Operational Plan 2
2014–2018

Supporting poverty reduction and improving food security and nutrition in Eastern and Central Africa

Highlights

January 2014
Banana bacterial wilt disease is among the diseases being tackled sub-regionally.
Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa

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January 2014
Food secure children are happy children.
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### Abbreviations and acronyms

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AR4D</td>
<td>Agricultural research for development</td>
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<td>ASARECA</td>
<td>Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU/NEPAD</td>
<td>African Union’s New Partnership for Africa’s Development</td>
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<td>CAADP</td>
<td>Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme</td>
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<td>CGS</td>
<td>Competitive Grant Scheme</td>
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<td>COMESA</td>
<td>Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa</td>
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<td>CSA</td>
<td>Climate Smart Agriculture</td>
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<td>DED</td>
<td>Deputy Executive Director</td>
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<td>EAC</td>
<td>East African Community</td>
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<td>ECA</td>
<td>Eastern and Central Africa</td>
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<td>ESS</td>
<td>Environmental and Social Safeguards</td>
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<td>FAAP</td>
<td>Framework for African Agricultural Productivity</td>
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<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
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<td>FARAF</td>
<td>Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross domestic product</td>
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<td>KI-Hub</td>
<td>Knowledge and Information Hub</td>
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<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and evaluation</td>
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<td>MMLT</td>
<td>Markets, Market Linkages and Trade</td>
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<td>NARES</td>
<td>National agricultural research and extension system</td>
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<td>NRMES</td>
<td>Natural Resource Management and Ecosystem Services</td>
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<td>OP1</td>
<td>Operational Plan 2008–2013</td>
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<td>OP2</td>
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<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern Africa Development Community</td>
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<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainable Development Goals</td>
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<td>SRO</td>
<td>Sub-regional organisation</td>
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The Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) is a not-for-profit sub-regional association of the national agricultural research and extension systems of 11 countries. The member countries are: Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda (Figure 1).

ASARECA brings together scientists and other stakeholders to generate, share and promote knowledge and innovations to solve the common challenges facing agriculture in the 11 member countries. Collectively, ASARECA and its partners work to assist smallholder farmers in Eastern and Central Africa (ECA) to practise productive and profitable agriculture.

The 11 ASARECA countries cover an area of 8.5 million km$^2$ and are home to more than 350 million people, most of whom are rural dwellers pursuing agriculture based livelihoods. Roughly one-third of the total land area (about 300 million hectares) in the ECA sub-region is devoted to agricultural use. Agriculture is the most common occupation in the sub-region, featuring heavily in the national economies and accounting for about 43% of the sub-regional gross domestic product (GDP).
In the Maputo Declaration of 2003 African countries committed themselves to increase spending in agriculture to at least 10% of their national budgets by 2015. However, by 2012 only Ethiopia in the ECA sub-region had exceeded the 10% mark; Madagascar, Sudan and Tanzania were operating at between 5% and 10% with the rest of the countries
investing well below the 5% level. Low investment in agriculture and agribusiness has therefore continued to result in low levels of productivity growth in the sector. Sluggish growth in agricultural productivity has translated into deepening poverty, slow overall economic growth and generally low per capita income levels. Average annual GDP per capita for 2003–2010 stood at US$659 for the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) region, a marginal increase from a modest US$520 in 1990–1995. COMESA covers 19 countries, 10 of which are ASARECA members. High levels of food imports, particularly of staples, appear to partially fill the consumption needs of a population lacking purchasing power. This has resulted in high levels of adult and child malnutrition and unacceptable child mortality rates.

Since the ASARECA member countries share common agro-ecological zones, they largely face similar challenges and opportunities in their agriculture sectors. Transboundary challenges are numerous and include epidemics such as the maize lethal necrosis disease, wheat stem rust Ug99, among others. The incidence of such epidemics is likely to be compounded by climate change. Agriculture in the ECA region is also constrained by divergent policy regulations that hinder innovation, technology transfer and cross-border trade. Despite these challenges, opportunities exist that would generate economies of scale and enhance synergy if they were harnessed jointly by the region. The ASARECA member countries can draw from the potential to be the world’s next food basket; the emergence of continental policy frameworks; and the strong impetus and commitment to regional economic integration. The sub-regional integration of regional economic blocs (the East African Community [EAC], COMESA and the Southern African Development Community [SADC]) provides a set of opportunities. In addition, the limited capacities for research and development in ECA could be efficiently shared regionally. Joint efforts are required to effectively harness these opportunities and address the key constraints to agriculture; this would be achieved through sub-regional collective action and investment.

