



OUTCOMES OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE TASK FORCE RURAL AFRICA REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The agri-food sector and rural areas are of central importance in the economy and society of both Africa and the European Union (EU). The two continents are deeply linked by peoples, geography and history. Relations with Africa have gained a high profile on the EU external action agenda. It is acknowledged that cooperation in agriculture will be crucial for a sustainable future.

In this context, the European Commission set up in April 2018 the Task Force Rural Africa ('TFRA')¹. This group of experts provided advice and recommendations in relation to strengthening the partnership in food and farming and in enhancing the role of the EU in African job-creating economic development in agriculture, agri-business and agro-industries. Following the adoption by the Commission of the new Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investments and Jobs², called for by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in September 2018, the TFRA has become even more relevant as a good example of an enhanced cooperation with Africa as partners.

The report of the TFRA was published on 7 March 2019 and can be consulted in the following [link](#) while the executive summary is in annex.

During May 2019 a public consultation was launched seeking the views and opinions of the stakeholders on the report and the recommendations of the TFRA, in order to better plan and implement future actions vis a vis to Africa for deepening the new Africa – Europe Alliance for sustainable investment and jobs.

All the questions included in the questionnaire of this consultation made reference to concepts (such as the territorial approach, food systems, the transformation of the agricultural sector etc.) developed in the report. The answers received were used by the European Commission services' for internal analysis.

The consultation contributed to the formulation of a **Political Declaration that had been endorsed by all the EU and AU Member States, along with an Action Agenda in the 3rd AU-EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference³, that co-hosted by Commissioner Hogan and Commissioner Sacko on the 21 June 2019 in Rome.** This Political Declaration and its Action Agenda are designed to strengthen the intercontinental partnership at all levels of the food supply chain (multiannual cooperation programme with African continental, regional and national farmer organisations, food safety and research and innovation).

1. Link to Commission's Expert Register website: <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetail&groupID=3579&NewSearch=1&NewSearch=1>
2. [Communication From the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council Communication on a new Africa – Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs: Taking our partnership for investment and jobs to the next level](#)
3. The programme and the concept notes of the different sessions of the conference are on https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/au-eu-conference-2019-jun-21_en.



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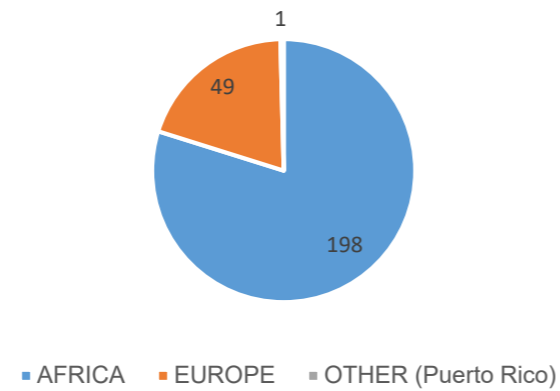
WHO REPLIED?

WHO REPLIED?

The consultation received 248 replies, the majority coming from African countries.

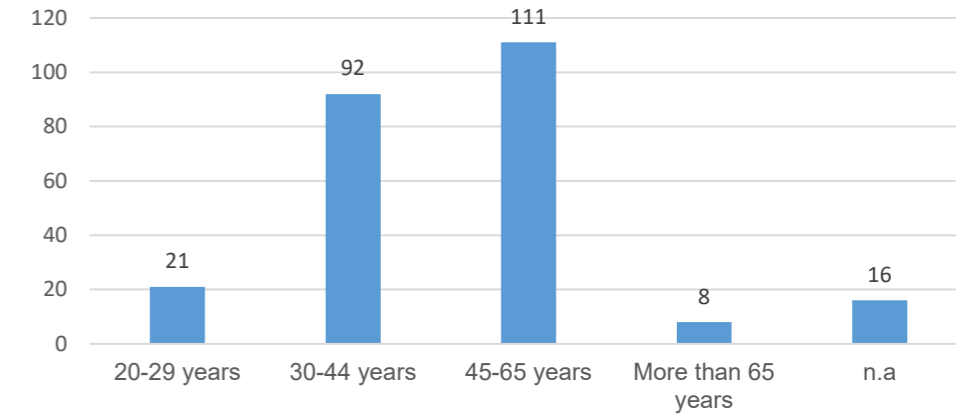
It should be noted that this number of respondents cannot be considered as a statistically representative sample; therefore the results cannot be taken as representing the wider views of a population related to the agri-food sector in Africa.

Origin of replies

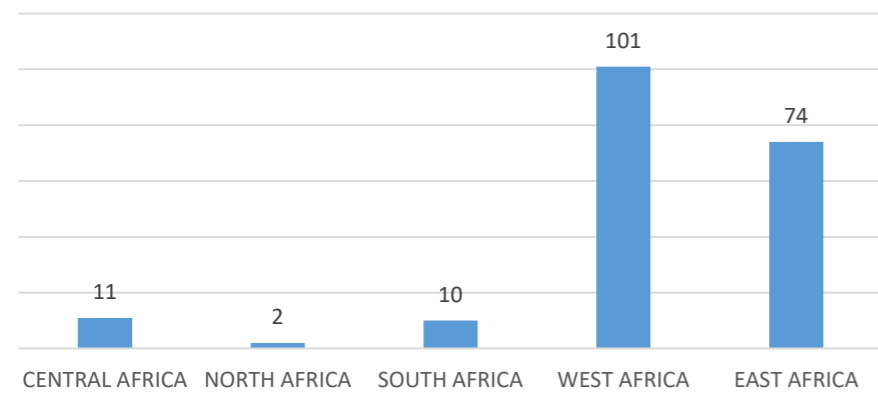


The large majority of respondents (111) are aged between 45 and 65 years old, with an important participation of people between 30 and 44 years of age (92).

Age respondents



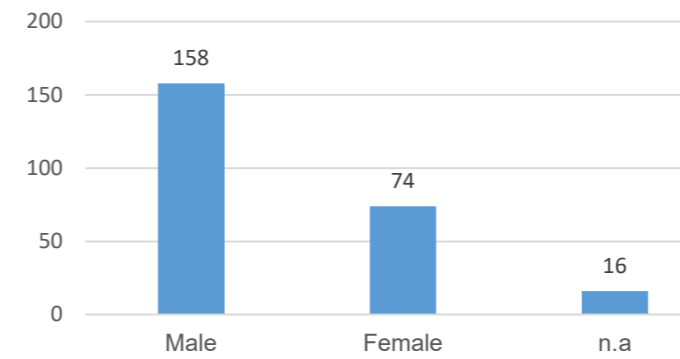
Origin of African replies



Most of the 198 replies received from African respondents originated from West Africa (101), while the participation from East Africa (74) is also quite important.

A possible explanation for this is the nature of the networks, which informed the stakeholders about the existence of the report and the public consultation.

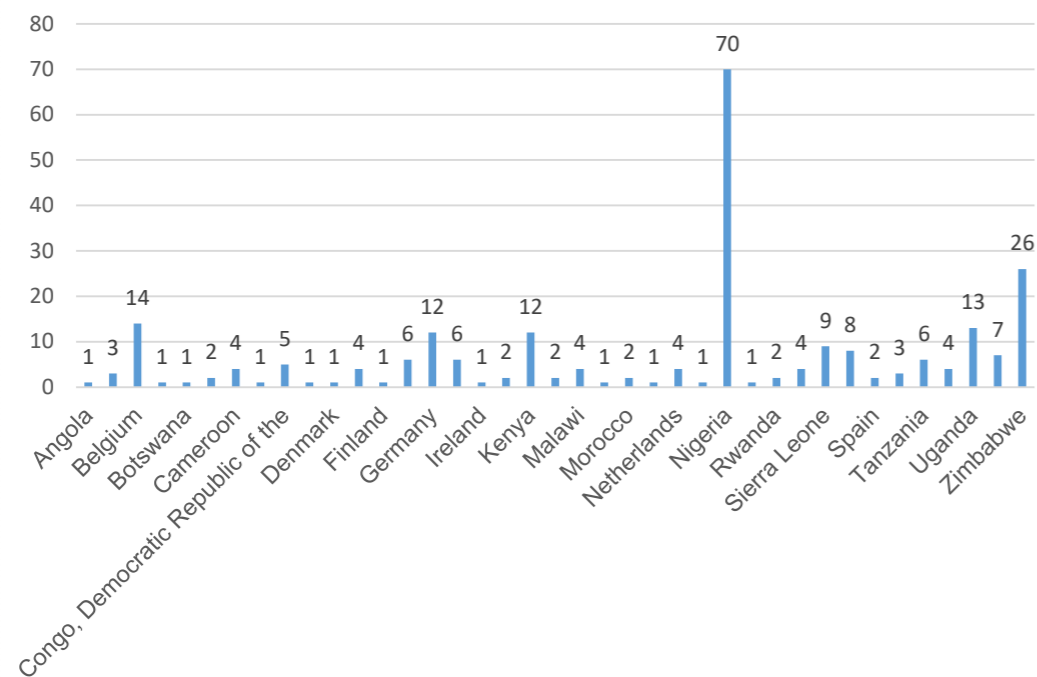
Gender of respondents



Male respondents are more than twice as numerous as the female ones

The countries with the highest participation are Nigeria (70) and Zimbabwe (26), while amongst Europeans most of the replies come from Belgium (14) and Germany (12).

