

Kwale Agribusiness Strengthening Project (MKUKI-Kwale)



Key details

Location

Kenya

Duration

Start Apr 2023

End Apr 2024

Budget

AUD 312,500

Commissioned organisation

Palladium International Pty Ltd

Partners

Base Titanium Limited; Cotton On Group; Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation; Kwale County government; Kwale Pavi Farmers Co-Operative Society Ltd; Palladium International Pty Ltd; Pwani University

Project Leader

Ms Deb Doan

ACIAR Research Program Manager

Mr David Shearer

Program

[Agribusiness](#)

Project code

AGB/2021/123



Overview

This project aimed to develop sustainable and inclusive agri-food value chains benefiting smallholder farming communities through linkages to multinationals'

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategies.

The project name and acronym—Mradi wa Kuimarisha Kilimo-Biashara Kwale (MKUKI-Kwale)—reflect the crux of the research objectives, with the full name translating to Kwale Agribusiness Strengthening Project, in Swahili and its acronym, MKUKI, translating to spear, representing the sharp, focused, targeted transformation of Kwale.

Although MKUKI-Kwale was originally planned as a five-year project, it was terminated 12 months into the project period. Despite the project's early termination, it achieved several findings and results, including baseline research, the establishment of farmer schools,

and a revised business model focusing on cotton, maize, and the associated value-added products of stockfeed and maize flour. As a result of these changes, several micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) opportunities were identified.

The project focused on supporting the transition of the Kwale community social system from a reliance on mining to enabling an agriculture-based economy while being more socially inclusive. The project took advantage of an opportunity for ACIAR to build on an established livelihoods program in Kwale, Kenya, taking a sharp, focused, targeted transformation through Government and private sector buy-in. The project built capacity of key influencers and future leaders within the community to maximise the likelihood of sustainable change over the long term. The project team looked to validate best-bet approaches for improved agricultural productivity and sustainable farming practices with adoption of climate smart crop varieties, effective water use management, healthy soils management, and effective communication and dissemination of applied scientific outcomes.

Youth development exploring opportunities to engage community youth in research activities is critical for success. The youth engagement focus would start by understanding what they would be interested in being involved in. Farmer capacity-building to improve the depth and breadth of training and enhance training methodology.

One innovative approach would be developing audio-based farmer training that could be scaled out at marginal cost through short, audible, interactive stories capturing key farmer training, bringing traditional storytelling techniques together with technology.

Equipping the private sector with a documented, evidence-based change model for a sustainable and inclusive agribusiness value chain, enabling them to better understand how to replicate this approach in their own businesses would be a key featuring in scaling the outcomes of the project.

Outcomes

- Generated a diverse body of knowledge for understanding and prioritising intervention opportunities.
- Identified challenges in the value chain, particularly at the production end, such as low use of inorganic fertilisers, inadequate extension services, and poor soil health.
- Introduced a new extension approach, leading to the establishment of 24 Farmer Schools, which provided collaborative action in solving farming problems.
- Enabled farmers to become more self-sufficient and select production methods through a discovery-based approach.
- PAVI shifted focus to more profitable activities down the value chain and improved market access for its members.
- Developed a revised business model focusing on cotton, maize, and value-added products.



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