



ADVOCACY POLICY BRIEF

Strengthening farmers' seed rights and agroecological seed systems in the agriculture budget (fy 2025/2026)

Target audience: Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Livestock, Industry and Trade

Prepared by: MVIWAARUSHA, in collaboration with SHIWAKUTA and the Seed Working Group (SWG)

Context: Parliamentary Session on the Agriculture Sector Budget, Dodoma – April 2025

1. Purpose of the policy brief

This policy brief presents key advocacy messages and budget-related policy recommendations to inform Parliamentary deliberations on the Agriculture Sector Budget for the Financial Year 2025/2026. It draws on evidence and collective positions from MVIWAARUSHA, SHIWAKUTA, and members of the Seed Working Group (SWG), following an advocacy meeting held with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture, Livestock, Industry and Trade on 16 April 2025 in Dodoma.

The brief focuses on strengthening farmers' seed rights, improving access to diverse and quality seeds, and promoting agroecological seed systems as a foundation for sustainable agriculture, climate resilience, and national food security.

2. Background and context

Smallholder farmers produce the majority of food consumed in Tanzania and are the primary custodians of agrobiodiversity. Farmer-managed seed systems, based on local seed selection, saving, exchange, and improvement, remain central to farmers' resilience, particularly in the face of climate variability, rising input costs, and ecological degradation.

Despite their importance, current agricultural policies, seed regulations, and budget allocations continue to prioritize commercial and input-intensive seed systems. Public investment in farmer-led seed initiatives, agroecological research, and extension services remains limited. At the same time, restrictive regulatory frameworks constrain farmers' rights to save, exchange, and market their seeds, undermining local innovation and biodiversity.



3. Key policy and budgetary challenges

- i. Limited public financing for farmer-managed seed systems, despite their contribution to food security and climate adaptation.
- ii. Regulatory barriers within existing seed laws that restrict farmers' seed saving, exchange, and local marketing.
- iii. Insufficient support for agroecological research and extension, particularly at local government level.
- iv. Over-reliance on external and commercial seed inputs, increasing production costs and farmer vulnerability.
- v. Weak integration of agrobiodiversity and climate resilience priorities within agricultural budget frameworks.

4. Why agroecological seed systems matter

- i. Enhanced climate resilience through locally adapted crop varieties;
- ii. Improved food and nutrition security through crop diversity;
- iii. Reduced dependency on costly external inputs;
- iv. Conservation of agrobiodiversity and indigenous knowledge;
- v. Strengthened local economies and farmer autonomy.

5. Key policy recommendations to parliament

MVIWAARUSHA, SHIWAKUTA, and the Seed Working Group respectfully propose the following actions:



1. Increase budgetary allocations to support farmer-managed seed systems, including community seed banks, participatory plant breeding, and local seed multiplication initiatives.
2. Review and reform seed legislation and regulations to recognize and protect farmers' rights to save, exchange, and use seeds, in line with smallholder realities.
3. Allocate dedicated resources for agroecological research and extension, with a focus on farmer-led innovation and climate-resilient practices.
4. Integrate agrobiodiversity and seed diversity indicators into agricultural planning, monitoring, and budget oversight processes.
5. Strengthen collaboration between Parliament, research institutions, and farmer organizations to ensure evidence-based and inclusive policy-making.

6. Implications for the fy 2025/2026 agriculture budget

Incorporating these recommendations into the FY 2025/2026 Agriculture Budget will enhance the effectiveness of public spending by targeting resilient, low-cost, and farmer-centered solutions. Budget support for agroecological seed systems will generate long-term returns through improved productivity, reduced vulnerability to climate shocks, and strengthened national food sovereignty.

7. Conclusion

The Agriculture Sector Budget for FY 2025/2026 represents a critical policy lever for advancing farmers' seed rights and sustainable agriculture in Tanzania. Parliament has a central role in ensuring that public investments and legislative frameworks respond to the realities of smallholder farmers and support agroecological transitions.

MVIWAARUSHA, SHIWAKUTA, and the Seed Working Group remain committed to continued engagement with Parliament and relevant institutions to support reforms that enable resilient, inclusive, and farmer-led seed systems.