

CAPACITY4FOOD PROJECT

Country presentation: The Gambia



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CLIMATE

The climate is Sahelian sub-tropical with long dry season from mid October to May

Rainfall is irregular in June & October but >500 mm is received in all parts of the country over the period July to September

The implications are short duration can be reliably produced in the wet season. Long duration drought-sensitive crops are risky to grow

Average daily temp. are 30°C in the dry season & 27°C in wet season



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SOILS

The soils of The Gambia are mostly ferralitic & ferruginous tropical soils in the uplands while alluvial & colluvial soils predominate in the lowlands.

The upland soils use for g/nuts and coarse grain production are well drained, slightly acidic (pH 5.5-6.5), moderately well structured but with moderate and declining inherent fertility

The alluvial soils where rice is grown are hydromorphic and fine textured usually with >80% silt plus clay content



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SOILS CONT.

Colluvial soils where vegetables are grown is found country wide
Soil degradation is proceeding both chemically (thru' increased salinity & acidity of some alluvial swamps) & physically (thru' erosion)



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AGRO-ECOLOGICAL ZONES

The Gambia has three agro-ecological zones:

I. Sahelian

II. a) Sudano-Sahelian

b) Sudanian

III. Guinea

There is a negligible area of zone I

Most of the country lies in zone II



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AGRO-ECOLOGICAL ZONES

Zone	Name	Avg. rainfall (mm)	Length of growing season	Vegetation
I	Sahelian	<600	<79	Open Savannah
II	a) Sudano-Sahelian	600-900	70-119	Savannah
	b) Sudanian	900-1100	120-139	Woodlands Savannah
III	Guinea	<1100	140-150	Woodlands

LAND USE TYPES

Land types	Total Areas	% of Total
1. Tree & Shrub Savanah	347,700	33.4
2. Upland cropped area	274,800	26.4
3. Swamps	104,200	10.0
4. Fallow land/bush	102,000	9.8
5. Woodland	83,500	8.0
6. Perenial saline swamp	62,000	6.0
7. Mangroves	66,900	6.4
Total land area	1,041,000	100.0

FARMING SYSTEMS

Farming system of Gambian house holes is singular there is limited interaction btw activities carried out by men & women

Women are responsible for lowland farming (rice, vegetables & poultry)

Men are responsible for upland farming (g/nuts, coarse grains & cattle)
men also cultivate rice in irrigation systems

Small ruminants are held equally by men & women

Land tenure is vested in the patrilineal clan



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FARMING SYSTEM CONT.

Farming systems are predominantly rain fed, integrated with crop/
livestock system

Dry season crops are mostly concentrated in upland valleys which are
found in all agro-ecological zones



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Material based mainly in:

Fairhurst, T. (ed.) (2012) Handbook for Integrated Soil Fertility Management. Africa Soil Health Consortium, Nairobi. Accessible from this [link](#)



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