EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA SMALL SCALE FARMERS FORUM (ESAFF)



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 – 2027

Advancing Social Accountability in Agriculture, Climate Change, Agroecology and Gender in Eastern and Southern Africa

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Acronyms	2
Message from the Chairperson	3
Executive Summary	4
About ESAFF	5
Theory of Change	8
Regional Overview: EAC, SADC Situational Analysis	9
The CAADP Kampala Declaration 2026 - 2035	11
The Value Add of ESAFF	12
About ESAFF Strategic Plan 2026 - 2035	13
Justification for the ESAFF Strategic Plan 2026 - 2035	13
Strategic Objectives and Implementation Frameworks	14
Monitoring and Evaluation	16
Assumptions and Risks	17
Budget Summary	12
Implementation Strategy	13

List of Acronyms

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUDA NEPAD	African Union Development Agency-New Partnership for Africa's Development
BR	Biennial Review
BRR	Biennial Review Report
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
COP	Conference of Parties
EAC	East African Community
ESAFF	Eastern and Southern Africa Small-Scale Farmers Forum
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
EXCO	Executive Committee
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
JSR	Joint Sector Review
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NASIP	National Agrifood Systems Investment Plan
PETs	Public Expenditure Tracking Survey
PSAM	Public Social Accountability Monitoring
RASIP	Regional Agrifood Systems Investment Plan
REC	Regional Economic Community
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SO	Strategic Objective
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards
SSF	Small-Scale Farmers
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Message from the Chairperson



As we launch ESAFF's Strategic Plan for 2025 - 2027, right after the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and change in donor priorities, we do so at a defining moment for agriculture in Eastern and Southern Africa. Climate shocks are intensifying, inequalities persist and food systems are under strain but so too is the resolve of small-scale farmers.

This Strategic Plan is a bold statement of intent. Small-scale farmers are not passive beneficiaries, they are the driving force of food sovereignty in Africa

Our path forward is guided by four bold and transformative priorities:

Turning Commitments into Action: The Kampala Declaration 2035

With the adoption of the CAADP Kampala Declaration 2035, a new chapter of continental ambition has begun. ESAFF will not stand on the sidelines. We will hold governments accountable, track implementation and amplify farmers' voices through public accountability platforms and high-level policy engagement, ensuring promises made at the highest level deliver real change at the farm gate

Climate Justice through Agroecology

Small-scale farmers are on the front lines of the climate crisis, yet too often remain at the margins of decision-making. ESAFF is claiming space not just to participate, but to lead. We champion agroecology as a climate-resilient solution rooted in farmers' knowledge, and we will closely monitor climate finance to ensure it reaches communities where it is needed most

Powering the Future: Women and Youth at the Center

A strong farmers' movement is an inclusive one. Women and youth are not the future of agriculture, they are its present. ESAFF is committed to placing them at the heart of leadership, advocacy and innovation, unlocking the energy, creativity and resilience that will sustain our movement for generations

A Stronger ESAFF for a Changing World

To shape policy and influence systems, we must be strong and credible as an institution. We are investing in our organizational strength, enhancing governance, expanding technical expertise, diversifying resources and embracing digital transformation to build a modern, connected and future-ready ESAFF.

In solidarity

Ms. Dianne Sibanda
Chairperson, ESAFF Regional Board

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF), through its Triennial General Summit (TGS) in Dar es Salaam in March 2025, has adopted the Strategic Plan (2025–2027) titled "Enhancing Smallholder Farmers Participation in Agriculture, Agroecology and Climate Change Public Policies and Financing in Eastern and Southern Africa." This farmer-led initiative builds on ESAFF's legacy of advocating for small-scale farmers' rights and sustainable agriculture across 17 member countries, representing over 5.5 million farmers. The plan aligns with the CAADP Kampala Declaration 2035 and addresses persistent challenges in policy influence, climate resilience and inclusive representation.

The Strategic Plan focuses on four key result areas:

1. Active participation, Influencing and Monitoring the Implementation of the agriculture - CAADP Kampala Declaration 2035 by SSF through public social accountability, policy dialogues and advocacy.

