

Japan in drive to improve agricultural productivity through irrigation



the government contribution increased to 1.1 million US dollars.

According to Masayoshi MIURA, the resident engineer and design supervisor of SANYU Consultant, Ngoma Irrigation Project has two main components. The Irrigation infrastructure that includes the Dam whose height measures 4.9m with a capacity of 960,000m³ plus 3 regulation tanks, two irrigation canals with the main having 28km and the other has 27 km.

It is comprised of high-quality solar power station for pumping water from the dam to irrigate hillside farms. It is the first time renewable energy technology to be used in irrigation schemes in Rwanda.

Training on paddy farming

The Senior Representative of JICA, Ryutaro MUROTANI emphasized the two important aspects in which the project is expected to serve as a model of irrigation development in Rwanda.

In order to benefit from this irrigation project, farmers from different sectors are being trained by Japanese agriculture experts on how to plant and make rice pads that are suitable for better yields. While the water user's organizations are strengthened to better maintain the facilities.

"Apart from teaching them good farming methods, the Japanese contractor is providing the knowledge of the construction work particularly on quality control, time management and safety measures. These are expertise and technology that will stay in Rwanda after the dam is completed", he added.

By August 2016, construction works and soft component will end and the rest of the activities like storing water and irrigation farming will start in August 2017.

construction work started in June 2015.

The cost

Originally, the cost of the project was 13,215,596 US dollars which is the equivalent to 9.5 billion francs with Rwanda contributing at the design stage 0.58 million US dollars. However due to inflation of the exchange rate,



"For better management, and as a model case in Rwanda, we need to engage students from universities and IPRCs to do hands on training with the ongoing sites so that they acquire the skills to maintain the project after it's completed'.

The productivity and the profitability of irrigated agricultural enterprises are partly influenced by the level of irrigation system performance.

While giving his speech before the tour, the Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of Japan Tomio Sakamoto said that Japan's present assistance to Rwanda is focused on economic infrastructure development, energy, promotion of market oriented and value added agricultural, assistance in water and sanitation as well as science and technology education and training.

"The project is one among the many that Japan contributes for the development of Rwanda in line with the vision 2020 and EDPRS and in future, we will have more opportunities to show case more Japanese projects done in Rwanda" Sakamoto added.

The project background

The project for Development of Irrigation Scheme in Ngoma District is a Grant Aid from the Government of Japan and has a command area of 300 ha of which 265ha are hill side while 35ha are for the paddy fields.

The project history goes back as early as 2009 when a feasibility study was started for a basic design and in August 2014 notes were exchanged between the governments of Rwanda and Japan. By September 2014, the Grant Agreement was signed and



BY JOSEPH MUDINGU

The country side is green and the fields are covered with an assortment of crops that are flourishing because of the recent rains.

The convoy of delegates from the Ministry of Agriculture, JICA and Japanese Embassy plus journalist from many media houses is quite long as we branch off the main road that goes to Ngoma.

What greets a visitor upon arrival is a big contrast with the days of yore. Residents are busy working on their rice farms at Ngoma while others are helping in the creation of the Irrigation dam and the solar plant under construction.

The media site visit was organized on the 19th January by the Embassy of Japan to show case the on-going project for the development of the irrigation scheme in Ngoma district whose main purpose is to improve agricultural productivity for paddy and hillside crops in Rurenge and Remera sectors in Ngoma district.

While touring different sites, the Minister of State for Agriculture, Tony Nsanganira called upon residents to use the opportunity to learn more from the project for future continuity.

"The Government of Rwanda is happy with the cooperation it has with Japan and we look forward to the completion of this irrigation project that will surely transform lives of not only residents in Ngoma but even those in other parts of the country" Tony said.

The Minister emphasized the need to focus on both infrastructure development as well as capacity development of local communities for a sustainable mechanism of the irrigation scheme.