ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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SPECIAL EDITION

30th Anniversary

A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE: 30 YEARS OF ESRF'S JOURNEY

EDITORIAL TEAM
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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As ESRF commemorates three decades of service, this special edition newsletter offers an abstract reflection on its enduring legacy of excellence and transformative impact on Tanzania's development landscape. Started its operation in 1994, ESRF has steadfastly advanced its mandate to support national development by promoting evidence-based policy-making, economic forecasting, and strategic analysis. Its research and policy insights have not only shaped public policy within Tanzania but have also resonated regionally and internationally, establishing ESRF as a trusted partner in development research.

ESRF's contributions are embedded in numerous areas of Tanzania's economic and social landscape. From its role in formulating Tanzania's Development Vision 2025 to its participation in Five-Year Development Plans, ESRF has been instrumental in aligning national goals with global frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Pioneering studies, such as the Tanzania Human Development Reports, have guided inclusive growth and human development policies, while flagship initiatives like the East Africa Youth Inclusion Program and the Tanzania Urbanization Laboratory illustrate ESRF's commitment to empowering marginalized communities, promoting urban resilience, and fostering equitable growth.

Being a leader in capacity building, ESRF has nurtured a skilled workforce through training programs that equip Tanzanian policymakers, researchers, and practitioners with critical skills in policy analysis, impact evaluation, and governance. Programs such as the Postgraduate Diploma in Poverty Analysis and the International Fellowship Program have been pivotal in building a strong foundation for future development leaders in Tanzania's public and private sectors.

ESRF's influence extends beyond national borders. Through partnerships with organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) initiatives, ESRF has played a key role in promoting regional integration, economic resilience, and sustainable trade. Research initiatives like the AFRICAP project and the Making Agricultural Trade Sustainable (MATS) project underscore ESRF's focus on agricultural resilience and environmental sustainability in Sub-Saharan Africa.

As ESRF looks to the future, its 7th Medium-Term Strategic Plan (2022–2026) highlights priorities in digital transformation, youth empowerment, and knowledge-based economic development. The Foundation's work on digital inclusion and ICT-driven innovations position Tanzania to thrive in the digital economy. ESRF remains committed to addressing challenges in climate resilience, urbanization, and social justice through research and policy innovation, ensuring Tanzania's sustainable growth in a rapidly changing world.

This newsletter celebrates ESRF's unwavering dedication to research excellence, social impact, and inclusive development. It invites stakeholders and readers to reflect on the remarkable strides made and to engage in ESRF's vision for the future as it continues to drive positive, impactful change in Tanzania and beyond.

Prof. Fortunata Songora Makene
ESRF Executive Director

From the Editorial Desk

By: Senorine Libena and Richard Ngilangwa

As we mark 30 years of the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), we are reminded of the extraordinary journey of dedication, innovation, and influence that has shaped both our institution and Tanzania's development landscape. The past three decades have witnessed ESRF's unwavering commitment to enhancing public policy through rigorous economic forecasting, policy analysis, and strategic recommendations aimed at advancing the social and economic welfare of all Tanzanians.

From its inception, ESRF has been dedicated to fulfilling its core mandate of contributing to the realization of Tanzania's national development goals. With a focus on improving the quality of public policy, facilitating capacity development, fostering dialogue on key economic and social issues, and disseminating findings for wider understanding, ESRF has become a cornerstone of Tanzania's policy ecosystem.

Through numerous research projects, policy dialogues, and capacity-building initiatives, ESRF has consistently worked to generate solutions to the most pressing challenges facing our country. Over the past three decades, ESRF had positioned itself as a vital partner to ministries, international organizations, and development programs by undertaking supply and demand driven research, capacity building as well as knowledge management and innovation activities with a commitment to inclusive growth. The Foundation has also been instrumental in shaping regional integration and globalization policies that resonate beyond Tanzania's borders.

The last decade marked a new chapter of innovation, with groundbreaking contributions such as the Tanzania Human Development Report 2014 and the subsequent Tanzania Human Development Report 2017 which informed the Five-Year Development Plans. ESRF also established the Maendeleo Studio, producing content that reaches communities across the nation. In recent years, our Foundation has deepened its impact with initiatives like the East Africa Youth Inclusion Program and the TangaYetu Initiative, providing young people with the tools they need to build sustainable livelihoods.

At the heart of our achievements lies an enduring belief in the power of knowledge, research, and collaboration to foster a better future. Whether developing agricultural information systems, building capacities for impact evaluation, or fostering accountability journalism, ESRF continues to break new ground in areas critical to Tanzania's development trajectory.

As we look back on the last 30 years, we also look forward to a future where ESRF remains a driving force for national development, resilience, and innovation in a rapidly changing world. The journey ahead promises continued growth and impact as we leverage our expertise to address the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow.

This edition of our newsletter celebrates the highlights of ESRF's work, as we honor the people and projects that have made it all possible. We invite you to join us in reflecting on this legacy of excellence and to continue being part of the transformative journey ahead.

Impacts in Snapshot

To celebrate 30 years of ESRF, take a look back at some of the most memorable moments in its history.

The overall goal and mandate of ESRF is to improve public policy making for realization of national development goals, primarily through economic forecasting, policy analysis and research, and formulation of medium and long-term strategic perspectives for economic and social development. In addition, ESRF is expected to provide and implement innovative and practical recommendations that advance the nation's broad goals, foster the economic and social welfare, security, and opportunity of all Tanzanians. The Foundation is mandated to work in the following specific areas:

i. To undertake research in public policy and sector-oriented issues;
ii. To facilitate capacity development for government and other development stakeholders;
iii. To act as a focal point for dialogue and exchange of knowledge on pertinent social and economic issues; and
iv. To disseminate/communicate policy and research findings for the purpose of deepening and widening the understanding of the issues, opportunities, and challenges by researchers and policy makers.

Establishment and Official Launch

1994 - 1998

Infrastructure and research facilities set up, building, furnitures etc.

Researchers recruited and Research Studies Designed

Establishing of the first in Tanzania, a totally computerized reference library.

Publication of ESRF products through Newsletter, Annual Reports, Brochures, Programme Booklets produced for marketing ESRF products produced.

The development to the effective local capacity to undertake economic policy analysis and research in Tanzania

1994 - 1998

i. 40 research projects completed on Microeconomic studies, growth potential and economic growth, trade, regional integration, and globalization etc by June 2003.
ii. 98 workshops, policy dialogues and conferences, six (6) being international by june 2003. Attracted foreign scholars and policy analysts, to contribute to local policy problems.
iii. Collaborative links established, and exchange programs introduced to enhance policy analysts' capacity. Short-term tailor-made training designed to enhance understanding and contributing to policy debates and policy analysis.

iv. 150 commissioned research projects completed, commissioned by ministries, Reforms programmes, City Councils, International Organizations, World Bank etc. by june 2003.
v. Developed the Training of the Trainers Manual for the 5 training centers for the Vice President's Office. About 200 enumerators were trained in economic and social surveys.
vi. A **furnished Conference Hall was constructed** for the purpose of Trainings, policy dialogue and meetings

Capacity Building

2004 - 2007 >> 2008 - 2011

i. **192 Students graduated** through a Post Graduate Diploma (PGD**) in Poverty Analysis** jointly managed by **ESRF, REPOA and ISS** from 2003 to 2013. The graduates are now working in Central Government, NGOs, Universities, Donor Agencies and the Private Sector.
ii. **128 master's Students graduated** through **Ford Foundation International Fellowships Awards** from 2002 to 2010 in different areas of disciplines coordinated by ESRF.
iii. National Conference on **"Unleashing Growth Potentials in Tanzania: Lessons and Way Forward in creating an Inclusive Growth**", May 2012.
iv. National Conterence on **"Unleashing Growth Potentials in Tanzania: Making Natural Gas a Guarantee for Sustainable Development"**, September 2013.
v. Development of Tanzania **Human Development Report 2014 (THDR 2014)** which informed the theme of the second Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP II) - Nurturing Industrialization for Economic Transformation and Human Development.
vi. Establishment of **5 Community Radios** in Bunda, Ileje, Bukoba, Nyasa Districts.
vii. Established **Maendeleo Studio** that produces TV and Radio programmes targeting community radios.
viii. International Collaboration, Researches Exchange Programs.

Research, Policy Review, Capacity Development, Innovation

2012 - 2015

i. Development of Tanzania Human Development Report 2014 (THDR 2014) which informed the theme of the second Five- Year Development Plan (FYDP 11) -- Nurturing Industrialization for Economic Transformation and Human Development.
ii. National Conference on Pan African
iii. Conference on Oil and Gas Vocational Training Initiative, March 2015.
iv. Established Maendeleo studio that produces TV and radio programmes targeting community radios.
v. Develop an Innovative approaches to create opportunities and Incorporating youth into labour Markets in the EAC Conduct a Tanzania Capacity Development for Partners of Accountability.

30 MEMORABLE YEARS

Research, Knowledge and Innovation, Impact Evaluation and Policy Review

2016 - 2020 >> 2021 - 2024

i. **25 Regional Investment Guides developed** - to enhance regions' competitiveness in areas of comparative strengths as well as emerging economic areas.
ii. **25,000 Youth** from communities in Tanzania were trained and, complete financial and technical training and identify income-generating opportunities within their own communities under East Africa Youth Inclusion Program (EAYIP) 2017-2021
iii. Development of **Impact Evaluation Laboratory** - Training on impact evaluation methodologies for the public and private sector as well as research studies on Impact Evaluation.
iv. **10 Research Trainees at Masters level** have benefited from Small Grant Initiative for Capacity Development on Impact Evaluation Research
v. **Evaluation of National Development Vision 2025**, to inform the preparation of a successor National Development Vision after 2025
vi. Developing a National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan Phase Four (NACSAP IV - 2017 - 2022)
vii. Research Conference on "Rethinking the Future of Development Studies: Lessons from Teaching, Research and Practice"
viii. Developed a 'dashboard' an Agricultural Management Information System capable of retrieving, sieving and harmonizing data from different databases and produce meaningful information for decision making by Ministry of Agriculture and its stakeholders.
ix. ESRF created a **Mobile Kilimo Platform** to link buyers and sellers of agricultural products by providing real-time market information such as quantities and price of agricultural products available in different markets in Tanzania.10. ESRF prepared Farmers Registration System (also known as "Daftari la Wakulima") which is available for the first time in Tanzania.
x. **37 Journalists** were trained to instigate the space of "Accountability Journalism" in fostering downward accountability and improving service delivery in Tanzania.
xi. **47 Journalists** were trained for Accountability Journalism Project: The training built the capacity of journalists to understand the structure of health systems at sub national levels and understanding the main areas for conducting "clinics audit.