2. Meaningfully participation of small-scale farmers in planning, budget and implementation of climate change and agroecology related programs and monitor disbursement of funds

3. Strategic multidimensional inclusion of Women and Youth in ESAFF Leadership and Advocacy activities.

4. Institutional Development of ESAFF and members in managerial, technical and advocacy strengthened through capacity building, fundraising, networking and digital space proficiency

The total budget for the three-year period is USD 962,450, including activities costs, operational costs such as personnel cost, office operations, statutory meetings and monitoring and evaluation. Funding will be secured through a diversified strategy, including: Development partners (70–75% of the budget from grants), membership contributions from 17 member organizations, government bonds, and fundraising events. This plan provides a roadmap for ESAFF to amplify farmers' voices, foster sustainable agriculture and drive transformative change by June 2027.

ESAFF Constitution Article 6.1.2 (3)

> The Triennial General Summit will receive, ratify and approve work plans for the next three years

2 ABOUT ESAFF

Background of ESAFF

The Eastern and Southern Africa small-scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF) is a network of grassroots small scale farmers' organizations working in 17 countries of Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region. The movement which started in 2002 during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg – South Africa is a small-scale farmer initiated, farmer led and farmer owned

ESAFF, a fully operational since April 2009, is registered in Tanzania under Non-Governmental Organizations Act 2002 of the United Republic of Tanzania since 27th August 2007 with registration number 00NGO/1097.

Membership of ESAFF

The following are members of ESAFF in ESA region;

The membership represents directly a more than 5.5 million members.

BOFA
ESAFF Burundi
ESAFF eSwatini
FOPAC
ESAFF Lesotho
CPM
NASFAM
APPEE
SEYFA
ESAFF South Africa
SSAPU
MVIWATA
ESAFF Uganda
ESAFF Zambia
ZIMSOFF

Governance Structures of the ESAFF

The structure of ESAFF is built on the national farmers' forums which are themselves membership based. ESAFF maintains clear separation of powers and mandates between its different governance structures. The Governance Structures of ESAFF consist of four layers:

Triennial General Summit (TGS)

Meets every three years to decide the direction of the organisation and also receive, ratify and approve workplans for the next 3 years

The Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Meets every year to oversee the implementation of annual plan and approve activities for the following year

ESAFF Regional Board (ERB)

Helps to run the organisation through an executive committee (EXCO)

The Secretariat

The Secretariat is charged with daily operations and led by the regional coordinator who reports to the Board.



Vision Statement

A strong effective forum of empowered Small-Scale Farmers with united voices in the policy processes for ecological agriculture and poverty free Eastern and Southern Africa region.

Mission Statement

Empowering Small-Scale Farmers in Eastern and Southern Africa to influence development policies and promote ecological agriculture through capacity strengthening, research and networking.

The Purpose of ESAFF

To enable farmers in Eastern and Southern Africa to speak as a united voice so that issues, concerns and recommendations become an integral part of policies and practices at grassroots, national,regional and global levels.

ESAFF Core Values

Integrity:
To be honest, reliable and upright in our conduct; and to stand for what we believe

Equal partnership:
Treat every member equally with the same rights irrespective of their country of origin, sex, age or beliefs

Mutual trust:
Cultivate confidence, self-reliance among farmers to avoid hurting each other

Transparency and accountability:
Openness and truthfulness in our conduct and being answerable to one another and to others

Respect:
Holding high opinion of each other and of others, valuing each other and nurturing the esteem of fellow farmers as well as keeping our promises

Review of the Previous 4 Last Strategic Plans

1 The 1st Strategic Plan 2008 – 2011

Identified key focus areas which included: (i) Organisational and Institutional Development: To ensure that ESAFF's capacity to fulfil its mandate is developed and is adequate; (ii) Improvement of Food Security: Support smallholder farmers to contribute more meaningfully to food security in the region through improved access to necessary resources, better government policies and sustainable agriculture practices; (iii) Trade and Marketing; to empower smallholder farmers to understand, access and influence markets of agricultural produce; and (iv) Gender, HIV/AIDS and Youth to ensure that gender, HIV/AIDS and youth issues are mainstreamed in the actions of farmers and ESAFF at all levels.

