



Transforming South Africa's agricultural sector by integrating climate-smart agriculture in support of the green economy

Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) is an approach that helps guide actions needed to transform and reorient agricultural systems to effectively support development and ensure food security in a changing climate. CSA aims to tackle three main objectives: sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes; adapting and building resilience to climate change; and reducing and/or removing greenhouse gas emissions, where possible.

Source: <http://www.fao.org/climate-smart-agriculture/en/>

WHAT IS THE CONTEXT OF AGRICULTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA?

- ▶ Agriculture accounts for 2% of South Africa's gross domestic product and is an important engine for growth due to its upstream and downstream links to the rest of the economy.¹
- ▶ Agriculture is uniquely placed to facilitate the transformation to a green economy in South Africa. However, climate change poses a potential challenge to the sector's growth.
- ▶ Agricultural systems are caught in a vicious cycle: they are adversely affected by the climate while the sector concurrently contributes to practices that exacerbate climate change; it is clear that efforts to green the economy through this sector must address both aspects.
- ▶ CSA is ideal in this regard because it involves both mitigation and adaptation interventions.
- ▶ The existing agriculture policies in South Africa lack the connection between national policies on climate change adaptation and local institutional frameworks. Furthermore, the development of infrastructure to provide climate change resilience and access to markets is not equitable across all provinces.

¹ Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. 2016. Economic Review of the South African Agriculture. <https://www.daff.gov.za/Daffweb3/Portals/0/Statistics%20and%20Economic%20Analysis/Economic%20Analysis/Economic%20Review%202016.pdf>.



What is the enabling environment for CSA in South Africa?



- ▶ **Availability of climate information services:** to inform farmers' decision-making, improve management of climate-related agricultural risk and help adapt to climate change;
- ▶ **Weather index-based insurance:** availability of appropriate agricultural insurance to buffer weather-related shocks;
- ▶ **Investing in research:** increased investment by Governments in CSA research and adaptive conservation agriculture specific to the different agro-ecological zones in a country;
- ▶ **Capacity-building:** a requirement for training and education institutions teaching agriculture at different levels to include CSA in teaching curricula and institutional research strategies;
- ▶ **Creating awareness:** a national awareness and education campaign on the impact of climate change on agriculture and the benefits of adopting climate-smart farming methods;
- ▶ **Providing "product incentives":** market-based mechanisms, such as payment for ecosystem services and the carbon market.



CSA guidelines in South Africa



The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries of South Africa, with the support of SWITCH Africa Green Programme, has developed CSA guidelines with the following key objectives:

- ▶ *To establish a framework that provides actionable and implementable activities that would integrate CSA into key areas and support South Africa's transition to an all-inclusive green economy;*
- ▶ *To contribute to the integration of the social, environment and economic pillars of sustainable development into the agricultural sector.*

The CSA guidelines focus on the practices of soil and water management, cereal crop production, sugar cane production, fruit production, viticulture, rangeland management and urban agriculture.



What can South Africa do to operationalize the CSA guidelines?



South Africa needs an overarching CSA policy that includes:

- ▶ Provisions for cross-sectoral coordination of CSA initiatives;
- ▶ An effective CSA promotion and mainstreaming strategy;
- ▶ A coherent CSA mechanization policy;
- ▶ Availability of enabling resources, such as (i) resource mobilization; (ii) climate information services; (iii) appropriate agricultural insurance; and (iv) agricultural marketing infrastructure.
- ▶ Provisions for the elimination of perverse incentives that hinder CSA implementation.

SWITCH Africa Green is funded by the European Union and provides policy support to Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa and Uganda in promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns in their transition to an inclusive green economy. The programme provides financial and technical support for the development of policy frameworks that support the greening of four key sectors: agriculture, integrated waste management, manufacturing and tourism.