



Potato Strategic Partnership

Overview

In Tanzania, potatoes (*Solanum tuberosum*) are sometimes called "Irish potatoes" or "European potatoes" (Viazi Ulaya in Swahili), indicating their foreign origin, or "round potatoes" (Viazi mvingo in Swahili) distinguishing them from sweet potatoes (SAGCOT, 2018).

Round Potato is among the top ten important staple food crops in Tanzania. According to the Ministry of Agriculture there are more than 173,772 producers (MoA, 2017) engaged in the production of round potatoes who are predominantly smallholder farmers. Most potato production takes place in the southern highlands zone covering; Njombe, Mbeya, Songwe and Iringa regions (SAGCOT region). According to the statistical data from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA, 2019), a total of 337,803 Metric Tons of Potato were produced in the country during the crop season of 2018/19, of which, 282,404 Metric Tons (83%) of total production were coming from Southern Tanzania. Mbeya region is a leading producer of potatoes in the country (49.8%), followed by Njombe (19%), Iringa (10.8%) and Songwe (3.9%) during the crop season 2018/19. In general, 83% of ware potato produced in the country were coming from the SAGCOT area.

Key Stakeholders in the Potato Value Chain

Private sector, Development Partners, farmers organizations and Civil Society Organisations

- Ministry of Agriculture
- Local Government Authority and Regional Secretariates in Southern Highlands
- TARI-Uyole
- Royal Norwegian Embassy
- USAID
- AGRA
- CIP
- Kilimo Trust
- Grimme
- Yara
- Europlant
- TOSCI
- HZPC
- Bayer Crop Science
- Silverlands Tanzania Ltd
- Tanzanice Agrofoods Ltd
- CRDB Bank
- National Microfinance Bank (NMB)

The Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT)

Is a public-private partnership that seeks to catalyse responsible agribusiness investments in the country's southern corridor. The SAGCOT Centre Ltd serves as a partnership broker and information hub to facilitate socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable investments. SAGCOT Centre actively promotes and facilitates strategic partnerships due to their high impact and potential for expansion.

What makes the potato partnership a strategic partnership?

Transforms farmers' food security and improves livelihoods. The Potato Partnership seeks to double productivity and triple profitability of potato farmers in SAGCOT region. The SAGCOT Potato strategic partnership has gained wide recognition across the region and represents the Government of Tanzania on the EAC Secretariat in a project to improve seed potato trade in Eastern Africa supported by GIZ through Global Fund for Agriculture Policy and Innovation (GV FABI). SCL represents Private Sector and has coordinated potato partners (Beula Seeds, Silverlands, Tanzanice, HZPC, ISOWELU AMCOs and Lusitu Agribusiness Group) to critique and validate the draft strategy and work plan for seed potato trade in Eastern Africa.

Seeks end-to-end value chain solutions. The Potato Partnership was strategically built to include stakeholders from each link in the value chain.

Access to finance: through farmer organizations, strengthening of farmer cooperatives and improved financial management knowledge and systems farmers will have more access to finance.

Access to knowledge and technology through convening and outreach activities potato farmers have access to latest agronomic knowledge such as soil testing technology, lime application and use of certified seed.

Potato stakeholders convened and came up with business cases that will support growth of potato value chain in the SAGCOT. There is a need to increase availability of improved seed potato, to establish a National Potato organization and to have structured potato markets with good quality potato.

Improves availability and accessibility of improved seed potato. 13 potential seed multiplier farmers have already been assessed for certification. 8 farmers qualified for the training and started seed multiplication under supervision of CD - PIT, TARI and TOSCI. These farmers have farm size ranging from 10 to 40 acres. The certified seed multipliers will help on increasing availability and accessibility of improved seed potato to smallholder farmers.

Demonstrates positive environmental impact. Partners are working with farmers to raise their productivity in a way that ensures the responsible management of natural resources. CD PIT has demonstrated that a farmer can produce up to 59 tons of potato per hectare using new seed varieties that have been introduced in the country. In 2021 some farmers in Njombe have reached up to 50 MT per hectares. This has provided confidence to market actors who purchase potato from farmers'. Njombe farmers are exporting their potatoes to Kenya and Zanzibar hence increased incomes and boost competitiveness in the market.

Inclusive and sustainable impact

The increasing trend in potato production by SCL-facilitated partners is a sure testimony about clear pointers to agricultural transformation. Farmers in Ihemi cluster have jumped from an average production of 7MT/ha in 2016 to 28MT/ha in 2021 with others surpassing the world record production to more than 50MT/ha. Partners reported total production of 9,994MT which is almost three times the projected production of 3,636MT. 5,829.6 Ha of land is under CSA in potato production.

In addition to being an important source of energy, potato contains essential amino acids and vitamins. It grows best in temperate regions and cool tropical highlands, areas often characterised by high population densities. Investing in the potato value chain is therefore an opportunity to support the dietary needs of rapidly growing populations – both rural and urban – and support income-generating opportunities for rural potato farmers. In addition, potato has so far proven to provide employment to young people who are working as potato street vendors in urban settings.

Key Challenges

Currently, potato production levels in SAGCOT area (Njombe, Iringa, Mbeya and Songwe) Njombe sit at a third of their potential, primarily due to low availability and use of quality seed, as well as limited knowledge of good agricultural practices. These – together with poor marketing structures, unspecified weights and measures, limited value addition and lack of crop promotion – restrict potato profitability among smallholder farmers. To overcome these challenges, the Potato Partnership leverages their resources and knowledge to build solutions for the introduction of higher quality seed and new planting and harvesting mechanisation. Through this platform, partners are able to provide hands-on training and community demonstrations to support farmers in the adoption of these new technologies.

To provide a comprehensive value chain approach, the partnership is calling upon non-members to become involved, specifically those engaged in processing, dealers in mechanisation of smallholder farming, specialists in seed production, retailing and high end market off-takers.

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