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FAO IN MALAWI

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MALAWI AT A GLANCE

COUNTRY AREA

118 480 sq km

LAND AREA

94 280 sq km

AGRICULTURE LAND AREA

56 500 sq km

FOREST AREA

22 830 sq km

POPULATION

17.5 million

CONTRIBUTION TO GDP

30% Agricultural contribution

DEPEND ON AGRICULTURE

80% of the population

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS

70% are women

Source: FAO, 2019, Malawi country profile, <https://www.fao.org/countryprofiles/index/en/?iso3=MWI>

Photo: ©FAO/Towela Munthali.

INTRODUCTION

A group of people, including men and women in various colored shirts, are walking away from the camera along a dirt path through a lush green agricultural field. The field is filled with various crops, including tall corn stalks and banana plants. In the background, a large, densely forested hill rises under a clear sky. The overall scene is vibrant and depicts a rural agricultural setting.

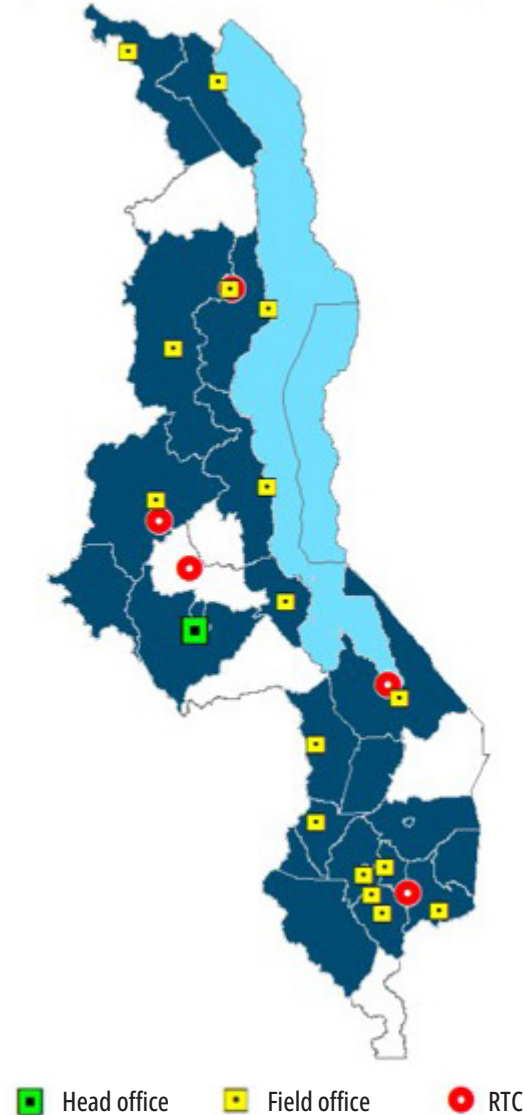
The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. The goal of the Organization is to achieve food security for all and make sure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. With 195 members (194 countries and the European Union), FAO works in over 130 countries worldwide.

FAO has collaborated with the Government of Malawi since establishing its representation in the country in 1986. FAO's cooperation with the Government of Malawi focuses on policy and technical support in food security, agriculture and rural development through a wide range of programmes and projects. These are being delivered with emphasis on technical advisory services and capacity building.

OUR FOOTPRINT

With its head office in the capital city, Lilongwe, FAO has presence in 21 districts namely Chitipa, Karonga, Nkhatabay, Mzimba, Kasungu, Nkhatakota, Salima, Lilongwe, Mchinji, Ntcheu, Mangochi, Zomba, Chiradzulu, Blantyre, Thyolo, Mulanje, Phalombe, Chikwawa, Balaka, Neno and Mwanza.

Implementation of activities in these districts is being supported by 17 field offices and five government residential training centres. The country office has a team of over 120 staff, with technical experts in the fields of policy, agricultural economics, agribusiness, agronomy, fisheries, food security, natural resources management, nutrition, gender, geospatial analysis, extension, communication, irrigation, monitoring and evaluation.



Source: Margaret Mugo, 2022, FAO Malawi.
Map conforms with UN. 2012. Map of Malawi. <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/malawi>

THE COUNTRY PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK (CPF) 2020–2023

The principal role of FAO in Malawi is to help the Government identify, plan and implement priority activities based on the short and long-term aspirations of the country. This is done through the Country Programming Framework (CPF) and in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). The CPF 2020–2023 is aligned to the development and sectorial strategies and policies of the Government of Malawi, the Malawi 2063. The CPF 2020–2023 focuses on four thematic areas:

- conducive agricultural policy and investment environment;
- food and nutrition security and livelihoods;
- governance of natural resources and ecosystems;
- resilience of the agriculture sector and the food systems.

Here are some of the initiatives that are being implemented to contribute to the four thematic areas.

