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## An analysis of challenges and opportunities for upscaling the organic fertiliser industry in Kenya

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### Abstract

Organic fertilisers are considered a feasible solution to restore low-quality soil, reduce risk to food security and improve smallholder livelihood. Their development also contributes to creating a circular economy and achieving the low-carbon and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) commitment of the Kenyan government. Nevertheless, the development of the industry is regionally diverse and still limited. Also, little is known about the social acceptability of organic fertilisers among relevant stakeholders despite that understanding the range of their perceptions is a key requirement for the successful management of this industry. This study contributes to shedding light on stakeholders' attitudes toward obstacles and potential measures for improvement to the upscaling of the organic fertiliser industry in Kenya. This study conducted Q-methodology to explore the perceptions of five key stakeholder groups (policymakers, farmers, private entrepreneurs, NGOs, and researchers) towards organic fertilisers in Central Kenya. Eighteen participants were invited to rank 38 statements that described 9 categories of possible challenges for the development of organic fertiliser, on a scale from 'most like I think' to 'least like I think'. The ranking results were factor analysed and interpreted in three distinct factors, where each represented a perception. Overall, all perceptions believed in the potential of the organic fertiliser market in Kenya, yet they all acknowledged numerous challenges hindering the scaling up of this industry. Perception 1 regarded the financial support, policy & legal frameworks as well as marketing strategies as the main constraints, represented by respondents mainly from the farmer group. Perception 2, by contrast, gave high importance to access to organic products and outreach strategies while perception 3 focused mainly on the lack of available scientific data on the environmental and economic efficacy of organic fertilisers. These two perceptions both comprised respondents from distinct stakeholder groups who worked with farmers, whereas the stakeholder composition of Perception 3 was more diverse. As for the measures for improvement, outreach strategies and approaches concerning business dynamics, access to products, market creation and marketing strategies were highly recommended for alleviating key barriers to the development of the organic fertiliser sector in Kenya.

**Keywords:** Commercialized organic fertilisers, Kenya, measures for improvement, Q-methodology, self-produced organic fertilisers

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