

MARAKWET HIGHLAND FARMERS ASSOCIATION

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6th JANUARY, 2020

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF ELGEYO MARAKWET,
P.O BOX 220 – 30700, ITEN.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: SUBMISSION OF MEMORANDUM ON COUNTY ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ADP) 2020/2021 FINANCIAL YEAR.

Marakwet Highland Farmers Association (MHFA) would like to make a submission on the subject above to the Department of Agriculture, Elgeyo Marakwet County. MHFA conducted a farmer-led participatory process to facilitate community reflections of challenges they face across enterprises and values chains; discuss probable solutions and development proposals to address the identified challenges.

This memorandum therefore presents proposals and aspirations of farmers across four wards of Elgeyo Marakwet County.

We also wish to book an appointment with the County department of Agriculture to do a detailed presentation of the memorandum and put the therein attached proposals into perspective. The organization also wishes to request for slots in the upcoming public participation to make formal presentation of these proposals to the members of the public during the public participation forums.

Thank you in advance.

Yours Faithfully,

Moses Kisang Yatich,

Secretary, MHFA

0708 043 705

CC:

COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING

Executive Summary

As stated in the notice for public participation, Marakwet Highland Farmers Association (MHFA) and network members would like to make a submission.

In developing the memoranda, we convened 54 community meetings which were attended by 1120 number of participants across four wards of the Elgeyo Marakwet County i.e. Kapyego, Lelan, Sengwer and Charang'any/Chebororwa.

This memo therefore largely represents the views of these selected wards, but the challenges represent wider view of farming communities in the county.

In our submission, we have the following requests:

1. Increase the allocation for agriculture and irrigation to 40% from the EDA ward budget shares to address key challenges identified by farmers as the impediments to production. We have the following specific requests:
 2. **Allocate 10 Million per Ward to address common challenge**
 - 2.1. Allocate Ksh. 2.4 million to strengthen agricultural productivity by piloting contract-based employment of agricultural extension officers. This amount will facilitate hire five agronomists at Ksh. 150,000 and offer facilitation of Ksh. 120,000 annually. The agronomists will, among others perform the following roles and responsibilities:
 - a. offer onsite and targeted technical support to farmers, thus supporting delivery of Technologies, Innovations and Management Practices (TIMPs) project goals;
 - b. adopt issue-based non-conference/workshop to promote cost-effective and widely accessible training model to improve knowledge transfer to majority of farmers;
 - c. research and avail information on modern and innovative practice to encourage adoption by farmers.
 - 2.2. Allocate Ksh. 5 million to address shortage and cost of access of certified potato seeds by offering competitive financial support to up to three farmer groups to produce certified Irish potato seeds (and other cash crops seeds/seedlings) locally.
 - 2.3. Allocate Ksh 600,000 for the purchase a motorbike for each sub-location to enhance capacity and mobility of existing extension officers.
 - 2.4. Set aside Ksh. 2 million to facilitate ward-wide subsidized soil testing services
3. In Sengwer Ward, allocate Ksh. 15 million for opening, grading and gravelling Kapkta – Bonde road through in-house mode of work. By constructing this road, the county will:
 - a. extend Suwerwo-Bonde road to open up the lower Sengwer ward to Kitale and other agricultural markets and related opportunities in Trans Nzoia county;
 - b. open the area to other amenities such as healthcare and facilitate modern means of transport. Residence in the area are currently using donkeys and carts to transport goods and services while also serving as an ambulance;
4. A more detailed presentation of these challenges is provided in annexes 1.1, 1.2., 1.3, and 1.4. attached to this memorandum for your review and consideration. Annex 2 presents list of community members consulted in the process.

