



## ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN THE GAMBIA'S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

The Gambia is a small country in West Africa, with an agrarian economy and a large, youthful population. The country's economy relies mainly on agriculture, which is concentrated in the rural areas. However, despite its potential for inclusive growth, improved food security and poverty reduction, the agriculture sector is affected by numerous constraints. Among these are weak research and extension systems leading to inappropriate/unsustainable farming practices and pest control, low yields, limited arable land irrigation, inadequate storage facilities and other infrastructures, lack of entrepreneurial culture, and a low level of vulnerable smallholder producers' participation in value chains and end markets. These constraints are exacerbated by extreme weather conditions and erratic rainfall and prolonged dry seasons, negatively impacting the country's economy and well-being. In response to these challenges, this European Union-funded project aimed at contributing to inclusive and equitable sustainable growth in the country's agriculture sector, and to reducing food insecurity and malnutrition to mitigate migration flows to Europe.



### WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project contributed significantly to improving food systems in the Gambia through its various interventions, including support to extension services and farmers and the production of policy documents to support agricultural development, among many others. Several key policy documents were produced for the first time in the country. These included the National Agriculture Extension Policy, which made a significant contribution to the delivery of effective agriculture extension services. The project also contributed to national efforts to increase production and productivity by updating the country's National Seed Policy and developing a comprehensive seed plan. In addition to extensive capacity-building, farmers were provided with access to loans for agricultural production activities through informal community-led financial services. The breeding capacities of young scientists on major food crops were strengthened, resulting in the development of early maturing varieties to mitigate the effects of climate change on crop yields. Vegetable gardens were rehabilitated and/or established, providing around 300 beneficiaries with an alternative source of income to climate-affected field crop production. In addition, agricultural inputs were distributed to 36 358 farming households to mitigate their vulnerability to food insecurity.

### KEY FACTS

**Latest Approved Budget**  
USD 14 848 313

**Duration**  
August 2017-January 2023

**Resource Partner**  
The European Union

**Partner**  
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)

**Beneficiaries**  
Government institutions operating in agriculture, trade and food security/nutrition sectors; smallholder farmers, their cooperatives and associations; private and commercial actors within the value chain

# IMPACT

The project interventions successfully contributed to sustainable growth in the agricultural sector in the Gambia. This, in turn, is expected to contribute to reducing food insecurity and malnutrition in the country, and to mitigating migration flows to Europe. The project created job opportunities for youth and women, enhanced the incomes of vulnerable households, and improved their standards of living through targeted activities, such as the introduction of innovative approaches to crop production and the establishment of community vegetable gardens, among others.

# ACTIVITIES

- National Agriculture Extension Policy (2020-2030) developed, as well as five-year strategic plan, which was piloted in two regions as guide for extension services delivery.
- National Animal Feed Policy (2022-2026) developed to promote sustainable production of high-quality feeds and forage.
- Capacities of 550 farmers strengthened on Farmer Field Schools (FFS), comprising 502 farmers and 48 extension officers, who established FFS in over 600 rural communities (30 farmers each), focusing on crops and livestock.
- Informal community-led financial services, Savings and Internal Lending Communities (SILC), introduced in 75 communities.
- 30 adult learning centres established, where over 300 participants were taught how to read and calculate figures in four different national local languages.
- National Seed Policy updated and developed into comprehensive national seed plan.
- Capacities of Plant Protection Services (PPS) enhanced to address major challenges of effective food production, through capacity-building activities on pest and disease surveillance, mitigation and reporting.
- First National Fertilizer Policy formulated, enabling sustainable provision of quality and affordable fertilizers to farmers.
- First National Cooperative Policy facilitated, leading to transformation of Agribusiness Service Unit of Department of Agriculture into Department of Cooperatives.
- Laboratory facilities at National Agricultural Research Institute and PPS rehabilitated and handed over to ensure efficient services delivery on plant breeding, pests and diseases problems.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## Project Title

Agriculture for Economic Growth in The Gambia

## Project Code

FAO: GCP/GAM/040/EC  
Donor: FED/2017/383-810

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