ESRF's mandate is to improve public policy making for realization of national development goals

RESEARCH AS A TOOL FOR NATION-BUILDING: LESSONS FROM THE FIRST DECADE OF ESRF

By: Prof. Mwita Samuel Wangwe (Principal Research Associate, ESRF)

The discussions which were initiated by the academia, mainly economists, in 1984 and inviting senior government officials were a major step towards collaboration and gaining of confidence on the inputs from the academia. That tradition has been maintained since then. Since 1986 when Tanzania adopted the Economic Recovery Programme (1986-1989) followed by the Economic and Social Action Programme (1989-1992) Tanzania was following macroeconomic policy prescriptions from Internation Financial Institutions (World Bank and IMF). However, by 1990 the Tanzania Government led by the Ministry of Planning was concerned that the capacity of policy analysis and development management was needed in Tanzania.

The government appointed a team of 4 experts to study the situation and advice on the feasibility of an independent policy research institution outside government. The team comprised two Deputy Permanent Secretaries (Salmon Odunga and Joshua Doriye) and two academicians (Prof. Brian van Arkadie and Prof. Samuel Wangwe). The team worked on the assignment and submitted the report in 1991. The study that was carried out by the team of four experts led to the recommendation on the establishment of an independent non-government institution which would primarily augment capacity for policy analysis and development management in government. The outcome was establishment of Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) in 1993. The key suggestion that policy research should be established to work primarily on long- and medium-term issues that were beyond day-to-day engagements in government. In 1993 ESRF was established registered outside government so it could undertake policy analysis independently while working closely with the government. At this point the Government secured for ESRF a 4-year grant of USD 1.7 million from the African Capacity Building Foundation, the World Bank and other donors including African Governments were contributors to this Fund.

ESRF's Head Office in Dar es Salaam

ESRF started its operations in 1994. It built on the tradition of consultations between the academic community and the Government. The Executive Director of ESRF also happened to be one of the main actors in the organization of 1984 workshop and subsequent discussions and consultations between researchers and policy makers in the rest of the decade and beyond. The role of research in policy analysis and development occupied greater space as the transition to a more market-oriented economy, democratization and political liberalization was setting in. It is in this context that the government decide to undertake a study on the establishment of an institutions that could assist the government to make independent policy analysis on issues which could not be done inside government.

Policy research was undertaken by harnessing institutional and human capacities, who were available in various institutions to address challenges which were emerging from the new context of economic and political liberalization and globalization. The increasing demand for policy analysis necessitated institutional development in terms of staff, facilities and resources and an institutional framework to translate the founding objectives into work programs which could be implemented. This would be in response to need for developing institutional capacity in Tanzania and at the same time address the other aspect of capacity building identified. It undertook core research, commissioned research and policy dialogue and dissemination through seminars and workshops which were the primary vehicle for promoting and stimulating policy dialogue between researchers, policy makers, the business sector, civil society and the donor community.

ESRF facilitated a better utilization of otherwise thinly scattered capacities of individual experts in the Government, NGOs academia and the private sector but also the need for new capacities as vividly shown by the findings of the National Capacity Assessment Study (1996). It was demonstrated that the requirements of capacity in policy analysis and development management needed to be met by creation of new capacities in the Government, civil society and private sector in order to cope with demands from various groups that make up civil society to articulate and locate their interests in the broader social context.

It was demonstrated that there was an increased demand for improved understanding of policy options and management issues in the new dispensation of economic and political liberalization and dialogue between groups in society.

During the first 10 years the ESRF contributed to major policy inputs notably as a Secretariat to the formulation of Tanzania Development Vision 2025, preparation of the National Poverty Eradication Strategy, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper which formed the basis for debt relief and the Tanzania Assistance Strategy which addressed the relationships between the Government and the donor community. The Foundation facilitated discussions between government and various stakeholders by providing the necessary research-based information for negotiations to take place. For instance, ESRF performed as a broker in budget discussions and negotiations between the private sector and the Government budget and tax issues based on a study synthesizing the Business sector's budget proposal on the budget and taxes. The Foundation facilitated dialogue between the Dar es Salaam City Council and the Confederation of Tanzania Industries (CTI), on local taxes based on its study resulting in win-win situation where tax rates were reduced and spread more widely while revenues accruing to the City Council increased dramatically.

The Foundation made institutional capacity for policy analysis and development management within the Government, civil society and the business sector. Key elements of the consolidation of ESRF's own institutional capacity as well as a variety of initiatives and services made substantial contribution to the Foundation's long-term sustainability. It coordinated core research on fundamental policy issues, as well as commissioned research on policy issues for clients in the Government, civil society, the private sector and the donor community and stimulated policy research in other research institutions and coordinated the otherwise scattered capacities.

" ESRF facilitated a better utilization of otherwise thinly scattered capacities.

> **By the end of 10 years the Foundation began to face tension between time allocated to commissioned research and more fundamental policy in favour of the latter.**

By the end of 10 years the Foundation began to face tension between time allocated to commissioned research and more fundamental policy in favour of the latter. The past record of the Foundation had shown that efforts to raise co-financing were not as successful as had been anticipated for two reasons. First, most donors were reluctant to provide institutional support to enable institution building and broad support for the work programme.

They were more willing to give project support or support for other specific purposes which were in line with their own mandate. Second, many donors were hesitant about giving support to a new institution whose track record was yet to be seen. In the first year of operations the Foundation relied on ACBF funds to the tune of more than 90%. Over time this share was reduced as the Foundation began to raise some resources from contract work and other support for specific tasks within the work programme. Financial sustainability can be enhanced through contract work and by offering consulting services. However, these sources of finance have the potential to divert the institution from a policy research and capacity building institution to a consulting firm. It was becoming clear that attaining financial sustainability would largely be derived from domestic sources of funds by developing a strong philanthropic tradition which will facilitate financial support from domestic sources without demanding undue influence on the agenda of think tanks or without risking capture to serve narrow interests of the financing groups.

To strengthen budget management primarily by building the capacity for revenue generation through such efforts as widening the tax base. A strong revenue base is more consistent with using the budgetary mechanism to support financially important activities in society including activities of non-. government actors in society. To democratize the budget management process so that various actors and groups in society have influence on the budget process. To reduce the danger of patronage in allocating budgetary support to think tanks it would be useful to consider establishing autonomous mechanisms of determining budgetary allocations to think tanks. An autonomous national council of think tanks with broad-based representation could be one such mechanism. Such a council would establish clear criteria of allocation of financial support to think tanks based on their track record in serving the society. This is a fundamental change in making the Government fund policy research.

RESEARCH IN A CHANGING WORLD: ADAPTING TO NEW ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REALITIES

By: Dr. Hoseana B. Lunogelo (Principal Research Associate, ESRF)

As already stated elsewhere in this publication, during the first decade ESRF focussed and contributed mostly to policy and strategy formulation for almost all sectors; as well building the capacity of public sector in implementing those policies.

In the second decade, ESRF innovatively expanded its research horizon to embrace new areas; undertaking impact assessment of national and global policies on people's livelihoods and social dynamics; and undertaking collaborative research and capacity building agenda with other Think Tanks and institutions from within and outside Tanzania. These areas are briefly recounted below.

In expanding its frontiers of research areas ESRF embraced natural resource governance, venturing onto how the country's natural gas, iron ore, coal, and uranium, could be instrumental in driving Tanzania's economic transformation. A decision was made to introduce a Centre on Natural Resource Management in 2008 and worked on different projects in collaboration with the Institute of Resource Assessment (IRA).

During this period ESRF was involved as a peer reviewer in the preparation of national local content policy (LCP) and regulations. LCP formulation was motivated by the observation that most of the natural resources were extracted and exported without much value addition, thus denying the country of much needed job creation and additional foreign exchange. ESRF also prepared policy briefs that recommended to the government of Tanzania to selectively pick state-owned enterprises (SOEs) as joint venture partners (JVP) in the development of natural resources such as natural gas and iron ore.

In the case of Liganga-Mchuchuma complex (with iron ore and coal), SOEs were assumed to be more stable in their commitments and were not necessarily driven by profit-motives that tend to fluctuate based on stock markets. The thinking then was that the extracted iron ore would eventually be used in the expansion of the country's railway network, including the construction of a new Southern Railway line from Mtwara port to Mbamba Bay (with branches to Liganga and Mchuchuma); and in the modernisation to standard gauge of the Central Railway network between Dar-es-salaam and the Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika ports of Mwanza and Kigoma, respectively

Mchuchuma iron ore Project

The Foundation initiated several ESRF Discussion Papers and Policy Briefs meant to influence public policy on natural resources. These included papers titled “Opportunities and Challenges for the Extraction of Natural Gas in Tanzania: The Imperative of Adequate Preparedness” (Prof Humprey Moshi); “Making Natural Gas Guarantee Sustainable Development” (Enock Kabendela); “Challenges Ahead for Tanzania to Build new capacities for Gas Industry Development” (Col. (Rtd) J.L. Simbakalia). ESRF also participated in research on the governance of Indian Ocean, which culminated to publications of a paper titled “Governing the Ocean. Perspectives from Tanzania (chapter 14. In: Maritime Governance and South Asia. Trade, Security and Sustainable Governance in the Indian Ocean” by Dr H.Bohela Lunogelo. It is also at this time that ESRF was actively involved in the review and refinement of the country’s environmental management policies in line with those stipulated at international level by the United Nations.

Among the studies undertaken during this period included defining requirements for the modernization and commercialization of the country’s agricultural sector along the major three transport corridors: Northern corridor (Tanga, Kilimanjaro, Arusha, Mara); Central corridor (Dar-es-salaam, Dodoma, Tabora, Mwanza and Kigoma); TAZARA Corridor (Dar-Morogoro-Iringa-Njombe-Mbeya and Songwe) and Mtwara Corridor (Mtwara, Ruvuma, Njombe, Mbeya and Songwe).

ESRF has also been involved in undertaking impact assessment of national and global policies on people’s livelihoods and social dynamics. Our work included interrogating how national policies contributed to poverty reduction, leading to the publication of several ESRF’s Policy Briefs and Discussion Papers on poverty such as No.40 on Poverty escape routes in Central Tanzania: coping strategies in Singida and Dodoma regions by Dr. Flora Kessy, Dr Oswald Mashindano, et.al. in 2011.

ESRF a special grant from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to undertake research on inclusive growth and development leading to the publication of Tanzania’s country-specific Human Development Reports. The first publication titled “Unleashing Growth Potentials in Tanzania: Economic Transformation for Human Development” was officially launched by the then President of Tanzania, His Excellency Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete during ESRF’s third Annual National Conference in 2014.

