

Smallholder farmers don't have access to credit for investment mostly because most financial institutions don't regard them as creditworthy. Smallholder farmers then depend on savings from their low incomes, which limits opportunities for expansion.

Poor implementation of agriculture policies in the EAC. Most EAC countries aren't progressive in implementation of the agriculture policy and the National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP). Most countries are asserting the unavailability of funds as the main reason.

There is lack of linkage between research and smallholder farmers and inadequate extension services. This has left smallholder farmers to suffer from new pest and diseases with no access to new environment-friendly innovations that would improve their productivity.

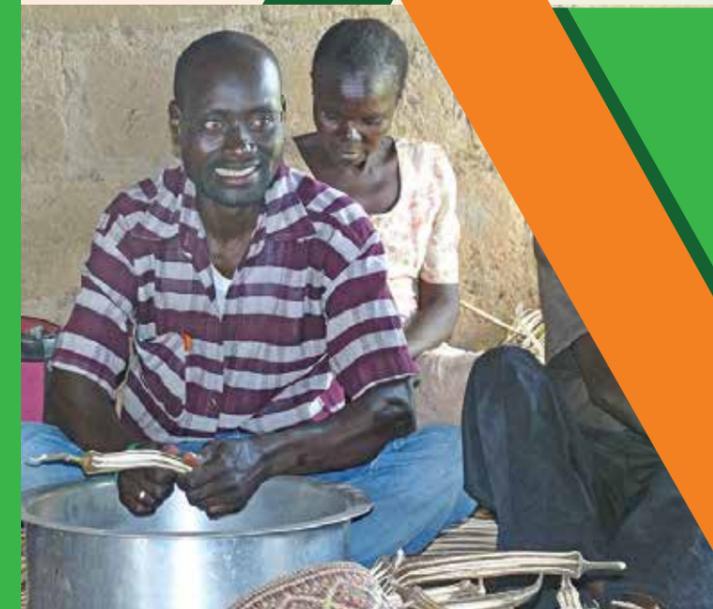
5 Key recommendations

Governments should enhance investment in the agriculture sector targeting smallholder farmers through investing 10 percent of the annual budget to the sector. Smallholder farmers believe that investing in these 5 strategic areas would transform the sector;

- Governments should focus investment on extension services focusing on improving quality of agricultural inputs and the ratio between farmer and extension officer hence improving the delivery of agricultural support services.
- Governments should support smallholder farmers efforts of increasing production and productivity by increasing investment extensively in irrigation infrastructure to combat climate change as well as protecting smallholder farmers' secure land rights especially for rural women.
- Governments should invest in facilitating smallholder farmers' access to agriculture related information like markets, weather, policies among others that will increase their ability to address the current challenges the sector is facing.
- There is need for greater investment in agricultural research focusing on smallholder farmers needs as well as promoting regional cooperation in research and development.
- EAC partner states should invest in the promotion of biodiverse, ecological and organic farming which increases resilience of farming systems to climate change and strengthens the capacity of smallholder farmers to adapt to climate change as well as addressing the hunger problem.

Conclusion

It has been predicted that the expansion of smallholder farming can lead to a faster rate of poverty alleviation, by raising the incomes of rural cultivators and reducing food expenditure, and thus reduces income inequality (World Bank, 2008). As policymakers and others in East African nations anticipate their countries' economic prospects, they must consider agriculture as an important trigger to inclusive economic development. EAC risks to lose a lot by not prioritizing financing agriculture since agriculture is a proven path to prosperity. Much more remains to be done to truly drive the agricultural transformation needed for development in the EAC and to ensure a better life for smallholder farmers and all people as laid out in the Malabo Declaration, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Africa's Agenda 2063.



Eastern and Southern Africa
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SMALLHOLDER FARMERS' CALL

Smallholder farmers' proposed 5 key investment areas that would transform farmers' livelihood and lead to greater economic growth

INTRODUCTION:

With the continued decline of arable land per person, it is predicted that by 2050, the population of East African countries in the East African Community (EAC) will hit 411 million people of which the largest proportion will be young people. There is fear that EAC is running out of natural resources (foremost among them forest cover, land and freshwater resources) hence the concerns that agriculture might, in the not too distant future, no longer be able to produce the food needed to feed a still growing population. This problem can only be addressed by massively investing in the agriculture sector. The agriculture



Eastern and Southern Africa
Small Scale Farmers' Forum
ESAFF - UGANDA

CONTACT US

Office:
Plot 266 | Muvule Avenue
Buye - Ntinda | Kampala
P.O BOX 34420 Kampala - Uganda
Telephone: +256 414 699623 | +256 773 264609
Email: esaffuganda@yahoo.com
Website: www.esaffuganda.org
f ESAFF Uganda @ESAFFUG



sector, which is mainly subsistence employs on average over 76% of the entire population of the EAC of which over 85% are women and it takes a large share of National Economies of countries in the region. According to FAO and World Bank development Indicators, agriculture accounts for 43% of the total GDP in the region.

Agricultural development is considered a key pillar in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is predicted that government investment in the agricultural sector can not only address hunger and malnutrition but also other challenges including poverty, climate change among others. In 2014 EAC Heads of state were part of a meeting held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea were African Heads of State and Government the African Union adopted the Malabo declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for shared prosperity and Improved Livelihoods meant to transform the Agriculture sector in Africa and to give CAADP an opportunity to guide

agriculture development on the African continent. The 7 commitments in the Malabo declaration include Recommitment to the Principles and Values of the CAADP Process, Recommitment to enhance investment finance in Agriculture, Commitment to Ending Hunger by 2025, Commitment to Halving Poverty by 2025, through inclusive Agricultural Growth and Transformation, Commitment to Boosting Intra-African Trade in Agricultural Commodities and Services, Commitment to Enhancing Resilience in livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and other shocks, and Commitment to Mutual Accountability to Actions and Results. The Malabo Declaration sets the Africa 2025 Vision for Agriculture implemented within the CAADP Framework as a vehicle to achieve the first 10 year implementation plan of Africa's Agenda 2063.

Challenges facing smallholder farmers in the region

Smallholder agriculture continues to play a key role in the agriculture which is a priority policy objective of the East African Community (EAC) since its establishment. East African governments consider agriculture as the backbone of their respective economies. *The major challenges facing the agriculture sector in the region include;*

Some smallholder farmers have inadequate access to land due to uncertainties regarding land tenure and land fragmentation. Without adequate access to land, smallholder farmers cannot be expected to respond to food needs at household and market.

Smallholder farmers are suffering from seasonal changes, droughts, floods and food insecurity which is as a result of climate change.