



## Feed the Future Tanzania ASPIRES Project

### Project Duration

May 2016 – Jan 2020

### Budget

\$6 million

### Geographic Focus Areas

Nationwide

### Implementer

Michigan State University

### Partners

Ministry of Agriculture,  
Livestock and Fisheries;  
International Food Policy  
Research Institute; Sokoine  
University of Agriculture;  
President's Office for Regional  
Administration and Local  
Government

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*Adam Kibiki, a farmer in Mufindi district in the Iringa region holds out his tea leaves on his farm. Adam is a beneficiary of ASPIRES' interventions on domestic agricultural trade tax.*

While Tanzania has achieved rapid economic growth over the past decade, smallholder farmer productivity remains low. Rural poverty, malnutrition, and inequality are also pervasive. Key contributors to this situation are a limited access to basic public goods, from land rights to availability of inputs; an unpredictable policy environment; and a private sector and civil society with limited ability to participate in the policy-making process. Addressing these problems is necessary to create an enabling environment for an inclusive, broad-based, and sustainable agricultural sector growth.

In this context, the Agriculture Sector Policy and Institutional Reforms Strengthening (ASPIRES) project works to accelerate Tanzania's adoption of more effective policies and programs in order to drive growth of the agricultural sector, improve household food security and nutrition, and reduce poverty. ASPIRES is organized around four areas of action: collaborative research; advising on policy and coordination; capacity building; policy advocacy; and communication. Together, these areas are designed to increase evidence-based policy decision making and help establish a foundation for more inclusive, transparent, and sustainable processes for developing policy.

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

**Emphasis on policy engagement, supported by collaborative applied policy research:** ASPIRES works with the Policy Analysis Group (a coordinating body of policy analysts from





local organizations and implementing partners) to facilitate regular policy dialogue; consults regularly with policy makers in and beyond the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries; and establishes stakeholder working groups for many of its studies to guide research and policy engagement. ASPIRES also supports the Annual National Agricultural Policy Conference, engages Sokoine University of Agriculture and other partners in applied research.

**Demand-driven research on current policy topics, supported by long-term research on fundamental forces of change:** ASPIRES conducts research requested by the Government of Tanzania (e.g., studies of agricultural commodity board reforms and the Local Government Finance Act). At the same time, ASPIRES studies fundamental forces of change, such as shifting land ownership patterns and diets, which drive changes in the country's agricultural food system and broader economy. Together, both types of research improve policy making.

**Support pilot interventions that emerge from research and policy engagement:** For example, ASPIRES is coordinating with the President's Office for Regional and Local Government (PO-RALG) to support the pilot of an e-pay system for local taxes, a recommendation that emerged from an earlier Michigan State University study of tax practices in rural areas.

**Commitment to building human and institutional capacity for policy research and engagement:** This is done through regular formal training, in-service training through collaborative research, and institutional support. For example, ASPIRES supported the creation of a policy resource center and a market intelligence unit within the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries.

## RESULTS

Since inception, ASPIRES has played a significant role in advancing agricultural policy coordination, outreach and advisory efforts to the highest level of senior government leadership, the private sector and development partners. ASPIRES continues to support efforts to accelerate the adoption of more effective agricultural and nutrition policies. The project also equips Government of Tanzania staff with analytical skills to assess market dynamics and information.

Some of the key achievements to date are as follows:

- Designed and established the Market Intelligence Unit (MIU) within the Ministry of Agriculture. The MIU is expected to influence trade policy, especially for staple foods, and reduce the risk of imposing export bans.
- Established the Private Sector Desk (PSD) at the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries. The PSD will support regulatory reforms as outlined in the Blueprint on Regulatory Reforms to Improve the Business Environment.
- Influenced policy reform in the edible oil subsector in Tanzania through the 2018 Finance Bill Act. The policy reform raised the import tax on crude, semi-refined and refined edible oil (from 25% - 35%) to stimulate domestic competitiveness of local sunflower oil.
- Supported the launch of the Second Phase Agricultural Sector Development Programme II (ASDP II) on June 4, 2018. The program's second phase, which is being implemented over a five year period, seeks to address critical constraints and challenges to sector performance, improve agriculture output and farmer incomes, and ensure food security and nutrition by 2025.

