



# **APRA COUNTRY BROCHURE: RICE COMMERCIALISATION IN TANZANIA**

## The APRA programme

The Agricultural Policy Research in Africa (APRA) programme of the Future Agricultures Consortium (FAC) is a six-year research initiative (2016-2022) that is working to **identify the most effective and inclusive pathways to agricultural commercialisation** that empower women, reduce rural poverty, and improve food and nutrition security in sub-Saharan Africa.

### What is agricultural commercialisation?

We define commercialisation as a process that occurs when farmers increasingly engage with the market, either to procure inputs and resources (such as fertiliser, seeds, hired labour, formal credit, and rented land), or to prepare and sell their produce. Commercialisation may occur through either external investment or market specialisation and farm consolidation, or a combination of the two.

Commercialisation is successful if more people are 'stepping up', 'stepping out', and 'stepping in', and fewer people are 'hanging in' or 'dropping out' of productive agriculture.

### What is APRA doing?

APRA researchers are examining how African farmers engage with four different types of commercial agriculture (estate/plantation, medium-scale commercial agriculture, contract farming, and smallholder commercialisation) and the effects this has on the livelihoods of rural people, particularly women and young people. The aim is to help inform future policy and investment decisions to promote inclusive forms of agricultural commercialisation in sub-Saharan Africa targeting six focal countries across east, west and southern Africa (Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe).

### APRA in Tanzania

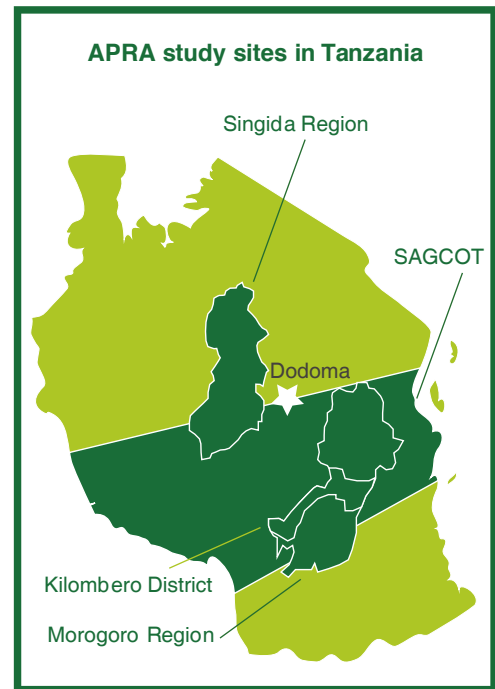
APRA is working in Tanzania to conduct quantitative and qualitative research to analyse the effects of different forms of rice commercialisation on poverty, food and nutrition security, and women's empowerment in Kilombero Valley.

### APRA Tanzania: research objective

This study aims to assess the effects of different rice commercialisation pathways on poverty, food security, and youths in Kilombero Valley.

### Study questions

- What are the drivers of rice commercialisation, and how can they inform policy and accelerate rice commercialisation in order to reduce poverty and food insecurity, especially among women and girls?



- What are the different commercialisation opportunities and options chosen by different groups, such as men, women, medium-scale farmers, and members of sustainable rice intensification (SRI) groups?
- What is the level of commercialisation attained by different categories of farmers, and are these influenced by the options chosen?
- How are different commercialisation opportunities associated with different livelihood outcomes, and how do they influence which farmers step out, step up, step in, hang in, or drop out of their original commercialisation options? Is commercialisation inclusive?



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## Research findings

### 1. Trends

- Rice commercialisation is ongoing but not yet on a sustained and rising trajectory; it remains susceptible to weather and market factors.
  - Infrastructure improvement (electrification, roads and communication) is accelerating commercialisation.
  - Trade policies need to be coherent and sensitive to consumer demand in regional markets. Tanzania should also plan ahead to maintain its position in regional markets, as other countries implement plans for self-sufficiency and become net rice exporters in the medium- and long-run.
  - Coordinated regional strategies are required in order to foster complementary competitive advantages among countries within regional economic blocks, as well as in Africa in general. The African Union can provide leadership in this regard, working with regional bodies such as the East African Community.
  - Rice is an important crop, which contributes to income and food security. However, issues faced by women and young people (i.e poorer access to inputs and land) in the production of rice is a challenge that still needs to be addressed.
  - Employment and value addition opportunities exist along the rice value chain for women and youths, but these groups continue to face resource and cultural barriers that need to be addressed.
- Investment in private goods (processors establish more efficient mills where there is electricity).
  - Intensification (use of inputs, especially herbicides and fertilisers), and technological spill-over from large-scale investors (training and credit support for SRI groups).
  - Extensification (tools such as animal-drawn technology and tractors; immigration).
  - Diversity amongst the farming population is enhancing knowledge sharing within communities which drives competition to learn from each other, while also addressing negative cultural norms.
  - Increasing demand for rice as a result of the rising population, enhanced incomes, urbanisation, and a preference for aromatic rice at local and regional markets.

### Conclusion

Rice commercialisation in Kilombero Valley has been ongoing for a long time, but it has accelerated during the last two decades thanks to a number of drivers – especially public investment in infrastructure, which has improved transportation, communication, and processing. Some farmers, especially medium-scale farmers and SRI members, have been able to step up and some have stepped out, as they benefit from intensification, extensification, and diversification. However, the majority of farmers face low use of purchased inputs, especially purchased seed and chemical fertiliser, in turn leading to persistent low yield. Consequently, some small-scale farmers, especially women and youths, have been hanging in – while a few have dropped out to become casual labours as they face issues such as resource ownership and access gaps, as well as other shocks.



The study's findings raise concerns about the unmonitored and rising use of herbicides, which leads to water pollution. Uncoordinated expansion of rice production also has the potential to increase the siltation of rivers within the Kilombero Valley and further down the Rufiji Basin. Moreover, rice expansion into a protected wetland within the valley threatens biodiversity. Other problems, including climate change, COVID-19, rising input prices, and unstable output markets, have also tested the resilience of agricultural commercialisation outcomes. All of these challenges need to be addressed to ensure medium- and long-term sustainability of production systems and inclusive outcomes.

Finally, the findings demonstrated that, while rising income is an important outcome of commercialisation, livelihood improvement also depends on how that income is used. Investments in education, and improvements in houses and latrines, have raised the status of many households to above the poverty line; and cultural factors play an important role to influence positive changes in this regard. Ultimately, promoting inclusive commercialisation requires combined efforts from the government, development agencies, and local communities.

## ***Policy messages***

- Support infrastructure and institution development to enable sustainable intensification and extensification, and intensification works for all, including women and youths. There is a need to monitor and address the negative effects arising from intensification and extensification.
- Increase investment in health and education services and enforce health laws, especially in remote villages where women are more marginalised.
- Support alternative income-generating activities and make them more inclusive for women and youths.
- Involve local communities in devising solutions which address negative cultural norms to enhance the involvement of women and youths.
- Make strategic moves to sustain and expand the regional market, and address the concern of increasing competition from imports and the drive towards self-sufficiency in regional markets.

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### **For more information:**

**[www.future-agricultures.org/apra/](http://www.future-agricultures.org/apra/)**

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The APRA Directorate is based at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UK ([www.ids.ac.uk](http://www.ids.ac.uk)), with regional hubs at the Centre for African Bio-Entrepreneurship (CABE), Kenya, the Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), South Africa, and the University of Ghana, Legon. It builds on more than a decade of research and policy engagement work by the Future Agricultures Consortium ([www.future-agricultures.org](http://www.future-agricultures.org)) and involves more than 100 researchers and communications professionals in Africa, UK, Sweden and USA.

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