



Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development



# ASARECA Contribution to Member States

## THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Since inception in 1994, ASARECA has worked with the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) of its 14 member countries: Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Between 1994 and 2023, ASARECA has mobilised over US\$ 258 million to implement Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D) initiatives in member countries. Out of these, US\$ 138 million was received directly by the Secretariat, which disbursed US\$ 101 million (73.5%) to member countries retaining US\$ 37 million (26.5%) for operational costs. The rest of the money (US\$ 120 million) was disbursed directly to select countries by Development Partners under the East Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme (EAAP), an initiative that was closely coordinated by ASARECA.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is a founding member and one of the 14 Member State of ASARECA. Since inception, ASARECA has been working mainly with Institut National Pour l'Etude et la Recherche Agronomiques (INERA) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to implement AR4D projects. To date, ASARECA has invested US\$ 5.70 million to catalyze Agricultural transformation in the Democratic Republic of Congo through key beneficiary projects highlighted below:

[www.asareca.org](http://www.asareca.org)

# ASARECA work in the Democratic Republic of Congo

## Controlling the spread of Banana Xanthomonas Wilt (BXW)

ASARECA supported INERA to promote proven and cost-effective measures to control the deadly BXW epidemic that threatened to wipe out the banana crop in Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo. Working with INERA, the project established eight macro-propagation units in four sites in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in addition to mother gardens and demonstration plots established in Kayonza and Gisagara districts. The units produced clean banana plantlets for distribution to farmers. Within six months of adoption, BXW prevalence reduced from over 90% to less than 5%, while the proportion of farmers who controlled the disease increased from less than 5% to over 60%. After 15 months, banana production recovered from zero percent in some places to over 80%.

## Promoting climbing bean innovations

Following decline in yields and quality of most bean varieties in Rwanda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo, ASARECA supported researchers from these countries to identify and test the best bean cropping systems. Two systems: intercropping beans with maize stalks (as stakes) and monocropping beans using sisal and banana fibre/strings were selected. Extension workers and farmers were trained on best agronomic practices, with the beneficiary farmers registering yield increases from 780 to 3,500 kg/ha, while those who intercropped climbing beans with maize realized yield increases from 367 to 2,100 kg/ha above the farmers who did not use these technologies.

## Fighting Cassava Brown Streak Disease

ASARECA supported scientists from Uganda, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Rwanda and Burundi to fight CBSD that had wrecked havoc in the region between 2000 and 2011. The losses were estimated at above US\$ 100 million. This collaboration led the development of Information Resource Kit used in awareness creation campaigns, and in training of farmers and extension workers on detection of affected materials. Researchers have since developed varieties that are tolerant to CBSD as efforts continue to find varieties that are totally resistant to CBSD.

## Increasing productivity of pigs

Following reports of the outbreak of Porcine cysticercosis in human beings as a result of consuming pork infected with *Teania solium*, ASARECA coordinated researchers from International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo to develop national

capacities for surveillance, prevention and control of *Teania solium*. National Action Plans were developed for control of the disease in the five countries, leading to remarkable control and increased productivity in the pig sector.

## Promoting Quality Protein Maize (QPM)

Following the high incidence of acute child malnutrition, massive illiteracy and high levels of poverty, ASARECA has supported INERA in rapid scaling-up of Quality Protein Maize. This improved variety of maize contains 70-100% more building blocks of proteins than normal maize varieties. Out-scaling initiatives were implemented in the Southern and Central Provinces, with over 40,000 farmers planting QPM for sale as grain and quality seed. In Gandajika, where malnutrition was highest, lactating mothers and malnourished children were put on feeding regimes of QPM at organized feeding centres. Within two weeks of feeding, the malnourished babies began to recover, with majority of the breast-feeding mothers reporting increase in breast milk. This led to rapid awareness of QPM within the country.

In May 2012, President Joseph Kabila learnt of the nutritional and income benefits of QPM, and joined researchers in promoting it by allocating 500 hectares of land to INERA to multiply QPM seeds for distribution across the country. Subsequently, the President's office ordered 1,000 kg of QPM seed for planting on the State Farm, while the Ministry of Environment and Nature Preservation bought 250 kg of seed for QPM multiplication.



Children at a feeding center in Tanzania enjoy QPM porridge

## Facilitating learning through benchmarking

ASARECA organized two benchmarking exercises for eight (8) ASARECA member countries including Democratic Republic of Congo one in October, 2021 hosted by the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), Uganda; and the other in July, 2012 hosted by Tanzania Agricultural Research Institute (TARI). During the two exercises ASARECA facilitated a total of 88 researchers from the National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs), farmers and selected private sector actors (43 in 2021, and 45 in 2022) to enhance their capacities in implementing climate relevant AR4D initiatives. The beneficiary countries were: Cameroon, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and Sudan. They were supported to visit sister NARIs in Uganda and Tanzania to enhance their skills through peer-to-peer learning and mentorship.

The researchers interacted in key areas such as: (i) laboratory diagnostic tools; (ii) bio-policy and bio-safety; (iii) aflatoxin management; (iv) tissue culture, biotechnology and hydroponics; (v) bio-fortification of banana; (vi) livestock nutrition and embryo transfer; (vii) integrated pest management; (viii) marketing and private sector involvement; (ix) soil analysis; (x) crop production using CSA practices; (xi) strategies for livestock management to mitigate impacts of climate change; (xii) new approaches to farming; (xiii) application of commercialization concepts and marketing; (xiv) and choice of crop varieties for diversified agro-ecological zones.

## Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance (ACSAA)

ASARECA mobilised the National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) of member countries to form a united front to mitigate the effects of climate change. Through this initiative, which was adopted by the Directors General of all the 14 member countries **Democratic Republic of Congo**, the ASARECA Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance (ACSAA) was established in August 2021 with the overall objective of bringing together all climate relevant multi-stakeholder platforms, partnerships and networks within the region to scale up CSA. All researchers from the 14 member countries are members of this alliance which has already embarked on an ambitious collaborative effort to: (i) Define a framework for institutionalizing CSA among partner institutions; (ii) act as a clearing house for exchange of CSA TIMPs; (iii) facilitate exchange of knowledge among the partners; and (iv) provide a platform for CSA partners to engage with governments and global partners on climate relevant priorities. ASARECA secretariat has since organized five training and consultative

workshops for the Alliance on application and uptake of CSA technologies and constituted them into a Community of Practice (CoP) for regular interaction.

## Building a pool of experts on AIS

ASARECA in collaboration with FAO facilitated two Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops to support integration of the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) Common Framework (CF) into ASARECA member NARIs including **Democratic Republic of Congo** and farmer organisations. The selected cohort of trainers who have now been constituted into a database included Researchers, Directors of Research, Private sector actors, farmer organizations. At the end of the training held in March 2022 and July 2022, the ToTs became certified trainers on Integrating the TAP framework for Capacity Development in the Agricultural Innovation System. They have since implemented their Participant Action Plans (PAP) by training other trainers in the TAP AIS concept in their respective countries. Through this action, ASARECA and the NARIs have built a common pool of experts in the NARS who are now enhancing the utilisation of AIS tools and approaches among researchers, farmer organisations and other stakeholders.

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The benchmarking exercise facilitated collaboration and sharing of technologies and entailed a series of activities such as in-class training and visits to selected private sector and model farmers' fields on application of CSA technologies.

## Commercialization of CSA Technologies

ASARECA convened researchers from its 14-member NARIs including **Democratic Republic of Congo**; other actors from the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS); and the private sector for a dialogue to chat out sustainable pathways for commercialization and scaling up of gender responsive and climate smart agricultural technologies. During the Dialogue held in Nairobi, Kenya, in March 2022, the participants showcased the best bet climate-smart TIMPs of regional importance for commercialization and scaling. They: (i) identified over 100 technologies and innovations that are ready for commercialization; (ii) established a platform comprising private sector actors, researchers, and civil society organizations to advance the initiative; (iii) identified barriers and pathways for commercializing and scaling identified TIMPs; (iv) and identified and documented digital climate advisory capacity gaps in ECA.

## Agricultural Trade Policy Reforms

ASARECA convened the Regional Policy Dialogue on Agricultural and Trade Policy Reforms in Eastern and Central Africa for all the 14 member countries, including **Democratic Republic of Congo** to enhance the capacity of member states to comply with quality standards for cross border trade in agricultural inputs

and commodities. The Dialogue was attended by 50 participants drawn from NARIs; Ministries of Agriculture; Ministries of Trade; National Revenue Authorities; National Bureaus of Standards; farmers' organizations; youth groups; the private sector; the African Union Commission; and the Regional Economic Communities. The participants discussed recent agriculture related policy and trade policy reforms in ECA; and mechanisms to address barriers to cross border trade. Overall, it was noted that challenges such as political instability; overlapping membership to Regional Economic blocs; uncoordinated macro-economic policies; and poor compliance to international standards cut across member states. The meeting agreed to resolve these through review and harmonization of regional trade policies and standards; adoption of harmonized certification and regulations for seed by all member states; strengthening customs administration procedures; and establishing measures to eliminate trade barriers.

### Enhancing market information for cross border trade in agricultural commodities

ASARECA organized a policy dialogue with the objective to enhance market information for cross border trade in agricultural commodities in Eastern and Central Africa. The Dialogue sought to provide a platform for farmers, private sector, and other key stakeholders to engage with the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat on strategies for improving availability and access to market information to improve the resilience of farmers to climate shocks and boost cross border trade. The dialogue brought together 39 representatives of farmers; private sector; youth groups; policy makers from the Ministries of Agriculture and Trade; NARIs; regulators from the National Bureaus of Standards and National Revenue Authorities; and the East African Community. The participants were drawn from Burundi, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania. They agreed to establish a Regional Market Information System in ASARECA to act as a one-stop agricultural data hub for information for cross-border traders as well as act as an agro advisory.

### Financial Commitments by Member States

To facilitate operations at the Secretariat, fund jointly conceived priority Research for Development Projects, and indeed as a badge of ownership, the Member States earlier committed to make a one-off capitalisation payment of US\$ 100,000 and an annual membership fee of US\$ 50,000. The Business Committee of the General Assembly on February 7, 2023 approved the revision of annual fees to 100,000 to match-up the demand for the Secretariat to catalyse the creation of impact in Member States. The Business Committee also made a passionate appeal to the Member States to clear outstanding arrears currently standing at US\$ 1,819,206 as of December 2022. The Secretariat anticipates that fulfilment of these obligations is the beginning of a journey towards self-sustenance in the financing of ASARECA.

### Council of Patron Ministers

The ASARECA Constitution has placed the ASARECA Council of Patron Ministers for Agriculture at the helm of the Governance of the Association to ensure close oversight, guidance and value for money for the Member States. Similarly, ASARECA is currently affiliated to COMESA, IGAD, and the EAC, through mutually agreed arrangements to serve as their technical arm. The main purpose of such an affiliation is to reinforce full ownership from Member States and mainstream their issues and priorities through the joint Meeting of Council of Ministers of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources at the COMESA level.



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