



# Africa Agriculture Transformation Scorecard: Performance and Lessons

## 2021 CAADP Biennial Review Brief: Eswatini

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# 1. Introduction

The Malabo Declaration outlines the vision of Africa's leaders for accelerating agricultural growth and transformation on the continent between 2015 and 2025 (AUC 2014). This transformation is to be achieved through the pursuit of seven broad commitments:

1. Upholding the principles and values of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP),
2. Enhancing investment finance in agriculture,
3. Ending hunger in Africa by 2025,
4. Reducing poverty by half by 2025 through inclusive agricultural growth and transformation,
5. Boosting intra-African trade in agricultural commodities and services,
6. Enhancing resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and related risks, and
7. Ensuring mutual accountability for actions and results by conducting a Biennial Review (BR) continent-wide to monitor progress in achieving the seven Malabo Declaration commitments.

As part of fulfilling the seventh commitment on mutual accountability, the third CAADP BR report was endorsed by the assembly of African Heads of State and Government at the 35<sup>th</sup> African Union (AU) Summit in February 2022 (AUC 2021). This brief draws on that report to summarize the performance of the nation of Eswatini in pursuit of the seven Malabo Declaration commitments and assesses the challenges faced and the lessons learned by the country. The brief also reviews policy, programmatic, and investment changes in Eswatini induced by the inaugural BR of 2017 (AUC 2018), the second BR of 2019 (AUC 2020), and the most recent BR. The final section of the brief highlights policy actions and programmatic measures Eswatini must take for it to meet its Malabo Declaration commitments by 2025.

## 2. Progress by Eswatini in Achieving the Malabo Commitments

For the third BR, the benchmark score, the minimum score for a country to be considered on-track to achieve the Malabo Declaration commitments by 2025, was 7.28 (AUC 2021). The benchmark score for the third BR is an increase over both the second BR, for which the benchmark was 6.66, and the first BR's benchmark of 3.94. Eswatini's overall performance score for the first BR just surpassed the benchmark, so the country was on-track to achieve the Malabo commitments at that time. However, the second BR found the country was no longer on-track, with an overall score of 4.19, below the 6.66 second BR benchmark score. For the third BR Eswatini attained an overall score of 5.73, so did not meet the third BR benchmark of 7.28 and is considered not on-track to achieve the Malabo commitments by 2025. However, the overall score for Eswatini has been improving across the successive BRs. Eswatini's overall score for the third BR shows an improvement of 37 percent in the country's performance relative to the second BR and a 44 percent improvement relative to the first BR.

Despite this improvement in performance, as shown in Table 1, Eswatini performed far below the benchmark for the third BR. The low rating can be attributed to the country's poor performance on most Malabo commitments.



**Table 1. Eswatini—summary of Biennial Review scores by Malabo commitment**

Malabo commitment	First BR (2017)	Second BR (2019)	Third BR (2021)	% change, BR3 - BR2	Third BR Benchmark	Third BR Status
1. Recommitment to CAADP	5.15	6.89	5.58	-19	10.00	Not on track
2. Enhancing agriculture finance	8.07	3.27	8.54	161	7.50	On track
3. Ending hunger by 2025	2.72	3.34	3.97	19	6.32	Not on track
4. Halving poverty through agriculture	1.00	3.51	5.02	43	5.81	Not on track
5. Intra-Africa trade in agriculture	1.54	1.39	2.96	113	5.00	Not on track
6. Enhancing resilience to climate change	3.33	3.82	5.85	53	8.00	Not on track
7. Mutual accountability	6.16	7.10	8.23	16	8.33	Not on track
All commitments	3.99	4.19	5.73	37	7.28	Not on track

**Source:** Authors' calculations based on Eswatini Biennial Review scores.

Eswatini was found in the third BR to be on-track on only the second Malabo commitment, that of enhancing investment financing in agriculture. That only one commitment was on-track represents a regression for the country, as it was on-track on four of the seven themes in the first BR. However, Eswatini was found to not be on-track for any commitment in the second BR.

Despite the third BR finding the country not on-track to achieve the Malabo commitments, Eswatini saw notable improvements between the second and third BR on five of the seven themes: 3) Ending hunger by 2025, 4) Halving poverty through agriculture, 5) Intra-Africa trade in agriculture commodities and services, 6) Enhancing resilience to climate change, and 7) Mutual accountability for actions and results. Eswatini has realized a consistent improvement on commitments 3, 4, 6, and 7 across the three BRs, even if performance has fallen short of the benchmark scores for each commitment.

