

Concept Note on Agri-food Systems Transformation Research Project

Introduction

Transformation towards sustainable, resilient, equitable, and inclusive agri-food systems is one of the most important challenges of our times across Africa as it contributes to reducing poverty, unemployment, and achieving food and nutrition security in rural, peri-urban, and urban communities. Therefore, research focusing on the transformation of food systems is one of the present and key research agendas of AISA in South Africa and other countries in the region, including Tanzania and Zambia. The current study focuses on Food systems transformation leveraging digital and climate-smart agriculture technologies and has started data collection in Zambia, going into Tanzania and South Africa this year. To prepare for fieldwork in Tanzania, a multi-stakeholder consultative workshop becomes essential ahead of the field data collection process. Such a workshop will allow the team to understand the perspectives, needs, and concerns of various stakeholders involved in the agri-food system. This can help shape the research objectives and methodology to ensure they are relevant and beneficial to those directly impacted by the system. The workshop will provide an opportunity to build relationships and trust with stakeholders, facilitating better cooperation and participation during the fieldwork. More importantly, this consultative workshop will help identify potential challenges or barriers that might arise during the research project. This can allow for proactive planning to address these issues.

Goal:

- Undertake high-level multi-stakeholder engagement dialogues with diplomats, local and national government officials, the private sector, the research community, and civil society groups regarding food systems transformation in Tanzania study to enhance policy advocacy and institutional visibility.

Objectives of the workshop

- To map and establish collaborative networks with stakeholders such as the Mzumbe University, the Government, the Economic Social Research Foundation (ESRF), and others for research purposes.
- To conduct preparations such as study site selection and data collection instruments finalization for the implementation of the agri-food systems transformation study in Tanzania
- To establish a good engagement for the development of MOU/MOA with partners such as the Sokoine University of Agriculture and the Economic Social Research Foundation (ESRF)
- To enhance HSRC/AISA visibility and footprint in research and development in Tanzania for continued sustainable research collaboration beyond the current study.
- To build awareness and community trust with key stakeholders involved in agriculture, food security issues, and local governance to facilitate easy community entry during the implementation of the study.
- Develop networks and contacts with key informants such as policymakers, food safety experts, market regulators, and other key stakeholders in the food supply chain for possible interviews.

Methodological Approach

The workshop will be done in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in collaboration with the Mzumbe University. The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA) will lead the workshop engagements. Participants will be drawn from government departments and universities, including Mzumbe University, Sokoine University of Agriculture, University of Dar es Salaam, the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) Tanzania node, civic society, development agencies, and local government institutions. The workshop will take place over two days, and the expected outputs and outcomes are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Activities, outputs, outcomes, and verifiable indicators of achievement of the multi-stakeholder workshop in Tanzania

Objective	Activity	Outputs	Outcomes	Verifiable indicators of achievement
Establishing collaborative networks	Stakeholder engagement	-Institutions engaged	-improved visibility	-List of institutions engaged
Preparations such as Community entry, study site selection, and data collection instruments finalization	Discussions with partners on ethics clearance, study site selection, and instruments reviewing	- Identified study areas -Reviewed instruments	-Instruments reviewed and improved -Community entry process and logistic set	-List of study areas -Instruments reviewed. -Potential gatekeepers engaged
the development of MOU/MOA with partners	Discussions with potential partners	- Identified Institution(s) for MOU/MOA signing	-Improved collaborative networking	-Listing of institution(s) for signing MOU/MOA
Build awareness, and community trust with key stakeholders involved in agriculture, food security issues, and local governance to facilitate easy community entry	Identification and engagement of key institutions involved	-Names of institutions and contact persons	-initial collaborative engagements done	-List of institutions, contact persons and responsibility