

UK AID POISED TO WIPE OUT SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE

In 2015, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) adopted a new [Conceptual Framework on Agriculture](#). This new long-term strategy promotes commercialization and agroindustry development to enable a “rural transition” that would allow the majority of the rural poor to exit “primary agricultural production.” Under DFID’s vision, smallholder farmers, who currently produce 70 percent of the food consumed worldwide, are expected to become workers participating in market-oriented food production or to find off-farm job opportunities. As a result, DFID’s aid to agriculture in the developing world openly favors large-scale, agroindustry-led initiatives.

The UK contributes [£600 million](#) to the G8’s New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, a partnership with international donors, 10 African countries, and multinational companies that foments the corporate takeover of African land and food systems.



→ **The UK supports the G8’s New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, which inflicts pro-agribusiness policies on African countries.** Aid to the New Alliance’s [10 African partner countries](#) is conditioned to implementation of policies that incentivize agribusiness investments, such as advantageous tax schemes and the opening of large tracts of land for industrial plantations. [DFID and four other donors](#) support a World Bank-implemented business ranking of countries for agriculture. This project, called [Enabling the Business of Agriculture](#) (EBA), is embedded in the G8’s New Alliance and notably [promotes reforms](#) to increase the use of chemical inputs and commercial seeds, foster private titling of land, and create favorable import and export conditions for agribusinesses.

→ **DFID is a key donor to agricultural growth corridors as well as other initiatives that foster large-scale land acquisitions in Africa.** DFID supports the Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor in Mozambique ([£6.5 million](#) in 2011), and the Southern Agricultural Corridor of Tanzania ([£43 million](#) in 2013). These corridors aim to convert millions of hectares of African land into zones dedicated to industrial agriculture. They involve private sector partners such as the British multinationals SABMiller, Diageo, and Unilever. Although donors hail the agricultural growth corridors as a successful model of investment, these initiatives have supported a number of projects that resulted in the [violation of local communities land rights](#), [environmental pollution](#), and [abusive contract farming schemes](#). The UK is also the [largest backer](#) of the Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF), which awards 69 percent of its grants and loans to agribusiness projects. The AECF has invested in projects in [Tanzania](#) and [South Sudan](#), where companies’ acquisitions of land have triggered claims of [political collusion](#) and [land grabbing](#).

→ **DFID supports smallholders’ adoption of hybrid seeds and synthetic fertilizers, and research on new technologies, including GMOs, to be marketed to farmers.** The UK is a long-time supporter of farm input subsidy programs that supply [commercial seeds](#) and [synthetic fertilizer](#) to African farmers. The UK bets on the [bio-fortification](#) of staple crops, a top-down approach to address nutritional deficiencies, and invests in GM research projects ([C4 Rice](#), [Banana 21](#)) in [collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#). Between 2004 and 2015, DFID allocated nearly [£12.5 million](#) to the African Agricultural Technology Foundation, focused on advocacy and research on agricultural biotechnology.

For more information, read the Oakland Institute’s report: [The Unholy Alliance, Five Western Donors Shape a Pro-Corporate Agenda for African Agriculture](#).