Agro-Youth

Situational Analysis of Agro-Food Entrepreneurs in the West Coast Region (WCR) of The Gambia

– Determinants, Opportunities and Challenges –

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AEZ	Agricultural Ecological Zone
AfDB	African Development Bank
ANR	Agriculture and Natural Resources
ANRP	Agriculture and Natural Resources Program
ATP	Agricultural Transformation Program
CBG	Central Bank of The Gambia
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation

CET	Common External Tariff
CFSVA	Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment
CRR/N	Central River Region – North
CRR/S	Central River Region South
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CASD	Collective Action for Sustainable Development
DDYF	Ding Ding Yirwa Federation
DLS	Department of Livestock Services
DOA	Department of Agriculture
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
ECOWAS States	Economic Community of West Africa
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FDDF	Foni Ding Ding Federation
FSQA	Food Safety Quality Agency
GATP-PPF	Gambia Agriculture Transformation Program Project Preparation Facility
GBoS	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GCAV	Gambia Commercialization Agricultural Value-Chain
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAP	Gambia Environmental Action Plan
GIS	Global Information System
GMD	Gambian Dalasi
GNAIP	Gambia National Agricultural Investment Program
GoTG	Government of The Gambia
GSCDA	Global South Career Development Academy
HDI	Human Development Index
HIHO	High Input High Output

IHS	Integrated Household Survey
LGA	Local Government Authority
LILO	Low Input Low Output
LRR	Lower River Region
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFI	Microfinance Institution
NARI	National Agricultural Research Institute
NBR	North Bank Region
NDP	National Development Plan
NEMA	National Environment Management Act
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NSS	National Seeds Secretariat
PAGE	Program for Accelerated Growth and Employment
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RCN	Raw Cashew Nuts
SAP	Self Employed Assistance Program
SDF	Social Development Fund
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SKF	Saama Kairo Federation
SPS	Sanitary-Phytosanitary Standards
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
URR	Upper River Regional
USD	United States Dollar
VCA	Value Chain Analysis
WCR	West Coast Region

Executive Summary

This study used a mixed-method survey involving both qualitative and quantitative survey questions and an extensive document/secondary literature review to conduct needs assessment of the Agri-entrepreneurship in the WCR. The assessment created a questionnaire with answer options (quantitative) and questions that require detailed responses (qualitative).

It has analysed the situation of Agric entrepreneurs in the WCR and identified constraints and opportunities for growth and development in the agri-food industry. The study drew information from both secondary and primary sources at national and regional levels. The assessment identified six hundred and eighty-nine (689) agriculture related entrepreneurs in the WCR of The Gambia.

The assessment found that the majority of the Agri entrepreneurs in the WCR were above the age category of youth as described in the National Youth Policy of The Gambia 2019-2028. National Youth Policy of The Gambia 2019-2028 defines youth as individuals within the age bracket of 15-35 years. Results show that 62% of Agric entrepreneurs identified in the WCR were between the ages of 35 years and above. Only 38% of individuals were within the age bracket of 18-35 years.

Out of the six hundred and eighty-nine (689) agriculture related entrepreneurs identified, 75% were female and 25% male. In terms of headcount, out of the six hundred and eighty-nine (689) identified agriculture related entrepreneurs/businesses in the WCR, the ownership of only 266 businesses (38%) can be associated to individuals within the national youth classification/categorisation while the rest would be considered as owned by adults. In terms of the level of education attained by entrepreneurs, the assessment found that 52% did not attend formal education (non-formal education). Only 19% completed primary/basic education, 16% secondary education and 12% tertiary and vocational education.

Results show that the majority of businesses in the region, especially those operating in the Agricultural sector neither have their businesses registered nor have plans for their businesses. The findings indicated that, the most frequently used product marketing and advertisements methods were the word of mouth followed by the use of social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok and Instagram). A fairly good percentage of agriculture related entrepreneurs identified, confirmed keeping financial records for their businesses with daily and weekly updating. In the WCR, the most prevalent agriculture related businesses types are sole proprietorship businesses.

The survey results reveal a strong reliance on family support and personal savings for business financing, with significant portions of respondents also turning to grants and diverse, unconventional sources. The majority of the community lacks the necessary agri-business and entrepreneurial skills with the majority of the respondents indicating they do not feel equipped to manage and grow their businesses.

Results show a strong demand for agri-business and entrepreneurial skills among the youth in the community. Thus, providing valuable insights into the specific training needs of the community to make their businesses profitable and sustainable. Findings also underscore a significant need for agric business management and entrepreneurship skills training within the community. A significant majority of respondents (86.38%) perceive their businesses as profitable and sustainable, which is a strong positive indicator for the community's agribusiness sector. Thus, providing valuable insights into the specific support needs of young Agri-entrepreneurs in the community.

Results provide a clear picture of the various success metrics for agribusiness entrepreneurs, with a significant focus on family support, educational opportunities, profitability, and financial independence. It also provides a clear picture of the challenges faced by young Agri-entrepreneurs, with inadequate funding, market access, and knowledge being the most significant issues. Findings also suggest clear picture of the recommendations for supporting agribusiness entrepreneurs in The Gambia such as prioritising financial support, comprehensive training, marketing assistance, provision of inputs, loan facilitation, and grant opportunities, the agro youth project can address the critical needs and enhance the growth and sustainability of agribusinesses in the community. Regular community engagement and flexible support programs will further ensure that all unique and diverse needs are met effectively.

1 Background and Context

Situated on the coast of West Africa, the Republic of The Gambia spans approximately 480 km inland from west to east on both banks of the river Gambia, with a width that varies from 48 km at the river's estuary to 24 km inland. It is located between latitudes 13028'N and 16034'W, with a mostly drought-prone Sahelian shrubland ecosystem. The Republic of Senegal encircles the nation to the north, south, and east, and a brief stretch of the Atlantic Ocean borders it to the west. The country's land area, which is approximately 10,689 km2, is divided into two parts by the river Gambia, which flows the whole length of it from the Fouta Djallon highlands in Guinea Conakry to the Atlantic Ocean: The North and South Banks.

The government's Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy (ANRP, 2017–2026) is based on the creation of a market-led, commercialised dynamic agriculture sector that is efficient, competitive, and consistent with the National Development Plan (NDP, 2018–2021). The economy is primarily based on rain-fed subsistence agriculture, which is the main source of livelihood for the majority of the population (Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis, 2016). The goals of the policy to create a market-driven economy are embodied in the projections of production, employment, factor productivities, and utilisation rate of local raw materials, value-added activities, and sources of output growth. Value addition in agriculture was predicted by the draft policy to grow at a rate of 6.14 percent annually between 2017 and 2026. The sub-sectors of fisheries, livestock, and crops—including fruits and vegetables—will be major drivers of this growth. It is anticipated that the sector's overall employment will increase at a rate of 12.67 percent annually due to the expansion of agro-based industrial development and suitable crop production mechanisation. This will make it possible for industrial development to employ a greater share of the young labour force that is available.

The Gambia's population is expected to be 1.9 million, with a 3.3% annual growth rate (GBoS, 2013). Approximately 40% of the population lives in rural areas, with women accounting for 51%. The high fertility rate of 5.4 births per woman has produced an extremely young population structure. Forty-two percent of the country's citizens are under the age of 15, while approximately 22 percent are between the ages of 15 and 24. Over 70% of the population is under 30 years old (Ibid, 2011), and around 59.6% of the population resided in cities in 2015, a significant rise from 28.4% in 1980 (Economic Commission for Africa, 2017). In 2017, the Gambia's Human Development Index (HDI) was projected to be 0.460, placing the country 174th out of 183 countries (UNDP, HDI 2017). The Gambia is very vulnerable to recurring droughts and floods, with approximately one in every three Gambians experiencing food insecurity. Smallholder farmers in The Gambia account for approximately 43.1% of the population and 22.6% of the economy (GoTG Vision, 2016). However, the bulk of them lack adequate access to local markets and are susceptible to periodic shocks, particularly during lean seasons.

1.1 Economic environment

The macroeconomic conditions in The Gambia were difficult and unstable during the Autocratic Rule of the Second Republic (1994–2016). These conditions were primarily caused by an unpredictable governance structure with abrupt policy shifts and slippages, poor institutional management, excessive borrowing (raising debt to GDP ratio), and excessive budgetary spending. As a result, the country became vulnerable to economic and external shocks, which had a negative impact on economic growth. The debt-to-GDP ratio increased to 130 percent of GDP in 2017, classifying the country as a debt distress nation.

Using the new 2013 base year, the Gambia's GDP at current prices, stands at GMD 49.2 billion (GBoS, June 2018), or little more than USD1 billion (exchange rate at GMD 48.50 per USD) in

2018. Between 1999 and 2018, real GDP growth fluctuated significantly, reaching 5.4 percent in 2018 from 3.5 percent in 2017. Services (including tourism, trade, finance, and insurance) grew by 10% in 2018 (Knoema, 2018) contributing significantly to this GDP growth trend. Furthermore, the significant expansion in transport, construction, and telecommunications contributed to GDP growth. Despite the country's positive GDP growth, its GDP per capita in 2017 was only USD 483(World Bank Estimate, 2017), which was one-third of the Sub-Saharan average of USD 1,553 and less than 4% of the global average. Inflation fell to an expected 6.2 percent in 2018 from 8% in 2017. The Gambian Dalasi (GMD) remained stable, with gross international reserves rising marginally to 3.1 months in 2018 from 2.9 months in 2017((AEO, 2019). These results were supported by the new government's increasing fiscal discipline, which was bolstered by greater financial aid from development partners.

The Gambian economy is mainly driven by the services, agriculture, and industrial sectors. In 2013, the services sector contributed 58% of the GDP, and this increased to 61% in 2017. The agriculture industry contributed 26% in 2013, 23% in 2014, 22% in 2015 and 2016, and 21% in 2017. Agriculture in Gambia is mainly subsistence-based, with groundnuts being the primary cash crop. During the same period, the industrial sector contributed between 12% and 17% to the national GDP (GBoS, June 2018). Furthermore, the fisheries and aquaculture sector contribute approximately 5% of GDP, indicating its importance for food security and export earnings. Wholesale and retail trade, on the other hand, contributes an average of 25% of GDP during the same period, demonstrating the importance of re-export trade to the Gambian economy (WTO, March 2018). In 2016, tourism alone accounted for nearly 20% of GDP and was the top foreign exchange earner. However, remittances and international aid have long been critical to the economy's survival. The Gambian economy is characterised by its small size, narrow market, and limited diversification, with a focus on services (tourism and re-export commerce) and agriculture. It also has a limited export base, with groundnuts, cashews, mangoes, and fish as the primary agricultural and natural resource export items.

The Gambia is particularly exposed to recurring droughts, floods, and other climate change-related threats. As a result, the agriculture industry, which previously contributed up to 30% of the GDP, decreased to 27% in 2017 (GBoS 2017). From 2007 to 2016, the average annual growth rate in agricultural production was 2.5%, which is lower than the population growth rate of 3.1%. There is also significant variation in yield among major crops

1.2 Poverty and Food Security

The public destitution rate was recorded at 48.65 percent (2015 integrated household survey) utilising the not exactly USD 1.25 per individual each day, and 8 percent of them are viewed as food insecure (Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis, 2015). There was a rising provincial destitution (from 64% in 2010 to 70 percent in 2015), and a developing gap among country and metropolitan regions concerning admittance to business sectors (World Bank, 2015). In 2015, the country received a Gini Index score of 35.9, which indicates a high prevalence of income inequality (Budget Speech by the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs of the Gambia, 2015). Rural poverty was on the rise, with 60 percent of rural households considered to be living in poverty in 2003 rising to 62.1 percent in 2010 (MAF, 2010) and 69 percent in 2016 (IHS report, 2017). In urban areas, the percentage of households living below the poverty line is 31.6%. The provincial regions represent around 42.2 percent of the nation's populace; however, they hold 60% of its poor (National Development Plan: 2018 - 2021).

Food insecurity has a greater impact on households in rural areas. The latest Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA, 2016) shows that food insecurity has risen to about 5.6 percent since 2011. Rural areas have the highest proportion of food-insecure households, ranging from 12 to 18 percent. Due to declining productivity over the years

(GNAIP, 2010-2015, pp 21), the rural population in the country is more affected by food insecurity. However, the agricultural sector plays a crucial role in achieving the government's objectives for economic growth and development. It is important to promote growth and employment in The Gambia through the development of the agriculture sector.

1.3 Socio-economic dynamics

The economy is basically relying upon agricultural and farm commodities produced by small farmers, largely through traditional methods with very limited modern technology and inputs. Networks are prevalently relying upon downpour taken care of means horticulture, which is the fundamental wellspring of job for larger part of the populace. According to the perception of general farmers, crop agriculture is no longer profitable due to declining production trends and unstable market conditions. This led to youth provincial metropolitan mass migration, while others ventured out to abroad for greener fields leaving farm work for ladies and the old.

For family expenses, many households heavily rely on remittances from abroad. Their poverty profile shows a lot of inequality because there is a lot of income inequality because people have different levels of education, employment, and sending money home from abroad. The majority of Gambian communities are patriarchal, with multiple clans and family ties sustaining households' existing social and economic safety nets. They esteem more distant family frameworks, albeit the customary family designs and values are as of now not equivalent to previously. To alter their way of life, people try to increase their earnings by diversifying their sources of income.

Animals are by and large sorted as the second most significant proportion of family abundance. They are usually used as draft creatures for crop creation and transportation as well with respect to potential deals should the family need extra pay. Along with crop farming, livestock rearing involves the care of cattle and small ruminants like sheep and goats. The Gambian economy and standard of living are significantly impacted by the livestock subsector. Cattle, small ruminants, pigs, horses, poultry, rabbits, and other short-cycle species are raised as part of the traditional production system. The different species are raised to give meat, milk, pay, socio-social reasons, draft power and fertiliser for crop development.

It is evident that the various species of livestock play a significant role in enhancing the food security of rural households by serving as a source of income and food. The reducedprecipitation has frequently appeared in unfortunate harvest yields and expanding dependence of farmers on animals for food during the lean time frames when grain stocks are close to exhaustion. The primary source of feed for livestock owners is farmland resources, which are constantly under threat. According to DLS (2011), only 5,000 ha of Gambia's total arable land was designated as improved pasture in 2010 (40 percent, or 371,200 ha). In addition, a livestock density of over 42 heads per hectare of farmland was noted in the DLS 2011 report. The primary sources of feed for livestock are unimproved pastures and crop residues. Feed adequacy for domesticated animals in The Gambia is occasional.

Farmlands' carrying capacity is sufficient to meet feed requirements during the rainy season; however, during the dry season, the farmlands' quality and quantity of grasses decline and become nutritionally deficient. During the dry season's peak times, when animals rely on crop residues and swamp grazing, less feed is available. The current stocking density puts a lot of pressure on the natural farmland, which affects the structure of the soil, crop production, and the growth of forest trees. This is made worse by livestock that move within and across borders. In fact, the transhumance pastoral system in the sub region includes the movement of livestock along the Gambia-Senegal border, with access to pasture, water, and a livestock market serving as the primary drivers.

1.4 Youth in agribusiness in the Gambia

The agricultural sector must be appropriately transformed from a subsistence-based, rainfall-dependent, and supply-oriented approach to a commercialised one if youth participation in agribusinesses is to be effective and sustained. The common negative discernments on horticulture should be changed to mirror a promising, fulfilling, and appealing venture deserving of commitment. A shift away from government-focused, undifferentiated targeting to farmer-led, public-private partnership, and multi-pronged targeting based on clearly defined youth categories must also be the foundation of the strategy.

Youth should be empowered by providing relevant opportunities for capacity building and training so that they can acquire the skills they need to participate in the various agriculture commodity value chains. Strategic support should be given to some of the existing incubation and training facilities to help them improve and consolidate their outreach and programs. To ensure both inclusion and impact, it is necessary to take into account the location, purpose, and content of the programs.

The current agriculture mixed farming centres (MFCs) lack resources and are not being used to their full potential. They ought to be changed to become a model smaller than normal Songhai farming focused inside the different locale by which the youth and women could approach creation offices and limit building administrations working on suitable business and productive models. The centres ought to be improved and run-in line with the Songhai initiatives, with identified youths receiving training and participating in commercial agro-related businesses.

Last but not least, deliberate and strategic interventions are required to address the issue with the country's land tenure system, particularly with regard to the participation of young people and women in agriculture. The land residency framework ought to be explored and rebuilt to empower private investment and support as well as the contribution of youth and women in agribusiness. However, this may take a long time and certainly falls outside of agriculture's purview. Considerably more relevant and practical techniques could be conveyed to accomplish the same outcomes. Contract farming, land leasing, and a careful process for identifying and appropriating agricultural land for PPP engagements in strategic locations all require strengthening and promotion. The current land guideline and regulation components consider such mediations in light of a legitimate concern for public interest.

The fact that agricultural research has never been able to provide technology that is both productive and long-lasting and has an enabling policy environment, is one of the main factors contributing to Africa's current lack of agricultural success (Haggblade, Hazell and Kisamba-Mugerwa, 2010). The government needed to set up regulatory bodies like the NAQAA, FSQA, and NSS to help create a favourable policy environment for the relevant agro-related businesses because of these policy and research gaps. Their work however instrumental in improving the exercises of youthful Agric-business people is accentuated with hierarchical and asset imperatives which require consideration.

According to the findings of the 2018 Gambia Labour Force Survey, the majority of people who left the country by regular (21.6 percent) or irregular (59.6 percent) means did so because they couldn't find work. The Gambia Public Advancement Plan (2018 - 2021) and the modified Public Youth Strategy (Nov 2015) both have strategy goals outfitted towards tending to the developing youth joblessness in the nation and the related youth movement coming about to diminishing workforce, especially inside the horticulture area. As a result, one important strategy for the agricultural transformation program should concentrate on strategic interventions, investments, and policy directions to provide youth with long-term employment opportunities through targeted differentiation. There is no such thing as a "one strategy for all categories" that is differentiated in any way.

1.5 Status of youth employment in agribusiness in the Gambia

The majority of the population of the Gambia is largely youthful. They are almost equally distributed between urban and rural areas 50.1 per cent in the urban areas and 49.9 percent living in the rural areas. However, there are slightly more male youth in the urban areas (63.0 percent), than the rural areas due partly to sex selectivity of migration with males more likely to migrate than females. The rural areas lag behind the urban areas in terms of educational attainment at tertiary and vocational levels. This is hardly surprising as the majority of the tertiary and higher learning institutions are located in the urban areas. This gives indication of areas that need both public and private sector attention in providing the necessary facilities and opportunities to bridge the rural-urban gap. It is in recognition of these gaps that the Gambia NDP (2018 -2021) maintained the efforts that are required to improve the transition and retention of female and the rural youth, as well as improving access to vocational and tertiary education, and skills training in rural areas

The Gambia National Development Plan (2018-2021) rightly emphasised that to achieve the goal of improving agricultural and livestock transformation value chains, it will be necessary to take steps to: identify crop and livestock value chains that should be prioritised in agriculture, as well as actors in these value chains and improve their capabilities; encourage agribusiness and agro-processing, as well as financial access; promote a viable agricultural marketing system that includes commodities exchange and cooperatives; and adhere to national, regional, and international quality assurance standards in the adoption and implementation of a framework.

