

# CASHEW NUT AND SESAME PRODUCTION AND MARKETING

2018–2020 | KILIFI, LAMU AND KWALE COUNTIES, COASTAL KENYA

**Coastal Kenya has the highest concentration of cashew nut trees in the country with almost 70,000 smallholders along the coastline producing cashew nuts. However, ageing trees, most of which are diseased, saw cashew nut production fall from 18,907 tonnes in 2015 to 11,404 tonnes in 2016 with some farmers in Kilifi, Lamu and Kwale counties felling the trees for charcoal or switching to other crops.**

Riddled with limited employment opportunities and growing food insecurity, Coastal Kenya is one of the most under-developed regions in the country with more than 62% of the population living below the poverty line.

The cashew and sesame value chain project is working with 15,000 smallholder farmers in three coastal counties (6,500 in Kilifi, 6,500 in Kwale and 2,000 in Lamu) to revive the dwindling economy by increasing incomes for cashew and sesame farmers, creating employment opportunities for the communities and boosting food security.

Farm Africa, together with Ten Senses Africa is training farmers in Kilifi, Kwale and Lamu in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and agribusiness concepts so as to increase the social and economic empowerment of participating communities and empower smallholder farmers by enhancing their access to marketing opportunities.

The project is building the capacity of the communities in good agricultural practices, agribusiness and financial literacy.

Financial linkages will provide the capital needed for reinvestment so that farmers can produce more while market connections will ensure that they sell for more.

Training in group dynamics and conflict resolution will enable the youth groups to form cohesive community self-help clusters.

The groups will create employment opportunities by helping youth and women set up sustainable income-generating businesses providing services in nursery operations, top working, pruning and biological pest management.

The establishment of three tree nurseries in Kilifi, Kwale and Lamu will increase access to high-quality cashew seedlings and spur production volumes.

## PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ 15,000 farmers have received training in agribusiness and financial literacy.
- ✓ Savings worth Ksh 3,382,100, an average of Ksh 10,000 per member, have been realised from the 23 VSLAs, with outstanding loans amounting to Ksh 3,280,673, an average loan of Ksh 7,079 per member.
- ✓ 336 VSLA members are running income-generating ventures.
- ✓ 200 youth entrepreneurs have established cashew nurseries and are offering grafting services to farmers.
- ✓ Youth groups have so far received Ksh 95,000 in income from the sale of cashew, coconut and citrus seedlings.
- ✓ Youth entrepreneurs offering biological pest management services have generated an income of Ksh 35,000.
- ✓ Work is underway to link groups with financial institutions. Three groups have applied for no-interest youth enterprise fund loans worth Ksh 300,000 to expand their businesses.



### **SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF YOUTH AND WOMEN**

We are supporting 1,000 young entrepreneurs and women to run specialised service provision businesses within the cashew and sesame value chains. Through a self-help approach, the youth and women have been equipped with the knowledge and tools needed to provide services such as nursery establishment, biological pest management to eradicate pests and diseases organically, as well as top working and pruning skills to revitalise old trees and increase yields.



### **INCREASING MARKET ACCESS**

Price fluctuations and a lack of a reliable market for cashew nuts and sesame have crippled production and profitability. The cashew and sesame value chain project is assisting farmers to produce high-value produce that will attract premium market prices by helping them achieve Organic and Fair Trade certification. Ten Senses Africa will buy the cashew nuts directly from the farmers.

A ready and competitive market will give the smallholder farmers the incentive to commit to agricultural production, thus improving their livelihoods and alleviating their vulnerability to drought and other natural severities.



### **BOOSTING PRODUCTION**

Neglect of the cashew trees through lack of pruning and inadequate pests and diseases control has affected yields. We are encouraging farmers to adopt good agricultural practices such as regular pruning and top working of the old trees, proper manure application, biological spraying and use of improved varieties of cashew nuts and certified seeds for sesame.

In liaison with Ten Senses Africa, the project will establish three tree nurseries in Kilifi, Kwale and Lamu counties to ensure easy access to quality cashew seedlings.



### **BROADENING ACCESS TO FINANCE**

Lack of collateral makes it difficult for smallholders to borrow funds from financial institutions such as banks. The project is supporting the formation and strengthening of 20 Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) where members are able to save and borrow money to invest in their businesses.

The youth and women's groups are also linked with financial providers so that they can access micro-enterprise funding for the expansion of their ventures.

Farm Africa is implementing the project in collaboration with Ten Senses Africa (TSA).

The project is funded by the European Union's Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa. The Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation (Slovak AID) is managing the project's funds on behalf of the European Union.