2 The 2nd Strategic Plan 2011-2014

Identified key result areas, namely: (i) Food security and sovereignty: To support small scale farmers (SSF) to contribute more meaningfully to food security and sovereignty through improved access to necessary resources in the agriculture sector and rural development; (ii) Trade and markets: To empower small scale farmers to understand, access and influence markets of agricultural produce; (iii) Cross cutting issues: Climate Change, Gender, Youth and HIV/ AIDS; to ensure are incorporated in ESAFF programmes at all levels and that ESAFF engage governments and RECs to ensure development programs are youth, gender and HIV sensitive; and (iv) Institutional and organizational strengthening; to strengthen the capacity of ESAFF as well as its members to fulfill its mission and objective and create a mass movement of farmers in the region

3 ESAFF 3rd Strategic Plan 2014-2016

Aimed at enhancing wealth creation and capacity among smallholder farmers to influence agricultural policies in Eastern and Southern Africa, Key result area; (i) Food security and sovereignty: To support small scale farmers (SSF) to contribute more meaningfully to food security and sovereignty through improved access to necessary resources in the agriculture sector and rural development; (ii) Trade and markets: To empower small scale farmers to understand, access and benefit from intra-regional markets of agricultural produce; (iii) Cross cutting issues: Climate change, Gender, Youth and HIV/ AIDS; to ensure are incorporated in ESAFF programmes at all levels; and (iv) Institutional and organizational strengthening: To strengthen the capacity of ESAFF as well as its members to fulfill its mission and objective and create a mass movement of farmers in the region.

4 The 4th Strategic Plan 2016 – 2025

Aimed to enhance wealth creation and capacity of small-scale farmers in Eastern and Southern Africa to influence agriculture development policies and promote ecological agriculture for improved food sovereignty. The Key result areas focused on; (i) Agriculture policies and budget Influenced for the realisation of the Malabo Commitments through PETS and PSAM at all levels. (ii) Wealth creation through agroecology farming, seed, land security and trade. (iii) ESAFF has mainstreamed cross cutting issues Climate change, gender, youth and HIV in all its policies and programs and has externally identified and engaged in a number of cross cutting issues for advocacy. (iv) ESAFF and its member makes a network that produces high quality services efficiently, effectively and in good time

3 THEORY OF CHANGE

Small-Scale Farmers are a driving force for social change and poverty reduction in eastern and southern Africa (ESA) region through social accountability and participation in democratic processes at community and local government level, national and regional level as well as at continental and global level.

INTERVENTIONS

Capacity building, SAM Action and advocacy, Learning, Policy analysis, Coalition building, Institutional development.

BARRIERS

Shrinking of civic space, Reduced donor funds, Chemical intensive agriculture, Complacency of farmers.

OUTPUTS

- Collective action by smallholder farmers to address gaps in the implementation and delivery of the kampala declaration.
- Strengthening capacity of small-scale farmers and public resource management in the agriculture sector and climate change.
- Strengthened capacity of councilors to improve their oversight function of the full district council i.e agriculture committee/ portfolio or strengthen the capacity of district councilors/ parliamentarians.
- Practise of social accountabiity by SSF at national and sistict level is monitored and discussed.
- Advocacy, publication and dissemination on the implementation of official EAC and SADC reports of the Malabo 2014 - 2025, Kampala Declaration 2026 - 2035 and climate change in relation to agriculture services for smallholder farmers.

OUTCOMES

- Active participation, monitoring and engagement by SSF and engagement lead to improved delivery of agriculture related projects, CAADP Kampala Declaration and climate change at district, national and regional level across.
- Improved synergy between national and regional commitments in the agriculture food secuirty, climate change, financing and gender.
- Improved technical advocacy and organisational capacity of members in the oversight of selected national and regional commitments in the delivery of gender responsive servces in the agriculture and climate change.

IMPACT

Improved policy implementation with climate change and adaptation measures effectively integrated into policy processes at all levels.

Improved implementation of agriculture, food security and nutrition policy and climate change, more accountability in the implementation of the policy frameworks.