1.6 Training and capacity building for youth in agro business

The nation is home to seven public and private higher education institutions and 103 non-degree tertiary institutions (UNESCO, 2019). However, only a small number of these national institutions are implementing a variety of youth agro-related projects that target a variety of youth groups. University of The Gambia (UTG) and Gambia College of Agriculture: The College of the Gambia (UTG) and Gambia School of Horticulture are government organisations of higher education giving scholar and expert courses in youth Agri-related courses. The University of Gambia offers degree programs in a variety of agro-related fields, while the Gambia College of Agriculture offers certificate and diploma programs in agriculture and animal husbandry.

Nevertheless, there is a limited scope and level of specialisation, particularly concerning the various agricultural value chains. In addition, as previously stated, students from the two institutions lack access to relevant and appropriate demonstration/practical training opportunities and learning materials to enable self-employment and value addition in their respective fields. One more test with these two offices, as it connects with the execution of agro-related activities and projects, has to do with their areas. Another challenge with these two facilities as it relates to the implementation of agro-related projects and programs has to do with their locations. They are both located within the greater Banjul area thus restricting access to their services by the rural resource-poor youths. None of them have established any outreach facilities/ campuses in the provinces where agriculture is the predominant means of livelihood and employment.

1.7 Engaging youths in agribusiness

The proposed way to deal with youth (both male and female) in farming will be to a great extent informed by winning public strategy goals and needs and directed by pertinent provincial, global and multilateral prescribed procedures and demonstrated methodologies in the area. Vision 2020, the nation's diagram for the essential bearing for public turn of events and all the more as of late the Gambia Public Improvement Plan NDP (2018 - 2021) have all given guidance on the way to deal with the draw in young people in farming. The objective of the

public authority under the arrangement is to "convey great administration and responsibility, social union, and public compromise and a renewed and changed economy for prosperity, everything being equal. The vision and in general objective of the NDP is to be acknowledged through eight key needs including:

i. Restoring good governance, respect for human rights, the rule of law, and empowering citizens through decentralisation and local governance;
ii. Stabilising our economy, stimulating growth, and transforming the economy;
iii. Modernising our agriculture and fisheries for sustained economic growth, food and nutritional security and poverty reduction;
iv. Investing in our people through improved education and health services, and building a caring society;
v. Building our infrastructure and restoring energy services to power our economy;
vi. Promoting an inclusive and culture-centred tourism for sustainable growth;
vii. Reaping the demographic dividend through an empowered youth; and
viii. Making the private sector the engine of growth, transformation, and job creation".

These two landmark national development blueprints provide valuable justification and strategic direction for youth and women's involvement in the agricultural transformation process of the country. The approach is further guided by relevant regional, international and multilateral agricultural transformation strategies and programs.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) at the continental level has also adopted a strategy that is closely aligned to the dual key principles laid out in its 10-Year Strategy 2013–2022: inclusive growth and gradual transition to green growth. On the one hand, the AfDB Strategy for Agricultural Transformation in Africa promotes inclusive and green growth through direct programming. For example, it prioritises projects designed to target historically underserved rural, female, and youth populations to encourage equitable participation in all areas of the sector and increase the number of farmers using climate-smart agriculture practices.

However, it also elevates the importance of inclusive and green growth by mainstreaming these issues across all of its activities and the initiatives it funds. This will include ensuring that M&E is gender responsive, putting in place safeguards to protect against disenfranchisement of smallholder farmers as certain sub-sectors are commercialised, and supporting governments in developing country level data systems required to track the use and impact of climate smart agriculture practices. Fundamentally, the overarching aim of the strategy is to drive inclusive gains in agriculture to sustainably transform the lives of all, including the poorest and most vulnerable Africans.

1.8 Women and youth empowerment for sustainable employment

According to GBS (2013), women make up about 50.5 percent of the population and 52% of them live in rural areas. Sixty percent of the unemployed are made up of them; principally took part in the casual sector (Gambia National Gender Policy 2010 - 2020). During consultations at the field level, it was discovered that they make up more than half of the agricultural workforce and contribute 60% of food production. They can get land belonging to their clan or family, but they can't own land for farming. Women are also in charge of all cereal crop post-harvest tasks, despite their involvement in cash crop production in communities where men focus more on non-farming activities. The predominant practice for the most part permits ladies to control their income from plant exercises, which is to a great extent spent on family needs. Information from the field conferences reveal 55% of ladies are taking part in vegetable creation and showcasing; while 40% attempt frivolous exchange like peddling, products of the soil showcasing, and so forth. Additionally, the majority of the money generated by the sale of their cash crops is used to fund household necessities, particularly health, education, and other

welfare requirements (e. g. clothing). As of late, in certain networks where ladies' plant exercises have developed into bigger scope exercises, men are progressively taking part in the vegetable value chain.

The Gambia's National Development Plan for 2017–2022 estimated that youth unemployment is currently 38 percent (The Gambia Labour Force Survey, GoTG 2012), and the country is dealing with the problem of irregular migration to Europe. The rising absence of abilities and under-work among the adolescent open them to distress and vulnerability prompting unlawful movement to Europe for greener fields. The nation faces a gigantic "back-way" relocation challenge, especially to Europe, which is seen as expensive to families abandoned, particularly the older. Relocation has likewise brought about an expanded death toll enroute to Europe. As per the European Association, something like 14,735 (Eurostat, 2016) Gambians looked for refuge in EU part nations, with 75 percent delegated monetary travellers.

1.9 Women and youth associations

With 72.7 percent of the population under the age of 30, The Gambia has a young population. According to GBS (2013), women make up about 50.8% of the population. The two demographic groups whose full potential has not been fully realised are young women and men. They are important forces that change the country's economic growth (including agriculture). They comprise a critical part of the populace and can be likely empowering influences of financial and rural change, food creation and security. Individual affiliations include ladies, men, youth or blended bunches in with each playing one-of-a-kind parts and obligations. They engage in a wide range of activities, including cooperative farming operating period contributions, savings and loan programs, and social and economic endeavours. Absence of admittance to monetary assets, powerless administration designs, and administration, and deficient institutional help are a portion of the key limitations related to these town-based affiliations. With support from the government, development partners, and non-governmental organisations, there are associations that are involved in horticultural production and marketing. The contribution of the adolescent society in such farming and related exercises is yet to be completely taken advantage of.

1.10 Review of the Gambia Agricultural Sector

Agriculture is a major contributor to the country's GDP growth and provides a means of subsistence for 72% of the population. The sector is low-commercialised, with 62% of farm households producing only for their own consumption, 34% producing for both their own consumption and commercial sale, and only 4% producing solely for commercial sale (World Bank Databank). Agribusiness has very little added value and very few formal private sector businesses. In contrast to organised large-scale imported goods (rice), the majority of local agricultural products are marketed through informal channels.

Esteem chain improvement of key agro-wares is a public need, highlighting advancement of agri-business and agro handling; remaking and rejuvenating the rural market framework through cooperatives and ware trades; a mechanism for quality assurance to improve access to export markets; expanded creation and efficiency utilising maintainable land and water the executives practices to address craving and food security needs; and promoting climate-smart agriculture as a means of strengthening rural resilience (National Development Plan: 2018 - 2021).

Gambia's horticulture is somewhat undiversified, chiefly smallholder-based and described by downpour that took care of resource crop creation. The primary yields are groundnuts, rice, millet, maize sorghum, and cashew; as well as more escalated development of foods grown from the ground. Groundnuts and early millet are the foundation of the local economy in the

rest of the country, whereas fruit and vegetable production dominates in the Western Region of the Country and the western fringes of NBR. Despite the fact that groundnuts are delivered, and animals raised in every one of the locales, rice creation becomes the overwhelming focus in the Focal Districts ~ Lower Waterway and Focal Stream Locales. Groundnuts, rice, maize, late millet, sorghum, cowpeas, and some early millet comprise the wellspring of neighbourhood jobs in Eastern Locale of The Gambia.

Low productivity and marketing restrictions, among other limitations, are worsening household purchasing power in the agricultural sector. Utilisation of conventional low input, low output (LILO) production methods is one of these obstacles. This prompts insufficient earnings of smallholder farmers, low intensity of privately created agro-products against less expensive imports.

Indeed, the sector is constrained by a variety of factors, including inadequate institutional support services, adverse climate conditions, and a high reliance on foreign aid (food, capital, and production inputs, etc.). Inadequate labour, a decline in soil fertility, inadequate management of land and water resources, rising global commodity prices, and inadequate domestic policies to promote the functions of the value chain: creation, total, handling and showcasing. There is a fertiliser subsidy program, but it does not appear to reach the majority of farmers.

Frail limit of farmer associations, failing to meet expectations support foundations that convey fundamental administrations of augmentation and money (credit), and restricted admittance to showcase data; poor country foundation (feeder streets) restricting admittance to business sectors are key hindrances to farming turn of events. In general, Gambia's agriculture sector lacks the economies of scale necessary to encourage and attract investment in the various commodities value chains, particularly in mechanised farming, which would expand production areas and increase productivity. Inadequate transportation and market infrastructure, inadequate storage facilities for major agro-commodities, high levels of aflatoxin contamination in groundnuts, low levels of application of food safety management systems along the value chains, poor adherence to Sanitary and Phyto–Sanitary (SPS) conditions, and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) are additional contributors to the low performance of the value chains.

The change from a dominatingly resource (LILO) to a business and differentiated (High Info High Result - HIHO) agribusiness area will fundamentally add to Gambia's financial development. Notwithstanding, low and unusual degree of farming result incites cost unpredictability that adversely influences the rural business sectors and makes creation and cost gambles, which are horrible to expanded speculation. Crops and livestock value chains are primarily market-oriented and supply-based. Post-harvest practices must be improved, value-added processing must be implemented, and quality standards must be met in order for agro-commodities to be commercialised. enhancing and expanding trade opportunities and links in the market chain; as well as fortifying and advancing linkages among key foundations and entertainers along the worth chains of the chosen agro products.

Except for the groundnut mill in Saaro, which attracts some private investment for oil extraction, The Gambia has few industrial processing facilities for major crops. NGOs and some global advancement accomplices gave nearby networks cereal (rice, millet, and maize) processing offices through their mainstreamed orientation programs. Both Kuntaur and Jahally Madina's industrial rice mills are no longer in operation. At Banjulinding, a tomato processing plant has been established. At the moment, their primary raw material is imported tomato pulp. There is one abattoir in Abuko, and there are a few milk-handling offices throughout the nation, albeit the larger part is broken.

In The Gambia, cashew exports may surpass groundnut exports in the near future. Gambia National Export Strategy 10,000 MT of Crude Cashew Nut (RCN) are created yearly lately, and more than 100,000 MT of RCN are created in Guinea Bissau and Senegal, yet traded from Banjul's port. In 2013, cashew exports were estimated to have a total value of $5.3 million. Trade values have been fluctuating somewhere in the range of 2012 and 2015, showing a declining pattern down to USD 2.3 million out of 2016 because of falling world market prices (GoTG, 2018). Due to a lack of export markets, weak local demand, and insufficient financing for processing, cashew kernels are typically exported primarily as raw products. Annual processing of Gambia's cashew is estimated to be between 5 and 10 MT, or 0.2%. There is only one processing unit in the industry, with a capacity of more than 1,000 MT per year, and a few smaller factories. The Joint neighbourhood handling limit is assessed at 3,000 MT each year.

Transportation of rural products is a fundamental capability of the farming worth chain. The Gambia's major roads are generally in good shape, but feeder roads are in bad shape, making it hard for farmers to get to markets and inputs. The secondary/feeder road network, which consists of approximately 2,500 kilometres, is underfunded, poorly managed, and in "poor condition" (World Bank, 2019). The main trunk road network has about 800 kilometres, of which 80% are paved. Deficient capital interest in horticulture obliged commercialization of the area. Due to high interest rates, financing options are few and far between. Such exorbitant loan fees joined by high guarantee necessities have been restricting accessibility of money for private interest in the useful areas. Additionally, financial institutions claimed to be unaware of the requirements and dangers of agriculture financing. There are no organised non-bank finance companies with the connections and ability to lend money to farmers. Exchange The Gambia has been confronting difficulties connecting with market size, powerful nearby interest, fluctuating item costs, and undiversified item and product base.

However, the country's unique location at the mouth of the main navigable river in West Africa, which gave it a vibrant entrepôt trade, presents enormous opportunities for the expansion of agricultural trade. Banjul port is small compared to larger peers (particularly Dakar) but perceived to be more efficient. While liberal trade policies and duty arbitrage attracted neighbouring countries to patronise Gambia’s re-export trade, but the Economic Community West African States (ECOWAS) Common External Tariff (CET) eliminated that opportunity. Nonetheless, The Gambia’s location, good trunk road infrastructure, and inland waterways is still providing natural advantages for trade with neighbouring countries in the sub-region which are not optimally exploited.

1.11 The Performance of the agricultural Sector in the Gambia

The agriculture of Gambia is largely smallholder-based, relatively undiversified, and characterised by the production of rain-fed subsistence crops. The fundamental yields are groundnuts, rice, millet, maize sorghum, and cashew; as well as more intensive vegetable and fruit cultivation. Groundnuts and early millet are the foundation of the local economy in the rest of the country, whereas fruit and vegetable production dominates in the Western Region of the Country and the western fringes of NBR. Despite the fact that groundnuts are created, and domesticated animals raised in every one of the locales, rice creation becomes the dominant focal point in the Focal Districts ~ Lower Stream and Focal Waterway Districts. Groundnuts, rice, maize, late millet, sorghum, cowpeas, and some early millet comprise the wellspring of nearby vocations in Eastern District of The Gambia.

There are various impediments in the horticulture area including low efficiency and showcasing requirements that are deteriorating family buying powers. Utilisation of conventional low input, low output (LILO) production methods is one of these obstacles. Smallholder farmers' incomes suffer as a result, and locally produced agro products are less competitive against cheaper

imports. Indeed, the sector is constrained by a variety of factors, including inadequate institutional support services, adverse climate conditions, and a high reliance on foreign aid (food, capital, and production inputs, etc.). Inadequate labour, a decline in soil fertility, inadequate management of land and water resources, rising global commodity prices, and inadequate domestic policies to promote the functions of the value chain: creation, conglomeration, handling and promoting. There is a fertiliser subsidy program, but it does not appear to reach the majority of farmers.

1.12 Conditions of the agricultural ecosystem in the Gambia

The country has an agricultural economy, with more than half of the 558,000 ha of arable land used for agricultural production each year. There are three particular Agro-Natural Zones (AEZs) in the nation to be specific: AEZ1, AEZ2, and AEZ3 which are exposed to broad land corruption related with deforestation, desertification, and loss of biodiversity. They traverse administrative regions by following the river Gambia. These agro-ecological zones are used for the production of livestock and agricultural crops.

1.13 Impact of climate variability on agricultural practice in the Gambia

The Gambia with its Sahelian environment has been encountering progressively whimsical precipitation designs, higher power storms, intra-occasional dry season and expanding temperatures, guided by intermittent virus spells and intensity waves. The Second Public Correspondence (SNC) to the Unified Countries Structure Show on Environmental Change (UNFCCC); By 2020, GoTG predicted an average annual rainfall of 800 millimetres or more. Notwithstanding, by 2100 the same records project normal precipitation of under 500 mm each year, meaning progressive dry season for a long time by 2100. The country's potential for agricultural production will undoubtedly suffer as a result. It is also anticipated that there will be more variation in the amount and distribution of rainfall in some parts of the country. This could lead to more extreme flood events, such as flash floods, which would be made worse by the country's inadequate infrastructure for water management and planning.

In the Gambia, climate change and variability have had and will continue to have a significant impact on the country's economy. Since more than 98% of agricultural land is irrigated by rain, the agricultural industry is extremely susceptible to variation in rainfall (National Climate Change Policy of the Gambia, 2017). Major crops' yields fluctuate by as much as one hundred percent annually. According to GoTG (2003), low utilisation of improved technology, declining soil fertility and climate variability are to blame for the significant decline in these crops' productivity. Crops like millet, groundnut, and maize's productivity are expected to be hampered by an additional decrease in rainfall quantity and distribution as temperatures rise.

The Gambia is one of the country’s most vulnerable to climate change due to its low elevation, excessive reliance on subsistence rain-fed agriculture, inadequate drainage, and storm management systems, and high demand for rural to urban migration. This weakness is because of far reaching neediness and restricted ability to fabricate protection from the impacts of such changes. Many households are highly susceptible to the whims of the present and future climate changes due to their limited access to resources for adapting to changing lifestyles, particularly regarding food supplies.

1.14 Soil types and agricultural practices

On normal an expected 320,000ha (57 percent of the all-out arable place that is known for 558,000 ha) was developed yearly from 2000 to 2010 of which grains comprise around 51.6percent with the excess 48.4 percent under cash crop oil seeds (in particular groundnut

and sesame). However, during the 2018 farming season, the amount of cultivated land decreased significantly, with an estimated 232,270 ha accounting for approximately 41.6 percent of the total arable land cultivated in the country (Department of Planning Unit, 2019). Cereal cultivation received more attention (approximately 75 percent) while cash crop oil seeds received the remaining 25 percent. Partner meetings indicate that almost 70 percent of these horticultural grounds are corrupted, and desertification has turned into a major ecological danger, especially in the North Bank Locale (NBR) and Focal Waterway District North (CRR/N). The cut across strolls in certain networks commonly found differing creation of land cover with broadened dry terrains, especially networks in NBR, CRRN and Upper Stream District (URR), of which land comprises parched, semiarid and dry sub-muggy regions.

1.15 Agricultural Lands in The Gambia

Most agricultural grounds have indications of debasement demonstrating extremely unfortunate plant development. Siltation, salt intrusion, intensive land use, deforestation, nutrient mining, and salt mining are major contributors to extensive degradation, which is evident in the form of gully erosion. The upland watershed biological systems are annihilated by various ravines brought about by high water spill overs; while flowing wetlands are debased to a great extent because of siltation and salt interruption. In all of the regions, erosion was one of the most prevalent indicators of degradation. The continuous deforestation is changing neighbourhood microclimatic conditions, disturbing local area weakness to environmental change occasions.

Crop-related activities are thought to be responsible for an average of 45% of community land degradation; 25% are brought on by annual forest fires; 15 percent brought about by overgrazing; what's more, 10 percent by vegetation expulsion for extending settlements, and another 5 percent by over-exploitation of the land (fuel-wood assortment).

