

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE STAKEHOLDER
CONFERENCE
FOR THE SUPPORT FOR APPLIED RESEARCH AND
ANALYSIS IN THE KENYA AND EAST AFRICA REGION
(SARA-KEA) PROJECT

**STAKEHOLDER
CONFERENCE**

29th - 30th,
October 2024
8 am - 5 pm

Sarova Panafric Hotel
Kenyatta Ave,
Nairobi, Kenya

SCAN TO REGISTER

Theme
**Shaping Sustainable
Futures: The Influence of
Policies, Programs and
Economic Factors in
Kenya's Agriculture and
Well-Being**



29-30 OCTOBER 2024

Sarova Panafric Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya

1. Background

The **Stakeholder Conference for the Support for Applied Research and Analysis in the Kenya and East Africa Region (SARA-KEA) Project**, held in Nairobi, Kenya, addressed pivotal challenges and opportunities in the agricultural sector under the theme *"Shaping Sustainable Futures: The Influence of Policies, Programs, and Economic Factors in Kenya's Agriculture and Well-Being"*. The two-day event brought together policymakers, researchers, donors, and private sector representatives to share insights and discuss strategies for sustainable agricultural development, improved nutrition, and resilience building.

Speakers highlighted the urgent need for solutions to critical issues such as climate change and rising input costs, empathizing the vital role of agriculture in Kenya's economy, food security and livelihoods. The conference marked a significant milestone for the SARA-KEA Project, presenting findings and fostering dialogue among diverse stakeholders, along with key takeaways and policy recommendations.

2. Key takeaways and policy recommendations, organized by major themes

a. Agricultural Growth and Value Chains

The discussions on agricultural growth in Kenya painted a complex picture. Despite progress in irrigation and value addition, overall agricultural GDP growth is hindered by frequent shocks, such as droughts and pest outbreaks. High-demand sectors such as aquaculture and beef value chains present opportunities for transformation, which could reduce imports, create jobs, and enhance nutrition. Medium-scale farms were identified as crucial for bridging the gap smallholder farms and commercial farms as well as key factor in driving food systems transformation.

However, inefficiencies and gaps in policy coherence between national and county governments remain pressing concerns. Presenters highlighted the need for agricultural policies that align with broader economic and social goals to promote inclusivity and equity in value chain development.

b. Fertilizer and Soil Health

The conference discussed challenges in farming related to fertilizer and soil health and fertilizer. Despite government subsidies, farmers face problems with the timeliness, quality,

and access to fertilizer. Soil testing, which is a crucial tool for improving productivity is underutilized with few farmers aware of or willing to pay in these services. To improve the situation, there were recommendation to address these issues include subsidizing soil testing, engaging private sector in distribution networks of the subsidized fertilizer and providing education on soil health management.

c. Nutrition and Food Security

Kenya faces a dual burden of malnutrition and rising rates of obesity. Many households find nutrient-dense foods like fruits and vegetables to be unaffordable, while unhealthy options are prevalent in peri-urban areas. Although fortified foods have potential benefits, there is low consumer awareness and limited rural reach. Panelists advocated the need for comprehensive policies to improve access to and affordability of nutritious foods, combined with urban planning initiatives that foster healthier food environments.

d. Engaging Youth in Agriculture

Youth engagement in agriculture emerged as a key issue in Kenya, where underemployment of young people is prevalent. Many young people perceive agriculture as labor-intensive and low-reward, which deter their participation. The conference highlighted the potential for entrepreneurship along agricultural value chains, particularly in input supply and value-added processing. To encourage youth involvement, proposed interventions included developing tailored financial products, launching mentorship programs, and making agriculture more appealing through digitization and mechanization.

e. Building Resilience

On the second day, resilience-building strategies were the focal points with discussions on how households can withstand shocks and adapt to changing conditions. Key discussion centered on the importance of diversification of income sources—both on and off the farm—especially for women and youth. Climate-smart agriculture and digital advisory tools were proposed as transformative solutions, although successful adoption calls for targeted investment and scaling efforts.