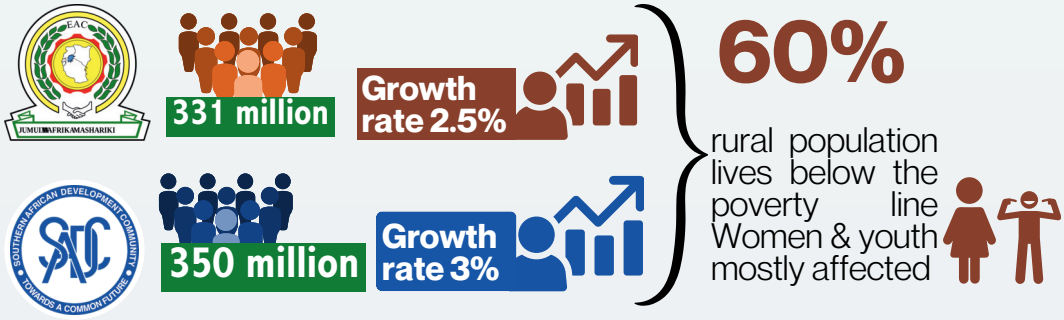
4 REGIONAL OVERVIEW EAC, SADC SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Agriculture remains the backbone of economies in the EAC and SADC regions, employing over 60% of the population and contributing significantly to GDP (e.g., 23% in Tanzania, 33% in Kenya). Small-scale farmers, especially women, produce up to 80% of food in these regions but face challenges such as limited access to finance, land tenure insecurity, and inadequate extension services

60%
of the EAC and SADC population rely on agriculture

The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) framework drives agricultural transformation, with the Malabo Declaration (2014) setting targets like allocating 10% of national budgets to agriculture and achieving 6% annual agricultural growth. The new CAADP Kampala Declaration (adopted January 2025) extends these goals to 2035, emphasizing resilient agri-food systems, a 45% increase in agrifood output and zero hunger.

Population and Poverty Levels:



East Africa Community

The 2024 State of Food Security and Nutrition report indicates 20–25% of the population (40–50 million) faces hunger, with 30–40% of children under five stunted due to malnutrition

Southern Africa Development Africa Community

Approximately 25% (95 million) are food insecure, with high malnutrition rates exacerbated by climate variability and conflict.

The 4th CAADP Biennial Review Report shows that no member state in EAC and SADC were on track to achieve the 4th CAADP Biennial Review Report with a benchmark of 9.29.

On goal number 6 on enhancing resilience to climate change, no county in SADC region is on track to achieve the goal of 9.75, only Angola (8.33), Tanzania (8.88) and Mozambique (7.01) performed well.

According to the CAADP Malabo biennial review report, countries with a high rate of stunting include; They are: Uganda (26%), Zimbabwe (26.7%), Tanzania (30%), Eswatini (30.5%), Rwanda (32.4%), Zambia (34.6%), Malawi (35.5%), Mozambique (37%), Lesotho (46.4%), Burundi (55.8%), and Madagascar (79.7%).

Climate Change Context:

Agriculture is highly vulnerable to climate change, with projected yield losses of 10% - 25% by 2050. Both regions face increasing droughts, floods, and unpredictable rainfall. Small-scale farmers lack access to sustainable technologies and financing, with adaptation funding constituting less than 5% of agricultural budgets.

Women and Youth

Women constitute 60–80% of the agricultural workforce but own less than 20% of land and receive minimal policy support. Youth (15–35 years) represent 60% of the population but are underrepresented in leadership and face high unemployment (20–30%).

Globally only **0.3%** of the total climate finance reaches smallholder farmers

60% of the population but are underrepresented in leadership and face high unemployment (20–30%).



5 THE CAADP KAMPALA DECLARATION 2026 - 2035

The Kampala CAADP Declaration is a continental agriculture framework adopted in January 2025 by the African Union, it outlines a strategic framework for transforming Africa's agri-food systems from 2026 to 2035. This initiative builds upon previous commitments made in the Maputo (2003) and Malabo (2014) Declarations, emphasizing sustainable practices, regional integration and the empowerment of women and youth.

