

\$4m in projects to strengthen Tanzania's agricultural productivity

More than 100,000 smallholder farmers in Tanzania will benefit after today's announcement of US\$4.25-million in new grants to increase their productivity and as a contribution to the country's food security.



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The funding from the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) aims to improve incomes, productivity and access to markets for farmers in the Southern Highlands - Tanzania's main breadbasket region and a region covered by the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) initiative.

Availability of quality seed and inputs as well as poor market access and difficulty securing finance are major inhibitors to agricultural productivity in Tanzania, and most of sub-Saharan Africa.

To overcome these challenges AGRA, with partners including Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), Rural Urban Development Initiative (RUDI), Women in Social Entrepreneurship (WISE) and, Dunduliza Network of Savings and Credit Co-operatives (SACCOs) have worked together to design a series of three year projects to directly tackle these issues.

Facilitating the training of agro-dealers

To enhance farmers' access to improved seed and inputs, the project will facilitate the training of agro-dealers to increase their knowledge and confidence on the improved technologies. The project will also link agro-dealers and farmers to micro-financiers to make these improved technologies more accessible.

The use of better inputs go hand in hand with improved management practices, and through the project over 90,000

farmers will be trained on practices such as Integrated Soil Fertility Management (ISFM). ISFM can increase cereal crops yield by up to 300% and legume crop yields by 100%, and involves the strategic use of fertilizers combined with organic soil enhancers. Farmers use fertilizers efficiently and in combination with organic soil ameliorating inputs,

To ensure gains made from improved seed and management are not lost when trying to sell the produce, the projects will result in providing farmers with training in post-harvest loss management, access to storage facilities and access to structured markets for rice, maize, beans and soybeans.

From seeds to access to markets

AGRA Tanzania Country Head, Dr Mary Mgonja said that the grants announced today aim to improve productivity from seeds to access to markets.

"These grants take into consideration the whole value chain: from ensuring farmers have access to improved seeds and other inputs, training in the best soil management practices and output markets which, pay a fair price for their harvests," said Dr Mgonja.

In welcoming AGRA's announcement, Deputy Permanent Secretary Ministry for Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives, Engineer Raphael Daluti said investments such as what was being announcing today, complements existing investments and initiatives occurring in Tanzania.

"This announcement builds on the work we are doing to secure the country's food supply, in our initiatives such as the Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP) and our Input Subsidy Programme," he said.

To achieve a food secure Tanzania

But it also adds to the work occurring through SAGCOT, which is helping us achieve a food secure Tanzania," he said.

AGRA's Director for Market Access Program (MAP), Anne Mbaabu said the funding will help ensure continued agricultural growth in Tanzania.

The Tanzanian Government must be congratulated for their focus on agriculture and their work in implementing policies to improve productivity.

Since 2002, agricultural production in Tanzania has grown 4.2% annually and this year many farmers are expecting bumper harvests.

"Projects, like those announced today, build on the great work being undertaken by the Tanzanian Government, and other stakeholders, in growing Tanzanian agriculture," Mrs Mbaabu said.

The funding will go to projects in several districts in the southern highlands region of Tanzania, including Ifakara, Kilombero, Kilolo, Kyela, Ludewa, Mbarali, Mbeya, Mbozi, Momba, Namtumbo, Songea and Sumbawanga.

To-date AGRA has invested over \$47m in Tanzanian agriculture.