

AfDB unveils strategy roadmap to safeguard food security

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has unveiled a strategic roadmap of projects and programmes to assist African countries in tackling the nutrition and food security aspects of the Covid-19 crisis through a raft of immediate and longer-term measures.



Kate HoltAusAID via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

The Feed Africa Response to Covid-19 (FAREC) paves the way for a comprehensive intervention to build resilience, sustainability and regional self-sufficiency in Africa's food systems and help farmers cope with coronavirus-related disruptions to the agricultural value chain.

"The bank's response to support the agriculture sector lays out specific measures aimed at addressing challenges faced by African countries across all aspects of the agriculture sector. Africa cannot afford a food crisis in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic," said Dr Jennifer Blanke, the bank's vice president for agriculture, human and social development.

Delivering food security solutions

A report released alongside the roadmap recommends immediate, short- and medium-term solutions for the agriculture sector including; support of food delivery for the most vulnerable; stabilisation of food prices; optimisation of food processing; extension support services, and provision of key agricultural inputs through smart subsidies.

According to the report, the bank will prioritise policy support to enhance the movement of inputs and food, to establish food security task forces in countries, and to strengthen the capacity of regional organisations to monitor multi-country initiatives.

The pandemic has worsened volatility in the price of food staples and complicated food system actors' investment decision-making. The confluence of impacts risks deepening food insecurity and malnutrition. According to the World Food Programme, over 40 million West Africans face food shortages in the coming months.

Cushioning economies and livelihoods

FAREC forms one part of the bank's Covid-19 Response Facility (CRF) of up to \$10bn. The CRF is the bank's primary channel to deploy financial and technical measures to cushion African economies and livelihoods against the health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic.

In May, the bank's African Development Institute, its focal point for capacity development, hosted a seminar that examined the pandemic's impacts on Africa's agri-food systems and offered policy recommendations to make them more resilient and efficient.

"Ensuring food security for Africans in all situations is at the core of the Bank's Feed Africa Strategy. Our institution will coordinate its efforts with different stakeholders across the continent to effectively answer the needs of regional member countries," said Dr Martin Fregene, director of the bank's agriculture and agro-industry department.

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