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## Participatory Impact Assessment to Improve Food Security of Smallholders in Rural Tanzania

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### Abstract

Food security remains a major challenge in sub-Saharan Africa. Sustainable agricultural development is fundamental to food security and poverty alleviation, notably in developing countries. Many development initiatives focus on the enhancement of smallholder production and productivity because the majority of poor people in developing countries live in rural areas where agriculture is the main source of livelihood. However, the consequences of these development initiatives are often manifold; i.e. besides having intended effects also causing non-foreseen impacts. Therefore, there is a need to assess development strategies/projects prior to implementation to reduce the risk of possible negative impacts and to allow for adjustments if necessary. This can be done by applying *ex-ante* sustainability impact assessment. The theoretical discourse on sustainability impact assessment emphasises the following: equal integration of all three sustainability dimensions, active involvement of stakeholders at every step of the assessment process and a focus on exchange and learning among the involved stakeholders. We developed an *ex-ante* impact assessment approach, based on the FoPIA (Framework for Participatory Impact Assessment) method that is applicable to a small-scale farmer's level in the development context. The adapted FoPIA we applied to assess sustainable upgrading strategies along the farmer's food value chains in order to improve food security in rural Tanzania. We present the different methodological steps of this framework and we present results gained from its application at four contrasting case study villages in Tanzania; in the semi-arid Dodoma Region and in the sub-humid Morogoro Region. Strengths and shortcomings of the adapted FoPIA method are discussed. We conclude that FoPIA was capable of identifying local stakeholder preferences, in setting priorities of development measures and for providing a stakeholder-inclusive analysis of possible opportunities and risks connected to the proposed upgrading strategies.

**Keywords:** Food security, impact assessment, smallholder farmers, sustainability, Tanzania