



**CRAFT**

# Starlight Farmers' Cooperative Society: Making Potato farming a bountiful treasure amid Climate challenge

[Using climate-smart methods and seed to reap from Potato growing]



## Round Potato in Kenya (Nakuru County)

The Round Potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) is a food and commercial crop that grows well in most soils. Its ability to transform the livelihoods of farmers is in its range of cuisines and the growing demand. However, such opportunity diminishes as the effects of climate change become increasingly devastating to the crop.

Using climate-smart agriculture (CSA) to counter climate challenge is Starlight Farmers' Cooperative Society, a CRAFT Business champion. The company assists farmers to develop climate-proof approaches in growing potatoes; then builds resilience with the strategic engagement of actors in the value chain.

CRAFT, also Climate Resilient Agribusiness for Tomorrow, is a project committed to capacitating Agro-based Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) to ably support smallholder farmers develop key crop value chains that can survive the impact of extreme climate now and in the future.

### About Starlight Farmers' Cooperative Society

Starlight Farmers' co-op is a farmer-owned and led Agri-business organization in Kuresoi North Sub-county in Nakuru. The company deals in seed potato multiplication, milk collection, and marketing. Its services include: selling seed potatoes to farmers, supporting potato production, aggregation, and marketing. To





further strengthen potato production, the organization started an Agrovet shop that will be supporting farmers with inputs.

### Climate Smartness

Starlight Farmers' co-op, through its seed multiplication system, is supporting farmers with climate-tolerant seeds. In addition, training farmers in conservation practices to protect soil integrity—particularly from erosion and degradation. Then using techniques such as minimal tillage and crop rotation, the company enables targeted farmers to suppress pests and weeds to improve the crop health of their potato gardens. Additionally, it is skilling farmers in integrated pest management (IPM)—a strategy for the long-term prevention of pests.

In managing droughts, Starlight Farmers' co-op has invested in water harvesting systems and low-pressure drip irrigation. Such installations optimize rainwater usage in field irrigation for crops to thrive. Furthermore, the company has equipped farmers with post-harvest handling techniques, which is a sure way to prevent crop losses and guarantee quality. As a result, farmers are ably performing actions such as cooling, cleaning, sorting, and packing potato tubers once they harvest.

## Targets

Smallholder Farmers	Producer groups	Value-chain Actors	Yield
1,500 	600 	8 (Finance 1, Inputs-2, Certification 1, Association 1, Off-takers -3) 	2000 MT (Metric tons per year) 

## Target market segments and consumers

With ware potato as the source of revenue, Starlight Farmers' co-op provides farmers with reliable seed and guarantees market. Such efforts have farmers investing more in CSA practices and technologies, while the company improves revenue inflows. So far, farmers, off-takers, and processing companies such as Sereni Fries Ltd and Twiga Food Ltd are benefiting from this initiative. However, the company plans to increase its market base to stimulate further growth..

## Partners

Under the CRAFT project, Starlight Farmers' co-op's key partners include FreshCrop Company Ltd, Sereni fries Ltd, Twiga Food Ltd, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS), Seed Potato Out growers, smallholder farmers, Africa Gospel Church Good Shepherd, Weather-based service providers, Agrochemicals suppliers, Machinery suppliers, the National Potato Council of Kenya (NPCK), County Department of Co-operatives, Nakuru Potato Co-operative Union LTD, Cooperative bank, the surrounding community, and traders.

## Key Objectives and Outcomes

Enhance the capacity of 1,500 smallholder farmers to improve potato output by 15% through climate-smart agronomy, linkages to input suppliers, and mechanized farming by 2022.	<b>1,500 SHF contracted and capacity build to adopt CSA practices.</b>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Mobilize and engage farmers on scheduled contract farming agreements.</li> <li>2) Facilitate and mentor leadership, business management skills, marketing, and financial inclusion.</li> <li>3) Facilitate and Link farmers to Input and mechanization service providers.</li> <li>4) Recruitment and train 20 TOTs on CSA ultimate to train the SHFs and follow up on the adoption of CSA.</li> </ol>	
Improve resilience to climate Change amongst targeted farmers through the promotion of appropriate climate-smart agricultural practices.	<b>Adoption of CSA practices for increased productivity</b>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Facilitate and Set up 36 demo farms to showcase CSA practices and technologies.</li> <li>2) Profile and link TOT service providers and SHFs to extension and business developments services.</li> </ol>	
Improve efficiency in potato inputs delivery, agronomy, and markets access	<b>Facilitating inputs, production, financial, and marketing services</b>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Mapping strategic and establishing inputs delivery channels</li> <li>2) Organized inputs sourcing, accredited suppliers and link with financial service providers.</li> <li>3) Conduct farmers deal-making business workshops for VC actors interaction and farmers exposure</li> </ol>	
Improve business turnover by at least 10% through developing new market channels and increasing volumes of potato marketed.	<b>Increased supply of volume and sales of potato</b>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Increase working capital to increase the volume of procured potato.</li> <li>2) Establish a distribution</li> <li>3) Facilitate efficient collection and delivery of potato to the market</li> </ol>	
Business case budget	Total: € 141,392	Own funds; 47%