The commitments highlight the following goals

1 Intensifying Sustainable Food Production, AgroIndustrialization, and Trade

- To increasing agrifood output by **45%** to meet growing Africa food requirements and global trade opportunities.
- Reducing post-harvest loss by **50%**.
- Tripling intra-African trade in agrifood products and inputs by 2035 in line with the AfCFTA.
- Raising the share of locally processed food to **35%** of agrifood GDP by 2035

2 Boosting Investment and Financing for Accelerated Agri-Food Systems Transformation

- To mobilize a total of $100 billion in public and private sector investment in African agrifood systems.
- At least 10% of annual public expenditure is allocated to agrifood systems
- At least 15% of agrifood GDP is reinvested annually into the sector.

3 Ensuring Food and Nutrition Security

- To reduce stunting by **25%**
- To reduce wasting by **25%**
- To reduce overweight by **25%**
- To reduce ensuring that **60%** of the population can afford a healthy diet.

4 Advancing Inclusivity and Equitable Livelihoods

- Reducing the number of people living in extreme poverty by **50%**
- Reducing the yield gap between men and women farmers by **50%**
- Empowering at least **30%** of women, **30%** youth and **30**% vulnerable groups in agrifood value chains by 2035

5 Building Resilient Agri-Food Systems

- Ensuring that Africa's agrifood systems are resilient to climate, socio-economic, and environmental shocks
- To have at least 30% of agricultural land under sustainable management and 40% of households protected from shocks by 2035

6 Strengthening Agri-Food Systems Governance

- African Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) integrate the Kampala CAADP Declaration into their national and regional agrifood systems investment plans by 2028
- African countries adopt best practices in governance of agrifood systems based on CAADP principles.
- African countries incorporate the CAADP Biennial Review process into their national agriculture joint sectoral review platforms

6 THE VALUE ADD OF ESAFF

1 Farmer-Led Advocacy

ESAFF ensures that smallholder farmers shape policies and influence decision-making at grassroots, districts, national, regional (EAC, SADC), and continental (AU) and global levels, advocating for food sovereignty, agroecology, and inclusive rural development.

2 Policy Engagement & Influence

ESAFF actively participates in key policy dialogues such as CAADP, Post-Malabo Agenda, AfCFTA, and UN spaces like UNEP, UNFCCC (COPs) ensuring that farmers' priorities are reflected in investment plans and climate adaptation strategies.

3 Climate Resilience & Adaptation

ESAFF champions agroecology and climate justice, advocating for locally led adaptation and sustainable agricultural practices that empower farmers to mitigate climate risks.

4 Regional & Global Recognition

As an accredited organization to UNEP, ESAFF has a growing influence in global food and climate governance, bringing smallholder farmers to international decision-making spaces.

5 Knowledge & Learning Hub

ESAFF facilitates peer-to-peer learning, research, and documentation of best practices, strengthening farmer networks across Africa.

6 Inclusive & Rights-Based Approach

ESAFF upholds gender equity, youth inclusion, and indigenous rights, ensuring marginalized farmer groups have a voice in policy processes

7 Networking and Solidarity

As a farmer-led movement, ESAFF fosters collaboration among grassroots organizations, civil society, and other stakeholders. This network amplifies its impact, connecting farmers to resources, innovations, and opportunities while building resilience against challenges like climate change and economic inequality.

7 ABOUT ESAFF STRATEGIC PLAN 2025 - 2027

The ESAFF Strategic Plan (2025–2027) aims to enhance small-scale farmers' capacity to influence policies, advocate for sustainable agriculture, and drive climate resilience in the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) region. It aligns with the CAADP Kampala Declaration 2035, promoting agricultural financing, gender equality and institutional development. This plan provides a roadmap for policy engagement, advocacy and capacity-building to improve food security and livelihoods across the region.

This strategic plan builds on previous achievements which focused on policy influence, climate resilience gender and youth inclusion and institutional capacity-building of 2016 - 2025

8 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE 2025-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

Malabo Declaration 2014 - 2025

ESAFF participated in the implementation monitoring and follow up its implementation through the CAADP Malabo Declaration 2015 – 2025 Biennial Review Report. Through these, ESAFF managed to influence key issues such as the completion of stalled projects at district level and increased agriculture budget allocation.