1. Background

- 1.1. In 2019/2020, agriculture received an average of 8% (Ksh. 63 million) of Ksh. 813 million allocated to wards to share. This is despite all wards in Elgeyo Marakwet County relying on agriculture for livelihoods and, despite the sector having yet to realize its potential; refer to ANNEX 2 to see how much our ward allocated to agriculture;
- 1.2. Partially, this is a result of the structure of public participation forums in the county. These forums are about half-day community conversations across the 20 wards to determine how to spend their ward EDA allocations, which is about Ksh. 40 million on average. This is not sufficient time for communities to assess their needs and prioritize spending of this amount.
- 1.3. Considering that the share of the budget allocated to wards is not sufficient to cater for the needs of communities in the ward in single a year, it is imperative to strategically prioritize well for that particular year in order to get value for this small budget; that explains that importance of well-structured public participation.
- 1.4. Therefore, public participation forums should be structured to accord wananchi enough time, ideally more than half-day, to reflect on their experiences and prioritize the spending of the ward allocation in a manner that addresses key community priority needs;
- 1.5. The priorities identified and funded through public participation have rarely reflected our agriculture dependent community's needs. Communities living in Elgeyo Marakwet county are dependent on agriculture for livelihood, yet, we are not producing to potential capacity across value chains.
- 1.6. As a result, Marakwet Highland Farmers Association (MHFA) with technical support from Open Governance Institute organized community meetings ahead of public participation with the idea of allowing our communities to discuss challenges faced across the agricultural value chain, based on their collective experiences; identify probable solutions and identified delegates to use the feedback to develop proposals.
- 1.7. We organized 54 community meetings in five wards which were facilitated by 20 trained community facilitators and attended by **1120** number of participants. Of these community meetings ,26 were chiefs' baraza, 20 were village savings and loans and seven church and other related public caterings.

2. Output of community meetings

At the community meetings, we discussed challenges that farmers experience across the agricultural value chain i.e. production, harvest and market stages. The issues are grouped according to the stages below.

- 2.1. **Production stage:** Farmers identified the following issues as the greatest challenges preventing farmers from producing to capacity especially for Irish potatoes:
 - i. Inability to access good quality seeds, fertilizer and labor due cost and lack of availability locally;
 - ii. Inadequate skills and farm management capacity by farmers contribute to low production due inefficiencies of the approaches applied by farmers;

- iii. Unreliable and over-dependence on rainfed agriculture reduce ability of farmers to produce sustainably and efficiently.

2.2. Harvest stage

- i. Unskilled and inefficient labor result in poor handling of harvesting processes thus contribute to losses in farm produce both in terms of quality and quantity;
- ii. farmers lack adequate knowledge and skills to handle farm produce, including unhygienic practices that contribute to post-harvest losses.

2.3. Storage and Market

- i. Farmers dispose their farmer produce at throw away prices due to pressure and fear of losses that result from attack by pests and rotting and related damages because they lack storage facilities;
- ii. Farm produce prices and market demand is unstable while farmers lack sufficient market information;
- iii. Inadequate organization of farmers and unregulated packaging and standards of measurements expose farmers to manipulation by unscrupulous middlemen.

2.4. Cross cutting challenges

- i. Small holder farmers have inadequate access to agricultural extension service because these officers are few and have been retiring while it is expensive to hire private service provider;
- ii. Poor road network hikes the cost of transport of farm input such as seeds, fertilizer and related input contributing to high cost of production, however, not all roads are economically viable in the absence of optimal production;
- iii. perishable goods are wasted and lost due to poor road network and longer time such goods spent on the road between farms and market.

2.5. Community delegates

- i. One of the key outputs of the community meetings were delegates, a small number of community nominees to attend locational and ward level meetings that brought together all delegate from the 54 community meetings to develop the proposal in the annexes.

3. Proposals and requests

3.1. Proposal development

- i. We used the output from the community meetings to develop the proposals annexed to this note below. These proposals were considered the best available and viable options to address the issues raised, however, participants are encouraged to provide alternative and better proposals to these proposals.