The World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF) conducted a baseline survey in 2018 for the Large-scale Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) Project in The Gambia. The findings confirmed that intensive land use (94.3%), erosion and flooding (67.54%), and salt intrusion (4.8%) are the primary causes of farmland degradation in rural The Gambia. The driving elements of land debasement were viewed as complicated, among which are biophysical causes (counting geology that decides soil disintegration danger and climatic circumstances, like precipitation and temperature) and land use change. Land corruption has turned into a basic issue in the undertaking networks, particularly in NBR, which is truly undermined by desertification.

For the most part, land is gained through legacy in the networks. According to the findings of the ICRAF baseline survey conducted in 2018, rural households hold relatively large amounts of land in comparison to other African nations with high population densities. With a median land area of 5.27 ha per household, URR is found to be the most populous, followed by CRR-N with 4.86 ha. In CRR-S and LRR, household landholdings are relatively lower, at 3.65 and 2.45 ha, respectively.

1.16 Regulatory frameworks

Over the previous two decades, the Government of the Gambia had implemented plans, policies, and regulatory frameworks with the goal of increasing food, nutrition, and income security without harming the environment through agricultural diversification. As of late, there has been more emphasis on the improvement of the whole worth chains across the area. Despite these designing strategy structures, the slow pace of execution of the rural area versus populace development has brought about huge disintegration of the ideal approaches.

The food subsector in particular has seen a persistent decline in yields. As a result, the country now relies on imports for approximately half of its needs. Rice imports cost GMD 84 million in 1994 and GMD 1.923 billion in 2014 (CIF value), while other non-rice imports of locally produced food products cost GMD 115 million in 1995 and GMD 1.716 billion in 2015(ANR Policy, 2017-26). The overarching goals of agriculture sector policies at the macro level were to create a more favourable environment for producers, which will lead to increased production, productivity, employment, and incomes. This means creating conditions that will encourage small-scale farmers and operators-especially women and young people—to produce more efficiently and generate surplus for the market in the Gambia, where small-holder farming operations are prevalent. This is a crucial step on the way to implementing the broader agricultural transformation program.

At the micro level, policies haven't given small-scale farmers and ranchers enough opportunities to produce more food, cash crops, and livestock products to support a viable value chain. This was because of the way that information on these potential open doors was deficient, as the important data or information were not accessible or promptly available, and were not connected to choices for development in unambiguous cultivating/creation frameworks or other nearby drives. Consequently, the majority of farmers and operators continue to employ traditional farming practices, which are harmful to the integrity of the environment. These techniques, as has been illustrated, are at this point not satisfactory to adapt to the expanded tension of the populace in the area, and consequently, the assumptions for working on day-to-day environments for most of the populace have not yet been understood.

The current Agricultural Policy is based on the development of a market-led, commercialised, effective, competitive, and dynamic agricultural sector in accordance with sustainable development and environmental preservation for future generations. The primary means of effecting change will be the sector's intervention rationalisation and structural transformation. As the sector progresses along the path of industrialization, it will be able to benefit from and contribute to the economy's growth and development thanks to this process of change. The Policy's overarching goal is to increase food, income, and nutrition security while simultaneously reducing poverty by making the most of the sector's resources while preserving the integrity of the environment (ANR Policy 2017-2026).

Generally speaking, the key target of the Gambia's Agricultural Change Program (ATP) is to upgrade financial development through expanded commitment of the horticulture area to the public economy. This cycle is moored to the procedure for Horticultural Change in Africa (2016-2025), underlining linkages between the AfDB High-5's and furthermore to increase the Bank's 10-Year Methodology (2013 - 2022). The ATP's specific goal is to define a sector investment plan that helps improve agriculture production in order to achieve long-term food security, lessen malnutrition, and maintain a cereal import balance. In accordance with the Feed Africa initiative and to guarantee a program of high quality, the formulation of the program fell within the scope of viable, bankable, and sound proposals. The ATP is organised around four vital program parts: Support for production and productivity, market competitiveness through promotion of value chains, youth employment in agriculture, and coordination, management, monitoring, and evaluation of ATP Critical commodity value chains and suitable program target areas capable of mobilising the agricultural transformation's enablers were identified in the studies.

Millet and Maize assume basic parts in customary family food and nourishment security among Gambian families, with gigantic possibilities for food import replacement. The two products are dry spell safe with incredible possibilities to increment, on a supportable premise, the pay of local farmers, and worth chain business people (entertainers). Maize creation has diminished from 28,932 tons 2012 to 18.070 tons in 2018 as a consequence of low quality of seeds, powerless agronomic practices, unfortunate innovation reception and absence of admittance

to advertise data, as well as norms and quality affirmation conventions. Quality checks (such as grain quality, stored pests, and moisture levels) receive little attention. Public normal yield is 1.4 tons/ha1 far underneath the possible yields of 3-4.5 tons/ha typically acquired at on-station research fields and 8-12 tons/ha utilising cross breed seeds. In a similar vein, millet production has decreased from 88,663 Mt in 2013 to 30,590 Mt in 2018 due to climate variations, low application rates of inorganic fertilisers (high costs of fertilisers to supplement lost fertility), and poor soil fertility (soils typically lack the necessary nutrients).

Groundnut is the main source of foreign exchange for The Gambia, accounting for 30 per cent, and 50 per cent of the national food requirement (CCA 2015). It is widely spread in major production areas and serves as a traditional prevalent cash crop. It employs over 150,000 farmers, realising a total production of 109,780 MT in 20172. Gambia commercial groundnut dropped from 90,000 tons per annum in 1990s to less than 40% of these quantities (FAO VCA 2019). Presently the yield of HPS per ton of groundnuts on kernel basis is less than 20% compared to the industry norm that range from 40% to 60%. Groundnuts varieties being grown in the country are purely old stocks, (decades old) and have lost their genetic vigour resulting in low productivity and small kernel sizes. Export has also dropped 30,000 tons in 2001 to 18,000 in 2018 as result of high aflatoxin levels.

Horticulture (fruits and vegetables) especially mango, orange, banana, and paw-paw production and marketing has been a growing economic activity in The Gambia since 1999. It's an important source of food and cash income for producers and marketing agents. A study in 2013 estimated a total of 325 private orchards in the country, employing 34 percent of the adult population in both production and marketing. Mango is the largest economic fruit in The Gambia, with estimated production levels steadily growing from 25,000 Mt in 1998 to over 60,000 Mt in 2018 (FAO Value Chain Study, 2019).; and 40 percent of the produce being currently commercialised (World Bank, 2019). Actors in the vegetable value chain have limited access to market information, limited skills to investigate market opportunities and limited access to financial services. The quality of available inputs is not properly monitored affecting quality and effectiveness. Village based agro-dealers offer poor selection of pesticides and seeds that are often outdated, low skills and technologies.

Livestock farming contribute 7 percent of public Gross domestic product and 25-30 percent of horticultural Gross domestic product with greater part of ranchers being smallholders (DLS.GBOS 2016/2017 Livestock Census). The general interest of meat expanded from 34,751 metric tons to 54,931 metric tons. In 2017, the absolute yearly nearby meat creation/yield was assessed at 11,995 Metric tons. There are 34 butcher offices circulated all through the nation however only one of them is delegated an abattoir. The transcendent creation framework in The Gambia is the low information means framework portrayed by high illness rate, bad quality feed, high pervasion of gastrointestinal worms, and unfortunate choice and unfortunate mating rehearses which results in rearing. Admittance to veterinary medications and immunizations at region level is poor. The majority of the confidential veterinary medication outlets are situated in metropolitan regions. There are Deficient quantities of veterinarians in the public help, with just 2 at present in assistance and there is absence of strategy on confidential veterinarians.

In 2016, the quantity of feed factories was assessed to be four. In 2019, none of these feed plants will be functional. In 2019, there is just a single feed factory (GamHolland Undertaking) presently working in The Gambia. There are 3 incubators in the country with the ability to create 995,400-Day-old Chicks. Be that as it may, they were creating just 3% of the limit. The low use of incubation facilities is brought about by inaccessibility of parent stock in the Gambia.

Youth constitute about 72% of the Gambian population and over the years the country has witnessed the proliferation of various organisations ranging from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to government institutions and government supported programs, private

sector initiatives, training, and research institutions providing services to youths in agro-related projects. There are only a few of these institutions implementing youth agro-related projects. The scope and level of specialisation especially in relation to the various agricultural value-chains are limited. Students do not have access to relevant and practical training opportunities and learning materials to enable them to acquire adequate skills and knowledge for self-employment. The Gambia youth are further constrained by inadequate access to finance and investment resources, Limited capacities of incubation centres, Weak training curricula for youth in agriculture (poor practical facilities), inadequate oversight and coordination mechanisms (FSQA, NSS & NAQAA) and inappropriate land administration procedures and tenure system. There are over 10 public-private-partnership models on-going in The Gambia. However, PPP has been constrained by inability of local private sector partners to raise large amounts of capital required to build the necessary infrastructure; limited sources of accessing large funds for investment, high interest rates; making the cost of capital expensive. Political interference by Government and Bureaucratic process, Inadequate Policy and Regulatory measures to enhance coordination, monitoring, and supervision, Poor institutional framework at all levels of the value chain, Weak incentives for partnership and limited Matching funds for PPP constraint PPP formation.

The Gambia Rural Change Program (GATP) is planned with a visionto utilise comprehensive farming and agribusiness ground breaking for monetary development. Key targets are to make Gambia independent in the key worth chains, make employment for youth and women, stimulate private sector investment, promote value addition, and accelerate wealth creation and position Gambian agriculture to be climate resilient.

1.17 Assessment of existing youth agro-related projects

The country has seen a rise in the number of organisations that help youth participate in agro-related projects. The mix of organisations includes NGOs, government institutions and programs supported by the government, private sector initiatives, training facilities, and research institutions. Likewise, their areas of centre differ and here and there cross-over but in a reciprocal way. The organisations participating in some kind of youth entrepreneurship support program are summarised in the table below, along with their mandates, year of establishment, coverage, and reach over the past ten years.

Table 1: Youth and women entrepreneurship support programmes/Institutions

No	Name of youth entrepreneurship support program	Year established	Area of focus	Coverage by region	Current operational status
1	Youth Empowerment program (YEP}	2017	Youth empowerment training, financing and development	Nationwide	Operational on a project basis
2	Gambia Songhai Initiative GSI	2015	Agriculture, agribusiness training and support	NBR, CRR, and LRR	Operational but needs replication to other areas
3	Njawara Agricultural Training Centre (NATC}	1997	Training on sustainable farming systems	NBR	Functional
4	National Youth service scheme (NYSS}	1999	Training on livelihood skills, entrepreneurship, and Agric skills	Nationwide	Functional
5	Presidents International Award	1978	Youth empowerment skills training and leadership	Greater Banjul Area	Functional but need support
6	National enterprise development initiative (NEDI}	2004	Training in agribusinesses, entrepreneurship, and business planning	Countrywide	Operational
7	Global youth innovation network Gambia chapter (GYIN}	2012	Training in agribusiness, entrepreneurship & leadership & ICT	Nationwide	Operational

8	University of The Gambia (UTG)	1999	Higher education in Agric, ICT, business & engineering	Nationwide	Operational
9	The Food Safety and Quality Authority of The Gambia (FSQA)	**2011**	Regulation of safety & quality regarding food commodities	Nationwide	Operational
10	Rural Development Institute (RDI)	1979	Rural Dev., Agricultural & livelihood skills	Nationwide	Operational
11	Gambia College of Agriculture		Agriculture extension training	Nationwide	Operational
12	Gambia Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Agriculture and Employers' Association (GCCI)	**1967**	Business advocacy, entrepreneurship & management training	Nationwide	Operational
13	The National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI)	**1993**	Agricultural research and technology transfer	Nationwide	Operational
14	National Women's Federation, The Gambia	2010	Empowering women in enterprise particularly in various agriculture commodity value chains	Nationwide including women from The Diaspora.	Operational
15	Women's Enterprise Fund (WEF)	2019	Entrepreneurship & enterprise dev., & access to finance	Nationwide	Operational

Source: Gambia Agriculture Transformation Programme 2020-2030 Final Report

2 Project Summary

The AGRO-YOUTH pilot project aims to improve the entrepreneurial skills and knowledge/capacity of youth and women in the agri-food sector. Considering the above-mentioned potential opportunities and challenges facing youth and women in The Gambia. The impact of the AGRO-YOUTH project is based on a market-oriented approach to improve the skills and employability of youth and women already working in the agri-food sector. Through gender equality and the empowerment of women, sustainable agri-food systems are created.

The project contributes ***to Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*** and the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),** in particular Goals 2 (Zero Hunger), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality) and 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production).

The AGRO-YOUTH pilot project is being implemented in the West Coast Region (WCR). The West Coast Region (WCR) of The Gambia is one of the five administrative divisions of the country. The success of the project depends on collaboration with various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, private sector companies and community organisations. Collaboration with local communities will ensure the relevance and sustainability of the project, while the involvement of industry stakeholders will facilitate job placement and linkages with the market for trained youth. Therefore, different stakeholder groups are involved in the activities.

2.1 Project objectives and target group

Project goals:

- Improving the production capacities of young people and in particular women in the agricultural sector

- Promoting innovation and value creation in agriculture among young people and particularly women.

In order to increase the incentive for young people and women in general to continue working in agriculture, the project focuses on the interface between agriculture and entrepreneurship and specifically promotes entrepreneurship skills

Target groups

The main target group of the AGRO-YOUTH project are young people up to the age of 35, with a particular focus on young people and women who are already working in the agricultural and food sector in the WCR region of The Gambia. Other target groups are vocational school teachers and representatives of educational institutions and bodies, including ministries.

2.2 Project Implementing Partners

The project will be jointly implemented by BGZ Berliner Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit mbH, which is a joint institution by the State of Berlin and the Berlin Chamber of Crafts supporting international development and cooperation, The Landesstelle zur Förderung gewerblicher Berufe in Entwicklungsländern a training organisation affiliated with the Berlin Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family and the Collective Action for Sustainable Development (CASD) in The Gambia a registered non-governmental organisation in The Gambia committed to collective action in the pursuit and realisation of sustainable human development and the fulfilment of human rights. CASD aims to ensure effective mobilisation and coordination of collective action by various stakeholders and individuals to improve the standard of living, well-being and sustainability of life on earth by reducing the impact of climate change through the protection and conservation of the environment. The project is funded by the State Office for Development Cooperation, Berlin (LEZ).

2.3 Purpose of the Study

The CNA activity aims to conduct a situational analysis by assessing the determinants, opportunities and challenges of agro-food entrepreneurship in the WCR target region. The assessment will also provide understanding and recommendations on the type of interventions, capacity development and proposed solutions to promote and improve agro-food entrepreneurship, especially for youth and women in The Gambia. In this regard, the purpose of this activity is to conduct an in-depth social case study to provide relevant results and data that will guide the implementation of this project. The study will also be made available to all relevant stakeholders, thus contributing to the growing body of knowledge and data on agri-food entrepreneurship in The Gambia. The results of the CNA will also inform the development of the Agro-Food Entrepreneur Training Guide/Module, the Training of the Trainer concept and guidance for the Tech Workshop on Entrepreneurship Training.

2.4 Scope of Work

The Community Needs Assessment (CNA) will be conducted by a team of data collectors and thus, the lead researcher will facilitate the research process on behalf of the CASD. The survey design will be developed by the partners BGZ, CASD and the Landesstelle, while the results are analysed and reported by a lead facilitator on behalf of CASD. The scope of work of the lead research for this assignment includes the following:

4. Develop a robust methodology for data collection and analysis that grounds the community Needs Assessments to inform prospective training and development of agri-food entrepreneurs.

5. The Lead researcher will work with field data collectors and enumerators, provide strategic guidance, and collate and analyse the data as well as lead in the presentation and validation of the report.
6. Conduct a needs assessment of the Agri-entrepreneurship with consideration of situation analysis and identification of constraints and opportunities for growth and development in agri-foods industry in the WCR
7. Conduct stakeholder mapping and consultations to understand, obtain, and analyse qualitative and quantitative data relevant to stakeholders and partners.
8. Develop strategies with clear deliverables, indicators, and tools that address the constraints and challenges to enhance Agri-entrepreneurship and the agri-foods industry in the WCR.
9. Conduct capacity gap analysis and assessment to guide the implementation of skills entrepreneurship training and mentorship programs in agro foods entrepreneurship in WCR.

2.5 Specific Task

1. Conduct a literature review of policies and documents relevant to the understanding of agricultural entrepreneurship and skills training and development including opportunities and constraints for skill requirements and training methods within the context of agribusiness in the food sector in WCR.
2. Review existing national strategies/actions, laws, and policies on agriculture and agri-business entrepreneurship.
3. Design evaluation framework and plan including related data collection tools and analytics – _consultant is responsible for cleaning of raw-to-identified datasets including recoding and standardising variables.
4. Develop a comprehensive methodology and work plan for a participatory process with a view of achieving support from stakeholders and partners, which includes data collections, consultations and facilitating interviews with relevant stakeholders including, but not limited to, Government, donors and development partners, the private sector, and civil society NGOs.
5. Finalise and submit the CNA report, including the capacity gap analysis, log-frame and detailed implementation plan through entrepreneurship skill training and mentorships programs after incorporating feedback in the draft report, and that includes visualising of relevant/key results (graphs, charts etc.).

3 Methodology, Approaches and Processes

In line with the objective of the exercise, this study used a mix of qualitative research methods to conduct needs assessment of the Agri-entrepreneurship in the WCR with consideration of situation analysis and identification of constraints and opportunities for growth and development in the agri-food industry. The study drew information from both secondary and primary sources at national and regional levels. It was divided into two parts. The first part was an extensive desk review/research and the second involves primary data collection including survey of agriculture related entrepreneur businesses with the help of stakeholder of three youth development organisations in the WCR namely Foni Ding Ding Federation, Saama Kairo Federation, Ding Ding Yirwa Federation and the Gambia College.

3.1 Desk Research.

To conduct needs assessment of youth Agri-entrepreneurship in the WCR of The Gambia, the study conducted an extensive review of secondary literature including existing national strategies/actions, laws, and policies on agriculture and agri-business entrepreneurship and

documents relevant to the understanding of agricultural entrepreneurship and skills training and development. It also included opportunities and constraints for skill requirements and training methods within the context of agribusiness in the food sector in WCR. The study reviewed website information of youth service providers and publications relevant to the topic.

3.2 Qualitative Survey

With the help of a questionnaire, this assessment used the services of the staff of Foni Ding Ding Federation (FDDF), Saama Kairo Federation (SKF), Ding Ding Yirwa Federation (DDYF) and staff of the Gambia College to identify Agric entrepreneurs in the WCR and collect additional information about the businesses and their ownership.

The scheduling of the survey in the districts was coordinated by Collective Action for Sustainable Development (CASD), in collaboration with the consultant. The consultant also prepared a survey questionnaire in collaboration with Collective Action for Sustainable Development (CASD).

