

Kenya Agricultural Production and Market Access Development for Small-Scale Farmers

Background

Agriculture is the most significant sector in the Kenyan economy given its contribution to employment, foreign exchange, food, and its linkages with other sectors of the economy. In the last ten years or so, the performance of the sector has been steadily declining, culminating in a negative growth rate in 2000. With over 80 percent of the Kenyan population (the majority of whom are poor) living in the rural areas; the poor performance of the sector has had serious implications on poverty and living standards of the people. Declining agricultural growth has been identified as a major determinant of poverty in the country. Reversing this trend is no doubt an immediate development challenge for Kenya. Addressing this challenge requires knowledge of what drives agricultural growth and productivity.

The KAPMAD study focused on two districts – Homa-Bay and Kilifi, chosen for the active presence of a relatively more organised constituency of small-scale. The project would contribute to poverty reduction and improvement of livelihoods in Kenya through improved agricultural production and sustainable access of smallholder producers to markets. This project was conducted in partnership with the Kenya

Small-Scale Farmers' Forum (KESFFF) and with support from the Ford Foundation.

Objectives

The KAPMAD project was launched to contribute to ways of enhancing productivity of smallholder farmers in Kenya; improving their livelihood sources; as well as to point out areas that can ameliorate poverty in the country. To achieve this goal, the study sought to understand constraints hindering productivity of and access to markets by smallholders; following which, it sought to offer options for unblocking the constraints as well as provide intervention points for initiating a smallholder policy advocacy plan of action.

More specifically, the project aimed at mapping out the institutional and policy issues that affect small-scale farmers in Kenya. The goal of the project was to build an effective advocacy movement for sustainable and equitable agricultural development in Kenya by strengthening the capacity of agriculture advocacy organisations and networks; as well as developing locally appropriate advocacy strategies to ensure that national policies align

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with the goals of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

Project Activities and Outputs

To carry out the above objectives, CUTS partnered with KESSF and conducted a scope study of organisational capacity needs and strengths in Kenya; produced a comprehensive electronic database of advocacy organisations involved in the agriculture sector; convened and mobilised CSOs to network and develop strategies for raising awareness of the role of agriculture; promoted dialogue and partnership building for agricultural development; and supported efforts to monitor government commitments under CAADP.

All the above activities were envisaged to initiate a small-scale farmer's movement in Kenya, by which the farmers groups are provided

the knowledge, opportunity and space to contribute in the process of evolving and implementing relevant policies that will alleviate them from their present state of poverty into prosperity.

Project Outcome

The project produced reliable knowledge and baseline evidence for mapping. It also facilitated advocacy organisations and other stakeholders in Kenya to share ideas; develop and implement locally relevant strategies for raising awareness about the role of agriculture; and explore opportunities for building broad public support through advocacy campaigns. The project resulted in forging effective connections among key stakeholders (particularly small-scale farmers associations, CSOs and private sector) to enable them build stronger alliances and coalitions for sustained agriculture.