

ABOUT LSMS-ISA

The LSMS-ISA project is funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other donor agencies, and is implemented by the Research department of the World Bank (DECRG) and the national statistical agencies.

- The surveys are nationally representative and have been conducted in Ethiopia, Malawi, Niger, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda from 2008 onwards.
- The data are geo-referenced and contain detailed information on agriculture at the plot level as well as many non-agricultural facets of people's livelihoods (employment, income, consumption, shocks, assets, nutrition).
- By 2014, all households will have been visited at least twice, enabling the construction of panel data and in-depth causal analysis.

THE TEAM

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THE DATA

“High quality data are to economists, what high quality genes are to agronomists. Without them, reality cannot be properly understood nor enhanced.”

Eric Tollens, Prof Agricultural Economics Emeritus, Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium



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AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA



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THE WORLD BANK Initiative led by Office of the Chief Economist for Africa

TELLING FACTS FROM MYTHS

Contributors: World Bank, African Development Bank, Cornell University, Food and Agriculture Organization, Maastricht School of Management, University of Pretoria, University of Rome Tor Vergata, University of Trento, Yale University



AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA TODAY

Governments, donors, and the private sector are again investing billions of dollars in Africa's agriculture. A thorough bottom-up update is needed to guide these investments, establish baselines, and ground the agricultural policy dialogues.

"Agriculture in Africa Today – Telling Facts from Myths" addresses this void, using the Living Standards Measurement Study-Integrated Surveys on Agriculture (LSMS-ISA). The surveys are conducted in 6 countries, representing 40 percent of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa.

40%



OF THE POPULATION SURVEYED

The project revisits conventional wisdoms about Africa's agricultural sector, its farmers and their livelihoods. These may no longer be valid given Africa's rapid economic growth, fast urbanization, and the new era of high food prices.

TELLING FACTS FROM MYTHS

THE FOLLOWING ARE COMMONLY PERCEIVED WISDOMS ABOUT AFRICA'S AGRICULTURE THAT WILL BE REVISITED USING NEW LSMS-ISA SURVEYS.

1. The use of modern inputs, like chemical fertilizer, remains dismally low
2. Land, labor and capital markets remain largely incomplete and imperfect
3. Agricultural labor productivity is low
4. Land is abundant and land markets are poorly developed
5. Access to credit remains low
6. Extension services are poor
7. Agroforestry is gaining traction
8. African agriculture is intensifying
9. Women perform the bulk of Africa's agricultural tasks
10. Seasonality continues to permeate rural livelihoods
11. Smallholder market participation remains limited
12. Post-harvest losses are large
13. Droughts dominate Africa's risk environment
14. African farmers are increasingly diversifying their incomes
15. Agricultural commercialization and diversification improves nutritional outcomes

PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS

IN A FIRST PHASE (2013-2014) THE PROJECT WILL:

Provide governments and policymakers with a solid, updated, bottom-up picture of Africa's agriculture and its farmers livelihoods.

Establish a harmonized, easy-to-use database of core agricultural variables for tabulation and regional cross country benchmarking by policymakers as well as academics and private sector actors.

Foster a community of practice among African and other scholars using the LSMS-ISA for agriculture and food security policy analysis. To this effect, a mentorship program has been initiated, pairing members of the research team with promising junior African scholars.