3.2. Requests

- i. In consideration that that we have competing needs as a community, we are asking you the following:
 - a. Consider allocating at least 40% of the ward allocation for 2020/2021 to agriculture on the basis of the proposals in 3.2.1. and which can be costed and budgeted for. Specifically, we

request the county and citizens in public participation at the ward level to set aside the following budgetary amounts from the ward allocations for Agriculture;

- i. Ksh. 10 million for Sengwer ward
 - ii. Ksh. 17 million for Cherang'any/Chebororwa
 - iii. Ksh. 10 million for Lelan ward
 - iv. Ksh. 10 million for Kapyego ward
- b. Other proposals are intangible requests that are executable through government policy and administrative roles and responsibilities, refer to 3.2.2.;

3.2.1. Specific proposals for 2020/2021. For detailed proposals, refer to annexes

3.2.2. General proposals

1. To motivate scaling of agricultural enterprises, facilitate farmers to organize for structured connection to markets through contract farming;
2. To stimulate production by expanding land area under agricultural enterprises, facilitate access to credit, loans, insurance and other financial services by partnering with banks, insurance companies and financial institutions and serving as a guarantor to support farmers to be adventurous in farming;
3. Facilitate private sector through Public Private Partnership (PPP) with key sector players e.g. Toyota Tsusho to:
 - a. provide mechanized services and equipment across wards which may be subsidized through ward allocations;
 - b. facilitate soil testing and production of specific crop fertilizer.
4. In line with shifting priorities from infrastructure to economic and productive sector as proposed in the ADP, identify and allocate resources only to strategic road networks that demonstrate economic value.

Anne 1: Detailed proposal segregated by value chain i.e. production, harvest and post-harvest stages.

Annex 1.1. Proposals for production stage

Challenge 1: High cost and low quality of farm input goods and services e.g. seeds, fertilizer and labor prevent farmers from producing to capacity

Challenge description	Probable solutions to the challenge	Proposal to deliver solution	Remarks
1.1. Use of low-quality seeds, fertilizer, and disease & pest controls;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. facilitate access to affordable and appropriate quality seeds and fertilizer; b. provide technical advice to farmers on pests and diseases controls; c. facilitate soil testing to enable application of right inputs for the right soil. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Allocate Ksh. 5 million from the ward allocation to offer competitive financial support to up to three farmer groups to produce certified Irish potato seeds (and other crops) locally; b. Enhance capacity of extension officers to offer-site technical support through training; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The proposed allocation is not new budget line, but the same budget that has been set aside for subsidizing seeds; b. Farmers will have access to quality and affordable seeds that are suitable for and compatible with the local weather conditions; c. Successful farmer groups will enhance their income and create jobs by multiplying and supplying seeds all year-round.
1.2. Over-reliance on traditional manual farming methods	promote mechanized farming by providing access to equipment at affordable rate to increase production efficiency;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Facilitate private sector through Public Private Partnership (PPP) with key sector players e.g. Toyota Tsusho to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. provide mechanized services and equipment across wards which may be subsidized through ward allocations; ii. facilitate soil testing and production of specific crop fertilizer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Farmers will have access to affordable mechanized services for efficient production. This project may require substantive amount of resources to acquire sufficient equipment for all farmers in the ward and may present a challenge to fund from ward allocations
1.3. Farmers do not have access to funding to enhance their agricultural enterprises	Facilitate farmers to access credit/loans to upgrade from subsistent farming to agri-business commercial enterprises;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Structure connection of farmers to market for farm produce through contract farming; b. Partner with banks and financial institutions to offer guarantee to e farmers to access loans and other financial services; c. Establish county agricultural enterprise fund to facilitate access to affordable credit; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. More farmers will be motivated to commit to and upgrade agricultural enterprises to commercial ventures because there guarantee of market and demand; b. The land area under agriculture will expand because farmers have the capacity (financial support e.g. access to loans) to do so.

Challenge 2: Inadequate skills and farm management capacity by farmers contribute to low production due to inefficiencies

Challenge description	Probable solutions to the challenge	Proposal to deliver solution	Remarks
1.4. Poor land preparation practices and timing of planting to fit within the recommended rainy seasons;	Advice and train farmers on farm management e.g. terracing, soil and testing & management, crop rotation, planting timing, use of pesticides and other diseases controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Allocate Ksh 600,000 for the purchase a motorbike for each sub-location to enhance capacity and mobility of existing extension officers; b. Set aside Ksh. 2 million to facilitate ward-wide subsidized soil testing; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Government will have improved soil management, reduced erosion of soil, b. availed general advice to farmer whenever is needed at no additional cost.

