



World Food Programme

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Ecuador at a glance

South – South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) Country Project

Supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China

May 2023



ECUADOR

Strengthening capacity and market access of smallholder farmers especially for rural women, with national and local government support.

OBJECTIVE

Strengthen sustainable food production systems and implement, with a gender approach, resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity by diversifying crops, especially rice through rice-duck farming modality of China.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock
National Institute of Agricultural Research
Smallholder Farmer Associations and local governments in Ecuador

PHASE OF THE INITIATIVE

III (January 2022- December 2022)

THEMATIC AREAS



Value Chain Development for Smallholder Farmers



Innovative Poverty Alleviation Initiative, including rural e-commerce

SSTC MODALITIES



Policy dialogue and workshops/seminars/webinars



Online/ offline training courses

1,459 PEOPLE ENGAGED



146 from institutions (e.g. government, academia, think tank, private sector) (106 male, 40 female)



1313 Smallholder farmers (male 867, female 445)



TECHNICAL PARTNERS INVOLVED IN THE SSTC ACTIVITY

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China

WFP Centre of Excellence for Rural Transformation in China Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG)

National Institute of Agricultural Research,

Smallholder Farmer Associations and local governments in Ecuador.

Hunan University from China

National Institute for Agricultural Research (INIAP)

Local government



Development challenge and the SSTC solution

Ecuador is highly vulnerable to climate-related risks, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and landslides. Rice is the most extensive crop in Ecuador, occupying more than a third of the country's production areas. Recently high production costs and illegal exports affect the industry leading to a 125% increase in the cost of fertilizer in Ecuador.

Smallholder producers are responsible for over 60% of national food production while 70% of women work in this sector, but 54% are unpaid. Overall, 40% of the rural population in Ecuador lives below the poverty line, and 62% of children under one year old are anaemic.

The third phase of the rice-duck farming project in Ecuador was implemented within the SSTC framework to provide technical support to

smallholder farmers. The rice-duck model was shared by Chinese experts and adopted to the country context. This successful model, that was adapted to the Ecuador context, combines rice cultivation with duck farming, reducing the use of chemicals and improving and diversifying the livelihoods and diets of farmers and their families.

The innovative initiative supported the implementation of environmentally friendly agricultural practices that increased productivity. Crops as well as farmers' sources of income were diversified to equally improve food and nutritional security of their families, therefore promoting economic empowerment and decision making of rural women.

SSTC partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China (MARA)

In 2022, the WFP's Global Field Pilot Initiative on SSTC in Ecuador, supported by WFP's Global SSTC Team in the Programme Humanitarian and Development (PRO-T) Division, the WFP Centre of Excellence for Rural Transformation in China (China CoE), and the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBP) came to completion.

This represents the third phase of the financial SSTC strategic partnerships with MARA that started in 2019, aimed at leveraging SSTC to create benefits for the most vulnerable rural populations.

The initiative in the past three phases of the implementation focused on strengthening national institutions and programmes, including social protection programmes, that aimed to reduce food insecurity and malnutrition in Ecuador as well as sustainably increase income and improve productivity of smallholder farmers, especially women, in targeted areas.

The project faced challenges at the early stage of the implementation due to the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., the five in-person workshops with Chinese experts that were planned for 2020 were not possible).

To overcome the challenges and ensure a smooth implementation of the project, in 2021 and 2022, Chinese experts developed Mandarin-language training videos and WFP Ecuador Country Office edited the videos by adding Spanish subtitles.

To share the progress, lessons learned, and results of the implemented model with other project partners in the Latin America region, both virtual and in-person workshops were conducted.

Key SSTC results achieved in 2022



SSTC strengthening capacity

Development of 11 Mandarin-language training videos, with Spanish subtitles and dubbing, featuring Chinese experts from the Hunan University outlining key features of the rice-duck model. These videos were shared with producers and technicians of MAG, INIAP as well as local governments.



SSTC knowledge sharing

- Organization of an in-person workshop on marketing for MAG technical teams that will be followed by a webinar where Chinese experts will be sharing their experience in e-commerce;
- Virtual exchange programme carried out with government representatives from Panama and Costa Rica with MAG of Ecuador and its local government to share experiences and knowledge on the rice-duck model;
- Development of three advocacy videos describing and promoting the rice-duck model and the SSTC project, with versions in Spanish with English subtitles and in Spanish; and
- Set up of four research plots for rice-duck cultivation with INIAP and carried out a preliminary survey to evaluate the results of the project; the results will then be presented as part of a best practices guideline that will be issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock in Ecuador in 2023.



Support producers

In 2022 WFP implemented 14 new rice-duck plots, four of which are managed directly by MAG, benefitting 1,313 producers (445 women and 868 men) in Guayas, Loja and Los Rios provinces. In particular:

- Producers benefitted from higher rice selling prices for farmers equal to USD 38.00 per quintal (1 quintal=45 Kg) compared to the price established by the government equal to USD 34.50.
- Farmers saved costs up to USD 880 per hectare per harvest cycle, due to the reduced use of fertilizer and costs related to the production.
- With the help of WFP, the smallholder farmers could sell 1,200 metric tons of rice produced through the rice-duck model and therefore receive a total of \$1million USD in 2022.
- Farmers could sell ducks for a price equal to \$14 USD each and save \$6 USD per week as they were able to consume duck meat and eggs produced locally.
- The model allowed to reduce carbon emissions and ensured a chemical-free rice production, representing a key element for the improvement of the local ecosystem.
- The project supported 445 women producers to play key roles in the rice cultivation sector and in agriculture in general, given the project's primary focus on training and empowering women farmers.



SSTC lessons learned

- The continued expansion of the rice-duck model into new geographical areas has increased producers' awareness and trust in the initiative, perceiving it as a feasible option to be introduced to their context.
- MAG and other cooperation agencies' support has been essential to the model's expansion, as they provided support for gender-specific trainings to empower female producers to participate in the model.
- The support for direct sales has created sustainable market niches and generated higher demand and increased prices for the product. The inclusion of ducks in the plots has favoured the improvement of family nutrition through the consumption of ducks' meat and/or eggs and created additional profit deriving from their local sales.

Next Steps

Building on the results of the past three phases, the following activities will be implemented in 2023 to deliver on the project objectives:

SSTC knowledge sharing

Organization of a virtual webinar with Chinese experts on e-commerce in order to transfer knowledge and experience on innovative rural e-commerce and other marketing practices with the Government. The webinar includes the implementation of actions focused on empowering women to ensure their full and effective participation in the different areas of the agricultural sector with a view to consolidate the sustainable and resilient integrated rice-duck farming system.

Sharing SSTC lessons learned

Organize workshops (also virtual) for the dissemination and expansion of the integrated rice-duck farming system within the Latin America region, considering the basic needs and strategic interests of women and men, such as equal participation in decision-making, autonomy and care work at home.



Testimonials



"The animals can serve as mosquito control, weeds, fertilizer, and therefore one begins to see them not only in an economic way but also as a friend who is helping you in your business...."

"In one cycle I saved \$600.00 in 1 ha without putting chemicals...."

Marcelo Granda, Macará-Loja

"The project we have with the ducks is very important, because now we want to produce organic rice. The duck eats all the weeds, the little bugs and we don't need to use any type of fertilizer...."

Rocío Pérez, Crucita-Manabí



"We wanted to feel important, to be able to fulfil ourselves as women and not be limited by the lack of resources... This has taught us that we can also be part of the economy, not only of a community but also of a parish, of a country".

María Calderón, Crucita-Manabí



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