Number of answers / country





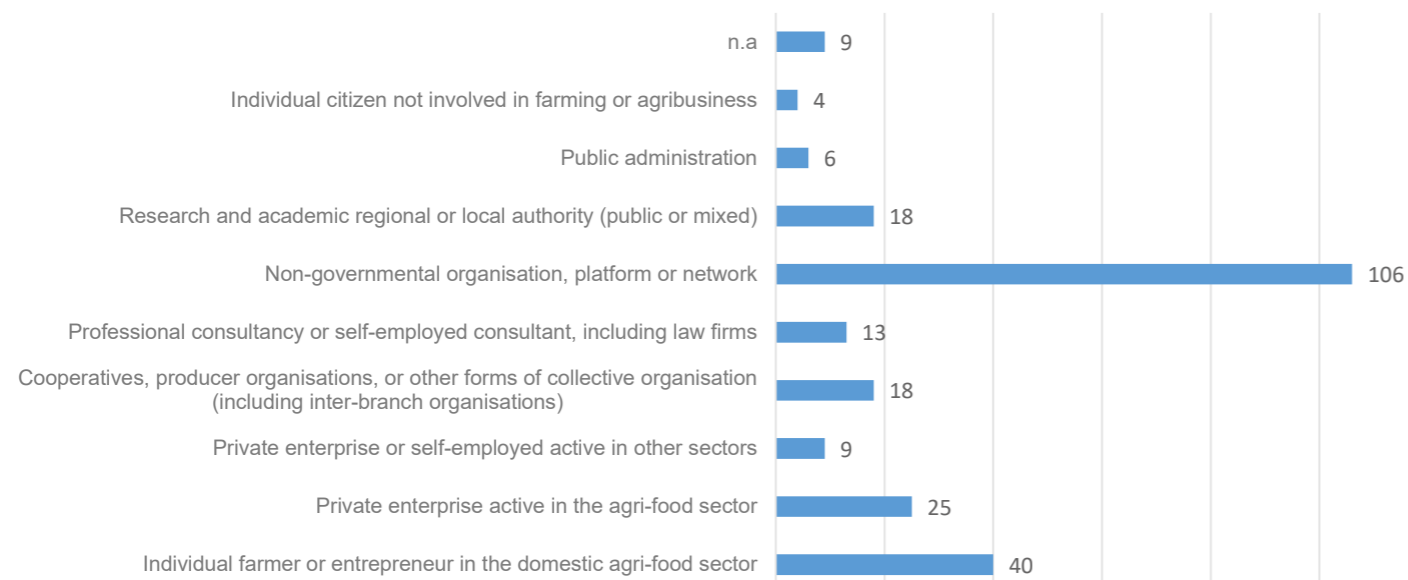
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TYPE OF ENTREPRISE / ORGANISATION

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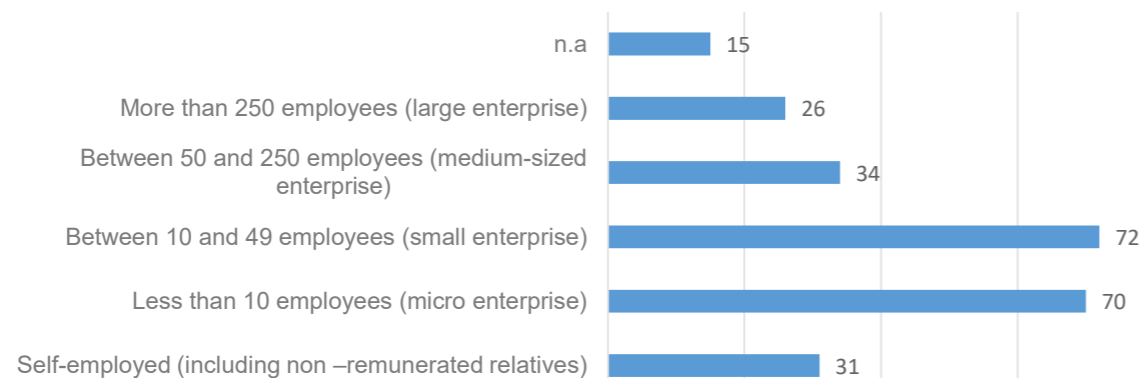
The report of the Task Force Rural Africa is a specialised and technical one and this is reflected in the background of the respondents. Only 4 individual citizens not involved in farming answered, with vast majority (244) having some more direct involvement in the agri-food sector.

Type of organisation



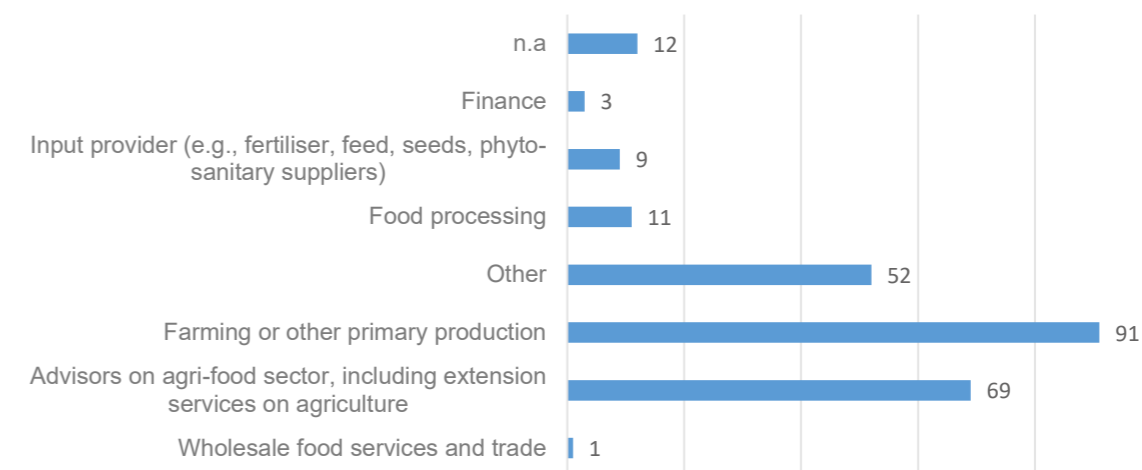
The largest number of replies (106) originated from non-governmental organisations, while an important number are coming from individual farmers or entrepreneurs in the domestic agri food sector (40) and private agri-food enterprises (9). Most of the agri-food enterprises and organisations of the respondents (142) are small or micro size (between 10 and 49 employees).

Employees in the enterprise/organisation



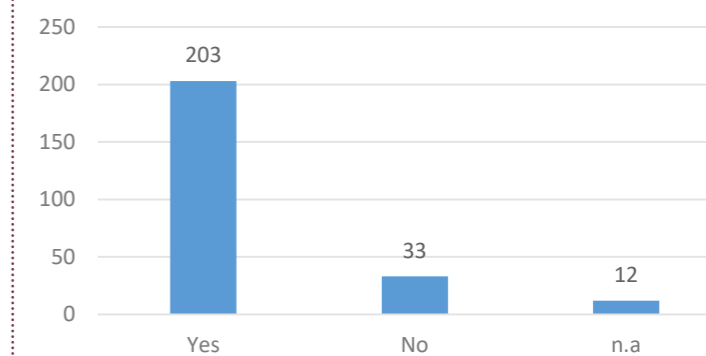
Most of the respondents are active in farming or in other primary production (91), or they are working as advisors on the agri-food sector (69). This could be expected, given that both the report and the survey of this consultation are technical and not really taken up by the general public. On the other hand, this gives an extra value to the answers received.

Sector of activity of the enterprise / organisation



The validity of the answers is enhanced, given that most of the institutes and organisations, which participated in the survey, are active in Africa.

Institute or organisation active in Africa





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TERRITORIAL APPROACH

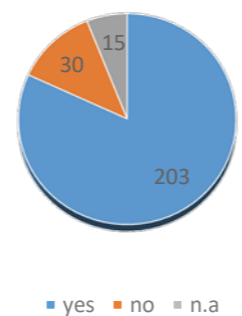
TERRITORIAL APPROACH

One of the central recommendations of the report was the idea of following a territorial approach for the development of rural African areas.

