



# **APRA COUNTRY BROCHURE SUNFLOWER 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?

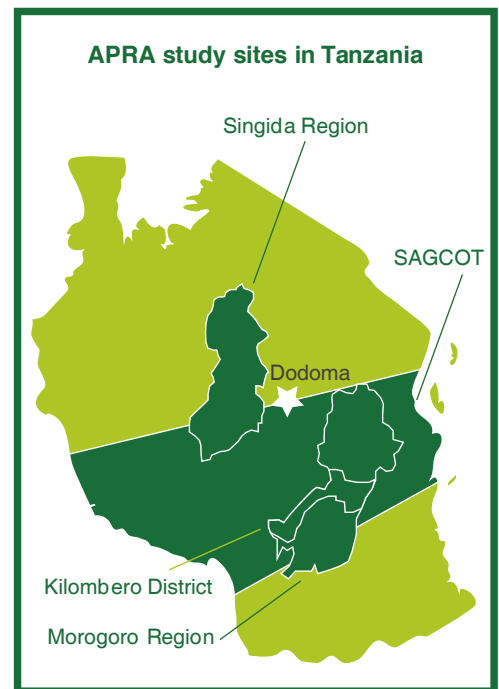
APRA researchers are examining how African farmers engage with four different types of commercial agriculture (estate/plantation, medium-scale commercial agriculture, contract farming, and smallholder commercialisation) and the effects this has on the livelihoods of rural people, particularly women and 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 explore how different pathways of sunflower commercialisation have evolved over time to assess the dynamics of agrarian change, and how these have influenced the livelihood opportunities and outcomes for rural men and women in Singida Region.

### APRA Tanzania: research objective

This study aims to identify the role of sunflower commercialisation, and potential pathways for agricultural commercialisation, in a semi-arid environment. Specifically, it will examine how different pathways of sunflower commercialisation have evolved in Singida Region. It will also assess the changes that have occurred over time, and investigate how these have influenced livelihood opportunities/choices and livelihood outcomes for different categories of farmers.



### Study questions

- How have different pathways of sunflower commercialisation evolved in Singida Region?
- What are the dynamics of agrarian change?
- How have these influenced the livelihood opportunities/options, choices, and outcomes for rural women and men in different contexts?

### Research findings

- Sunflower commercialisation has stimulated diversification and changed livelihood options. Commercialisation has benefited other enterprises, but the reverse is also true. For instance, incomes



from sunflower catalysed investments in high value crops, such as onions and green gram, in response to market dynamics. Likewise, income from other crops has been invested in sunflower production, marketing, and processing. Farmers depend on diverse sources of livelihood, both within and outside of agriculture.

- Competition for land changed the management of livestock, such as distributing large herds to caretakers and migration to less densely populated districts.
- Everyone benefitted from commercialisation in some respect, but at different levels as a result of social factors (such as gender, age, wealth status, and social behaviours).
- Medium-scale farmers and male-headed households experienced greater food security and less impoverishment than small-scale farmers and female-headed households.
- Some farmers stepped up (diversifying to onions, green gram, or livestock), while others (women and landless men) stagnated and some stepped down (into poorer wealth rankings) due to resource constraints.

## Key takeaways

### 1. Trends

- During the 1990s, the government, development partners, and non-governmental organisations promoted sunflower production to help reduce poverty levels. This involved establishing the correct policies, mobilising resources, and developing technology, as well as supporting institutions and infrastructure development.



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- The private sector involvement was centred on trading and investment in transportation, processing, and financing.
- Observed effects included an increased number of producers and processors, rising yields, and raised production levels between 2000–2010. After this time, however, yields declined as investments in technology development – particularly to support the production and distribution of improved seed – dwindled.
- Relations between sunflower/other crops and livestock have been complementary – driven by rising use of animal-drawn technology (ADT) and manure. Competition for land saw large livestock herds driven to the west where grazing land was available; and some large herd owners redistributed their livestock to caretakers – spreading the benefits through communities. Livestock ownership is a local symbol of wealth and, as more people accumulate wealth from crop production, they acquire livestock. Therefore, the number of livestock per household has been increasing – although not for all.
- Declining sunflower yields after 2010 have raised alternative opportunities. Other emerging crops (e.g., onions and chickpeas) and non-farm activities have widened the scope of livelihood options, leading to diversification.
- Gender and cultural institutions, such as Nsoza and village community banks (VICOBA), can be utilised to enhance women's inclusion in agricultural commercialisation processes. For example, they can increase opportunities for women to access resources such as land (under Nsoza) and purchased inputs using credit (from VICOBA).

### 2. Drivers of commercialisation:

- There is a high demand for sunflower oil due to health reasons: this oil has a lower cholesterol content compared to alternatives.
- Investment in public goods (such as trunk and rural roads that are now passable year-round, and mobile phone networks) and increased use of mobile phones. Rural electrification is bringing processing facilities closer to farmers. Solar technology has also improved the quality of life at the household level (for example, through improved lighting and mobile phone charging for enhanced communication).
- Improved mobility through the use of motorcycles (which has benefitted from the improvement of rural roads that are passable year-round).
- The availability of informal financing from traders and VICOBA.
- Use of ADT for cultivation, weeding, and transportation.

- Renewed government efforts to prioritise sunflower production, under the Sunflower Policy of 2016.
- Enhanced government efforts to promote crop diversity – for example, introducing cashew as a new cash crop in Singida Region.

## Conclusion

The findings show that sunflower commercialisation has played an important role in reducing poverty in the study area, driven by area expansion and initial yield improvement. Nevertheless, yields generally remain low due to underinvestment in technology development – which has also seen the use of poor-quality seed remaining high among farmers. Income from sunflower has supported diversification into other crops, including onions and green gram, and livestock and non-farm activities. With Singida Region's fragile environment, diversification was necessary – but this has also led to competition for land, labour, and capital, as well as competition and complementarity among enterprises including livestock production. Consequently, some farmers stepped out into non-farm enterprises while others stepped in, investing proceeds into further sunflower expansion and improvement. Exclusion from such benefits is observed among women and youths, who stagnated or stepped down as they faced limitations in accessing land and credit for input acquisition. These limitations can be addressed through

policy and institutional changes, as well as inclusive adaptation in light of climate challenges and changes. Other constraints, including various social vices, need to be addressed at the community level – perhaps with external facilitation in order to bring about positive behavioural and cultural changes.

## Policy messages

- Facilitate the production of high-quality sunflower to consolidate import substitution.
- Promote complementary enterprises based on their relative competitive advantages (in the use of land, labour, and capital) in the short, medium and long-term.
- Control livestock populations to encourage communities to practice proper land use.
- Promote alternative income generating activities to enhance household food security in marginal environments.
- Ensure the availability of productivity-enhancing inputs and technologies at affordable prices. Expand markets and promote and harness savings while improving borrowing capacity to accelerate the development of the value chain.

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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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