

## **Communique on Strengthening Competitiveness in Export-Oriented Staple Food Value Chains in East Africa Project Launch Workshop in Kenya**

April 3, 2024, Emory Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya



*Stakeholders' group photo during the launch*

### **Introduction**

The Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC), in collaboration with Trademark Africa (TMA), launched a three-year project on “Strengthening Competitiveness in Export-Oriented Staple Food Value Chains in East Africa” on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April in Nairobi. This project is funded under the USAID-funded “Economic Recovery and Resilience Activities (ERRA)” program, implemented by TMA, and will boost export-oriented staple grains trade in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda - with Kenya being the destination market and Tanzania and Uganda as suppliers due to their surplus production.

This project is particularly significant given the volatility and gradual decline that has characterized the region's trade in food commodities. Numerous challenges, such as minimal aggregation, informal trading, and limited integration of farmers into formal trade, contribute to substantial transactional costs. Furthermore, the absence of adequate storage and quality management infrastructure, a deficiency in post-harvest handling expertise, and a scarcity of information about export markets aggravate these issues.

Attended by over sixty stakeholders of the staple grains value chain actors, the project aims to achieve several objectives. Firstly, it seeks to strengthen farmer-operated grain business hubs (G-Hubs), enabling them to utilize technology to enhance grain production, quality, and trade. Additionally, the project aims to develop enterprise-level capacities and institutional mechanisms to scale up Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards and quality compliance, thereby increasing export-oriented grain trade. Furthermore, it aims to establish and enhance an information hub to inform regional food balance sheets and shape national and regional food security and trade policies, fostering an enabling regulatory environment for trade.

## Key remarks

During his keynote address, Mark Priestley, Chief of Party, USAID-ERRA, underscored the strategic collaboration between EAGC and USAID. This collaboration is set to enhance grain exports across the region through innovative approaches such as farmer-operated Grain Business Hubs (G-Hubs), which harness technology to advance grain quality and stimulate trade.

Giving his remarks, Gerald Masila, Executive Director of EAGC, expressed his excitement about the project's launch and emphasized its alignment with EAGC's mission to advocate for an enabling environment in promoting structured grain trade for the optimum benefit of its stakeholders. He emphasized the project's expected benefits to the sector, including improved production, greater access to agricultural finance, capacity enhancement, mentorship in SPS and quality compliance, and better trade linkages.

Speaking on behalf of the Managing Director of the Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS), James Nduati, Standards Officer, stated that the partnership with EAGC has played a pivotal role in shaping quality standards of various staple foods standards which have been developed, harmonized, and domesticated at East Africa Member States level. He noted that several staple foods standards Other standards have been established and are currently at the balloting stage. These include FDKS 2086:2023, outlining specifications for varieties blend milled rice, and FDKS 2087:2023, detailing specifications for Milled pishori rice. Additionally, KS 2985:2023 standard, which delineates requirements for silos intended for the storage of bulk cereals and pulses, has already been officially gazetted thanks for the EAGC support. He added that EAGC partnership with KEBS has also resulted to the review of KS EAS 75:203 cattle feed specification which has been approved and awaiting EAC gazettment.

## Project intervention areas

The project will focus on crucial intervention areas, including;

Smallholder farmers: Interventions for smallholder farmers will concentrate on several aspects. First, there will be training and technical assistance aimed at enhancing farmer G-hub management so that farmers can operate as commercially oriented entities. Additionally, efforts will be made to link farmers to service providers for inputs and equipment. Integrating climate adaptation into production and post-harvest management will also be emphasized to improve overall production and trade.

Firms/ SMEs: At the firm level, interventions include various engagements. These involve advancing the process of Industry-self-regulation initiated in 2022 under the USAID policy link project. Moreover, there will be a focus on scaling up the utilization of private sector-driven post-harvest handling and quality solutions, such as aflatoxin decontamination machines, driers, cleaners, and aflatoxin testing labs. Support will also be provided for access to Business Development Services (BDS), such as technology for financial management, as well as access to finance and cross-border trade facilitation.

Improving policy environment: This work area will improve the policy environment surrounding staple grain trade. Efforts will include activating a more structured sector platform to facilitate engagement with governments on issues impacting export-oriented trade. There will also be a focus on strengthening an information hub and streamlining data collection to generate and provide data and information to the sector, thereby informing trade and food security policy responses.

The project implementation will adopt several approaches:

- Upscaling of private sector-driven solutions: This involves linking and promoting private sector-driven solutions.

- Market systems development approach: Provision of market-focused interventions along the value chain to increase market access.
- G-hubs model: Enhancing the capacity of farmer organizations to link farmers to services and markets.
- Structured trading system: Providing organized and predictable exchange services.
- Inclusivity: Focusing on the inclusion of women and youth.
- Policy interventions: Creating an enabling environment for staple foods export trade.

### Outcomes of the workshop

The workshop realized outcomes around the following:

- a) Awareness and understanding of the project, its objectives, approaches, and expected results were created among staple grains value chain actors.
- b) Consultations were conducted with value chain actors to determine the best strategies and processes to boost project results.
- c) Synergies and possible collaboration with stakeholders were explored to ensure strong outcomes.

