



Briefing Note for the February 2015 Roundtable Forum:

## **“Strategic Directions for Agricultural Transformation in Southern Africa”**

The Alice and Knut Wallenberg Foundation is currently funding research projects under six long-term research themes at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies (STIAS), one of which is devoted to “Sustainable Agro-ecosystems”. There are four interrelated subject matter areas associated with the agro-ecosystems theme in Southern Africa, namely, climate change, environmental degradation, food security and land redistribution.<sup>1</sup>

Four STIAS Fellows with broad institutional and field experience in agricultural science and related fields have undertaken the task to address, in some depth, one of the food security sub-themes, namely the “Impact of sustainable intensification of agriculture on food security, the environment and human well-being in Southern Africa”.<sup>2</sup>

A major component of this initiative is to organize seminars and technical consultations on food security and its associated sustainable agricultural intensification topics. The focus is on those factors that threaten global food and nutrition security similarly, which in turn drive the food security challenges of the Southern Africa region. *These challenges relate to: soil and rangeland degradation, water resources, low soil fertility, low yielding cultivars, climate change, poor infrastructure, and inappropriate policies and practices.*

The STIAS Fellows have proposed the assignment’s major goal to be the “Determination of the strategic directions for agricultural transformation towards the 2050 horizon in Southern Africa” with an initial major focus on *sustainable agricultural intensification*. The year 2050 is the time horizon against which the trend towards significant increases in the global population (9 billion people by 2050) is likely to be matched by Southern Africa regional increase of a three- to five-fold population increase. This will raise the region’s population from its current estimated 303 million to just over 1 billion people. This dramatic increase would trigger an exponential increase in the region’s food and nutrition *insecurity* to a level well above its current 10% of the region’s population.

STIAS, in collaboration with the Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg Foundation, will sponsor the first Sustainable Agricultural Intensification Roundtable Forum for Southern Africa on 23 and 24 February 2015. The purpose of this brief is to elaborate the key sustainable agricultural intensification interventions which will constitute the foundations of agricultural transformation for the region. This will represent the focus of the Roundtable discussions which will be structured to provide the participants (keynote speakers, panel discussants, and key stakeholders) an opportunity to define and articulate:

1. Their vision of agricultural transformation in the region, occurring simultaneously with major structural transformations in urban migration, shifts in economic growth patterns, and new opportunities for livelihood generation, on- and off-farm;
2. The major reforms in policies, markets, science and technology applications, infrastructure, land-use patterns, production systems, intensification interventions, and the institutional arrangements and private sector participation, that will enhance transformation;
3. The resource mobilisation pathways to be adopted to ensure the flow of resources for effective implementation of the transformation envisaged; and
4. A well designed roadmap of actions and milestones to ensure effective implementation of the transformation.

The consolidated outcomes from the February 2015 Roundtable will constitute the framework around which the STIAS Fellows will structure detailed options and scenarios for transformed agricultural systems. The options will guide the utilisation of opportunities for the adoption of appropriate and sustainable intensification interventions which may include ecological practices such as intercropping and conservation farming; genetic intensification, such as resilience to pests and diseases, and resilience to climate change; socio-economic intensification, such as creating sustainable off-farm livelihoods opportunities, and building human capital. These scenarios will be the centre-piece of a STIAS-sponsored research symposium planned for October 2016.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see Research > Themes on the STIAS website at [www.stias.ac.za](http://www.stias.ac.za).

<sup>2</sup> The four Fellows are: Richard Sikora (convenor), Janos Bogardi, Lucas Gakale and Eugene Terry.