

Quarterly

January – March, 2025

# Newsletter

Dear Readers,

In this issue, we are delighted to share the highlights of our impactful work and engagements in the January to March 2025 quarter. From the successful 14<sup>th</sup> Eminent Speaker Series event that we conducted with our partners: National Planning Commission, LUANAR, GIZ Malawi and Oxfam, to the significant collaborative engagement with the Water Resilience Tracker team.

We are also pleased to share the highlights of our validation and dissemination workshops for the Agriculture Public Expenditure Report that we conducted with the World Bank. The newsletter also presents a summary of our various research outcomes on key issues that are vital to the national conversation on agriculture policy. This issue also highlights our activities under the Transformative Initiatives (TI) for Food Systems project.



Mr. William Chadza - Executive Director

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## POLICY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

## EMINENT SPEAKER CALLS FOR MORE INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION TO TRANSFORM FOOD SYSTEMS IN MALAWI

The MwAPATA Institute, National Planning Commission (NPC) and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) in partnership with Oxfam organized and conducted the 14<sup>th</sup> Ndizotheka Eminent Speaker Series (ESS) session, with financial support from Germany Cooperation through GIZ. Speaking during the event, the Eminent Speaker Dr. Greenwell Matchaya urged stakeholders in the Agricultural sector to invest more in Agricultural research and innovation to achieve food systems transformation in Malawi. Dr. Matchaya who is currently the Senior International Researcher at Consultative Group on International Agriculture Research (CGIAR) also emphasized on the need to improve the performance of the key players in the food systems, not only in production, but also in processing, aggregation and other areas while... **(To page 2)**



# Use of Agri-AI Proposed at the 14<sup>th</sup> ESS

(From page 1) ... working along the value chains. Dr. Matchaya's presentation was in accordance with the theme for the 14<sup>th</sup> Ndizotheka Eminent Speaker Series which was "Leveraging Food Systems Transformation to Achieve livelihoods resilience, Nutrition Security and Environment Sustainability in Malawi". The presentation also included recommendations for improving the performance of various key players in Malawi's food systems. According to Dr. Matchaya, one of the areas that the Malawian agricultural sector needs to seriously consider is the incorporation of modern emerging technology, including pro-agriculture Artificial intelligence (AI).

Dr. Matchaya said the country needs to invest in modern technologies like AI to improve efficiency in different areas of the food systems, as other countries have already done. Speaking during a panel discussion following Matchaya's

presentation, the Ministry of Agriculture representative, Doshani Kadokera called for collaborative efforts to improve food systems. According to Kadokera, making recommendations to the government alone is not enough; rather, all stakeholders ought to share responsibilities in implementing the recommended strategies for improving the food systems in the country.

Oxfam Malawi's Programme Manager for Livelihood Resilience, Steve Kuliyaizi said the event was so vital as it provided stakeholders a good platform to brainstorm possible strategies to transform food systems in Malawi. In his remarks, Kuliyaizi commended the MwAPATA Institute, GIZ, NPC and LUANAR for collaborating well with Oxfam in organizing the event.

The 14<sup>th</sup> ESS was held at Bingu International Convention Centre (BICC) in Lilongwe on 29 January 2025.



Dr. Greenwell Matchaya speaking during the 14<sup>th</sup> Eminent Speaker Series at BICC in Lilongwe

## Stakeholders Validate the Agriculture Public Expenditure Report

On January 27 and 28, 2025, the MwAPATA Institute in partnership with the World Bank held validation and dissemination workshops respectively, for the Malawi Agriculture Public Expenditure Report (AgPER) at Sunbird Capital Hotel in Lilongwe. The report is an outcome of a study conducted by the Institute from 2023 to December 2024. During the validation workshop, MwAPATA Institute's Research Analysts,

Mr. Zephaniah Nyirenda and Mrs. Dinah Saloga, along with Research Fellows Dr. Christone Nyondo and Dr. Anderson Gondwe, presented key findings and policy recommendations to the government stakeholders, including the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture Mr. Geoffrey Mamba.

In response to the presented report, the stakeholder asked questions and made comments for the researchers to

consider revising before publishing the final report.

During the dissemination workshop, the AgPER with incorporated input from the validation exercise was presented to a diverse group of public and private sector stakeholders, including development partners and the media.