To draw the requisite collective action, ASARECA was established in 1994 by the then 10 pioneering member countries and mandated to:

- Promote common welfare through collective action by jointly addressing challenges and opportunities to improve agriculture in the sub-region.
- Coordinate the generation of cost effective technologies, knowledge and innovations that would be shared, as public goods, among member countries.
- Complement the activities of national institutions in delivering the products and services of agricultural research, extension and training needed by people in the sub-region.
- Provide a forum for regional dialogue on agricultural policy bottlenecks.

Central to the ASARECA vision and mission is the value of regional collaboration among member countries to improve food security and increase incomes of their people, while fostering broad-based, sustainable economic growth.
The ASARECA vision and mission statements are given in Box 1.

**Box 1: ASARECA vision and mission**

The Vision for ASARECA is to be a:

*Regional leader in agricultural research and development for improved livelihoods in Eastern and Central Africa*.

Its Mission is to:

*Enhance regional collective action in agricultural research for development, extension and agricultural training and education to promote economic growth, fight poverty, eradicate hunger and enhance sustainable use of resources in Eastern and Central Africa*.

ASARECA sees improved delivery and impact of scientific knowledge, policy options and technologies as a powerful tool to drive the sub-region towards meeting the targets set by the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). CAADP is the agriculture agenda of the African Union’s New Partnership for Africa’s Development (AU/NEPAD). In line with the CAADP agenda, ASARECA develops policies and programmes aimed at deepening cooperation in agricultural research for development (AR4D) and policy among its member countries, for the mutual benefit of all the stakeholders in the agriculture sector. ASARECA implements its AR4D strategy through partnerships among member country national agricultural research and extension systems (NARES). These are agricultural research, training, extension and education institutions. ASARECA stakeholders include:

- Farmer associations
- National and sub-regional associations that coordinate agricultural research, extension, training and education
- Associations of processors of agricultural products
- Associations of agricultural service providers
- Associations of agricultural businesses and related marketing agents
- Consumer associations
- Organised women groups and youth groups working in agriculture
- Non-governmental associations working in agricultural research and development
- International agricultural research centres
- Universities and advanced research institutes
- Investors and donors/development partners.

During OP1 ASARECA made significant achievements, as highlighted in Box 2.
Box 2: Selected achievements of ASARECA under OP1

- A total of 409 different agricultural technologies, innovations and management practices (TIMPs) were either generated or improved to suit farmers’ demands. In addition, 498 TIMPs were availed for uptake by targeted stakeholders, leading to significant benefits to the beneficiaries. For example, through the adoption of labour-saving equipment such as ox-planters, ox-weeders, ox-rippers and threshers, farmers reported reductions in drudgery by up to 75% per acre.

- A total of 422,176 rural households directly benefited from ASARECA-related support initiatives, and over 2.5 million individuals have benefited directly from an assortment of ASARECA support initiatives. Furthermore, 270,000 farmers and other stakeholders have adopted new TIMPs generated and availed for uptake from project- related interventions. This led to an increase in net crop production value of US$73.4 million within the OP1 period.

- Food security has improved for beneficiary households over the programme period from 74% to 81% (7 percentage points), compared to an increase from 78% to 79% (1 percentage point) for non-beneficiaries.

- Highly positive spillover effects were noted for the projects, with an average pass-on rate to non-project farmers of 7 for each beneficiary household.

- Over 4,600 ha of land were dedicated to improved TIMPs, especially for the production and multiplication of quality pre-basic, basic and certified seeds of selected crops. As a result of this, over 800 metric tons of quality seed were produced and either sold or distributed to farmers for further multiplication. On the other hand, over 5,000 ha of highly degraded lands and watersheds have been reclaimed, thereby providing targeted households with steady water supply for domestic and farm use.

- ASARECA contributed to enabling policy environments through review of existing policies, laws, regulations and management practices. A total of 100 policies, laws, regulations and procedures were analysed, 46 were presented for legislation and dialogue, while 17 were approved by various legislative bodies, EAC and COMESA parliaments.