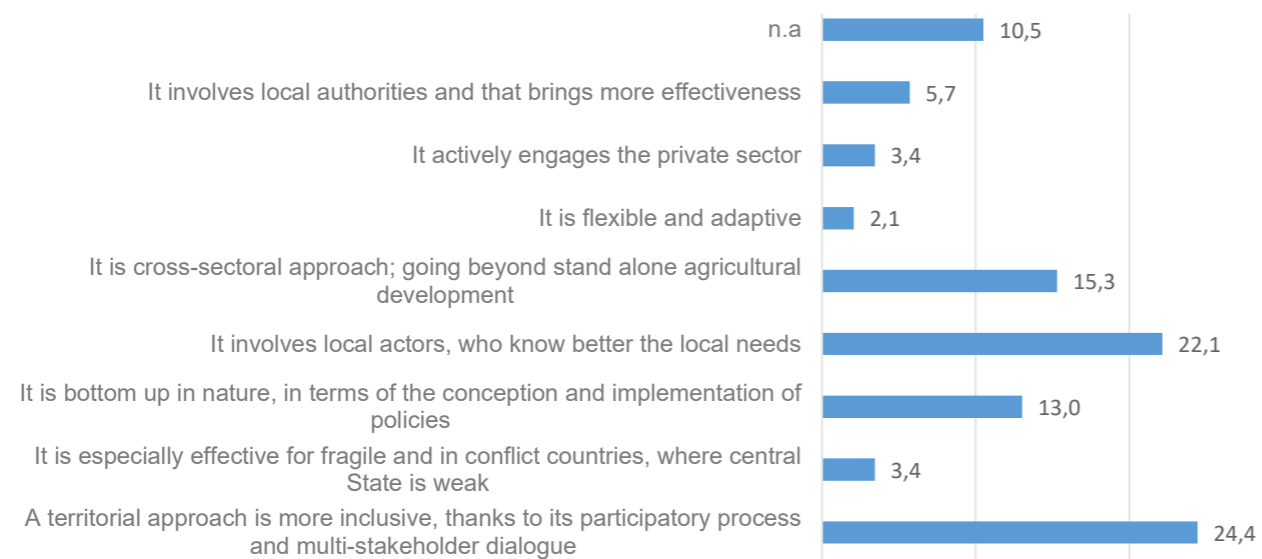
According to the report, a territorial perspective goes beyond existing administrative boundaries, making a clear break from the legacy of precolonial, colonial and postcolonial history in Africa, which deeply shaped Africa's spatial infrastructure. Mostly based in the past on the exploitation of natural resources, transport networks were oriented to the coasts, with each colonial territory building a port, which was often both the main town and a railhead to ship out local commodities. At a practical policy level, adopting a territorial approach involves strategic thinking and planning, an increased focus on public and private investment, and the provision of basic infrastructure and services in small and medium sized towns and rural areas. At the same time, a territorial approach is an approach to development, in which the EU has considerable experience, given the successful Leader initiative in the European countryside.

The majority of respondents (203) agree that the proposed approach is the right one. They find it more inclusive, thanks to its participatory process and multi-stakeholder dialogue (24.4%) and because it involves local actors who know better the local needs of their territory (22.1%).

For a territorial approach ?

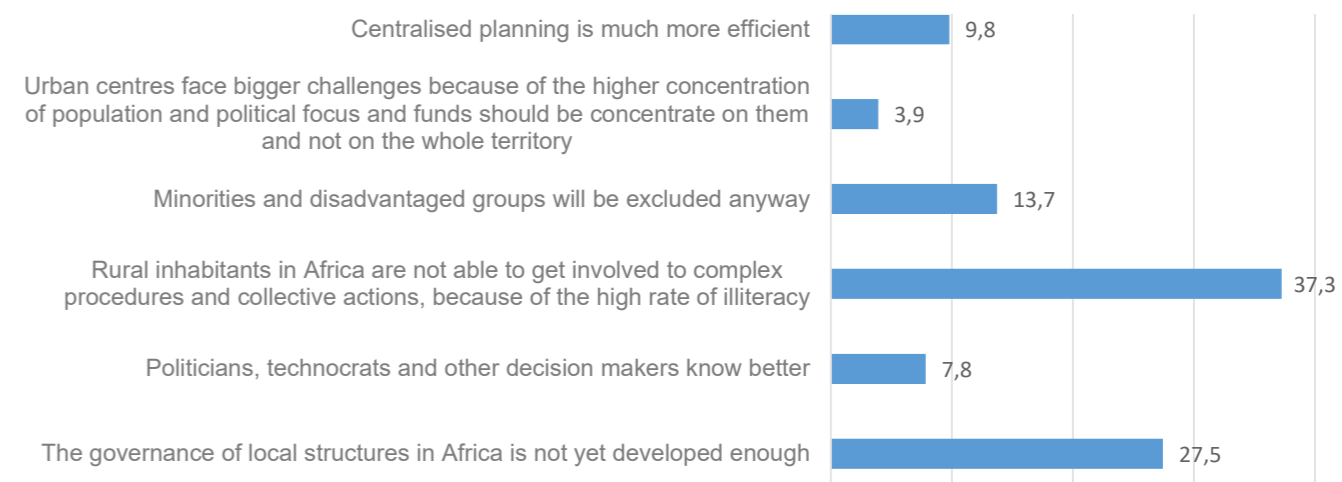


Reasons for a territorial approach (%)



Among the main reasons given by those, who do not believe that the territorial approach is right for Africa, is that rural inhabitants in Africa are not able to get involved in complex procedures and collective actions because of their high rate of illiteracy (37.3%). Another major obstacle is that the governance of local structures in Africa is not yet developed sufficiently for permitting such an approach to be fruitful (27.5%).

Reasons against a territorial approach (%)





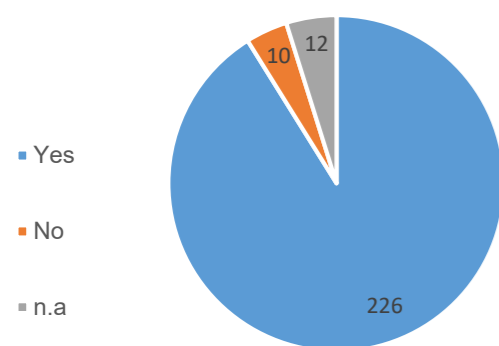
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SUSTAINABLE
LAND AND
NATURAL
RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT
AND CLIMATE
ACTION

SUSTAINABLE LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE ACTION

According to the report of the TFRA, the high demand for agricultural land and the need of the growing African population for food, fodder, fibre, water, and other uses put natural resources under great pressure. Desertification, land degradation, and drought contribute to food insecurity and rural-urban migration. In addition, climate change is leading, worldwide, to increased climate variability and extremes that are in turn key forces driving the recent rise in global hunger. The report argues that land and resources management and climate action should be a priority to policies aiming rural and agricultural development in Africa. It recommends giving incentives to land users, such as farmers and pastoralists in order to adopt and continue sustainable land management practices, through policy measures and other mechanisms, while ensuring their ownership and access to land.

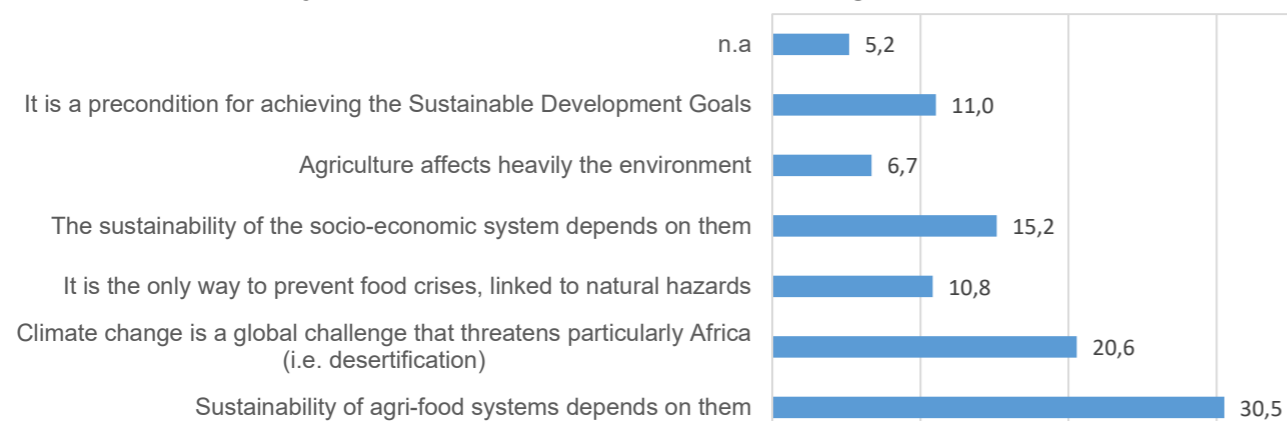
Land and natural resources management and climate action should be the first priority of rural development policies and programmes in Africa



A large majority of respondents (226) agree with the point of view of the TFRA that land and natural resources management and climate action should be the first priority of rural development policies and programmes in Africa.

The main reasons for agreeing are that they believe that the sustainability of the agri-food systems depends on them (30.5%) and also that climate change is a global challenge that threatens particularly Africa, through desertification (20.6%).

