cover a wide range from short training courses to long-term design and reform processes of formalized TVET systems. We aim at integrating any form of agricultural training and education into the educational system of a country by applying selected tools from a comprehensive set of services such as:

- Conceptual support for policies and sector frameworks
- Professional human capacity development of advisors, teachers, trainers and educational managers
- Design of target-oriented delivery modes, e.g. classroom, mobile, e-learning etc.
- Inducement of modern learning approaches
- Establishment and review of national qualification frameworks and recognition of prior learning mechanisms
- Development and review of skills and occupational standards, curricula and training programs

More than anything, we favor a competency-based approach in learning and training (CBT) that integrates practical training in enterprises or on farms.

Family farms and SMEs are major actors and target groups in the rural sector. Most of them need knowledge and skills in innovative farming techniques. At the same time, they require management and organization skills so they can raise productivity of their farming systems and develop their businesses. As a result, appropriate training and education shall lead to better performing value chains at a system level. GFA supports the design of curricula for the required complex occupational profiles that cover both technical as well as business topics. We emphasize target group specific modes of delivery, language use and didactical methods as to optimize learning success and adoption rates.



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IRRIGATION | SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN AGRICULTURE

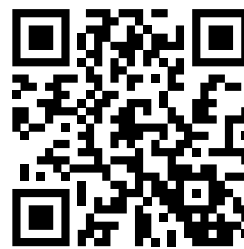
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