- As part of enhancing capacity strengthening of NARES, over 470 assorted infrastructures were provided to targeted partner institutions. A total of 81,751 persons (45,620 male, 36,131 female) were given short-term training in integrated water management, value addition, integrated soil fertility management, value chain development, project management, monitoring and evaluation, environment and social safeguards, basic agronomic and management practices, among others. In addition, over 150 students (15 PhD [9 male, 6 female]; 112 MSc [73 male, 39 female]; 4 BSc [2 male, 2 female]; and 19 diploma/certificate [12 male, 7 female]) benefited from ASARECA long-term training.

- ASARECA facilitated the production of over 800 different information packages that include peer-reviewed journal articles, books, chapters in books, electronic newsletters, conference proceedings and manuals. These products were made available to partners through over 260 different delivery pathways such as websites, flyers, TV, radio, SMS, dissemination events, media events, farm trials, multimedia (YouTube) among others, benefiting over 1 million targeted stakeholders.

- Over 290 different partnerships were formed by ASARECA in implementing its AR4D strategy during OP1.

- The implementation of the projects in OP1 led to significant generation of benefits to stakeholders, including provision of additional income for farmers, processors, small-scale traders, and increased productivity of selected commodities. For example, average total crop revenue increased by 63% from US$272 to US$442 between 2008 and 2012 for beneficiaries (compared to only 5% for non-beneficiaries). Total livestock revenues also increased by 139% from US$157 to US$375 over the same period, compared to a fall of 21% for non-beneficiaries.
Background and introduction

The ASARECA Strategic Plan covers a 10-year period and outlines where the organisation wishes to be by 2018. The first ASARECA Operational Plan (OP1) guided the implementation of the first 5 years (2008–2013) of the ASARECA Strategic Plan. To address the changing environment under which it operates, ASARECA is now launching its second Operational Plan (OP2). OP2 builds on experiences gained, to align its approach to meeting the new challenges facing agriculture in ECA.

ASARECA is guided by several key frameworks. The principle ones are CAADP and the Framework for African Agricultural Productivity (FAAP).

Although interest in agriculture remains high at the global, continental and sub-regional levels, the ECA sub-region continues to face many technical as well as policy-based and related challenges which have evolved and developed since OP1 started. Among the key challenges are ensuring food security and adequate nutrition for the ever-increasing population; and overcoming the adverse effects of climate change and climate variability. To proactively address climate change related issues, ASARECA proposes adopting and promoting the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) recommendations on Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA). The CSA approach has the potential to positively contribute to the three Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): economic, social and environmental development. Expected outcome indicators of
CSA include enhanced food security, better mitigated climate change, and sustainable conservation of natural capital and flow of vital ecosystems services. The ASARECA initiatives and the anticipated outcomes, described in the OP2 document, are well aligned to the three pillars of CSA: (1) sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes; (2) adapting and building resilience to climate change; and (3) reducing or removing greenhouse gas emissions, where possible.

In developing OP2, ASARECA used stakeholder consultations and numerous sources of information, both internal and external to the organisation. ASARECA built upon the positive and negative lessons learned in implementing OP1 and integrated the views and demands of stakeholders along the agricultural products value chains in OP2. Further, ASARECA acknowledged the prevailing challenges and opportunities in the agriculture sub-sector.

The top priority for ASARECA remains transforming agriculture into a viable market-oriented venture by focusing on access to markets for smallholder farmers, most of whom are women, and providing them with appropriate information on marketing forces and requirements such as quality, quantity and price. This, ASARECA anticipates, shall succeed in drawing more youth to agriculture.

Under OP2, ASARECA will continue in its role of catalysing cooperation among sub-regional stakeholders in executing its AR4D strategy. In addition, ASARECA sees itself evolving into a sub-regional learning centre on how to transform agriculture, a think tank, and a knowledge and information hub supporting all aspects of sub-regional agriculture.

Planning process

OP2 is a statement of how ASARECA intends to carry out its business from 2014 to 2018. It recognises lessons learned, changing external and internal conditions, and fresh priorities. OP2 is based on a new results framework developed through a consultative process with stakeholders. The OP2 Impact and Outcome statements are aligned and coherent with the Goal and Purpose statements in OP1 respectively. The five new Outputs define what ASARECA will be accountable for delivering in the next five years. The narrative statements for the OP2 logical framework are given in Box 3.
Box 3: Narrative statements for OP2 logical framework

Impact
“Competitiveness of appropriate agricultural systems improved”.

