



IRRIGATION IN THE DRY SEASON



LLTC IS DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING FARMERS AND PROVIDING ACCESS TO WATER FOR IRRIGATION.

IRRIGATING MALAWI THROUGH THE DRY SEASON



The majority of sub-Saharan agriculture is dependent on rain, as even if there are large bodies of water like lakes and perennial rivers nearby, a lack of infrastructure means that farmers cannot use this water for irrigation. Limbe Leaf Tobacco Company (LLTC) is very engaged in the construction of small dams where water can accumulate during the rainy season to be used in the long months of dry weather.

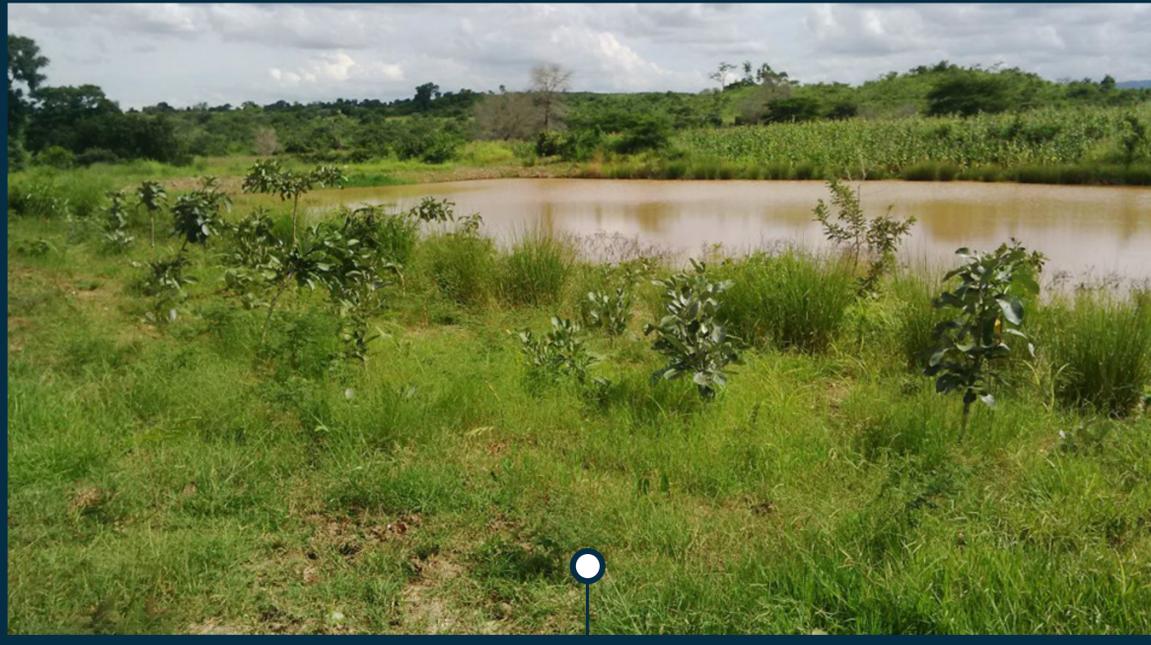
These dams are built in the upper reaches of small river catchments, where there is usually very little water available at the driest time of the year. Small dams are more efficient than bigger projects, as Malawi's tobacco growers are scattered over a wide area and a big dam might supply only a few farmers at great cost.



The mapping of farmers is done using data gathered on the Universal Leaf Mobile app used by LLTC field technicians.

Building a dam is not just a matter of piling some stones in a riverbed – it involves a lot of planning and work. The technicians and area coordinators identify suitable locations during their farm site visits, and engage with the surrounding communities in order to fully understand their needs. A specialised construction firm is then contracted to build a dam that can stand the test of time, while still allowing water to seep through, which ensures that communities below the dam can still benefit from the water. Trees, bahia and vetiver grass are also planted to consolidate the dam and control erosion. A successful dam also requires a short dam wall and the creation of a big flooded basin.

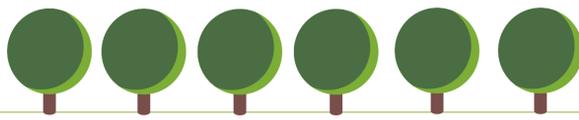
It is vital to engage with the community and educate them on what is required to maintain the dam. This includes explaining the importance of maintaining the dam banks and why crops should not be grown too close to the water level, to prevent erosion and siltation. **LLTC works with both the communities and the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development to ensure that water usage by-laws are put in place and enforced.** Water guardians must be appointed and trained to monitor the dam, ensuring that it is well maintained (including regular weeding), that crops are not grown in the lower part of the banks and that the trees are not cut down. This includes regularly auditing the trees to ensure that they flourish and are not abused.



It takes four to five years for a dam project to reach the stage when the community can take over its management. LLTC has built eight dams so far – three in the Southern region, three in the Central region, and two in the Northern region.



BENEFITTING NEARLY 10 000 PEOPLE



NEARLY 65 000 TREES HAVE BEEN PLANTED AROUND THE DAMS



A FURTHER 73 000 HAVE BEEN PLANTED IN WOODLOTS IN THE SURROUNDING AREAS