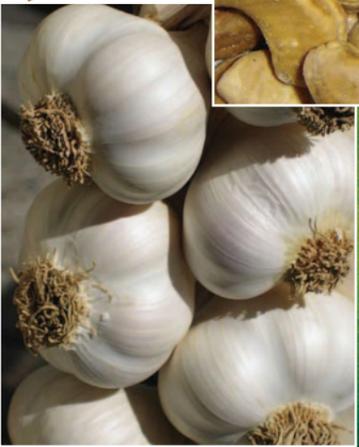
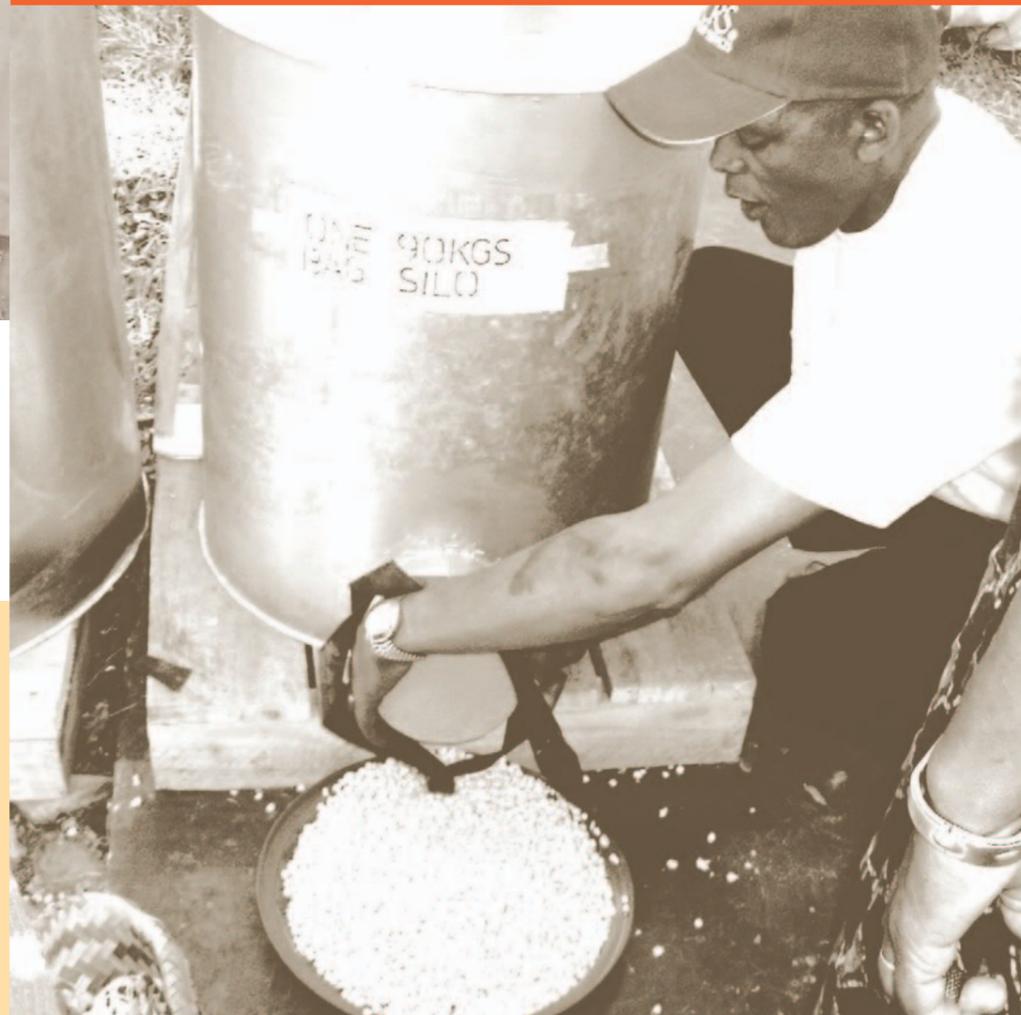


Supporting  
a Diversity of  
Agricultural  
Produce in East Africa  
since 2002



Improving Livelihoods Through Innovative Partnerships



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## BACKGROUND

Eighty percent of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa is dependent on agriculture as a source of income and employment. While elsewhere in the world agricultural productivity has increased, availability of food per person in Africa has decreased by 3% since 1990. Given the current world food crisis, revitalising the agricultural sector in Africa, which mainly consists of small scale farms, is now more important than ever. Agricultural productivity in Africa has stagnated due to limited access to new technologies, low investment, institutional failures, and market constraints for smallholder farmers.