Outcome
“Equitable access and utilisation of agricultural research and development innovations enhanced”.

Outputs
1. Appropriate technologies, innovations and management practices (TIMPs) generated.
2. Appropriate TIMPs disseminated and upscaled.
3. Appropriate policy analysis and advocacy enhanced.
4. Stakeholder capacity for innovation strengthened.
5. Communication, information and knowledge management improved.

Output 1 remains a core area of comparative advantage for ASARECA, although a more equitable distribution of resources and effort between this and the other outputs will be a feature of OP2. Output 2 has been deliberately separated from Output 1 to emphasise the importance that ASARECA places on scaling out and scaling up agricultural TIMPs. This will ensure spill-in through opening up to more farmers in different districts within the same country and ensure spillover through upscaling the technologies in similar ecological zones across ASARECA member countries. Output 3 is key to ensuring free access to input and output markets, and guaranteeing the competitiveness of raw and processed farm produce. Output 4, capacity strengthening, is a key element of the core business of ASARECA. Finally, Output 5 will support the ASARECA advocacy role and deliver a higher profile organisation that communicates freely with a wide range of primary and secondary stakeholders and partners with additional internal benefits for ASARECA. This will lead to a new strategic role for ASARECA as an information and knowledge hub.

Some critical Secretariat and ASARECA-wide institutional strengthening issues are not covered directly by the outputs. These are: establishing a knowledge and information hub; mainstreaming environmental and social safeguards (ESS) in all activities; gender mainstreaming; monitoring and evaluation (M&E); and change management. However, the organisation recognises these issues as preconditions to success which underpin the whole Operational Plan.

Implementation approach

OP1 emphasised the role of ASARECA in supporting farmer empowerment. OP2 will continue this by specifically targeting poverty in project design and implementation by identifying discreet target populations.
Enhancing access to productive resources such as mechanisation is a priority in OP2.
The challenges of ensuring food security and nutrition while developing mechanisms for livelihoods resilience to counter the effects of climate change and climate variability will be addressed through three themes:

- Natural Resource Management and Ecosystems Services
- Markets, Market Linkages and Trade
- Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition

A theme is defined as a major opportunity or challenge facing agricultural transformation in the sub-region. The three themes provide a clear poverty, food and nutrition security focus. The focus will be to increase the resilience of households and systems to respond to threats posed by a wide range of biological, social, environmental and political challenges.

ASARECA successfully effected a programme-based approach under OP1. However, this approach continually evolved in a constantly changing external environment, placing fresh demands on implementation.

The programme structure encouraged a commodity approach, which emphasised technology rather than the users of the technology. Key crosscutting areas in this structure were separate programmes and units, with their own projects; no formal system existed to ensure that they add value to the commodity programmes. Under OP2, this and related issues will be addressed through a combined programme-thematic approach and a changed institutional culture, supported through deliberate change management to institutionalise a multi-disciplinary approach.

Some of the key factors driving the programme-thematic approach include the importance of crosscutting disciplines, and the need to adopt an integrated approach to resolving challenges facing agriculture. The approach is also a mechanism for harnessing opportunities that would contribute to stimulating agricultural transformation. This approach will be a key requirement in achieving the SDGs and the outcome indicators for CSA. The projects developed will remain sub-regional rather than multi-country, meaning they will deal with transboundary issues affecting several countries as opposed to repeating similar research in different countries.

The nomenclature and approach in OP2 is deliberately designed to move away from the concept of commodity-based
programmes driving the agenda. Moreover, it is an evolution and development of the programme approach, designed to capture the lessons learned and major achievements of OP1.

The themes shall not be part of the ASARECA Secretariat structure, but shall exist as operational virtual means for institutionalising collaboration between programmes and units. The approach will include strengthening management and leadership skills within the Secretariat and supporting a shift in attitude to encourage a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral approach to implementing all programme/project activities that must be oriented to theme outcomes.

ASARECA will develop multi-disciplinary projects which capture crosscutting issues and are based on priorities clustered under Themes. For each thematic area, calls for proposals for projects will be developed jointly by the programmes and units, which will remain cost centres. This means the calls will no longer be made in isolation or outside of the thematic areas.