Mr. Zephaniah Nyirenda (standing) making the presentation on the AgPER findings



Dr. Anderson Gondwe presenting policy recommendations from the AgPER



# MwAPATA Staff Participate in GIZ Training on Leadership in Food Systems Transformation



Blessme Phiri (left) and Dr. Anderson Gondwe (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) during the training



Participants at the training pausing for a group photo on the last day of the workshop

GIZ Malawi in partnership with the MwAPATA Institute, Civil Society Organization Nutrition Alliance (CSONA) and Civil Society Agriculture Network (CISANET), is implementing the Transformation Initiative for Food Systems (TI) project. As part of capacity building for the project team, GIZ organized training on Transformative Leadership in Food Systems Programming, which is facilitated by Korumo Consultants. The training started in October 2024 and has been conducted in phases, which include individual coaching sessions.

From Tuesday, 28 January 2025 to Thursday, 30 January 2025, two members of the MwAPATA Institute staff who are the Research Fellow Dr. Anderson Gondwe and the Communications Officer Blessme Phiri participated in the second Transformative Leadership Programme workshop together with other participants from GIZ Malawi, CISONA, CISANET and the Local Government representatives from Dedza, Chikwawa and Mzimba district councils. This was the second phase of the training following the first training workshop conducted in October 2024.

The training seeks to accelerate transformative leadership for food systems change in Malawi. Key leadership subjects covered during the second phase of the training include 'Principles of Engagement in Transformative Leadership' as well as 'Gender Diversity and Intersectionality'.

The two members of MwAPATA staff who participated in the workshop will continue to put such leadership skills into practice during and even after the implementation of the TI project. The training workshop was held in Lilongwe at Kumbali Lodge.



Representatives from MwAPATA and WRT having discussions during the meeting

## MwAPATA and the Water Resilience Tracker Team Discuss Potential Partnership

The MwAPATA Institute and the Water Resilience Tracker (WRT) team held a bilateral meeting on Friday, 7th March 2025, to explore potential areas of collaboration in supporting the delivery of climate actions. The meeting, which was held at the Institute's offices in Area 10, Lilongwe, also aimed to align both the MwAPATA Institute and WRT on potential priorities for planning and implementation of climate resilience actions during the upcoming implementation phase.

Representing the MwAPATA Institute in the meeting were the Executive Director Mr. William Chadza and three Research Fellows namely Dr. Anderson Gondwe, Dr. Christone Nyondo and Dr. Maggie Munthali.



# Research Outcomes Published in the Quarter (January – March, 2025)

## Agricultural Diversification Strategies and Rural Household Food Security and Income in Malawi (Working Paper)

Date of Publication: February 25, 2025

The study identifies the agricultural diversification strategies adopted by farming households in Malawi; assesses how household welfare varies with the identified diversification strategies; and identifies factors associated with household participation in the various agricultural diversification strategies.

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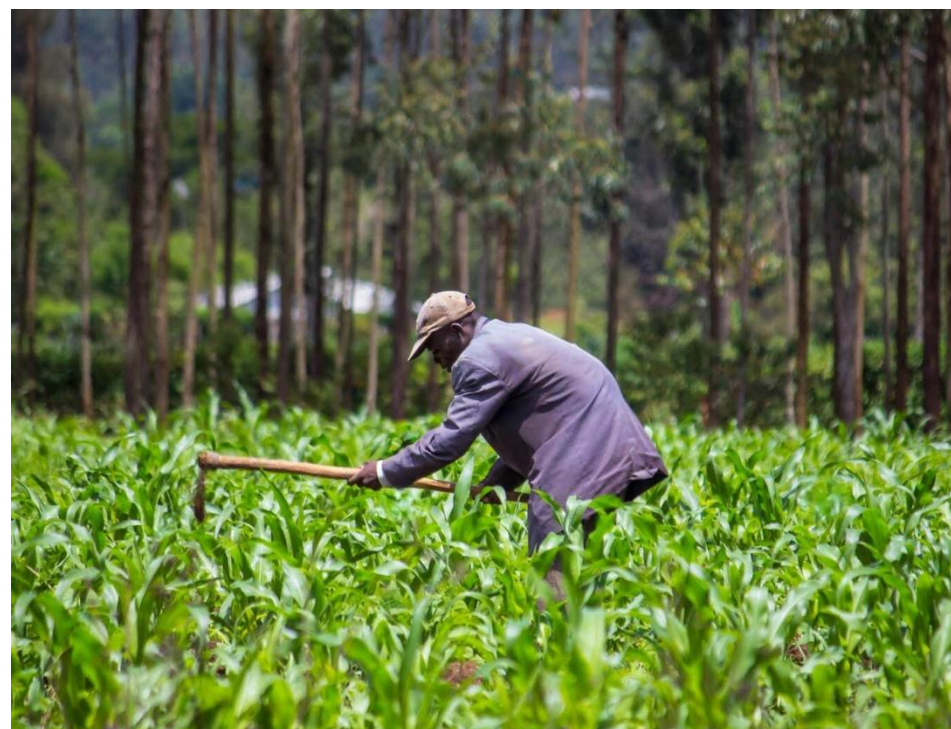


## Agricultural Diversification and Commercialization of Smallholder Farming in Malawi: Extent, Drivers, Impacts and Policy Options (Working Paper)

Date of Publication: February 25, 2025

The study presents findings from an in-depth study on diversification and commercialization of smallholder agriculture in Malawi, focusing on various aspects such as, levels, drivers, barriers, and impacts. The findings of this study are significant for policymakers and other stakeholders involved in the agricultural sector and can help shape policies that promote sustainable agriculture and rural development in Malawi.