Hon. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, (Seated center) the President of the United Republic of Tanzania in a group photo with Development Partners, ESRF Board members and staff during the 3rd Annual Conference on Economic Transformation for Human Development

Following the mid-term evaluation of Tanzania Development Vision 2025 in 2011 undertaken by ESRF, it was decided to disseminate regular policy briefs to grassroot stakeholders detailing progress being made in implementing different interventions that contribute to the attainment of goals set out in TDV2025. The policy briefs dispatched to all Wards in all districts of Tanzania with instructions to share the reports with leaders at village levels.

Undertaking collaborative research and capacity building agenda with other Think Tanks and institutions globally, was another interesting area that ESRF embarked during its second decade of operation. Although it involved institutions from different parts of the world, there was particular focus in building synergetic relationships with those from the East African Community (EAC), Southern African Development Community (SADC) and Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS).

Collaboration with Think Tanks from the EAC included Kenya Institute of Public Policy Analysis (KIPRA), the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) at Makerere, Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) in Kigali, and in Burundi, and SADC based Think Tanks included Botswana Institute of Development Policy Analysis (BIDPA). Among the outcomes of the collaboration included publishing papers on regional integration and economic convergence and organising forums youth engagement in agribusiness value chain in SADC countries.

It is during this period that ESRF collaborated with UK's Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in conducting research onto the dynamics of chronic poverty, leading to contributions in publications such as Translating growth into poverty reduction: beyond the numbers coordinated by the Chronic Poverty Centre http://www.chronicpovertyresearch.org/publications

All in all, we are proud that ESRF has lived true to its mandate by effectively undertaking knowledge management from own and outsourced research evident to build the capacity of policy makers, civil servants, civil society, private sector stakeholders and citizens at large.

Coffee Plantation

RESILIENCE AND INNOVATION: ENSURING RESEARCH REMAINS RELEVANT IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD

By: Prof. Fortunata Songora Makene (Executive Director, ESRF)

For 30 years, the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) has been a beacon of resilience and innovation, leading the charge in conducting research that addresses Tanzania's most critical socio-economic challenges. As the world continues to shift and evolve, ESRF remains committed to ensuring that our research not only stays relevant but also shapes the future of Tanzania's development. Through our work in fostering inclusive growth, promoting investment, trade, and sustainable agriculture, we have contributed significantly to the nation's socio-economic transformation, always with an eye on building a strong, knowledge-based economy.

Our efforts are deeply aligned with Tanzania's Development Vision 2025, which emphasizes industrialization, human capital development, and sustainability. As we look ahead, ESRF will continue to adapt to the fast-paced changes in the global environment, ensuring that Tanzania is well-positioned to compete on the world stage.

At the heart of ESRF's mission is the alignment of our research agenda with the nation's broader development goals. Guided by Tanzania's Development Vision 2025, our research is instrumental in driving industrialization, sustainable growth, and human capital development.

Initiatives such as the Work Skills for Life program exemplify how ESRF is preparing Tanzanian youth for the labour market, ensuring they are equipped with the skills necessary to thrive in an industrializing economy. Similarly, our Empowering Women-Owned Businesses through Public Procurement project advances gender equity by enabling women entrepreneurs to participate in public procurement processes, contributing to poverty reduction and economic empowerment. Another critical initiative, is the study on 'Innovation for Cancer Care' exploring potential synergies between industrial and social sectors to improve access to cancer care, underscoring our commitment to health and sustainable development.

ESRF's ongoing research, including the Policy Review and Gap Analysis for Circular Food Systems in Tanzania and Scaling Up Innovations for Reducing Women's and Girls' Unpaid Care Work, demonstrates our dedication to integrating gender inclusivity and sustainability into Tanzania's development agenda. These initiatives ensure that national policies are evidence-based and responsive to the needs of all citizens.

ESRF has always prioritized research that promotes inclusive growth. By focusing on the empowerment of marginalized groups—especially women, youth, and rural communities—we are helping to create a more equitable and prosperous Tanzania. For instance, the East Africa Youth Inclusion Programme (EAYIP) previously hosted by ESRF has empowered youth by creating opportunities for them to engage in agriculture and other economic activities, particularly in rural areas. Projects like Scaling Up Innovations for Reducing and Redistributing Women and Girls' Unpaid Care Work in Rural Tanzania have had transformative impacts, enabling women to participate more fully in the economy by alleviating the burdens of unpaid care work. Through these efforts, ESRF is helping to shape an inclusive and sustainable future for Tanzania, where growth benefits all segments of society.

FROM RESEARCH TO IMPACT: HOW ESRF HAS CONTRIBUTED TO TANGIBLE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES IN TANZANIA

By: Dr Mugisha Rweyemamu (Senior Research Fellow, ESRF)

ESRF has played a key role in both action and policy research across various sectors in Tanzania. Notable contributions include the formulation of the National Development Vision 2025 (1998-2000) and subsequent midline and endline evaluations. ESRF's involvement extends to the Work Readiness Programme preparing secondary school students for the labor market, and the development of Tanzania's First and Second Five-Year Development Plans (FYDP I and FYDP II). Other notable projects include evaluating the implementation of FYDP II, the National Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan (NACSAP III), and conducting a Rapid Assessment of Challenges and Opportunities for Machinga (informal street vendors).

Additionally, ESRF has provided Rapid Response Implementation Support (RARIS) to the Ministry of Agriculture, assessing local government authorities through the Third Poverty Reduction Project, and addressing public health concerns through the SMS Campaign to Increase COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake. ESRF's engagement with the 2nd National Multisectoral Nutrition Action Plan (NMNAP II) and its research on inclusive industrialization in agro-processing further highlight its wide-ranging influence on public policy.

Sector-specific work by ESRF has informed policy formulation, such as reviewing the National Microfinance Policy, Nvational Environmental Policy, and National Energy Policy. ESRF's research on agro-processing, Tanzania's industrialization status, and population dynamics provides a critical lens for understanding the country's development prospects. ESRF's contribution to regional economic development is exemplified by its preparation of investment guides for all 25 regions of Tanzania, which have spurred regional authorities to tap into their local resources effectively.

Moreover, ESRF has pioneered action-oriented projects such as promoting new agricultural technologies, including fish farming, hydroponics, and azolla cultivation. These initiatives have offered policymakers vital insights for evidence-based policy formulation.

ESRF's research has significantly impacted Tanzania's development trajectory. The evaluation of TDV 2025 provided the basis for formulating the new Tanzania Development Vision 2050, helping policymakers identify achievements, gaps, and future priorities. ESRF has also supported policy development at the local government level, guiding 25 regions in preparing investment guides that identified economic opportunities and facilitated strategic planning.

In the agricultural sector, ESRF's Rapid Response Implementation Support led to the innovation of the Kilimo Integrated System, enabling farmers, livestock keepers, and fishers to access markets using mobile technology. This system has since been adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture, revolutionizing access to agricultural markets across the country. ESRF's evaluation of FYDP I and FYDP II has directly influenced the development of FYDP III, ensuring the government's strategic focus aligns with the country's development needs. The NACSAP III evaluation informed the government's anti-corruption strategies, leading to enhanced measures to curb corruption. Similarly, research on the Machinga provided practical recommendations for integrating informal vendors into the formal economy, benefiting both vendors and local authorities.

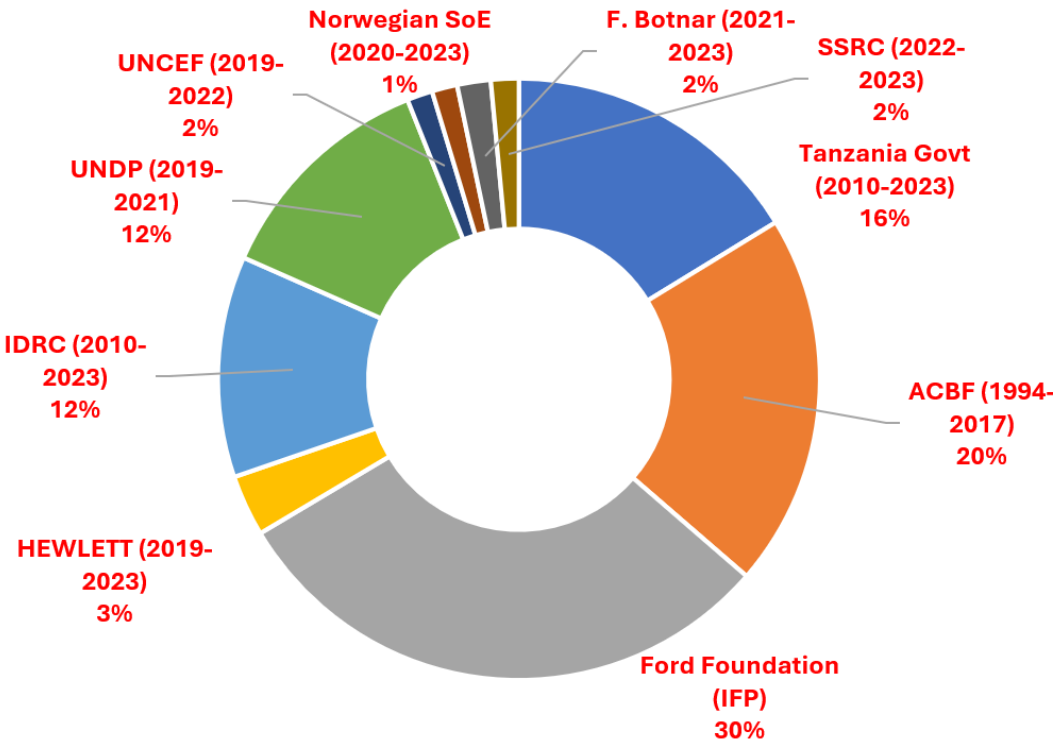
CONTRIBUTION OF DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS TO ESRF'S OPERATIONS

By: Dr. Hoseana B. Lunogelo
(Former ESRF Executive Director – October 2024)

The establishment of ESRF as a Think Tank dedicated to policies and economic management research, knowledge management and capacity building was a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Finance (MoF) of the Government of Tanzania (GOT) and the World Bank (WB) through the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF).
Core Funding by Donors

The principal donors of ESRF from its commencement and for the longest period, were the Government of Tanzania (GOT) and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), which over the past 30 years they contributed 16 percent and 20 percent, respectively (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Comparative Financial Contribution to ESRF Operations by Different Major Donors



Source: Table 1.

MOF included a budget line for annual support to ESRF and other Think Tanks. Other significant donors, who supported ESRF over shorter periods of 4 to 8 years, were the Ford Foundation-IFP) (30%), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (12%) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) (12%), of the total grants as shown in Figure 1. The total contribution by all donors from 1994 to 2023 was USD 28.57 million out of USD 47 million used by ESRF and generated from different sources (Table 1).

