

# ► JobAgri: Putting knowledge to work to support job-rich investments in agriculture and agri-food chains in sub-Saharan Africa





## ► Sub-Saharan Africa's current and structural challenges



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In addition to the long-lasting structural employment challenges of sub-Saharan Africa, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic will require new and innovative approaches to foster a job-rich recovery. The region is experiencing its worst contraction in GDP in 25 years – forecast to fall between 2.1 and 5.1 per cent. At the same time, the population will continue to grow dramatically, putting pressure on the labour market. Some 300 million young women and men will reach working age between 2020 and 2030. Today, more than 60 per cent of the labour force is engaged in agriculture related activities, and the majority of the region's population will remain rural in the near future. The limited economic diversification and capacity to absorb new job seekers in search of decent work means that the agricultural sector will remain a major creator of jobs.

Even if the long-lasting consequences of the pandemic will impact the patterns of globalization and possibly result in more opportunities for African manufacturing in the long run, the region will have to identify new trajectories for structural transformation that include the development of the agricultural sector. The COVID-19 crisis has also had a negative impact on the food supply, in particular for cities dependent on food imports, and has revealed the importance of strong local food systems. Climate change and its consequences add further complexity to these challenges.

As a result of these trends, the evolution of agriculture and the agri-food sector and their capacity to create

decent employment will be decisive for a transition to a sustainable development model for the region and socio-economic stability.

### ► How to support more and better-quality jobs in agriculture and agri-food chains

Different options for the development of the agricultural sector exist, with different outcomes in terms of job creation, working conditions, income distribution and the use of natural resources. Yet, there is a lack of systematic, consistent and comparable data on the labour content of these different options. Lack of information about the labour content in agriculture concerns both the quantity and quality of labour, particularly conditions of work and returns to labour (wages, incomes, profitability), as well as the distribution of labour according to gender and age.

### ► The need for new evidence: The JobAgri project

While there are many agricultural surveys and statistical sources of information on rural areas in sub-Saharan Africa, very few are dedicated to labour issues. The majority of existing databases mostly offer information about production, input use, and major farm characteristics (size, equipment, labour), but do not provide specific information related to the labour content of different productions, types of farms and

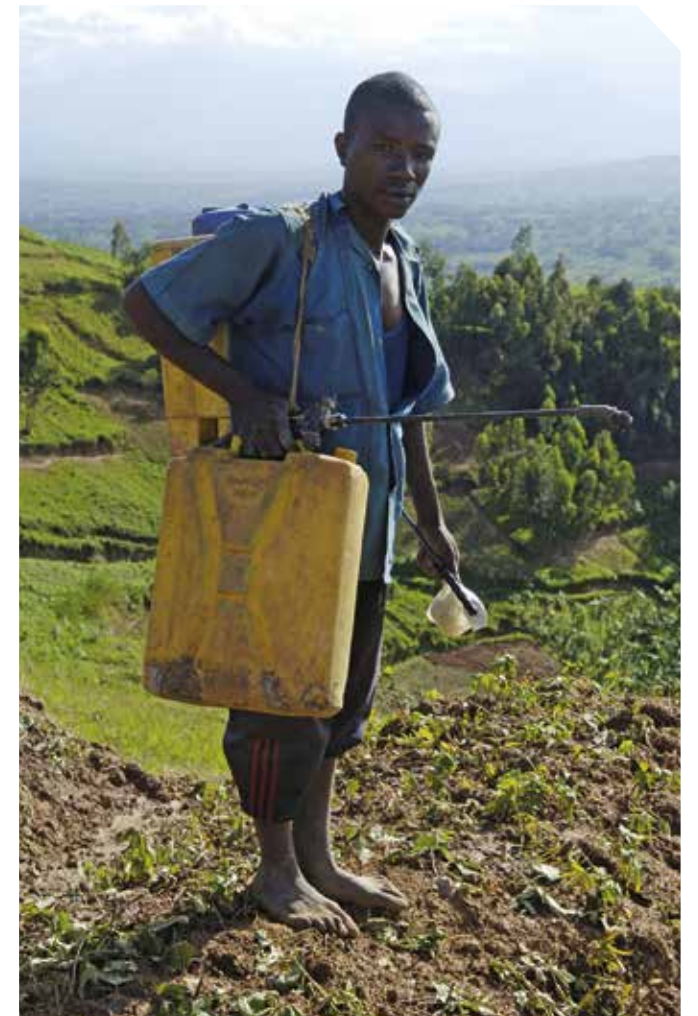
techniques. Upstream (input supply systems and services) and downstream (processing and packaging) activities are also rarely addressed. The JobAgri project will investigate the capacity of agriculture and the agri-food sector to create decent employment, through data collection on the labour content of different farming systems and related agricultural development models. Evidence will be collected through representative surveys, based on the sub-national sampling of farms and the selection of major value chains in order to capture the labour content of agricultural activities and upstream and downstream activities, in addition to non-farm activities. Particular attention will be paid to measuring and capturing the labour content in agricultural activities linked to seasonal and part-time work, temporary workers, and family members engaged in farming – critical pieces of information missing from standard surveys implemented. This information will support different simulation exercises and foresight activities based on the development of plausible alternative futures for the sector and the food system. Of critical importance, the project includes a policy component, including policy dialogue, dissemination and policy design and implementation support.

The main goal of this project is to fill this knowledge gap in order to support policy making by identifying best development options in different contexts, and to provide guidance to support job-rich investments in agricultural value chains. Ultimately, the project aims at contributing to building a sound evidence base to address sub-Saharan African structural challenges.



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The project will directly contribute to the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Ouagadougou +10 Plan of Action, international and national efforts towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the renewed Africa - Europe partnership, including the New Africa - Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investments and Jobs (launched by the European Commission in September 2018) and the international components of the 2019 European Green Deal.



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## ► Proposed budget

The budget for implementing the programme in eight countries – the minimum number of countries to allow for comparison between different agro-ecologies, farming systems, demographic and economic contexts – is estimated at approximately

**20 000 000€**

In order to implement the programme as envisaged, the ILO, FAO and Cirad have launched a resource mobilization campaign.



## ► About the JobAgri project

The International Labour Office (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (Cirad) are proposing a joint initiative called “JobAgri”. The objective of this project, based on the implementation of specific surveys with an original methodology allowing for international comparisons, is to support effective and job-rich investments in agriculture and agri-food value chains through renewed and innovative knowledge generation on the quantity and quality of labour. Both dimensions remain broadly unknown but are central for guiding policy choices and investments for a job-rich recovery and for supporting innovative transformation pathways in sub-Saharan Africa.



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