Reason why land and natural resources management and climate action should be the first priority of rural development policies and programmes in Africa (%)



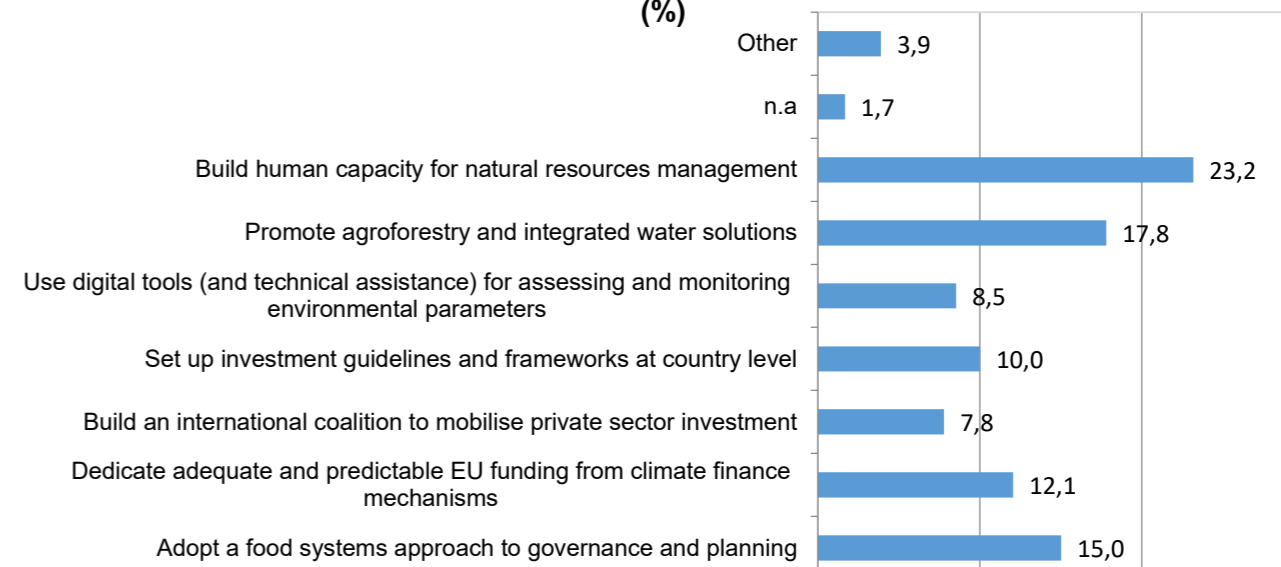
The few respondents (10), who believe that land and natural resources management and climate action should not be the first priority of rural development policies and programmes in Africa, give as reasons the fact that agricultural productivity, aiming at feeding the population, is more urgent. They also consider that Africa is huge and has abundant arable lands and natural, intact spaces. Consequently, they believe that the environmental pressure in the continent is not that high.

Reasons why land and natural resources management and climate action should NOT be the first priority of rural development policies and programmes in Africa (%)



Most of the respondents (23.2% out of the 539 answers given) believe that the most adequate tool for main-streaming environmental sustainability and climate action is through building human capacity for natural resources management. The promotion of agroforestry and integrated water solutions (17.8%) and the adoption of a food systems approach to governance and planning (15.0%) are also considered as important tools.

The most adequate tools for mainstreaming environmental sustainability and climate action (%)



Respondents proposed other ways for mainstreaming environmental sustainability and climate action that may be summarised as follows:

Respecting international conventions and establishing adequate and independent national climate policies. Efforts to ensure the ratification of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is essential. Reducing agribusiness influence to national agricultural policies and supporting, through specific measures, climate services development for the adaptation of sustainable agri-food systems, are also among respondents' proposals.

Resolving and regulating trade issues and environment. Establishing fair trade conditions could avoid, according to some respondents, situations where European agro-industrial products are perceived to be flooding and destroying the African markets. Fast-tracking economic regional integration and inclusion of environment issues in trade facilitation (including easier access to European markets for the African products) are essential according to some other respondents. Regulation should encourage and allow public mentorship of sound agribusinesses, instead of suffocating them. Bilateral agreements with partner countries supporting African countries in adopting and enforcing environment legislation could be useful.

Adopting sustainable agricultural practices. Developing sustainable agricultural practices such as organic farming, using autochthonous (and not imported) plants and seeds and recognising the positive role of pastoralism (through the assessment of its status and of conditions and trends in rangeland and pastoral lands) are proposed, Establishing Multipurpose Weather Data Systems at scale across the Continent is considered as a strategic infrastructure priority.

Improving training and capacity building. It was generally felt that extensive, long-term training through schools and communities, government and donor institutions, which promote genuine local health and nutrition, are essential because sustainability requires both social and cultural transformation for its achievement. Improvement of the capacity building of farmers to increase their resilience could contribute positively too.

4. Note that, when the number of answers given is higher than the number participants (248), this is because multiple answers could be given to some of the questions



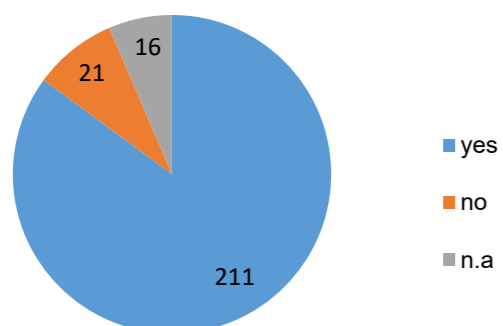
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SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICAN AGRICULTURE

SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICAN AGRICULTURE

According to the TFRA, agriculture still employs a big part of the Sub-Sahara African workforce and it remains a critical component of livelihoods. Yet, over the past two decades, a minority of African countries have achieved significant agricultural growth and the challenge now is for other countries to engage in the transformation of the sector to achieve its sustainable and inclusive development. The report argues that inclusive agricultural strategies can stimulate growth result in strong multiplier effects that expand job opportunities in the rest of the economy. The TFRA acknowledges the wide diversity in agricultural situations among African countries and it proposes measures to achieve rapid inclusive agricultural growth, using and preserving the full potential of ecological resources to co-design with local actors a new development paradigm. It favours a specific focus on family farming, building capacity in farmers' organisations, sustainable agricultural intensification, and agri-food systems, backed up by increased commitment to creating an enabling economic and institutional environment for the sector. According to the report, African governments, societies and farmers must drive together this transformation.

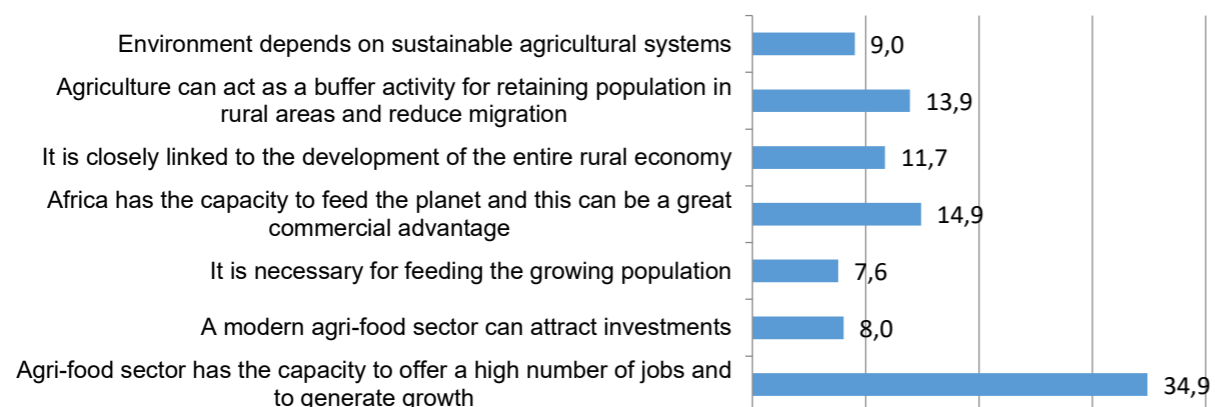
Is the transformation of the agricultural sector (in the way it is presented in the report) a key element able to boost the development of African rural economies?



Most of the respondents (211) agree with the point of the view of the report that the transformation of the agricultural sector is a key element for boosting the development of African rural economies.