The grant from ACBF, like that provided by the Government of Tanzania, helped to offset administrative costs including staff salaries and the maintenance of working space. Initial contribution by GOT to set up ESRF included donation of land and a building on Plot 51 along Uporoto Street, where it has been operating until now as its Head Office. It is worth noting that the grant by the Ford Foundation-International Fellowship Programme (FF-IFP) was uniquely national in nature as it offered post-graduate scholarships to 4,300 young professionals who had demonstrated leadership potentials in serving marginalized societies and working in geographically isolated parts of Tanzania. These were trained at levels of Masters and Doctor of Philosophy within and outside the country (mostly in European, British and American Universities). They all came back after their studies to continue discharging their duties in different sectors: natural resource management, tourism, agriculture, forestry, education for children with disabilities, etc.

Funds Generation from Commissioned Research and Consultancy Work

Operations of ESRF were also funded using its own resources generated through net income obtained after conducting commissioned research and consultancy work for different state and non-state stakeholders. ESRF's own resources therefore accounted for 36.2 percent of all funds accrued to the institution (Figure 2), which amounted to about USD 47 million from 1994 to 2023 (Table 1).

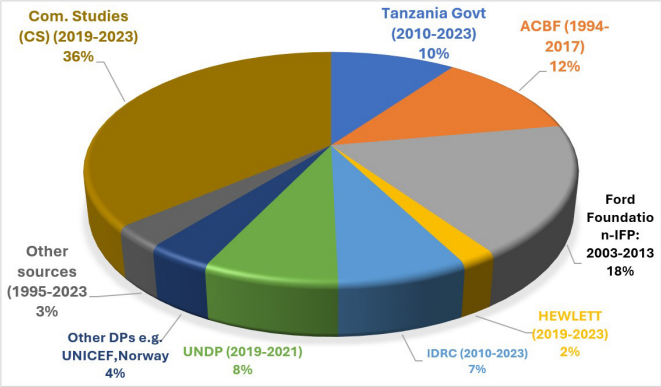
Table 1 Sources of Funds (1994 - 2023)

SOURCES	Percent
ESRF Own Sources from Commissioned Research	36.2%
Tanzania Govt (2010 - 2023) - Ministry of Finance	9.9%
ACBF (1994 - 2017)	12.2%
Ford Foundation-IFP (2003 - 2013)	18.3%
HEWLETT (2019 - 2023)	2.0%
IDRC (2010 - 2023)	7.2%
UNDP (2019-2021)	7.5%
UNCEF (2019 - 2022)	0.8%
Norwegian SoE (2020 - 2023)	0.8%
F. Botnar (2021 - 2023)	1.1%
SSRC (2022 - 2023)	0.9%
Other sources	3.0%
Total Percent	100%
Total Funds Received by ESRF (1994 - 2023)	**USD 46.999 Million**

Source: ESRF Finance Department.

Sector Ministries used ESRF to assist in preparing policies and strategies, while for Development Partners (DPs) it was mostly in conducting baseline surveys and impact assessment of their funded programmes and projects.

Figure 2 Relative Contribution of ESRF's Self-generated Money to Total Funds Received from Different Sources



Source: Table 1.

Concluding remarks

Stability in flow funding is crucial for the survival of any institution. ESRF was lucky enough to have some dependable and consistent donors led by MOF who committed its funds continuously and those who provided financial resources based on predictable renewable periods (e.g. ACBF. Ford Foundation and IDRC). The Board of Trustees also encouraged ESRF to strengthen its capacity to generate its own funds by undertaking competitively obtained assignments tendered by government, development partners, private sector and civil society organizations. This strategy paid dividends as it provided about 36 percent of all resources received by the institution. The assignments also exposed ESRF's technical staff to solving different challenges faced by non-state actors in the country. However, these were mostly conditional, demand-led types of non-research work, which could not allow ESRF to use the results for publishing or preparing policy briefs. This implies that it would have been more desirable if the proportion of non-conditional grants such as those provided by GOT and ACBF were relatively larger so that ESRF could work on unconditional supply-led assignment in its role of generating evidence-based policy recommendations.

ECONOMIC REFORMS AND TRANSFORMATION: ESRF'S ROLE IN SHAPING TANZANIA'S POLICY LANDSCAPE

By: Mr. Musa Martine (Research Associate, ESRF)

The 1990s were a turning point for Tanzania, as the country faced economic challenges stemming from the recession of the 1980s. State-owned enterprises were inefficient, agriculture dominated the economy, and markets were tightly controlled. In response, Tanzania embarked on economic liberalization, seeking to open its markets and encourage private sector participation. This shift in policy provided the backdrop for the establishment of the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) in 1992.

From its inception, ESRF played a pivotal role in shaping Tanzania's policy landscape, contributing to the formulation of key strategies such as the Tanzania Development Vision (TDV) 2025, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), and the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (MKUKUTA). ESRF's research and policy dialogues guided the creation of Five-Year Development Plans (FYDP), which set the foundation for industrialization, inclusive growth, and poverty alleviation. Through these efforts, ESRF helped Tanzania align its national development goals with global frameworks like the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and subsequently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

One of ESRF's standout contributions came through its long-term engagement with TDV 2025. In 2022-2023, the Foundation led a comprehensive evaluation of the Vision, assessing its successes and recommending adjustments to stay on track for the 2025 targets. This evaluation also informed the groundwork for Tanzania's post-2025 Vision, highlighting priorities like industrialization and human capital development.

In addition to national strategies, ESRF supported sector-specific reforms, including the formulation and review of policies in agriculture, microfinance, and youth empowerment. The Foundation's research informed key initiatives such as the Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP) and the Youth Economic Empowerment through Value Chain Ecosystem (YEEVACE) project. These initiatives addressed critical challenges in agriculture and youth employment, supporting Tanzania's broader industrialization goals.

Moreover, ESRF has been instrumental in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. In 2022, it conducted a Comparative Baseline Study on the Establishment of a Startup Policy, providing recommendations for a robust startup ecosystem that would fuel economic diversification. The Foundation's commitment to supporting Tanzania's entrepreneurial spirit was evident in its policy advice and technical capacity-building initiatives for young innovators.

ESRF's contributions to sub-national development have also been transformative. The Foundation worked closely with regional governments, helping to develop Local Economic Development (LED) strategies and investment guides for cities like Tanga, Arusha, and Mbeya. By fostering local economic growth and improving living standards, ESRF demonstrated its ability to translate national goals into actionable regional plans.

As ESRF looks to the future, its 7th Medium Term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2022-2026 focuses on supporting Tanzania's aspirations for industrialization and digital transformation. Through cutting-edge research, policy advocacy, and capacity-building initiatives, ESRF will continue to drive the nation's economic reforms, helping Tanzania prepare for Vision 2050—a vision that prioritizes competitiveness, innovation, and sustainable development.

For the past 30 years, ESRF has been at the heart of Tanzania's economic reforms. Its work has shaped policies that fostered growth, alleviated poverty, and empowered future generations. As the nation moves toward Vision 2050, ESRF's legacy of policy innovation and research excellence will remain critical in guiding Tanzania's economic trajectory.

ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE: ESRF'S ROLE IN POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

By: Richard Ngilangwa, (Research Fellow, ESRF)

From its inception, the Foundation (ESRF) has been central to addressing Tanzania's pressing socio-economic challenges, particularly poverty reduction and empowering marginalized communities. ESRF's early research identified key barriers such as limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, laying the foundation for policies aimed at creating a more equitable society.

A notable example of ESRF's contributions is its study on "Managing and Regulating Mixed Health Care Systems," funded by DFID, which examined the public financial management of healthcare services in Tanzania. The findings of this research informed reforms that aimed to improve healthcare access for all citizens. Similarly, in education, ESRF's work on education financing had shaped more equitable policies, helping to ensure underserved communities have better access to quality education.

ESRF's commitment to improving rural livelihoods is evident in its research on agriculture, where studies focused on increasing agricultural productivity and reducing poverty in rural areas. These recommendations have guided government strategies aimed at enhancing rural economies. Beyond national research, ESRF has collaborated with international partners to explore Tanzania's role in global and regional economic frameworks, offering critical insights into trade and globalization.

One of ESRF's landmark projects is the study "The Development of Capital Markets and Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Tanzania," by Prof. Samuel Wangwe. Whereby, the research highlighted how fostering financial inclusion through capital markets could drive economic growth and reduce poverty. ESRF's work on reducing Tanzania's aid dependency, such as the "Managing the Transition of Aid Dependence in Sub-Saharan Africa" study, further emphasized the importance of building domestic capacity for self-sustaining economic growth. Studies of the ilk provided a roadmap for Tanzania's economic self-sufficiency.

Projects such as "Aid and Reforms in Africa," commissioned by the World Bank, examined how optimizing aid management could positively impact Tanzania's socio-economic landscape, offering evidence-based approaches for reducing poverty. ESRF's focus on governance and public accountability was equally significant. Its "Aid Management and Accountability Programme (AMAP)" helped improve how aid was managed and accounted for, contributing to more effective poverty alleviation efforts. Similarly, the "Public Expenditure Review for the Agricultural Sector" provided recommendations to enhance public spending, improving food security and rural livelihoods.

ESRF's research into industrial and financial sector reforms also played a critical role in tackling poverty. Studies like the "Review of Legal and Regulatory Framework of Industrial Sector in Tanzania" and the "Rural and Micro-Finance Services Project" demonstrated how empowering small-scale entrepreneurs and promoting financial inclusion could stimulate economic growth and reduce poverty.

Through these efforts, ESRF has cemented its role in advancing social justice in Tanzania. Its collaborations with organizations like the World Bank, UNDP, and AERC, and its focus on national issues have driven meaningful changes for vulnerable populations. As Tanzania faces emerging challenges, ESRF continues to be at the forefront of research aimed at fostering sustainable development and socio-economic empowerment, ensuring that the nation's most vulnerable populations remain a priority.

BUILDING NATIONAL CAPACITY: ESRF'S TRAINING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

By: Mr. Danford Sango, (Head of Governance and Capacity Development, ESRF)

ESRF from the conceptualization recognized the importance of nurturing a vibrant research community. Through tailored training programs and workshops, the Foundation has been instrumental in building the capacity of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. These initiatives have not only enhanced individual skills but also strengthened the overall research ecosystem in Tanzania.

In the early years, ESRF played a pivotal role in providing backstopping support for the Ministry of Water's Public Expenditure Review (PER) and working closely with the Ministry of Finance and Planning Commission to enhance policy analysis. Key government ministries, such as Agriculture, Industry, Commerce, and Education, were involved in training on the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), helping public servants better manage budgets and integrate performance-based outcomes. The 1999 capacity-building efforts, supported by the IDF grant, focused on developing immediate and long-term skills for effective policy management and coordination across the United Republic of Tanzania.

