

## ABOUT LSMS-ISA

The LSMS-ISA project, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, has now completed the first round of data collection.

- The data are unusually rich, nationally representative, multi-topic household surveys, conducted in Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Niger between 2009 and 2011
- The data are geo-referenced and contain detailed information on agriculture, at the plot level as well as many modules on non-agricultural facets of people's livelihoods (including employment, income, consumption, shocks, assets, nutrition).
- By 2014, all households (and subsets of individuals) will have been revisited a second time, enabling the construction of panel data and more causal analysis.

## THE TEAM

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## THE PROJECT

The Living Standard Measurement Study-Integrated Surveys on Agriculture Initiative (LSMS-ISA) is an updated understanding of the new reality of life in Africa.



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# AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA

TELLING FACTS FROM MYTHS



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Initiative led by Office of the Chief Economist for Africa



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## INTRODUCTION

Governments, donors, and the private sector are taking a renewed interest, and investing billions of dollars in Africa's agriculture. A thorough, bottom up update of the current picture of Africa's agriculture is needed to guide these investments, establish baselines, and ground the agricultural policy dialogues in the latest insights from the ground.

The "Agriculture in Africa at the Dawn of the 21st Century – Telling Facts from Myths" project\* addresses this void, using the Living Standards Measurement Study - Integrated Surveys on Agriculture (LSMS-ISA), which conducts household surveys on 40% of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa on multiple topics.

## THE MYTHS

SOME OF THE COMMON WISDOMS THAT WILL BE REVISITED USING RESULTS FROM THE LSMS-ISA INCLUDE:

1. Modern input use remains dismally low
2. Factor markets remain largely incomplete and imperfect
3. Agricultural labor productivity is low
4. Land is abundant and land markets are poorly developed
5. Access to credit remains low
6. Extension services are poor
7. Agro forestry is gaining traction
8. African agriculture is intensifying
9. Women perform the bulk of Africa's agricultural tasks
10. Seasonality continues to permeate rural livelihoods
11. Smallholder market participation remains limited
12. Post-harvest loss is large.
13. Droughts dominate Africa's risk environment
14. African farmers are increasingly diversifying their incomes.
15. Agricultural commercialization and diversification is good for nutrition



## OF THE POPULATION SURVEYED

The project aims to revisit key assumptions about common wisdoms that used to apply to Africa's agricultural sector which are no longer valid due to, rapid growth and urbanization, the new environment of high (and more volatile) world food prices, continuing soil erosion, and climate change.

## GETTING THE FACTS

IN A FIRST PHASE (JAN 2013-JUNE 2014), THE PROJECT WILL:

- Provide governments and policymakers with a solid, updated, bottom-up picture of Africa's agriculture at the dawn of the 21st century and formulate a series of hypotheses about the mechanisms driving Africa's agricultural performance for in depth follow up analysis.
- Establish a publicly available harmonized cross-country database of core agricultural variables for easy access, tabulation and regional and cross country benchmarking by a wide variety of users, including policymakers and academics as well as private sector investors along the supply chain (including farmers, input providers and agro-processors).
- Stimulate the use of the LSMS-ISA data by a wide community of researchers, students, policy analysts as well as the private sector, including through a call for papers from junior African scholars.