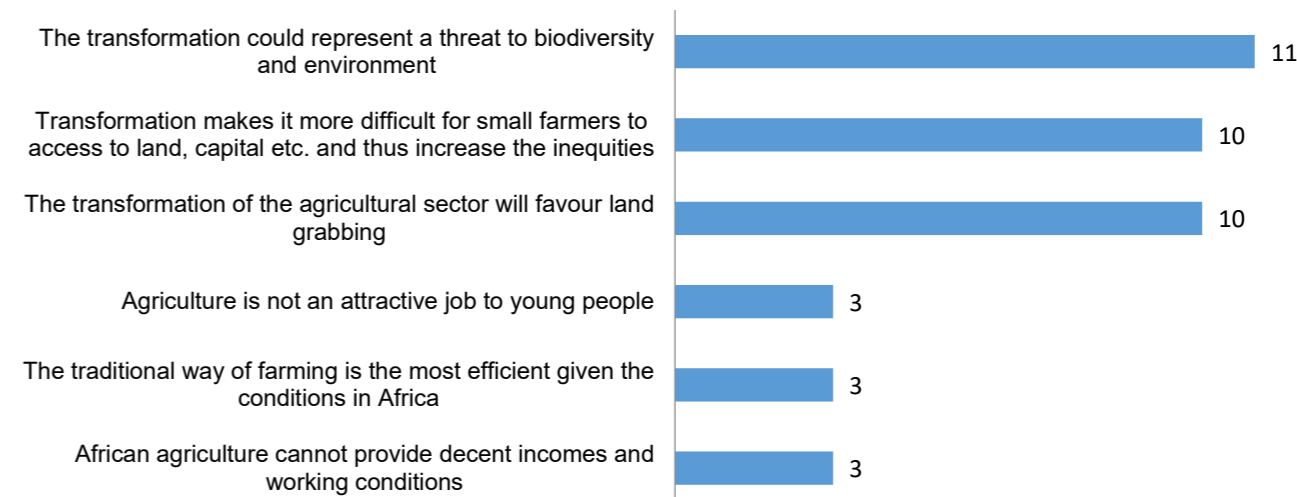
Among the main reasons given for supporting this answer (34.9%) is that the agrifood sector has the capacity to offer a high number of jobs and to generate growth in the African rural areas. Moreover, 14.9% of responses assert that agriculture is not only a pivotal economic sector in Africa, because it has the capacity to feed the planet, but also provides a great commercial advantage to Africa. They think that it can also act as a buffer activity for retaining rural populations in place and thus reduce migration.

Reasons for the transformation of the agricultural sector



Amongst the small number of respondents (21) against the transformation of the agricultural sector, the main reason given is because they consider that this transformation could represent a threat to the African biodiversity and environment. In addition, they consider that a transformation could increase the inequities between farmers, since it would make it more difficult for small and poor ones to access to land and capital. Another main fear is that transformation of the sector risks favouring and facilitating land grabbing.

Reasons against the transformation of the agricultural sector (%)



Regarding the most adequate and efficient ways to achieve the necessary agricultural transformation, the most frequent answer, among the 983 received, is on the need to set up a strategy for agricultural transformation, based on a territorial approach and participatory planning and foster its implementation at national and continental level (12.2%). Other important ways to promote a sustainable agricultural transformation included supporting and empowering youth to participate meaningfully and gainfully in the transformation process (10.4% of replies), encouraging farmers' organisations and cooperatives at national, regional and continental level (9.2%) and investing in vocational training in agriculture and in the food industry (8.6%).



The most adequate and efficient ways to achieve this transformation (%)

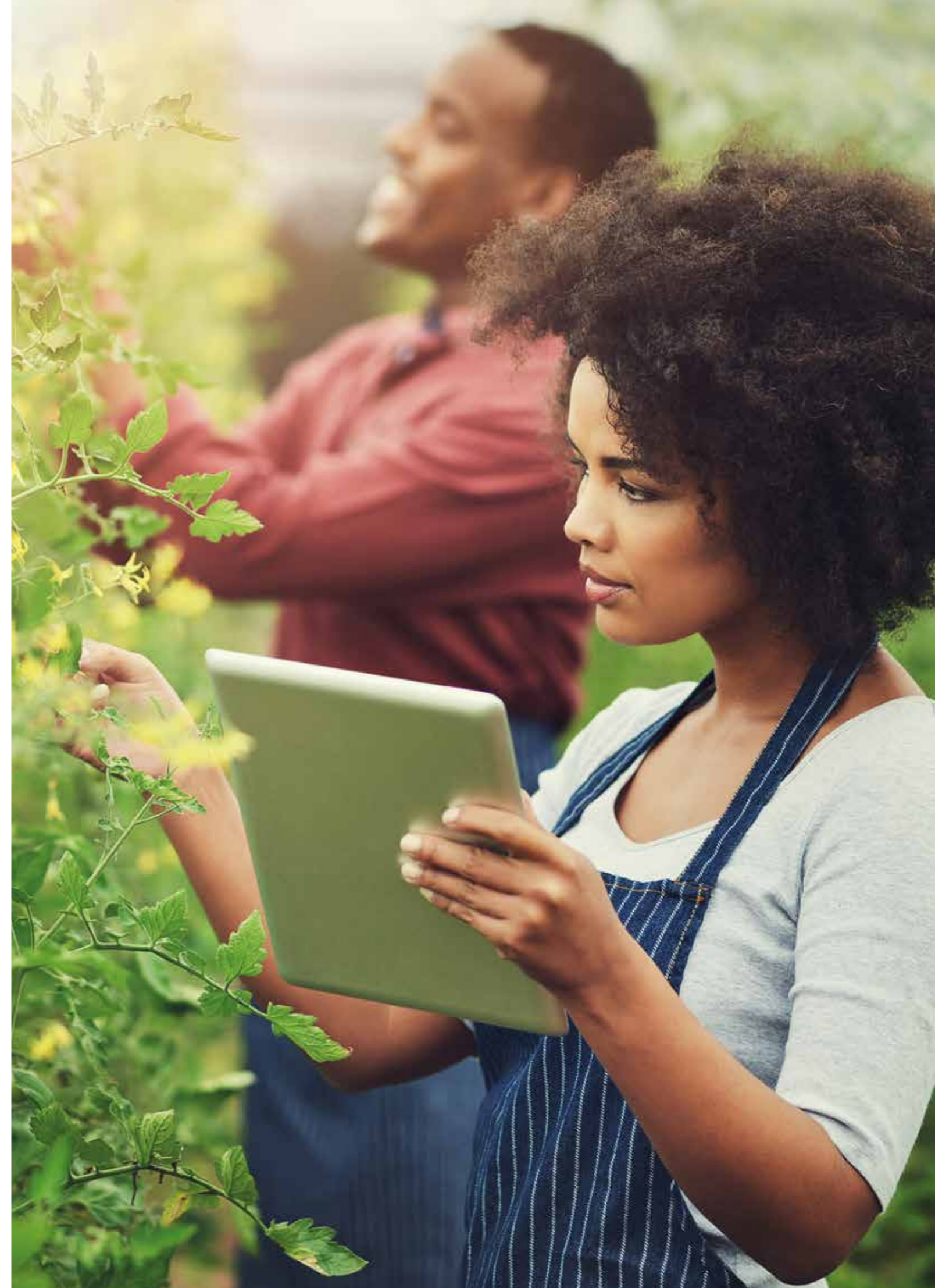


Respondents proposed also some other ways for achieving a sustainable transformation of the African agriculture. These proposals concern the following fields of action:

Policy strategies. Concerning policy orientations, according to some respondents all farmers' communities should be supported in order to ensure an enabling policy framework and get everyone involved. Policies should invest in enabling environment transforming the smallholders to medium scale business farmers, through mechanization and access to finance. Agricultural policies should follow a farming systems approach that assesses opportunities within each farming system, including staple foods and high value crops or livestock. At the same time, monoculture farming should be banned. Both public and private sector should increase investments and the capacity to comply with food quality and safety standards. Developing participatory guarantee systems to improve organic quality and build market linkages could be part of this strategy.

Research orientations. African States should invest in the research aiming at reinforcing agro-ecological methods of production (supporting sustainable crop livestock interaction for improving nutrient management, soil fertility and increasing productivity of traditional systems)

Trade issues. Dumping of European agri-food products, which outcompete the local production, should be avoided. Some respondents argue that preferential treatment given to African producers should be maintained in order to protect them from unfair global competition. Moreover, in some cases protection of the national market is necessary to build up sufficient structures and markets and permit them to be competitive on a global level.





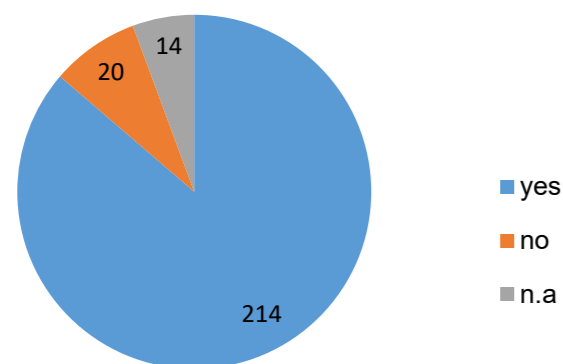
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DEVELOPMENT OF THE AFRICAN FOOD INDUSTRY AND FOOD MARKETS

DEVELOPMENT OF THE AFRICAN FOOD INDUSTRY AND FOOD MARKETS

The report claims that the increase in African food demand is a major opportunity for the continent's food industry. But that opportunity can only be realised if the current constraints to competitiveness, inadequate levels of investment, low levels of value chain organisation and value added, little export diversification and barriers to expanding trade – domestic, regional, intra-African and international trade – can be overcome. The development of the African food industry could create major employment and livelihood opportunities both in the agri-food sector and across the rural economy and ensure that Africa's food security needs can be met in the future.