3.3 Data Collection

The data for this assessment was collected by the staff of SKF, DDYF, FDDF and staff of the Gambia College acting as enumerators with the supervision of a CASD. The survey questions were uploaded on Google forms, an electronic data collection software. Google forms with questionnaires were downloaded on tablets and mobiles by the enumerators. Where the tablets were not functional enough or available, the form was downloaded to the mobile phones of the enumerators who signed a data protection agreement with CASD to ensure all data stored in personal phones were deleted at the end of the exercise.

Before collecting the data, the enumerators went through a comprehensive day training session where they were guided through each question, its specific meaning, and what to consider when asking study participants those questions. Survey tools were pre-tested before the enumerators were sent into the communities to start the actual data collection. Since the larger part of WCR tends to have internet connectivity challenges, electronic data collection was the most suitable for the majority of the districts covered by this study as it allows for an offline, real-time submission of data. Because of its built-in entry restrictions, skip patterns/logic, and constraints, electronic data collection reduces interviewer-induced response entry errors and at the same time allows for the collection of better-quality data.

3.4 Data cleaning

The raw data were provided to the consultant in Excel format. The consultant was responsible primarily for data cleaning. The datasets from the field were sent to the consultant by CASD. Before cleaning, data was downloaded from the email in Excel file format. Excel was used to clean and analyse the data. While cleaning the data, the consultant reviewed entries for raw files to check the completion rates, renamed all of the variables into a format that is acceptable in Excel, labelled all variables and then generated new variables as stated in the consultant's data analysis plan.

3.5 Data Analysis

As detailed in the analysis plan, data was analysed using a thematic approach. The Excel outputs were used by the consultant to compute the analysis tables which acted as a guide for this evaluation report. Analysis was disaggregated based on the questions and their relationships. Files that allow for the reproduction of findings were used to complete the analysis.

4 Profile of the of Agric-Entrepreneurs

The assessment identified six hundred and eighty-nine (689) agriculture related entrepreneurs in the West Coast Region (WCR) of The Gambia. WCR or the Brikama Local Government Area (LGA), is divided into nine districts, namely, Kombo East, Kombo Central, Kombo North/Saint Mary and Kombo South, Foni Bintang-Karenai, Foni Bondali, Foni Brefet, Foni Jarrol, and Foni Kansala. WCR shares borders with the Southern Senegalese region of Casamance on the South, Lower River Region on the East and Kanifing Municipal Area on the North and the River Gambia on the West. With a total area of 1764.3 km2, WCR, as per the 2013 census had a population of about 699,704 and a population density of 397 with a total number of households of45,396 as of 2003.

The share of youth aged 13-35 as per the 2013 census was 37.2 percent of the total population (females represent 52.8 percent and males, 47.2 percent) (National Youth Policy of The Gambia 2019-2028). WCR (Brikama) was one of the three Local Governments Areas (LGAs), that had higher youthful populations than the national average in 2013. This shows that youths were more concentrated in urban areas as opposed to rural areas. The 2013 census did not consider the new age bracket of 15 – 35 years (National Youth Policy of The Gambia 2019-2028), rather it maintained the definition of youth in the National Youth Policy 2009-2018 i.e., individuals within the age bracket of 13-30 years.

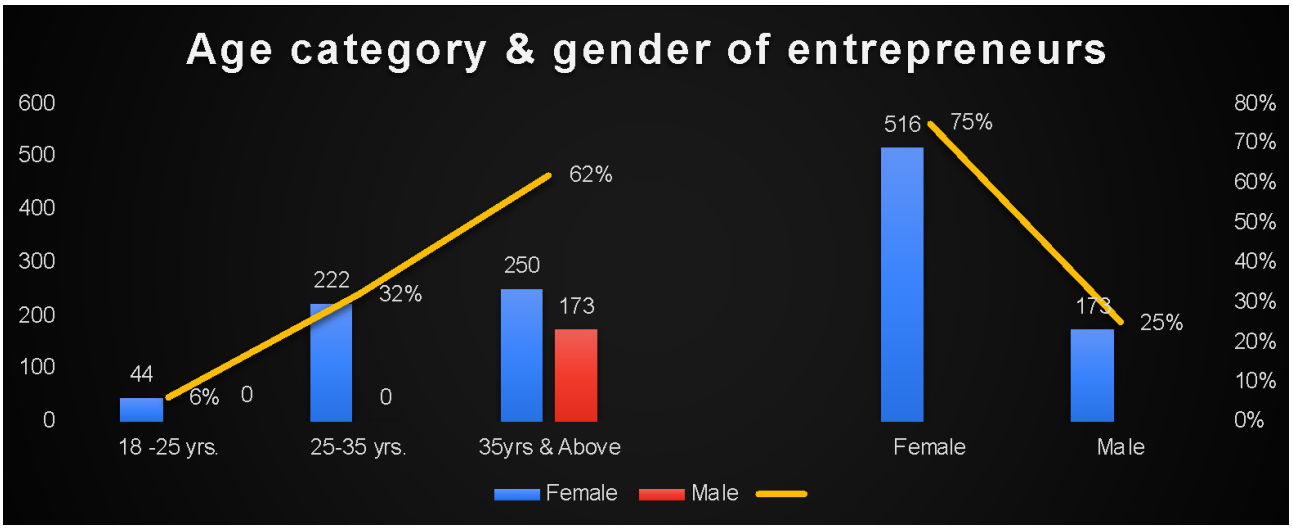
4.1 Age and gender of entrepreneurs

This section described the age categories and gender of entrepreneurs or business owners identified in the WCR. When quizzed about their age, the assessment found that the majority of the Agri entrepreneurs in the WCR were above the age category of youth as described in the National Youth Policy of The Gambia 2019-2028. National Youth Policy of The Gambia 2019-2028 defines youth as individuals within the age bracket of 15-35 years. The predecessor youth policy i.e., the National Youth Policy 2009-2018 refers to youth as individuals within the age bracket of 13-30 years.

Out of the six hundred and eighty-nine (689) agriculture related entrepreneurs identified, 75% were female and 25% male. The findings of this assessment confirmed the highlights of youth characteristics in the 2013 Census which shows a slightly more female youth than males. The 2013 Census showed that about 53% of the youth population were female and 47.2 % male.

Regarding the distribution of youth between urban and rural areas, the 2013 Census report showed that, youth are almost equally distributed with the urban areas harbouring 50.1% while 49.9% lived in the rural areas. Although due partly to sex selectivity of migration with males more likely to migrate than females, there were slightly more male youth living in the urban areas than female 63.0% and 60.3% respectively. Except for Banjul LGA where there were slightly more males than females, females out-numbered males across all ages and geographical location (The Gambia National Youth Policy -2019-2028, p.11). As illustrated in the chart, 62% of Agric entrepreneurs identified in the WCR were between the ages of 35 years and above. Only 38% (6% + 32%) of individuals were within the age bracket of 18-35 years.

Figure 1: Age category & gender of entrepreneurs



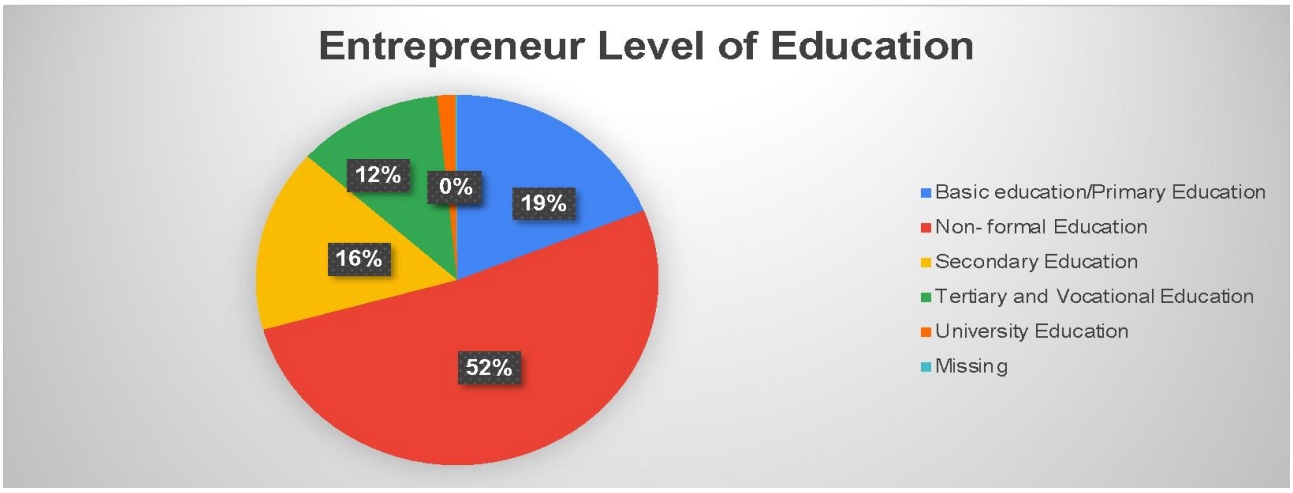
In terms of headcount, out of the six hundred and eighty-nine (689) identified agriculture related entrepreneurs/businesses in the WCR, the ownership of only 266 businesses (38%) can be associated to individuals within the national youth classification/categorisation while the rest would be considered as owned by adults. When we aggregated the findings based on age, the result shows that the 266 businesses (38%) of businesses in the WCR that can be associated with individuals within the national youth classification/categorisation (15-35 yrs.) were all owned by females. For instance, as it can be seen in the above chart, out of the six hundred and eighty-nine (689) agriculture related entrepreneurs identified, 6% (18-25yrs) and 32% (25-35yrs) are all owned by female, the total of which is 266 businesses. This shows that among the identified entrepreneurs in the WCR that are within the national youth classification/categorisation (15-35 yrs.) are all owned by females. Out of the 62% entrepreneurs within the age bracket of (35 and above) 250 were female and 173 males.

The AGRO-YOUTH pilot project cannot possibly work with all the identified youth businesses in the agricultural sector in the WCR. Therefore, since the target of AGRO-YOUTH pilot project is the younger generation (between the ages of 20-35) who have little interest in working in agriculture due to challenges related to entrepreneurial skills and knowledge/capacity deficiency in the agri-food sector including low financial returns, it is highly recommended that CASD leadership select its project participants from the 266 youth businesses (within the age bracket of 18-35 years). This is the age bracket (both men and women) that urgently needs training to meet the identified challenges so that they can remain in agriculture and secure a decent standard of living.

4.2 Entrepreneur Level of Education

In this section, the assessment looked at the level of education attained by the identified entrepreneurs in the WCR. In terms of the level of education attained by entrepreneurs, the assessment found that out of the six hundred and eighty-nine (689) agriculture related entrepreneurs, 52% of the identified entrepreneurs in the WCR did not attend formal education, and thus described as non-formal education. Also, only 19% completed primary/basic education, 16% secondary education and 12% tertiary and vocational education.

Figure 2: Entrepreneur level of education



Putting the findings into context, analysis of the educational attainment of the youth in the country, shows that overall, at the time of the census in 2013, 32.1% of the youth in The Gambia never attended school, 33% were going to school at the time of the census, and 34.9 percent attended in the past. While 16% attained primary education, 23% attended lower secondary and 24% reached upper secondary level (The-Gambia National Youth Policy -2019-2028, p.11). As reflected in the findings, in The Gambia those who have never attended school formed the larger part of the population followed by those currently going to school, and those who attended in the past.

The implication of these findings is that any intervention training or otherwise targeting the entrepreneurs in the WCR must factor in the literacy level of the programme participants for it to be effective and responsive to their needs. In case of training, trainers should not only be familiar with the sociocultural environment of the region but must be fluent in the widely spoken national languages in the region and be able to conduct training on them. Conducting training only in the English language would certainly not be impactful and at best fruitless.

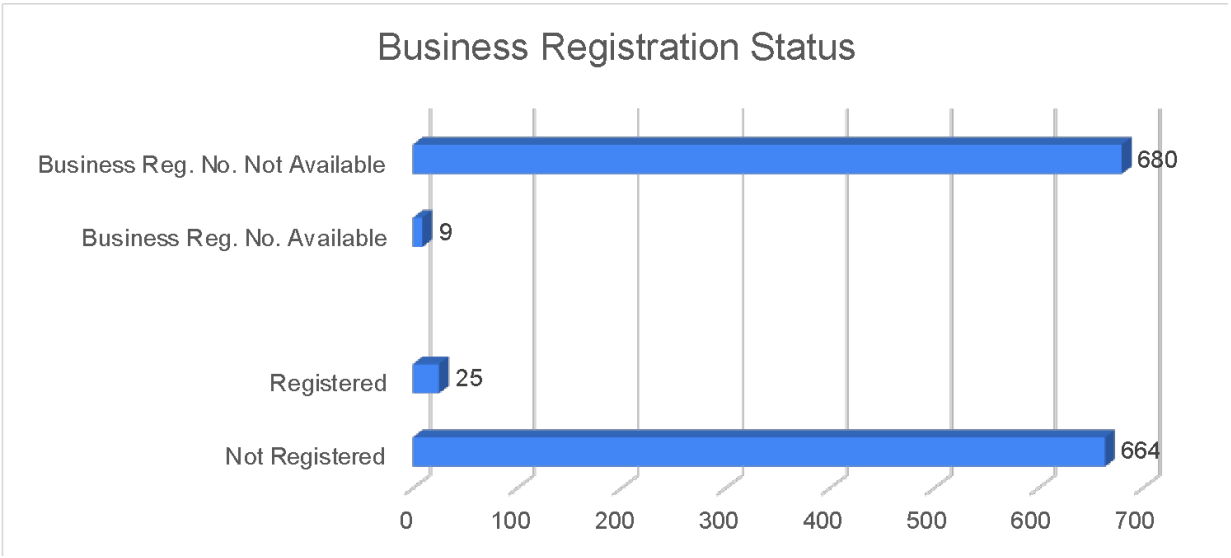
5 Agric-Entrepreneurship Businesses Profiles

This section described the profile of the identified agricultural related businesses in the WCR. Topics such as business registration, availability of business plan, product marketing and advertising methods, challenges entrepreneurs face in marketing products, financial records keeping and updating, types of business structures, employee count and longevity of businesses, category of businesses in the Agro-food sector, estimated profit margin (Annual turnover) of businesses in Gambian dalasi, sources of loans/grants for business in the region, the main reason for wanting/expecting changes/advances in agri-business and customers types in Agribusiness sector.

5.1 Business registration status

This section assessed the registration status of Agric related businesses in the WCR. Out of the six hundred and eighty-nine (689) agriculture related entrepreneurs recognised in the WCR only twenty-five (25) business owners confirmed that their businesses were registered, out of which only 9 could produce evidence of registration. This goes to show that the majority of businesses in the region especially those operating in the Agricultural sector have not registered their businesses despite the critical nature of business registration to any entrepreneur who runs a legitimate business.

Figure 3: Business registration status



Based on the findings, it would be of great importance to ensure a topic on the criticality of business registration is included in the design of any training programme for entrepreneurs in this region. The training curriculum must include the importance of business registration in terms of giving legitimacy and credibility to businesses, easy access to bank loans and grants, protection of intellectual property and liability protection among other advantages. It would be imperative to emphasise what having the necessary legal documents and certificates will mean in terms of making a business genuine in the eyes of potential customers, investors, and partners and the likelihood of approval for grants and bank loans, as lenders see them as more credible and trustworthy.

5.2 Business plan availability

This section assesses whether the identified businesses have business plans in place or not. The result shows that the majority of the identified businesses do not have a business plan to help entrepreneurs to make smart decisions and help them foresee potential challenges, identify opportunities, and set clear objectives for their businesses. Out of the six hundred and eighty-nine (689) identified businesses, only 19% confirmed having a business plan.

Figure 4: Business-plan availability

Having the majority of agro-businesses in the region not having a business plan means that majority of the entrepreneurs neither make smart decisions nor have any mechanism in place to help them foresee potential challenges, identify opportunities, or set clear objectives. Understanding the importance of a business plan to an entrepreneur especially in objective setting, predicting potential challenges and identifying opportunities, it would be imperative

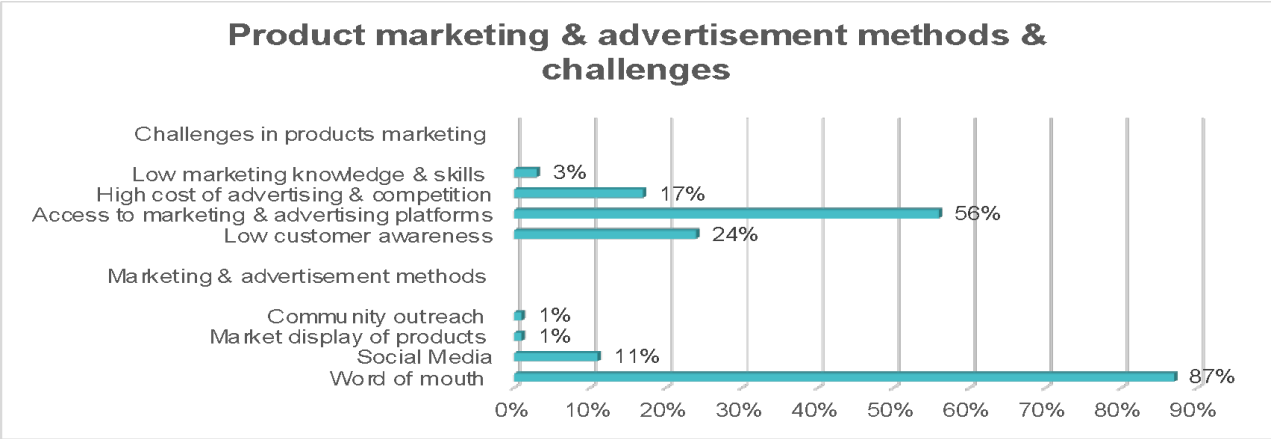
that interventions designed to support agro-businesses in the WCR include helping them on how to develop business plans or at least guide them in the process.

5.3 Product marketing & advertisement methods and challenges

This section discusses product marketing and advertising methods and challenges entrepreneurs face in marketing their product to reach wider customers in the WCR. The findings indicat that the frequently used product marketing and advertisements methods were the word of mouth. Word of mouth was used by 87% of the entrepreneurs followed by the use of social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok and Instagram) 11% and community outreach 1%.

Regarding the challenges entrepreneurs face in marketing their product to reach wider customers, majority of the entrepreneurs (56%) cited access to marketing and advertising platforms as a challenge followed by low customer awareness (24%), high cost of advertising and competition (17%) and 3% low marketing knowledge and skills.

