Sustainable Food Systems in Malawi (FoodMa) Assessment Questionnaire

The LUANAR Sustainable Food Systems in Malawi programme is conducting a rapid assessment of the FoodMa project. The exercise is focusing on: *Evaluating the current status of project implementation; Identifying challenges and opportunities in project execution under the prevailing conditions;Documenting success stories, lessons learned, and areas for improvement; Strengthening collaboration and communication among project implementers and stakeholders.*

To support this effort, this questionnaire is designed to gather valuable insights and feedback from you.

**Section A: Respondent Information**

1. Name:

Abraham Mhlanga

1. Organization/Institution:

Mchinji District Agriculture Office

1. Position/Title:

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**Section B: Assessment Questions**

1. **Synergies in Sustainable Food Systems**  
   What type of synergies currently exist in the promotion of sustainable food systems at the district level?

There are several synergies that currently exist in the promotion of sustainable food systems at the district level. These synergies often arise from the collaboration between various stakeholders including government agencies, local communities, NGOs, businesses, and research institutions. Here are some key areas of synergy:

1. Integrated Land Use Planning: Aligning agricultural land use with urban development create synergies by optimizing land resources. This includes promoting urban agriculture, community gardens, and agroecological practices that enhance biodiversity and reduce environmental impact.
2. Local Food Systems and Economic Development: this is done promoting local food production which strengthen local economies. Farmers' markets and local food initiatives support local farmers, reduce transportation emissions, and foster community pride, thereby enhancing economic resilience.
3. Community Engagement and Education: Initiatives that involve community participation promote awareness and education around sustainable practices. This results in improved food choices, waste reduction strategies, and community-led conservation efforts, leading to a more informed populace.
4. Partnerships Between Sectors: Promoting collaborations between various sectors—such as health, agriculture, and education—can lead to comprehensive strategies that encompass food security, nutrition, and economic vitality. For instance, health initiatives that promote consumption of local produce can simultaneously support local farmers.
5. Innovative Technology and Practices: The integration of technology, such as precision agriculture and data analytics, helps farmers increase efficiency and lower their environmental footprint. Districts can promote initiatives that provide access to these technologies and share best practices among farmers.
6. Policy and Regulatory Frameworks: Aligning district policies with sustainable food system goals can create synergies. This includes zoning laws that support local food production, subsidies for sustainable practices, and regulations that reduce food waste.
7. Research and Development: Partnerships with academic institutions such as Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural resources (LUANAR) can foster research on sustainable agricultural practices, leading to innovations that are tailored to local conditions and needs. This can lead to the development of new crop varieties or methods that increase resilience to climate change.
8. Food Waste Reduction Programs: Initiatives to reduce food waste at the district level, such as composting programs and food recovery networks, create synergies by transforming waste into resources, enhancing soil health, and improving food security.
9. Social Equity Initiatives: Ensuring that all community members have access to nutritious food through programs that support vulnerable populations can promote inclusivity and strengthen social cohesion, enhancing overall community resilience.
10. Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship: Initiatives that focus on sustainable land management and climate-smart agriculture create synergies that address climate change while enhancing food security and biodiversity.

By leveraging these synergies, districts can create more resilient, equitable, and sustainable food systems that benefit both the environment and the community. Collaboration, innovation, and a multi-stakeholder approach are key to achieving these goals.