CAADP Kampala Declaration 2026 – 2035

ESAFF also participated in the making of the CAADP Kampala Declaration 2026 - 2035 influencing key issues such as; Rural Transformation, SSFs at Center of Agri-Food Systems, Proposal for Quality Rural Financing (Governance, Infrastructure, Extension Services, etc.), Recognition of Farmer-Managed Seed Systems, Decentralization and monitoring of CAADP from district level, national to regional level and other recommendations.

Climate change is worsening food insecurity in Eastern and Southern Africa, where floods, droughts, cyclones and pests heavily impact smallholder farmers—especially women who produce 70 - 80% of local food. Limited climate budgets and weak implementation of SDG 2030 and CAADP commitments have deepened the crisis. By August 2023, 57.5 million people in SADC and 43.4 million in EAC were food insecure.

ESAFF and members see there is a need to continue working to influence the CAADP Kampala Declaration 2026 - 2035 and implementation at all levels, working on climate change, food and nutrition nexus as well as youth, advocacy and leadership. ESAFF needs to strengthen its institutional capacity and build capacity of intuitional, advocacy and governance of weaker members.

Despite efforts made through past strategic plans, challenges persist in securing agricultural funding, climate resilience and inclusive farmer representation at all levels. This strategic plan responds to gaps in policy implementation and provides a roadmap for smallholder farmers' active engagement in decision-making.

9 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The ESAFF Strategic Plan of 2025 – 2027 will focus on the following strategic objectives as well as main activities as follows

1 Active participation, Influencing and Monitoring the Implementation of the agriculture - CAADP Kampala Declaration 2035 by SSF through public social accountability, policy dialogues and advocacy.

This Key Result Area aims to strengthen the meaningful participation of small-scale farmers in shaping, influencing and monitoring the implementation of the CAADP Kampala Declaration at continental, regional and national levels. It seeks to institutionalize public social accountability by localizing CAADP priorities into district planning and budgeting processes. Through structured policy dialogues, advocacy campaigns and evidence-based position papers, ESAFF supports farmers to influence agricultural policies, agrifood system investment plans and Biennial Review processes.

Ultimately, the objective is to increase CAADP-aligned budgets, improve policy reforms and ensure farmer recommendations are formally adopted in CAADP agri-food system governance.

Activities

- Participation in development of indicators at continental level, regional level and national levels
- Train 120 district officials, farmers, parliamentarians, , media and other stakeholders annually on CAADP localization
- Analyze, track and advocacy campaigns - Develop position papers through PETs and advocacy tools on CAADP implementation.
- Participation and publish position papers on CAADP BR reviews
- Develop summary of the 10 years Malabo implementation in EAC and SADC based on the BRR 2014 – 2025
- Regional policy dialogues with EAC and SADC secretariats as well as Parliaments
- Production of IEC advocacy materials and media engagement

Indicators

- % Districts with CAADP-aligned budgets (Baseline: 15%, Target: 45%)
- Number of national agriculture policies revised
- Farmers position papers on the draft indicators
- 30 policy dialogues (10 per year)
- 20% of countries in SADC and EAC increasing agricultural budgets toward 10% and 5 ESAFF recommendations adopted.

2 Meaningful participation of small-scale farmers in planning, budget and demand implementation of climate change and agroecology related programs and monitor disbursement of funds

This Key Result Area seeks to strengthen the meaningful participation of small-scale farmers in shaping, influencing and monitoring climate change and agroecology policies, budgets and implementation processes at all levels. It empowers farmers especially women to demand accountable climate financing, promote agroecological adaptation and restore ecosystems. Through capacity building, coalition building, digital advocacy and structured policy dialogues, ESAFF amplifies farmer voices in climate and food security governance.

Ultimately, the goal is to increase public investment in climate-resilient agriculture, enhance food and nutrition security, and institutionalize farmer-led oversight of climate-related programs and funds.