Figure 5: Product marketing and advertisement and challenges



As a way of calling the attention of the public to something, typically a product or service, advertisement is a guaranteed method of reaching an audience to improve trade or boost brand recognition. Therefore, the fact that the only 11% of the entrepreneurs in the region have not been taking advantage of the modern fast and far-reaching methods of advertisement, it would be prudent to provide them with a training curriculum that would enlighten them on the advantages and the use of the different social media handles for their advertise needs. Training design also needs to have access to marketing and advertising platforms, awareness raising of customers, improvement of low marketing knowledge and skills and strategies on how entrepreneurs can navigate the high cost of advertising and competition as part of its curriculum.

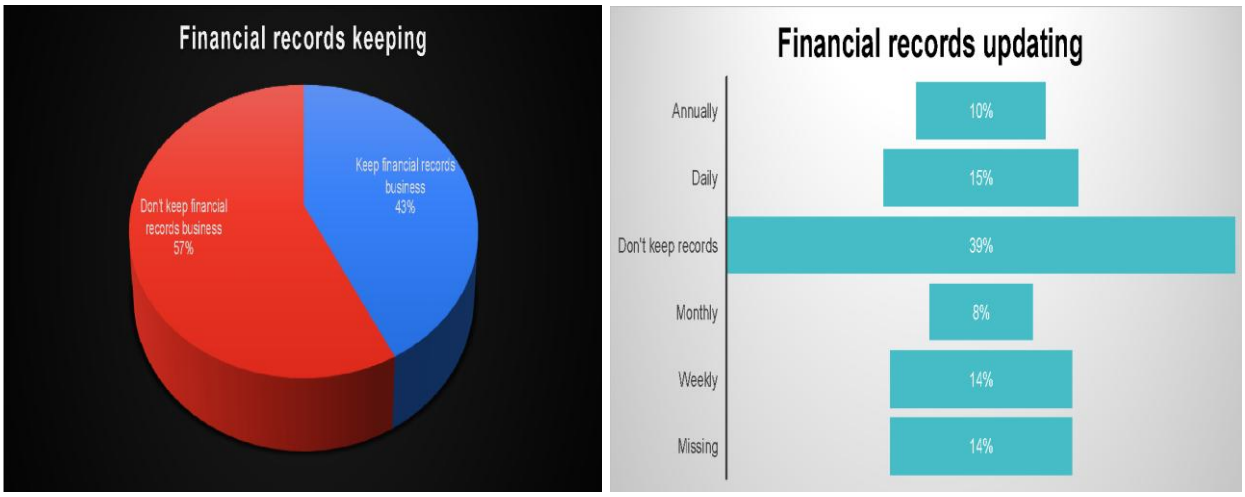
5.4 Financial records keeping and updating

This section analyses the keeping and updating of financial records by the identified entrepreneurs in the WCR. Keeping accurate and up-to-date records is fundamental to the success of any business in terms of minimising losses, managing cash, and meeting any legal, regulatory and taxation authority requirements. The findings show that 43% of the six hundred and eighty-nine (689) agriculture related entrepreneurs identified in the WCR confirmed keeping financial records for their businesses.

Again, out of six hundred and eighty-nine (689) agriculture related entrepreneurs identified in the WCR 15% confirmed updating their financial records daily, 14% weekly, 8% monthly and

10% annually. This suggests that there is a problem of financial record keeping and updating among entrepreneurs in the WCR.

Figure 6: Financial records keeping and updating

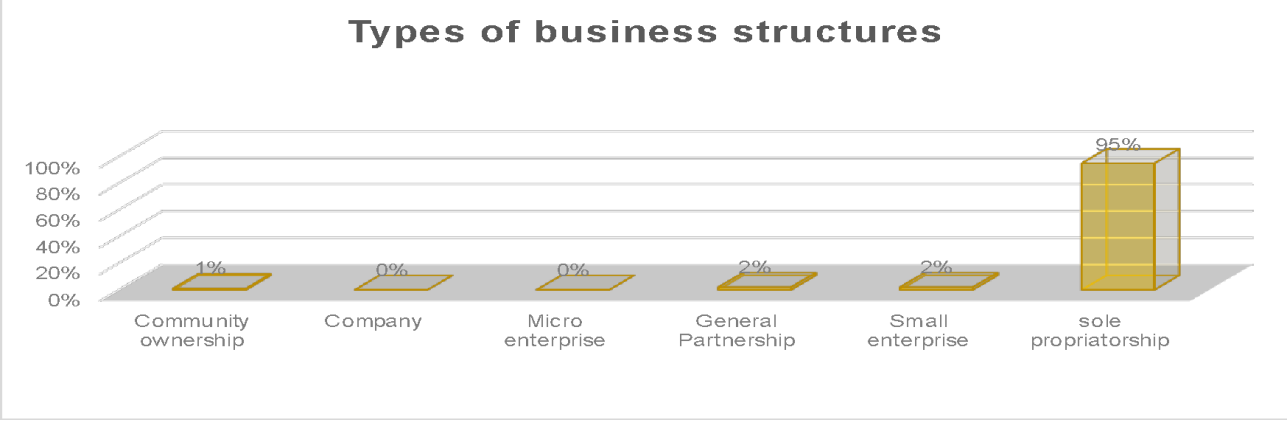


One can observe a contradiction when comparing the findings of the financial record keeping and financial record updating when it comes to record keeping. In responding to the question of financial record keeping 57% of the six hundred and eighty-nine (689) agriculture related entrepreneurs who were questioned confirmed that they don't keep records while in response to the question of the frequency of records updating 39% confirmed that they don't keep records.

5.5 Types of business structures

A business type is no mere administrative detail as the structure of a business determines things like corporate and personal taxes, and may alter its day-to-day operations. Also, the structure of a business doesn't only impact its financial liability, but affects its investment or funding options as well. Out of the six hundred and eighty-nine (689) agriculture related entrepreneurs in the West Coast Region of The Gambia, 95% were sole proprietorship businesses, 2% small enterprise, 2% general partnerships, and 1% community ownership businesses.

Figure 7: Types of business structures



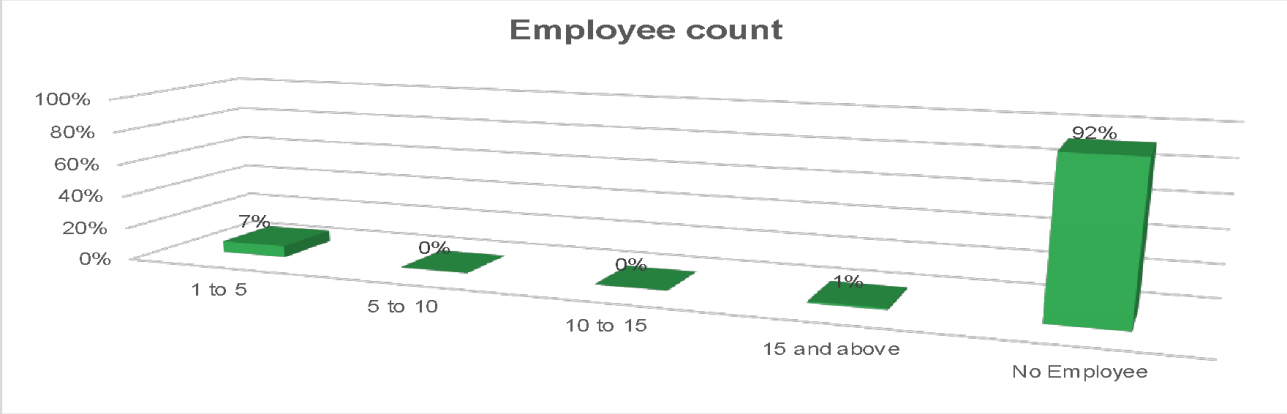
A sole proprietorship as the default business entity designation for anyone selling a service or product themselves is typically an unincorporated business entity owned and operated by a single individual. Small enterprises are privately owned corporations, partnership, or sole proprietorship with fewer employees and less annual revenue than a corporation or regular-

sized business. Microenterprise/microbusiness are small businesses employing fewer than 10 people while a company is a legal entity formed by a group of individuals to engage in and operate a business. Community ownership refers to a collective ownership business that community members or groups collectively own and manage.

5.6 Number of Employees

When questioned about the number of employees running the businesses, the assessment found that the majority of the agro businesses in the WCR did not have any employees. Out of the six hundred and eighty-nine (689) businesses identified 92% were run by an individual or a family. Only 7% of the businesses employed 1 to 5 people and only 1% employed 15 and above people in their businesses.

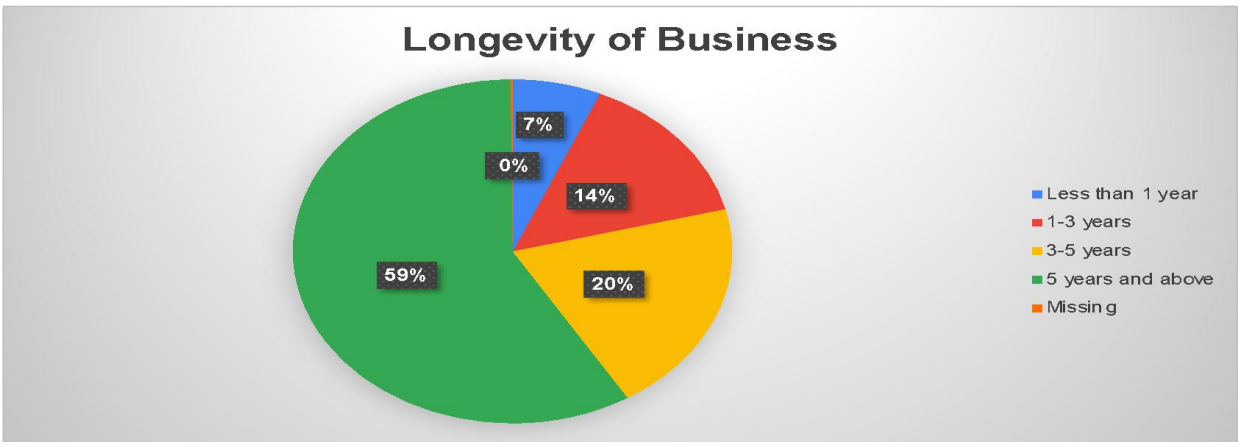
Figure 8: Number of employees



5.7 Longevity of Businesses

The assessment studied the number of years the identified businesses have been in operation. The findings show that the majority of the businesses (59%) have been operating for more than 5 years, 20% existed between 3 and 5 years, 14% between 1 and 3 years and 7% less than a year of existence.

Figure 9: Longevity of business

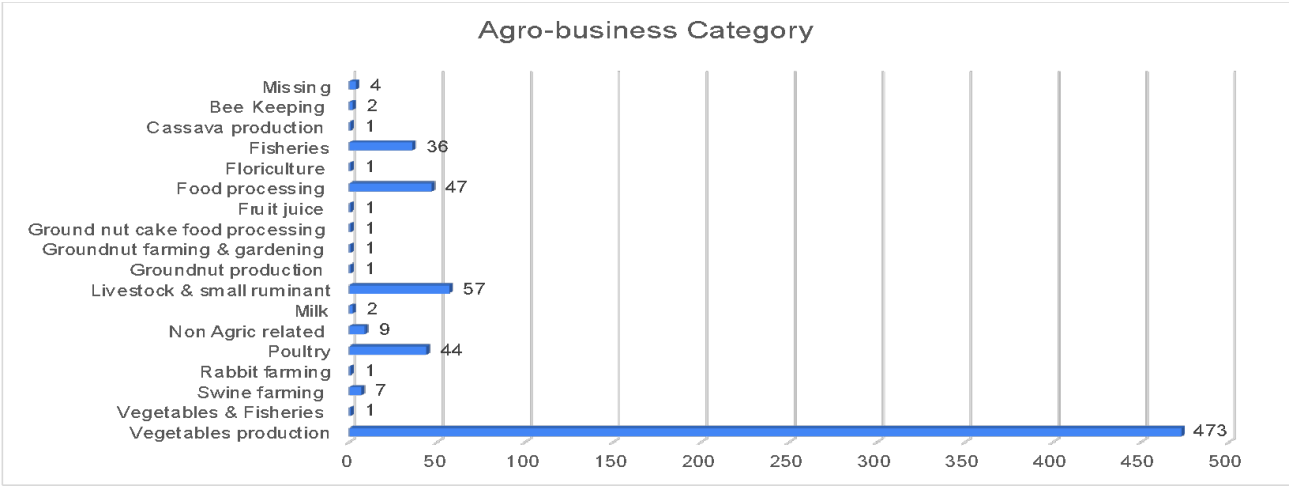


5.8 Business category in the Agro-food sector

The assessment studied the categories of the Agro-food sector the identified businesses fall in. In terms of the Agro-food sector category, vegetable gardening tops the list with four thousand and seventy-three (473) businesses. This is followed by fifty-seven (57) livestock and small

ruminant businesses and forty-seven (47) food processing business, forty-four (44) poultry and thirty-six (36) fisheries businesses.

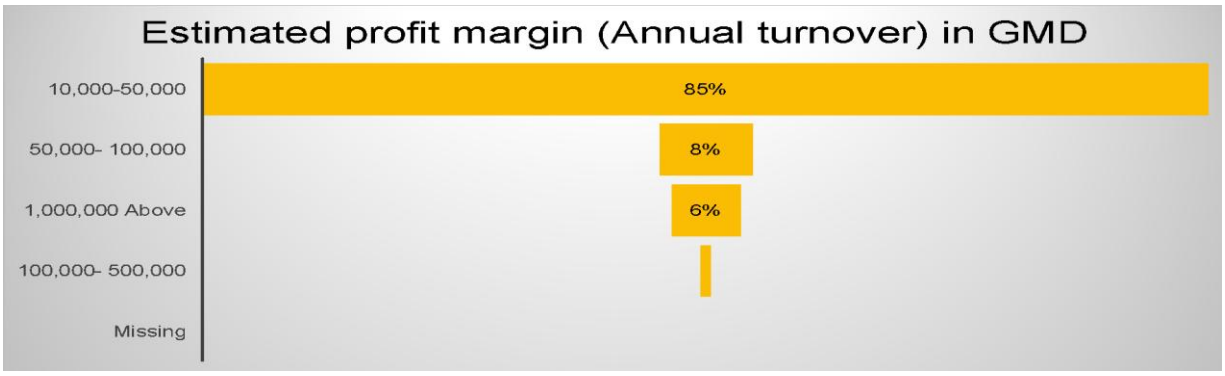
Figure 10: Agro-business category



5.9 Estimated profit margin (Annual turnover) in GMD

Here the assessment looks at the estimated profit margin (annual turnover) in Gambian dalasi (GMD) of the identified agribusinesses in the WCR. The results show that 85% of businesses have an estimated profit margin of between 10,000 to 50,000 annually followed by 8% between 50,000 to 100,000 and 6% 1000,000 above.

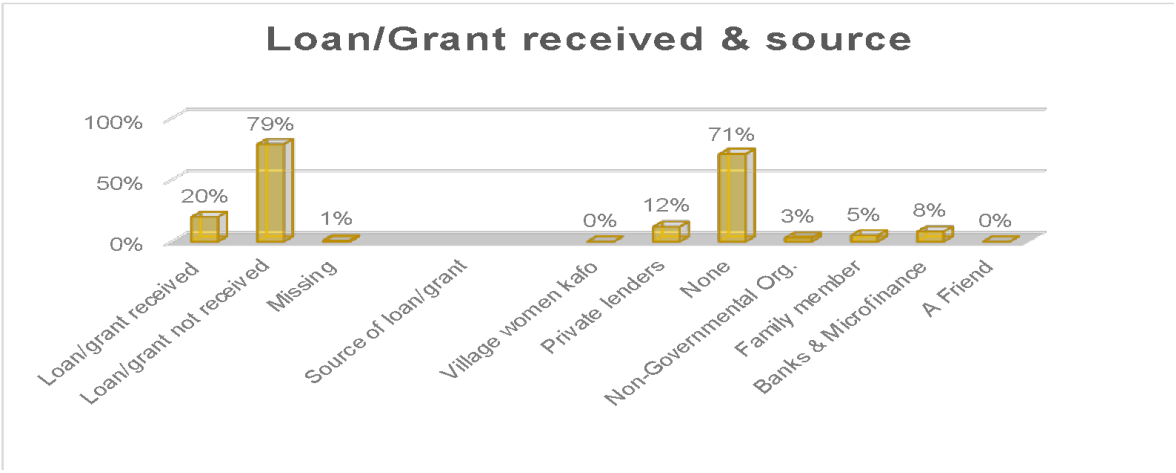
Figure 11: Estimated profit margin (annual turnover) in GMD



5.10 Loans/Grants for business and sources

All businesses need a bit of extra help sometimes, particularly when it comes to finance, thus, this section assessed whether the identified businesses had ever accessed a loan/grant or not. Having access to extra cash flow or a contribution towards a project from a grant or loan can help businesses purchase new equipment, hire employees, and develop. Findings of the assessment show that only 20% of the identified businesses had received a loan or grant since the start of operation to the date of the assessment.

Figure 12: Loan/grant received and sources

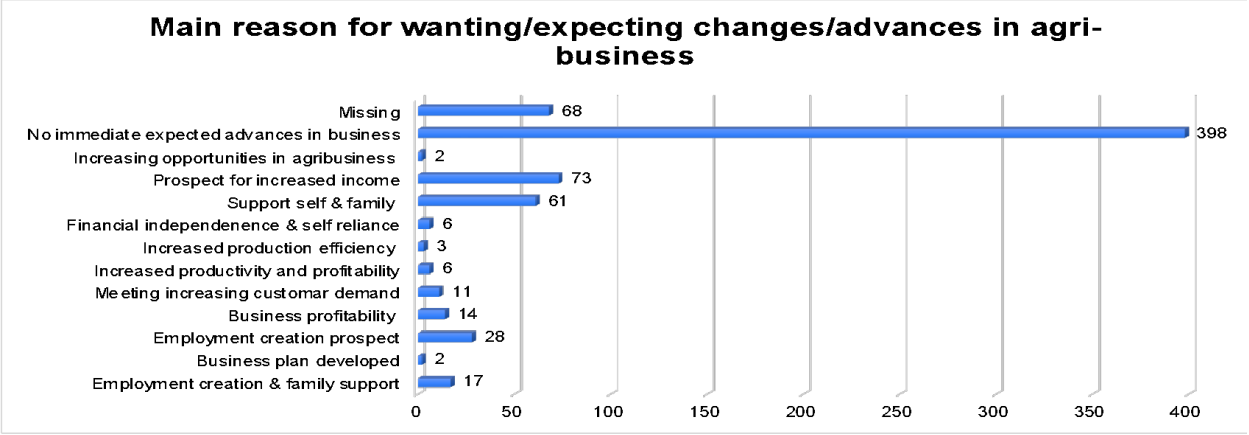


Also assessed was the source of a loan/grant for those businesses who confirmed receiving a loan/ grant. The results show that 12% of the businesses sourced a loan/grant from private lenders, 8% from banks and microfinance, 5% from family members and 3% from NGOs.

