

THE MALAWI AGRICULTURE SECTOR WIDE APPROACH (ASWAp)

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ASWAp is a short term for the Agriculture Sector Wide Approach. The goal of the strategy is to have a harmonized agricultural sector with a wide sectoral approach involving as many stakeholders as possible to enhance increased and sustainable agricultural production and growth. The process starts from planning, coordination, implementation and monitoring of the agricultural activities to have accelerated growth. This also includes financing the agricultural sector. The ASWAP approach advocates multidisciplinary participatory approach with all stakeholders including farmers with a lot of participation by the private sector and non-governmental organization.

ASWAP has three main pillars to achieve the growth. These include Technical Support to achieve increased growth through nutrient management and productivity, Capacity Building and Human Resources development, and Planning and Monitoring the agricultural programmes. There are teams responsible for planning, coordinating, implementing and monitoring the three pillars. Currently ASWAp is concentrating on increased food production with main emphasis on crops specifically maize and some grain legumes while utilizing the natural resources especially soil, land management and sustainable environmental management. Research and extension have a crucial role in achieving the agricultural growth and productivity as there is need for technology development and dissemination. ASWAP also looks into income generation and diversification on crops, livestock, fisheries and other commodities that will increase the income base of the farmers so that they are food and income secure. This also involves the value addition, agro-processing, marketing and storage to minimize post harvest and processing losses.

Since ASWAP involves harmonized planning, coordination, implementation and monitoring to have accelerated agricultural growth, it goes without saying that it is contributing to improved nutrition and income of the participating communities. Diversification of the agricultural production and marketing increases the food and income base which eventually will lead to food security and income base there by improving the welfare, nutrition, and income of the communities.

Since food security and nutrition will lead to a healthy population the improved agricultural production and marketing will lead to a healthy nation and general economic growth. It is therefore an approach which can lead to improved well being of the Malawi nation.