



GLOBAL CHALLENGES RESEARCH FUND AGRIFOOD AFRICA PROGRAMME

Inaugural Event: Workshop Outputs

9th - 10th December 2019

Knowledge Transfer Network



**Innovate
UK**

This report is a summary of the GCRF AgriFood Africa Programme Inaugural Event held in London, bringing together stakeholders from across Africa and the UK. It describes lessons learnt from the information-gathering strategy day and next steps for the GCRF AgriFood Africa programme.

Introduction to the programme

The GCRF AgriFood Africa Programme aims to realise sustainable management of the food production systems in Africa in a way that alleviates poverty, enhances economic prosperity and delivers improved wellbeing. Target long term outcomes of the programme include:

- ***Developing sustainable intensification of African agriculture***
- ***Improving human health and diversity of diets and nutrition***
- ***Impacting positively on rural income and food security***
- ***Facilitating increased trade activity in agricultural products***

The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) is a £1.5 billion fund to support cutting-edge research which addresses the problems faced by developing countries. Innovate UK secured some of this GCRF funding (£26 million) to extend activities that had been initiated through the Department for International Development (DFID) funded Agri-Tech Catalyst.

This programme is being delivered through three core activities, led by Innovate UK:

1. Technology Accelerator Programme
2. Skills and Knowledge Transfer Programme
3. Dissemination and Coordination Activities

KTN has been funded to provide dissemination and coordination support to Innovate UK for this GCRF AgriFood Africa Programme until 2024.



Summary of Day 1

The first day of the event shared success stories and lessons learnt from ongoing collaborative initiatives represented by 67 stakeholders in the UK and Africa, and highlighted funding opportunities to support new activities in this area. The morning session included presentations providing an overview of the new GCRF AgriFood Africa programme to support collaborations between the UK and Africa. This was used as a briefing event to raise awareness among the key stakeholders and began early stage engagement to build a community.

The afternoon session showcased collaborative projects between the UK and Africa which were funded through the Agri-Tech Catalyst. This was used to highlight successes and identify key issues relevant to the programme. The event also provided time to explore synergies and collaboration opportunities with the potential to lead to new project ideas which could be submitted to funding schemes including the Agri-Tech Catalyst. One such opportunity is the GCRF AgriFood Africa Innovation Awards, a £800,000 pump-priming fund for UK universities to address an African AgriFood challenge in collaboration with an African partner.

Summary of Day 2

The second day of the event was an invitation-only strategy workshop that brought together 24 experts from the UK and Africa with varied backgrounds from across the AgriFood supply chain. The group identified priority challenges in the African AgriFood system and debated how these focus areas could be best addressed. Participants took part in a range of different activities, including round table discussions, live survey questionnaires and informal data gathering. These data will inform future programme activities, and the key themes are collated and summarised below. Six areas were considered:

1. ***Dissemination***
2. ***Skills and training***
3. ***Stakeholders***
4. ***Coordination***
5. ***Impact and impact assessment***
6. ***Governance and due diligence***



1. Dissemination

- Dissemination needs to be fit for purpose and needs to identify audiences clearly so as to be able to tailor messages and appropriate delivery mechanism(s).
- Care must be taken to not treat Africa as a homogenous geographical entity. There are substantial geographical variations in both sector needs and local culture. This can affect both the work required and optimal methods for dissemination.
- Internet-based methodologies can have variable success, social media and TV can be mistrusted whereas faith groups and other civil society outputs are more likely to be trusted. Choice of an appropriate language for dissemination is an important factor.
- Methodologies relying on face-to-face interactions such as tailored clinics, demonstrations and peer-to-peer learning, coupled with regular opportunities for contact were recommended. CABI's PlantWise is a good example. Apps are often preferred to emails, tailored incentives and partnership with commercial ventures can also be considered.

2. Skills and training

- Bridging the gap in mindset including both social and cultural aspects, is an important factor in addition to addressing any lack of technical knowledge. Training needs to be iterative and integrated to produce a culture change in business and technical practices. We need to ensure that human resource infrastructure is built up as well as physical infrastructure and facilities across technical, financial and commercial areas.
- We need to engage with providers of business entrepreneurship within the UK and universities with an overseas focus or experience. Local centres of excellence need to be identified and engaged. Civil society and commerce should be engaged locally as they are likely to be invested in the future of their region.
- Suggested routes for development of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships project opportunities include specific visits to develop networks as it was found that in many African states (such as Nigeria and The Gambia) the existing industry/local university links are not strong.
- Consider cohort activities to maximise peer-to-peer learning and future networks. Wherever possible use existing structures such as the High Commission and Government Ministries.
- Measuring impact of training routes requires a number of approaches including looking at immediate/mid/longer-term outcomes. We need to make sure that we collect data in such a way that we can consider parameters carefully rather than just aggregating data for initial ease. Consider the needs of individuals, communities and business to understand the baseline and then monitor repeat engagement as indicators of success. Consider the social aspects of rewards and recognition for individuals and the importance of delivering real connection to drivers of business from the academic base.