Thematic area 1

CONDUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENT

Scaling up the Tropical Agriculture Platform Framework

Project duration: July 2020 - July 2024

Part of the **European Union** initiative called **Development of Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA): Towards climate-relevant Agricultural and Knowledge Innovation Systems**

Logos: MALAWI GOVERNMENT, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, tap, DeSIRA PARTNERSHIPS FOR INNOVATION, EUROPEAN UNION, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

The agricultural sector in Malawi is diverse and complex. It involves work in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, hence, policies in all these sub-sectors ought to align to ensure consistency and coherence. FAO support is focused on strengthening policy and strategy formulation, harmonization and implementation

monitoring; strengthening the capacity of the agricultural sector to respond to emerging needs for enhanced overall sector performance and strengthening of agricultural statistics, knowledge management and monitoring and evaluation.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

This support is being delivered through technical and financial assistance towards:

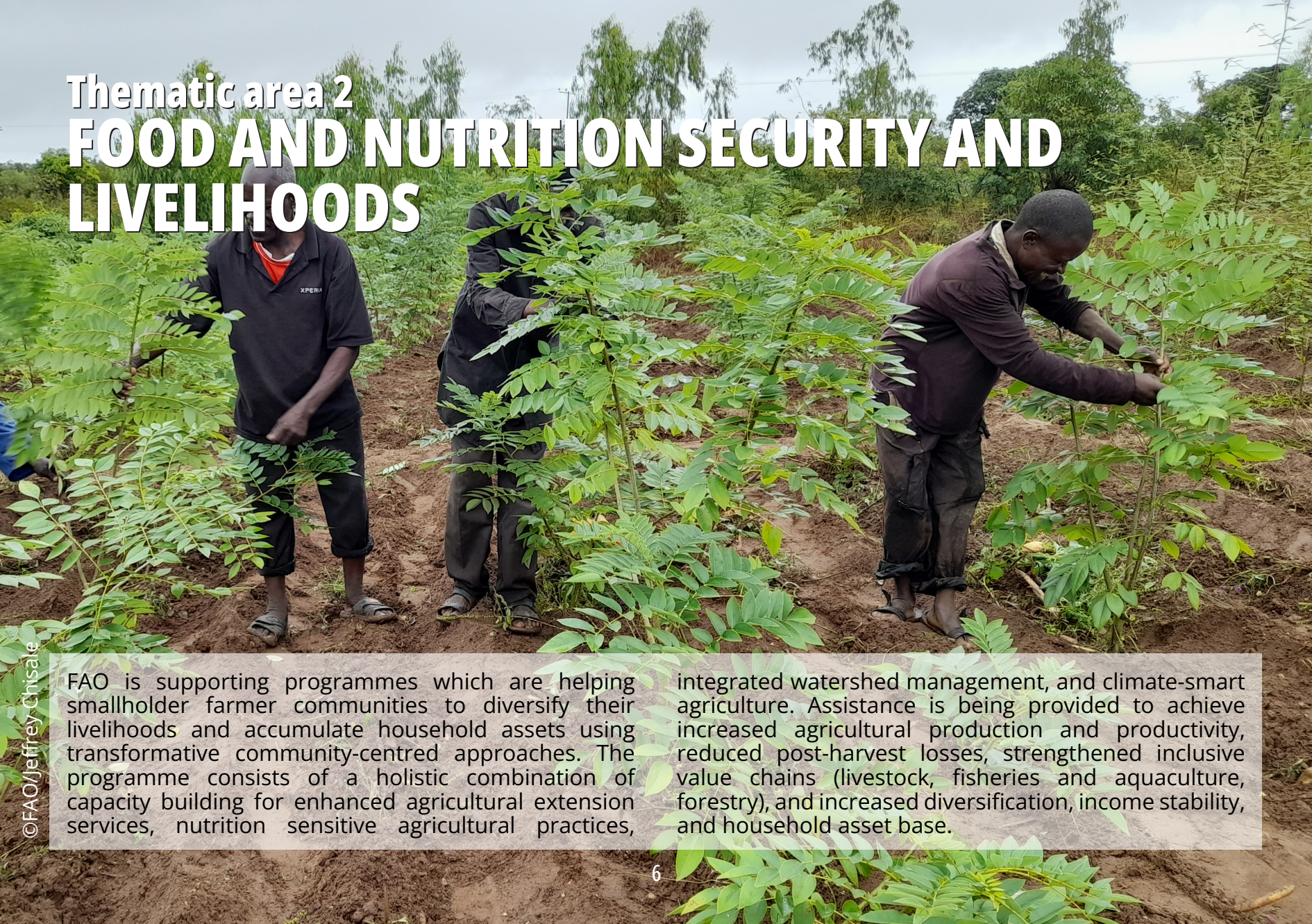
- **National Agriculture Policy:** FAO has invested both financial and technical support towards the review of the National Agriculture Policy (2016 – 2021) and formulation of its successor.
- **Food Safety Policy:** since 2021, FAO has worked with the Government of Malawi to develop the first ever country's food safety policy and subsequently, relevant legislation to support its implementation.
- **Supporting food systems transformation:** together with key partners, FAO has worked closely with Government in conducting food systems dialogues and identifying relevant development pathways for transforming the food systems in the country. As the next step, FAO will be supporting Government to incorporate the findings into its development planning.
- **Support towards the operationalization of the SADC regional agricultural policy (STOSAR):** FAO seeks to develop long-term national capacity by strengthening the management of agricultural information systems, and improving the control of five emerging plant pests and three high-impact

