



Ministry of Agriculture
and Animal Resources



ASARECA Contribution to Member States

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

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.

Since inception, ASARECA has been working mainly with Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB), formerly Institut des Sciences Agronomiques du Rwanda (ISAR), University of Rwanda and Kigali Institute of Science and Technology to jointly address AR4D challenges in the country. Between 1994 and 2023, ASARECA invested US\$ 5.90 million to catalyze agricultural transformation in Rwanda through key flagship projects highlighted below:

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ASARECA work in the Republic of Rwanda

Building capacity of scientists to deliver AR4D

ASARECA in 2008 sponsored 34 young, mid-level scientists from Rwanda, Burundi and Sudan to undertake leadership and mentorship training, and master's degree studies in various disciplines through the Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research and Development in Eastern and Central Africa (SCARDA) project. A total of six scientists in Rwanda received Master's degrees, and returned to take up various leadership positions in the ISAR/RAB research structure.

Promoting banana productivity and value addition

Working with RAB and the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology, ASARECA facilitated efforts to increase productivity and profitability in the banana value chain by promoting use of clean planting materials and improvements in banana processing by Rwandan cooperatives. Specifically, COPROVIBA, a farmer cooperative, benefited from this project and improved its capacity to handle up to 4 tons of banana weekly.

Controlling the spread of Banana Xanthomonas Wilt (BXW)

ASARECA supported RAB 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, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. Through RAB, ASARECA mobilized and supported Rwandan communities from 26 BXW hotspots in Gisagara and Kayonza to establish sources of clean planting materials. 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%.

Improving wheat productivity

Despite being a major staple food crop in Rwanda, the productivity of wheat is marginal, leaving the demand gap to be met through imports. To close the gap, ASARECA in partnership with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) supported RAB to assess technology adaptability in Kinigi, Rwerere and Nyamagabe Research Stations. Subsequently, fields of improved varieties (Njoro BW2, Chozi, Simba, EN161 and EN48) were established, while demonstration plots were established in Butaro and Mukura to evaluate promising technologies. The smallholder wheat farmers who adopted these varieties registered increased productivity from 2 to 3 tons/ha.

Mitigating effects of climate change

Working with researchers from Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Burundi, Uganda, South Sudan, Madagascar and **Rwanda**, ASARECA implemented projects to increase the availability and productivity of water in rain-fed and irrigated farms. The projects built capacity to harness water resources from rain, runoff, surface, and ground water at farm, and at the watershed level. As a result, over 500 households adopted water-efficient technologies, leading to the rehabilitation of over 5,000 hectares of severely degraded land. Over 1,000 households previously dependent on relief food are now food secure.

Promoting clean potato planting materials

Research in the early 2000s established that 95 percent of farmers in Eastern and Central Africa were using poor quality tubers riddled with bacterial wilt and viruses leading to low yields. In response to the challenge, ASARECA in collaboration with International Potato Center (CIP), supported scientists from RAB to increase the productivity of Irish Potato through the seed plot technology. The technology involved maximizing production of disease-free seed tubers using best practices. Farmers who adopted the technology witnessed a production increase from 10 to 30 tons per/ha.

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 Rwanda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo to identify and test the best bean cropping systems. Two systems, namely 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



Extension workers and farmers in Rwanga were trained on best agronomic practices, with the beneficiary farmers registering yield increases from 780 to 3,500 kg/ ha.

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Establishing cassava and potato standards for EAC states

Aware of the dual roles of cassava and potato as food security crops and as commodities with high industrial potential, ASARECA in partnership with National Bureaus of Standards of East African Community (EAC) states including **Rwanda** jointly formulated the East African standards for cassava, seed potato, potato and related products. Eleven (11) rationalized and harmonized standards for cassava and sweet potato were approved by EAC, hence opening up space for structured trade and industrialization of the commodities. Rwanda realized the potential of cassava and established the Kinazi Cassava Plant, which has promoted the “Made in Rwanda” high quality cassava flour footprint on the global market.

Policy reforms in the seed sector

ASARECA incorporated Rwanda into the Seed Regional Working Group (SRWG), which championed the analysis of the entire sector and recommended actions to ensure a vibrant and transformative seed industry. This led to the formation of the Eastern Africa Seed Committee (EASCOM), and subsequently to the harmonisation of Certification Standards and Procedures, Q-List, Variety Catalogue, and harmonisation of Import and Export Procedures. These efforts informed the evolution of Rwanda’s Seed Policy, its alignment with COMESA Seed regulations and subsequently it’s becoming law in 2016. ASARECA also spearheaded efforts to establish and strengthen national seed trade associations in Rwanda, leading to the birth of the Seed Trade Association of Rwanda (STAR).

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 including **Rwanda**, 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.

Commercialization of CSA Technologies

ASARECA convened researchers from its 14-member NARIs; other actors from the National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS) including **Rwanda**; 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 **Rwanda** 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.

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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.

Building capacity for international negotiations

ASARECA organised a workshop for key climate scientists and country United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) focal points to enhance their negotiation ability in international climate change meetings. The workshop sought to: (i) consider ASARECA member states views on the socioeconomic and food security dimensions of climate change negotiations; (ii) improve analytical skills of climate scientists, agriculture experts and UNFCCC Focal Points from ASARECA Member States on international climate decision making processes; and (iii) to provide a platform for climate scientists, agriculture experts and UNFCCC Focal Points from ASARECA member states to share their experiences and lessons learned on engagements in the UNFCCC processes. The discussions focused on: (i) the history of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The workshop was attended by 41 participants from the 12 ASARECA member countries of Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Republic of Congo, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo; Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

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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