Challenge 3: Unreliable and over-dependence on rainfed agriculture reduce ability of farmers to produce sustainably and efficiently

Challenge description	Probable solutions to the challenge	Proposal to deliver solution	Remarks
1.5. Farmers are limited to production during the rainy seasons;	Construct and install irrigation infrastructure to foster all-year production;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Organize farmers into groups to facilitate co-financing of solar-powered irrigation systems through ward allocations; b. Gov't to act a guarantor access to credit/loans financing of solar powered irrigation systems by individual and farmer groups; c. Formulate policies to promote responsive farming by formulating and enforcing policies that protect water catchments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Farmers will produce all-season round and take advantage of demand during off-season to enhance household income; b. By organizing farmers to co-own irrigation system, gov't will facilitate collective action, including taking advantage of economies of scale; c. Climate change effects on agricultural productivity will be manageable.

Annex 1.2. Proposals for Harvest stage

Challenge 4: Poor handling of harvesting processes contribute to losses in farm produce both in terms of quality and quantity.

- a. This challenge is caused by inadequate access to extension services. Officers offering the service have been reducing in numbers without replacement hence exposing farmers to emerging challenges. The current number of officers stand at an average of two officers per ward;
- b. The county government has frozen employment of any kind including extension officers as a result of current budgetary constraints. As things stand, the government is unlikely to unfreeze employment over medium-term, thus, the challenge will remain for long-overhaul;
- c. The proposals below therefore offer innovative and alternative solutions to address current deficiencies in agricultural services as a more permanent solution is established in the near future.

Challenge description	Probable solutions to the challenge	Proposal to deliver solution	Remarks
Unskilled labor and inefficient harvest	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Facilitate farmers to improve handling of farm produce, including observation of hygienic and other practices that contribute to reduction in pre- and post-harvest losses; b. Support farmers in enhancing capacity and skills of manual labor as way of increasing harvesting efficiency through training and coaching; c. Encourage farmers to adopt use of modern and innovative methods for harvesting, grading, sorting and packaging to reduce post-harvest losses; d. Provide agricultural skills training courses in vocational trainings to increase availability of skilled labor. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Allocate Ksh. 2.4 million for piloting contract-based hiring of trained agronomist to complement existing extension officers to; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. offer onsite and targeted technical support to farmers; ii. adopt issue- based non-conference/workshop widely accessible training model to improve knowledge transfer to majority of farmers; iii. research and avail information on modern and innovative practice to encourage adoption by farmers. b. Introduction of short courses in vocation training institutions as a strategy to make agriculture attractive to young people in efforts to create jobs. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The proposed budget is a consolidation of budget lines for training, demonstrations and filed-days in 2019/2020 and previous years' budgets. b. Employment of additional extension officers will be done on contract and renewable on the basis of performance and financed from ward allocations. By doing so, the county will address most of current challenges facing farmers that relate to farming knowledge and skills at affordable cost without exerting additional pressure on the current budget; c. By offering issue-based farmer training and at locations that are accessible to farmers and offered by extension officers, more farmers will have access to sustainable learning opportunities; d. Introduction of agricultural skills training courses in vocational training colleges will be done cost-effectively by extension officers.

