

Sample IEE

“Getting Rid of Weeds” (GROW) Project

Project Description

The GROW project will work with smallholder farmers and farming cooperatives to enhance agricultural production in rural Malawi. The project will promote the use of agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and improved seed varieties; the project will also promote specific pest control efforts, emphasizing Integrated Pest Management (IPM), but leaving the door open for future use of synthetic pesticides (in accordance with USAID and Gov't of Malawi regulations). GROW also entails an irrigation development component, with funding for construction coming from rural credit institutions that USAID will support with technical and managerial capacity building efforts.

Baseline Environment

GROW will be implemented in some of Malawi's poorest regions. Traditional means of natural resource management (NRM) have stripped local soil and water resources of their most productive capacity, and the uptake of improved cultivation practices has generally failed to boost output and incomes. Generally water resources are scarce with significant re-use among target communities. Low rates of numeracy and literacy also present a significant barrier to the effective conveyance of enhanced agricultural techniques and effective loanmaking to the rural farming sector.

Assessment of Potential Adverse Impacts and Recommended Determinations

- The use of synthetic pesticides presents a range of potential adverse environmental impacts. In order to promote pesticide safer use, the project will solicit the opinions of rural farmers as to which products they are most comfortable using. This list will be compiled, formatted and submitted to meet the USAID PERSUAP requirement (Negative Determination with Conditions: no pesticide use until PERSUAP is prepared based solely on community preference and feedback).
- Support for rural credit institutions to increase ag. sector loanmaking has no environmental impact as the project will be providing training and technical assistance only and will not use this component to directly fund any agricultural interventions (Categorical Exclusion).
- Promotion of the use of fertilizers and other agricultural inputs requires effective training and technical assistance so that inputs are not mis-used in a manner that further degrades the land's productive capacity and negatively impacts local-level NRM (Negative Determination with Conditions: in order to benefit from this activity rural farmers must review a technical manual and pass a written exam assuring cognizance of potential adverse impacts and familiarity with best management practices [BMPs]).
- Given existing water scarcity, technical assistance with the design and construction of smallholder irrigation systems poses a strong likelihood of significant adverse environmental impacts (Positive Determination: implementation of smallholder irrigation schemes by GROW will require completion of Programmatic Environmental Assessment [PEA]).
- The introduction of improved seed varieties poses the potential adverse impact of developing into an invasive species (Negative Determination with Conditions: non-native seed varieties may not be introduced by GROW in areas proximate to protected areas or other sensitive habitats [e.g., wetlands, primary forest, etc.]).

