

**Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Agriculture and Agribusiness Management (CESAAM):
An Eastern and Southern Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence Project at Egerton
University, Kenya**

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Abstract

Food insecurity and poverty remain the major challenges to Africa's development, affecting about 33% of its population. Among the key contributing factors to food insecurity are occurrence of frequent droughts, rampant crop and livestock diseases, poor infrastructure, poor policies, poor market access, high input costs, inadequate technical capacity and limited technologies and innovations. One key approach in addressing the above challenges is to build capacity along the agricultural value chain through strengthening of agricultural training, promotion and up scaling of promising technologies. The Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Agriculture and Agribusiness Management (CESAAM) at Egerton University, Kenya, is modelled to address the above issues. Egerton University has a long history of agricultural training and research, and is centrally placed within the Eastern Africa region. The region has a number of countries emerging from conflict that need to re-build their human capacity to address food insecurity. The broad objective of CESAAM is to contribute to sustainable agricultural and agribusiness management through capacity development, research and technology transfer for enhanced food security. The specific objectives are: (i) to develop capacity along the Agricultural Value Chain (AVC) in the Eastern and Southern Africa region, especially for the fragile and post-conflict states, (ii) to undertake innovative research, including use of biotechnology and climate smart agriculture, for increased crop and livestock productivity, (iii) enhance the capacity of the Egerton University's Agro-Science Park to assist partner universities establish a similar model for incubation of technological innovations, and (iv) to develop evidence-based agricultural policy briefs and disseminate best practices through Agricultural Knowledge Centres at Egerton and partner universities. Key activities of

CESAAM are focused towards: building capacity of partner institutions to undertake quality teaching and research, improving research laboratories, and improving innovation and incubation capacities of national and regional partner institutions to support agro-enterprise development. CESAAM will contribute towards the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture. Development Programme (CAADP) pillar 4 thrust on strengthening agricultural research, technology dissemination and adoption. Thus, its expected outputs include increased capacity to conduct quality training and research nationally and regionally, well equipped and functional research laboratories, increased innovation products, increased dissemination of agricultural best practices and evidence-based policy briefs. The cumulative impacts of these outputs are increased productivity along the value chain and improved food and nutrition security.

Key words: ACE II, Agribusiness Management, Centres of Excellence, Egerton University, Eastern and Southern Africa, Sustainable Agriculture