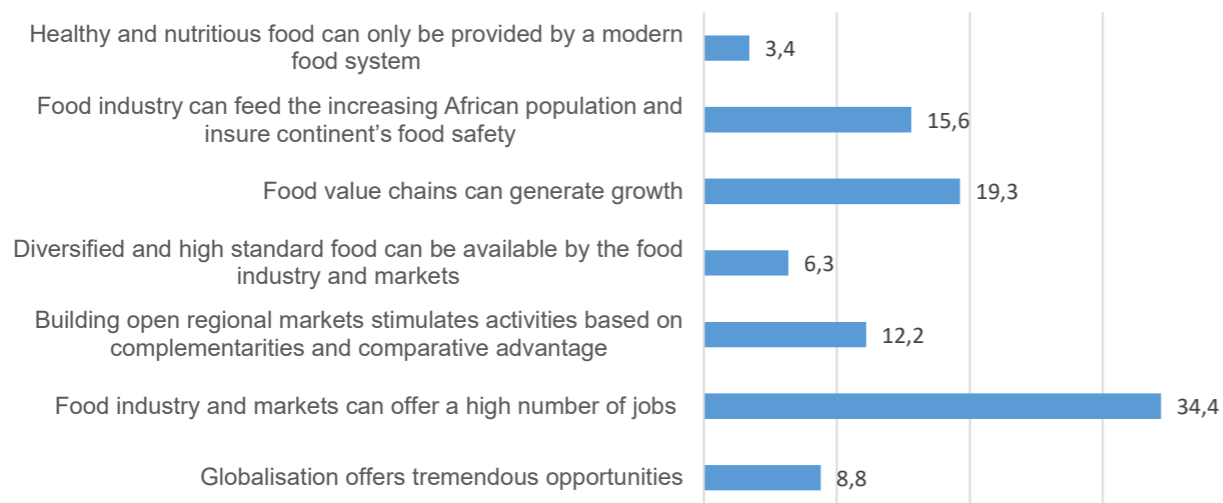
Do you consider the development of African food industry and food markets key for creating employment and livelihood opportunities while answering Africa's food security needs?



The majority of the people who participated to the public consultation (214) agree with the report that the development of the African food industry and food markets is a key element for creating employment and livelihood opportunities while answering Africa's food security needs.

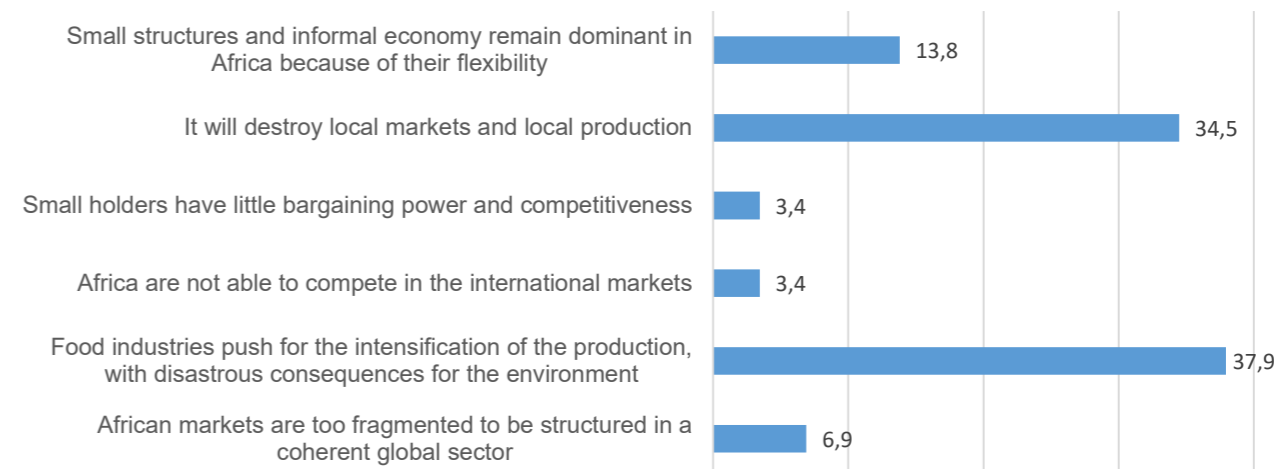
The main reason for this preference is that respondents consider that food markets can offer a high number of good quality jobs (34.4%) and that food value chains can generate growth that can be beneficial for the whole economy (19.3%). Africa's food security and safety issues are also among the reasons for supporting the development of African food industry and food markets (15.6%).

Reasons for considering the development of African food industry and food markets a key element for creating employment and livelihood opportunities while answering Africa's food security needs (%)



The reasons for considering the development of African food industry and food markets as unsuitable for creating employment and livelihood opportunities include the fear that the food industries will push for the intensification of the production, with disastrous consequences for the environment. They also afraid that such a development will destroy local markets and local production, where small structures and informal economy continue dominating because of their flexible character.

Reasons for NOT considering the development of African food industry and food markets a key element for creating employment and livelihood opportunities while answering Africa's food security needs (%)



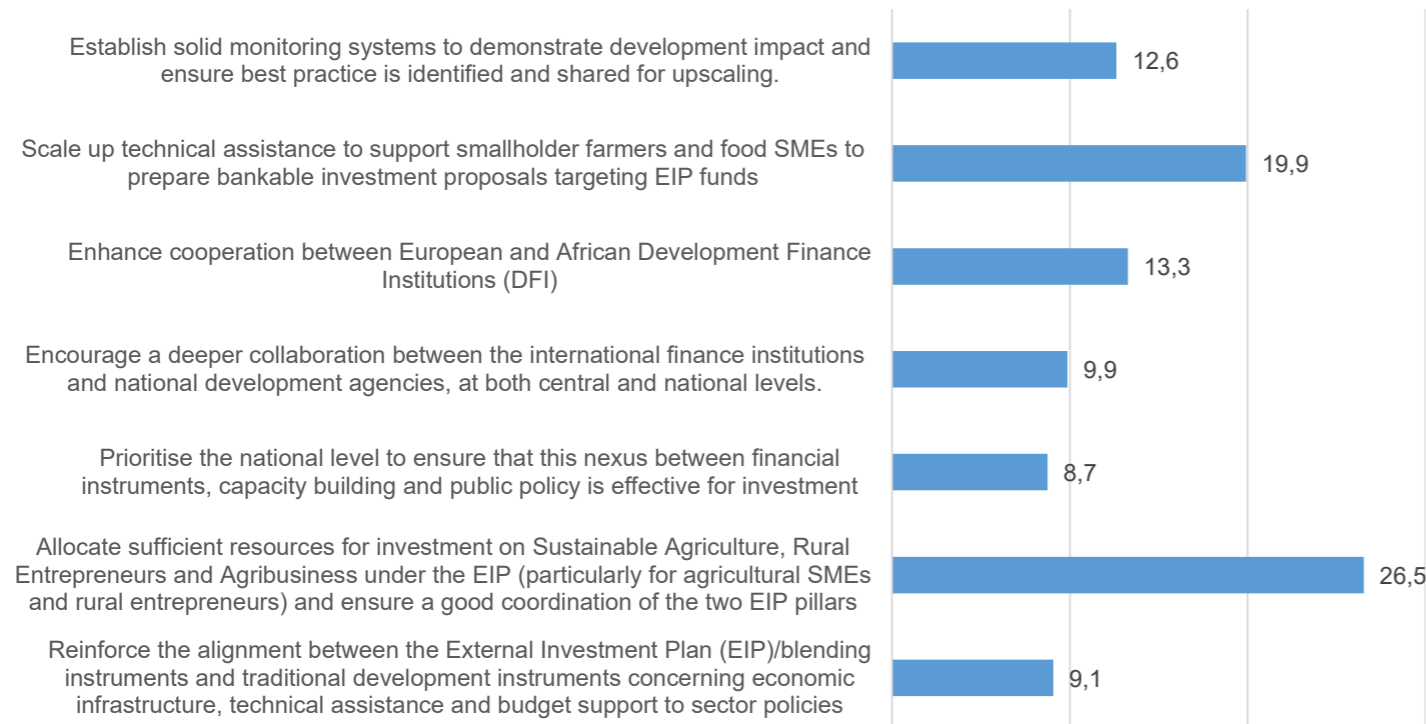
Of the 438 answers received to this question, about the key actions for increasing the competitiveness of the African food industry, 34.5% refer to the improvement of infrastructures (mainly roads and ports), in order to reduce transport costs and time. More than a quarter of the received answers (27.6%) argue that the main key action to be promoted is setting up stable, predictable and coherent domestic policies, transparent regulations and an efficient administration for attracting foreign direct investment and helping companies stay in business and reduce operational risk. Finally, another quarter (26.9%) of the respondents believe that encouraging knowledge generation on competitiveness, market intelligence and value chain cooperation is the main way to increase the competitiveness of the African food industry.