Calls for project proposals will be formulated under each theme to address prioritised, sub-regional challenges and opportunities. The priorities identified for these themes are based on in-depth analyses of existing programmes, strategies and priorities and on consultations with stakeholders. The priorities were reviewed and validated by stakeholders as part of the OP2 inception phase.

Theme coordinators will be assigned by the Executive Director in consultation with the Deputy Executive Director (DED), and will be drawn from the pool of programme managers; they will report to the DED. The role of the theme coordinators will be to convene meetings of programme managers and unit heads to develop multi-disciplinary calls for projects which address the priorities of the theme. In consultation with the programme managers and unit heads, the theme coordinators will be responsible for developing detailed annual workplans, cost estimates, and expected outcomes under each theme with linkages with the rest of the themes.

Currently, ASARECA has eight programmes and five crosscutting units. These will be retained under the new paradigm. However, the roles and responsibilities will be reviewed to ensure they provide the necessary conditions for successful implementation.

The programme-thematic approach will focus on multi-disciplinary initiatives that consider the value chain and the numerous parameters involved in creating interest in new technologies across a range of stakeholders. Up- and outscaling will be integrated into activities throughout the life of projects and be governed by a communications strategy which is defined, agreed and budgeted for. The influences of research products on the whole system will be considered before upscaling, and indicators of success will target transformational outcomes.

Market-oriented approaches will be used with strategic partnerships and increased engagement with the private sector. New and innovative partnerships will be developed
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with a range of stakeholders who have the expertise and skills outside of those engaged directly in agricultural research.

Since the ECA sub-region has limited high-tech facilities, partnerships with universities and advanced research institutes will be developed and maintained as part of the wider ASARECA networking process. Selection and implementation of research project activities will remain based on a Competitive Grant System (CGS). Current funding mechanisms will be reviewed, refined and adapted to address issues and to broaden the scale and scope of stakeholder involvement.

To ensure the quality of ASARECA science, sets of harmonised standards or procedures, by which technologies of different categories are validated at the sub-regional level, will be institutionalised and promoted. This will ensure that validation and peer review systems are developed and implemented.

Linked to the quality of science is the issue of value for money. ASARECA is determined to ensure that the investment in projects and other initiatives reflects measures of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and cost effectiveness in terms of delivering the organisation’s outputs.

Crosscutting issues

The crosscutting functions of ASARECA reflect its role as a sub-regional organisation (SRO). These functions are the foundation which underpins ASARECA value addition to agricultural development.

Knowledge and Information Hub—As a sub-regional organisation, ASARECA recognises the need to leverage her capacity to serve as a repository for knowledge and information and a think tank on agriculture. To enhance her capacity in this regard, ASARECA proposes to establish a Knowledge and Information Hub (KI-Hub) in the ECA sub-region. The KI-Hub will be a focal point for generating and exchanging knowledge, developing new ideas and networking. Among others, the hub will mainstream new scientific concepts in TIMPs and policies in the region. It will serve to facilitate learning and increase the capabilities of ASARECA stakeholders. The hub will also serve as a sub-regional focal point for data and information generated by ASARECA and other AR4D organisations both in ECA and beyond. The ASARECA KI-Hub will achieve the following four mutually reinforcing outputs:

1. Learning and innovation centre for AR4D established and operationalised.
2. AR4D think tank established and operationalised.
3. Platforms for information exchange established and institutionalised.
4. Technology and information clearing house established and operationalised.

Monitoring and evaluation—ASARECA has institutionalised a functional M&E system. A focus of M&E will be identifying and building on the lessons learned from the process.
Everyone in a smallholder farming household has a role to play, hence the importance of gender mainstreaming.
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The M&E unit will be renamed the **M&E and Learning Unit** with specific responsibility and terms of reference to ensure that ASARECA continues developing as a learning institution. To ensure efficient M&E systems and reliable results, M&E processes will be standardised through closer collaboration with the other SROs and with the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) to ensure consistency with the CAADP and FAAP principles and indicators.

**Gender mainstreaming**—ASARECA recognises that gender mainstreaming enhances the understanding of socio-economic issues, putting a human face on activities. Gender is no longer viewed as a women’s issue or an issue for development partners, but as something vital to understanding the needs of women and men as the people for whom ASARECA exists. This includes the needs of youth and disadvantaged groups.