Activities

- Farmer mobilization and capacity building and advocacy for climate resilience (adaptation, agroecology, financing)
- Farmer-led lobbying, advocacy and campaigns on increased funding for climate related activities for food and nutrition security
- Restoration of indigenous trees
- Support members to develop atleast 5 district climate fund proposals
- Development of a regional learning platform on climate change
- Coalition building on climate change
- Regional, national and district dialogues on climate change, food and agroecology
- Organize digital and media advocacy campaign on issues regarding climate change the voice of farmers especially women farmers
- Document and disseminate best practices related to climate change adaptation
- Policy analysis and development of position paper on climate related activities for food and nutrition security

Indicators

- 12,000 Smallholder farmers (65% women) in 10 districts in ESA demand governments support to address climate change, food and nutrition security.
- Increased funding for climate related activities for food and nutrition security in 10 districts in 10 countries in ESA region
- Planting of 30,000 indigenous trees
- Number of policy dialogues held: (12 per year - 10 national level and 2 regional)
- Completion of the learning platform, modules created, number of farmers and stakeholder accessing the platform (1,000 within first year),

3 Strategic multidimensional inclusion of Women and Youth in ESAFF Leadership and Advocacy activities.

Activities

This Key Result Area aims to institutionalize meaningful inclusion of women and youth in ESAFF's leadership, governance and advocacy processes. It seeks to strengthen organized women and youth structures, build advocacy and digital campaigning skills and ensure equitable representation in decision-making spaces. Through a dedicated database and online knowledge-sharing platform, ESAFF aims to enhance visibility, networking and leadership opportunities for young and women farmers across member countries.

Ultimately, the objective is to secure at least 30% representation in governance structures and position youth and women as leading voices in farmer-led advocacy and policy influence.

- Follow up and Engage on the International Year of Women Farmers (IYWF) 2026
- Establish a Youth and Women Farmer Database - Create and maintain a digital database capturing key details of youth and women in agriculture across ESAFF member countries.
- Develop an Information Exchange Platform - Set up an online platform to share knowledge, information, opportunities and success stories among youth and women farmers.
- Strengthen Women and Youth Wings in 10 ESAFF Countries - Support and empower women and youth structures in at least 10 member countries through leadership training, planning and funding.
- Ensure 30% Youth and Women Representation in Leadership - Promote policies and reforms to achieve at least 30% inclusion of women and youth in ESAFF governance and decision-making bodies.
- Build Advocacy Skills of Youth Farmers - Train and mentor youth farmers on advocacy, digital campaigning, and policy engagement to lead impactful campaigns.

Indicators

- Database established
- Functional online platform established
- Number of women/youth wings established: 10 by 2027
- Percentage of leadership positions held by women/youth: 30% by 2027
- Atleast 50% of ESAFF campaigns are led by youth (1/3)

4 Institutional Development of ESAFF and members in managerial, technical and advocacy strengthened through capacity building, fundraising, networking and digital space proficiency.

This Key Result Area aims to strengthen ESAFF's institutional capacity, sustainability and effectiveness in delivering farmer-led advocacy across the region. It focuses on building managerial, technical and fundraising competencies of staff and members while modernizing digital systems for improved coordination, visibility and accountability. Through regional resource mobilization hubs and strengthened donor engagement, ESAFF seeks to diversify funding and increase financial sustainability.

Ultimately, the objective is to establish a resilient, well-governed and digitally proficient organization capable of advancing climate justice, agroecology and smallholder farmer priorities at all levels

Activities

- Build capacity of ESAFF staff and members through targeted training in key areas such as fundraising, financial management, advocacy, M&E, storytelling, documentation and production of IEC materials and to enhance effectiveness and impact.
- Upgrade ESAFF's digital infrastructure by modernizing the website, improving data systems, streamlining reporting mechanisms, and enhancing the membership platform for better coordination and visibility.
- Establish three regional resource mobilization hubs in Eastern Africa, Central Africa Region and Southern Africa, to coordinate fundraising efforts and build stronger local donor networks.
- Strengthen donor engagement and partnerships through regular communication, strategic networking and showcasing impact to build trust and long-term partnerships.
- Develop an internal ESAFF climate change policy to guide organizational action, align with member priorities, and contribute to climate justice efforts.
- Participate in relevant and strategic national, regional, processes and meetings, document and share outcomes
- Monitoring, evaluation and networking visits for learning and sustainability

Indicators

- Number of staff/members trained or number of trainings held
- Percentage increase in operational funding
- An operational digital platform (By end of year 1)
- Increased joint resource mobilization structure (regional hubs) and diversified funding ratio (40% non-donor)
- ESAFF policy on climate change developed

10 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In order to ensure learning, programme relevance and effectiveness ESAFF will mainstream monitoring and evaluation in its activities and a specific staff will be responsible for M&E and learning. During the implementation period, ESAFF will encourage monitoring and evaluation techniques that are participatory and actively involve farmers in measuring the results and outcomes of the interventions.