transboundary animal diseases. The project also aims to establish a harmonized regional agricultural and food security information system (AIMS) to facilitate collection, analysis, and dissemination of comparable agricultural information and statistical data, thus enhancing compatibility of the various information systems.

- **TAP-AIS project:** This project is part of a larger Initiative called '*Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA): Towards climate-relevant Agricultural and Knowledge Innovation Systems*', whose objective is to boost innovation in agriculture and food systems transformation of partner countries with a view to be more resilient to the effects of climate change.
- **National census of agriculture and livestock (NACAL):** FAO is supporting the Government of Malawi through the National Statistical Office (NSO) to plan for the upcoming implementation of National Census of Agriculture and Livestock (NACAL) in the country. The overall objective of the NACAL is to provide data for evidence-based decision-making and improved capacity for planning and implementation of agriculture and rural development, including an updated data base, documentation of the situation and implementation and monitoring of policies.

Thematic area 2

FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS



FAO is supporting programmes which are helping smallholder farmer communities to diversify their livelihoods and accumulate household assets using transformative community-centred approaches. The programme consists of a holistic combination of capacity building for enhanced agricultural extension services, nutrition sensitive agricultural practices,

integrated watershed management, and climate-smart agriculture. Assistance is being provided to achieve increased agricultural production and productivity, reduced post-harvest losses, strengthened inclusive value chains (livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, forestry), and increased diversification, income stability, and household asset base.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

Implementing the small-scale fisheries guidelines for gender-equitable and climate-resilient food systems and livelihoods

This project is aimed at supporting small-scale fishers (SSF), especially women, to increase their participation in the whole fisheries value chain thereby increasing incomes from fishing and fish processing and trading. The activities also enhance the profile of SSF in the community and promote women's participation in decision-making processes at community level. The project is being implemented in three districts, Karonga, Salima and Mangochi, by operationalizing the SSF guidelines with a focus on the work of women and the post-harvest sector and capitalizing on related guidance. The project aims to contribute to more inclusive and efficient fish value chains and food systems, delivering benefits to those who work in the sector, local communities and consumers at large. It is implemented using a holistic approach which ensures links with related initiatives on sustainable resource utilisation, responsible fishing and climate change adaptation.

Afikepo nutrition sensitive agriculture project

FAO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in collaboration with the Government of Malawi are implementing the Afikepo nutrition sensitive agriculture project. This is a part of a wider programme called Afikepo Nutrition Programme. FAO and UNICEF supported activities are aimed at increasing and diversifying dietary intake of safe and nutritious foods to achieve optimal nutrition for women of child bearing age, adolescent girls, infants and young children. The project also aims to strengthen multi-sectorial governance of nutrition, contributing to both national and district development planning and monitoring as well as informing policies at the national and district levels.

Revitalizing agriculture clusters and ulimi wa mndandanda through farmer field schools

This intervention is part of the European Union-funded programme Kutukula Ulimi m'Malawi (KULIMA), which aims at improving agricultural productivity in the country. Through the project, FAO in collaboration with Government is supporting agriculture extension workers and communities, building skills and capabilities

for enhanced agricultural production. The project aims to impart knowledge and skills, training at least 600 extension workers as master trainers on the farmer field school (FFS) methodology. The 600 extension workers will in turn transfer their knowledge and experience reaching at least 8 000 community based facilitators. At the end of the programme, smallholder farmers will have gained skills and techniques that will transition them from subsistence agriculture to a more commercially oriented and highly productive agriculture.

The marketing capacity building project for smallholder farmers in Mzimba and Kasungu districts

This project aims at reducing poverty through market-oriented agricultural production. The project's main goal is to strengthen the capacity of the decentralized institutions of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) to support smallholder market-oriented agricultural production. The specific outcomes of the project are to achieve an increase in the number of smallholder farmers organized in formal groups and producing for the market, roll out demand driven and integrated extension delivery system on market-oriented agricultural production in the two districts and mainstream lessons on smallholder market-oriented

production in future agricultural extension strategies and policies of MoA.

