The East African Agricultural Productivity Programme (EAAPP) was conceived as a 10-year Regional Agricultural Research for Development initiative with two phases. Phase I, approved in 2009, focused on capacity building with the establishment of the Regional Centres of Excellence (RCoEs) through construction/improvement of infrastructure and human resource development; technology generation and dissemination; and improving seeds and breeds availability.

Regional initiative and partnership

It was a regional partnership of the governments Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda with ASARECA in collaboration with the World Bank.

Establishment of Centres of Excellence

Under EAAPP, the four countries undertook to establish Regional Centres of Excellence (RCoEs) for agricultural research by investing in commodities identified by ASARECA as being of sub-regional importance to mitigate food insecurity. A Regional Center of Excellence is a leading agricultural technology programme with established research, dissemination and training capacity that distinguishes it as a leader in the region and beyond. Kenya is the centre of excellence for dairy, Uganda for cassava, Ethiopia wheat and Tanzania for rice. The countries have pledged to manage investment in these commodities to benefit the sub-region.

ASARECA as convenor and coordinator

By playing a convening and coordination role, ASARECA sought to enhance collaboration of the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) to contribute to the AU/NEPAD’s CAADP Pillar I, which focuses on revitalizing, reforming and expanding Africa’s agricultural research, technology dissemination and adoption.

Specifically, ASARECA played the following roles:

Convening role: ASARECA is facilitated strategic meetings for the four
countries to develop operational frameworks for RCoEs; define the responsibilities of each RCoE to the sub-regional stakeholders; define the mode of operation of the RCoEs individually and in relation to others; define outputs and the manner in which they will be shared amongst participating countries and other countries in the sub-region, and facilitates the development of regional strategies for the four commodities.

**Networking and information sharing:** ASARECA facilitated information sharing platforms to enable sharing of benefits and spillover of technologies and innovations developed by individual RCoEs to other participating countries.

**Technical backstopping:** The role entailed supporting the Centres of excellence in project management.

**Monitoring and evaluation:** Regional M&E activities focused on tracking the extent to which EAAPP is making spillovers happen across the sub-region.

**Policy harmonisation:** ASARECA facilitated rationalization and harmonization of policies, procedures and regulations aimed at creating common standards in the participating countries.

**Capacity building:** ASARECA organized and facilitated regional training workshops for RCoE managers to equip them with the tools and skills to transform the RCoEs into more effective research institutions.

**Achievements of EAAPP**

An external evaluation of EAAPP in early 2015 Titled: End Of Phase 1 Evaluation of the East African Agricultural Productivity Programme – EAAPP. Final Report, noted the following achievements:

**Researchers trained:** Seventy-five Masters students and 36 PhD candidates have been fully funded under the project. Similar numbers of men and women registered for Masters programmes in Tanzania and Uganda but only 2 in Ethiopia. There were only 7 female PhD students out of 36 across the four countries. A further 50 students have received partial funding from the project.

**Technologies developed:** Over 138 new technologies have been developed by the regional centres of excellence. Many are new varieties of cassava, rice, wheat and forage crops. Twenty-three new technologies have been
disseminated across national boundaries including: two Tanzanian rice varieties released in Kenya and Uganda, and undergoing National Performance Trials (NPT) in Ethiopia; four clones of Napier grass from Kenya recommended for dissemination in Uganda; botanical seed of cassava with enhanced carotene sent to Ethiopia, Tanzania and Kenya; assisted reproductive technologies from Kenya sent to the other countries.

**Adoption of new varieties:** There was an increase in adoption of new varieties, breeds, and other selected management practices by farmers from 35 percent to 53 percent (2010-2014) in project areas.

**Increase in improved cultivars:** Land planted with improved cultivars are 2,755 ha in 2010, increasing to 12,807 ha in 2014.

**Policy harmonization:** ASARECA facilitated harmonized NPT protocols for cassava, rice, wheat and pasture seeds under the project. It has coordinated a draft EAAPP intellectual property (IP) rights policy.

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