



THRIVE
EAST AFRICA

THRIVE in Kenya

Transforming Soil Health, Livelihoods
and Nutrition Through Regenerative
Diversification and Inclusive Value
Chains in East Africa (THRIVE)

At a Glance

The initiative supports East Africa's food security, farm resilience, and economic growth by strengthening sustainable, inclusive value chains for opportunity crops, African Indigenous Vegetables (AIVs), and coffee through diversified regenerative production with Neglected and Underutilized Species (NUS) and enhanced market systems.

The initiative builds upon two interconnected principles: production system diversification and inclusive market systems, using a Public-Private Partnership and living-labs model to co-create context specific, evidence-based solutions jointly with governments, research institutions, and private sector actors.

It is implemented by the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT, in partnership with CIHEAM Bari, ECDPM, and UNIDO, and funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

THE CHALLENGE

East Africa's food systems face multiple challenges, including climate change, soil degradation, biodiversity loss, and malnutrition, compounded by over-reliance on a few staple crops, which leads to low dietary diversity and food insecurity. Despite the region's rich agrobiodiversity, NUS remain marginalized by limited research, underdeveloped markets, and low consumer awareness, while fragmented, informal value chains cause high food loss and inequalities.

In Kenya, African Indigenous Vegetables and other NUS hold proven potential for food security and nutrition. Yet smallholder farmers in the Vihiga–Kisumu–Nakuru–Nairobi and Kisii–Nyamira–Nairobi corridors and vendors in Nairobi and Kisumu's informal settlements, face price volatility, post-harvest losses, high transport costs, and fragmented procurement system, limiting their ability to meet growing urban demand.

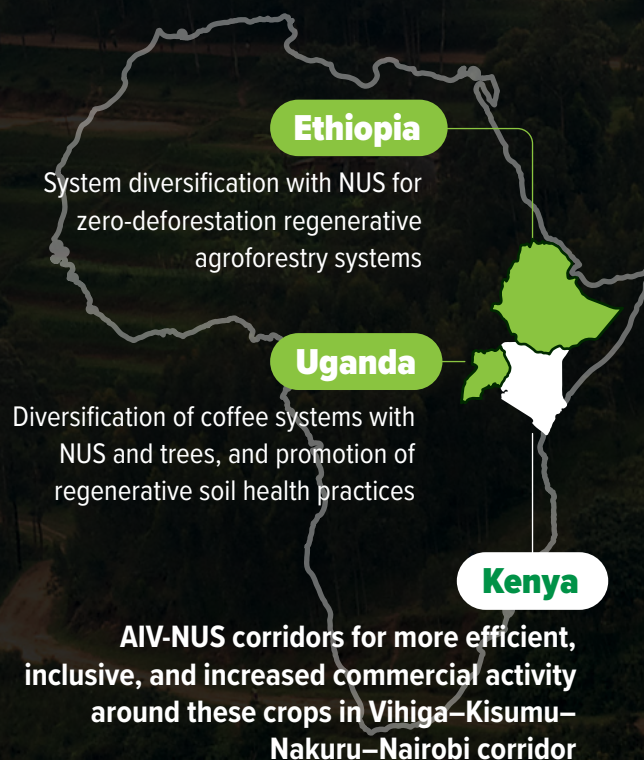
Project Objectives

THRIVE aims to enhance livelihoods of small-scale farmers through market inclusion and regenerative agricultural and agroforestry practices based on diversification with NUS and boosting soil health in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda.

At the regional level, the project leverages the African Seed and Biotechnology Platform (ASBP) working group on opportunity crops, supports regional and national stakeholders in identifying context-appropriate regenerative agricultural practices, guides policy formulation, and promotes linkages with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). It partners with CIHEAM Bari's training hub for capacity building in NUS value chains and policy alignment.

Project Locations

THRIVE focuses on three target countries, each with a unique outcome.



Project Activities In Kenya

AIV Corridor Coordination & Climate-Resilient Regenerative Production



Establish Multi-Actor Market & Investment Coordination Platforms

Through quarterly dialogues, corridor actors share market needs, pricing signals, quality standards, and demand forecasts, linked to NUS MSPs. Real-time data sources and digital marketplaces help analyze priority crops, volumes, and timing for better production alignment.



Scale AIV/NUS Production Through Seedbanks & Aggregated Farms

Strengthen community seedbanks, promote the adoption of soil-restoring practices through KALRO demonstration plots, support aggregation facilities, and register farmers on KDAP to receive tailored, locally validated, SMS-delivered CSA and market advisories.



Engage Youth and Agritech for Aggregation & Logistics

Recruit and train 50 youth as market facilitators and organize weekly aggregation days. Select at least 10 agritech companies and off-takers for a matchmaking event.

Market Access & Demand



Strengthen Collective Procurement for Urban Vendors

Forms vendor groups with at least 300 informal vendors/MSMEs from Vihiga–Kisumu, Nakuru and Nairobi clusters, links trained youth facilitators with institutional buyers; engages agritech companies and off-takers for demand aggregation, and surplus processing.



Establish Institutional Buyer Linkages

Links farmer groups with schools, hospitals, and feeding programs in Vihiga, Kisumu, Nakuru, and Nairobi. Maps food procurement budgets, pilots structured supply agreements or regular deliveries, and explores digital ordering platforms for institutional buyers.



Launch AIV Demand Generation Campaigns

Boosts demand through targeted co-designed communication on AIV health benefits, food safety, and establishes BCC partnerships with NGOs/CSOs on behavior change communication and consumer education.

Access to Finance & Investment



Enhance Access to Finance and Insurance

Map finance and insurance providers, facilitate negotiations for small-scale farmers and intermediaries through cooperatives, including access to county subsidies, and identify critical capacity gaps that limit engagement with financial markets.



Engage the Enterprise Support Organization

Engage an Enterprise Support Organization to conduct business audits and deliver tailored training across 10 farmer cooperatives, and facilitate a deal room where at least 5 investment-ready cooperatives sign formal agreements.

Project Outcomes in Kenya



7,000 smallholder AIV and NUS farmers overcome limited market access, high costs/losses, and year-round production risks through scaled aggregation/linkages



300 market vendors and intermediaries address fragmentation/perishability/capital shortages



50 youth/local enterprises build coordination skills as facilitators



3 AgriTech4Kenya Start-ups will benefit from matchmaking events potentially leading to scaling their innovations (e.g., digital tools to link market supply and demand)



20,000 low-income urban consumers and institutions will benefit from increased availability, and accessibility of nutritious foods ultimately improving diets and nutrition of the most vulnerable. Improved market access and coordination will reduce losses and increase incentives to upscale production.

Linking productivity, processing and logistic improvements with investments promotion will increase access to finance for SMEs and smallholders, ultimately improving their livelihoods. This will strengthen the position of the AIV value chain as a contributor to inclusive economic growth, healthy diets and prosperity in Kenya and regionally.

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Find more about
THRIVE here:



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