

Initiative aims to reform African agribusiness

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) has announced a five-year project that will aim to increase incomes of smallholder farmers through the creation of an enabling policy environment in Africa. The initiative - Micro Reforms for African Agribusiness (MIRA) - will identify, prioritise and reform specific agricultural policies and regulations that currently deter or limit private investment in small- and medium-sized agribusinesses operating in smallholder agricultural value chains.



AGRA president, Jane Karuku

Over a period of five years, AGRA aims to motivate at least 25 significant policy or regulatory reforms in selected countries, leading to measurable increases in private sector investment in local agribusinesses. The project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is expected to increase the number of smallholder farmers accessing improved technologies supplied by agribusinesses operating in local staple food value chains. It will also help them access stable, predictable income-generating market opportunities. This enhanced access to input and output markets is in turn expected to lead to increased smallholder productivity and incomes, and reduced poverty for smallholder farm-dependent families.

Unlocking potential

"We are very excited about this new initiative," says AGRA president, Jane Karuku. "It will help African governments unlock agricultural potential in their countries by supporting their efforts to develop progressive agricultural policies that will attract increased private investment in smallholder agricultural value chains. The initiative aims reform retrogressive agricultural regulations that deter rather than encourage such investment."

"The MIRA project will provide African governments with access to high quality local and international technical assistance for identifying, prioritising and reforming specific agricultural regulations," says Dr Steven Were Omamo, AGRA's director of Policy and Advocacy. "Current regulations often discourage private investment in small- and medium-sized agribusinesses that serve the needs of smallholder farmers. The project will help build the capacity of African government leaders and analysts to make better informed, economically robust assessments and decisions about which regulations need to be reformed in order to facilitate increased private investment in smallholder value chains."

Key objectives

The MIRA project has four key objectives:

- To strengthen African governments' demand for regulatory reforms, by supporting efforts to identify and assess regulations that unintentionally limit private sector investment in smallholder value chains.
- To support African governments' efforts to reform regulations that limit private sector investment in smallholder value chains.

- To promote reformed regulations to local and international private sector investors, in order to raise awareness about improved agribusiness-enabling environments in Africa.
- To enhance the capacity and commitment of African governments to continuously review, assess and reform regulations that limit private sector investment in smallholder value chains.

Expected outcomes

By the end of the project, three major outcomes are expected:

- Reformed agricultural policies and regulations creating more conducive environments for private sector investment in local agribusinesses operating smallholder value chains in five countries.
- Increased private sector investment in the throughput capacity of existing and new local agribusinesses - those supplying inputs to smallholders and/or purchasing farm outputs from them.
- At least 25 significant policy or regulatory reforms that induce measurable increases in private sector investment in local agribusinesses operating in smallholder agrifood value chains.

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