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## What are the Potential Impacts of Export Mandates on Malawi's Economy and Development Trajectory? (Policy Brief)

Date of Publication: February 3, 2025

This policy brief explores the potential impacts of Export Mandates on Malawi's economy and development plans. It highlights the risks of trade restrictions, including reduced foreign exchange earnings, market distortions, and investment disincentives. At the same time, it examines how these mandates could align with or conflict with key national policies like Malawi 2063, the National Export Strategy II, and agricultural transformation initiatives.

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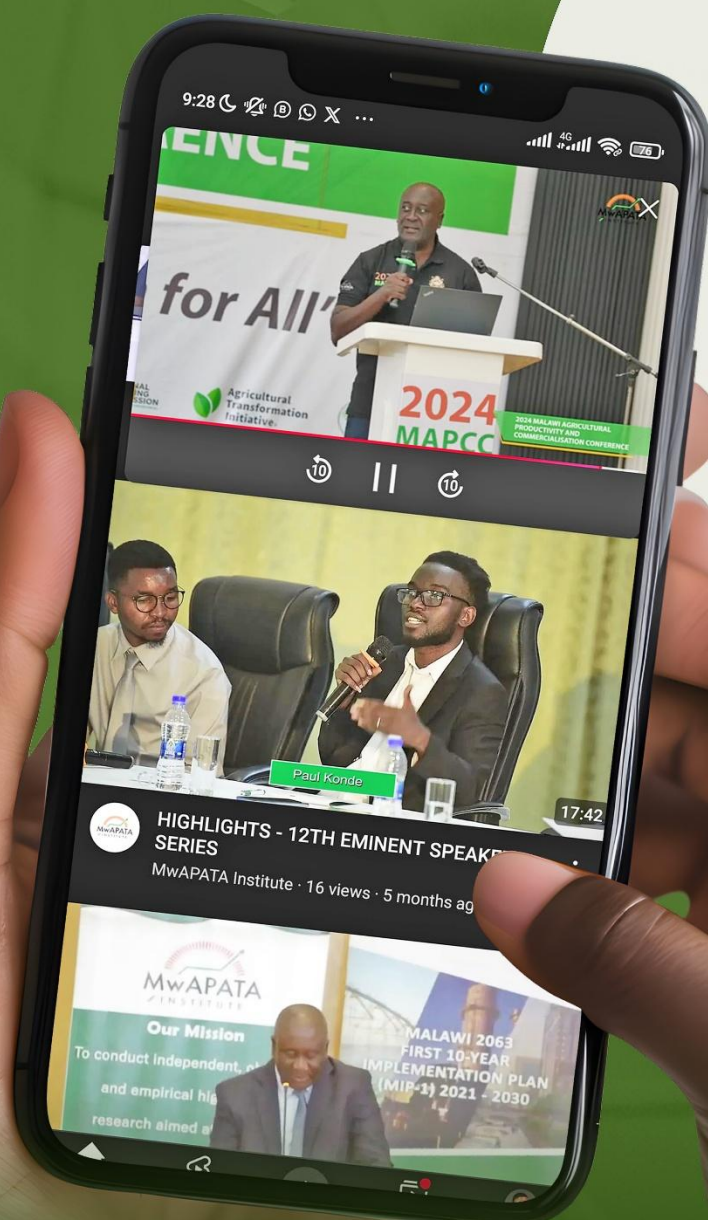
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Evidence Matters for Transformational Impact





# ABOUT MwAPATA

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## Evidence Matters for Transformational Impact

### VISION

Our vision to be a world-class, highly active, credible, and respected local **agricultural policy research think tank** in Malawi, the most sought-after in Africa, and among the most respected in the world.

### MISSION

Our mission is to conduct independent, objective, and empirical high-quality research aimed at **providing innovative and practical recommendations** to inform and improve agricultural sector policies in Malawi

## OUR CORE VALUES

Professionalism/Integrity

Relevance

Independence

Mutual respect

Excellence



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