5.11 Reason for wanting/expecting changes/advances in agri-business

This section assessed the main reason the identified business owners expect changes/advances in their agri-business. Out of the six hundred and eighty-nine (689) agriculture related entrepreneurs in the West Coast Region, 73 business owners mentioned prospects for increased income, 61 businesses cited self & family support, 28 business owners said employment creation prospect, 17 businesses stated employment creation & family support, 14 businesses revealed profitability and 11 mentioned meeting increasing customer demand.

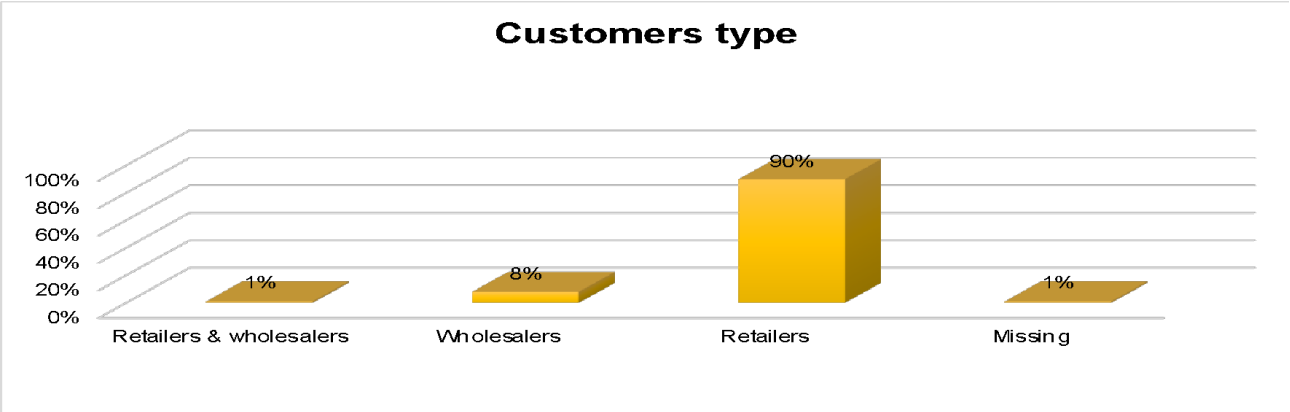
Figure 13: Main reason for wanting/expecting changes/advances in business



5.12 Customers types in Agribusiness sector

This section studied the customer types that the Agribusiness entrepreneurs operating in the WCR deal with. Since customers are important in driving the revenue of a business and that businesses can neither survive or thrive without a good and loyal customer base, the assessment inquired about the customer types in the region. The results show that Agribusiness entrepreneurs operating in the WCR deal more with retailers (90%) followed by wholesalers (8%) and only one percentage of customers deal in both retailers and wholesalers.

Figure 14: Customers type



6 Business Improvement / Growth Needs of Agric-business Entrepreneurship

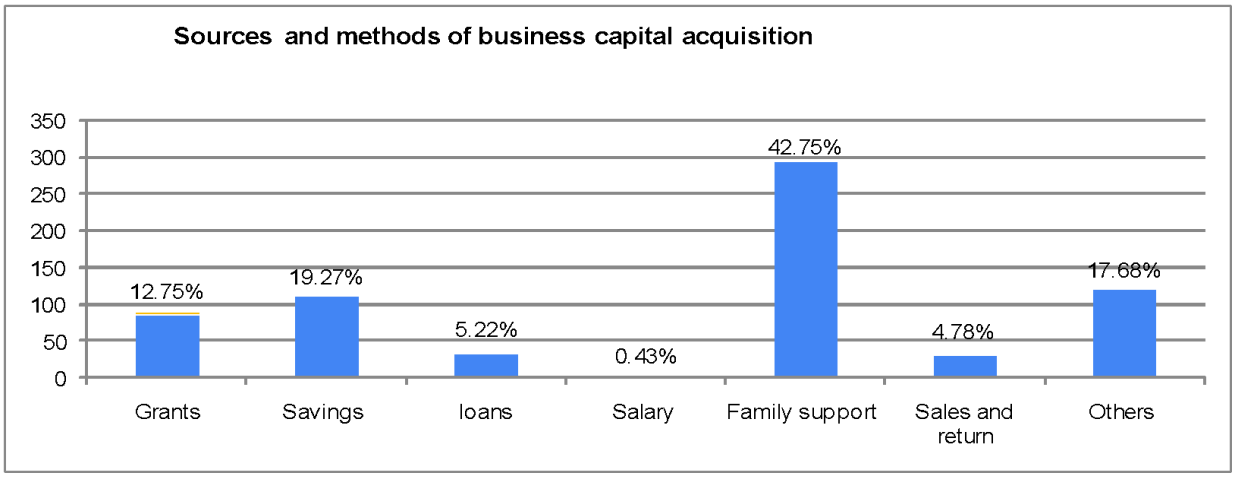
6.1 Sources of business financing and provision of capital

In this section, the assessment focused on sources of business financing and provision of capital. The results show that the most common source of business financing is family support, with 42.75% of respondents relying on it. This suggests a strong reliance on familial networks for capital, which can be both a strength and a vulnerability. While family support can provide a stable source of funding, it may also limit the scalability and independence of the business.

The second most common source is personal savings, at 16.38%. This indicates that many respondents are willing to invest their own money into their businesses, reflecting a degree of financial independence and commitment. A significant 17.68% of respondents fall into the Others category, indicating diverse and possibly unconventional sources of funding. This variety suggests that many community members are creative in finding ways to finance their businesses, but it also implies a lack of standard financial support mechanisms. With 12.75% of respondents relying on grants, it shows that external funding opportunities are being accessed, although not as widely. Grants can provide critical capital without the burden of repayment, which can be a major advantage for new or small businesses.

Only 5.22% of respondents finance their businesses through loans, indicating a limited use of formal financial institutions or perhaps a lack of access to credit. This could point to challenges in obtaining loans which may be partly due to stringent requirements or a lack of collateral. At 4.78%, this category shows that some businesses are reinvesting their earnings back into the business. This is a positive sign of sustainability and growth, as it indicates that these businesses are generating sufficient revenue to fund their operations. The least common source is salary, at 0.43%. This suggests that very few respondents are using income from other jobs to fund their businesses, which could indicate that many are fully reliant on their agribusinesses for income and livelihood support.

Figure 15: Sources of business financing and provision of capital



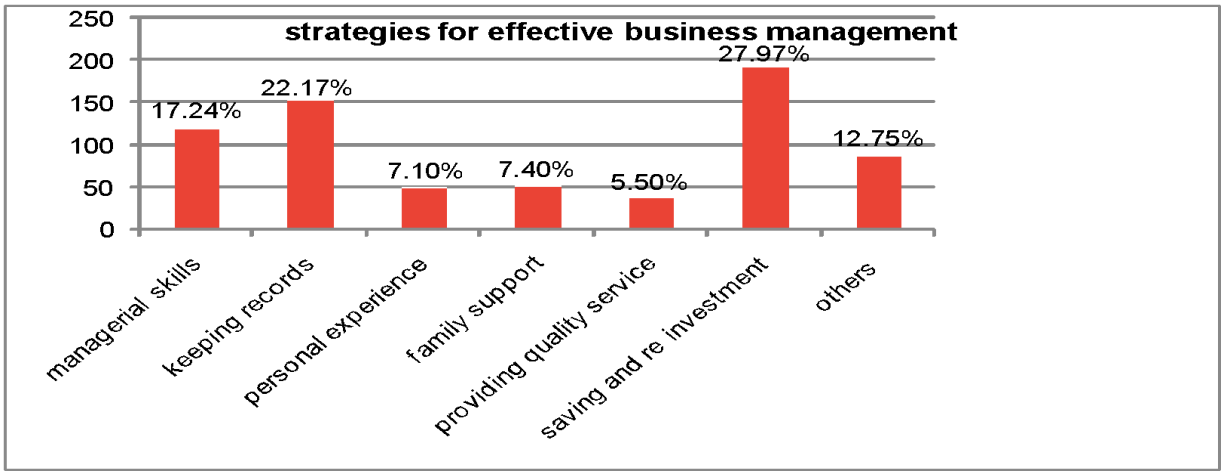
Given the heavy reliance on family support and personal savings, the project should aim to expand access to diverse funding sources, including grants, loans, and other financial instruments. This could involve partnerships with financial institutions, microfinance organisations, and grant providers. To help those relying on savings and family support, the project could include financial literacy and management training. This can help participants better manage their finances, plan for growth, and reduce dependency on limited funding sources. Increasing awareness and accessibility of grants and loans can provide necessary capital for growth. The project can offer guidance on grant applications and loan procurement, including how to meet eligibility criteria and prepare necessary documentation. Supporting businesses in reinvesting their profits can enhance sustainability. Training on effective business reinvestment strategies can help businesses grow organically.

6.2 Strategies for effective business management

In this section, the study investigated the business management style employed by the entrepreneur. The survey findings show the different ways in which the respondents managed their businesses. Results indicate that 27.97% of respondents managed their businesses by saving and reinvesting their profits, indicating a focus on financial sustainability and growth. The second most common method used is record keeping. This suggests that a significant portion of respondents 22.17% understand the importance of keeping accurate business records for tracking performance and making informed decisions.

Managerial skills with 17.25% indicates that a considerable number of respondents relied on their managerial skills, which may encompass a variety of strategic and operational skills critical to business success. Personal experience representing 7.10% revealed that some respondents managed their businesses based on their personal experience, highlighting the role of experiential knowledge in business operations. Family support with 7.39% highlight that a similar percentage of respondents relied on family support, which underscores the role of family networks in providing assistance and resources for business management.

Figure 16: Strategies for effective business management



With 5.51%, the smallest group focused on providing quality services as their primary management method, indicating a lowemphasis on customer satisfaction and service excellence. Others representing 12.75, a notable group of individuals, used methods that do not fit into the predefined categories. This suggests diversity in management approaches that could include unconventional or innovative strategies not initially considered.

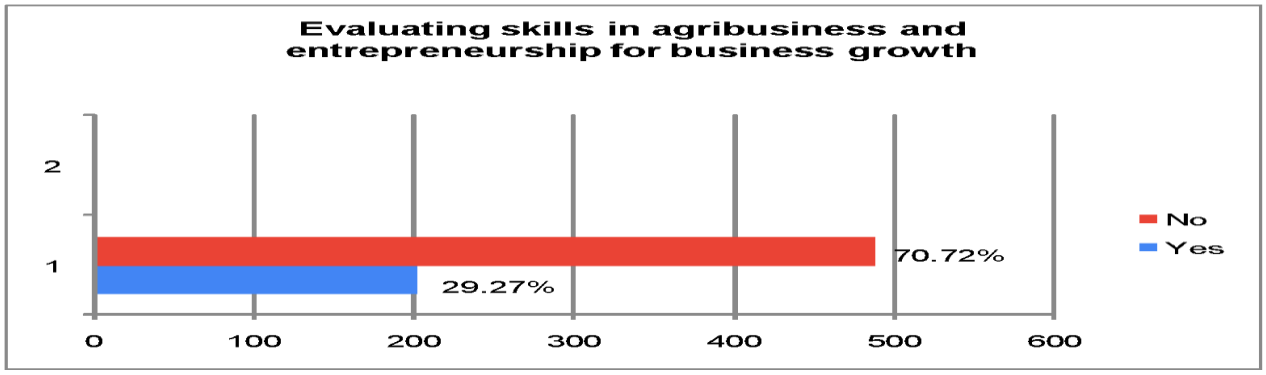
The analysis of the survey results provides insights into the existing management practices of the respondents, which can inform the design and implementation of the agro youth project. Findings suggest tailored training programs focusing on enhancing managerial skills and record-keeping that can be beneficial, given that these are already prominent methods used by respondents.

Training should emphasise financial literacy, savings, and reinvestment strategies that can support the largest group of respondents who rely on these methods. Drawing inspiration from the roles of leveraging experience and support networks, the results suggest programmes that build on personal experience and family support systems that can be developed to strengthen these existing resources. Initiatives aimed at improving service quality can be introduced to help those already focusing on this aspect and to encourage others to adopt similar practices.

6.3 Evaluating skills in agric-business and entrepreneurship for grow business

This section studied the skill adequacy Agric-business and entrepreneurship skills to manage and grow business. Findings suggest that 29.28% of the respondents believed they have sufficient agri-business and entrepreneurial skills. This indicates a relatively small portion of the community that feels confident in their abilities to manage and grow their businesses effectively. A large number of entrepreneurs 70.72% acknowledged skill deficiency, they do not believe they have adequate skills. This suggests a significant gap in knowledge and expertise that needs to be addressed for the success of the AGRO-YOUTHproject.

Figure 17: Evaluating skills in agric-business and entrepreneurship for grow business

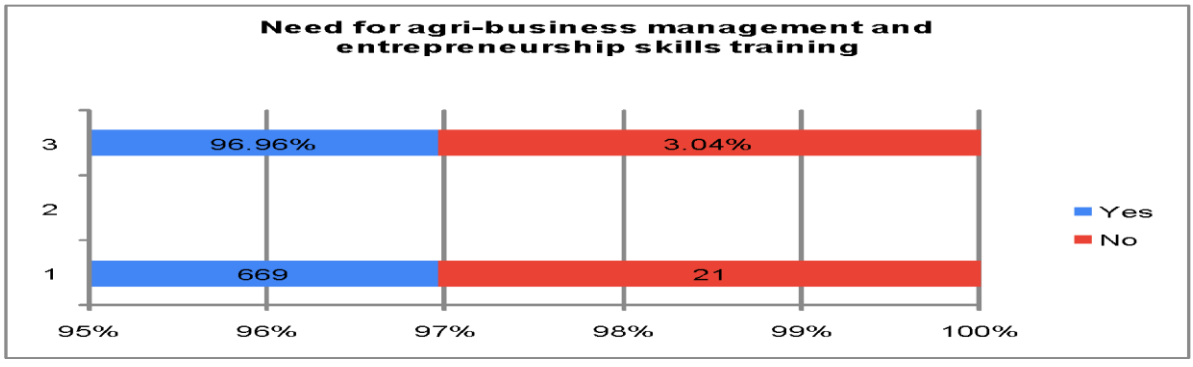


The high percentage of respondents lacking skills highlights the necessity for comprehensive training programs focusing on agri-business management and entrepreneurship. This can include workshops, mentoring, and practical hands-on sessions. Different respondents may have varying levels of knowledge and experience. Tailoring support to meet these diverse needs will be crucial. For instance, beginners may need foundational training, while those with some experience might benefit from advanced strategies and scaling techniques. Prioritising resources to develop and deliver training programs will be essential. This includes not just financial resources but also expertise from experienced trainers and access to relevant materials and tools. Implementing a system for continuous assessment and feedback can help in monitoring progress and adjusting training programs to ensure they remain effective and relevant.

6.4 Need for agri-business management and entrepreneurship skills training

This section studied the participants' need for agri-business management and entrepreneurship skills training. Results suggest that the majority of the entrepreneurs have expressed high interest in skills acquisition. An overwhelming majority of the respondents (approximately 96.96%) expressed a need for agri-business and entrepreneurial skills. This indicates a strong interest and perceived necessity for these skills among the community members. Only a small fraction (approximately 3.04%) of the respondents did not feel the need for these skills or have low interest. This might suggest that they either already possess the required skills, do not see the relevance of these skills for their business, or have other reasons which could be explored further.

Figure 18: Need for agri-business management and entrepreneurship skills training



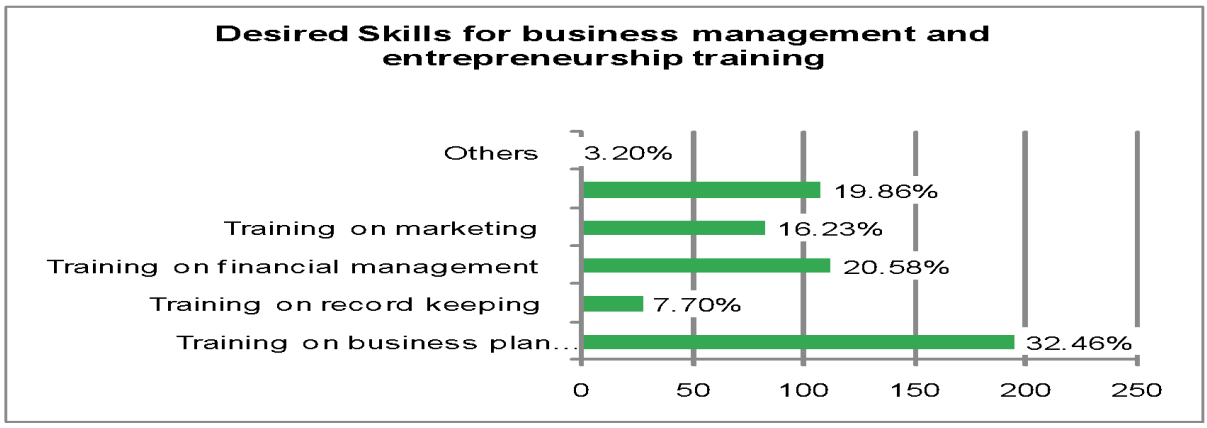
Given the high interest, the project should prioritise the development and implementation of agri-business and entrepreneurial skills training programs. This can significantly enhance the business capabilities and success rates of young entrepreneurs in the community. Understanding the specific needs and levels of existing knowledge among the respondents can

help in tailoring the programs to address varying skill levels and ensure effective learning outcomes. It may be beneficial to conduct follow-up interviews or focus groups with the 21 respondents who said No; to understand their reasons. This can provide insights that may help in refining the project's approach or in identifying other support mechanisms that might be needed.

6.5 Desired skills for business management and entrepreneurship training

In this section, the analysis focused on the type of business management and entrepreneurship skills training the business owner would like to attend. The results show that training on entrepreneurship management is top priority, skills the majority of the business owners would like to acquire. This category has the highest number of respondents (32.46%). It indicates that a significant portion of the community feels that acquiring entrepreneurship management skills is crucial for both the profitability and sustainability of their businesses. Thus, suggesting a need for comprehensive training programs in entrepreneurship management within the AGRO-YOUTHproject.

Figure 19: Desired skills for business management and entrepreneurship training



The second highest category (20.58%) is the training on financial management. This highlights the importance of financial management skills to the entrepreneurs. Effective financial management is essential for business sustainability, indicating a strong demand for financial training programs. Training on food processing and vegetable production with 19.86%, occupied third position on the list of the training needs of entrepreneurs. This category underscores the importance of technical skills in specific agricultural processes. Training in these areas can directly impact the quality and value of agricultural products.

Training on marketing and advertising methods scored 16.23%. This category shows that many respondents recognize the need for marketing skills to promote their products and expand their customer base. Marketing training can help businesses reach larger markets and improve sales. Although training on record keeping was mentioned by a smaller percentage (7.68%), however, this category is very vital. Good record keeping is fundamental for tracking business performance and making informed decisions. The smallest category (3.19%) includes responses that do not fit into the predefined categories. These could be specialised needs or unique skills that are not commonly recognized but are still important for certain businesses.