### Way forward

- Enhancing cross-border market access for Tanzania and Uganda to tap into the Kenyan market's export potential.
- Promoting export trade of Kenyan cereals to various market destinations, especially for pulses.
- Strengthening smallholder farmers' access to essential Business Development Services (BDS) for enhanced production and trade.
- Building the capacity of enterprises across the grain export value chain to boost their export capacity.
- Facilitate the creation of a sector information hub platform, fostering public-private partnerships to enhance the conducive environment for export-oriented staple food trade.

*This communique is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of EAGC and TMA and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.*

## About the Eastern Africa Grain Council



The Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) is a membership-based organization representing the grain sector in Eastern and Southern Africa. The Council exists to facilitate efficient, structured, profitable and inclusive grain trade in its 10 mandate countries, namely Kenya (Regional Headquarters), Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi, Rwanda, Zambia, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

EAGC draws its membership from grain sector value chain actors in its Member States, which include farmers, traders and processors. Support service providers and complimentary sectors such as agro-input suppliers, financial services and animal feed manufacturers also form part of the Membership. In facilitating structured grain trade in the Eastern Africa region, EAGC provides trade facilitation services through the EAGC G-Soko Grain Trading System; market and cross-border trade information through the Regional Agricultural Trade Intelligence Network (RATIN -[www.ratin.net](http://www.ratin.net)); pursuing appropriate policy reforms to support growth of structured grain trade through the Agricultural Trade Policy Advisory Forum for Eastern and Southern Africa (ATPAF-ESA); and capacity building of grain industry stakeholders through the Grain Business Institute (GBI).

### Contacts

Mbaazi Avenue, Off King'ara Road  
P.O Box 218-00606, NAIROBI  
Tel: +254 733 444 035/0710 607 313  
E-mail: [grains@eagc.org](mailto:grains@eagc.org)

[www.eagc.org](http://www.eagc.org) | [www.ratin.net](http://www.ratin.net) | [www.grain.institute](http://www.grain.institute)

## 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.

For more information, please visit [www.trademarkafrica.com](http://www.trademarkafrica.com).

Workshop attendees

S/No	Name	Organization
1.	Lucy Muna	Equity Bank
2.	Evelyne Muthoni	TradeMark Africa
3.	Nyawira Kigathi	NCBA
4.	Mercy Mwende	Sweet N Dried
5.	Kennedy Nyagah	GMOA
6.	Eric Kiplagat	Total Energies
7.	Andrew Kalama	African Grain Care Equipment
8.	Rosslynne Nyamri	Simlaw Seeds
9.	Eunice Kibe	Kentainers LTD
10.	Peter Kiptoo	Smart Farmer
11.	Dorcas Mugambi	KEPHIS
12.	John Kariuki	Consultant
13.	Elizabeth Mudoyo	
14.	Victor Olando	NCBA/Loop
15.	Edward Njuguna	Loop
16.	Roger Bird	Impact Associates
17.	Juma Nyatego	Equity Bank
18.	Terry Muiruri	Food Banking Kenya
19.	Muhamed Baraka	Synergy Lubricants
20.	Kamal Sharma	Mjengo LTD
21.	Wilson D'souza	K.E.F.C.S LTD
22.	Benjamin Masyula	Kitiso Framers Cooperative Society
23.	Eunice Mboya	F&S Scientific
24.	Abigae Cinem	COTECNA
25.	Gilbert Nyakundi	WRSC
26.	Marjory Githure	Great Investopedia Inland LTD
27.	Mathews Wanjala	Trade Mark Africa
28.	Mark Priestly	Trade Mark Africa
29.	Jacob Muriungi	Tharaka Cereals
30.	Milliam Kariungi	IMCOS
31.	Moses Agevi	Ndalu Cooperative
32.	Victor Ongeto	Smart Logistics Solution LTD
33.	Joseph Melilei	Kaplomboi FCS Bomet
34.	Christopher Kering	Kipchamo FCS Uasin Gishu
35.	Lydia Dreda Makau	Taita Taveta Green grams Cooperative
36.	Anastacia Mwangangi	Kwale Pavi Farmer Cooperatives
37.	Nahashon Kagiri	Ngarua Cereals Farmer Cooperative
38.	Fatuma Mghana Zainab	Mnaran Small Holder Group
39.	Caroline Nderi	World Food Programme
40.	Irene Samoei	Cheptarit Star Women Group
41.	Francis Charo	Songa Mbele Women Group
42.	Anthony Ndirangu	Food Chain Millers
43.	Daina Maina	Scan Global Logistics

44.	Noah Koskei	NCPB
45.	Nancy Kariuki	IFTL Labs
46.	Collins Cheptim	Sigoro Fes LTD
47.	Rose Ndungu	Grain Pro Kenya
48.	Linet Malit	Kentainers LTD
49.	James Nduati	KEBS
50.	Naomi Ngumo	Equity Bank
51.	Victor Mutua	Brazafric
52.	Francis Charo	Songa Mbele Women Group
53.	Judy Anne	EFKEN
54.	George Kuria	Jazz & Johari