1. **Actors in Agri-Food Systems**  
   Which other actors are involved in agri-food systems within the district?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Label** | **Type** | **Tags** | **Description** | **Contact person** | **Phone Number** |
| NASFAM | NGO | Extension provider | Improving livelihoods of small holder farmers by developing farming bussiness capacity in T/As in the district | Catherine Salanaye | (+265) 0881 04 19 98 |
| CIP | NGO | Extension provider | Improving smallholder potato production through use of improved varieties. | Thoko Mvula | (+265) 0995 43 33 22 |
| CICOD | NGO | Extension provider | Supporting sustainable agriculture to achieve food security, resiliency and employment opportunities in T/As Dambe, Mlonyeni and Zulu | Mr. Edward Thole | (+265) 0997525279/0888505980 |
| CARE Malawi | NGO | Extension provider | Supporting increased crop production through home grown school garden in primary schools | Gladwell Potifala | (+265) 0999 48 06 01 |
| Heifer | NGO | Extension provider | Climate resilience Agriculture, Strengthening VSLs, Livestock, Agroforestry and Nutrition. | Franncisca Mabedi | (+265) 0999 02 37 06 |
| WVI | NGO | Extension provider | Transforming Household Resilience in Vulnerable Environments(THRIVE) through crop diversification and livestock distribution. | Mereena Mhone John | (+265) 0888 56 69 98 |
| TLC | NGO | Extension provider | Sustainable Farming Systems, Crop diversification, Climate Smart agricultural practices, Market access, water management, ecosystem services | Francis Chiwaya | (+265) 0999 60 39 68 |
| SEED-CO | Company | Agricultural Input Supplier | Distribution of certified seed to farmers and agrodealers | Jacqueline Kanise | (+265) 0995 41 14 53 |
| Bayer Malawi | Company | Agricultural Input Supplier | Distribution of certified seed to farmers and agrodealers |  |  |
| TRADE | Public | Extension provider | Climate Smart -Enhanced Public Works Programme | Shidah Kambalame | (+265) 0994 26 29 00 |
| CONCERN YOUTH ORGANISATION | NGO | Extension provider | Enhanced Women Active Citizenship and Economic empowerment,Ending Violence Against Women | AUBREY CHIDZIWITSANO | (+265) 0993 61 00 60 |
| WHOA International | NGO | Extension provider | input distribution - fingerlings | Faith Kamanya | (+265) 0998 46 69 17 |
| Kapiri Community Development Organization | NGO | Extension provider | Youth Inclusion Participation and Empowerment (YIPE),Enhanced Women Active Citizenship and Economic empowerment, Strengthening women's voice in local government systems | Linda Kabanda | (+265) 0994 42 14 15 |
| Salvation Army | NGO | Extension provider | Enhanced Women Active Citizenship and Economic empowerment, | Haswell Jim | (+265) 0999 20 66 81 |
| CARD | NGO | Extension provider | Agribusiness: Market information /market access | Jonaphane Mateketa | (+265) 0881 75 00 51 |
| DAECC | Public | Coordinating Committee | A technical advisory committee that promote coordination, collaboration, integration and co-location amongst stakeholders in the district to develop and strengthen linkages/systems for networking and learning for sustainable agriculture development. | Francis Chiwaya | (+265) 0999 60 39 68 |

1. **Strengthening Stakeholder Participation**  
   How can stakeholder participation in sustainable food systems be strengthened?

Strengthening stakeholder participation in sustainable food systems can be achieved through various means at the district level. By promoting these synergies and strategies, stakeholders can work together to strengthen participation in sustainable food systems at the district level, leading to more resilient, equitable, and sustainable food systems.

Here are some types of synergies and strategies that currently exist or can be implemented:

1. Interdisciplinary collaboration: Encourage collaboration among farmers, agricultural extension agents, researchers, policymakers, and community members to share knowledge and expertise.
2. Farmer Field Schools: Support Farmer Field Schools, where farmers learn about sustainable practices, share experiences, and develop problem-solving skills together.
3. Food System Coalitions: Form coalitions that bring together diverse stakeholders, including farmers, consumers, and policymakers, to advocate for sustainable food systems.
4. Community-based organizations: Support community-based organizations that work with farmers, consumers, and other stakeholders to promote sustainable food systems.
5. Capacity building: Provide training and capacity-building programs for farmers, agricultural extension agents, and other stakeholders to enhance their knowledge and skills in sustainable agriculture.
6. Market-based initiatives: Encourage market-based initiatives, such as local food systems and value chains, that promote sustainable agriculture and support farmers.
7. Government support: Engage government agencies and policymakers in efforts to promote sustainable food systems, through policy support, regulations, and incentives.
8. Farmer cooperatives: Support farmer cooperatives, which enable farmers to work together to improve their livelihoods, promote sustainable practices, and access markets.
9. Extension services: Enhance extension services that provide support to farmers, such as training, advisory services, and access to resources.
10. Community engagement: Engage with local communities to raise awareness about the importance of sustainable food systems and involve them in decision-making processes.
11. Innovative financing mechanisms: Explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as impact investing and crowdfunding, to support sustainable agriculture and food systems.
12. Participatory Action Research: Implement Participatory Action Research (PAR), which involves stakeholders in identifying problems, setting goals, and implementing solutions.
13. Food systems planning: Develop food systems plans that bring together stakeholders to identify challenges and opportunities, set goals, and develop strategies for sustainable food systems.
14. Community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs: Support CSA programs, where consumers purchase produce directly from farmers, promoting local food systems and sustainable agriculture.
15. Policy and regulatory frameworks: Develop policy and regulatory frameworks that support sustainable agriculture, such as organic farming, agroecology, and sustainable water management.
16. Farmer-to-farmer extension: Implement farmer-to-farmer extension programs, where experienced farmers share knowledge and expertise with less experienced farmers.
17. Women's participation: Enhance women's participation in sustainable food systems through training, capacity building, and support for women-led initiatives.
18. Inclusive decision-making: Ensure inclusive decision-making processes that involve diverse stakeholders, including those from vulnerable populations.
19. Capacity for data analysis and monitoring: Establish capacity for data analysis and monitoring to track progress and identify areas for improvement in sustainable food systems.
20. Research and development: Support research and development activities that address key challenges in sustainable food systems, such as climate change, water management, and food security.
21. **Lessons on Dietary Diversification**  
    What lessons can we learn from promoting biofortified crops and nutrition education being done by research project?