The Monitoring and evaluation will be in accordance to ESAFF's Monitoring and Evaluation updated guidelines & tools. The document highlights goals of monitoring, levels, who is involved and provide tool. Basically, ESAFF will be conducting four types of M&E activities to ensure relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability, these are;

Project Impact Evaluation

Outcome Assessment

Outputs Monitoring

Process/Activities Monitoring

In the implementation of this strategic plan, ESAFF is expecting to influence policy and practise changes at various levels, at the RECs level, at National level and at grassroots level. Monitoring and evaluation will therefore be conducted at four levels;

Level 1
Level of Regional Economic Groupings (EAC, SADC, AU)

Level 2
ESAFF HQ

Level 3
Level of Governments in 17 ESAFF member countries

Level 4
National Small-Scale Farmers Forum level in 17 member countries



11 ASSUMPTIONS AND RISKS

Assumption

Stable political environment, donor interest in ESAFF strategic objectives and member commitment to dues.

Risks

- ESAFF has insufficient capacity to meet high expectations of members
- Lack of willingness among ESAFF members to participate in the project
- Members seen much inclined to other regional farmers networks
- Small scale farmers abandon agroecological farming for hybrid and GMO seeds and chemical fertilizers input
- Shrinking civic space in countries and possible ban of advocacy farmer organisations and post-election violence
- Ban/restriction to operate due to none adherence to governing laws and tax regulations
- Donor not interested to provide funds. Policy makers fail to offer space
- Mismanagement of funds and internal conflicts
- Fraud and marginalisation of members
- Cutting of funds due to economic crisis or change of governments orientation or policies in Europe and North America
- Complacency of farmers
- Lack of ICT infrastructures, and political restrictions and high cost of communication.



12 BUDGET SUMMARY

This budget outlines the financial requirements necessary for the effective implementation of activities under each Key Result Area. It also covers essential operational costs, including staff salaries, office operations, audit expenses, governance and board meetings, as well as monitoring and evaluation (M&E) processes to ensure accountability, learning, and performance tracking throughout the strategic plan period.

More details and breakdown see annex

2025
USD
319,650

2026
USD
302,150

2027
USD
340,650

Funding Strategy

The ESAFF Strategic Plan (2025–2027) is underpinned by a robust and diversified funding strategy designed to ensure financial sustainability and effective implementation of its objectives. This strategy leverages multiple revenue streams to support the plan's goals across Eastern and Southern Africa. These are;



Donor Partnerships: 70 - 75% of the budget



Membership Contributions from 17 members organizations



Government Bonds



Fundraising Events





13 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

ESAFFs' strategy 2025-2027 will be implemented to ensure effective execution and maximization of impact, with a goal of raising at least USD 962,450 over three years to bring this vision to reality. During the initial years of this strategy, our emphasis will be on ensuring continuity and consolidation of existing strengths and past achievements and venture into areas like climate change using public social accountability monitoring (PSAM) approaches. We will leverage our established expertise and experience to facilitate a seamless transition and achieve early impact. This approach allows us to build upon proven interventions while gradually expanding into new areas.

The strategy is divided into three distinct phases:

Initiation

At the commencement phase, the focus will be on continuity and consolidation. ESAFF and members will concentrate on priority KRAs where we have existing strengths to ensure a smooth transition and achieve early successes.

Expansion and Integration

As the strategy progresses, we will expand and integrate successful programs, like climate change and agroecology building upon the base established in the initiation phase.

Consolidation

Optimization, and Scaling In the final phase, we will consolidate the gains made, optimize our programs for maximum efficiency, and scale impactful initiatives to achieve widespread positive change and sustainability.




ESAFF





The Eastern and Southern Africa Small-Scale Farmers Forum (ESAFF) is a network of grassroots organizations of smallholder farmers with a membership of 5.5 million smallholder farmers, operating across 17 nations of Eastern and Southern Africa

For more information

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