Empowering teen mothers and adolescent girls through farmer field and life schools

FAO is implementing a component called 'Empowering teen mothers and adolescent girls through farmer field and life school' in Mchinji district. This is within the framework of a wider programme called Action for teen mothers and adolescent girls. The FAO-led component focuses on improving the capacity of agriculture extension workers to mainstream tailored activities for empowering teen mothers and adolescent girls. The project also aims to increase entrepreneurial and life skills to raise income levels of adolescent girls in Mchinji district. For economic empowerment of adolescent girls, FAO is initiating farmer field and life schools for mentors, adolescent girls in safe spaces and boys and young men in youth clubs to address both the short- and long-term economic shocks including those resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thematic area 3

GOVERNANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENT AND ECOSYSTEMS

Productive natural resources across Malawi are deteriorating, ecosystems are stressed, biological diversity is fast being lost and climate change continues to pose a threat to food production leaving smallholder farmers vulnerable to hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition. For improved governance of natural resources, environment and ecosystems, FAO is

supporting programmes which promote protection of biodiversity, equitable access to land and tenure security, sustainable management and use of environment and natural resources, efficient management and use of water for agricultural production and responsible use of agro-chemicals in agricultural production systems.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

Pesticides risk reduction project

This project focuses on ensuring community awareness on the dangers of pesticides, building capacity for correct use and handling of pesticides, and promoting the adoption of alternatives, including the promotion of biological control of pests and integrated pest management. The goal is to prevent risks to both human health and the environment arising from obsolete pesticides and associated wastes, in order to promote sustainable intensification of agricultural production to meet the food, income and nutrition needs at both household and national levels.

Transforming landscapes and livelihoods


The project objective is to promote the sustainable management of the Miombo and Mopane productive landscapes of the districts of Balaka, Ntcheu and Mangochi contributing to land degradation neutrality. It is targeting 242 000 hectares of forest and agriculture land under integrated landscape management plans, 16 299 hectares for restoration sustainable land management and sustainable forest management and is reaching out to 150 000 members of rural communities with benefits of land degradation neutrality interventions.

Alliance for restoration of forest landscapes and ecosystems in Africa (AREECA)

This project is designed to increase the socio-economic, ecological and climate-related benefits from large-scale forest landscape restoration in Malawi. It targets restoration of 25 000 ha of degraded landscapes in the catchment area of Mpira dam. It was designed in support of the Government of the Malawi's ambitious target of 4.5 million hectares (nearly half of the country's total land area) for restoration under the Bonn Challenge and the AFR100 initiative, and in support of Malawi's National Forest Landscape Restoration Strategy and National Charcoal Strategy (2017).

Land use planning and sustainable land and water management for improved agricultural productivity in Kasungu and Mzimba districts

This intervention aims at achieving sustainable land and water management to improve agriculture productivity in the country. It is designed to address issues of tenure security, within the framework of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the context of national food security (VGGT) as a catalyst for ensuring that land and water resources are conserved for improved



agricultural productivity. It is being implemented in the two districts of Mzimba and Kasungu and has among its beneficiaries, at least 90 extension workers, 1 000 community based facilitators and at least 60 000 smallholder farming households.

Building climate change resilience in the fisheries sector in Malawi

The project, also known as Fisheries Resilience for Malawi (FiRM), aims to improve the resilience of fishing communities around Lake Malombe to effects of climate change. To achieve this, the project specifically aims to strengthen access to information and knowledge regarding climate change and its implications, while creating a favourable enabling environment of policies, plans, regulatory instruments and capacities for the promotion of climate change resilience among fishing communities. The project is also strengthening

stakeholder capacities at local level to increase the resilience of fishing communities to climate change. The FiRM project is therefore working to enhance information on climate trends, extreme events and resource status availability and usage for the formulation and implementation of effective and timely resilience and management measures; enhance mainstreaming of climate change resilience considerations into key policy and planning instruments of relevance to fisheries and fishing communities; enhance restoration of fish stocks and habitats through the ecosystem approach to fisheries and aquaculture (EAFA); ensure that aquaculture is climate-proofed and able to contribute to diverse and resilient livelihood strategies of the most vulnerable sectors of the population; and ensure that local people have access to diverse, pro-poor farming systems as a central element of resilient rural livelihood options.



