



Rice cultivation with Smart-Valleys approach in Cameroon | ©GFA

## RURAL DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME (PADER)

### KEY FACTS

COUNTRY	Cameroon
CLIENT	GIZ
CONTRACT VALUE	EUR 8,399,258
DURATION	06/2021–12/2027

### OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The introduction of modern agricultural practices adapted to climate change in Cameroon's cotton regions is improving the economic performance of private actors in the agriculture and livestock sectors.

### SMART-VALLEYS APPROACH

#### CHALLENGE

Farmers in rain-fed lowland areas face highly variable rice yields due to poor water retention, erosion, and increasingly irregular rainfall. Limited technical knowledge on water management and weak coordination among producers further constrain productivity and climate resilience.

#### HOW IT WORKS

The **Smart-Valleys** approach is a low-cost, agroecological rice production method that builds on farmers' existing knowledge of water flows.

It involves:

- Constructing simple canals, drains and small weirs to actively manage rainwater on fields.
- Improving water infiltration and raising the groundwater table to stabilise rice production.
- Training farmer groups (especially women's groups) in field layout, water control, erosion protection and sustainable land management.

- Embedding the approach in community-led planning structures, ensuring collective decision-making and long-term maintenance.
- Supporting complementary activities such as vegetable gardening, nutrition education and small livestock management to strengthen household food security.



Land preparation for the Smart-Valleys approach in Cameroon | ©GFA



## SMART-VALLEYS APPROACH

### IMPACT/BENEFITS

- Yields from sites using the Smart-Valleys approach are three to six times higher (5.5 t/ha vs. ~1.5 t/ha under conventional production).
- The Smart-Valleys approach increases climate resilience and reduces vulnerability to floods, droughts and erosion.
- It improves the technical capacities of producers in water management on rice sites.
- It strengthens cooperation between producers through management committees and joint planning.
- It is easily replicable and allows for the widespread dissemination of the innovation. More than 400 farmers that were not part of the project's target group of the intervention apply it after witnessing results.
- It ensures strong participation of women and youth (over 60 % of beneficiaries) contributing to economic empowerment and improved household nutrition.



Smart-Valleys approach in rice cultivation in the PADER project in Cameroon  
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Smart-Valleys approach in a project in Benin – women harvesting rice | ©Olivier Girard