The increasingly positive performance on the four commitments highlights areas of strong performance by Eswatini in seeking to achieve the Malabo Commitments by 2025. Among the actions it has taken is establishing public-private partnerships within important agricultural commodity value chains that have strong linkages to smallholder farming households. Eswatini also has raised public agriculture expenditures as a share of the annual government budget, increased value addition within agriculture, improved food safety, and reduced the number of households experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity. However, the country can do better in the attention paid to engaging youth in new job opportunities in agriculture value chains, in raising crop yields for the country's priority agricultural commodities, and in increasing total agricultural research spending as a share of agriculture GDP.

On commitment 1, the recommitment to CAADP, which saw a decline in performance between the second and third BR, Eswatini was on-track for this commitment in 2017 when the first BR was done. While the country improved on its score for commitment 1 for the second BR, it did not meet the second BR benchmark. However, between the second and third BR, Eswatini regressed by 19 percent in its performance on the CAADP commitment. The main cause for this performance decline was that, at the time of the third BR, the country had not finalized its second-generation National Agriculture Investment Plan to detail the specific strategies and targets it would pursue to attain the Malabo Declaration commitments.

**Table 2. Eswatini—third Biennial Review scores relative to average for Southern Africa countries, by Malabo commitment**

Malabo commitment	Eswatini Third BR	Eswatini status	Third BR Benchmark	Southern Africa avg.
1. Recommitment to CAADP	5.58	Not on track	10.00	6.55
2. Enhancing agriculture finance	8.54	On track	7.50	3.94
3. Ending hunger by 2025	3.97	Not on track	6.32	2.79
4. Halving poverty through agriculture	5.02	Not on track	5.81	1.43
5. Intra-Africa trade in agriculture	2.96	Not on track	5.00	2.35
6. Enhancing resilience to climate change	5.85	Not on track	8.00	5.58
7. Mutual accountability	8.23	Not on track	8.33	6.14
All commitments	5.73	Not on track	7.28	4.11

**Note:** The Southern Africa region is made up of Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

It is worth noting that the country performed better than the Southern African countries on average (Table 2). Most countries on the continent are struggling to make progress towards achieving the Malabo commitments by 2025. The second BR of 2019 found four countries in Africa to be on-track to achieve the Malabo commitments—Ghana, Mali, Morocco, and Rwanda. However, in the third BR of 2021, only Rwanda remained on-track.

### 3. Challenges and Lessons Learned from Third Biennial Review in Eswatini

Eswatini should pay attention to all of the Malabo Commitments for the country to be on-track to achieve them by 2025 in the next BR processes. This requires that the country recommit itself to concluding the remaining aspects of domesticating the CAADP process, to forming partnerships and alliances with all stakeholders, and to completing a range of agricultural sector policy and institutional reviews.

Eswatini provided 97 percent of the data needed for the third BR process—a commendable accomplishment. While Eswatini reported on most of the BR indicators, some data gaps remain that the country needs to address for future BRs. Availability of data on post-harvest losses remains a challenge in Eswatini. In addition, given that Eswatini is still in the process of developing a trade in services strategy, data on intra-African trade in agriculture commodities and services could not be obtained for the third BR. Streamlining all BR data into the Central Statistics Office of Eswatini will strengthen monitoring and evaluation processes in the agricultural sector and improve evidence-based planning and learning.

## 4. Policy and Programmatic Changes in Eswatini following the First Three Biennial Reviews

The following actions taken by Eswatini contributed to the positive performance trends for most of the Malabo commitments between the second and third BRs (Government of Eswatini, 2021).