Development of an independent and better resourced Gender Mainstreaming Unit which is more effective and efficient in supporting gender mainstreaming in ASARECA and partners will continue. It will prioritise and focus on fewer, more strategic interventions that will strengthen capacity to address gender mainstreaming across socio-economic differentiation at all levels of its institutional and thematic work.

**Partnerships and coordination**—ASARECA is sub-regionally owned by the NARES of member states. This provides the opportunity to create enabling sub-regional platforms addressing issues of a sub-regional nature. This will continue and the number of partnerships will be increased. The importance of partnerships with the private sector, and the need to improve these is recognised. The key issues and potential strategies for addressing these partnerships have been identified.

ASARECA also has a convening role with the ability to bring various stakeholders together to address sub-regional priorities. The importance of this with a particular focus on the new themes will be emphasised.

**Capacity strengthening**—Within the ASARECA Secretariat, a training needs analysis will be carried out and appropriate funding will be identified to support an itemised plan for human resource development. This will include building the capacity of Secretariat staff to improve skills necessary to implement this Plan.

“ASARECA sees itself evolving into a sub-regional learning centre on how to transform agriculture, a think tank, and a knowledge and information hub”
For NARES and stakeholders, general capacity strengthening will support a targeted capacity assessment of member country NARES to identify gaps and potential areas for synergy and partnership development. This will then be used to provide training through a range of approaches.

Capacity development functions will be explicitly built into all new projects, and guidance notes on capacity development will be prepared to support this. Capacity development will also be built into partnership arrangements and become a key part of new projects. Emphasis will be on learning by doing.

Infrastructure development will be determined in a participatory manner, considering the resources available. Participating institutions will be expected to make their own contribution, including in kind. The institutions will be expected to sustain the infrastructure beyond the ASARECA funding.

**Knowledge management**—Support will be increased for uptake and upscaling by addressing issues identified during OP1. Project design will deliberately incorporate mechanisms to document and share spillover between countries and encourage the dissemination of research findings beyond participating project countries. Advantage will be taken of lessons from the use of innovation platforms and alternative uptake pathways with innovative partnerships being explored.

The potential that ASARECA has to become a sub-regional hub of knowledge and information will be realised. The hub will ensure mechanisms for sharing the sub-regional benefits of ASARECA work are effective. It will include using novel approaches such as platforms for multi-stakeholder engagements and learning events such as joint field visits.

A new **Communication and Public Relations Unit** will address information and communication issues at corporate, thematic, programme and project levels through more clearly defined roles on information management. The unit will package information about ASARECA for a range of media and different audiences to raise the organisation’s profile and increase the visibility of its achievements.

**Advocacy**—ASARECA representation at high-level, regional, agriculture-related fora at COMESA ministerial meetings and AU/NEPAD will be treated as a high priority to increase its ability to engage and influence high-level policy processes in the sub-region. An advocacy strategy and implementation plan to support the development of high-level advocacy skills and a stronger, focussed advocacy thrust will be developed.

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**Organisation and governance**

The existing structure and governance proved useful and effective during implementation of OP1, but has constantly evolved to meet fresh demands and needs. Several further
PhD students who transgressed drought tolerance into maize—there will be increased participation of universities in sub-regional projects.
changes, driven by the shift to a programme-thematic approach, are proposed to increase accountability, transparency and efficiency.

ASARECA has successfully gone through substantial changes since 2006. However, no formal change management programme was in place to oversee these, and significant areas were neglected. A formal and structured management of change process was started in January 2013. The process will be facilitated and mentored by the recruitment of a Change Management Specialist(s) to guide, support and mentor the process in collaboration with a Change Management Team comprising ASARECA staff members. Change management will be integrated into everything that ASARECA does.

**Board of Directors**—The roles, composition, committees, and performance as well as skills sets of Board members will be reviewed and aligned with the demands of this Plan.

**Technical Advisory Committee**—A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will be established to act as the technical advisory arm of the Executive Director. This will have clear terms of reference and a clear operational plan of its own.

