EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ADAPT: Policy Innovations to Unlock Climate Finance for Resilient Food Systems in Africa
Africa’s food systems are at the forefront of the global climate crisis, with direct consequences on food security, livelihoods, and incomes. In most African countries, food systems are a key pillar of livelihoods and national GDP: nearly half of the continent’s workforce is employed in agriculture and the sector contributes to an average of 20 percent of GDP. Climate change has already caused a reduction in agricultural productivity growth by 34 percent since 1961. Droughts have claimed the lives of more than half a million people and led to economic losses of more than US$ 70 billion in the past 50 years. Warming beyond the 2°C mark will cause crop yields to fall by up to 20 percent and extreme weather events are likely to cost the continent US$ 50 billion annually by 2050. Future projected changes in the length of growing seasons (shorter) and increasing water stress are likely to exacerbate the challenges faced by food systems in Africa. Adaptation to climate risks and shocks is crucial and must form a part of overall efforts to build resilience while simultaneously reducing climate risks by bending down the warming curve, and adopting nature-based climate solutions for emission reductions, such as agroforestry, sustainable land and soil management.

For African countries to improve their preparedness, adapt to climate change, and build resilient food systems requires effective institutions and governance, innovation, and investments in environmentally sound technologies and infrastructure. Access to climate finance is critical to ensure increased resilience and to limit the adverse impacts of climate change. However, the continent’s access to international climate finance remains low and insufficient, with total estimated access at only 5 percent of the global finance available.

Building resilience and adaptation to climate change has therefore been elevated to a top policy priority by the African Union, demonstrated by the adoption of the 2022 Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan and the 2021 African Union Green Recovery Action Plan. Equally, the Africa Common Position on the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit outlines strategies to tackle the challenges caused by climate change as well as the measures and investments needed to strengthen climate resilience in Africa’s food systems. In turn, African countries are stepping up and investing significant national resources in response to climate change.

Given the degree of vulnerability of Africa’s food systems and the implications of too little being done too late, calls have been issued for urgent action to unlock additional climate adaptation finance and to meet existing commitments that will make US$ 100 billion available to developing countries annually. As shown in this report, a wide range of innovative financing tools and mechanisms exist to mobilize additional finance from both the public and the private sectors. Moreover, our analysis of the policy and institutional innovations in four systematically selected African countries – Benin, Mali, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe – provides examples of effective government action to leverage climate adaptation finance for food systems transformation.

In this report, the Malabo Montpellier Panel hence makes the following recommendations to mobilize climate adaptation finance for resilient food systems:

- Systematically align the food and climate agendas.
- Build the technical knowledge and capacity that straddles climate, agriculture, and finance across government.
- Mainstream climate change adaptation and resilience-building activities into policies and investment decision-making across government.
- Develop a pipeline of bankable projects focused on food systems and related infrastructures and supported by investible adaptation plans.
- Support locally led adaptation efforts to ensure that resilience-building interventions meet the needs of the most vulnerable and have a sustainable impact.
- Scale up efforts to attract private capital for adaptation across food systems.
- Design reliable tracking mechanisms and simple digital tools to record climate finance flows at the national level.
- Streamline, coordinate, and rationalize policies at donor institutions to unlock opportunities for recipient countries to access more and better finance.
Endnotes


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