

MALAWI FAP recommendations

A total of 7 key recommendations to address deficiencies and/or opportunities in the FAP area of Malawi's seed system have been developed by the assessment team and vetted with stakeholders. The recommendations are roughly, but not strictly, listed in order of importance or recommended sequencing.

Recommendation #1: Studies on extension models
Description
Support studies of functional private & public extension models in the world and share findings with stakeholders and government through convenings. This study findings may convince the government to increase public extension financial resources and institutional support to both public and private sector extension agents to improve quality, frequency, and outreach of agricultural extension services in more effective and efficient ways to reach all farmer households. These studies can also include a focus on gender and youth inclusivity in extension services.
Key determinants of costs
The associated costs include hiring an expert to carry out studies on public & private extension models that are functional, and farmers are benefiting from them in the world.
Recommendation #2: Training and capacity building
Description
Provide regular training to public and private extension officers and subject matter specialist (SMS) through programs such as in-service training programs, as well as providing widely and freely available training and support materials both physical and online.
Key determinants of costs
The associated costs include: 1) hiring an expert to carry out the training, 2) bringing together public and private extension agents in one location and 3) developing training materials
Recommendation #3: Knowledge management
Description
Establish an online resource database of all relevant extension and agricultural training materials that can easily be accessed by both farmers and extension workers that include lessons on agronomics and cultivation (soil health, seed choice, soil and seed match, agronomic practices such as fertilizer application and spraying) as well as harvesting, post-harvest handling and processing, and marketing.
Key determinants of costs
Costs of developing an online extension resource database including yearly hosting cost and maintenance
Recommendation #4: Advocacy
Description
Strengthen National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) and Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM) to have a voice for advocating with government on extension issues
Key determinants of costs
The associated costs include: 1) convening meetings, 2) gathering and developing evidence and 3) developing training materials

Recommendation #5: Private sector inclusivity
Description
Support strong partnerships between the national/regional government, private extension service providers (e.g., village-based agents, seed company extension workers) and farmers in designing extension plans and programs
Key determinants of costs
Cost of designing extension plans and strategies

Recommendation #6: Feedback mechanisms
Description
Develop a two-way feedback mechanism between farmers and government institutions (Seed Services Unit (SSU), Department of Agricultural Research Services (DARS), etc.) where farmers can give their feedback on seed quality and variety development.
Key determinants of costs
Cost of developing a two-way technological feedback mechanism and cost of promoting of the technology via radio campaign
Additional comments, if needed
This recommendation may also be considered under the thematic area on Quality Assurance

Recommendation #7: Farmer outreach communication
Description
Identify, support and scale functional farmer outreach communication channels such M-Chikumbe and popular agricultural radio programs so that they can reach a lot more farmers
Key determinants of costs
The associated costs include: 1) radio campaigns to popularize identified farmer outreach channels, 2) platform maintenance and hosting and 3) studies to determine the usage of these channels by farmers