



A Report on First Exploratory visit by the Indian delegation to Malawi

October 01 - October 10, 2022

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About Triangular Development Cooperation

On 2nd May 2022, India and Germany signed a Joint Declaration of Intent on implementing Triangular Development Cooperation (TrC) projects. This declaration was formalized during the Inter-Governmental Consultations held in Berlin, marking a significant step towards fostering international cooperation for sustainable development.

Triangular Development Cooperation (TrC) is a collaborative development approach involving three key partners: Germany (a traditional donor country), India (a pivotal partner country with relevant expertise and experience), and Malawi (a beneficiary country). This model combines financial resources, technical know-how, and local insights to address development challenges more effectively and sustainably.

In the context of the India-Germany-Malawi partnership, TrC enables the joint implementation of innovative solutions—such as the Agri-Business Incubator Model for Women in Agriculture and Food Systems—by leveraging the strengths and experiences of all three nations.

Key Collaborating Partners

❖ Political Partners

The key political partners of the TrC Project include the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany, as the facilitating partner; NITI Aayog, Government of India, as the pivotal partner; and the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Malawi, as the beneficiary partner.

❖ Implementing Partners

The key implementing partners of the TrC Project include Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) from both India and Malawi, the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE) and Access Livelihoods from India, and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Institute (SMEDI) from Malawi.

From India, MANAGE, along with Access Livelihoods—both organizations with proven expertise in designing, guiding, and supporting agri-incubators—are providing technical support and know-how for the project. In Malawi, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Institute (SMEDI) has been identified as the key anchoring institution for the development of the agri-business incubator ecosystem. The implementation and progress monitoring of the project are being coordinated and facilitated by GIZ.

Objectives of TrC Project

The TrC Project primarily focused on establishing an Agri-Business Incubator Model for women in agriculture and food systems in Malawi. The initiative aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

The key objectives of the project were to:

- To develop an agri-business incubator for MSMEs and women-led collective enterprises in Malawi.
- To build the capacities of at least one local institution, namely SMEDI, including through Training of Trainers programs.
- To advocate for the creation of a special fund to support women-led enterprises.
- To provide policy recommendations and guidelines for establishing world-class agri-business incubators in Malawi.
- To enhance the competencies of 50 women entrepreneurs.

Overview of the Visit

Following the online kick-off of the pilot project on 31st August 2022, a series of virtual interactions were held in September between the implementing partners from India and Malawi. These discussions led to the formulation of a comprehensive Joint Plan of Action (PoA) for the pilot initiative.



To initiate on-ground implementation, a four-member delegation from India visited Malawi with the objective of conducting a thorough situational assessment. The visit aimed to study the existing agri-business incubator ecosystem, engage with key stakeholders, and understand the challenges faced—particularly by women entrepreneurs, who are at the heart of this pilot project.

The delegation also focused on identifying potential institutional partners who could collaborate in the initiative, offering long-term support for the development of a sustainable agri-business incubation ecosystem in Malawi. The visit was instrumental in laying the groundwork for a context-specific, inclusive, and impactful implementation strategy.

Indian Delegation Members

The Indian delegation comprised the following members:

- **Dr. Suhasini Huddone**, Agriculture Advisor and Gender Focal Person, GIZ – Green Innovation Centre
- **Dr. Saravanan Raj**, Director of Agricultural Extension, MANAGE
- **Mr. Krishnagopal G.V.**, Group CEO, Access Livelihoods
- **Ms. Monalisa**, Project Head, Access Livelihoods

Highlights of the Visit

During the course of the visit, the delegation held meetings with various stakeholders, including key government bodies such as the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Institute (SMEDI), the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and the Department of Community Development.

▪ Visit at SMEDI Headquarter

The Joint Plan of Action agreement was formally signed by the three implementing partners at the SMEDI headquarters, marking a major milestone in the pilot initiative. As part of this collaboration, SMEDI committed to supporting the project in three critical areas.





First, it will provide the necessary infrastructure for setting up an agribusiness incubator specifically for women entrepreneurs. Second, SMEDI will facilitate training and capacity-building programs for 50 selected women entrepreneurs to enhance their skills and business readiness. Third, it will assist in drafting policy guideline briefs, which will be proposed to the Ministry of Industry and Trade to help institutionalize and scale women-focused agri-business incubators across Malawi.

▪ Meeting with Ministry of Industry and Trade's (MoTI) Officials

Given the Ministry of Industry and Trade's (MoTI) pivotal role in SME development in Malawi, its support in connecting currently siloed incubators under a central anchoring institution like SMEDI is crucial for building a cohesive and self-sustaining agri-business incubation ecosystem.



During the discussions, insights were shared on how various ministries in India collaborate to create a unified ecosystem for entrepreneurship support—an approach that could be adapted and replicated in the Malawian context. Additionally, it was

proposed that SMEDI’s recommendations be considered for inclusion in the SME policy document, specifically to guide the structured development of agri-business incubators across the country.