3. Stakeholders

- A UK-located event cannot solely represent the full breadth of stakeholders that need to be engaged. We need to ensure that we are cognisant of the breadth of the AgriFood system including financial, regulatory and digital elements as well as producers, agribusinesses etc. Need to be aware of female entrepreneurs and also reflect the geographical complexity of the continent.
- African diasporas are a resource that should be considered as they often provide a relatively easily accessible group with strong motivation for involvement.
- To ensure good coordination between African and UK stakeholders the programme needs to hold events in African target states and be aware of and respond to cultural and operational differences in an African context. Importantly, the process must be undertaken in good faith rather than as a box ticking exercise.
- The best mechanisms for engagement with key stakeholder groups was thought to be the same as the dissemination responses in section one.
- Engagement of women and female groups is best achieved by use of women-only interventions encouraging women to use available technology, speaking to women directly using their own language if possible and communicating that desire directly to males locally.

4. Coordination

- We will research and contact the list of aligned programmes and funding schemes suggested by participants to determine whether there is any opportunity for joint working or at least greater awareness of each other's activities.
- A number of African states were suggested as gateways to help businesses achieve a lasting presence with GCRF support, including Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Malawi and South Africa. Considering existing DFID investments as a focus for geographical emphasis and use of existing initiatives such as SAGCOT, the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania, were also suggested.
- Broadening the pool of applicants for funding was considered important to provide a good basis for success of the programme and is best achieved by specific encouragement to applicants. Local knowledge and networks should be used to highlight potential, credible African partners and these new entrants should then be supported more intensively during the application process and through delivery.

5. Impact and impact assessment

- Clarity is required on the overall purpose of the work, individual roles within projects, and desired outcomes for both partners. There needs to be an understanding of the other partners' needs and constraints and mutual commitment to the project, together with clear accountability for delivery.
- A number of parameters for measuring impact were suggested including macro measures such as household income for target communities; commercial data such as product sales, revenue, profit, manufacturing output, prototype development (including Technology Readiness Level tracking to demonstrate movement towards markets); biological measurements such as yield and disease prevalence and systems measures such as access to supply chains or markets.
- Emphasis was placed on the necessity of gaining good quality data regardless of the parameters considered. Reporting on funded projects from initiation through to project end and beyond, provides a strong baseline and gives evidence of the outputs developed and the achieved impact.
- Government departments and NGOs often have access to wider and deeper datasets from across a number of support mechanisms and/or geographies. These repositories of information can be considered alongside specific data from the GCRF AgriFood Africa programme and used to generate additional relevant data.
- Schools, universities and established local structures, such as farmer groups or cooperatives, can be useful in developing and delivering meaningful impact.

6. Governance and due diligence

- An appropriate level of understanding and allowance for local cultural and governance structures, both formal and vernacular, is required. Being aware of cultural sensitivities regarding business norms in individual African states while also guarding against real and perceived corrupt practices is needed.
- Building trust and mutual understanding of best practice should be achieved by developing local networks and guidelines, with subsequent case studies using specific and relevant examples to inform guidelines.
- Building on existing, proven relationships and community interactions may be both cost- and time-efficient. New partnerships and initiatives can be supported through pump-priming measures to build required relationships before large-scale adoption. As discussed above, delivery accountability for all partners within partnerships should extend to maintaining clear and transparent governance.
- A number of feedback stakeholders were suggested to assist the programme to meet its governance requirements: directly from projects to funders; local business networks; trade associations; UK Department for International Trade representatives; local Ministries and Embassies, and NGO partners.
- Due diligence on potential projects or activities can be achieved in country using existing networks and relationships. These include: the banking system, via endorsements from trusted partners within industry, from the research base and from Government ministries.

Further thoughts

To ensure that all and any future activities for the programme are developed considering the parameters suggested during the event to promote success and impact:

Relevance

Is the research or technology arising from it, relevant to the needs of the target country, crop, and market for the product or service?

Availability

Does a route exist to take the outputs of the research to develop a product or service that can be made available to the target market/audience?

Accessibility

Are the target beneficiary/consumer able to afford the product or service, and use it without specialist equipment or knowledge or additional support?

Delivery

Can the programme deliver a relevant product or service available and accessible to the target market, user, consumer?

Next steps

1. Visits to one or more African states with UK industrial and academic participants, including GCRF AgriFood Africa Innovation Awards winners, to develop new partnerships and consortia for Agri-Tech Catalyst funding.
2. Further develop communities around key research and innovation priorities for use in KTP applications within the AgriFood Africa programme.
3. Use the insights gained to influence our strategy for more effective dissemination of funding and other opportunities, including careful targeting of relevant audience and methods for increased engagement.



KTN would like to thank all participants for their enthusiasm and valued contributions.

Knowledge Transfer Network

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and Innovation**

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For more information on the GCRF Agrifood Africa Programme, visit <https://ktn-uk.co.uk/programmes/gcrf-agrifood-africa-programme> where you can sign up to become a member.

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