Promoting biofortified crops and nutrition education offers valuable insights into improving sustainable food systems and public health. Here are some key lessons learned from such initiatives:

1. Integration of Agriculture and Nutrition

- Biofortified crops serve as a bridge between agricultural practices and nutrition outcomes, demonstrating the importance of integrating agricultural initiatives with health education.

- Programs should educate farmers not only about cultivation techniques but also the nutritional benefits of the crops they grow.

2. Stakeholder Engagement

- Successful projects often involve collaboration among various stakeholders, including farmers, local governments, NGOs, and health professionals. This multi-sectoral approach fosters ownership and ensures that interventions are contextually relevant.

- Engaging communities in the planning and implementation processes enhances trust and adaptability.

3. Education and Awareness

- Nutrition education is crucial for ensuring that consumers understand the benefits of biofortified crops, which can lead to increased demand and consumption.

- Tailoring educational programs to local cultures and understanding specific dietary practices can improve effectiveness.

4. Capacity Building

- Training farmers on the cultivation of biofortified crops not only empowers them but also equips them with the knowledge to make informed decisions about crop management and sustainable practices.

- Workshops and training sessions should include hands-on activities to enhance learning and retention.

5. Policy Support

- Advocacy for supportive policies that encourage the cultivation and consumption of biofortified crops can amplify the impact of educational programs and enhance sustainability.

- Policies should facilitate access to markets, supplies, and funding resources for both farmers and consumers.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Continuous monitoring and evaluation help assess the effectiveness of biofortified crops and nutrition education initiatives, providing data to inform future interventions.

- Feedback mechanisms should be established to understand the community’s perspectives and to adapt programs as necessary.

7. Cultural Sensitivity

- Recognizing and respecting local traditions, preferences, and dietary habits is critical for successful implementation. This ensures that solutions are culturally acceptable.

- Projects should aim to enhance existing diets rather than imposing new ones.

8. Knowledge Dissemination

- Effective communication strategies are essential for disseminating knowledge about biofortified crops to broader audiences, including potential investors and policy-makers.

- Use of various channels, such as social media, community meetings, and workshops, can broaden outreach.

9. Leveraging Technology

- Technology can play a vital role in both agricultural practices and education. Tools such as mobile apps for farmers and online resources for health education can enhance accessibility and reach.

- Digital platforms can help connect farmers with markets for selling biofortified crops more effectively.

10. Long-Term Commitment

- Sustainable impacts require long-term commitment from all stakeholders involved, including continued education and support beyond initial implementation phases.

- Building a resilient system might take time, necessitating patience and ongoing investment.

1. **Linkages to Agribiz Hub and Entrepreneurship**  
   Are there any linkages between current projects and beneficiaries for entrepreneurship training through the Agribiz hub?