- **Visit at Department of Community Development**

The Department of Community Development, with its focus on community level mobilization, capacity building, marketing, and enterprise development, emerged as a vital stakeholder in the pilot initiative. As a result of the discussions, a collaborative framework was outlined for the Department to work closely with SMEDI, particularly in areas of value addition, market access, and financial linkages.



The Indian delegation also had the privilege of meeting the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Gender, where they provided a comprehensive briefing on the TrC pilot. These high-level engagements highlighted strong potential for deeper collaboration under a future full-fledged project, aimed at empowering communities and women entrepreneurs in Malawi.

- **Discussion with Microloan Foundation**

The Indian delegation engaged in a productive discussion with the Microloan Foundation, a leading financial institution in Malawi, exploring the creation of a customized financial product to support the agri-business incubator initiative. Encouraged by the vision of empowering women entrepreneurs, the Foundation agreed to develop a tailored financial solution aimed at facilitating their growth and sustainability within the incubator ecosystem. This innovative product is expected to play a pivotal role in enhancing both social and financial inclusion, laying a strong foundation for long-term sustainability and success of the enterprising community at the grassroots level.



- **Visit at SYNERGY incubation Centre**

The Indian delegation visited SYNERGY Incubation Centre, a dynamic private incubator based in Lilongwe, and recognized its strong potential to emerge as a key private sector partner in supporting women entrepreneurs and community-based enterprises. With demonstrated expertise in designing effective incubator programs and developing robust business proposals, SYNERGY stands out as a valuable contributor to the evolving agri-business incubation ecosystem.



Its proactive approach and readiness to collaborate present an exciting opportunity to strengthen private sector engagement in nurturing grassroots entrepreneurship and fostering inclusive economic growth.

- **Workshop organised at SMEDI**

The Indian delegation organized a focused workshop at the SMEDI Enterprise Development Centre in Mponela, which was attended by 12 SMEDI staff members, including the Chief Executive Officer and two Directors.



The workshop served as a platform for knowledge exchange and collaborative planning, centering on four key areas: understanding the aspirations for the proposed agri-business incubator, identifying the challenges currently faced in agri-business incubation, introducing the concept and structure of agri-incubators, and jointly planning the roadmap for the pilot implementation. The interactive session fostered deeper alignment among stakeholders and laid the groundwork for a shared vision toward building a robust agri-incubation ecosystem in Malawi.

- **Workshop organised for Women Entrepreneurs**

The Indian delegation also organized a dedicated workshop that witnessed the participation of 15 women entrepreneurs representing diverse agricultural value chains and various districts across Malawi.



The concept of an Agri-Business Incubator for Women was enthusiastically received by the participants, who viewed it as a vital platform for accessing expert guidance and support. They recognized its potential to help them overcome the numerous challenges currently hindering their growth and to unlock new opportunities for scaling their enterprises. The session highlighted the strong demand for targeted incubation support among women entrepreneurs and reaffirmed the importance of building a gender-responsive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

- **Visit to Jumabunguzi Cooperative**

As part of their field visit, the Indian delegation also visited the Jumabunguzi Cooperative, an agro-based cooperative engaged in agricultural production, processing, and marketing. Located in the Salima district of Malawi, this cooperative represents a grassroots-level effort to strengthen local agribusiness through collective action. During the visit, the delegation interacted with members of the cooperative to understand their operations, challenges, and aspirations.



The visit provided valuable insights into the realities of rural agri-enterprises, particularly regarding their need for technical support, access to markets, and financial linkages. Jumabunguzi Cooperative showcased the potential for community-driven entrepreneurship and emerged as a promising candidate for future collaboration under the Agri-Business Incubator initiative.

- **Discussion with German and Indian Embassy Officials**

During the visit, the delegation had the opportunity to debrief the Deputy Head of Cooperation at the German Embassy and the Honourable High Commissioner at the Indian Embassy on the ongoing TrC pilot project. They shared key insights on the implementation progress, initial outcomes, and the strategic vision for scaling the initiative.



The discussions also highlighted the potential for long-term impact, particularly in strengthening women-led agri-businesses and building a sustainable incubation ecosystem in Malawi. The engagement with both embassies reinforced diplomatic and developmental support for the pilot and opened avenues for enhanced collaboration in its future phases.



Future Plans & Milestones Potential for Scale and Impact

As to build on the momentum of the ongoing pilot, the following key activities have been planned:

- A debriefing session will be organized for GIZ Malawi's Climate Resilient Private Sector Support (CRPSS) cluster to explore areas where they can contribute and align with the initiative.

- As part of the capacity-building efforts for SMEDI and other relevant incubators, two online Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops will be conducted by the Indian partners to enhance institutional readiness and technical knowledge.
- In November 2022, a delegation from Malawi, comprising key stakeholders from the Agri-Business Incubator ecosystem, will visit India. This exposure visit aims to showcase successful and sustainable agri-business incubator models in India and facilitate meaningful interactions with accomplished agri-entrepreneurs and enterprises.