Food and Agricultural Research Management (FARM-Africa) has a strong track record of transforming lives. Founded in Kenya in 1985, for 23 years we have worked to improve the standard of living for almost two million people in East and South Africa. Our vision is of a prosperous rural Africa, and our mission is to reduce poverty by enabling small scale farmers and herders to develop innovative and effective approaches to natural resource management. Our core values are embedded in a fundamental belief in the potential of small scale farmers and we always work to promote their interests within the marketplace. FARM-Africa has operational experience in Africa across six countries with a constant emphasis on both farm level and institutional capacity building.

The Maendeleo Agricultural Technology Fund (MATF), managed by FARM Africa, was established in 2002 with joint funding from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation which, since 2005, has been channeled through the Kilimo Trust. MATF has supported small scale agricultural producers to improve their production through access to new technologies, training, and linkage to profitable local and regional African output markets. MATF is a grant making initiative which has funded 67 projects in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. We currently have a network of over 250 reputable grass roots development organisations and partners, which is the essence of our success.

### **Sustainable production, seed supply and marketing of African indigenous vegetables in Kiambu District (Kenya)**

*This project implemented by AVRDC and Farm Concern International engaged with 500 farmers who were organised into 20 groups of 25 members each. From an average of 0.09 acre when the project was just established, farmers have almost tripled the area under cultivation. During the project period, the gross margin for 0.25 acre increased from US\$ 303 with conventional vegetables to US\$ 5,013 with indigenous vegetables. Groups have purchased shares on the local stock market as a way of investing savings with potential higher returns.*

## PROJECT IMPACTS

More than 150,000 households have benefited from the adoption of improved agricultural technologies brought by MATF projects. A recently conducted external evaluation of the initiative states the following about MATF's positive effects on agricultural productivity and related household incomes: *'As can be seen there is a wide variation, but a very positive story, with median increase in yields of 400 per cent and median increase in incomes of 500 percent.'* Our analysis suggests that MATF has been highly successful in fulfilling its goal, that is, improving the livelihoods of small holder farmers and herders'.

Economic impact studies conducted recently show that the increased household incomes derived from improved agricultural technologies and market access have been extraordinary: *for every dollar invested in MATF projects, the return in terms of increased farmer income has ranged from 1.3 to 24 US dollars.* Many farmers have reinvested their profits in agricultural enterprises. In terms of changes in livelihoods, farmers have most of all appreciated being able to pay school fees for their children and buy food items. In addition, affording domestic running and medical services also made a big difference to their lives. In most projects, partners provided savings and credit services to farmers which further boosted their enterprises and strengthened their financial resilience.

## HOW MATF OPERATES

The MATF secretariat is based in the FARM-Africa country office in Nairobi, Kenya. An Advisory Panel (AP) comprising seven agricultural development experts from the three East African countries, along with representatives from both donor organisations and FARM-Africa, provides support and strategic direction for the management of the fund.

Approximately once a year MATF advertises a call for concept notes. The most appropriate ones are short-listed by the AP based on set criteria and applicants are invited to submit detailed proposals. MATF visits potential projects to assess the capacity of the applicants, their partners, and ensure that the projects are feasible. Successful projects receive a grant of between £ 8,000 and £ 90,000 for a project that can last up to 3 years.

MATF builds capacity of grantees in relevant areas, such as participatory monitoring and evaluation (PME) and financial management. Quarterly and annual reports are submitted by every project to the MATF secretariat. Grantee organisations

and selected partners also participate in annual experience sharing workshops. Field monitoring visits are undertaken annually by members of the Advisory Panel together with MATF monitoring officers. These provide valuable feedback, and learning is documented and shared among all partners through workshops, conferences, newsletters, booklets, videos and its website - [www.maendeleo-atf.org](http://www.maendeleo-atf.org). Impact studies and external evaluations are conducted within 6 months of the completion of each project. FARM-Africa carries out robust external mid-term evaluations and financial audits for all rounds of projects.

## WHAT WE FUND

All projects exploring crop, natural resource management and livestock-related technologies (including bees and fish) are eligible for consideration. The fund prioritises projects which move beyond production and into value addition and access to markets. The technologies must have been tested under farmer conditions, yield impact within a short period of time and have the potential for scaling out. Examples may range from new crop varieties to innovative systems of crop or livestock management, post-harvest handling, processing, storage and marketing. The fund encourages the participation of beneficiaries and inclusion of women in its approaches and methods.

## IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

MATF has built up an extensive network of reputable grass-root and other development organisations in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Since the start, these organisations have benefited from strategic and lasting partnerships, an increased ability to foster new partnerships and market linkages, and improved networks for information sharing.

Organisations which are eligible to receive grants have a proven track record in agricultural development work. They include research institutions, NGOs, CBOs, private companies with interests in agriculture and public extension departments among others. They work in partnership with other relevant institutions to stimulate agricultural transformation and market access for smallholders.