

Press Release

The Government of Switzerland has agreed to provide a grant assistance equivalent to USD 3.6 million (equivalent to about RS. 262.22 million) for the implementation of The phase IV of the Hill Maize Research Project-HMRP (2010-2014) and 7 million Swiss Franc (equivalent to about Rs 540.47 million) for the implementation of the phase IV of the Sustainable Soil Management Program (SSMP) (2011-2014) to the Government of Nepal.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has been supporting the HMRP project since 1999. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has joined as co-funder from the phase-IV of the project with a grant assistance equivalent to USD 2,000,000, totaling the project phase budget to about USD 5.6 million.

The Project will contribute to improve food security through increase in income of poor and disadvantaged farmers in 20 hilly districts namely Okhaldhunga, Khotang, Ramechhap, Dolakha, Sindupalchowk, Kavre, Dhading, Syangja, Palpa, Baglung, Gufmi, Jajarkot, Surkhet, Dailekh, Kalikot, Achham, Doti, Dadeldhura, Bajhang and Baitadi. This will be achieved through the dissemination and adoption of the farmers selected technologies including new maize varieties, improved seeds and resource conserving technologies linked with market and the promotion of more efficient seed policies. The Project will be implemented by CIMMYT International.

From The implementation of SSMP, it is expected to improve food security and income of at least 50,000 poor and disadvantaged households in the mid hills. This will be achieved through adoption of improved sustainable soil management practices and also through new production and market opportunities. The Project will support for the promotion and implementation of decentralized agricultural extension through trained experienced leader farmers. The project will be implemented in seven hill districts namely Accham, Kalikot, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Ramechhap, Okhaldhunga and Khotang The Helvetas Nepal is entrusted for the implementation of this project.

Mr Rameshore Prasad Khanal, Secretary, Ministry of Finance and H.E. Mr. Thomas Gass, Ambassador of Switzerland to Nepal, signed the two agreements on behalf of the Government of Nepal and the Government of Switzerland, respectively.

The Government of Nepal expresses its sincere appreciation to the Governments of Switzerland and the United States for the assistance and also for their keen interest and continued support in the socio-economic development of Nepal.

Ministry of Finance
Singh Durbar, Kalthmandu
31 January, 2011