

AUGUST - DECEMBER, 2025

NEWSLETTER

**CONTRIBUTOR**

Blessme
Phiri

EDITORIAL TEAM

Mr. William
Chadza

Prof. Levison
Chiwaula

Dr. Christone
Nyondo

Mr. Lemekezani K.
Chilora

Dear Reader,

As we close the year 2025, we are pleased to share the highlights of our work conducted between August and December. These include the Malawi Action Plan on Fertilizer and Soil Health (MA-FSH) Stakeholders Workshop, where the instruments for implementing the plan's roadmap were refined. The issue also gives you a glimpse into what transpired at the MwAPATA staff retreat and strategic plan development workshop.

We also showcase some of the research outcomes published in this period. Activities conducted under the GIZ-funded Transformative Initiative for Food Systems in Malawi (TI Malawi) project are also highlighted in this issue.

Lastly, the newsletter shares in a nutshell, some of the activities that demonstrate our involvement in regional research networks, including our participation in the 12th ANAPRI Stakeholder Workshop.

Enjoy the read and stay captivated.



Mr. William Chadza
Executive Director

A group photo of representatives from various stakeholders in the Malawi Action Plan on Fertilizer and Soil Health (MAP-FSH)

Stakeholders Refine the Roadmap for the Malawi Fertilizer and Soil Health Action Plan

The MwAPATA Institute, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture through the Department of Land Resources Conservation, and with participation from public, private, civil society, and development partners, convened a stakeholder workshop to refine the instruments for the implementation of the Malawi Action Plan on Fertilizer and Soil Health (MAP-FSH) 2024 – 2034. The workshop was held at BICC in Lilongwe on 24 November 2025 and was conducted in collaboration with our partners, including the FCDO, AGRA, Sustain Africa, and AUDA-NEPAD.

During the workshop, the stakeholders reviewed and validated the MAP-FSH implementation roadmap, financing and investment plan, as well as the proposed national coordination and governance structure for the MAP-FSH. These instruments are essential for guiding implementation, mobilizing resources, and strengthening multi-stakeholder coordination over the lifespan of the Plan.

In his remarks during the workshop, the MwAPATA Board Chairperson, Professor Richard Mkandawire said that restoring soil health is a clear business as the production of organic fertilizer offers opportunities for young entrepreneurs and women while regenerating the soil. Professor Mkandawire added that the fertilizer and soil health sector can drive both environmental sustainability and economic growth if properly supported.

MwAPATA Participates in the 12th ANAPRI Stakeholders Conference

The MwAPATA Institute participated in the 12th ANAPRI Annual Stakeholders' Conference in Kigali, Rwanda from 4th to 6th November 2025. The conference provided a platform for strategic dialogue on how African countries can respond to the compounding challenges facing their food systems.

During the conference, stakeholders in the agriculture policy research and food systems sectors discussed and identified policy options and investment pathways that balance immediate needs with long-term development goals for Africa's food systems transformation. The stakeholders reflected on Africa's food systems in a rapidly changing global environment and co-created pathways for resilient and inclusive transformation.

The Executive Director, Mr William Chadza, the Research Director, Professor Levison Chiwaula, Research Fellow Dr Maggie Munthali and Research Analyst Bonface Nankwenya, represented MwAPATA at the conference.



MwAPATA Research Fellow, Mr. Bonface Nankwenya (middle) with other participants at the 12th ANAPRI Stakeholders Conference



Chilora - Among the 2025 - 2026 AMIE Mentees

MwAPATA Research Analyst Selected into the 2025 – 2026 AMIE Mentoring Program

Research Analyst, Mr. Lemekezani Chilora was successfully selected into the 2025 – 2026 AMIE Mentoring Program. The AMIE (Association for Mentoring and Inclusion) program provides guidance to Ph.D. students in economics, public policy, applied economics, and agricultural economics, based in any country. It also supports students who may face barriers to academic advancement, including those who have limited access to elite academic networks. Chilora's research focuses on land transactions, climate change, agricultural and food policy, nutrition, and environment and natural resource valuation.



The Executive Director Mr. William Chadza (standing) making a presentation to the staff during the strategic plan development workshop

MwAPATA Develops the 2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan

The MwAPATA Institute staff conducted a three-day strategic plan development workshop and retreat at Kalipano Hotel in Dowa. The workshop was conducted from December 6th to 8th, 2025. During the workshop, the staff reviewed the Institute's 2020 – 2025 Strategic Plan and collectively developed the new 2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan.