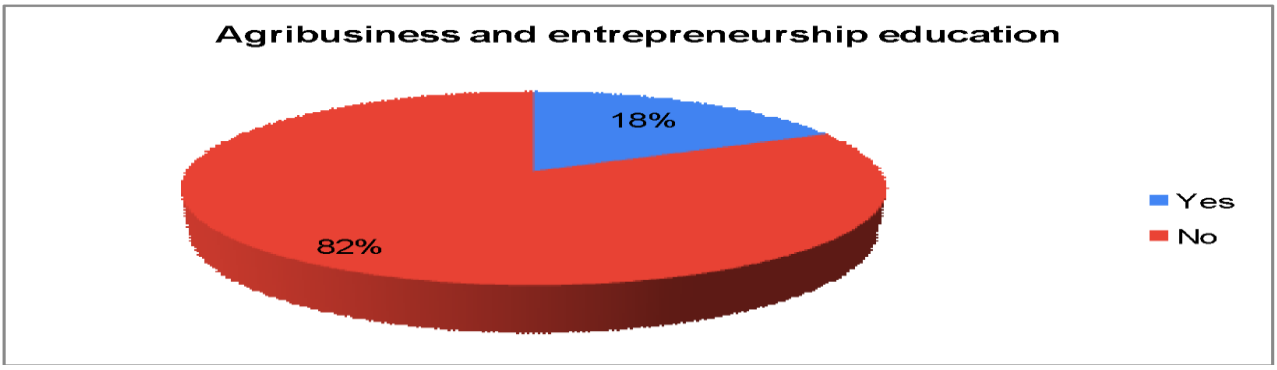
The responses indicate a need for a variety of training programs, with a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship management and financial management. The project should design a curriculum that covers these key areas comprehensively. While the majority of respondents fall into the main categories, the 22 individuals (3.19%) in others suggest there might be niche needs that require tailored support. Identifying and addressing these specific needs can ensure

that no segment of the community is left unsupported. The diverse training needs highlight the importance of a holistic approach to business education. Combining technical skills with management, financial, and marketing training can create well-rounded entrepreneurs capable of sustaining and growing their businesses.

6.6 Agric-business management and entrepreneurship education

This section investigated whether the identified entrepreneurs have received any Agric-business management and entrepreneurship skills training in the past. The findings suggest a limited training exposure. A significant majority (82.03%) of respondents have not received any Agric business management and entrepreneurship skills training. This indicates a substantial gap in the current skills and training available to the community. Only 17.97% of respondents have confirmed receiving some form of training. This minority may have an advantage in running their agribusinesses more effectively, but it also highlights the need for broader access to such training.

Figure 20: Agric-business management and entrepreneurship education



With over 82% of respondents lacking prior training, there is a clear and urgent need for the AGRO-YOUTHproject to provide comprehensive Agric business management and entrepreneurship skills training. This will help bridge the knowledge gap and equip more individuals with the necessary skills to succeed in agribusiness. By leveraging their existing knowledge, the 17.97% of respondents who have received training can potentially serve as resources or mentors within the community. The project could consider engaging these individuals in peer-to-peer learning programs or as local trainers to extend the reach and impact of training efforts.

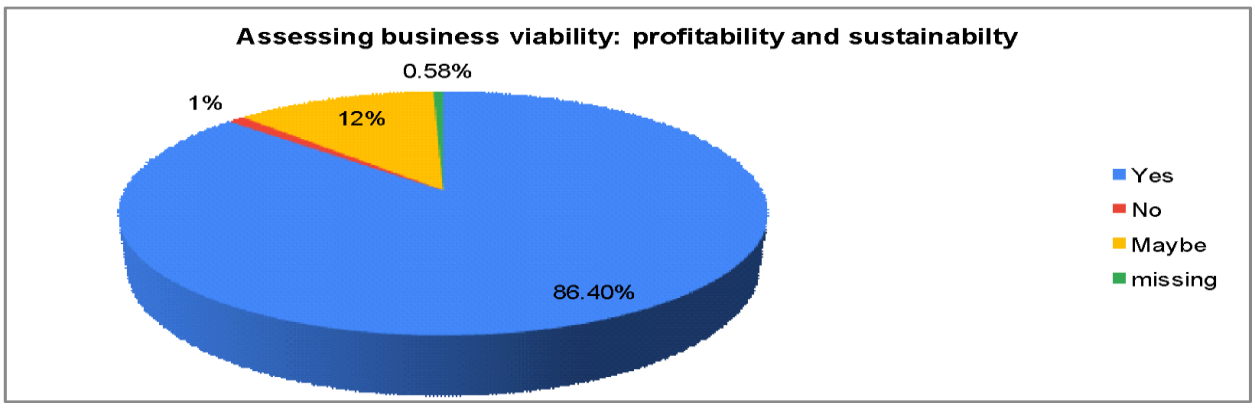
Given the high percentage of respondents without training, targeted outreach and awareness campaigns are essential to ensure maximum participation in the upcoming training programs. Highlighting the benefits and potential impacts of such training can motivate more community members to get involved. In addition to initial training, the project should consider ongoing support and refresher courses to reinforce learning and help trainees apply their new skills effectively. Continuous engagement can enhance long-term outcomes and sustainability.

6.7 Assessing business viability, profitable and sustainable

In this section, the study assessed the perceived profitability and sustainability of businesses from the perspective of the entrepreneurs themselves: The majority of respondents (86.38%) believed that their business is profitable and sustainable. This positive perception could be due to a variety of factors, including confidence in their current operations, market conditions, or personal optimism. Only a small fraction (1.01%) of respondents feels that their business is not profitable and sustainable. This suggests that very few respondents are currently facing significant challenges in their agribusiness operations.

A notable 12.03% of respondents indicated doubt. Reflecting uncertainty about their business's profitability and sustainability. This group may benefit from targeted support to help them gain more confidence in their business practices and strategies. The 0.58% who didn't answer the question might have missed it or were unsure about how to respond. This is a very small number and likely doesn't significantly impact the overall analysis.

Figure 21: Assessing business viability, profitable and sustainable



Given the high percentage of respondents who believe their businesses are profitable and sustainable, the project can build on this positive perception by providing advanced training and resources to further enhance their business operations. The 12.03% of respondents who are uncertain about their business's profitability and sustainability need targeted support. This could include tailored workshops, mentorship programs, and access to financial and market analysis tools to help them better understand and improve their business viability.

The small percentage (1.01%) who believes their business is not profitable and sustainable should receive focused assistance. Identifying the specific issues they face and providing customised solutions can help turn their businesses around. The project should adopt a holistic approach that includes not only training but also continuous support, access to resources, and a community network to ensure that all participants feel confident and equipped to sustain their businesses.

7 Success factors of Agric-business entrepreneurship

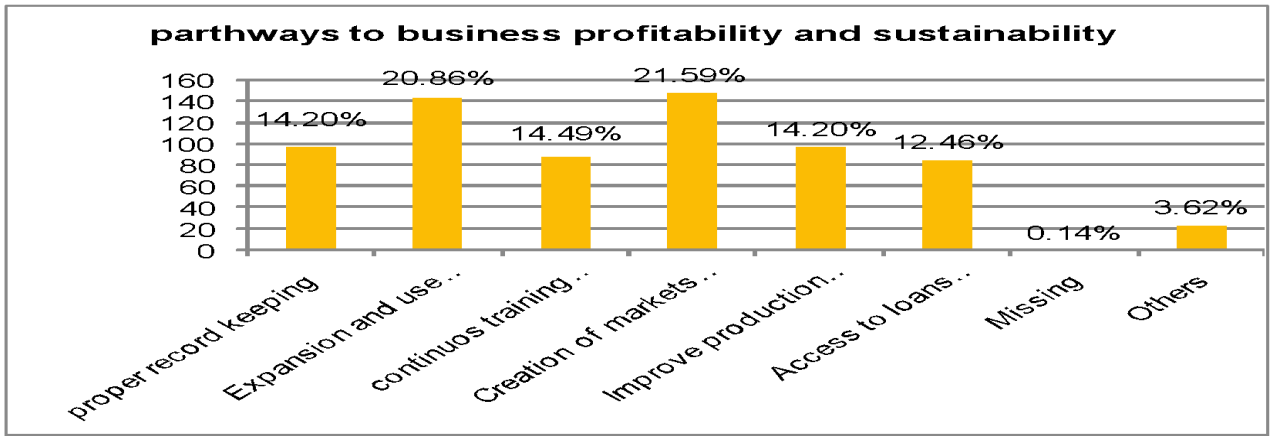
7.1 Pathways to make business profitable and sustainable

This part analysed the creation of markets for agribusiness. 21.6% of respondents believe that creating markets for their products is the key to profitability and sustainability. This indicates a strong focus on market access as a priority for business success. 20.9% of respondents prioritise expansion and the adoption of smart agriculture technologies. This suggests a forward-thinking approach to scaling and modernising agricultural practices. A good number of the respondents constituting 14.2% emphasise the importance of proper record keeping and improving production. These are essential for maintaining efficiency and tracking business performance. 12.9% of respondents highlight the need for ongoing training, which reflects an awareness of the importance of skill development in sustaining and growing their businesses. 12.5% of respondents consider access to financial resources such as loans and grants critical for business sustainability, indicating a need for financial support.

Since 21.6% of respondents emphasise the importance of creating markets for their products, the project should prioritise initiatives that help youths access and develop markets for their agricultural products. This could involve creating market linkages, facilitating partnerships with

buyers, and providing training on market analysis and marketing strategies. With 20.9% of respondents highlighting the need for expansion and smart agriculture, the project should incorporate technology and innovation into its training programs. This could include providing resources for smart farming technologies, offering workshops on their use, and supporting pilot projects to demonstrate their benefits.

Figure 22: Pathways to make business profitable and sustainable



Both proper record keeping and production improvement were noted by 14.2% of respondents each. The project should include components that teach efficient record-keeping practices and methods for improving production techniques. This could involve digital tools for tracking and optimising production processes. Continuous training was identified by 12.9% of respondents as crucial. The project should offer ongoing educational opportunities in agri-business skills, including advanced training and refresher courses. Partnerships with educational institutions or industry experts could enhance the quality and scope of training. With 12.5% of respondents considering access to loans and grants essential, the project should work on creating pathways for youths to access financial support. This could involve partnering with financial institutions, providing information on grant opportunities, and offering assistance with loan applications. Integrating these insights into the project's strategy will require a comprehensive approach that balances market access, technological advancement, skill development, production efficiency, and financial support. Developing a multi-faceted program that addresses these areas can help in achieving the overall goal of making the AGRO-YOUTHproject effective and impactful.

The survey responses indicate that the most emphasised strategies for making businesses profitable and sustainable are creating markets for agri-business products (21.6%) and expanding through smart agriculture (20.9%). Proper record keeping, improving production, and continuous training are also seen as important, while access to loans and grants is viewed as a crucial factor by a significant portion of respondents. These insights can guide the design of interventions and support programs tailored to the specific needs and priorities of the community.

7.2 Types of support needed for business improvement and growth

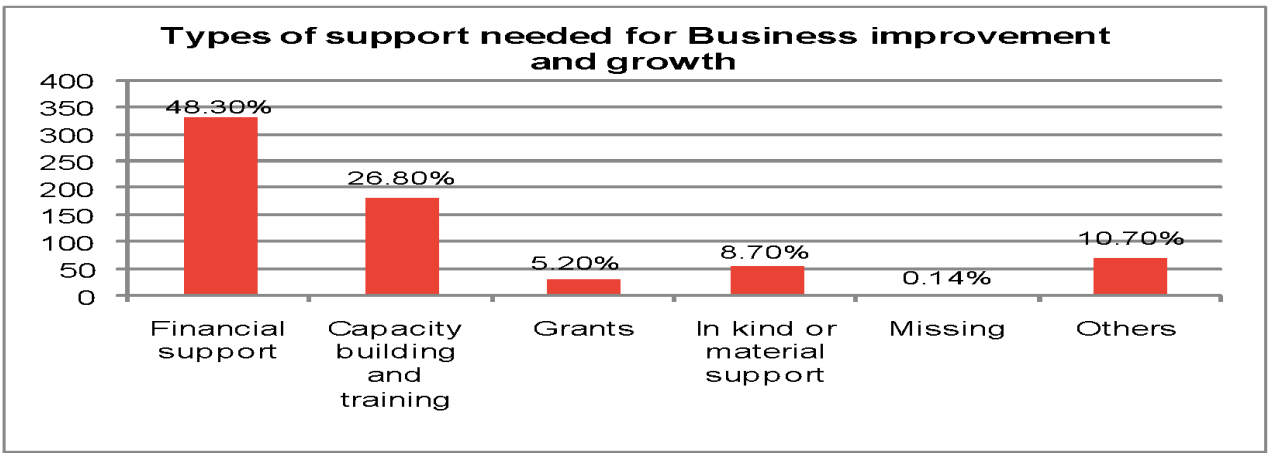
This part analysed the kind of support business owners need to improve and grow their businesses. Results show that nearly half of the respondents (48.26%) identified financial support as their primary need. This underscores a significant demand for accessible financial resources, such as loans, investment, or direct monetary aid, to help them improve and expand their agribusinesses. The second most requested support type, at 26.81%, is capacity building

and training. This indicates that a substantial portion of the respondents recognizes the need for enhanced skills and knowledge to manage and grow their businesses effectively.

Although a smaller percentage (5.22%), requests for grants. This shows a specific interest in non-repayable funding sources. This can be critical for start-ups or businesses looking to innovate without the immediate pressure of repayment. At 8.70%, in-kind or material support (such as equipment, seeds, fertilisers, etc.) is also a notable need. This highlights the necessity of physical resources in addition to financial and educational support to improve agricultural productivity.

The 10.72% classified under others indicates a range of diverse needs that do not fit into the predefined categories. This suggests that there may be unique or niche support requirements that the survey did not specifically address. The negligible 0.14% are those respondents who didn't answer the question which does not significantly affect the overall analysis but suggests near-complete engagement with the survey question.

Figure 23: Types of support needed for business improvement and growth



Given the high demand for financial support, the project should prioritise creating or facilitating access to financial resources. This could include microloans, investment opportunities, or partnerships with multilateral donors. The project should aim to create a comprehensive support system that integrates financial, educational, and material resources. By offering a combination of these supports, the project can address the multifaceted needs of young agribusiness entrepreneurs and provide a more robust foundation for their growth and sustainability. Establishing partnerships with financial institutions, agricultural suppliers, NGOs, and government agencies can enhance the project's capacity to provide the necessary resources. Networking can also facilitate the sharing of best practices, access to markets, and advocacy for more supportive policies for young agri-preneurs.

Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework will help track the progress and impact of the support provided. Regular assessments can ensure that the needs of the respondents are being met effectively and can identify areas for improvement. Recognizing the diversity of needs, the project can develop tailored support programs based on the specific requirements of different respondent groups. For example, offer financial literacy workshops, microloan programs, and connections to potential investors. Provide targeted training sessions in business management, agricultural techniques, and market access strategies. Facilitate access to grant-writing assistance and information on available grant opportunities. Establish a resource bank for equipment, seeds, and other materials needed for agricultural production.

Community engagement is crucial for the success of the project. Involving community members in decision-making processes can ensure that the support provided is relevant and effective.

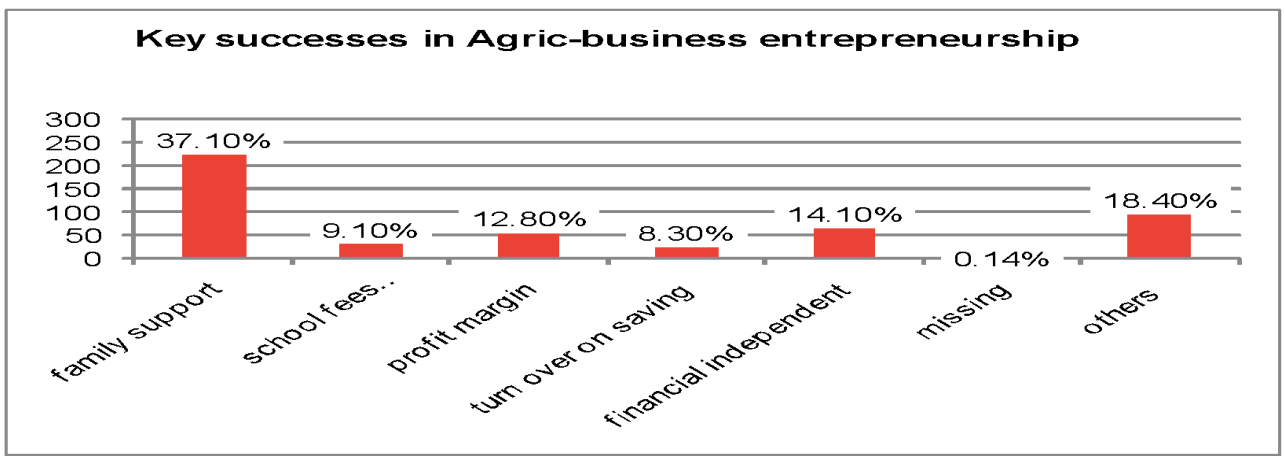
Additionally, fostering a sense of community ownership can enhance the sustainability of the project. Since a notable percentage of respondents identified the need for grants, the project could offer training on how to identify, apply for, and manage grants. This can empower participants to independently seek and secure funding from various sources. The project should include strategies to build resilience among young agri-preneurs. This could involve training on risk management, diversification of income sources, and sustainable agricultural practices to ensure long-term business viability. Supporting innovation within agribusiness can drive growth and sustainability. The project can foster an environment where young agri-preneurs are encouraged to experiment with new technologies, practices, and business models.

7.3 Key successes in Agric-business entrepreneurship

This section looked at successes of Agric-business entrepreneurship among the identified business owners in the region. The most common success identified by respondents (37.10%) is the ability to support their family. This indicates that a significant portion of agribusinesses contribute directly to household welfare, which is a primary motivator and measure of success for many entrepreneurs. At 9.13%, paying school fees for children is another important success metric. This reflects the impact of agribusiness income on educational opportunities, highlighting the role of entrepreneurship in breaking the cycle of poverty through investment in education.

About 12.75% of respondents consider their profit margins a success, indicating that these businesses are generating sufficient revenue to consider they are profitable. Profitability is a critical indicator of business viability and success. With 8.26% of respondents highlighting turnover on savings as a success, this suggests that some agribusinesses are generating enough profit to save and reinvest in their businesses, indicating growth and financial health. Financial independence is a key success for 14.06% of respondents. This shows that their agribusinesses provide enough income to support themselves without relying on external financial assistance, a significant marker of economic empowerment. The 18.41% classified under others; indicates a variety of unique successes that do not fit into the predefined categories. This suggests diverse and individualised definitions of success among the respondents. The negligible 0.14% who didn't answer the question likely does not significantly affect the overall analysis but suggests near-complete engagement with the survey question.

