

# Options for Agriculture in the 2015 International Climate Change Agreement

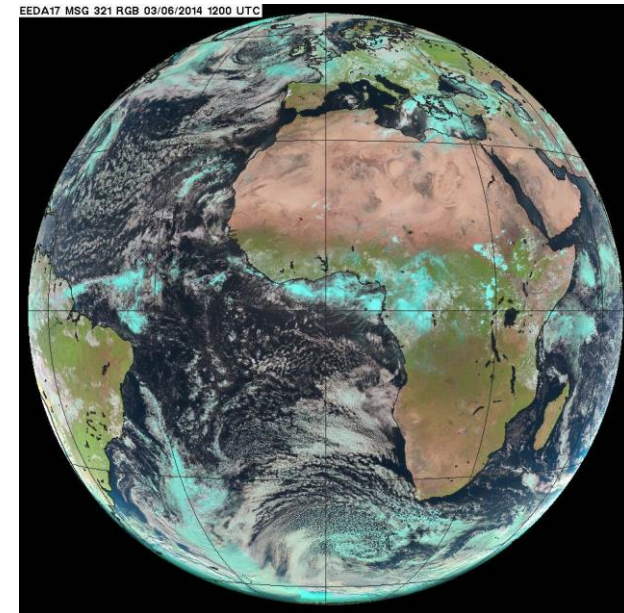


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3 June 2014 satellite picture showing weather, a band of vegetation and precipitation across Africa surrounded by semi-arid and arid regions – UK Met Office

## Summary of the Main Report

([www.evidenceondemand.org](http://www.evidenceondemand.org))

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## The Challenge

Agriculture has not yet been successfully integrated into the current negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

However, agriculture occupies a unique space in relation to climate change. Agriculture is globally important, providing food, feed, and fibre, as well as income and jobs, for millions, directly through production and indirectly through the food chain.

Agriculture faces significant challenges in the next 30 years. Growing demand for food will increase pressure on natural resources. At the same time, climate change will increasingly impact on agriculture. This will require more adaptation efforts to build resilience to protect farmers' livelihoods and contribute to a more food secure and prosperous world.

At the same time, agriculture is responsible for about 10-12% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This does not take into account food chain emissions. Taking these into account, agriculture and the food system contribute about 19-29% of global GHG emissions.

With the new agreement in 2015 setting the course for international action on climate change from 2020, now is the time to consider the best option for advancing action on agriculture under the UNFCCC that helps deliver three outcomes:

- Builds resilience of agriculture to climate risks;
- Contributes to a more food secure and prosperous world;
- Sequesters carbon and reduces direct emissions of greenhouse gases.

## Agriculture in the negotiations

Agriculture is a complex sector with a number of issues to resolve (see main report) before it can be fully integrated into the UNFCCC. This will take time, and places constraints on what can be achieved by COP 21.

Given these constraints, this report proposes an objective for 2015 on agriculture to establish a framework or a stream of work that:

- Supports action by Parties on agriculture in the pursuit of their overall strategies for adaptation and mitigation; and,
- Promotes international coordination to ensure progress on agriculture adaptation and mitigation.

Any framework should also aim to:

- Ensure agriculture is not excluded from being fully integrated into the UNFCCC in the future;
- Offer a space for knowledge exchange, build common understanding, and provide a mandate for discussion on agriculture.

## Agriculture outside of UNFCCC

While discussions on agriculture in the UNFCCC have been slow, there has been progress on mainstreaming climate change into agriculture policies and programmes. This has included:

- Work on the Sustainable Development Goals;
- In Africa [CAADP](#) is integrating climate-smart agriculture;
- FAO has undertaken extensive work on [climate-smart agriculture](#);
- IFAD action through the [Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme](#) (ASAP);
- The [Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases](#) is finding ways to produce more food while minimising GHG emissions,

## Box 1 Options for agriculture

There are a range of options for including agriculture in the UNFCCC. The main ones are:

**Option A:** to step back and focus on the broader agreement, with no specific 'ask' or mention of agriculture. The objective would be to first create an overall framework, in which agriculture could then be considered.

**Option B:** to continue current efforts to agree on a work programme under SBSTA, to be completed before 2015, or started before 2015, with the objective of informing Parties' national plans and sharing knowledge.

**Option C:** to prioritise the mention on agriculture in the 2015 text, most likely in the preamble or 'chapeau' of the agreement, with the objective of laying the basis of a common understanding that would then facilitate further work post-2015.

**Option D:** to combine REDD, Land Use, Land Use Change, Forestry (LULUCF) and agriculture into a 'land sector' to reflect the synergies between them. A mandate for a 'land sector' in the 2015 text would then set the stage for further discussions post-2015 on agriculture.

**Option E:** would have agriculture taken up by existing bodies, such as the Nairobi action plan and/or the Adaptation Committee, using existing frameworks and building experience and knowledge on agriculture, perhaps paving the way for a standalone stream of work.

- The [Climate and Clean Air Coalition's Agriculture Initiative](#), is reducing emissions from short-lived GHGs;
- A [Global Alliance on Climate Smart Agriculture](#) is to be launched at UNSG's Climate Summit.

While these are all important they are not an alternative to the UNFCCC. Given agriculture's

contribution to global emissions and the vulnerability of agriculture to climate change, any 2015 agreement covering mitigation and adaptation will need to cover agriculture.

## Conclusion

The latest IPCC reports provide ample evidence on why action on adaptation and mitigation under the UNFCCC are essential. The challenge is how, in the next 18 months, Parties can secure an ambitious agreement in 2015 that will contribute to creating a framework for action on climate change, and set the direction for agriculture to become integrated into UNFCCC, be it standalone or in a 'land sector'.

The ability to reach this depends upon three elements: 1) appreciation of the importance of agriculture and its role in food security and livelihoods; 2) for Parties to discuss agriculture adaptation and mitigation together; 3) political will to aim to agree text on agriculture for the 2015 agreement.

Of the Options presented, B, C and D would meet the objectives of a) supporting actions by Parties on agriculture and b) promoting international coordination and knowledge sharing. How much progress can be made through SBSTA (option B) by 2015 is uncertain, given that many issues remain to be resolved.

Option A could limit further work on agriculture. Option D would likely take time to build a consensus that might not be achieved by Paris.

A focus on Option C while also incorporating work on Option B may potentially be the best approach to help take agriculture forwards under UNFCCC.

More discussion on the pros and cons of these options are in the full report that can be downloaded at [www.evidenceondemand.org](http://www.evidenceondemand.org).