In addition to these early efforts, ESRF facilitated a Training of Trainers (TOT) program for government budget officers. Participants from six ministries were trained, and this initiative extended into the 2000s, with training programs for Zanzibar's Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs on essential macroeconomic and public finance skills. These sessions helped bridge the gap between research and policy implementation, enabling government staff to produce integrated performance budgets and engage in evidence-based policy-making. Among the notable initiatives was the launch of the Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) in Poverty Analysis in 2003, jointly designed and delivered by ESRF, REPOA, and the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam, under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Seated from right are Dr. Hoseana Lunogelo - Principal Research Associate ESRF, Dr. Tausi Kida Former Executive Director ESRF, Dr. Afua Mohamed - Commissioner for Department of Research Zanzibar Planning Commission, Ms. Montserrat Pejuan - Social Policy Specialist UNICEF Zanzibar, and Ms. Vivian Kazi - Head of Strategic Research and Publications ESRF together with Zanzibar Planning Commission Staff who attended Research Training on Research Methodologies, Proposal Writing and Media Engagement

> **ESRF from the conceptualization recognized the importance of nurturing a vibrant research community. Through tailored training programs and workshops, the Foundation has been instrumental in building the capacity of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners.**

This course aimed to enhance capacity for policy analysis on poverty issues in Tanzania, a critical area in the country's development agenda. Over its eight cohorts ending in 2013, the program attracted 2,519 applicants, of which 211 were accepted, and 192 successfully graduated.

ESRF has since expanded its range of training programs, including workshops for community leaders and government officials in resource mobilization, research and policy analysis training for Zanzibar Government staff, and short-term courses on climate change, research coordination, knowledge management, and impact evaluation. These programs have been pivotal in ensuring participants gain expertise in research design, data analysis, report writing, and policy evaluation skills that have contributed directly to improved governance and policy formulation.

For example, more recently the capacity-building workshops for Zanzibar Government staff, conducted in collaboration with UNICEF, focused on research methodology, proposal writing, and media engagement. The training empowered officials to make more informed decisions and contribute to the development of evidence-based policies.

Building on earlier achievements, ESRF continues to play a dynamic role in addressing Tanzania's development challenges. By fostering national capacity, the Foundation strengthens not only individual capabilities but also the institutional frameworks needed for Tanzania's sustainable development, positioning itself as a vital player in shaping the country's future.

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE: DIGITAL ECONOMY, INNOVATION, AND ESRF'S VISION FOR TOMORROW.

By: Margareth Nzuki, (Principal Research Associate, ESRF)
James Kasindi, (Information Technology Expert, ESRF)

In today's rapidly evolving world, the digital economy is reshaping industries, societies, and economies. As a leading research institution, the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) Tanzania is at the forefront of understanding and navigating this transformative landscape. This article delves into ESRF's forward-looking vision, exploring its commitment to driving digital innovation, fostering economic growth, and addressing societal challenges as outlined in its Medium-Term Strategic Plan (2022-2026).

ESRF recognizes the immense potential of the digital economy to drive economic development and improve the lives of Tanzanians. The Foundation's vision encompasses several key areas:accepted, and 192 successfully graduated.

- Policy Framework for Digital Transformation: ESRF advocates for a comprehensive policy framework that supports digital transformation and inclusion, ensuring that technology is accessible and relevant across sectors that matter most to Tanzanians.

- Digital Skills Development: Committed to promoting digital literacy, ESRF actively engages in initiatives to enhance knowledge transfer and innovation, equipping Tanzanians with the necessary skills to thrive in the digital economy.

- Utilization of New Technologies: ESRF supports the integration of ICT and new technologies in social and productive sectors, recognizing their critical role in driving economic growth. The Foundation fosters a culture of innovation by encouraging research and development in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things

- Empowering for the Fourth Industrial Revolution: As part of its mission, ESRF aims to empower the African workforce to contribute to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This involves identifying innovations that spur the start and growth of businesses, particularly among youth and women, thereby improving their resilience.

The Foundation's research and analysis inform policy decisions, creating a conducive environment for investment, entrepreneurship, and job creation. By identifying key growth sectors and addressing barriers to technological innovation, ESRF helps shape strategies that align with national development goals

Through its rigorous research, the Foundation provides evidence-based insights that inform policies aimed at improving education, healthcare, poverty reduction, and social justice. By focusing on inclusive innovations and technology transfer from developed countries, ESRF seeks to address urgent developmental challenges such as access to clean water and food security.

As Tanzania continues to navigate the complexities of the digital age, ESRF stands as a trusted partner, providing valuable research and insights. The Foundation's vision for the future is one of a digitally empowered Tanzania, where innovation, economic growth, and social progress go hand in hand. By focusing on a robust digital infrastructure, skills development, and responsible governance, ESRF is helping to shape a brighter future for the nation, ensuring that technology serves as an enabler for achieving broader socio-economic objectives.

Digital Systems developed by ESRF

> **As Tanzania continues to navigate the complexities of the digital age, ESRF stands as a trusted partner, providing valuable research and insights.**

MOBILE KILIMO

KILIMO
Mobile Kilimo

Mobile Kilimo ni jukwaa la mawasiliano linalowawezesha wakulima, wafugaji, wavuvi na wafanyabiashara mbalimbali kutangaza biashara na kutafuta masoko kwa kutumia simu ya mkononi.

Maafisa ugani wanaweza kuutumia Mfumo huu kuwasiliana na wakulima, wafugaji au wavuvi waliopo katika maeneo yao ya utendaji.

Afisa ugani anaweza kuwasiliana na wakulima, wafugaji au wavuvi waliosajiliwa au kujisajili kwenye jukwaa hili kwa njia kuu mbili:

Njia ya kwanza: Afisa ugani kutuma ujumbe kwa wakulima, wafugaji au wavuvi aliowasajili au waliojisajili wenyewe au waliopo kwenye daftari la wakulima ndani ya eneo lake la utendaji kutoka kwenye mfumo na kwenda moja kwa moja kwenye simu zao za mkononi.

Njia ya pili: Afisa ugani ataweza kujibu maswali na kutoa ushauri wa kitaalam kwa mkulima, mfugaji au mvuvi moja kwa moja kupitia mfumo huu.

Mbali na mawasiliano baina ya wakulima, wafugaji, wavuvi na maafisa ugani, mfumo huu unamuwezesha afisa ugani kupata manufaa yafuatayo kupitia mfumo huu:

- Kuweza kuhifadhi taarifa za mawasiliano ya wakulima, wafugaji au wavuvi.
- Kuweza kuwaweka kwenye makundi yanayofanana ya wakulima, wafugaji au wavuvi, Mfano Wakulima wa Mahindi Bahi.
- Kuweza kuwasiliana na maafisa ugani wenzake hata kama hana mawasiliano yao ya simu.
- Kuweza kuweka kumbukumbu za call sheet na kuzituma moja kwa moja halmashauri ama wizarani.
- Kuweza kuona idadi ya wakulima, wafugaji au wavuvi na maeneo walipo kwa urahisi kupitia dashibodi ya mfumo.

Ili kuweza kuutumia mfumo huu, Afisa ugani atatakiwa kua na akaunti kwa kujiandikisha moja kwa moja kwenye mfumo kupitia tovuti *exts.kilimo.go.tz.*

Baada ya kujisajili, afisa ugani atathibitishwa kisha ataanza kuutumia mfumo.

Imeandaliwa na:

Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania
Wizara ya Kilimo
P.O. Box 2182, 40487 Dodoma ● Telegram: "Kilimo Dodoma"
Simu: +255 (026) 2321407/ 2320035 ● *Fax:* +255 (026) 2320037
Barua pepe: ps@kilimo.go.tz

Ikishirikiana na:

exts.kilimo.go.tz

Cross section of participant during the workshop on Agribusiness

SYSTEMS DEVELOPED

1. Mobile Kilimo (M-Kilimo)
2. Farmer's registry system
3. DigitalDashboard
4. Mafunzo App
5. Stakeholder's Database
6. WRRB stocks Dynamics system
7. Tanzania online getway

A knowledge-based economy is key to Tanzania's future, and ESRF is at the forefront of promoting this transformation. Through innovative projects such as Food Systems Transformation in Southern Africa for One Health (FoSTA) and Making Agricultural Trade Sustainable (MATS), ESRF is generating insights that will help reshape Tanzania's agricultural and urban development landscapes.

Among recent ESRF's flagship initiatives such as the Impact Evaluation Laboratory (IE-Lab) and the Tanzania Urbanization Laboratory showcase ESRF's dedication to evidence-based policy formulation, ensuring that decisions are grounded in solid research. By promoting innovative financing mechanisms through programs like the Development Financing Programme, ESRF is supporting Tanzania's transition to a knowledge-driven economy.

ESRF staff in a group photo with participants of the Impact Evaluation Laboratory course

As Tanzania navigates new challenges and opportunities, ESRF's role in shaping the future has never been more critical. Our research will continue to leverage the power of digital technologies and promote sustainable practices in agriculture, trade, and investment, ensuring Tanzania remains competitive in the global economy. Initiatives such as the Pro-Poor Economic Growth and Environmentally Sustainable Development (PEI Initiative) demonstrate ESRF's proactive approach to addressing future challenges, integrating economic growth with environmental sustainability. Our partnerships with global institutions, such as CUTS International Geneva, had further enhanced Tanzania's ability to stay agile in an interconnected world.

For three decades, ESRF has stood as a pillar of resilience, innovation, and excellence in Tanzania's research landscape. By aligning our projects with national priorities and promoting inclusive growth, we have cemented our role as a cornerstone in shaping Tanzania's policy and development agenda.

As we look to the future, ESRF's forward-thinking research will continue to play an essential role in ensuring Tanzania is prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Our legacy is not just in our research output but in the tangible impact we have made on the nation's socio-economic transformation. With a continued focus on innovation, inclusion, and sustainability, ESRF will remain a driving force in Tanzania's development for years to come.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR TANZANIA'S DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

By: Dr. John Shilinde (Senior Research Fellow, ESRF)
Richard Ngilawa (Research Fellow, ESRF)

As Tanzania progresses toward its Vision 2025, the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) underscores the critical role of research in shaping policies that align with the nation's development goals. Insights from the evaluation of the Tanzania Development Vision (TDV) 2025 reveal key research priorities that are crucial for sustainable growth.