The workshop started with a reflection of the institute's present situation through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. In addition, the staff appreciated the results of the stakeholders' feedback survey conducted by the institute. Such reflection led to the rethinking of the institute's strategic pillars, goals, objectives, vision and activities planned for the period of 2026 to 2030.

The MwAPATA staff also carried out various team-building activities during the retreat. These included outdoor physical games like football and high jump as well as indoor games such as playing cards.

Dr Maggie Munthali Participates in the Youth Inclusion in Agriculture Dialogue



Research Fellow, Dr. Maggie Munthali making her presentation at the Youth Inclusion in Agriculture Dialogue

Research Fellow, Dr Maggie Munthali, participated in the Youth Inclusion in Agriculture Dialogue, convened by Point of Progress at Chikho Hotel in Mponela on 30 September 2025. The dialogue aimed to promote inclusive agricultural transformation in Malawi by positioning youth and women at the centre of agribusiness, value addition, and market access. As Malawi's agriculture policy think tank, the Mwapata Institute was invited to the dialogue to deliver a technical presentation at the beginning of the programme, sharing evidence, research insights, and policy recommendations that highlight challenges and opportunities for youth in agriculture and food systems.

Representing Mwapata, Dr Maggie made a presentation titled "Evidence-Based Insights on Youth in Agrifood systems: Extent, Challenges and Opportunities". Among key things, the presentation highlighted some major policy gaps that Malawi is facing in terms of youth inclusion in agriculture. The gaps include: limited youth-specific financing mechanisms; limited access to land; limited access to technology; and low profitability of agriculture enterprises or poor returns on investment.

The presentation also highlighted policy recommendations such as the need to support the development of agricultural youth groups or associations; to modernize the agriculture and food systems sector; and to enhance financial literacy and inclusion among the youth. The dialogue serves as the beginning of a series of initiatives that will ensure youth and women remain central in shaping policies and programmes that advance agricultural transformation and contribute to the aspirations of Malawi Vision 2063, Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

AGRA Awards Grant to Mwapata and NYCOM for the LEAP4YOUTH Initiative

The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) awarded a grant of USD 400,000 to the Mwapata Institute and the National Youth Council of Malawi (NYCOM) to implement a two-year initiative titled "Enhancing Inclusive Youth-Led Platforms for Evidence-Based Agricultural Policy Making and Implementation in Malawi (LEAP4YOUTH)." Running from 1 November 2025 to 31 October 2027, the LEAP4YOUTH project seeks to strengthen youth participation in Malawi's agricultural policy processes by establishing institutionalized platforms that empower young people to shape, monitor, and implement policies driving agricultural transformation.

Following the award, Mwapata and NYCOM conducted an inception meeting for the project on 20 November 2025 at the Mwapata Office. Representing Mwapata at the meeting were the Research Fellow Dr. Maggie Munthali as well as Research Analysts, Mr Bonface Nankwenya and Mr Lemekezani Chilora. During the inception meeting, the LEAP4YOUTH project team discussed and refined the project plans, including the proposed interventions, expected outcomes, indicators of success and monitoring plans.

Under the project, Mwapata Institute will lead evidence generation and the development of policy knowledge products, while NYCOM will coordinate youth engagement, advocacy, and capacity-building activities. The project is expected to directly reach 10,000 youths, with at least half of them being young women across priority value chains, including maize, soybean, groundnuts, poultry, horticulture, and beekeeping.



NYCOM and Mwapata teams during the LEAP4YOUTH Inception meeting



A group photo of the Minister of Agriculture (4th from left) with leaders from key stakeholders and partners in the Malawi Action Plan on Fertilizer and Soil Health (MAP-FSH) including the MWAPATA Executive Director Mr. William Chadza (1st from left)

Ministry of Agriculture Applauds MwAPATA and Partners for Supporting the Development of Malawi Fertiliser and Soil Health Action Plan

On 20th August 2025, the MwAPATA Institute joined various partners, including the World Bank, IFAD and AGCOM, in supporting the Ministry of Agriculture as it launched the Malawi Fertiliser and Soil Health Action Plan (MAP-FSH) 2024-2034. The plan aims at improving soil health, increasing agricultural productivity, and enhancing food security in Malawi.

Minister of Agriculture Hon. Sam Dalitso Kawale, officially launched the MAP-FSH at BICC in Lilongwe. During the launch, the minister made remarks calling for strong collaboration and support from stakeholders in the implementation of the plan. He also applauded various partners and stakeholders who contributed to the development of the plan, including the MWAPATA Institute, which serves as the Secretariat for a multi-stakeholder platform that coordinates the implementation of the MAP-FSH.