- Policies and programs to enhance farmers' resilience to climate and non-climate-related shocks were put in place, and most farmers were introduced to practicing climate-smart agriculture. The country has improved linkages with early warning entities that focus on analyzing and disseminating climate-related information. The government of Eswatini has channeled public investment towards water harvesting, such as small and medium-size earth dams and rooftop and infield water collection, to reduce direct reliance on solely rainfed agriculture production. Both livestock and crop-producing households have adopted measures to improve their resilience to weather-related shocks.
- Eswatini launched the Agrinvest Approach. This creates pathways for leveraging private investment in agriculture under a planned Agriculture Development Fund.
- Eswatini expanded public-private partnerships aimed at eradicating poverty through agriculture commodity value chains that rely on smallholder agricultural production. The partnerships contribute towards sustainable agricultural development that is inclusive of smallholder agriculture.
- The government mobilized resources to boost public agriculture expenditure levels and to ensure their effective use. Public expenditures for agriculture reported in the third BR increased over the figures reported in the first and second BR. In particular, more resources were made available for water harvesting and irrigation development; access to farm inputs and mechanization, and emergency relief activities, including drought response.
- Moderate or severe food insecurity in Eswatini, as measured using the Food Insecurity Experience Scale, has been declining. However, it remains a significant development challenge—the proportion of the population that experiences moderate or severe food insecurity was reported to be 54 percent in the third BR.
- Representatives from Eswatini participated in regional BR training workshops and were involved in the dissemination of the second BR report, enhancing its impact among agricultural stakeholders in the country. Stakeholders also launched a review of the National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP) in 2019 and conducted diagnostic studies to inform a second-generation Eswatini NAIP. A budget was developed for projects under the NAIP. These facilitated the implementation of projects, particularly regarding accountability and transparency, enhanced reporting to the NAIP portfolio committee, and contributed to several of the performance gains in Eswatini reported in the second BR.
- For the first BR, the government of Eswatini ensured that there was awareness and ownership of the BR process by pertinent stakeholders. This awareness was critical to facilitating the collection of accurate data, as it brought about commitment from stakeholders to provide the data required for the BR.



## 5. Eswatini—Priority Actions and Recommendations for Ensuring Achievement of Malabo Commitments by 2025

Overall, the third BR report shows that Eswatini is not on-track to achieve the Malabo commitments by 2025. This is a setback for the country because, in the first BR, the country's overall score was above the minimum benchmark, indicating that the country then was on-track to achieve the Malabo targets. Moreover, the country is still quite a long way from putting in place the policies needed to attract its youth into agricultural value chains and from sufficiently increasing spending for agriculture research and development. Eswatini needs to implement recommendations emanating from the third BR to ensure there is progress on the commitment areas for which it did not do well, while still focusing on areas where performance was more satisfactory. The following recommendations are important for Eswatini to improve the implementation of the Malabo commitments and to get back on-track for the next BR:

- **Recommitment to CAADP:** The government should accelerate the development of the second-generation instrument-based NAIP and the monitoring and evaluation system for the investment plan. The country needs to improve its performance on the overall CAADP process and implement CAADP-based policy and institutional support plans, as deficiencies in this support led to lower scores on this Malabo commitment.
- **Enhance Agriculture Finance:** Currently, Eswatini has committed very little government spending on fisheries or aquaculture in the country. The government should commit greater funding to fisheries and promote increased use of fisheries among households to reduce poverty and hunger. Also, the third BR showed that government agriculture expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure has declined over time. Concerted efforts to increase public agriculture spending are needed.
- **Ending Hunger by 2025:** Government must increase total agricultural research spending as a share of agricultural GDP to improve agricultural productivity, food availability, and national food systems.
- **Halving Poverty through Agriculture:** The government should ensure that youth have improved access to job opportunities in agriculture value chains. Increased investment is needed to modernize the agricultural sector, as doing so will provide attractive employment opportunities for youth.
- **Intra-Africa Trade in Agriculture Commodities and Services:** Currently there is no record of the volume of intra-African imports and exports of agriculture commodities or services into or out of Eswatini. There is a need to improve trade data management systems in Eswatini.
- **Enhancing Resilience to Climate Change:** Eswatini should adopt high-yielding and drought-tolerant modern crop varieties to increase both land and labor productivity. Weather-based index insurance or social protection schemes against weather catastrophes will enhance the ability of farmers in Eswatini to adapt to the challenges of climate change.
- **Mutual Accountability for Actions and Results:** Eswatini should strengthen its peer review and mutual accountability indicators by improving on the BR process. The Central Statistical Office should be facilitated to enable it to collect all data that feeds into the monitoring indicators of the BR process. Doing so will contribute to establishing inclusive mechanisms for mutual accountability and peer review. The country should also improve its capacity for evidence-based planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. To do so, Eswatini must increase funding for data generation, management, analysis, and utilization in the agriculture sector.



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