



Future Agricultures

Independent research and debate on
the future of agriculture in Africa

The Future Agricultures Consortium is an Africa-based alliance of research organisations seeking to provide timely, high-quality and independent information and advice to improve agricultural policy and practice in Africa.

Future Agricultures' research and analysis focuses on the political economy of agricultural policy processes in Africa – critically examining how and why decisions are made, the conditions for change, and the practical and policy challenges of establishing and sustaining pro-poor agricultural growth.

Since 2005, Future Agricultures researchers have conducted comparative, multi-country research across 10 core themes in 15 countries; produced more than 100 technical papers, books and policy briefs; and convened over a dozen high-profile events on the politics of policy processes in African agriculture.

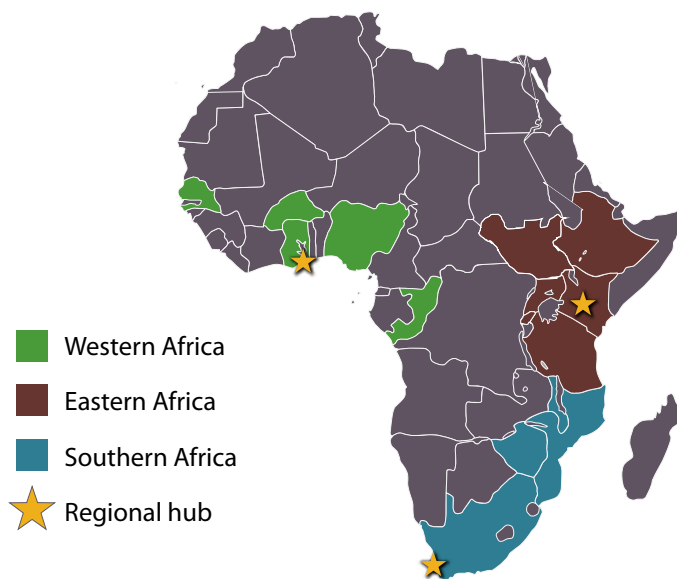
Providing policy-relevant advice and analysis for improving agricultural decision-making remains one of the key challenges in the region, one that requires Africa-based solutions to address the reality of contrasting political interests and priorities.



To achieve this goal, Future Agricultures recently instituted a new, regional, Africa-centred structure. This will strengthen and expand the capacity of our growing, decentralised network of over 90 researchers across the region and around the world to produce and deliver cutting-edge research to policy actors at national, regional and international levels.

How we work

Funded by the UK Government, Future Agricultures is organised as a network of three regional hubs related to the major regional economic communities in Africa (COMESA, ECOWAS and SADC), as well as a fourth hub in Europe. Our regional offices are in East Africa (Nairobi, Kenya), West Africa (Accra, Ghana), Southern Africa (Cape Town, South Africa) and Europe (Brighton, UK). All are located in leading, university-based, policy research institutions.



Each hub is linked to and supports a network of national, regional and international partners that provide academically-robust, policy-focused research and advice on agricultural policy processes in Africa.

The central activities of the Future Agricultures regional hubs involve four key components:

- **Researching the political economy of African agricultural policy processes at national and regional levels** to inform decision-making and assess policy and investment options for accelerating agricultural growth and reducing poverty;
- **Investing in social science capacity and policy research careers in an African context** through a successful ongoing Early Career Fellowship Programme and a new Post-Doctoral Programme, with mentoring support from senior Future Agricultures researchers;
- **Strengthening and supporting the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) of the African Union Commission** and related programmes and processes through research and facilitated dialogue;
- **Communicating evidence and facilitating access of key policy actors to new knowledge and information** to improve decision-making, and assessing the impacts and outcomes of agricultural research and engagement on decision-making.

“Future Agricultures builds on the capacity of leading research institutions to inform policy-making for a sustainable future by focusing on areas that need urgent attention - showing how to remove barriers to policy-making and implementation, highlighting alternative policy options and facilitating access to new knowledge and information.”

Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP)



Building next-generation capacity

Since 2009, Future Agricultures has awarded 27 Early Career Fellowships to promising post-graduate researchers addressing a wide array of themes related to the political economy of agriculture in Africa. Future Agricultures has also created small grants opportunities under our Land and Youth research themes, and provided fieldwork bursaries through the Collaborative Master's Program of Science in Agricultural and Applied Economics (CMAAE). These activities are building a new generation of engaged, critical researchers in Africa and beyond.

Core research themes

Brazil and China in Africa

Analysing how different investments, approaches and models of development from the 'rising powers' are influencing African agricultural development, working with partners in Brazil and China

Climate change

Examining how debates on climate change are shaping agricultural policy processes and what alternative adaptation and mitigation pathways for climate-responsive agriculture may be created

Commercialisations

Investigating how smallholder farmers can compete in markets and what public policies and programmes can help promote new pathways to commercial agriculture

Growth and social protection

Assessing synergies between welfare-protecting and growth-promoting social protection and agricultural policies, and what 'graduation' means in vulnerable and unpredictable contexts

Gender and social difference

Exploring how gender and social difference affect how different people in different places benefit from agricultural development – challenging stereotypes and assumptions about women and men in African agriculture

Land

Investigating the causes and consequences of 'land grabs' in Africa, and the politics and interests behind large-scale land deals

Pastoralism

Examining how pastoralist communities are adapting to change in complex, risk-prone areas of Africa and how governments and other policy actors might support them

Policy processes

Examining which actors and interests determine which policies and investments for agricultural development are 'politically feasible' in different contexts, and how poor people can be better included in policy processes

Science, technology and innovation

Analysing the critical factors constraining and supporting pro-poor science, technology and innovation processes in African agricultural policy and the implications for technology choice and priority setting

Young people and agri-food

Assessing how young people interact with the agri-food sector in different countries and contexts, and how policies and programmes can respond to their needs and aspirations



Institute of Development Studies

“The Future Agricultures fellowship serves as a springboard to opportunities in agricultural research for young researchers in Africa. It enabled me to collect field data on contemporary land investment issues which have contributed to the bigger debate on Foreign Direct Investments in Ethiopia. I received excellent mentoring from my Future Agricultures mentors.”

Maru Shete Bekele
2010 Early Career Fellow



Seán Sprague/Panos Pictures

What makes Future Agricultures unique?

- **A central focus on policy processes, not just policy analysis** – understanding the political economy of policy change, exploring what works, what does not, for whom and under which conditions and contexts;
- **Sustained engagement with policy change processes** in alliance with CAADP through country processes and regional dialogues;
- **An independent voice that challenges mainstream agricultural policy agendas** with critical perspectives, solid evidence and innovative approaches;
- **A diverse and robust decentralised network**, involving leading national research and policy-oriented organisations linked together through four regional hubs;
- **Strong linkages between Africa and Europe, as well as emerging powers in Asia and Latin America**, with a capacity to convene high-profile, policy-relevant events and activities across north and south and with substantial communications and influencing reach.

Communications for change

Future Agricultures produces cutting-edge, policy-relevant research, linking national debates to wider regional discussions on the political economy of African agricultural policy processes. Our website serves as a dynamic communications and networking portal with regularly updated news and information, events announcements, new publications and analysis (including *Policy Briefs* and *Working Papers*), and an active blog featuring regular commentaries from Future Agricultures researchers and others.

www.future-agricultures.org



Regional hubs

East and Central Africa

Tegemeo Institute of Agricultural Policy and Development, Egerton University, Kenya

Southern Africa

Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies, University of the Western Cape, South Africa

West Africa

Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, University of Ghana

Europe

Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK

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