Potential for Scale and Impact

Upon successful implementation and validation of the pilot phase, there is significant potential for scaling the initiative. Once the proof-of-concept is established, the programme envisions the expansion of up to 10 Agri-Business Incubators across Malawi. Additionally, the full-fledged implementation phase aims to provide training and capacity building for up to 5,000 women entrepreneurs. This scale-up will further strengthen the agri-entrepreneurship ecosystem in the country, fostering inclusive growth and long-term sustainability.

THE NATION
MONDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2022

Trilateral agreement set to boost agribusinesses

SINGAYAZI KAMINJOLO
STAFF REPORTER

India High Commissioner Subbiah Gopalkrishnan has hailed the start of Germany-India-Malawi trilateral cooperation, saying it will help to develop the country's agri-businesses for women.

Through GIZ, a delegation from Indian Government was in the country to sign the cooperation on Saturday and start the implementation of the triangular cooperation.

He said: "I am confident that this triangular cooperation will immensely help in empowering Malawian women from rural areas besides building local capacity.

"This is the second of such cooperation. The first one being India-US-Malawi triangular cooperation on food security."

In his remarks, German Embassy deputy head of cooperation Knut Gummert said agriculture is one of the essential sectors of development and the collaboration of the three countries will help women

move away from subsistence farming.

He said: "In this country, 80 percent of the population depends on agriculture and women are the backbone of the economy in every African country, so we need to empower women.

"We all see the need to be more professional and we need to move to processing and value addition if we are to improve people's livelihoods."

Gummert said through the cooperation, Germany will contribute financially and provide expertise.

"Women struggle to get loans from banks or lending institutions. They have great ideas, but struggle to implement them and this cooperation will help to find solutions," he said.

Small and Medium Enterprises Development Institute chief executive officer Rodrick Chattaika, whose organisation is implementing the project,

said the cooperation will help Malawian women entrepreneurs to upscale their skills.

He said: "Through this agreement, we will implement a pilot phase project for six months to help Malawian women entrepreneurs to be involved in agri-value addition.

"We want to upscale their skills so that they can do value addition to whatever they are farming."

Chattaika said they have identified 50 women who will be put into a cluster at Smedi Campus in Mponela, Dowa for six months.

He said: "There are a number of crops that are involved in value chain products like soya, tomatoes, mango, potatoes and cassava.

"After this pilot phase is successful, we can replicate the same in all the districts. In this way we will be able to create women entrepreneurs who can make products that can compete well on the market."

He said the arrangement has been facilitated by the German government to have incubation centres to enable women to learn. ■

Gummert: Women struggle to get loans from banks

PHOTOGRAPH: NATION

BUYING	SELLING
1 015.9300	1 036.2494
1 168.6292	1 192.0018
58.1215	59.2840
1 025.4805	1 045.9901
79.1085	80.6907

CDH
INVESTMENT BANK

BUYING	SELLING
1 020.7057	1 036.2494
1 167.3829	1 190.7210
58.1627	59.3255
1 024.7562	1 045.2430
79.1091	80.6907

BUYING	SELLING
1016.5607	1 036.2494
1171.1118	1 192.5782
58.1975	59.2642
1026.4723	1 046.3530
143.1972	145.6736

The Daily Times TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2022

Germany, India partner Mw in agri-business initiative

By Rebecca Chimjeka

Governments of India and Germany—through GIZ—have teamed up with Malawi in developing World Class Inclusive Agribusiness Incubator Model in Agriculture and Food Systems.

The initiative is being implemented under the Green Innovation Centres Programme, which is aimed at boosting business for rural area-based Malawian women.

Speaking during a roundtable discussion in Lilongwe, Indian High Commissioner to Malawi Shri Gopalakrishnan said the initiative would be life changing.

“I am confident that this triangular cooperation will immensely help in empowering Malawian women from rural areas besides building local capacity,” he said.

Deputy Head of Development at GIZ Knut



PARTNERS IN DEVELOPMENT—Labour Minister Vera Kamtukule (third, first row) and members of the GIZ and India government team—Picture by Rebecca Chimjeka.

Gummert said the business incubators, will help women develop start-ups with latest technologies which can redefine supply chain systems, support value addition and help innovate food products so that they can meet the demands of new-age consumers.

“As is the case in many parts of the world,

in Malawi women also work in agriculture with little reward or income in return to their labour. They traditionally have less access than men to productive resources, services, opportunities, assets – including land and finance, technology and education– to update their knowledge and agriculture

practices,” he said.

Some of the beneficiary partners are Small and Medium Enterprises Development Institute, with the Ministry of Gender entrusted with the task of setting up incubators for small and medium enterprises and collective enterprises by women farmers.

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