

## Agricultural Extension and Marketing

The Irish Potato is the second most important food crop after maize in Kenya, with approximately 800,000 small scale farmers practicing potato farming. The crop is not only important for food security, but also a major income source for farmers in the Kenyan highlands. Without an appropriate agricultural extension and marketing support, the gains of the value chain would not be achieved. Farmers in Nyandarua, Bungoma, Trans-Nzoia and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties have benefitted from a new extension approach – the Farmer Field and Business Schools. Farmers are trained on Good Agricultural Practices and marketing for sustainable potato production to increase their incomes.

### Challenges

Despite the importance of the potato value chain before the project's intervention, there are numerous challenges that farmers faced:

- Farmers had little knowledge on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), such as: soil fertility management; pest control measures; and crop management because of limited access to the extension services.
- Clean and high quality seed potatoes were not available due to limited investments from public and private sector. Consequently, farmers experienced low yields where on average they would only harvest 8-10 t/ha which is far below the attainable yield of 30t/ha. Farmers were also struggling with a high incidence of pests and diseases as well as declining soil fertility.
- Additionally, limited organization of farmer groups reduced their bargaining power resulting in limited marketing marketing opportunities and high price fluctuations. This coupled with low yields resulted in low incomes for the potato farmers.

### Achievements

- Using the **Farmer Field and Business Schools (FFBS)**, a total of **17,927** farmers, **61%** women trained.
- A total of **991 FFBS** (408 schools run by county staff and 583 run by lead farmers) have been established.
- Increase **adoption of Good Agricultural Practices** (46% to 71%)
- Yield increase of **54%** for those trained in FFBS [4-year average, compared to base: from 8 t/ha (2016) to 12.3 t/ha (2019-22)]
- Access to quality seed and marketing conditions have been significantly improved for the target groups in the FFBS by **over 65%**.

### Our Approach

The project targeted to increase yield by 40% through adoption of good agricultural practices for 23,000 farmers as well as link 2,500 farmers to off-takers to ensure better access to market and higher prices. To attain this, NuSePPP works on different stages of the potato value chain:

1. To enhance farmer's access to seed potatoes NuSePPP worked with CIP in promoting Rooted Cuttings (RC) technology. CIP trains individual farmers and FFBS groups on on-farm seed production using small seed plot technology (SSPT).
2. The Project used the Farmer Field and Business School (FFBS) approach to enhance extension services. In cooperation with KALRO, County extension officers were trained on GAP and further equipped with facilitation skills. The capacitated extension officers establish Farmer Field and Business Schools and provided training to farmers during a 3.5 months training. The training entailed theoretical as well as practical modules, which were taught on a joint demonstration plot.
3. In the area of marketing, NuSePPP supported 2,665 farmers in the organizational development to form farmer groups, to aggregate their produce and collectively market it.
4. In parallel NuSePPP engaged with off-takers to facilitate a direct market linkage between farmers and buyers through contract farming.
5. NuSePPP promoted mechanization through sensitizing potential investors (service provider, cooperatives) and machinery demonstration during farmer field days.
6. To improve soil fertility management NuSePPP capacitated service providers which offered affordable on-field soil testing services to farmers

## Project Description

**Project Title:** Nutrition-sensitive Potato Partnership Project (NuSePPP)

**Commissioned by:** German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

**Overall Term:** July 2016 to June 2023

**Region:** Kenya (Nyandarua, Bungoma, Trans-Nzoia and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties)

**Implementing Partners:** Agriculture and Health Departments of the Counties, National Potato Council of Kenya (NPCK), International Potato Center (CIP), Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), local and international companies

**Lead Executing Agency:** Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation (MoALF&I)

## FFBS Economic Impact

- The organization of the FFBS groups and their continued existence has created 'social capital', used for new government and/or donor programs.
- FFBS causes an increase in farmer surpluses via GAP and marketing group membership (40.000 KES (330 EUR) per farmer per season per hectare, mostly by seed selection, soil fertility management, and harvest & post-harvest practices).
- The FFBS creates 1.9 bn KES (15.7 mn EUR) in economic value for 17.927 participating farmers.
- The FFBS cost between 250 and 500 mn KES (2 and 4 mn EUR), implying that every KES invested generates between 4 and 7.5 KES in value.

(Ref: FFBS Impact Study)



Earthing up of potatoes



Farmers inspect production success

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Registered offices  
Bonn and Eschborn

Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 36 + 40      Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1 - 5  
53113 Bonn, Germany              65760 Eschborn, Germany  
T +49 228 44 60 - 0                  T +49 61 96 79 - 0  
F +49 228 44 60 - 17 66              F +49 61 96 79 - 11 15

E [info@giz.de](mailto:info@giz.de)  
I [www.giz.de](http://www.giz.de)

**Contact:** Jackson Muchoki                      Festus Kimatu  
Project Manager                              M&E Advisor  
[Jackson.Muchoki@giz.de](mailto:Jackson.Muchoki@giz.de)                      [Festus.Kimatu@giz.de](mailto:Festus.Kimatu@giz.de)

Vincent Odero  
Technical Advisor Agriculture  
[vincent.odero@giz.de](mailto:vincent.odero@giz.de)

**Design:** Francis Muchiri

**Photos:** GIZ/ Meshack Rono  
GIZ/ Vincent Odero

