

Karongi District Environmental Statistics Training: Feb. 18-19, 2009

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1. General Introduction: The two-day training on environmental data collection and management was organised by the Karongi district authorities with support (technical and financial) from REMA. The workshop was held at Karongi district headquarters during February 18-19, 2009. It was officially opened by the District Executive Secretary and closed by the Vice Mayor for Social Affairs. A total of 20 participants attended the training and most of them were drawn from the *Imirenge* (see List in Annex 1). District level participants included the Agronomist, Environmental Officer, Statistician and the Director of Planning.

This was the first follow-up training after the nation-wide training on poverty-environment mainstreaming that covered all districts in the country. It was also initiated by the Karongi district authorities who requested for support to improve monitoring of environmental and other related data within the *Imihigo*, DDPs and other district development processes. The delegation from REMA included Alex, Celestin and Charles (from REMA/PEI); Fabrice and Martine, coordinators of two REMA-based projects involved in environmental information management (AEIN and PAIGER respectively).

2. The training content/ thematic focus: The thematic and content scope of the training embraced, inter alia, the following topics:

- Conceptual & Contextual Issues in Environmental data management: the place of data in planning and design as well as implementation and monitoring of development programmes (focusing on *Imihigo* and DDPs);
- Poverty-environment data as part of the poverty and development information;
- Environmental Data Management: Taking stock and Identifying the data and capacity needs;
- Coordination and partnerships in environmental data management – user-user; user-producer and producer-producer links;
- Developing an Action Plan for environmental data collection & management.

3. Training methodology: a number of participatory approaches were used (see training outline and time table). These included case studies, question and answer sessions; guided discussions; group exercises and discussions; plenary brainstorming sessions, with short presentations to introduce concepts and explain issues; as well as synthesise discussions. During the training, participatory situation analysis and data needs assessment was undertaken, and considerable discussions held on the main challenges currently faced and how data collection and management at district and lower levels could be improved. The training module was then adjusted to pay more attention to strategies for improving data management in general and on poverty-environment data more specifically. It was established that the Umurenge and lower

levels are burdened by huge data requests from the district and the centre but and most of the time, data use at these levels is low. The other important issue is the fact that, as all participants reported, there is no provision for data, raising challenges for effective planning and evidence-backed monitoring and priority setting.

A practical session of collecting data through short field visit, using three data collection techniques (questionnaire, interviews and observations) as well as secondary data collection (from health and agricultural production records), had been planned but due to rain and time constraint, was not undertaken. At the end of the training, participants were able to identify data needs, appreciate partnership building with data users, familiarised with different data collection techniques; and basic analyses, among others.

The main issues in discussions on data collection and analysis status are summarised thus:

- Data collection plan: Data is requested on emergency, *ad hoc* basis e.g. how many tonnes per season?
- Tools data collection is always not provided for in the budget and data collectors are not facilitated, nor are they training sufficiently.
- there is generally limited value attached to data by the
- Sector level handles too many data requests (MINALOC, MINAGRI, etc.) yet they are neither equipped nor facilitated;
- Generally more data provision and less analysis. The lower levels remain with no back-up and no analysis.
- the health sector has better quality data because it has a budget for vote for data collection and management (in HMIS). The health budget is also decentralised and there is high interaction between the central and decentralised levels.

4. Follow-up actions and closing: Participants were satisfied with the training in as far as highlighting the importance of data, identifying data needs and demonstrating how data can be used. They recommended that the training be undertaken at lower levels for sector, cell and *Umudugudu* leaders, who will be actively involved in collecting data. However, participants admitted that they had not yet got sufficient skills and confidence to be able to train lower level leaders and technical personnel. One thing the participants appreciated was the forum the training provided for Umurenge Executive Secretaries to discuss and exchange views with district stakeholders (who frequently request for data from them without any facilitation or other constraints they face. From these discussions, participants appreciated the need for close interaction, data management capacity building including data management infrastructure at lower levels. They were able to discuss and appreciate the need to clearly define the roles, requirements and capacities of each level in data collection and management.

In closing the training workshop, the Vice Mayor (In-charge of Social Affairs), thanked REMA and pledged the district commitment to generating data, using data in planning and monitoring, and sharing data with those who need it. She requested REMA to continue to support them, pointing out that no other partner has ever come up to support them in this domain. She praised the *Umurenge* Executive Secretaries for their commitment stating that, as strong pillars of the districts, the Umurenge Executive Secretaries were now in position to become more efficient and effective, as a result of the data collection and data management skills they had received. She implored REMA not to stop at supporting them in environmental data but also other sectors. On behalf of REMA, Project Manager PEI/REMA thanked the participants for the enthusiasm and commitment they had exhibited. He assured the participants and the district authorities that REMA was committed to supporting them to improve the quality of data collection and management (particularly environmental and poverty data), which are important for sustainable development.

Annex 1: Participants for the Karongi district Environmental data training (February 18-19, 2009)

SN	Name	Position	Organisation	Tel contact
1	Mukabalisa Simbi Dativa	Vice Mayor/ Social Affairs	Karongi district	
2	Niramire Nkusi	Executive Secretary	Karongi district	
3	Mukangwije Alphonsine	Director/ Planning	''	
4	Habyarimana Eric	Environment Officer	''	
5	Munyandekwe Gertrude	Etat civil	Mubuga sector	
6	Munyaneza Mathias	Executive Secretary	Gitesi sector	
7	Nyirashyrambere Jeanettee	Directrice (a.i)/ Land Officer	Karongi district	
8	Kuzabaganwa Vedaste	Executive Secretary	Murambi sector	
9	Ndayisaba Francois	Executive Secretary	Gashali sector	
10	Rudakenga Paul		Karongi district	
11	Rwigenza Steven	Executive Secretary (a.i)	Ruganda sector	
12	Nengiyumva R. Songo	Etat Civile		
13	Kamanzi Innocent	Executive Secretary	Murindi	
14	Udatsikira N. Heutieri	Etat Civil	Rugabano sector	
15	Rukesh K. Emile	Executive Secretary	Rubengera	
16	Nzeyimana Sylvere	Agronome	Karongi district	
17	Museruka Augustin	Executive Secretary	Gishyita sector	
18	Safari Bagina Theophile	Executive Secretary	Rwankuba sector	
19	Muhire Emmanuel	Statistician	Karongi district	
20	Gashanana Saiba	Executive Secretary	Bwishyura sector	
21	Kayumba J. Damascene	Etat Civile	Tumba sector	

Annex 2: Training Module
(Separate)