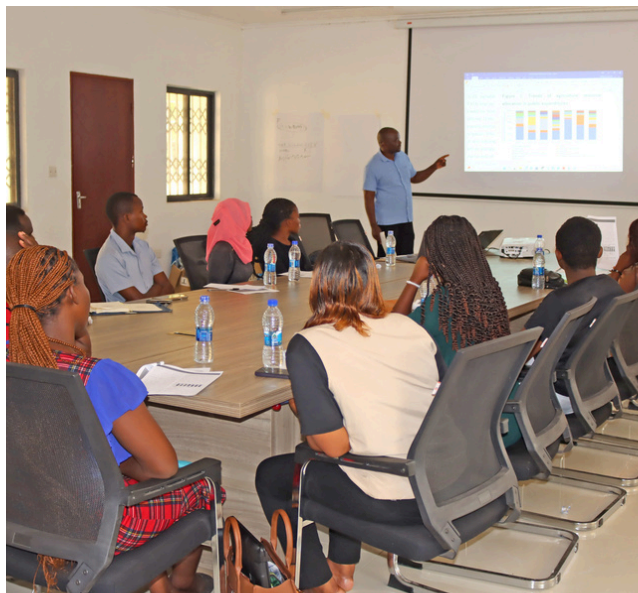
Representing the MwAPATA Institute at the launch event was our Executive Director, Mr. William Chadza. He was joined by many other representatives from various stakeholders, including the academia, research institutions, development partners, technical experts, farmers' organizations, the private sector and civil society organizations.

Dr Munthali Shares opportunities in the Non-Timber Forest Products at the NTFRs Webinar

Research Fellow, Dr Maggie Munthali, was the Guest Speaker at the "Unlocking Opportunities in Non-Timber Forest Resources (NTFRs) for Sustainable Livelihoods" Webinar, on 17th November 2025. The webinar was an interactive session that spotlighted inspiring youth-led enterprises in baobab processing and beekeeping, showcasing how innovation in NTFRs could drive green entrepreneurship, climate resilience, and inclusive development. Dr Munthali's presentation highlighted insights on the existing diverse. The presentation also highlighted research-based policy recommendations for the creation of an enabling environment in the NTFR based enterprises.



Local Government Stakeholders Validate Policy Brief on “Policy and Practice: Lessons for Localizing Malawi’s Food Systems Transformation”



Research Fellow, Dr. Anderson Gondwe, making the presentation during the validation workshop in Chikwawa

As part of the GIZ Transformative Initiative for Food Systems in Malawi (TI Malawi) project, the Mwapata Institute developed a Policy Brief titled “Policy and Practice: Lessons for Localizing Malawi’s Food Systems Transformation”, which will be useful in informing the localization of global and regional policy frameworks for the transformation of food systems at the country level. The Policy Brief draws on data and information from three primary sources, including consultations with local government stakeholders from Dedza, Mzimba and Chikwawa—the three pilot districts for the TI Malawi Project.

From 6th to 10th October 2025, Mwapata conducted district-based workshops in the three districts to validate the Policy Brief. Research Fellow, Dr Anderson Gondwe and Communications Officer, Mr Blessme Phiri, facilitated the validation workshops. At each district, the Mwapata team presented the Policy Brief to key district council focal persons, including the Director of Planning and Development (DPD), Agriculture Officers, Nutrition Officers, Environmental Officers, and CSO Representatives.

Responding to the presented Policy Brief, the district stakeholders provided their input on areas that require review or further research. For instance, Mzimba DPD’s Mr Walter Chikuni suggested that the recommendations in the Policy Brief should not only be addressed to central government policymakers but also to local government decision-makers. Following the validation workshops, Mwapata refined the Policy Brief and submitted it to GIZ for further review before publication.

15th Eminent Speaker Challenges the “Food for the Poor” Cultural Stigma Towards Neglected and Under-Utilized Food Crops

Professor Moses Maliro from the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) called for the promotion of consumer awareness and demand creation as one of the strategic pathways to maximize utilization of Neglected and Under-Utilized Species (NUS). Prof. Maliro made the call during his presentation at the 15th Eminent Speaker Series (ESS) held at Sunbird Capital Hotel in Lilongwe on 14 November 2025.

