

VITAL SIGNS

Vital Signs Tanzania Stakeholders Workshop

Ngurdoto Mountain Lodge, Arusha

September 29, 2012, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

The Vital Signs monitoring system was launched in 2012 with a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Vital Signs provides decision-makers with integrated information on agriculture, ecosystem services and human well-being, and monitors changes in vital ecosystem services upon which agricultural production and farmers' livelihoods depend.

The monitoring system is initially launching in Tanzania, Ethiopia and Ghana. As a first step in each of these countries Vital Signs is creating a "Regional Profile Report," synthesizing existing relevant data from local and global sources in two forms: (1) a consolidated, online data resource; and (2) an atlas of maps, charts and information to establish an information baseline on which Vital Signs measurements will build. Following the African Green Revolution Forum (September 26-28, 2012) in Arusha, Vital Signs held a regional profile workshop for Tanzania.

Workshop objectives:

- Introduce the concept of the regional profile reports as a baseline (compiling information that currently exists) in the context of the larger goals of the Vital Signs monitoring system.
- Give Tanzanian participants from different sectors (government, conservation, agriculture etc.) the opportunity to share their data needs and the format in which data would be most useful.
- Find out which Tanzanian groups are engaged in monitoring activities that relate to agriculture, ecosystems and human well-being, and create a list of current, relevant data sources as well as a list of potential Tanzanian partners for Vital Signs.

Participants:

- Ademola Ajagbe, Senior Program Manager, BirdLife International
- Hulda Gideon, Node Manager, Tanzania Biodiversity Information Facility (TanBIF)
- Charles Meshack, Tanzania Forest Conservation Group
- Shakwaanande Natai, Head of Environment Management Unit, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, Tanzania

- Richard Pluke, Senior Technical Advisor, Tanzania Horticultural Association (TAHA)
- Mary Shetto, SAGCOT Coordinator, Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, Tanzania

Invited, not attending:

- Barney Laseko, Private Sector Competitiveness Project, Prime Minister's Office, Tanzania
- Julius Ningu, Director of Environment, Vice President's Office, Tanzania

Leading the workshop for Vital Signs was **Dr. Alex Awiti**, Aga Khan University. Vital Signs was also represented by **Dr. Sandy Andelman**, Executive Director, Vital Signs (Conservation International), and **Dr. Cheryl Palm**, Deputy Director, Vital Signs (Earth Institute, Columbia University).

After a brief introduction to Vital Signs and a presentation of data from the Vital Signs pilot project in the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania, the workshop participants raised the following questions:

- How will Vital Signs link to and build upon existing monitoring systems?
- How will the monitoring system involve and work with Tanzania's district-level government, since local government is where many important decisions are made?
- Will Vital Signs indicators align with national indicators for Tanzania?

Key issues brought up by participants in the course of the discussion confirmed that:

- Data collection and data holding are dispersed: different institutions collect and have custody of information for different purposes, and it is often difficult to access the raw data.
- There is currently a lack of capacity (human and infrastructure) at multiple levels, but there is great interest in developing this capacity.
- Data products, especially maps, from global models can be difficult to downscale to the community level, and Tanzanians must be able to see the data at scales relevant for Tanzania (it is critical to translate the data into evidence and information for decision makers, including farmers).
- Conservation can be seen as preventing the development of agriculture, and agriculture and conservation representatives are not generally brought together for discussion.
- In establishing a central database in Tanzania, 24-hour internet connectivity is an important consideration.

Major areas of consensus:

Information gaps:

- The need for access to environmental information (water, climate change etc.) is great.
- A harmonized approach to data collection is needed in Tanzania, and there is considerable interest in a system at the local level that can capture and store data from multiple sectors for public use.
- Vital Signs will be in a position to encourage institutions to share their data, in order to create a baseline with our regional profile report.
- Vital Signs must be scaled down to the users, and consider what information they need to make informed decisions.
- Smallholders are key to increasing agricultural productivity, and an index of farmer well-being and profitability would be useful.
- The Environmental Management Unit of the Ministry of Agriculture is currently developing a first draft of information and data they need to establish a baseline. There is a need to explore synergies with this process and avoid duplication of effort.

Stakeholders:

- Key Vital Signs stakeholders in Tanzania will be data providers (research institutions, government institutions, NGOs) and data users (decision-makers, government institutions and ministries, NGOs).
- Vital Signs will need to identify a host institution, which will be important for coordination at the local level and for the creation of synergies with on-going initiatives.
- Vital Signs must take care in finding the right partners, and ensure that it involves multiple sectors and institutions as stakeholders (it is best to involve a wide range of stakeholders at this early stage, so they feel ownership).

Data Sources:

- AgDevCo (consultants to SAGCOT)
- Agricultural Council of Tanzania (ACT)
- Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA)
- Department of Forestry and Beekeeping
- Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET)
- Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF)
- Institute of Resources Assessment (IRA)
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives
- Ministry of Energy and Minerals
- Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development
- Ministry of Livestock

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism
- Ministry of Water
- Ministry of Works
- Missouri Botanical Garden
- National Bureau of Statistics
- National Environmental Management Council
- National Forestry Resources Monitoring and Assessment (NAFORMA)
- National Land Use Planning Commission
- Rufigi Basin Development Authority (RUBADA)
- Rural Energy Agency (REA)
- SAGCOT Green Reference Group
- Sokoine University of Agriculture
- Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) Centre
- Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC)
- Tanzania Meteorological Agency
- Tanzania National Biodiversity Information Facility (TANBIF)
- Tanzania Traditional Energy Development Organization (TaTEDO)
- University of Dar es Salaam
- Vice President's Office
- World Biodiversity Database

Expressions of support:

The participants were unanimous that this initiative presents an unprecedented opportunity for consultation, information sharing and cross-sectoral collaboration. There is a real chance, through Vital Signs and the data and information products it will generate, to encourage collaboration and integrated planning, which takes into account multiple sectors.