

## Participatory Assessment of Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) Practices - Field Day organized by RAMA BC

*By: Joaquim Waite*

The Resilient Agriculture and Market Activities Project in the Beira Corridor (RAMA\_BC) in partnership with the Centro Zonal Centro (CZC) of the Institute of Agricultural Research of Mozambique (IIAM) has been introducing and promoting various practices of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) aimed at reducing the vulnerability of small producers and dealing with climate change and its impact.

In the last 4 agricultural campaigns, several CSA demonstration fields were established in the provinces of Manica (districts of Sussundenga, Vanduzi, Gondola, Báruè, and Macate) and Sofala (districts of Nhamatanda, Buzi and Dondo), reaching about 20 thousand beneficiaries.



As a result of the use of intercropping of maize with new crops such as *canavalia* and *lab-lab*, and intercropping of maize and pigeon peas, the producers involved in the RAMA-BC program have observed many advantages and feel motivated to use of conservation agriculture. Producers face some challenges in implementing these practices, but with each campaign there are sufficient reasons for replicating these practices on the producers' farms, as the demonstration fields have shown higher yields. Each year of project implementation, there is an increase in producers' awareness of the advantages and effectiveness of the main practices, including the use of improved seed, as RAMA-BC has partnerships with seed companies where they have established some memoranda that allow access to improved seed in communities sold at subsidized prices.

One of the ways to increase the dissemination of CSA practices is the participatory evaluation of the different CSA practices promoted through the demonstration fields. Between March 15 and

18, 2022, field days were held in 4 communities in the districts of Bárue, Chimoio, Sussundenga and Nhamatanda. Among other objectives, the events aimed to showcase the advantages of climate-smart agriculture practices in farmer fields, show climate-resilient practices and show climate change resilient practices and encourage the use of seeds of tolerant and high-yield varieties by producers..

During the field days, IIAM highlighted the participatory evaluation of the practices promoted. In the evaluation, the participating producers had the opportunity to vote for their preferred treatment among the 4 options (maize and *canavalia* intercropping, maize and *lab-lab* intercropping, maize and pigeon pea intercropping, and peasant practice) and evaluating the performance of the treatments in the different plots of the demonstration fields.

During the field day, the producers showed their preferences according to local needs, taking into account that weather conditions tend to change their crop production habits. However, one of the technicians of the project assigned to the district of Nhamatanda said that of the 4 treatments they tried, the intercropping of maize and *canavalia* is the most sought after by local farmers, because it is more drought tolerant.

According to Maria da Luz, socio-economist and Head of the Training, Documentation and Dissemination Department of the CZC, variations were observed in the preferences of the producers and performance of the treatments between the districts. It was possible to notice that producers of some districts prefer the intercropping maize with pigeon peas while others prefer intercropping maize and *canavalia*.



This agricultural season is being characterized by delayed rains, which, according to the producers, affected the performance of crops in the communities, generating a feeling of uncertainty about the yields of crops in their fields.

However, despite the lack of rain during the agricultural season, the producers confirm that production will be good as a result of the implementation of intercropping between maize and canavalia and intercropping between maize and pigeon pea in the demonstration fields, thus demonstrating their satisfaction with the earnings that are earned from CSA practices.

It is worth noting that the producers call for their assistance in the implementation of techniques, in order to ensure the proper use of technologies in their fields, and also for access to inputs that have been one of the challenges in their day to day in agricultural production, although RAMA BC is already making great strides towards solving the problem.