



## Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://feedthefuture.gov/article/harvest-meet-market-how-new-fund-will-accelerate-agricultural-infrastructure-africa>

# Harvest, Meet Market: How a New Fund Will Accelerate Agricultural Infrastructure in Africa



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Since 1964, the [African Development Bank](#) (AfDB) has worked with African countries to develop their economies and progress socially.

This week, with the AfDB and Government of Sweden, we [launched](#) a first-of-its-kind effort to expand this progress and growth. The Agriculture Fast Track will encourage private sector investment in agricultural infrastructure projects to advance food security in Sub-Saharan Africa. In doing so, it supports Africa's agriculture transformation agenda.

### Incentivizing investment in agriculture

Historically, the private sector hesitated to invest in agriculture in Africa—and for good business reasons. Investing in agriculture has inherent risks, including drought, crop and livestock diseases and fluctuating crop prices. Agriculture projects can have high start-up costs because systems and facilities must be developed before they can begin making a profit. Given these challenges, it can be difficult for African countries and their development partners to create lasting improvements in food security.

That's why we are so excited about renewed efforts to tackle these challenges in order to catalyze private investment that can spur economic growth while reducing hunger and undernutrition. Following the lead of African nations, efforts like the [New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition](#) have coupled tough regulatory policy reforms with private investment commitments in agriculture. African leadership has driven these efforts forward, with governments undertaking transparent market-oriented reforms that encourage private investment and reduce barriers to agriculture-led economic growth.

### Bridging the last mile

But the last mile linking farms to markets still needs to be strengthened.

Smallholder farmers in Africa are some of the poorest and hungriest people in the world. And while the world has worked to reach them with the tools, skills and knowledge they need to increase their crops, farmers also need infrastructure.

Agriculture infrastructure reduces the risks farmers face—for instance by providing irrigation so farmers don't rely solely on erratic rainfall to water their crops. It also provides ways for farmers to get their harvests to markets (and buyers, and ultimately to tables) quicker, like on nicely paved roads, and helps preserve harvests longer, using electricity and modern preservation and processing facilities.

The Agriculture Fast Track addresses this challenge head on. It is the first and only fund exclusively focused on infrastructure for agriculture and food security. As a New Alliance deliverable aimed at addressing barriers to agricultural development, it defrays front-end development costs and risks the private sector is unwilling to shoulder alone.

Operationally, the Agriculture Fast Track will fund technical assistance for public and private sector organizations seeking to create agricultural infrastructure projects. By providing grants for activities like scoping assessments, feasibility studies, market analyses, and social impact investments, the Agriculture Fast Track will help create a pipeline of projects able to garner the private capital needed to start and complete them.

### **Learn more**

Along with our colleagues at the AfDB and the Government of Sweden, we've developed a variety of materials for you to learn more about the Agriculture Fast Track and the vision we have for it.

- [Watch a video](#) about how the Agriculture Fast Track can transform African agriculture
- [Read a press release](#) about the official launch of the Agriculture Fast Track this week
- [Visit the Agriculture Fast Track pages](#) on the AfDB website for more information and updates

*This post originally [appeared](#) on the USAID IMPACT blog.*