Key action areas for increasing the competitiveness of the African food industry (%)



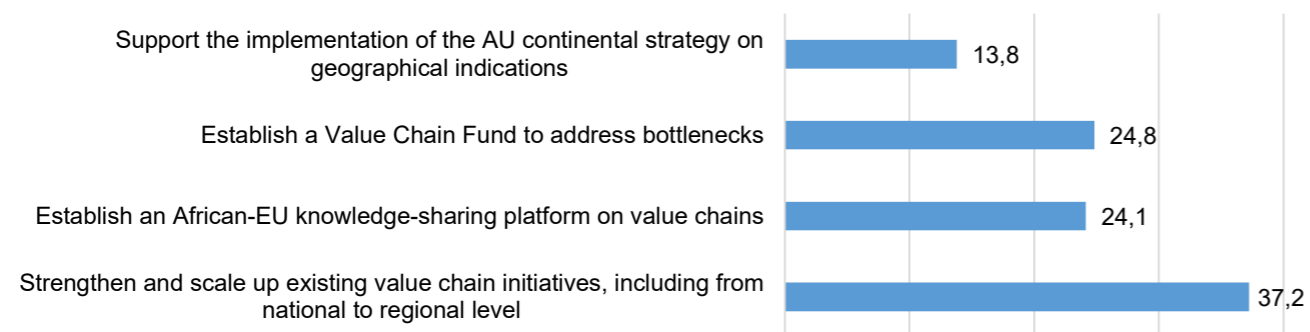
As regards the key actions for increasing private sector investment in the African food industry, 26.5% of the responses (out of 618 received) mention that the best way is by allocating sufficient resources under the External Investment Plan. These resources should focus to investments on sustainable agriculture, rural entrepreneurs and agribusiness (particularly for agricultural SMEs and rural entrepreneurs). In parallel, ensuring a good coordination of the two EIP pillars is also of a great importance. The respondents agree with the following key actions: scaling up technical assistance to support smallholder farmers and food SMEs to prepare bankable investment proposals targeting EIP funds (19.9%); enhancing cooperation between European and African Development Finance Institutions (DFI) (13.3%) and establishing solid monitoring systems to demonstrate development impact and ensuring best practices are identified and shared (12.6%).

Key action areas for increasing private sector investment in the African food industry (%)



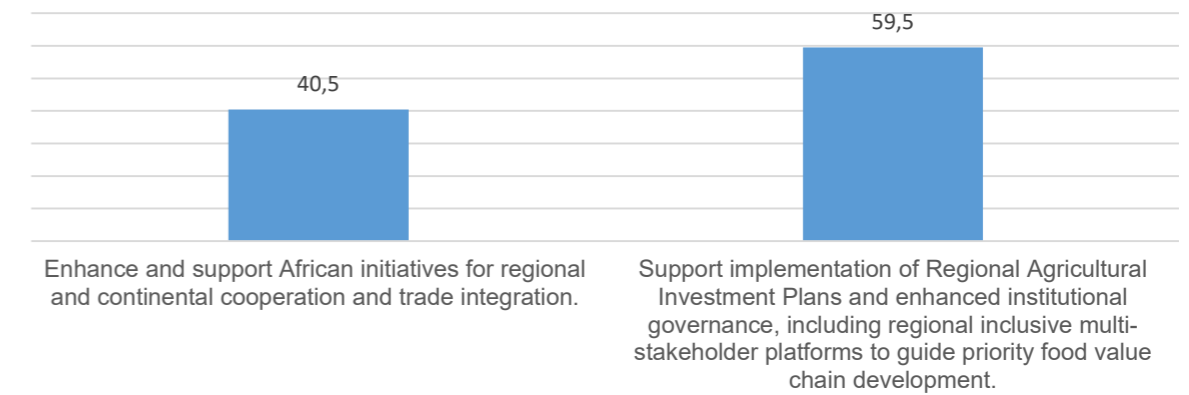
Many of the 435 responses received (37.2%), referring to the strengthening and scaling up existing value chain initiatives, including from national to regional level, see the action for promoting the development of value chains in Africa as the key priority. Establishing a Value Chain Fund to address bottlenecks (24.8%), as well as an African-EU knowledge-sharing platform on value chains (24.1%), are also judged as important key actions for this purpose.

Key action areas for promoting value chain development in Africa (%)



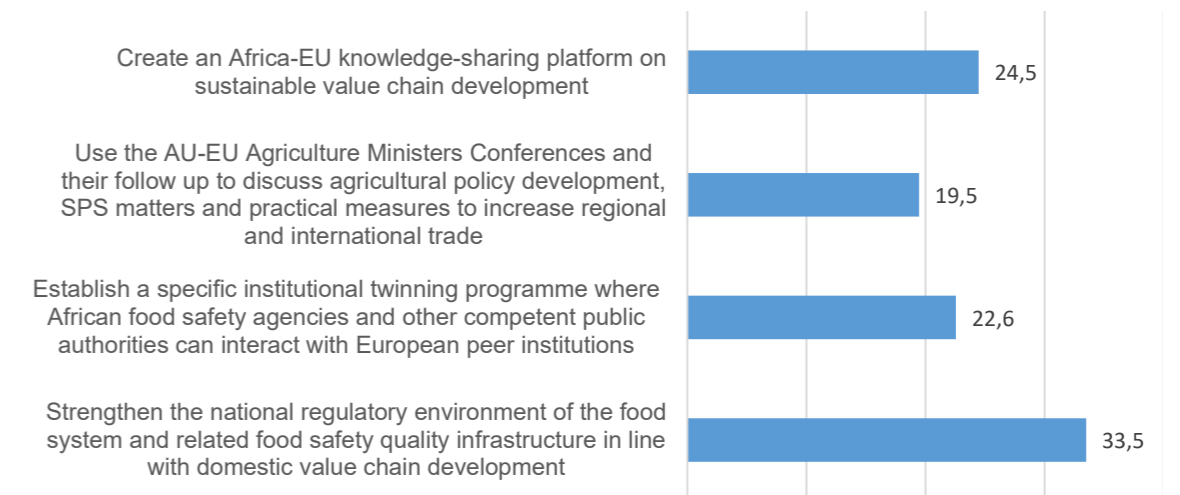
The main key action, for achieving the deepening of the regional trade integration, given by the respondents who argue that this is important for the development of African food industry and food markets, is considered to be supporting implementation of Regional Agricultural Investment Plans and enhancing institutional governance, including regional inclusive multi-stakeholder platforms to guide priority food value chain development (59.5% of the 257 answers received).

Key action areas for deepening regional trade integration (%)



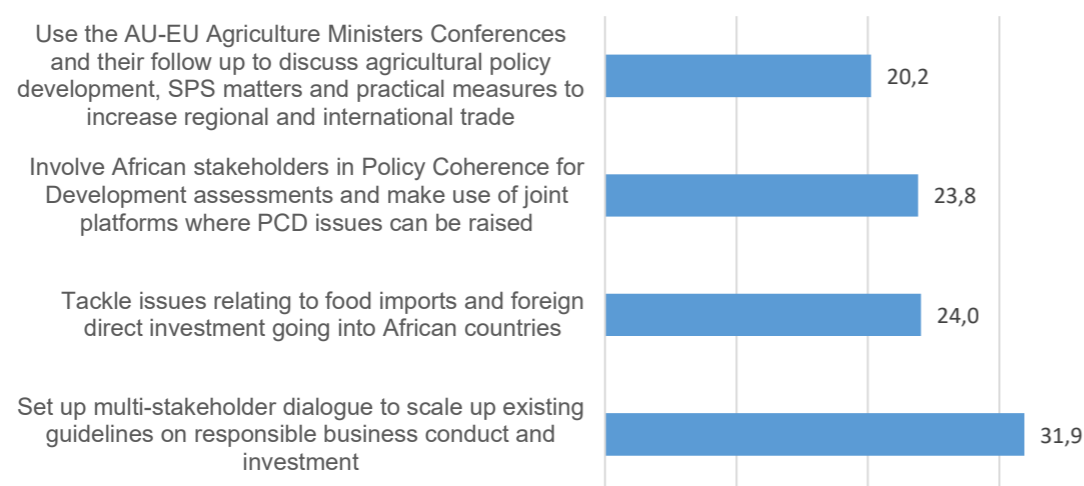
Strengthening the national regulatory environment of the food system and related food safety quality infrastructure in line with domestic value chain development is the key action that most of the respondents support (33.5% of 421 answers given). Creating an Africa-EU knowledge-sharing platform on sustainable value chain development (24.5%), as well as establishing a specific institutional twinning programme where African food safety agencies and other competent public authorities can interact with European peer institutions (22.6%), are also supported by a high number of respondents.

Key action areas to be forward for enhancing food safety and quality (%)



Setting up multi-stakeholder dialogue to scale up existing guidelines on responsible business conduct and investment is the main key action in the context of Africa – EU cooperation for promoting a professional food industry that appears in 31.9% of the 420 answers received on this issue. Tackling issues relating to food imports and foreign direct investment going into African countries (24.0%) and involving African stakeholders in Policy Coherence for Development assessments and making use of joint platforms, where PCD issues can be raised, are also considered as important (23.8%).

Key action areas in the context of Africa – EU cooperation promoting a professional food industry (%)



The participants to the public consultation were able to share not only their good and bad experiences in relation to agri-food trade, but also their thoughts on issues, which go beyond trade and which concern the whole of the agri-food sector in Africa.

