

TANZANIA SUSTAINABLE SOYBEAN INITIATIVE (TSSI)

How Partnerships Are Transforming Tanzania's Soybean Industry

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Transforming Tanzania's Soybean Seed System: A Collaborative Breakthrough

For years, Tanzanian smallholder farmers have faced a significant challenge: limited access to high-quality soybean seeds. This issue has stifled productivity, hindered income growth, and constrained the expansion of the soybean value chain. Despite the crop's critical importance in ensuring food security, supporting livestock feed production and driving industrial use, many farmers relied on low-yield recycled seeds. In 2023, the Tanzanian Sustainable Soybean Initiative (TSSI), under SAGCOT, stepped in to address this bottleneck by launching a collaborative effort to transform the nation's seed system. The initiative seeks to unlock the full potential of soybean farming in Tanzania. A field tour conducted in March 2025 to follow up on the SOYA seed system in the Ruvuma region highlighted notable progress in improving access to quality seeds and strengthening the soybean value chain.

The Power of Partnerships

Addressing the seed challenge has been a continuous collective effort, driven by collaboration and commitment. The SAGCOT Centre Ltd (SCL) team has been working with government authorities, research institutions, academic bodies, NGOs, and private agribusinesses to build and sustain an integrated supply chain. This ongoing partnership ensures that farmers have access to quality seeds, empowering them to improve productivity and secure their livelihoods.

Government Support: Building the Foundation

Government support has played a pivotal and ongoing role in transforming Tanzania's soybean sector. Significant progress has been achieved in building farmer capacity through comprehensive initiatives such as mapping seed demand and establishing soybean model farms and demo plots, managed by extension officers from local authorities. Additionally, institutions like the Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) and the Tanzania Official Seed Certification Institute (TOSCI) have been at the forefront of enhancing seed quality and streamlining certification processes. These efforts ensure farmers have reliable access to high-yield soybean varieties, driving productivity and sustainable growth across the agricultural value chain.

Private Sector Leadership: Driving Transformation

The private sector and development organizations have emerged as the driving force behind Tanzania's soybean revolution, spearheading transformative change across the industry. In Ruvuma, Savior Chanai, owner of Real World Company Ltd, has played a pivotal role as a catalyst for progress. By establishing a reliable market for farmers, he provided them with the assurance needed to scale up production, confident that their efforts would be met with guaranteed buyers.

As farmers increasingly embraced expanded production, the demand for high-quality seeds surged. Organizations such as M-CODE and Sange Agro, alongside input suppliers like Guavay, stepped forward to address this critical need. These partners have been instrumental in facilitating farmer training programs, distributing certified seeds, and establishing demonstration plots. These efforts have ensured that smallholder farmers have the knowledge and resources to maximize yields and achieve sustainable success.

Grassroots Mobilization: Extension Officers and Farmer Organizations

At the heart of this transformation were **extension officers** and **farmer organizations** who worked tirelessly at the grassroots level. Traveling from village to village, they conducted hands-on training sessions and showcased the impact of certified soybean seeds. Farmers who once struggled with poor yields now witnessed firsthand how science-backed farming techniques could dramatically boost productivity and income.

A Farmer's Story: From Struggles to Success

The Tanzanian Sustainable Soybean Initiative (TSSI): A Story of Transformation and Empowerment

A tale of resilience, hope, and transformation lies in the heart of Maposeni village, nestled within the lush landscapes of the SAGCOT Corridor. At its center is Theresphory Sebastian Miti, a dedicated soybean farmer whose journey from struggle to success has inspired countless others in his community.

Breaking Free from Poverty

For years, Theresphory faced the harsh realities of subsistence farming. "I am Theresphory Sebastian Miti," he begins, "a resident of Maposeni village. I have been a soybean farmer for many years, but the challenges were overwhelming." His yields were unpredictable due to the use of low-quality seeds that could not withstand environmental pressures. "The biggest challenge with soybeans was planting them too early or during heavy rains—they would rot before harvest," he recalls. These difficulties left him unable to plan for his family's future.