The Eminent Speaker, Prof. Maliro’s presentation was titled “Promoting Neglected and Under-Utilized Food Crops: Pathway to Diversified and Resilient Food Systems”. The presentation highlighted several key barriers to the promotion of NUS which include Policy and institutional neglect of NUS, Weak seed systems and market infrastructure, Limited research and characterization, as well as the Consumer’s Cultural stigma as ‘food for the poor’. As such, the presentation called for consumer awareness, strengthening of farmer-led seed systems, and integration of NUS into agricultural and nutrition policies.

The 15th ESS was organized by the Mwapata Institute, in collaboration with LUANAR, the National Planning Commission, and OXFAM, with support from NORA. The ESS aimed at amplifying the importance of local food plants in contributing to a sustainable, diversified, and resilient agri-food system. Apart from the main speaker’s presentation, the event also brought together some experts through a panel discussion where they shared insights from various perspectives towards the promotion of NUS. The discussant for the panel discussion was Dr Mangani Katundu from UNIMA. The panelists were Mr Hebert Mwalukomo from CEPA, Dr Lawrent Pungulani from DARS, Mr Edwin Munthali from CISANET and Mr Phillip Tegha from MAGNET.



Prof. Moses Maliro speaking during the 15th Eminent Speaker Series Session

MwAPATA Finance Team Participates at 2025 ICAM Annual Conference



Ms Mercy Chirwa and Mr Ernest Mfune from MwAPATA at the 2025 ICAM Annual Lakeshore Conference

The Finance and Administration Manager, Ms Mercy Chirwa and the Finance and Administration Officer, Mr Ernest Mfune attended the 2025 Institute of Chartered Accountants in Malawi (ICAM) Annual Lakeshore Conference, held from 21st to 23rd August 2025 at Sun 'n' Sand Holiday Resort in Mangochi. Conference convened under the theme 'From Awareness to Action: Catalyzing Malawi's Economic Resilience and Sustainable Growth'. The conference brought together 1,426 delegates, including accountancy and finance professionals, researchers, entrepreneurs, and other key stakeholders from various institutions. The sessions at the conference were designed to provide a dynamic platform for in-depth discussion on pressing economic issues and to focus on practical solutions for the sustainable growth of Malawi's economy.

During the conference, officially opened by Mr Efreem Chilima, Acting Country Manager for the World Bank in Malawi, expert presenters and participants explored innovative strategies for navigating economic uncertainties, emphasizing adaptation, innovation, and resilience in the finance sector. Among the various observations and resolutions that the delegates made at the conference was the need to rethink the critical elements for a sustained turnaround of the country's economic fortunes. The delegates agreed that the structure of the economy remains unchanged and is overly dependent on subsistence agriculture. Critical strategic thinking to increase agricultural productivity and commercialization through scaling up, irrigation, winter cropping, commercial farming, supply chain management and effective marketing are some of the critical elements for a sustained transformation of the country's economy.

 A graphic with an orange background featuring a laptop and a smartphone displaying the MwAPATA website. The website shows sections for 'RECENT EVENTS' and 'NEW RESEARCH'. Social media icons for Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and X are shown. Text encourages following MwAPATA on these platforms for updates and to access research publications for free.

Follow us
on Facebook, LinkedIn, X and YouTube for updates of our research activities. Visit our website www.mwapata.mw to access our research publications for free.

www.mwapata.mw P.O. Box 30883, Linds Street, Off Chapemba Road, Area 10-10B, Lilongwe, Malawi info@mwapata.mw +265 (0) 887 403 004/005

Evidence for Transformation #E4T

 A graphic with an orange background featuring a hand holding a smartphone displaying a video from the MwAPATA YouTube channel. A 'SUBSCRIBE' button with a bell icon is shown. Text encourages watching videos of various activities and research dissemination events.

SUBSCRIBE
TO OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL
Mwapata Institute

Watch
videos of our various activities and research dissemination events

www.mwapata.mw P.O. Box 30883, Linds Street, Off Chapemba Road, Area 10-10B, Lilongwe, Malawi info@mwapata.mw +265 (0) 887 403 004/005

Evidence for Transformation #E4T

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR!
2026**

About MwAPATA



Evidence for Transformation



VISION

To be a sustainable, world-class, Malawian agricultural policy research think-tank.

MISSION

To generate credible evidence for policy engagement, formulation, and implementation support.

OUR CORE VALUES

Professionalism

Relevance

Independence

Mutual Respect

Excellence

Sustainability