3. Way Forward

The conference emphasized the need for enhanced collaboration between government, private sector, and development partners. Key policy recommendations included:

- Establishing clear and coordinated frameworks for agricultural policy implementation.
- Investing in climate-smart technologies and innovation hubs.
- Enhancing support for youth agri-preneurs through financial products and mentorship.
- Increasing focus on value chain development, particularly for high-demand sectors like aquaculture and beef.
- Expanding access to nutritious foods through fortification programs and urban planning initiatives.

The overall message from the conference was one of hope and determination. By leveraging research, fostering partnerships, and prioritizing inclusivity, Kenya can achieve a sustainable and equitable agricultural future—one that not only feeds its people but also empowers them to thrive.

Conference Program

Day 1: 29th October 2024

Time	Activity
7.30 - 8.15 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrival and registration • Morning coffee/tea
8.15 – 8.30 am	Welcome and Introduction Master of Ceremony: <i>Paul Gamba</i>
8.30 - 10.00 am	Session I: Opening session Story Telling: <i>Master of Ceremony (20mins)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maize farmer (access to inputs) • Fish farmer (access to inputs) Welcoming remarks: <i>Director, Tegemeo Institute (10 mins)</i> Opening remarks: <i>Andrew McCowan, Feed the Future Coordinator, Kenya and East Africa Director, Center of Excellence for Resilience and Food Security (10 mins)</i> Opening Address: <i>Vice Chancellor, Egerton University (20 mins)</i> Overview and Objectives of the Conference: <i>SARA-KEA project PI, Michigan State University (MSU) (20 mins)</i>
10.00 – 10.30 am	Session II: Agricultural Growth in Kenya: Trends and Drivers Chair: <i>Joseph Karugia – CGIAR-NPS</i>
	Speaker: <i>Timothy Njagi – ANAPRI (20 mins)</i> Plenary discussion (10 mins)
10.30 - 11.00 am	Tea/coffee break and group photo
11.00 – 12.30 pm	Session III: Fertilizer and Soil Health Chair: Bridget Okumu – Country Director for Kenya, IFDC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the impact of recent fertilizer price crisis on Kenya’s fertilizer sector: What are the appropriate policy responses?

	<p><i>David Mather – Michigan State University (15 mins)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The status of fertilizer quality in agro-dealer outlets in Kenya <p><i>Timothy Njagi – ANAPRI (15 mins)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers’ willingness to pay for soil testing in Kenya <p><i>John Olwande – Tegemeo Institute (15 mins)</i></p> <p>Panel Discussion (30 mins) Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lilian Mbutia – FAK</i> • <i>Kiplimo Lagat – Chairperson of Agriculture CECM Caucus, and CECM Agriculture & Co-Operative Development, Nandi County</i> • <i>Joseph Komu – Coordinator, NVSP, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development</i> <p>Q&A (15 mins)</p>
12.30 – 1.30 pm	Lunch break
1.30 – 3.00 pm	<p>Session IV: Agricultural value chains development Chair: <i>Daniel M. M'Mailutha – CEO, KENAFF</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political economy factors and their influence on the development of agricultural value chains in Kenya <i>Mercy Kamau - Tegemeo Institute (20 mins)</i> • Are Commercialized Farms Driving Agricultural Transformation in Rural Kenya? <i>Milu Muyanga – Michigan State University (20 mins)</i> • Policy Prioritization through Value Chain Analysis: The case of Aquaculture and Beef <i>Lilian Kirimi & Jackson Langat – Tegemeo Institute (30 mins)</i> <p>Q&A (20 mins)</p>
3.00 – 3.20 pm	Tea/coffee break

3:20 – 4:10 pm	<p>Session V: Panel Discussion</p> <p>Chair: <i>Nancy Laibuni - Advisor, Associate Member, Council of Economic Advisors, Executive Office of the President</i></p> <p>Panel Discussion (40 mins)</p> <p>Topic: Lessons and perspectives from agricultural value chain development projects/programs</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Samuel Guto, National Coordinator, NAVCDP</i> • <i>Kennedy Okech - Agriculture Economy and Financial Advisor, Sustainable Agricultural Systems and Policies (AgSys) GIZ</i> • <i>John Macharia – Country Manager for Kenya, AGRA</i> <p>Q&A (10 mins)</p>
4.10pm	Wrap up and close of day