Trade. Some respondents express their fears that the intensification of agriculture linked to commercial value chains is not transformative, because it sidelines smallholders and family farmers, destroys ecosystems and has a high carbon footprint. Others accuse EU food exports of already harming local farm sectors. They argue that the volume of their production is not large enough to influence market prices, while their costs of production (e.g. water, electricity, transport) are very high. They criticise large landholders who evade taxes, with impunity. In general, instability and insecurity in prices of farm products appear as the great discouraging factors for African farmers. On the other hand, some claim that country and product specific analysis are necessary to provide a better understanding of their needs, since imports of certain products might be necessary to satisfy, in a sustainable way, the food demand, especially in urban areas.

Several respondents argue that cross-border trade should be encouraged and intensified. Nevertheless, some are unhappy by the excessive power of intermediaries, who are believed to control the whole food sector and exploit farmers, while some corporations often do not even honour agreements made with farmers under the contract farming model. Others present the European Single Market as the main driver for the positive development of EU-Agri-Food-Sector and think that this strategy should be adopted in Africa too, as soon as possible. However, global partnerships demand, beforehand, long-term strategic plans, which link infrastructure to data, quality control and market.

Farm structure. Worries about smallholders are quite serious, because, according to some, food trade is uneven and food exports still incur taxes, which do not favour the smallholders. Moreover, they argue that financial institutions has always disadvantaged

the small-scale farmers and not helped them growing. Some respondents consider that small-scale farmers have almost always little or no say in decision making while a large percentage of big farmers squander grants allocated to them. Meanwhile, the problem of rural poverty remains and farmers are trapped in this vicious cycle, with no support in accessing agriculture inputs and funding. Some other respondents accept as true that smallholders are trapped by agri-business into a life of “mono-cropping land slavery”. Cash crops are produced seasonally while labour input is high and cash rewards for farmers are low. Most of the participants have confidence in the potential of farmers to promote sustainable food production in Africa. Nonetheless, inclusiveness (included of women) is one of the major preoccupations of the respondents. They find also that the need for inclusiveness for the producers with respect to agri-food trade is urgent for enhancing their income capacities and further engendering the full participation of smallholders and unemployed youth. The development of global good agricultural farming practises and affordably regulatory agencies expenses, that could accommodate the expenditure level of the smallholder farmers, can be of a great help to them. SME can play a crucial role in linking small farmers with local, regional and international markets, as well as close monitoring and advice to farmers. Initiating win-win, direct partnerships between major agribusiness groups and local producer groups (unions or cooperatives) seems to be part of the solution.

Environmentally-friendly agriculture. Agro-ecology and organic farming are presented as a paradigm to be adopted in the African context, by many. These people find that it has to be a priority in reducing dependency and spending of national budgets on hazardous type of inputs and they propose the development of agro-ecology nodes around the key biodiversity areas across Africa. Chemicals, according to some, should not be included in agri-foods development but rather the use of natural fertilizers and preservatives should be considered. Climate resilient and

smart farming, agroforestry and pastoralism are presented as the adequate investments for Africa and as an opportunity to safeguard the environment, including peaceful coexistence on natural resources sharing. Therefore, it seems obvious to some that farmers should be supported in adopting agro-ecological methods (agro-forestry, use of organic inputs, soil restoration) and their access to markets through cooperatives should be facilitated (improving storage systems, transport, access to credits).

Quality standards. Several respondents mention that standardization of products is absent in Africa and that large scale capacity building is needed at all levels of the food industry in order to truly unlock the potential of the African food industry. Some others say that African governments tend to “copy-paste” European standards into their regulations currently. Development of locally made products to an international standard and value chain seems also essential to some respondents, in order to accommodate marketability of products, pairing food-chain with pharmacy-chains, pairing food with wildlife and develop standards to embrace those in the EU. The example of African organic farmers is given. According to one respondent, they have been left out of the EU and regional markets purely because of restrictive certification requirements, which are very expensive; while farmers in this sector are numerous and therefore there is a potential area for growth on the continent. A lot agree that African agribusiness need close support and guidance from the EU in terms of standards and quality because there is laxity and also political interference in Africa and also that African producers require training in order for them to meet the stringent EU food safety standards.

Technological development. Some respondents argue that an agricultural policy in Africa should aim at maintaining a certain level of domestic production of basic foodstuffs and enlarging the potential for exports of other agricultural products in order to finance food import needs. The use of modern technologies (in seed production and marketing, irrigation, aquaponics or hydroponic methods of production, mechanization, use of mobile phones and solar rechargers to create information networks that reach “last mile” communities etc.), in order to enhance best practices in an inclusive way, is supported in several responses. The need of efficient irrigation is highlighted several times. Poor quality machinery and equipment that find their way into African countries particularly from Asian countries should be avoided.

Infrastructure. Among the main challenges that face the African agro-food sector, according to the participants to the consultation are the post-harvest losses. Most of agro-products are lost due to the facts that road networks to places where farming activities take place are often inaccessible. Hence, the need to improve road network to enhance prompt transportation to market, minimize post-harvest loss, address food and nutrition availability and improve the storage conditions. This can also meet food standards and exclude mycotoxins levels in food.

Capacity building and participation. A large number of participants discuss the need for assistance in capacity building, development of grass roots infrastructure and in food handling. African farmers need also to obtain experiences through visits to model farmers in order to appreciate best practices. Networking (connecting the agricultural community in Africa) as well as matchmaking (creating a business and product matchmaking platform for the development and promotion of sustainable agriculture) could be part of the solution. The need for extensive demonstration and training of African farmers in appropriate climate smart agriculture methods for overcoming widespread reluctance to change is supported by some respondents. Innovation and technology should be backed up with funding.

It is primordial to some to give the opportunity to local stakeholders to take part in the process of orientation, discourses, seminars, and grassroots public enlightenment campaigns before engaging in transformation of the African agriculture. Isolated interventions, inconsistency and discordance in policy because of lack of continuity across regimes cause bigger problems than give solutions; therefore, investments should be consolidated and focused. Regulatory fragmentation (e.g. food law), burdensome customs procedures, illicit trade (e.g. alcoholic beverage sector) are some of the big challenge of the sector. The bottom up approach is largely supported, while some are afraid that government-to-government donations allow a certain level of corruption.



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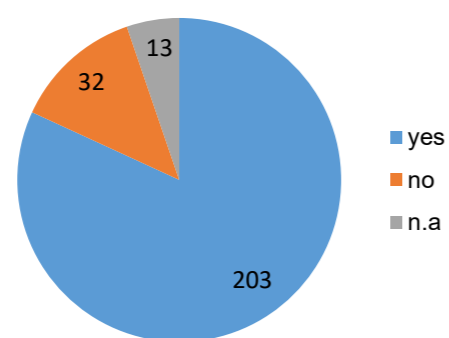
THE TFRA
REPORT: AN
AGRI-FOOD AND
RURAL AGENDA
FOR THE NEW
AFRICA – EUROPE
ALLIANCE FOR
SUSTAINABLE
INVESTMENT
AND JOBS

THE TFRA REPORT: AN AGRI-FOOD AND RURAL AGENDA FOR THE NEW AFRICA – EUROPE ALLIANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT AND JOBS

Most of the respondents find that the recommendations of the Task Force Rural Africa form a coherent agri-food and rural agenda for the new Africa – Europe Alliance for sustainable investment and jobs.

They judge the TFRA report as a comprehensive one that seeks a holistic approach for sustainable agricultural development. Several participants are happy with the perspective of the EU engaged in a constructive policy dialogue with African countries and the private sector on both continents, aiming at setting a stable and business-friendly regulatory environment beneficial for jobs, growth, trade and investment. They find the Task Force Rural Africa a great initiative aiming at redeeming African youth out of poverty and jobless communities. They agree with the territorial approach proposed in the report and the focus on family farming as well as with the idea of empowering small farmers and cooperatives for the promotion of integrated local economic and social development.

The recommendations of the Task Force Rural Africa form a coherent agri-food and rural agenda for the new Africa – Europe Alliance for sustainable investment and jobs



Fewer respondents (32) criticize the report. Some find it too general. They also believe that a critical approach to agribusiness is missing as well as a deeper analysis of rural-urban relations and agro-ecology, while concepts like bioeconomy and circular economy are not even mentioned in the report. Some participants think also that its ratification from known farmers' organisations is missing too. Others criticize the fact that the report does not give sufficient importance to major challenges that need to be addressed, such as territorial security. One participant argues that the report is biased because it promotes EPAs and AfCFTA, which would prevent the political integration of each REC during at least one generation as well as an agribusiness path. Some people express their disagreement with the report, because it does not take into account other EU policies, like fisheries etc.

Furthermore, a major concern remains, mainly how to encourage the youth into agriculture, how to boost agribusiness innovation, creativity and production. Several participants say that the report is an important step towards integration (territorial and food systems approaches), but additional steps are needed. Amongst them is the issue of communication, in terms of awareness raising on new and/or improved agricultural methods and paradigms.





https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/farming/international-cooperation/africa/eu-africa-partnership_en

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