One of the primary goals identified is the improvement of livelihoods, with education, primary health care, and food security emerging as top priorities. While food self-sufficiency in Tanzania has shown improvement, challenges in agricultural productivity continue to pose significant barriers. Research focusing on innovative agricultural practices and climate-resilient strategies is essential to enhance food security and reduce dependence on imports.

In education, the success of universal primary enrolment presents an opportunity to improve education quality, particularly through enhanced teacher training and the development of life skills-based curricula that equip students for the labor market. Furthermore, addressing gender dynamics and cultural barriers to women's empowerment remains a vital area for research, as access to education for girls has improved but participation in decision-making roles still lags.

"One of the primary goals identified is the improvement of livelihoods, with education, primary health care, and food security emerging as top priorities.

ESRF's evaluation also highlights the importance of improving access to quality primary health care. Significant advancements have been made, particularly in urban areas, yet rural communities still face challenges in accessing health services. Research aimed at enhancing the delivery of health services, particularly through innovative funding mechanisms, is crucial for sustaining these improvements. Additionally, while the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates indicates successful health interventions, barriers to quality reproductive health care access require further investigation to ensure that all women receive necessary support during pregnancy and childbirth.

Good governance is another essential focus area for the development agenda, emphasizing moral integrity and adherence to the rule of law. Initiatives like the self-vetting code of ethics for media professionals and the establishment of drug rehabilitation centers are positive developments; however, challenges such as cultural imitation among youth and parental neglect remain prevalent.

Despite notable decreases in crime rates, public ignorance about legal rights and persistent corruption hinder the establishment of a law-abiding society. Transparency improvements are evident, yet service delivery issues continue to foster corrupt practices.

ESRF research team facilitates FGD with service providers from Mkongo village-Ikwiriri in Pwani region who supplied fruits and vegetables during construction of the JNHHP.

Primary school children on the playground, Makambako Njombe

Although evaluations done by ESRF indicate progress in building a strong and competitive industrial economy, with the industrial sector's contribution to GDP significantly increasing. Challenges such as reliance on imports and high costs of value addition still hinder further growth. Achieving macro-economic stability is vital, as inflation rates have remained consistent, yet external shocks continue to pose risks to economic resilience.

By focusing on these identified research priorities, ESRF aims to inform evidence-based policies that promote sustainable livelihoods, empower communities, and contribute to Tanzania's development.

ESRF has been supporting community radios in contents generation

LEVERAGING RESEARCH FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

By: Vivian Kazi (Head of Strategic Research and Publications, ESRF)
Richard Ngilangwa, (Research Fellow, ESRF)

Inclusive growth involves more than just economic expansion; it aims to ensure that growth is equitable, benefiting all segments of society. Tanzania faces significant challenges, particularly with a growing population and increasing demands for job creation. The working-age population is projected to surge by 2050, with over 700,000 youth entering the labor market annually. This demographic shift presents both an opportunity for economic growth and a pressing need for policies that foster sustainable industrial practices and job creation.

Tanzania has made strides in reducing poverty, with the national poverty rate declining from 34.4% in 2007 to 26.4% in 2018. However, recent estimates suggest that the poverty rate has risen to 43.5% in 2023 according to the World Bank. This indicates that significant challenges remain in ensuring equitable and sustainable development. Despite the progress, over 13 million Tanzanians still live below the poverty line, and many remain vulnerable to economic shocks. The government's ongoing task is to create jobs and opportunities that align with the country's growing population, ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are widely shared.

The Role of ESRF in Promoting Inclusive Growth

At ESRF, we recognize that research plays a critical role in achieving inclusive growth and development. Our Medium-Term Strategic Plan (2022-2026) outlines several key areas where research can drive positive change:

- Youth Development and Entrepreneurship: By focusing on identifying and addressing the skills mismatch between education and the labour market, ESRF aims to prepare youth for a competitive and evolving job market. This is crucial in harnessing the potential of Tanzania's young and rapidly growing workforce.

- Food and Nutrition Security: Agriculture remains the backbone of Tanzania's economy, and improving agricultural productivity is essential for ensuring food security. ESRF's research in this area seeks to enhance agricultural practices, thus improving nutrition and resilience among Tanzanian households.

- Development Financing: Financial inclusion is key to ensuring that all segments of society, particularly women and disadvantaged groups, benefit from economic growth. ESRF is researching financial products that can support women-led small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and other underserved populations.

- Urbanization and Economic Resilience: Tanzania's cities are growing rapidly, and with this urbanization come both opportunities and challenges. ESRF's research focuses on creating urban policies that promote inclusive growth, address urban poverty, and enhance economic resilience in cities, ensuring they remain hubs of opportunity for all.

ESRF in partnership with other stakeholders transformed the City of Tanga into Youth Friendly City

ESRF is committed to monitoring and evaluating policies that promote inclusive growth, ensuring that the benefits of economic expansion reach all Tanzanians. Our work is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Tanzania's broader vision for economic resilience and inclusion. Through evidence-based policy recommendations, we aim to ensure that no one is left behind in the pursuit of prosperity.

As we reflect on our 30 years of contributions to Tanzania's development, it is evident that research has the power to shape the nation's future. By continuing to leverage research for inclusive growth, ESRF envisions a Tanzania where everyone can thrive and contribute to a more equitable and prosperous society.

> **"Our work is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Tanzania's broader vision for economic resilience and inclusion.**

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

By: John Kajiba (Principal Information and Technology expert, ESRF)
Libena Senorine (Senior Communications Officer, ESRF)

ESRF is among the leading research institutions that has played a important role in fostering the development of a knowledge-based economy in the country. A knowledge-based economy is one where the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge are central drivers of economic activity and social development.

Research and innovation are the cornerstones of a knowledge-based economy. ESRF has been at the forefront of conducting high-quality research across various fields, including economics, social sciences, agriculture, and health. This research generates valuable insights that inform policy decisions and drive innovation. By investing in research, ESRF is contributing to the development of new technologies, products, and services that can boost productivity and create new economic opportunities.

A knowledge-based economy requires a skilled workforce with the ability to adapt to changing technological and economic conditions. ESRF has been instrumental in building human capital through its training and capacity development programs. The Foundation offers a wide range of training courses and workshops that equip researchers, policymakers, and practitioners with the skills and knowledge they need to contribute to a knowledge-based economy.

Fostering Collaboration and Partnerships

Collaboration and partnerships are essential for the growth and development of a knowledge-based economy. ESRF has actively sought to foster collaboration with both domestic and international partners. By working with universities, research institutions, and private sector firms, ESRF can leverage the expertise of a wider network to address complex challenges and drive innovation.

Madame Julie Delahanty (2nd Right), the President of International Development Research Center (IDRC) on a courtesy visit to Prof. Fortunata Makene (1st right), ESRF Executive Director.

Prof. Louis Fourie making presentation on Digital Transformation Towards Industrialization: What are Opportunities in Agriculture, Education, Business and Service Delivery.

Promoting Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Innovation and entrepreneurship are key drivers of economic growth in a knowledge-based economy. ESRF has been actively promoting innovation and entrepreneurship through its research and capacity development programs. The Foundation supports the development of start-ups and provides mentorship and guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs. By fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, ESRF is helping to create new businesses and jobs.

ESRF is committed to building a knowledge-based economy in Tanzania. Through its research, training, and capacity development programs, the Foundation is contributing to the development of a skilled workforce, fostering innovation, and promoting economic growth. By investing in knowledge and human capital, Tanzania can position itself as a competitive player in the global economy.

ESRF's Recirculating Aquaculture System demonstration site

TESTIMONIALS AND REFLECTIONS

By: Faraji Mgwabati (Former Intern, ESRF)

As we celebrate 30 years of the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the institution for the milestones. Those who worked at ESRF will agree with me that the importance of this Think Tank organization cannot be over-emphasized. Also, they will concur with me that people who worked at ESRF have ended up making good career development elsewhere. Atal development.

ESRF is an important institution that helps policymakers make informed decisions regarding issues related to the country's socioeconomic development. Personally, as one of the few lucky individuals who passed at ESRF, albeit short stint, I still have fond memories of the institution. The skills I learned there, have significantly shaped my career development. I joined ESRF in 2011 as an Intern while studying Master of International Trade Degree at the University of Dar es Salaam.

Although it was a short stint, I still have good memories of how the institution contributed to my knowledge enhancement in the areas of research, analysis, and debates. Participating in ESRF research helped me understand practical data collection, policy analysis, and reporting methods. Participating in various symposiums at the famous Round Conference Hall greatly enhanced my ability to listen, analyze, and respond to issues from research findings.

ESRF was a perfect fit for me because of my Business Journalism background, data collection, analysis, and reporting which were part and parcel of my job. But it gave me confidence vigor and zeal to address development problems.

Just a few months after my internship I landed a consulting opportunity with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

With UNCTAD from 2012 to 2022, Faraja was involved in the documentation of the administrative procedures through an eRegulations system, under projects that were implemented in conjunction with the Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC), Zanzibar Investment Promotion Authority (ZIPA), and the TANTRADE. Since 2012, apart from UNCTAD, I have worked as a consultant for various international Organisations such as Trademark Africa and USAID.

Currently, I run my consulting firm, MG Empire Consultancy Limited, and I am the Director for 4 other companies in different fields. As the Managing Director of MG Empire, it helps investors start businesses in Tanzania through investment promotion, facilitation, research, and government relation services. As the publisher of the Doing Business Tanzania Magazine, which provides analytical information to investors on investment opportunities, procedures, and current affairs news, I rely on reports and findings from ESRF studies.

Between May and June 2024, I was commissioned by the President's Office, of Planning and Investment to prepare the Tanzania National Investment Report for 2023 as a Lead Consultant. This was accomplished with part of the knowledge acquired from ESRF.

In 2019 I authored the Tanzania Starting Business Procedure guide, which has helped many start-ups understand and navigate through the procedure for business formalization in Tanzania.
Faraja holds a Master's degree in International Trade, a Bachelor of Commerce and Management from the University of Dar es Salaam and an Advanced Certificate of Journalism from the International Institute for Journalism, Berlin, Germany. His areas of interest are Investment, Trade, Media & Communications, and Regional Integration.

ESRF AND USAID TANZANIA EXECUTED DATA QUALITY ASSESSMENT STUDIES.

By: Apronius Mbilinyi (Former Staff, ESRF)

In its three decades of service, the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) has done a lot in terms of research works, capacity development and knowledge management, in partnership with public and private sectors, local and international institutions that this article cannot absorb all.
I participated in a number of studies while working with ESRF, one of the studies was Tanzania Monitoring and Evaluation systems (TMES) which had a support from USAID in Tanzania. Tanzania Monitoring and Evaluation systems was an implementing partner (IP) for USAID, responsible for conducting Data Quality Assessment (DQA) studies.