**The Secretariat**—The new programme-thematic approach will be coordinated and managed by the DED. Senior technical staff will remain as they were under OP1, as programme managers and unit heads. Each Theme will have a Programme Manager assigned as a Theme Coordinator responsible for convening meetings and drawing annual workplans and cost estimates. An ESS Specialist will ensure that proposed work integrates appropriate ESS criteria. Projects will be largely managed as they are under OP1. Given that projects will be based under themes, the Executive Director in consultation with the DED will appoint a Focal Point Manager to oversee the implementation of specific project(s) and ensure delivery of expected results. For each project, a team with clear responsibilities will be constituted.

A special Crosscutting Committee under the chairmanship of the Executive Director will be created to advise, support and develop ASARECA-wide policy and initiatives. The scope and scale of the Committee will go beyond that covered by the themes, projects and activities. The Information and Communication Unit of OP1 will be split into a Communication and Public Relations Unit and an Information Technology Unit.

Job titles and descriptions will be reviewed to reflect the responsibilities attached to them. The staff representation outlined in the Operational Manual will be operationalised. ASARECA operations will be guided by the principles and policies in the Operations Manual which will be periodically reviewed to cater for oversights.

### Implementation schedule

Several practical issues need to be taken into consideration for implementation. The principal one is the projects for which funds are already committed and which are
operating under the programme approach. These need to be completed and, where appropriate, absorbed into the new paradigm.

The preparation for implementation of OP2 will start as soon as the document has been approved by the Board of Directors. ASARECA anticipates that an Inception–Transition Phase of 12–18 months will address several key issues. An indicative timetable has been developed for this.

Once the Inception–Transition Phase is completed, full implementation will include not only the research and other activities of ASARECA, but also the institutionalisation of the changes (substance and process) identified in the Operational Plan. The anticipated changes will be aided and guided by a change management specialist and a team of change champions.

Financial plan for the Operational Plan 2014–2018

There are no major differences between OP1 and OP2 in terms of budget centres. The current automated financial system and guidelines are flexible and will be able to accommodate the new programme-thematic approach with minimal modifications.

The themes will be budget centres for core project investments. All other financial systems and mechanisms remain the same, but may evolve over time.

A summary of the indicative costs for implementing the five-year plan are based on three possible scenarios or activity levels (see Box 4).

Box 4: Indicative cost scenarios for implementing the five-year plan

1. A high case level estimated at US$181 million, which reflects the maximum absorptive capacity of the organisation and the level likely to trigger the anticipated scale transformation.

2. A medium case portfolio of US$147 million which would be appropriate in the face of limited funding.

3. A low case portfolio which would be appropriate under highly constrained/limited funding estimated at US$90 million.

In OP2, ASARECA will continue to conduct ex ante and ex post analyses of financial and economic benefits accruing from the proposed investments in research. ASARECA will document benefits accruing from: (1) the generation, dissemination and adoption of improved production and processing technologies; and (2) enhanced technology spillover among ECA countries from cross-border transfer and sharing of technologies, and networking of researchers. Given the three possible funding levels of US$181 million, US$147 million or US$90 million, ASARECA anticipates the following results: (1) at least 6% (5.5%; 5%) increase in agricultural production; (2) at least US$3.5 million
Access to markets is critical for farmers to practise agriculture as a business.
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(US$2.5 million; US$1.8 million) households with increased farm-level incomes; (3) at least US$10.5 million (US$9 million; US$5.5 million) children under 5 years benefiting from improved nutrition; (4) over 600,000 ha (450,000 ha; 300,000 ha) of land under improved TIMPs; (5) at least US$21 million (US$18 million; US$11 million) households with improved nutrition levels; and (6) at least US$900 million (US$800 million; US$720 million) generated by targeted stakeholders through ASARECA support.

Resource mobilisation plan

To raise adequate resources to support the implementation of OP2, ASARECA has developed a Resource Mobilisation Strategy. This strategy will guide and facilitate the mobilisation of adequate resources to: (1) support the ASARECA key result areas and related activities; (2) support operations at the ASARECA Secretariat; (3) fund activities that support the vision and goal of ASARECA; and (4) facilitate the establishment of the ASARECA Knowledge and Information Hub. This strategy is founded on the ASARECA organisational setup as a sub-regional agency with the mandate to guide and support agricultural transformation in the ECA sub-region. Mobilised resources will help ASARECA position itself as a sub-regional think tank, knowledge and information hub, and a learning centre on how to truly transform the agriculture sector.
Quality maize flour: Value addition is a priority under the Markets, Market linkages and Trade theme.