Thematic area 4

RESILIENCE OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR AND THE FOOD SYSTEMS

Malawi is prone to natural disasters, which have continued to depress the resilience of poor and vulnerable households. Food security is affected by impacts of climate change such as flooding more recently caused by Cyclone Idai and tropical storms Ana, Batsirai, and Gombe which hit Malawi in 2019 and 2021 respectively. Also affecting agricultural production are recurrent dry spells and transboundary animal diseases and crop pests such as the epizootic ulcerative syndrome and fall armyworm respectively. In this context, FAO has been supporting the government with programmes designed to strengthen community

resilience to disasters and other shocks by combining short and long-term interventions that address multiple threats to livelihoods. Expertise is focused on enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation, improving institutional capacity for early warning, preparedness and response; and strengthening of agricultural production systems and related value chains to enable them withstand shocks and crises such as the COVID-19. All actions are underpinned by climate risk assessments, hotspot mapping and profiling, and climate information.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

Promoting sustainable partnerships for empowered resilience (PROSPER)

This is a multi-stakeholder resilience programme supporting the Government of Malawi to reduce extreme poverty and end the recurrent cycle of crises and humanitarian assistance. It aims at reducing the impact of climate shocks, responding to seasonal consumption needs, supporting the design of social safety nets, and generating evidence and knowledge to inform government policy. The FAO-led component aims at strengthened resilience of the targeted poor and vulnerable households to withstand current and future weather and climate related shocks.

Promoting coherence between disaster risk reduction, climate action and social protection

This programme is designed to support poor and vulnerable households to strengthen their resilience to climate change and climate variability through social protection and the adoption of proven climate-smart practices blended with disaster risk reduction. At the same time, it seeks to address capacity gaps in policy implementation, harmonization and monitoring at the district and national levels.

Scaling-up early warning early action (EWEA) for agriculture and food security

This project aims to scale-up FAO's Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) initiatives by building institutional capacities of national and local government, specialized humanitarian bodies, and civil society organizations to anticipate, respond and recover from the impact of potential, imminent and current hazardous events and emergency situations that pose humanitarian threats and could call for a humanitarian response. This includes risk analysis and assessment, mitigation, preparedness, such as stockpiling of emergency items, training and capacity building aimed to increase the speed and effectiveness of lifesaving assistance delivered in the occurrence of crisis. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to enable safeguarding of agricultural livelihoods and food security of vulnerable households by acting ahead of hazards, thereby reducing humanitarian needs, preventing the deterioration of food security and strengthening resilience.

FUTURE INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

In line with the Government agenda which emphasizes the productivity and commercialization of the agriculture sector and tapping on advancements in innovations and technology, below are some of the potential future investments:

Commercialization: Potentially, the country office will invest an estimated EUR 37 million in support of commercialization of existing and functional farmer organizations. Discussions on these openings are in an advanced stage with potential resource partners.

Green climate fund: Discussions are in progress for a potential USD 40 million investment in ecosystem management by the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

Digitalization: FAO is investing in digitalization of its operations and supporting the Government in digital agriculture. Digitalization offers a shift from traditional methods of data collection, information management and reporting, which were expensive, time consuming, less reliable and unsustainable. Capacity building and increasing device access have been prioritized, with over 40 percent of the agricultural extension service system have been trained on digital tools, initiatives

and systems and provision of over 1 500 smart phones and tablets to support the agricultural extension service system.

Digital systems which have been rolled out include the Climate Information System (CIS) for effective delivery of agro-climatic and farm advisories; the Emergency Agriculture and Food Security Surveillance System (EmA-FSS) which is enabling near real-time monitoring of animal disease outbreaks and food security; the Land Information Management System (LIMS) for sustainable land management through enhanced land ownership and registry and the FAW Monitoring and Early Warning System (FAMEWS) supporting integrated pest management of FAW. FAO is using advanced geospatial analysis and earth observation systems for catchment delineation, land degradation hot spot assessment and informed decision-making on appropriate adaptation and restoration plans. FAO Malawi is in the pilot phase of the Digital Village Initiative, which aims at fostering digital rural transformation to combat hunger, poverty, and inequality through the establishment of digital smart villages.

GLOBAL INITIATIVES

FAO is implementing a number of global initiatives aimed at transforming food systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life for all.

GLOBAL ACTION FOR FALL ARMYWORM CONTROL

Fall armyworm (FAW) presence in Malawi was confirmed during the 2016/17 rain-fed growing season and since then outbreaks recur perennially, causing crop damage. Infestations have been predominantly on cereal crops including maize, rice, sorghum, and millet, where the pest causes considerable crop losses. The pest also occurs on wild grasses. Significant investments have been made to understand bio-ecological adaptation of FAW and to validate and generate components of an effective and sustainable integrated pest management (IPM) strategy for its management on smallholder farms.

The global action

The Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control (GA for FAW control) is an FAO initiative which was launched in December 2019 to scale-up international and national

actions to sustainably control the spread and negative impacts of FAW worldwide. Under the GA for FAW control, Malawi is a demonstration country, among 11 other pilot countries of United Republic of Tanzania, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Lesotho, Eswatini, Botswana and Namibia.

