

# OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS TO THE ADOPTION OF CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE

## WHAT IS CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE (CSA)?

Climate Smart Agriculture is a conceptual framework for agricultural production that seeks to:



- 1) Build resilience to foster adaptation to climate change;
- 2) Sustainably increase agricultural production and incomes;
- 3) Reduce and/or remove greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural production.

## CSA'S ADOPTION BY SMALLHOLDER FARMERS HAS LARGELY BEEN SLOW, PIECEMEAL, AND UNSUSTAINED. WHY?

The current narrative surrounding CSA adoption incorrectly assumes that:

- 1) CSA adoption depends on access to, knowledge about, and implementation of training and technology;
- 2) Technologies work the same in all locations;
- 3) People in different locales share the same motivations; and
- 4) People in the same locale share the same motivations.

## THE CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE BARRIERS AND CONSTRAINTS TO CSA ADOPTION IS PROBLEMATIC.

This is because it fails to address the following:



### MISMATCHED TIMEFRAMES

While smallholder farmers make decisions on hourly to seasonal timeframes, researchers and experts are much more concerned with project timescales (3-5 years), while adaptation programs think on 20 or 30 year timescales. Generally, CSA produces significant costs and challenges at the short term, while benefits emerge over long-term timeframes. Reconciling these very different timeframes is essential to ensuring success in CSA adoption.

### DIVERSE MOTIVATIONS

Different actors have different motivations for their agricultural decisions. The desires of smallholder farmers, for example, will not necessarily match those of technical experts. It is not surprising that research has shown that smallholder farmers often place value on different outcomes, and utilize CSA for different goals than donors or technical experts.



### DIVERSE IMPACTS AND OUTCOMES

Both across areas targeted for CSA implementation and often within the same area, the impacts of technological change will affect communities and individuals differently. As a result, the relevance of particular positive CSA impacts can diverge greatly for different actors. There is no homogenous prescription that will impact constituents equally.

### IN OTHER WORDS...

Technology matters, but CSA adoption is as much about the wider social, political, and institutional environment in which agriculture plays a part, including:

- 1) Broader Livelihoods;
- 2) Identity roles and responsibilities (including gender);
- 3) Decision-making timeframes;
- 4) Farmers' perceptions and management of risk.



# 3-PART INQUIRY

TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE BARRIERS TO CSA ADOPTION, INTEGRA AND CLARK UNIVERSITY DESIGNED A 3-PART INQUIRY TO TRIANGULATE THE RESPONSES FROM LOCAL FARMERS, TECHNICAL EXPERTS, AND RELEVANT LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT.



476 Documents Reviewed



43 Experts Consulted



226 Farmers Interviewed

## KEY FINDINGS

1

### ECONOMICS MATTER, BUT IN COMPLEX WAYS

Unlike technical experts and literature reviews, farmers stress the burden of initial costs much more than long-term and administrative costs. This points to the need to better understand the different CSA costs relevant to targeted farmers, as well as a better understanding of the seasonal decision-making processes that underpin farmers' lives.

2

### MARKET FORCES AND STRONG INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FORM THE FOUNDATIONS OF CSA ADOPTION

The CSA literature, technical experts, and farmers agree: having a good support system of government institutions, resilient markets, and strong land tenure frameworks are key to supporting CSA adoption.

3

### FOR SUCCESSFUL ADOPTION, CSA PRACTICES MUST BE ALIGNED WITH SOCIETY AND CULTURAL VALUES AND NORMS

Agriculture is deeply embedded into social life, and farmers understand the barriers and opportunities around CSA adoption through their own personal lives (including labor, gender, identity, and beliefs). Practices which are closely aligned with local structures and culture are more likely to be quickly adopted.

4

### THERE IS NO SILVER BULLET FOR GENDER

Ensuring that climate-smart agriculture is also gender-smart is difficult. If CSA can lower the labor burden on women, it has the potential to empower women to make their own decisions which leads to more equitable outcomes.

This infographic is based on the findings of the report: "Adoption of Climate Smart Agriculture in Africa: Constraints, Incentives, and Recommendations", produced by Integra and the Humanitarian Response and Development Lab (HURDL) at Clark University, on behalf of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Full report is available [here](#). For more information, contact: David Quinn, Director, Economic Growth and Innovation, [dquinn@integrallc.com](mailto:dquinn@integrallc.com)

