

Scenario Planning for EAC Agricultural Development

Background

Agriculture is of major importance to all countries in the East African Community (EAC) region and its role is crucial for food security and as the driver for livelihood and poverty reduction. Not only does it constitute a substantial portion of the region's economy, foreign exchange and trade, the sector is of tremendous importance due to the percentage of the labour population it employs. The potential of agriculture to contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth and development in these countries is undeniable; while the widespread poverty in these countries which is a main cause of food security and is much more pronounced in rural areas cannot be eradicated without such agricultural development.

It is important to note that most countries in the region are net importers of food, contributing to the high prevalence of poverty, hunger and malnutrition and affirming that agriculture is not delivering its potential as a driver for poverty alleviation, rural livelihoods and food security. Changing climatic patterns further exacerbate the problem as the farmers are often dependent on good weather and rain for irrigation purposes. With this background, the Scenario Planning for EAC Agricultural Development (SCP-EAC) was undertaken from April to November 2010, with support from Trademark East Africa.

Goals and Objectives

The scenario planning aimed at facilitating integrated development of agriculture sector in the EAC region. The SCP-EAC project had two key goals, which were:

- (i) achieving sustainable food security by 2020 in the EAC within an overall productive agricultural development; and
- (ii) establishing a regional food security policy for the EAC that fosters poverty reduction and improvement of standard of living.

Specifically, the project aimed to achieve understanding of current state of agriculture development and food security in EAC; understanding of the current public policy on agriculture development and food security in the region; understanding of drivers and critical uncertainties with an influence on EAC food security; as well as outline scenarios for food security in EAC developed.

Research Methodology

The project was based on two assumptions. First, given the size of population and projected population of the region, the basic definition of food security was to be determined by (food) Availability, (food) Accessibility, and (food)



Absorption (3As) on the demand side); and on (food) Production, (food) Price and (food) Pattern (3Ps) on the supply side of the equation.

The second assumption was the two most critical *uncertainties* in the EAC context that underpin everything else in determining food security are food production and income levels. The project used four scenario models to determine the best scenario possible for food security in the region.

Project Activities and Outputs

To carry out the scenario planning exercise, various country-based interviews and consultations were held with stakeholders, including farmers, government officials, among others. Participants discussed and came up with a list of all possible drivers, trends, changes, threats, risks, constraints and opportunities that

could block or promote agriculture development and food security in the region. Report was disseminated to policymakers for policy debate and influence public policy change at national and regional levels.

Project Outcome

The SCP-EAC project assessed the state of agriculture development and food security in EAC and relevant public policy. The project brought out clearly that there was a need for revised public policies at national and regional levels. The project not only brought out drivers and critical uncertainties with an influence on EAC food security but also developed an outline of scenarios for food security in EAC. It is believed that the project made practical contribution towards achieving food security by 2020.