But everything changed when he was introduced to the **Tanzanian Sustainable Soybean Initiative (TSSI)**. Through this initiative, he gained access to **certified soybean seeds** and received **training in Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)**.

"Since adopting certified seeds and modern techniques," Theresphory shares, "my yields have skyrocketed. Now, even if you plant late in January, you can still harvest successfully as long as rainfall patterns align."

From Harvest to Home: Building a Better Life

With increased productivity came newfound prosperity. Theresphory's surplus allowed him to

sell at competitive prices, generating significant income. “Before learning about Good Agricultural Practices, life was difficult,” he says. “But thanks to soybean farming under this initiative, I built my new home right here. This house is proof of what good harvests can achieve.”

Beyond constructing a stable home, Theresphory reinvested his earnings into additional farming assets, ensuring sustainable growth. Most importantly, he prioritized **education for his children**, seeing it as an investment in their future. “Education is key,” he emphasizes. “If I hadn’t improved my farming practices, I wouldn’t have been able to fund my kids’ schooling.”

Paying It Forward: Inspiring Others

Theresphory didn’t stop at personal success; he turned his achievements into opportunities for collective empowerment. Inspired by his journey, he dedicated part of his land to serve as a **model farm**, where he trains fellow farmers on the importance of **certified seeds** and **GAP methods**.

“When people see results firsthand, they are more likely to embrace change,” he explains. “By teaching others how to grow high-quality soybeans, I’m helping break cycles of poverty in our community.”

His advice to other farmers? “**Don’t rush into planting without considering market conditions and certified inputs**,” he warns. “Many small-scale farmers face exploitation because middlemen don’t pay fairly or on time.”

Challenges Along the Way

Despite his successes, Theresphory acknowledges the hurdles that remain. “Even with certified seeds, weather fluctuations pose risks,” he admits. However, armed with knowledge and experience, he navigates these challenges effectively. “**Timing is everything**,” he advises. “Planting late, around January, works well when rainfall is moderate.”

He also highlights **systemic issues affecting local markets**, like when prices dropped significantly—from 1,000 Tanzanian shillings per kilo to 600-700. This discourages farmers who work hard only to receive meager returns.”

“I now farm independently, leveraging what I’ve learned over the years,” he reflects. “And I owe it all to programs like SAGCOT and firms like Silverland for giving **us the tools and training to succeed**.”

Theresphory’s story exemplifies the transformative power of access to **quality resources and education**. As he puts it, “**Change starts with one person, but its impact spreads far beyond. When we empower farmers, we empower entire communities**.”

Scaling Impact: Strengthening the Soybean Value Chain

The impact of these partnerships extends far beyond individual farmers. Across Tanzania, **soybean production is being revitalized**, strengthening the entire agricultural value chain. More farmers are adopting certified seeds, improving food security and greater market competitiveness. Increased production has also attracted processors and buyers, opening new market linkages.

These collaborations have sparked **policy discussions** on formalizing **contract farming guidelines** and **market stabilization strategies**, providing farmers with greater financial security and ensuring sustainable growth. One promising development is the **Soybean Revenue Model**, a framework piloted by **M-CODE in partnership with SAGCOT**. This model aims to establish **sustainable financing, fair pricing, and expanded market opportunities**, setting the stage for national adoption.

A Future Built on Collaboration

The success in Ruvuma now serves as a **blueprint for nationwide expansion**. As partnerships continue to grow, efforts are underway to expand **awareness campaigns, enhance extension services, and finalize contract farming frameworks** that will provide long-term stability for soybean farmers.

Tanzania is now on the path to a thriving, **self-sustaining soybean industry**. With continued collaboration, the vision of prosperous farmers, stronger markets, and **national agricultural transformation** are within reach. The **seed of change has been planted**—and it's growing into a future of many possibilities.

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