Yes, there can be significant linkages between current projects focused on promoting sustainable food systems and beneficiaries participating in entrepreneurship training through initiatives like the Agribiz hub. By linking the insights and outcomes from sustainable food systems projects with entrepreneurship training programs like those offered at the Agribiz hub, stakeholders can create a more integrated, supportive framework that empowers beneficiaries and fosters sustainable agribusiness development. Here are some key areas of synergy:

1. Skill Development: Projects promoting sustainable food systems often include training components that enhance entrepreneurial skills among local farmers and food producers. This aligns well with Agribiz training by providing complementary skill sets that can help beneficiaries start and scale agribusinesses.
2. Access to Resources: Entrepreneurship training often encompasses access to necessary resources like market information, financial services, and networking opportunities. Current projects focusing on sustainable food systems can leverage these aspects by facilitating connections to inputs for biofortified crops or organic farming techniques that align with sustainable practices.
3. Market Opportunities: The promotion of sustainable food systems can create new market opportunities for trained entrepreneurs. For instance, public awareness campaigns about biofortified crops and their health benefits can lead to increased consumer demand, enabling trained entrepreneurs to meet this demand with their products.
4. Holistic Approaches: Integrating nutrition education and biofortified crop promotion into entrepreneurship training can help beneficiaries understand the broader impact of their ventures. This holistic approach can encourage the development of business models that prioritize health, sustainability, and profitability.
5. Collaborative Networks: Projects may foster networks among entrepreneurs interested in sustainable agriculture, creating a community of practice that allows for sharing experiences, resources, and best practices, which is a key aspect of effective entrepreneurship training.
6. Policy Support: Sustainable food systems initiatives may also engage with local governance to improve agricultural policies. Entrepreneurship training can benefit from these policy changes that favor smallholder farmers, thereby enhancing the overall environment for agribusiness.
7. **Adoption of Agricultural Technologies**  
   Why do farmers refuse to adopt certain agricultural technologies?

Farmers may refuse to adopt certain agricultural technologies for a variety of reasons, including:

1. Cost Concerns: Many advanced agricultural technologies require significant investments. Farmers, particularly smallholder and low-income farmers, may lack the capital needed to invest in new equipment or technologies.
2. Risk Aversion: The agricultural sector is inherently risky due to factors like weather variability, pest outbreaks, and market fluctuations. Farmers may be hesitant to adopt new technologies that could expose them to additional risks or uncertainty.
3. Lack of Information: Some farmers may not be aware of new technologies or may not have access to information about their benefits and proper usage. Misinformation or a lack of outreach from extension services can hinder adoption.
4. Cultural Preferences: Farmers often have deep-rooted cultural practices and traditional knowledge that inform their farming methods. New technologies that conflict with these practices may face resistance.
5. Perceived Complexity: Technologies that are perceived as too complicated or difficult to use may be rejected by farmers who prefer simpler methods. Training and support can be critical in overcoming this barrier.
6. Access to Support Services: Farmers may lack access to the necessary support services, such as extension services or maintenance support, that are required to successfully implement and utilize new technologies.
7. Market Access Issues: If farmers do not have reliable access to markets for their products, they may see little incentive to invest in technologies that increase production, as they may not be able to sell the surplus effectively.
8. Regulatory Barriers: In some cases, regulatory frameworks can impede the adoption of certain technologies, either through strict regulations or lack of incentives for adopting innovative practices.
9. Environmental Concerns: Some farmers may be skeptical of new technologies due to concerns about their impact on soil health, local ecosystems, or water resources. Sustainability considerations can shape their willingness to adopt.
10. Community Influence: Social dynamics and peer influence play a significant role. If surrounding farmers are resistant to change or have had negative experiences with certain technologies, others may follow suit.
11. **Private Sector Linkages**

Are there any linkages with the private sector to upscale projects such as FoodMa and TRANSFORM?

Like TRANSFORM/ FOODMA is a global platform that aims to support countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. TRANSFORM/ FOODMA has partnerships with various organizations in the private sector, governments, civil society, and other stakeholders. It collaborates with the private sector through various mechanisms, including:

1. Partners: TRANSFORM/ FOODMA partners with private sector companies to leverage their expertise, resources, and networks. These partnerships can take the form of joint research initiatives, capacity-building programs, or collaborative development projects.
2. Expert networks: TRANSFORM/ FOODMA leverages the expertise of private sector professionals through its expert networks. This helps in ensuring that its projects and initiatives are informed by the latest best practices and technologies in the private sector.
3. Funding and investments: TRANSFORM/ FOODMA receive funding and investments from private sector organizations, government institutions, and other stakeholders. This funding supports the development of new projects, scale up existing initiatives, and build capacity in countries.