As part of its capacity-building efforts, USAID requested TMES to enhance the capacities of local organizations in Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Data Quality Assessments, as these were emerging professional fields in Tanzania.

Prior to the DQA study, all TMES staff and other partner organization staff received training on various topics in Monitoring and Evaluation. These topics included the formulation and evaluation of key project indicators, data collection processes, monitoring and evaluation data compilation, data flow, storage, analysis, data utilization, and the procedures for conducting Data Quality Assessments (DQA).

The need for the DQA exercise arose from the fast-growing concerns of Monitoring and Evaluation experts on the trustworthiness of data used for decision-making. Questions about data validity, reliability, accuracy, integrity, and timeliness are crucial in determining whether the data could be trusted for informed decision-making, such as in policy formulation.

To address these concerns, a Data Quality Assessment (DQA) was conducted. A DQA could either be carried out internally by the project's M&E team or externally by an expert engaged by the donor agency. In this case, USAID contracted TMES to conduct the DQA for the organization.

Therefore, the data quality assessment involved evaluating the reliability of data based on various aspects; known as the six DQA criteria namely; Validity, accuracy, completeness, consistency, timeliness, and relevance. As data is very important for informed decision making and therefore a need for having accurate and trusted data; DQA is critical for predicting and preventing potential data quality issues/challenges or weaknesses.
By definition a Data Quality Assessment (DQA) is a systematic process to assess the strengths and weaknesses of a data set, and to inform users of the 'health' of data. For instance, in data Validity, the key question is, does the data clearly and adequately represent the intended result? Would a third-party expert agree that the indicator is a valid measure for the stated result?
Another key aspect was reliability. This involves assessing whether the indicator definitions and data collection and analysis processes were clear and consistently applied over time. Integrity, on the other hand, examined the data collection, analysis, and reporting processes, focusing on whether mechanisms were in place to reduce the possibility of data manipulation.
Timeliness was also a crucial factor, considering whether the data was collected within an appropriate timeframe, without delays, and how recent it is to effectively influence management decision-making.

> **"Data is very important for informed decision making.**

TANZANIAN WHO BENEFITED FROM POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA

Festo Maro, Senior Research Officer, Monitoring and Evaluation, COSTECH

The Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) in Poverty Analysis, jointly designed and delivered by the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), REPOA, and the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam, based in The Hague, Netherlands, was officially launched under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2003. The course aimed to enhance capacity for policy analysis on poverty issues in Tanzania.
Throughout its eight cohorts, the course attracted 2,519 applicants. Of these, 211 were accepted, and 192 successfully graduated. These graduates are now widely dispersed across the country, working in central and local government, parastatal institutions, NGOs, universities, research institutions, private firms, and donor agencies.
As we reflect back to the last 30 years down the road when ESRF was established, Mr. Festo Maro, one of the beneficiaries of the PGD program, explains how the program benefited him:

Attending the postgraduate diploma training on poverty analysis for socio-economic security and development, offered by the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague in collaboration with the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), was a transformative experience in my professional journey.

ESRF has been in a forefront to build capacity of policy researchers in central and local government, academia, civil society and private sector to participate effectively in national development process

The program provided me with an in-depth understanding of the complexities of poverty and its impact on socio-economic security and development. Through a combination of theoretical frameworks and practical case studies, the training equipped me with the tools needed to critically analyze poverty and develop strategies that promote social and economic security.

This training served as a pivotal point in my career, inspiring me to seek new challenges and opportunities in research promotion coordination, management, and innovation commercialization. The knowledge and skills I acquired during the program enabled me to confidently transition into these areas, where I have been able to contribute meaningfully by managing research projects and fostering innovation.

The training also enhanced my ability to lead teams and manage complex projects, ensuring that research initiatives are effectively translated into actionable outcomes that address pressing socio-economic issues. In addition to my role in research management, the training opened up opportunities for consultancy work with reputable organizations such as the World Bank, FAO, and local organizations. My expertise in poverty analysis and socio-economic security has allowed me to provide valuable insights in areas such as rural development, value chain analysis, and program monitoring and evaluation.

The multidisciplinary approach of the training has been instrumental in enabling me to offer comprehensive solutions that meet the diverse needs of these organizations and the communities they serve.

Overall, the postgraduate diploma training has been a cornerstone of my professional development. It has not only enriched my understanding of poverty and its broader implications but also empowered me to take on leadership roles in research and consultancy. The skills and knowledge I gained continue to inform my work, allowing me to make meaningful contributions to the fields of rural development, socio-economic security, and beyond."

"The program provided me with an in-depth understanding of the complexities of poverty and its impact on socio-economic security and development.

POLICY DIALOGUES AND BEYOND: HOW ESRF FACILITATES DEBATE AND NETWORKING FOR DEVELOPMENT

By: Mr. Danford Sango, (Head of Governance and Capacity Development, ESRF)

One of ESRF's core contributions is creating a space where evidence-based research meets practical policy concerns. Over the years, ESRF has organized numerous policy dialogues that bring together diverse groups, including government officials, development partners, private sector representatives, civil society organizations, and academia. These forums offer a structured space for discussing pressing issues, from the impacts of globalization on labor markets to innovations in food security and agricultural trade.

These dialogues are not merely academic exercises; they are designed to lead to real-world change. For example, ESRF's dialogue on Building Climate Resilience in Africa's Agricultural Research Programs helped frame a national discussion on how Tanzania could better prepare its agricultural sector for climate challenges. In doing so, ESRF has become a trusted bridge between research output and policy implementation.

Participants following the presentation during the High-Level Policy Dialogue for the Making Agricultural Trade Sustainable (MATS) policy dialogue at ESRF Conference Hall – Dar Es Salaam Tanzania.

Beyond just hosting debates, ESRF excels at facilitating networking within the research ecosystem. It brings together individuals and institutions that might otherwise work in silos, enabling them to collaborate on shared goals. ESRF's multi-stakeholder dialogues, such as those involving FANRPAN, have allowed agricultural experts, government officials, and civil society actors to join forces and tackle the challenges of poverty and food security.

As Tanzania moves toward achieving its development goals under the Tanzania Development Vision 2025, the role of research-based dialogue is more critical than ever. ESRF remains committed to facilitating this process by creating platforms that encourage collaborative problem-solving and by ensuring that research continues to have a tangible impact on national policy.

Key Achievements

Over the past 30 years, ESRF has achieved several significant milestones:

- Building Research Capacity: ESRF has supported the development of a vibrant research community in Tanzania, providing training and mentorship opportunities to young researchers.
- Disseminating Research Findings: The Foundation has played a crucial role in disseminating research findings to a wider audience, ensuring that evidence-based information is accessible to policymakers and the public.
- Advocating for Evidence-Based Policymaking: ESRF has consistently advocated for the use of research evidence in policy formulation and implementation

By building on its past successes and adapting to the evolving needs of Tanzania, ESRF is poised to continue making a significant impact on the country's development. As ESRF enters its next decade, it remains committed to its mission of promoting evidence-based policymaking and fostering collaboration within the research ecosystem.

Publications are one of the ways ESRF disseminates its research findings

FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL: ESRF'S IMPACT ON REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

By: John Shilinde (Senior research Fellow, ESRF)
Theresia Mruma (Researcher, ESRF)

Over the past three decades, the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) has transformed from a Tanzanian think tank into a globally recognized institution, significantly influencing regional and international policy landscapes. Established in 1994, ESRF has remained steadfast in its mission of conducting research to guide policy and development management, focusing on Tanzania's economic and social advancement. Today, the Foundation's influence stretches far beyond national borders, playing a key role in shaping policy dialogue across Africa and the world.

At the core of ESRF's expansion is its commitment to evidence-based policy research, which has positioned it as a critical player in major international initiatives. Through strategic partnerships with organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the London School of Economics, and regional bodies like FANRPAN, ESRF has been pivotal in driving discourse on key global challenges such as climate change, food security, and sustainable development.

One of the standout examples of ESRF's international engagement is its work on the Agriculture and Food-System Resilience (AFRICAP) project, which brought together institutions from Tanzania, South Africa, Malawi, and Zambia, along with UK-based research partners. This project not only elevated ESRF's role in regional agriculture and food policy but also fostered cross-continental collaboration to build resilient, climate-smart food systems in Africa.
Similarly, ESRF's involvement in the Making Agricultural Trade Sustainable (MATS) project, funded by the European Union, underscores its increasing relevance in global discussions. By contributing to policy frameworks that enhance sustainability in agricultural trade, ESRF has influenced the discourse on balancing environmental sustainability with economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.

In recent years, ESRF has expanded its reach by supporting the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and contributing to Tanzania's export strategies. The Foundation's research on cross-border trade and regional integration has not only supported Tanzania's economic agenda but also helped align national strategies with broader regional and continental goals, fostering deeper integration across East and Southern Africa.

ESRF's expertise in governance and accountability has also drawn attention at global forums, where it contributes to capacity-building initiatives for policy makers across the continent. Its work on capacity development in Zanzibar and across Tanzania Mainland, in partnership with UNICEF and other organizations, highlights its regional impact in enhancing public sector performance.

As ESRF continues to evolve, its growing influence is evident in its participation in global policy networks and its contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through cutting-edge research, high-level policy dialogues, and collaborative international projects, ESRF is making significant strides in bridging local challenges with global solutions, cementing its status as a crucial actor in regional and international policy development. With its forward-looking strategic plans, ESRF is well-positioned to continue shaping the global policy landscape, proving that a think tank based in Tanzania can have a far-reaching impact on issues that matter globally, from climate resilience to sustainable trade.

ESRF's SMS Campaign to boost COVID-19 vaccine uptake was instrumental in increasing vaccine acceptance in Tanzania, particularly in regions with significant resistance due to misinformation. ESRF's work on NMNAP II addressed the paradox of child stunting in food surplus regions like Njombe and Iringa, informing targeted nutrition interventions. ESRF's collaboration with international projects, such as AFRICAP, led to the formation of the Muheza Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance (MUCSAA), enhancing climate resilience in agriculture in the Tanga region.

To foster future research capacity, ESRF collaborates with global institutions to offer scholarships. A recent partnership with China Agriculture University (CAU) enabled two Master's and one PhD student to pursue studies in rural development. ESRF also provides a learning platform for local university students, enriching their research experiences. Since 2012, ESRF has offered annual training on impact evaluation, initially funded by participants and now supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. These three-week sessions teach researchers, policymakers, and government officials how to evaluate development interventions using Randomized Control Trials (RCTs) and advanced evaluation techniques. ESRF's Impact Evaluation (IE) Lab, established in 2019, continues to enhance research skills across sectors and support evidence-based policymaking.

