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“Competition for Resources in a Changing World:
New Drive for Rural Development”

Extension Services in the Bié Province, Angola – Assessment and Perspectives

JANA MAZANCOVA¹, VLADIMIR KREPL²

¹ *Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Department of Engineering, Economy and Rural Development, Czech Republic*

² *Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, Institute of Tropics and Subtropics, Czech Republic*

Abstract

The Bié Province is traditionally an agricultural region. More than 85 % of population is involved in either direct agricultural or related activities. Agriculture is recognised as the main sector of peoples' living. The long-lasting civil war significantly influenced all spheres of daily life at all levels. As a matter of fact, agricultural production stopped. Farmers were forced to join army troops and majority of arable land was mined. Even though the climate is generally favourable for crop cultivation the soils tend to be of low fertility. Agriculture in the Bié Province is still dependent on the external assistance, especially in terms of knowledge and skills of sustainable technologies and agricultural input supply. Most of the constraints limiting an immediate better performance of agricultural production lie in farmers' lack of knowledge and skills. The traditional information transfer has been interrupted and network of extension services became extinct. Nowadays, several initiatives of NGO as well as governmental sector are carried out within rural extension to provide such an important technical support to farmers. However, the renovation process of extension services has progressed very slowly in comparison with the urgent needs of farmers. Our survey focused on the current performance and potentials of rural extension as perceived by extension agents and farmers. Recognition of changes in agricultural development in the last five years, identification of main constraints and outlining of possible solutions were the principles of our research. The results will serve as implications for competency modelling and development of curriculum of in-service training designed for extension agents in the Bié Province.

Keywords: Angola, extension services, in-service-training