Day 2: 30th October 2024

Time	Activity
7.30 - 8.15 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrival and registration • Morning coffee/tea
8.15 – 8.45 am	<p>Welcome and Introduction</p> <p>Master of Ceremony: <i>Paul Gamba</i></p> <hr/> <p>Summary of Day 1 Deliberations: <i>Rapporteur (10 mins)</i></p> <p>Story Telling: <i>Master of Ceremony (20mins)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestock farmer (output marketing) • Coffee farmer (output marketing)
8.45 am – 9.15	<p>Session I: Keynote Address</p> <p>Chair: <i>Anne Chele - Enabling Policy & Investment Environment Sub-Programme Leader, FAO</i></p>
	<p>Topic: Strengthening the Resilience of Food Systems and Livelihoods in Kenya</p> <p>Speaker: <i>Kelvin Shikuku, Scientist-Economist Lecturer, ILRI (20mins)</i></p>

	<i>Plenary discussion (10 mins)</i>
9.15 – 10.45 am	<p>Session II: Nutritional Policy and Environment: Assessing Influences and Costs of Food Choices in Kenya</p> <p>Chair: <i>Daniel Ndaka Sila - Associate Professor and Senior Researcher, Food Science & Technology Department, JKUAT</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the policy enabling environment for large-scale food fortification in Kenya <i>Lilian Kirimi – Tegemeo Institute (15mins)</i> • Influence of home and away-from-home food environments on diets in urban and peri-urban Kenya <i>Mywish Maredia – Michigan State University (15mins)</i> • The cost of a nutritious diet in Kenya <i>David Mather - Michigan State University (15mins)</i> <p>Panel Discussion (30mins)</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Charles Opiyo – Influencing & Advocacy Manager, GAIN Kenya</i> • <i>Veronica Kirogo – Director of Nutrition and Dietetics Services, Ministry of Health</i> • <i>Christine Chege - Agri-Nutrition and Food System Scientist, CIAT</i> <p>Q&A (15 mins)</p>
10.45 – 11.00 am	Tea Break
11.00am – 12.30pm	<p>Session III: Enhancing employment opportunities for youth</p> <p>Chair: <i>Rose Ngugi – Executive Director, KIPPRA</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livelihood options and labour force participation by youth in urban and rural Kenya: Facts and Trends <i>Jacob Ricker-Gilbert - Purdue University (15 mins)</i> • Increasing economic prospects of youth through entrepreneurship <i>Alexander Kahi - Egerton University (15 mins)</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building the youth employment opportunities: Case of youth input resellers study in Eastern Kenya <i>Patrick K. Ketiem – Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) (15 mins)</i> <p>Panel Discussion (30 mins)</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Patience Mshenga, Dean Faculty of Agriculture, Egerton University</i> • <i>Milu Muyanga, Department of AFRE, MSU</i> • <i>Judy Maina, Youth Program Officer – Rural Development, FAO in Kenya</i> <p>Q&A (15 mins)</p>
12.30 – 1.30 pm	Lunch break
1.30 – 3.00 pm	Session IV: Building resilience of rural households Chair: <i>Antony Kioko - CEO, CGA</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livelihood diversification among Kenya’s rural households <i>John Olwande – Tegemeo Institute (15 mins)</i> • Resilience through diversity: A policy scan of possible pathways to future food systems <i>Paswell Marenja - International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) (15 mins)</i> • The impact of agro- weather advisories on uptake of technologies and productivity in select crop value chains <i>Mercy Kamau - Tegemeo Institute (15 mins)</i> <p>Panel Discussion (30 mins)</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Barrack Okoba - Resilient Food and Livelihood Systems Sub-Programme Leader, FAO in Kenya</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Henry Mwololo, National Drought Management Authority (NDMA)</i> • <i>Joyce Mutua, CECM of Agriculture, Irrigation, Livestock, Fisheries & Cooperative Development, Makueni County</i> <p>Q&A (15 mins)</p>
3.00 - 3.30 pm	<p>Session V: Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap and way forward <i>Gideon Obare - Tegemeo Institute</i> • Concluding remarks <i>Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academics, Research and Extension, Egerton University</i> • Vote of thanks <i>John Olwande – Tegemeo Institute</i>
3.30 pm	Tea/coffee and departure