ESRF offers non-paid internship opportunities to students pursuing studies in social sciences, economics, and related fields. Interns participate in proposal writing, data collection, and research report writing, gaining practical skills in research methodologies and project management. ESRF supports student growth by providing regular feedback to academic institutions on interns' progress. ESRF's capacity development initiatives range from tailor-made training programs to policy dialogues, strengthening the national workforce. Programs like the Postgraduate Diploma in Poverty Analysis and the International Fellowship Program (IFP) have been integral in building expertise in Tanzania's development sectors. ESRF's training for journalists under the Afya Yako project has empowered media professionals to report on health issues based on rigorous research.

ESRF's capacity-building efforts extend to Zanzibar, where it has worked with government ministries and research institutions to strengthen policy analysis and development management.

ESRF continues to empower a diverse range of stakeholders, from policymakers to grassroots organizations, reinforcing its role as a leader in Tanzania's development landscape. ESRF's Impact Evaluation (IE) Lab hosts workshops like Utafiti Wetu (Our Research) and Na Serikali (With Government) to bridge the gap between researchers and policymakers. Through these platforms, ESRF facilitates research collaborations that inform government decisions and improve public interventions.

ESRF's contributions to policy and action research have had a profound impact on Tanzania's economic and social development. Its evidence-based recommendations have shaped policies that address pressing national challenges. The Foundation's commitment to building research capacity and fostering a culture of data-driven policymaking ensures that ESRF's legacy will continue to shape Tanzania's future.

PIONEERING NEW KNOWLEDGE: ESRF'S INNOVATION IN AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, AND DIGITAL SYSTEMS.

By: Mr Mussa Martine (Research associate, ESRF)

The Foundation has played a critical role in Tanzania's economic transformation by pioneering innovative approaches in agriculture, industry, and digital systems. Its projects, including M-Kilimo, hydroponics, cage fishing, and urbanization efforts through TULab, have transformed various sectors, enhancing productivity, sustainability, and economic growth.

ESRF's Agricultural Electronic Information Systems (AEIS) have revolutionized Tanzania's agriculture by addressing information gaps in the value chain. The flagship M-Kilimo platform connects farmers to real-time market prices and agricultural best practices, empowering them to make data-driven decisions that increase productivity and competitiveness. It also links farmers to extension officers, helping them manage risks and improve market access. The Farmers Registration System (FRS) has created a centralized database that helps policymakers allocate resources like inputs and subsidies efficiently, registering over a million farmers. This data-driven approach has strengthened agricultural planning and improved service delivery. Additionally, the Warehouse Management Electronics System (WMES) enhances transparency and efficiency in storage, reducing post-harvest losses, while the Agriculture E-Dashboard compiles data for better coordination and proactive decision-making.

ESRF has also promoted hydroponics, an innovative farming method that grows crops in nutrient-rich water rather than soil. This system addresses land and water shortages and enables year-round farming, contributing to food security in urban and peri-urban areas. ESRF's innovations in aquaculture, including cage fishing and Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS), have helped meet Tanzania's food security challenges. Cage fishing involves raising fish in enclosures within natural water bodies, a practice that supports sustainable fish farming while reducing overfishing. RAS, on the other hand, recycles water in a closed system, reducing water usage and allowing for intensive fish farming in water-scarce regions. Both methods contribute to food security and economic growth, especially in lake regions.

As Tanzania urbanizes, ESRF has led efforts to address the accompanying challenges through the Tanzania Urbanization Laboratory (TULab). TULab supports urban development by promoting smart cities and green infrastructure, ensuring sustainable growth. It has developed the National Urbanization Roadmap, shaping policies that guide environmentally sustainable urban expansion. TULab has also collaborated with international partners on pilot projects focused on housing, transportation, and waste management, ensuring that Tanzania's urban development aligns with global best practices. The Lotizer mobile app, another innovation, assists local governments in optimizing land use, improving urban planning in growing cities.

Digital innovation and youth empowerment are central to ESRF's work. The TangaYetu Initiative, launched in 2021, has transformed Tanga into a youth-friendly city by providing digital skills training and promoting entrepreneurship. Projects like Youth Digital Skills for Employment and the redevelopment of public spaces have fostered youth development and improved public infrastructure.

Hon. Suleman Jafo, Minister of State, President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government, cutting a ribbon to officiate launch of Tanzania Urbanization Roadmap. The exact title of the report is "Harnessing Urbanization for Development in Tanzania": Roadmap for Urban Development Policy. The event took place on 23rd August 2019 at Kilimanjaro Hall, treasury square room in DODOMA.

Under the support of Fondation Botnar , ESRF, Tanga City Council and TangaYetu Initiative organized a six-month training to youth in Digital Skills.

ESRF's Hydroponic Vegetable Demonstration Site

ESRF has also empowered youth through the YEEVACE project, which equips young people with the skills and resources to succeed in agriculture and industry. By supporting value addition in agricultural products, ESRF has helped youth drive economic growth and innovation. Additionally, its collaboration with UNICEF on programs for children and adolescents in urban areas has informed policies that address critical issues like food security and sanitation.

ESRF's innovations in agriculture, aquaculture, urban development, and digital systems have significantly contributed to Tanzania's economic transformation. By leveraging research and innovation, ESRF continues to foster sustainable growth, improve livelihoods, and align with Tanzania's national development goals. As it celebrates 30 years, ESRF remains at the forefront of driving change through pioneering knowledge and practical solutions.

> **"ESRF has also promoted hydroponics, an innovative farming method that grows crops in nutrient-rich water rather than soil.**

EMPOWERING TANZANIA'S REGIONS: ESRF'S CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

By: Mr. Musa Martine (Research Associate, ESRF)

Local Economic Development (LED) enhances economic performance and living standards in specific regions. In Tanzania, the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) has been pivotal in supporting regional and district authorities to attract investments and drive sustainable economic growth. ESRF's work aligns with Tanzania's vision of decentralizing economic growth. In collaboration with NIRAS, ESRF developed LED strategies for regions such as Tanga, Arusha, Mbeya, and Mtwara, identifying business growth potentials and providing action plans to reduce poverty and boost productivity. In response to Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa's directive that all regions have investment guides, ESRF led the creation of Regional Investment Guides for 25 regions, mapping opportunities in sectors like agriculture, mining, tourism, and manufacturing.

The investment guides provide comprehensive insights into economic opportunities in regions like Simiyu, Kilimanjaro, and Mwanza. These guides serve as essential tools for potential investors, equipping regional governments with frameworks for sustainable growth. ESRF supports local governments with feasibility studies to ensure investments are viable and community-aligned. Noteworthy projects include a textile plant in Katavi and fish farming in Busega District, ensuring that investment decisions lead to tangible benefits for local economies.

> **"ESRF facilitates investment forums where government officials, investors, and development partners collaborate.**

ESRF facilitates investment forums where government officials, investors, and development partners collaborate. A key success story is ESRF's support for rehabilitating the Nyakabindi Grounds in Simiyu for the Nanenane Agricultural Exhibition, along with feasibility studies for expanding regional businesses in Simiyu.

Through the PEA Project, ESRF promotes sustainable development by integrating poverty, environmental, gender, and climate change considerations. ESRF has worked on initiatives such as improving school sanitation in Iringa and supporting youth-led agribusiness projects in the Lake Zone, contributing to social and economic growth. ESRF has played a crucial role in advancing Tanzania's Local Economic Development, laying a foundation for sustainable and inclusive regional growth. Continued collaboration between local governments, the private sector, and development partners is essential, along with ongoing monitoring to ensure long-term success.

SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION: ESRF'S INFLUENCE ON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

By: Richard Ngilangwa (Research Fellow, ESRF)
Theresia Mruma (Researcher, ESRF)

Despite the country's significant economic growth, there remains a stark disconnect between this growth and the employment opportunities available to the burgeoning youth population. The rapid migration of young people from rural areas to urban centers exacerbates this issue, as these urban areas often lack the necessary jobs and social infrastructure, such as housing and access to clean water to support decent living conditions.

ESRF's commitment to improving education and fostering youth development has manifested through various initiatives, research studies, and policy advocacy efforts. Notably, the National Case Study on Education Financing Experiences and Budgetary Reforms (1999) set the stage for understanding the financial constraints in the education sector. Commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Culture and funded by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), this study analyzed existing budget practices, identifying key weaknesses and bottlenecks in implementing budget reforms. The recommendations generated from this study have been instrumental in shaping policies that improve expenditure management in education, directly impacting the resources available for youth training and development.

In 2005, the ESRF undertook multiple studies addressing pressing social issues that affect youth. One significant project was the Training Needs Assessment, Job Market Survey, and Tracer Studies, funded by Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA). This initiative aimed to assess the skills and experiences required by the labor market, ultimately informing adjustments in curricula, policies, and training programs. By bridging the gap between education and employment, ESRF has contributed to enhancing the employability of Tanzanian youth.

Furthermore, the East Africa Youth Inclusion Programme (EAYIP), launched in 2017, exemplifies ESRF's dedication to supporting youth livelihoods. This program aimed to improve the income and overall well-being of 25,000 youth in Uganda and Tanzania by providing direct pathways to sustainable livelihoods through employment and enterprise development. ESRF's comprehensive report under this initiative identified necessary reforms in national policies and legal frameworks, advocating for an enabling environment for youth participation in economic activities, particularly in agriculture and related value chains.

ESRF has also focused on gender dimensions in development, recognizing that empowering women and addressing gender inequalities is essential for the overall development of the youth sector. The study on the Gender Dimension in the Cut Flower Industry in Tanzania highlights how globalization can provide new opportunities for women in the labour market, thereby contributing to poverty reduction and fostering a more equitable society. More recently, ESRF's work on the public procurement programs, which aims to enhance women's participation in high-value sectors serves as a critical intervention that also addresses youth, particularly young women.

> **It is clear that our work has significantly influenced the trajectory of youth development and education in Tanzania.**

Through improving access to high-value work opportunities, these programs are helping to close the gender and youth employment gaps, ensuring that future generations can benefit from more inclusive economic growth.

As we reflect on the ESRF's legacy over the past 30 years, it is clear that our work has significantly influenced the trajectory of youth development and education in Tanzania. By conducting research, informing policy, and advocating for systemic change, the ESRF has established itself as a key player in shaping the future of our youth. Moving forward, continued investment in capacity building and targeted interventions will be essential to equip the next generation with the tools they need to thrive in an increasingly competitive global landscape.

ESRF's commitment to supporting youth through education and policy advocacy serves as a testament to its legacy of excellence. Together, we can pave the way for a brighter future, ensuring that our youth not only survive but thrive in an ever-changing world.

Training to researchers, policy analysts, economists, project managers to impart them with knowledge on Impact Evaluation.

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