

A NEW LIVELIHOODS PROJECT IN THE OFFING IN NTCHEU

New Apostolic Church Relief Organization (NACRO) in Malawi has signed an agreement with NAK-karitativ, a Germany based NGO, to implement a three-year food security project dubbed Mtendere Smallholder Farmers Irrigation Scheme Project in Traditional Authority Mpando in Ntcheu district. The project officially commences on 1 January 2024 and ends on 31 December 2026 to a tune of 394,742 Euros (approximately MwK710 million).



Anthony Ngwira: The new livelihoods project will improve food security in Ntcheu

The project is somewhat an upscaling of the previous project at Kanthunkhama in the same area, implemented during the past three years. The goal of the new project is to increase food security and rural incomes through the development of surface water irrigation system and enhancement of agricultural practices at the irrigation scheme. The project is expected to benefit directly a total of 200 smallholder farmers currently farming in the irrigation scheme and about 8,000 people from the surrounding villages of Mtendere, Ben Golombe, and Mbemba indirectly through the construction an irrigation system to cater for a 30-hectare piece of land, capacity building of beneficiaries in modern agricultural technologies, establishment of a farmers' cooperative and linking farmers to

high value markets for their crops, and formation of Self-Help Village Savings & Loans (VSL) groups.

Speaking last week when he signed the project agreement on behalf of NACRO, Anthony Ngwira, Acting Executive Director for NACRO, thanked NAK-karitativ for the continued support of the poor and underprivileged communities in Malawi over the years. He further said that the new project will, among others, complement the Government of Malawi's efforts in eradicating poverty and hunger in the country, in line with the Malawi National Irrigation Policy developed with a vision "Prosperity through Irrigation by the Year 2020", which is yet to be evaluated to determine whether the country has made some progress thus far. The new irrigation scheme project will also integrate other cross-cutting issues such as climate change, nutrition, and gender equality in its programming.

Ntcheu district has a lot of potential for irrigation due to the availability of surface and ground water resources. The major crops produced in the irrigation schemes in Ntcheu are maize, potatoes, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, carrot onion, cabbage and beans. The overall tonnage of crops under irrigation farming has been increasing over the years, with a total of 184,383 metric tonnes produced in 2017 alone (Ntcheu District Social Economic Profile, 2017-2022). However, the irrigation potential is not yet being fully exploited. According to Agriculture authorities in Ntcheu, irrigation farming is facing hurdles due to a lack of adequate resources, as the district is failing to meet and cover all land which has potential for irrigation.