

**MULTI-FUNDER INITIATIVE**

## Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAF)

### Precooked beans for food, nutrition, and income in Kenya and Uganda

Kenyan and Ugandan researchers will work with the private sector to develop precooked bean products. The aim is to increase bean consumption, improve diets, reduce time spent on cooking, and create a more lucrative market for bean farmers.

#### The challenge

Unprocessed dry beans, a traditional subsistence crop in East Africa, are a popular, nutritious, but slow-cooking food. Beans are also a key source of protein among low income households. In recent years, the rapid expansion of urban populations, rising incomes, and high costs of energy have fuelled the demand for fast-cooking, processed foods. Canned or frozen beans are sometimes available, but are only affordable to a minority of wealthy consumers. Developing affordable bean products is therefore increasingly important.

Previous experience in Rwanda has shown that developing a viable precooked bean industry requires reliable production of appropriate bean varieties, effective marketing systems, and competitive food products acceptable to consumers.

#### The research

The project will start by pre-screening bean varieties for their suitability for precooking. Seed companies and community seed producers will ensure sufficient seed of good varieties is available and promote them to farmers, who will also be trained in field and post-harvest management. The research team will test different supply models—including working with farmer groups and contract farming—for their ability to supply needed volumes and benefit women smallholder farmers. The research will involve farmers' federations in both countries and Smart Logistics, a private, women-owned company in Kenya.

Two private sector project partners—Lasting Solutions, Uganda and Fresh Del Monte, Kenya—will develop prototype products and packaging for market testing. Consumer research will determine package sizes and prices and assess potential demand. The research will analyze the gender implications of the new technology, to ensure that men, women and the youth are fully integrated in the development of the precooked bean value chain. The work will also contribute to the formulation of standards for precooked beans.

#### Expected outcomes

- Increased availability of bean varieties with high nutritional content (protein, iron, and zinc) suitable for precooking, produced by 7,500 smallholder farmers
- Increased bean production at the household level, supported by increased market demand
- Job creation in new agro-enterprises at various stages of the value chain (production, grading, bulking, packaging, transportation, and marketing), especially for women and youth
- Increased incomes at household level from the sale of beans
- Greater consumption of beans by households in rural, urban, and peri-urban areas
- Less wood used in cooking beans and less time spent by women collecting it
- Empowerment of various social groups (women, men, and youth) engaged in adding value to beans

#### Implementing partners:

National Agriculture Research Organization, Uganda  
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#### Other partners:

Community Enterprises Development Organisation, Uganda; Lasting Solutions, Uganda; Smart Logistics, Kenya; International Centre for Tropical Agriculture; Fresh Del Monte, Kenya.

**Countries:** Kenya and Uganda

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**Cultivate Africa's Future Fund (CultiAF)** supports research to achieve long-term food security in Eastern and Southern Africa. Learn more at [www.idrc.ca/cultiaf](http://www.idrc.ca/cultiaf).



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