Scaling up the adoption of effective and sustainable fall armyworm management practices

FAO and the Government through the Ministry of Agriculture established three demonstration sites at Lweya Irrigation scheme in Nkhatabay, Chitedze research station in Lilongwe and Kasinthula research station in Chikwawa district. These demonstrations are critical for scaling up the adoption of effective and sustainable fall armyworm management practices within Malawi, and the Southern African region. FAW demonstration programme aims to promote good agricultural practices including use of certified seed, early planting, timely application of fertilizers, timely weeding, pest and disease management, timely harvesting as well as technologies such as push-pull, intercropping maize with legumes and conservation agriculture.



EXPLORING INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS FOR FALL ARMYWORM

BACKGROUND

Fall armyworm (FAW) presence was confirmed in Malawi. Since then, outbreaks recur perennially, causing considerable crop damage and posing a threat to food security and livelihoods.

THE RESPONSE

CAPACITY BUILDING

Farmers are enabled to scout regularly and make informed and timely decisions on actions to protect their crops using effective local and sustainable innovative solutions .

PARTICIPATORY FIELD VALIDATION

Innovations for the IPM toolbox for FAW management are validated through season-long experiential learning using the farmer field school (FFS) approach.

FAMEWS ROLL OUT

National rollout of the FAMEWS to enable understanding of FAW prevalence and risk.

2016/17

2017 to date


2019

RESULTS

In validation studies, performance of aqueous extracts from botanical plants, physical crushing of egg masses and larvae, use of fish broth and refined soil, equaled and sometimes exceeded performance of synthetic pesticides.

CONCLUSIONS

Botanical extracts, physical crushing of egg masses and larvae, fish broth and refined soil, are low cost, accessible options and are synergistic with good agricultural practices. Their propagation is safer for human health and will contribute greening of the environment.



2021/22

**GLOBAL ACTION FOR
FAW CONTROL**

Malawi identified as a demonstration country for the Southern African geozone and commences demonstrations for dissemination of FAW management technologies.

ONE COUNTRY ONE PRIORITY PRODUCT

GLOBAL ACTION ON GREEN DEVELOPMENT OF SPECIAL AGRO-PRODUCTS



One Country
One Priority Product

In 2021, banana was identified as the special agro-product for focus under FAO's Global Action on Green Development of Special Agro-Products, themed

One Country One Priority Product (OCOP).

Banana is an important food and cash crop in Malawi ranking fourth as a staple crop after maize, rice and cassava. It offers food and nutritional value, with parts of the country considering it a staple food. For specific banana-growing districts it has provided commercial value with people earning income from sales, gaining employment through various activities along the value chain. Over the last two decades however, banana production has progressively declined due to wide spread outbreaks of pests, and diseases such as the banana bunchy top virus (BBTV) disease, poor agronomic practices and limited availability of

clean planting material. Under the OCOP initiative, FAO is working with the Government of Malawi to revitalize the banana industry for improved food security and rural livelihoods, strengthened value chain actors and for a replenishing of local supply to expand consumer choices.

Action so far

Through donor funded interventions, FAO has supported Government with revitalisation of the banana industry using a four-pronged approach to boost production. The approach includes hands on capacity building for smallholder farmers and government agricultural extension workers; safeguarding existing genetic diversity and preservation of local germplasm; production of clean planting material; and strengthening of community awareness and disease surveillance.



One Country One Priority Product

REVITALIZING THE BANANA INDUSTRY IN MALAWI

FROM THE YEAR 2000

The banana industry in Malawi has, over the past two decades from 2000, rapidly declined due to wide spread outbreaks of the banana bunchy top virus (BBTV) disease, poor husbandry practices and limited availability of clean planting material.

This has been exacerbated by effects of climate change with significant reduction in rainfall.

SAFEGUARDING GENETIC BIODIVERSITY AND PRESERVING LOCAL GERmplasm

To safeguard genetic biodiversity and to preserve local banana varieties, FAO in collaboration with the Government of Malawi have collected and indexed 15 local and improved varieties. These are being multiplied.

HANDS-ON CAPACITY BUILDING FOR EXTENSION WORKERS AND FARMERS

Tailored capacity building for extension workers and farmers through FFS to equip them with requisite knowledge and skills to holistically observe and sustainably manage orchards to attain high yields and prevent spread of pests and diseases.