Figure 24: Key successes in Agric-business entrepreneurship



Since a large portion of respondents measure their success by their ability to support their family and pay for their children's education, the project should emphasise these aspects. Programs could include financial planning for household support and scholarships or educational funds for children of agribusiness entrepreneurs. With many respondents citing profit margins and turnover on savings as success indicators, the project should focus on

enhancing business profitability. This can be achieved through training in efficient business practices, market analysis, and financial management.

As financial independence is a significant success metric, the project should encourage sustainable business practices that lead to self- sufficiency. This could include access to financial services, mentorship programs, and resources for business scaling. Understanding that there are various unique success metrics (as indicated by the others category), the project should maintain flexibility in its approach. Regular feedback mechanisms and customised support can ensure that all types of success are recognized and supported.

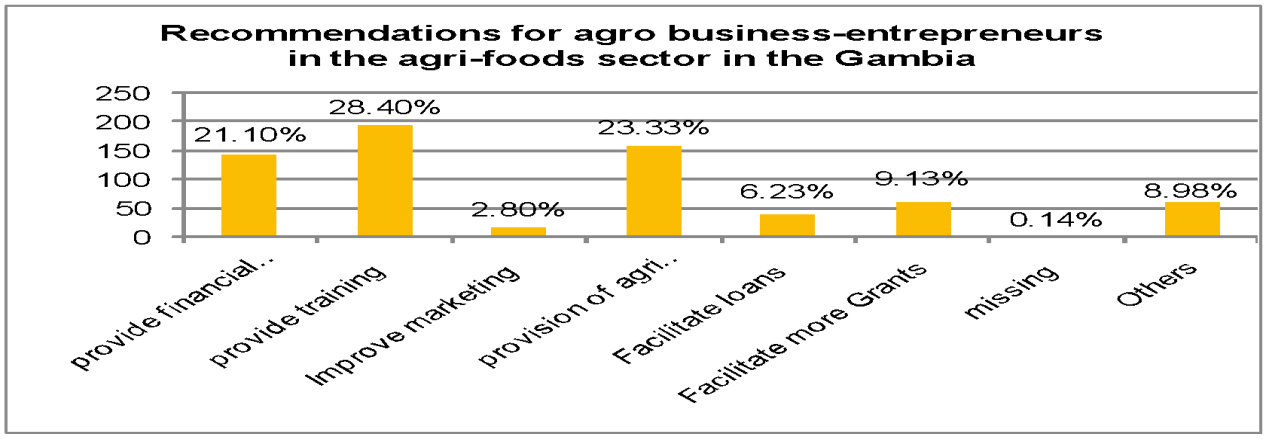
Given the interconnected nature of these success metrics, a holistic support system that includes financial aid, capacity building, market access, and community engagement will likely be most effective. With education being a significant aspect of perceived success, the project could collaborate with educational institutions to offer scholarships, vocational training, and literacy programs that can benefit the families of agribusiness entrepreneurs. Implementing a system to monitor and celebrate the diverse successes of agribusinesses can motivate participants. Success stories can be shared within the community to inspire others and build a positive narrative around agribusiness entrepreneurship.

7.4 Recommendations for agro business-entrepreneurs in the agri-foods sector in the Gambia

This section discussed the recommendations the identified entrepreneurs in the WCR have for agro business-entrepreneurs in the agri-food sector in the Gambia. The findings show that 21.01% of respondents recommended providing financial support. This emphasises the critical need for accessible funding to support the establishment and growth of agribusinesses. The most common recommendation, with 28.41% of respondents, is to provide training. This indicates a significant demand for knowledge and skills development in agribusiness practices, management, and entrepreneurship. Although only 2.75% of respondents recommended improving marketing, it is still an important aspect. Effective marketing strategies can enhance market reach, brand recognition, and sales, contributing to business success.

With 23.33% of respondents highlighting this recommendation, there is a clear need for better access to essential inputs such as seeds, fertilisers, and equipment. This can reduce production costs and increase efficiency and yields. About 6.23% of respondents suggested facilitating loans. This indicates a need for accessible credit facilities to support business operations and expansions. While 9.13% of respondents recommended facilitating more grants. Grants can provide critical funding without the burden of repayment, supporting innovative and start-up agribusinesses. The 8.99% classified under others; indicates a range of additional recommendations that do not fit into the predefined categories, suggesting the presence of unique or less common needs and suggestions. The negligible 0.14% who didn't answer the question likely does not significantly affect the overall analysis but suggests near-complete engagement with the survey question.

Figure 25: Recommendations for agro business-entrepreneurs in the agri-foods sector in the Gambia



Given that a significant portion of respondents emphasised the need for financial support, the project should prioritise developing funding mechanisms. This could include microloans, venture capital, and financial literacy programs to help agripreneurs access and manage funds effectively. With training being the most common recommendation, the project should offer a variety of educational programs. Topics could include business management, sustainable agricultural practices, financial planning, and market analysis. Partnerships with educational institutions and industry experts can enhance the quality and reach of these programs.

Although a smaller percentage recommended improving marketing, it remains crucial. The project can offer workshops on digital marketing, branding, and market research. Creating platforms for agripreneurs to showcase their products can also improve market access. To address the need for agribusiness inputs, the project can facilitate bulk purchasing agreements, provide subsidies, or establish input supply chains to reduce costs and ensure timely availability of quality inputs. Developing partnerships with financial institutions to create accessible loan products tailored for young agripreneurs can address the need for credit. The project can also provide support in preparing loan applications and managing credit.

Facilitating access to grants is essential. The project can help agripreneurs identify grant opportunities, provide training on grant writing, and offer support in the application process. Engaging the community in identifying and addressing recommendations can lead to more effective solutions. Creating forums for discussion and collaboration among agripreneurs can foster a supportive environment and collective problem-solving.

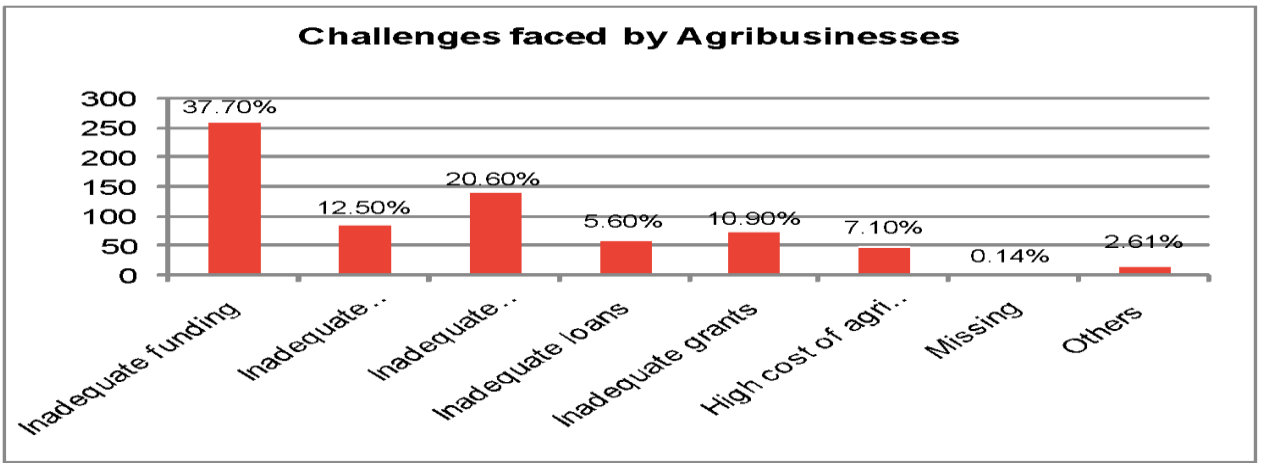
8 Challenges of Agric- business

8.1 Challenges faced by Agric-businesses

This part discusses the challenges Agric-business owners face. The most significant challenge identified by respondents (37.68%) is inadequate funding. This underscores the critical need for accessible financial resources to support and grow agribusinesses. At 12.46%, the lack of market outlets is a notable challenge. This indicates that many agribusinesses struggle to find sufficient or profitable markets for their products, limiting their sales and growth potential. With 20.58% of respondents highlighting inadequate knowledge, this reflects a substantial need for education and training in agribusiness management and best practices. About 8.55% of respondents face challenges with accessing loans, which are crucial for financing business operations and expansions.

The challenge of inadequate grants affects 10.87% of respondents, pointing to a need for more non-repayable funding opportunities to support innovative and startup agribusinesses. High input costs are a challenge for 7.10% of respondents, indicating that the expenses associated with necessary resources like seeds, fertilisers, and equipment can be a significant barrier to profitability and growth. The 2.61% classified under others; indicates a range of additional challenges that do not fit into the predefined categories, suggesting the presence of unique or less common obstacles faced by agribusinesses. The negligible 0.14% who didn't answer the question likely does not significantly affect the overall analysis but suggests near-complete engagement with the survey question.

Figure 26: Challenges faced by Agric-businesses



Given that inadequate funding is the most significant challenge, the project should prioritise providing or facilitating access to financial resources. This could include microloans, investment opportunities, and financial literacy training to help Agri-entrepreneurs manage and grow their finances effectively. With a notable percentage of respondents struggling with market outlets, the project should focus on improving market access. This could involve establishing direct-to-consumer sales channels, forming cooperatives to increase bargaining power, and providing market information and networking opportunities.

The substantial need for agribusiness knowledge indicates that comprehensive training programs are essential. The project should offer workshops and courses on agribusiness management, marketing, financial planning, and sustainable farming practices. Since inadequate loans are a significant challenge, the project should collaborate with financial institutions to develop loan products tailored to the needs of young Agri-entrepreneurs. Additionally, providing training on how to prepare loan applications and manage credit can be beneficial.

To address the challenge of inadequate grants, the project should seek to secure grant funding from various sources and provide support in grant writing and application processes. High input costs can be mitigated by negotiating bulk purchasing agreements, providing subsidies or vouchers for essential inputs, and promoting the use of cost-effective and sustainable farming methods. Recognizing the diverse and unique challenges faced by agribusinesses, the project should maintain flexibility in its support programs. Regular feedback and adaptive strategies can ensure that all challenges are adequately addressed. Engaging the community in identifying and addressing challenges can lead to more effective solutions. Creating forums for discussion and collaboration among agripreneurs can foster a supportive environment and collective problem-solving.

9 Strengths and limitation of the research

9.1 Strengths

Quad relationship involving four organisations:
The strength of this assessment lies in the quad relationship involving four organisations namely CASD, community-based organisations, the Gambia college and the consulting firm-Global South Career Development Academy (GSCDA). The study was designed by the consultant in partnership with CASD with input from the data collection team (the Gambia college, SKF, FDDF and DDYF. The data analysis and reporting were done by the consulting firm. Beside complementarity, each of the partners brought in wealth of experience and expertise which has contributed to the quality of the research findings.
High Response Rate:
With 689 respondents, the survey provides a robust data set for analysis, ensuring that the findings are statistically significant.
Comprehensive Coverage of Key Areas:
The survey addressed various crucial aspects such as financial needs, training requirements, market access, business sustainability, and challenges faced, providing a holistic view of the agribusiness landscape.
Clear Identification of Needs:
The survey effectively identified the key areas where support is required, such as financial support, training, market access, and provision of inputs, etc.
Community Engagement:
Conducting the survey involved engaging with the community, which is crucial for understanding their needs and building trust.
Actionable Insights:
The data gathered provides clear and actionable insights for designing interventions and support programs tailored to the community's needs.

9.2 Limitation

Survey Scope and Coverage:
While the survey involved 689 respondents, it may not fully represent the diversity of the entire agricultural community in The Gambia. Certain demographic groups or regions might be underrepresented.
Response Bias:
The respondents might have provided socially desirable answers or responses influenced by their expectations of receiving support. This can lead to a positive bias in their answers.
Limited Categories for Responses:
Some responses were categorised while others were not because they didn't fit predefined themes, indicating that the survey might not have covered all relevant areas comprehensively.
Missing Data:
A few instances of missing responses (e.g., one or two respondents not answering certain questions) may slightly skew the results, though the impact is minimal.
Qualitative Data Limitation:
The survey primarily collected quantitative data. Qualitative insights from open-ended questions could provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and needs.
Temporal Relevance:
The data collected reflects the respondent's views and conditions at the time of the survey. Changes in the economic, social, or political environment could alter these perspectives over time.

10 Lessons learned

Importance of Financial Support:

The overwhelming need for financial support highlights the critical role of accessible funding in the success of agribusinesses.

Training and Capacity Building:

A significant demand for training underscores the importance of knowledge and skills development in agribusiness management and practices.

Market Access:

Challenges related to market outlets indicate that improving market access is vital for business sustainability and profitability.

Diverse Challenges:

The wide range of challenges faced, from funding to high input costs, suggests that a multifaceted approach is necessary to support Agri-entrepreneurs effectively.

Community Involvement:

Engaging the community in the survey process provides valuable insights and fosters a sense of ownership and cooperation, which is crucial for the success of any support program.

11 Conclusions and recommendations

11.1 Recommendations

Need for Financial and Training Support:

The survey clearly indicates that the primary needs of Agri-entrepreneurs are financial support and training. Addressing these needs is essential for the growth and sustainability of agribusinesses.

Market and Input Challenges:

Improving market access and providing necessary inputs at affordable costs are critical areas that need attention.

Holistic Approach Required:

Given the diverse challenges and needs, a holistic and integrated approach is necessary to effectively support the agribusiness sector.

Community-Centric Solutions:

Solutions should be designed with active community participation to ensure they are relevant and effective.

Sustainability and Profitability:

Most respondents believe their businesses are sustainable and profitable, indicating a positive outlook and potential for growth with the right support.

11.2 Conclusions

Financial Support Programs:

Develop and implement financial support mechanisms such as microloans, grants, and investment opportunities tailored to the needs of Agri-entrepreneurs.

Comprehensive Training Programs:

Establish training programs covering essential areas like business management, marketing, financial planning, and sustainable agricultural practices. Partner with educational institutions and industry experts to deliver high-quality training.

Improve Market Access:

Facilitate market access by creating direct-to-consumer sales channels, forming cooperatives, and providing market information and networking opportunities.

Provision of Inputs:

Ensure timely and affordable access to essential inputs through bulk purchasing agreements, subsidies, and efficient supply chains.

Support Infrastructure Development:
Invest in infrastructure that supports agribusiness, such as storage facilities, transportation, and processing units, to enhance efficiency and reduce post-harvest losses.
Facilitate Access to Loans and Grants:
Work with financial institutions to develop accessible loan products and provide support in grant application processes. Offer training on preparing loan applications and managing credit.
Community Engagement:
Continue engaging the community in identifying needs and designing solutions. Create forums for discussion and collaboration among Agri-entrepreneurs to foster a supportive environment.
Regular Monitoring and Evaluation:
Implement regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of support programs and make necessary adjustments based on feedback and changing needs.
Promote Innovation and Sustainability:
Encourage innovative practices and sustainable farming methods to improve productivity and environmental sustainability. Provide support for research and development in agribusiness.
Policy Advocacy:
Advocate for policies that support the agribusiness sector, including favourable loan terms, subsidies for inputs, and infrastructure development. Engage with policymakers to ensure that the needs of Agri-entrepreneurs are addressed at the policy level.
By addressing these recommendations, the agro youth project can effectively support the growth and sustainability of agribusinesses in The Gambia, ultimately contributing to economic development and improved livelihoods for the community.

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11. Annexes

Annex I: Agro-youth project community need assessment questionnaire

This survey is part of a Community Needs Assessment under the AGRO-YOUTH PROJECT which aims to improve the entrepreneurial skills and knowledge capacity of youth and women in the agri-food sector in the Gambia. The project will be implemented by CASD in collaboration with its partners and stakeholders. This information will facilitate the mapping and identification of targeted beneficiaries and it will also help in the implementation of the project. Your participation in this Community Needs Assessment is voluntary and the information provided will remain confidential.
Thank you for your time in responding to this survey.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Personal information</td></tr>
<tr><td>1.Name……
…….</td><td>2. Phone…….</td></tr>
<tr><td>3. Age
○ 18 -25 yrs.
○ 25-35 Yrs.
○ 35yrs- Above</td><td>4. Gender
○ Male
○ Female</td></tr>
<tr><td>5. Education level?
○ Basic education
○ Secondary Education
○ Tertiary and Vocational Education
○ University Education</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">6. What is your nationality?
○ Gambia
○ Non-Gambia (Specify ……...)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Business information</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>7.Name of the business (if any)
……</td><td>8.Address/ Business location……</td></tr>
<tr><td>9. Has your business been registered
○ Yes
○ No</td><td>10. Registration No (if any)
……</td></tr>
<tr><td>11.Business size or status
○ Micro enterprise
○ Small enterprise
○ Company
○ Partnership
○ Community initiative and ownership

13. Number of employees</td><td>12 What is your business category in the Agri-food sector?
○ Vegetables and gardening
○ Ornament
○ Livestock and small ruminant
○ Poultry
○ Food processing(specify)……
…...</td></tr>
</table>

○ 1-5 ○ 5-10 ○ 10-15 ○ 15 above	○ Others(specify)…… …….. 14. What is your estimated Profit margin (Annual turnover) in GMD ○ 50,000- 100,000 ○ 100,000- 500,000 ○ 500,000-1000,000 ○ 1000,000 Above
15. Who are your Business customers? ○ Consumers ○ Retailer ○ Wholesalers ○ Others(specify)…… ……. 17. How to advertise your business products and reach out to your customers? …… ……..	16. How do you sell your business products and services? …… …….. …… …….
18. How do you finance your business? …… ……..	
Business management and Entrepreneurship needs	
19. How do you manage your business? …… …… ……	
20. Do you have agricultural entrepreneurship skills to improve your business ○ Yes ○ No ○ 20. If (No in Q19) What kind of Agric-business skill or knowledge do you need to continue the business? …… ……..	
21. Do you have adequate agric-business and entrepreneurship skills to manage and grow your business? ○ Yes ○ No	22. Would you need agri-business management and entrepreneurship skills for your business? ○ Yes ○ No
23. If (yes in Q22.) What type of business management and entrepreneurship training skills do you use for your business? …… ……	24. Have you ever received any agric-business management and entrepreneurship skills training? 1. Yes 2. No

25. Do you think that your business is profitable and sustainable? ○ Yes ○ No ○ May be	26. How do you intend to make your business profitable and sustainable? …… ……..
27. What kind support would be needed to improve and grow the business? …… ……..	
28. What are the successes of your agric-business entrepreneurship? …… ……..	
29. What challenges do your agric- business face? …… ……..	
30. What are your recommendations for agric-entrepreneurs in the agri-foods sector in the Gambia	