

WFP

SE Shaanxi - NW Hubei New Project

**GENERAL CONSIDERATION
ON AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**



During the mission, and in particular in the meetings with local authorities, at the presence of the Provincial PMOs, it was confirmed the willingness of identifying the most appropriate actions in order to carry out an environmentally protected agriculture development (according to specific/local agro-ecological conditions)

Several topics were discussed between them, the following should be recorded and we recommend their inclusion in the TORs of the incoming “project formulation” missions:

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Better protection of cultivated/cultivable land along the rivers/streams (particularly in Shaanxi) to be strengthened

Recovering abandoned “small scale” irrigation systems (particularly in Hubei) to be developed

- Terracing to be carried out as far as necessary **and not as far as possible** evaluating alternative/complementary solutions.

It must be emphasised that the cost of terracing 1 mu is equivalent to 200 US\$. Consequently the government objective of increasing the average per capita cultivated land from 0.5 mu to 1 mu should imply a per capita cost of 100 US\$.

How many beneficiaries can be expected?

The following possible alternative/complementary solutions to be attentively analysed:

Increasing yield on existing land:

- a) introducing new varieties, more locally suitable,*
- b) introducing small scale irrigation,*
- c) extending the practice of new planting techniques (i.e. plastic cover in the intercropping system);*
- d) in general moving toward a more intensive cropping system.*

Modifying, as far as possible, the crop mix patterns in order to get better nutritional results. In particular save for household consumption at least part of the current soybean and peanut productions, in order to increase the protein and fat component in the daily diet.

Mobilising households (providing women in particular with resources and training) on developing “home gardening practices”, in order to strengthen the practice of planting more nutrient crops around the house.

- Possibilities of modifying crop mix patterns to be identified in order to eat or to buy more and higher nutritional content food, i.e.:

- developing animal husbandry,

- and/or cash crops

- b1. permanent trees, industrial crops as industrial oil bearing trees, tea, cotton, nut trees, and so on;

- b2. increasing staple food crops (i.e. soybean and peanuts).

**MAJOR TOPICS DISCUSSED
WITH
PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL
DECISION MAKERS**

As a provisional result of several discussions with the Provincial and Local Authorities and on the base of field inspections, seven (7) “planning areas” are suggested:

four (4) “planning areas” in Shaanxi:

SH_N[ord], SH_C[enter], SH_E[ast], SH_S[outh]

three (3) “planning areas” in Hubei

HU_E[ast], HU_W[est], HU_S[outh]

It is expected that through a participatory approach, specific actions should be identified for each of the above “planning areas”.

Nevertheless, as a provisional result of :

- the VAM analysis,
- the VAM township targeting mission (including field inspections and meeting with local authorities and specialists),

the following issues on primary sector development are submitted for an attentive consideration.

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- SH_N** **Priority to the protection of existing cultivated land**
Less emphasis on wheat
More emphasis on soybean
Forestry activities

- SH_C** **Protection from erosion**
Reforestation
Development of peanuts

- SH_E** **Environmental protection and terracing**
Industrial oil crops and peanuts development

- SH_S** **Livestock development**
Rehabilitation of small scale irrigation systems

Shaanxi Local and Provincial officers (PMOs) have expressed the need of more emphasis on FOOD FOR WORK activities and less emphasis on a “micro-credit component”; justifying their requests with the fact that farmers, already “up to their eyes in debt, are reluctant to think about a “micro-credit” issue.

HU_E	Livestock development Peanuts development
HU_W	Livestock development Rehabilitation of small scale irrigation systems
HU_S	Soybean development Tea and, in general, permanent trees development Livestock development

At least apparently, a “micro-loan component” can be developed in an easier way in Hubei project areas, when compared with Shaanxi’ ones.

**TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
APPROACH**

One of the major topics discussed with Local and Provincial Authorities made reference to the “living standard development” issue.

It was emphasised that the Project should include between its objectives a “living standard” significant improvement and not simply a pure agricultural production development.

As a consequence it was stressed the importance of a “comprehensive development planning approach” in which education, nutritional and health knowledge should play a strategic role.

The following issues were lively and deeply discussed during the mission. It must be emphasised that an extremely important agreement on the above issues was reached.

Improving nutritional status not simply eating more but smartly.

- Actions:
1. Drinkable water protection
 2. Provide health-education training combined with adult literacy training (targeting women and primary school children)

Improving health conditions

- Actions:
1. Drinkable water protection
 2. Provide health-education training combined with adult literacy training (targeting women and primary school children)

Improving educational status

- Actions:
1. more children into the school
 2. less illiterate adult (particularly women), through literacy training.

The proposal that the adult literacy training should be provided on basic nutritional and health concepts and not following the traditional “500 words approach” was discussed with local decision makers.

Reactions were very positive.

In particular China Women Federation local representatives as well as Health and Education local representatives expressed their willingness to participate since the conception of this new adult literacy approach.

The idea that a new literacy training manual should be prepared and tested during the next months was fully supported.

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