AWI

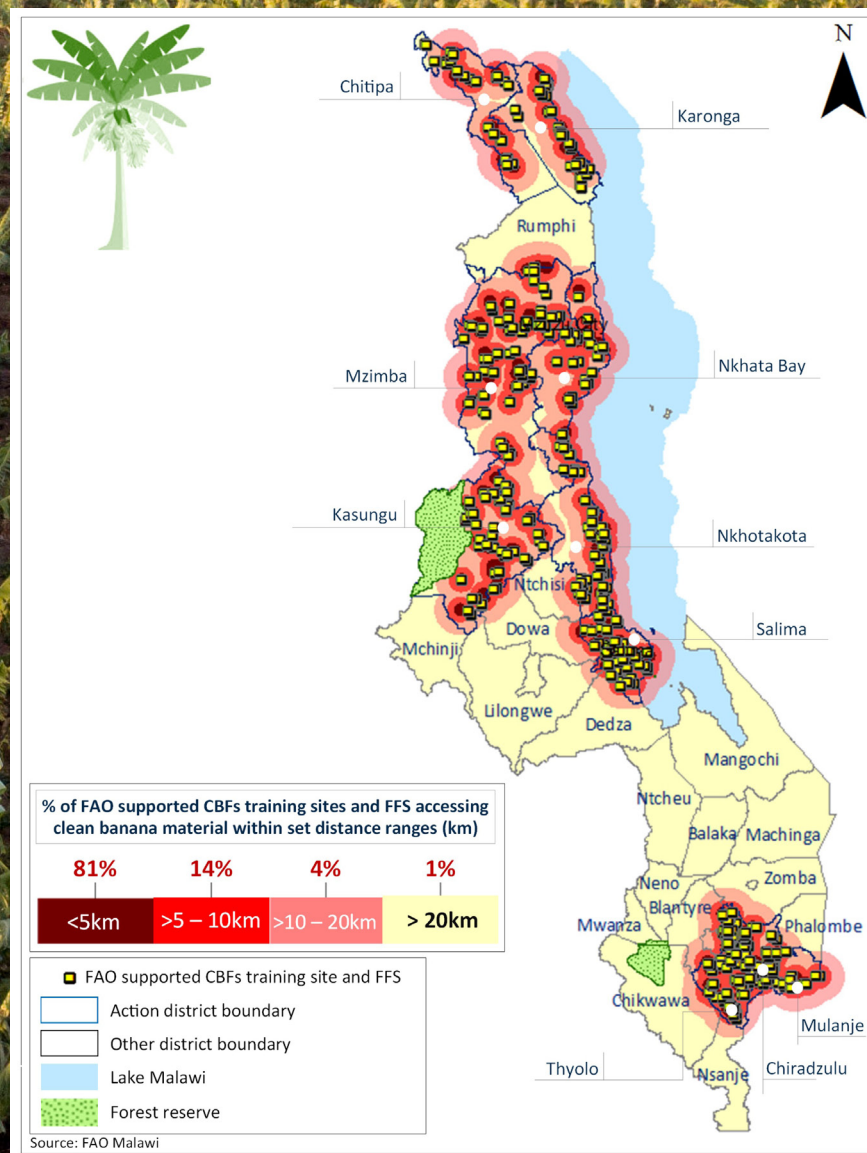
INTENSIFYING PRODUCTION OF CLEAN PLANTING MATERIAL

FAO in collaboration with the Government of Malawi has established four institutional orchards and 247 community managed nurseries to produce clean planting material.

There is also rolling out of macropropagation to increase household access and production of clean planting material.

15 banana varieties are being multiplied.

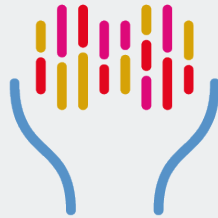
322 243 clean suckers have been produced and distributed, enough to establish 310 hectares of orchards.



Source: Margaret Mugo, 2022, FAO Malawi.

Map conforms with UN, 2012. Map of Malawi. <https://www.un.org/geospatial/content/malawi>

HAND IN HAND INITIATIVE (HiHi)



Hand-in-Hand Initiative

FAO and the Government of Malawi through the Ministry of Agriculture's Department of Agricultural Planning Services (DAPS) are implementing the FAO-funded Hand in Hand initiative (HiHi) as a way of providing holistic and effective development assistance within a disciplined, accountable, pragmatic and flexible partnership framework. The initiative will help address the challenges of low production and productivity, lack of up to date information and data for decision-making and lack of targeted and informed agricultural investment planning and programming.

The country taskforce team, including Government ministries responsible for agriculture, trade, industry, natural resources and youth, and the National Planning Commission, has endorsed a roadmap for implementation of the initiative. Among other things, prioritised activities include briefing of the initiative to the Donor Community on Agriculture and Food Security (DCAFS), private sector, academia, NGOs, other development partners and other UN agencies; mapping of donors and investment partners and development of a comprehensive program investment plan. Progress made includes initial assessments and analyses to establish a baseline of the current issues and bottlenecks facing prioritized agricultural value chains, as guided by the country's vision Malawi 2063, review and endorsement of the Malawi typologies analysis report, analysis and selection of key values chains for investment.

Next steps include mapping of value chains, specific investment needs assessment and consultations with value chain actors, endorsement of investment opportunities, partner matchmaking and executive round tables. A dashboard for HiHi will be customized to track progress of implementation.



