



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

MALAWI AND FAO

BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

FAO has partnered with Malawi since a country representation was established in 1986. Assistance is focused on food security and agriculture-related policies and programmes, with a wide range of field programmes and an emphasis on technical advisory services and capacity building. Emergency and rehabilitation operations are also an important feature of cooperation, as is the mainstreaming of action to address HIV and AIDS, climate change and gender issues.

Building community resilience to threats and emergencies

Malawi is prone to natural disasters, which have continued to depress the resilience of poor and vulnerable households. Flooding caused by Cyclone Idai, which hit the south of Malawi in March 2019, has affected 900 000 people who are now facing the threat of hunger.

With support from the African Solidarity Trust Fund (US\$2 million), the European Union (US\$75 million), the Government of Flanders (US\$900 000), the Global Environment Facility (US\$5.5 million) and the UK Department for International Development (US\$9 million), FAO has been supporting a programme designed to strengthen community resilience to natural disasters and other shocks by combining short- and long-term interventions that address multiple threats to livelihoods in 17 districts.

Through transformative community-centred approaches, people are being helped to diversify their livelihoods and accumulate household assets.

The programme consists of holistic interventions combining nutrition-sensitive agricultural practices, integrated watershed management, climate-smart agriculture and protection of biodiversity.

Climate risk assessments, hotspot mapping and profiling, and climate information underpin action taken.

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Matching FAO's expertise to Malawi's development priorities

FAO assistance in Malawi is centred on five priority areas:

- ➔ **Strengthening the Agriculture Sector-wide Approach** (now superseded by the **National Agriculture Investment Plan**) governance, coordination and implementation capacity for delivery of tangible food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture results
- ➔ **Strengthening availability of and access to data, information and statistics** for evidence-based decision-making related to food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture
- ➔ **Supporting policy and programmatic action for sustainable natural resources management and climate change**
- ➔ **Promoting secure land rights and land use planning for sustainable agricultural development and food security**
- ➔ **Supporting disaster risk reduction and building community resilience**

FAO's interventions contribute to addressing relevant priorities in key national development frameworks, including the **Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS III)**, the **National Agriculture Policy**, the **National Multi-Sectorial Nutrition Policy**, the **National Resilience Strategy**, the **Malawi National Social Support Programme II** and the **UN Development Assistance Framework for Malawi**.

New Country Programming Framework (CPF) formulation

Consultation and drafting of a new CPF are underway.

Strengthening agricultural extension services

With financial support from the European Union (US\$32 million) and the Government of Flanders (US\$5.2 million), FAO is working closely with the Government of Malawi to enhance the capacity of the agricultural extension delivery system to meet the skill requirements of farming communities affected by climate change.

“Agriculture is central to ending poverty, hunger and malnutrition and ensuring sustainable development and thriving communities.”

FAO Director-General

At the institutional level, FAO is collaborating with the Department of Agricultural Extension Services to revitalize and strengthen the existing District Agricultural Extension Service System as the coordination framework

for the pluralistic agricultural advisory services. At the community level, FAO's efforts are dedicated to nurturing model villages and agricultural clusters (*Ulimi wa Mdandanda*) through the Farmer Field School methodology. The Farmer Field Schools address the specific skill development needs of smallholder farmers and rural communities, thus contributing to increased food, nutrition and income security in a rapidly changing context. Farmers are empowered to cope with emerging challenges, including climate change and population growth. As part of this collaboration, at least 650 extension workers and 8 500 community-based facilitators will be trained to support more than 500 000 households in 10 districts as part of a five-year programme (2017-2022).

Safeguarding productive natural resources

In 2018, FAO and the Government of Malawi launched a project to build climate change resilience in Malawi's inland fisheries sector. Also referred to as “Fisheries Resilience for Malawi”, the initiative targets communities living around one of Malawi's five water bodies, Lake Malombe, as well as in the Upper Shire River basin. Expected outcomes include the collection of enhanced climate information, which will be used to ensure effective and timely resilience and management measures, the mainstreaming of climate change considerations in relevant policy and planning instruments, and restoration of fish stocks and habitats.

Project funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) through the Least Developed Countries Fund (US\$5.5 million).

Transboundary pest and diseases

Transboundary pests and diseases in crops and livestock significantly hamper Malawi's agricultural productivity. With support from the European Union (US\$800 000), the Government of Japan (US\$300 000), Belgium (US\$150 000) and the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) (US\$400 000), FAO is working with the Government of Malawi on a three-pronged approach to management and control. It includes emergency responses to outbreaks, building the surveillance capabilities of technical departments and communities, and supporting research to develop sustainable integrated pest management options.

Enhancing market access

With financial support from the Government of Flanders (US\$5.2 million), FAO and Malawi's Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development are implementing a project to help smallholder farmers in Mzimba and Kasungu districts obtain access to markets for their commodities. Farmers have been trained in the processing of high-quality cassava flour, which has led to greater intensification of production and value chain coordination. The project is to benefit 1 000 groups with training and mentorship on various entrepreneurial and marketing skills, and facilitation of linkages with the private sector. The project supports farmer-led agricultural transformation and commercialization through the promotion of agriculture as a business. FAO has also succeeded in strengthening linkages between small actors and buyers in the roots and tubers sector in Malawi.

Land governance

The importance of secure land tenure in agriculture cannot be overemphasized. FAO has been supporting the Government of Malawi in the enactment and operationalization of ten laws related to land tenure. Assistance has also focused on sensitization of national and subnational level government, civil society structures and communities on local and international land governance instruments. Women, in particular, have been encouraged to actively participate in land governance forums. This work is supported by the UN Multidonor Trust Fund (US\$450 000), the Government of Flanders (US\$380 000) and FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (US\$450 000).

