

**For Immediate Release**

**EAGC and USAID Ink Partnership to Strengthen Competitiveness in Export-Oriented Staple Food Value Chains**

**Nairobi, Kenya, January 23, 2024** –The United States government, through USAID's Economic Recovery and Reform Activity (ERRA) program delivered by TradeMark Africa (TMA) with funding from Feed the Future, has awarded a three-year grant worth US\$2 million to the Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC). This funding will strengthen the competitiveness of export-oriented staple food value chains in East Africa.

Through the five-year ERRA US\$75 million program, USAID and TMA are driving transformative trade and investment reforms in the East and Horn of Africa to create jobs in the staple crops and textiles sectors, especially for women and youth. A core part of this is to increase the ability of grain producers to export both regionally and to the rest of the world.

East Africa's immense potential for food grain production and trade has been hindered by low production rates, poor post-harvest management, and climate pressures. These challenges contribute to the low competitiveness of its staples in regional markets, reduced cross-border trade, production deficits, and postharvest losses that threaten the region's food security.

This facility with EAGC will directly tackle these challenges, removing trade impediments and building grain exporters' capacity in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda across export value chains such as Maize, Beans, Millet, Sorghum, and Rice.

Speaking during the signing ceremony, TMA's CEO, Mr. David Beer, revealed that the strategic collaboration with EAGC and USAID will boost grain exports within the region. "This includes spearheading innovative strategies such as Grain Business Hubs, or G-Hubs. These are operated by farmers, who will leverage technology to improve grain quality and drive up trade," said Mr. Beer.

A major impediment to grain trading across the region is businesses' ability to comply with international standards. EAGC will support over 80 SMEs to successfully meet Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures - which regulate the health of animals and plants that are traded; and Standards Quality Infrastructure (SQI) requirements that govern quality, health and safety systems, and environmental conservation. These are critical to their ability to export.

EAGC Executive Director Gerald Masila expressed satisfaction that the partnership aligns with EAGC's goal of facilitating structured, inclusive, sustainable and profitable grain trade. He highlighted the benefits for the sector, including access to agriculture-related financing, capacity building, and mentorship, leading to a commitment to Industry-Owned Checks or Industry Self-Regulation.

Mr. Masila emphasized that the expected outcomes promise to transform lives and contribute significantly to regional economic prosperity. He stated, "Our focus is on practical, impactful solutions. By fortifying grain business hubs and enhancing the capacities of SMEs, we are building

a foundation for sustained growth. And the information hub will be instrumental in informed decision-making, driving policy changes that positively impact food security and trade dynamics."

EAGC will also establish an information hub. This resource will help shape national and regional food balance sheets by providing real-time data and insights. The hub will create an enabling environment for implementing prioritized trade policies. In doing so, it catalyzes food security and reinforces East Africa's strategic position in international trade.

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### **About the Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC)**

EAGC is a regional, not-for-profit council of firms and organizations in the grain value that is “the leading voice of the grain industry in Africa “whose mandate is **“to facilitate efficient, structured, inclusive, sustainable and profitable grain trade”** through various interventions and programs that include policy research and advocacy, provision of market information, training, and capacity building as well as developing structured grain trading systems. EAGC’s mandate spans across ten countries: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, DR Congo, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Malawi, and Zambia.

### **About USAID ERRA**

The Economic Recovery and Reform Activity (ERRA) is a US\$75 million five-year program spanning from 2022 to 2027, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through TradeMark Africa (TMA). ERRA aims to promote to transformative trade and investment reforms in the East and Horn of Africa while supporting the region to return to a growth pathway and recover from the negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic while advancing competitiveness, resilience, and sustainability.

### **About TradeMark Africa (TMA)**

TradeMark Africa (TMA) is a leading African Aid-for-Trade organisation that was established in 2010. TMA aims to grow intra-African trade and increase Africa’s share in global trade, while helping make trade more pro-poor and more environmentally sustainable. Our focus on reducing the cost and time of trading across borders through enhanced trade policy, better trade infrastructure, standards that work for businesses, greater use of digital innovations and a focus on creating trade access for vulnerable groups, has contributed to substantially lower cargo transit times through improved border efficiency, and reduced trade barriers.

TMA recently rebranded from TradeMark East Africa (TMEA), reflecting our ambitions to serve partners in driving continental-wide trade gains, and are expanding from East and the Horn of Africa to Southern and West Africa. TMA operates on a not-for-profit basis and is funded by institutional and philanthropic development partners. TMA works closely with regional and continental intergovernmental organisations, national Governments, the private sector, and civil society organisations to deliver results that drive shared prosperity and reduce poverty.

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