VOICES FROM THE FIELD

ELERTON APPLAUDS THE POWER OF FARMER FIELD SCHOOLS

Elerton Levele is a member of Tadala FFS in Thyolo district. He was trained on the FFS methodology through The FAO-led component of the European Union-funded KULIMA programme at Thuchila residential training centre (RTC) in 2018. He is one of 366 FFS community based facilitators (CBF), who have been trained at government RTCs under the programme, enabling them to support farmers through a 12 to 18 months experiential learning cycle, where they are empowered to discover what works in their own local conditions to improve their agricultural production and productivity. Elerton applies the knowledge and skills gained through FFS in his own agricultural activities and he applauds the results. Since participating in FFS, he has diversified his crop enterprise. He introduced piggyery from proceeds from sale of crops in 2019 and later bought a calf with proceeds from 2021. The revenue generated is also helping to improve the family's living conditions. Elerton has been able to plaster the walls and to cement the floor of his house to improve his family's living conditions.

On challenges, Elerton cites access to water which is a distance from his fields. He plans to ease this constraint by buying a water pump to improve his irrigation system to ease expansion of the horticultural activities and

support increased income generation.

On nutrition, Elerton confirms that aside from producing their own food, his family is able to buy food items to supplement household needs thanks to the continual flow of income that is being generated.

"Prior to the capacity building, our homestead was just a home. But now we are able to maximize use of the space to produce diversified foods. As you walk around you will see the six food groups animal foods, fruits, legumes, fats, vegetables and staples. They are all available within the compound," Elerton says.

Elerton supports community members by sharing skills on good agricultural practices and with finding markets for their produce. He has opened up his home as a centre for learning for those who would wish to observe first-hand practices which they too can replicate in their own households. Through facilitation of two FFS groups i.e. 60 community based facilitators, Elerton's knowledge reaches out to 1 800 people since each of the 60 CBFs also works with their own outreach groups of 30.



Elerton and his family reap benefits from agriculture

FARMING WITH A NUTRITION LENS

Eva Mtonga learnt that being a farmer does not necessarily guarantee good household nutrition. She discovered that being a farmer who is equipped with adequate nutrition knowledge and skill is a huge plus for the household because food production in this case, is based on and aims at fulfilling the nutritional needs of the household.

Eva is 64 years old and hails from Alick Nyirenda village. She lives with her three grandchildren aged four, seven and thirteen. For years, she produced maize and soya beans for food and income respectively. Her household has been limited to a maize-based diet as a result of her agricultural production choices. Also, a lack of funds meant that she prioritized items other than buying of foods which could help to supplement the nutritional needs of her family.

“After selling soya beans, which usually would not fetch a lot on the market, I would use the money to buy fertilizer first and then the remaining money would be used to buy other things required in my household,” she says indicating that food items such as cooking oil, or eggs, were not among the items on her shopping list because the money was barely enough to include those necessities.

Eva’s situation changed in 2019 when she joined the EU-funded Afikepo program. Since she lives with her four year old granddaughter, Eva was eligible for and was able to participate in Afikepo activities, which target women of child bearing age, or those who are pregnant or breastfeeding, and children under the age of five.

“When I joined became a member of Tikoleraneko care group which is supported by Afikepo, I started learning about nutrition and the ways which we can use to obtain different types of foods,” she says.

Eva particularly liked the idea of producing a variety of foods since as a smallholder farmer, she was already familiar with food production. Afikepo helped her to understand how diversified food production could provide the complementary foods that were missing in her household.

She was particularly interested in integrated household farming, which allowed her to diversify her food production to feed the household while at the same time save money spent on food purchases. She has so far engaged in backyard gardening, planting of fruit trees and small stock production. After joining the care group, Eva saw an opportunity in the vegetable



production and expanded her garden from the average 2 m x 3 m to a 5 m x 7 m to increase her production of vegetables, which she now sells to raise money for her household.

Since joining Afikepo, Eva has been planting bio-fortified maize varieties, indigenous and exotic vegetable varieties, tomatoes and pumpkins in her backyard garden. Afikepo supported care group members in Alick Nyirenda village with 50 Black Australorp chickens to improve the performance of the local chicken varieties in terms of egg laying, egg size and increase in bird size. This has resulted in an increase in consumption

of animal foods among the care group members which provides protein for better health.

Through this initiative, Eva has improved her local chicken varieties using the Black Australorp variety, which produces more and bigger eggs and provides more meat.

“We can now afford to eat food from the six food groups in my home because of diversified production. I am happy that my grandchildren have enough food and they look healthier and are more active now,” she says.

THE FOUR BETTERS



**BETTER
PRODUCTION**



**BETTER
NUTRITION**



**BETTER
ENVIRONMENT**




**BETTER
LIFE**

Transforming agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life is at the heart of FAO's Strategic Framework 2022–2031. It is at the core of FAO Malawi's support to Government to achieve the national long-term vision, Malawi 2063 (MW63), and the sustainable development agenda 2030.

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