Annex 1.3. Proposals for Harvest stage

Challenge 5: Post-harvest losses, inadequate and unstable markets affect agricultural productivity

Challenge description	Probable solutions to the challenge	Proposal to deliver solution	Remarks
1.1. lack of storage facilities, prices and market trends information force farmers to dispose their farmer produce at throw away prices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Improve access to adequate storage facilities for respective crops e. Encourage farmers to utilize storage facilities and observe market trends to take advantage of stabilizing market prices and demand; f. Advice farmers to tailor production to sustainable market demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Operationalize Kapcherop cereal store in Sengwer ward; b. Set aside Ksh 7million for construction of cereal store in Cherang'any/Chebororwa ward c. Enhance capacity of farmers to handle farm produce for proper storage to maintain quality; d. Conduct market surveillance to provide farmers with updated market information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Effectiveness of low-cost storage methods have been established, read a feasibility study by University of Nairobi; b. In order for contract farming to work and to realize full utilization of economies of scale, storage facilities is necessary complementarity; c. Management of the storage facilities is critical to its functionality. For ownership, the stores can be handed to farmers for the management.
1.2. Farmers are exposed to manipulation by unscrupulous middlemen because packaging and standards of measurements are unregulated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Facilitate farmers to organize into saccos and other types of associations to take advantage of economies of scale; f. Safeguard farmers against manipulation by unscrupulous middlemen; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enforce standard measurements and packing regulations and policies to ensure farmers get value for money; b. Facilitate contract farming to offer guarantee of market access and stable prices to serve as motivation for increased production; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The gov't already started enforcing use of 50kgs as the standard measure for potatoes. Extension officers and local administration can be deployed to provide support; b. Farmers are not producing because they are demotivated by the losses resulting from poor prices of farm produce. Maize is an example of farming practices that has failed to elevate farmers out of poverty.

Annex 1.4. Cross-Cutting Proposals

Challenge 4: poor road infrastructure affects production, but there must be a good balance in investments in road network and agriculture production

- a. Good roads are good agriculture thus the performance of agriculture must be at optimal levels to necessitate the need for good road network;
- b. In other words, the economic value of road network is demonstrated by how much community are gaining, economically from the road network. Therefore, must be balanced public investment in road infrastructure and agricultural productivity;
- c. A well performing agriculture means enhanced revenue for county governments through cess and businesses undertakings of other added value products. Even with goods roads, if agricultural productivity is low, government will always collect less from cess because farmers are no proper use of the roads;
- d. In balancing investment in road network and agricultural productivity, the focus should shift to strategic roads only i.e. roads that demonstrate significant economic value.

Challenge description	Probable solutions to the challenge	Proposal to deliver solution	Remarks
1.6. Cost of input is higher when roads are poor while perishable farm produce damage easily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. Enhance access to farm inputs e.g. fertilizer, seeds and equipment for mechanized farming through good transport system; h. Facilitate farmers to access to markets by easing connection to main roads; i. Reduce wastage and post-harvest losses resulting from impassable roads; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Allocate Ksh. 15 million for opening, grading and gravelling Kapkta – Bonde road through in-house mode of work to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Extend Suwerwo-Bonde rd to open up the lower Sengwer ward to Kitale and other market and related opportunities in Trans Nzoia county; ii. enhance urbanization and increase value of land and related economic properties in the area; iii. open the area to other amenities such as healthcare and facilitate modern means of transport. Residence in the area are currently using donkey and carts to transport goods and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g. We recognize that our road networks in the rural areas are not generally in good condition and require reasonable amount of resources to fix them – more than the ward’s allocation; h. Secondly roads are enablers and not the end by themselves. In this case, good roads are good for agriculture only if agriculture is performing well. i. Therefore, there is need to balance our expenditure between good road infrastructure and other service areas to in order for the roads to be of economic value.

Challenge 5: negative effects of climate change and unpredictability of produce markets and prices is demotivating factor to agricultural productivity by limiting investments and scaling of agricultural ventures;

Challenge description	Probable solutions to the challenge	Proposal to deliver solution	Remarks
Fear of losses from prevent farmers from committing resources into agriculture	a. Cushion farmers from potential losses resulting from climate change and unstable markets;	Through Public Private Partnership (PPP), facilitate farmers to access crop and livestock insurance to stimulate scaling of agricultural ventures.	When farmers are assured that that any eventual losses are covered, they are more adventurous and willing to invest more time, resources and to innovate more.