

Objectives of the project

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen agricultural innovation partnerships and processes that support climate-relevant and sustainable transformation of agriculture systems in Rwanda. It strengthens capacities for agricultural innovation in six districts, supporting individuals, organizations and policy level, to address outstanding challenges, expand and promote best practices in identified thematic areas. The project supports innovation partnerships around eight priority value chains namely; cassava, potato, rice, maize, beans, horticulture, dairy, and small livestock (piggery).



Background

According to Rwanda's Vision 2050, the country is keen to build on the successes of the last 20 years which achieved remarkable social economic progress. In fact, Rwanda's economy depends heavily on agriculture for its income, employment opportunities, and improved people's livelihoods especially rural habitants. The value chain of different commodities has been facing challenges related to the lack of sustainable strategies able to create an enabling environment for farmers to undertake farming as a business thus improving incomes and building resilience to climate and economic shocks.

This project builds on, and further develops, the approaches and lessons learnt from the EU-supported CDAIS (Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems) project (2015-2019), which strengthened capacities for agricultural innovation in three local partnerships (Cassava value chain in Ruhango District, Dairy value chain in Burera and Effectiveness use of Water in Nyagatare and Gatsibo Districts) and at the policy level.

The proposed action addresses outstanding challenges from the earlier project and expands and promotes best practices in new locations and thematic areas. The project applies a multi-sector and interdisciplinary approach to improve capacities for climate-smart innovation in local innovation partnerships in six districts and at the national level. Thematically, the project focuses on three areas: diversification of livestock and crop systems; effective management of irrigated areas, and crop intensification and diversification in drought-prone areas.

The theory of change to achieve the objectives

The expected impacts are climate-relevant and sustainable transformation of agriculture systems to reduce poverty and contribute to food and nutrition security in Rwanda. This is being done in two ways: (i) addressing outstanding challenges in the previous innovation partnerships of the Rwanda-CDAIS project, where four districts are being assisted to refine and further assess and strengthen their capacity and support their innovation objectives, and; (ii) expanding and promoting the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP) approach – TAP Common Framework on Capacity Development for Agricultural Innovation Systems – in new thematic and geographic areas in Rutsiro and Bugesera districts.

The project is expected to strengthen and improve capacities for climate-smart innovation among actors engaged in local innovation partnerships in six targeted districts. This means that (i) Innovation partnerships are established, facilitated and strengthened to streamline climate-smart agriculture best practices (output 1), (ii) Technical capacity needs and functional knowledge gaps on gender-responsive climate-smart agriculture are addressed (output 2) and (iii) Climate smart agricultural best



practices are being adopted and endorsed by the policies for their scaling up (output 3). Analysis of food systems are conducted by research and academia in the eight innovation partnerships to guide a series of multi-disciplinary research projects to develop technologies, practices and business processes.

Technical gaps are identified and capacities of innovation partnerships to strengthen value chains and improve targeted farming systems are being developed through tailor-made solution packages to address specific needs identified. The training covers a wide range of topics, involving a range of service providers. Crosscutting issues such as youth and women are integrated throughout, and are even specifically targeted on innovation partnerships.

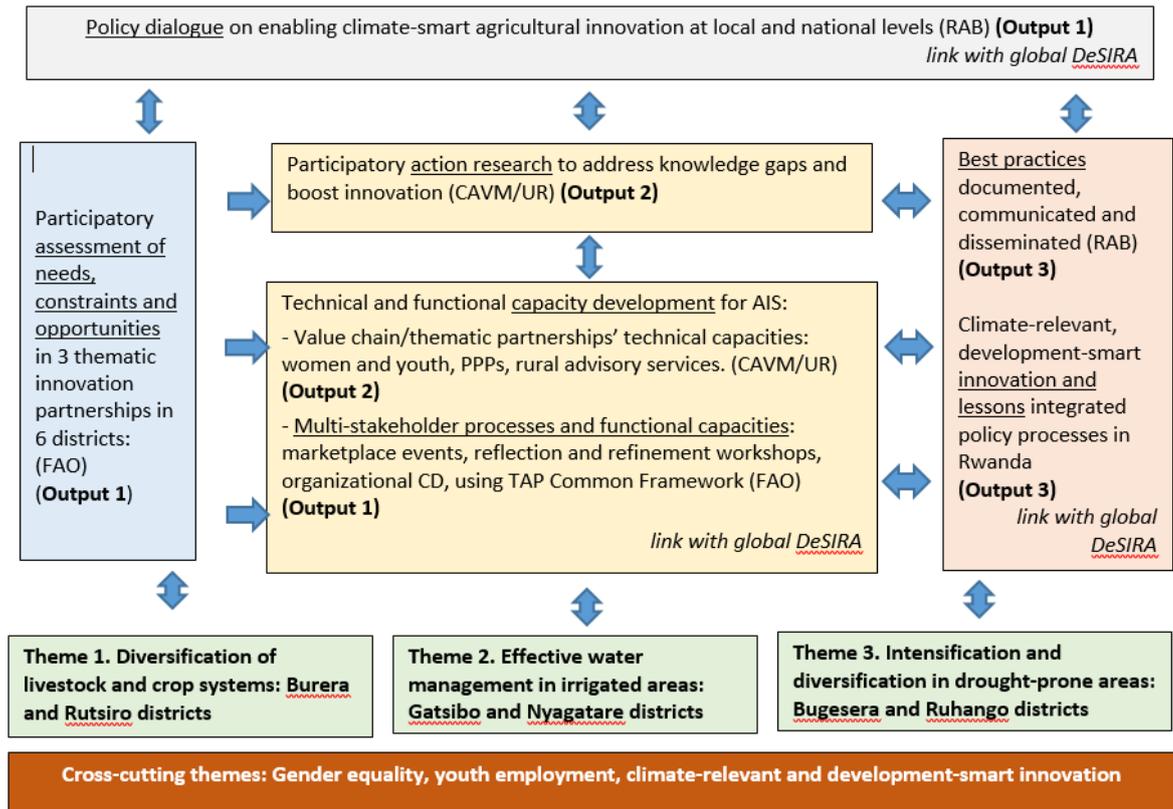
The project works towards increasing access of households to agricultural advisory services and other services to strengthen capacities and access to specific information and support. At the local level, the project is working with a wide range of actors participating in each innovation partnership, including district-level officials, agricultural service providers, farmers and farmer organizations, NGOs and local enterprises and other private sector actors.

At the national level, partnerships and capacities are being improved through stakeholders' collaboration. The project works with existing stakeholder platforms in Rwanda at both central level (e.g. Agriculture Sector Working Group, the Agriculture Sector-Wide Approach or national value chain platforms) and local level (e.g. the Joint Action Development Forum, and the Farmer Federation) to jointly develop and implement capacity development activities. A number of policy consultations and national dialogues are planned to discuss policy issues that emanate from the project's implementation.

The project's strategy for successful implementation is mainly guided by the Tropical Agriculture Platform (TAP)'s Common Framework, an approach and tool kit for developing capacities for agricultural innovation systems.

The risks that may impede the achievement of the targeted outcomes are: (i) Country-level activities do not address the priorities of the national system adequately, (ii) Participatory processes in the development of functional (system) capacities are long-term processes, and tangible results may emerge slowly, (iii) Weak facilitation capacity at national level on using TAP Common Framework tools and other participatory research approaches for climate-relevant innovation, (iv) Existing gaps between research, practice and policy are difficult or slow to change, (v) Changes in leadership and key staff in local and national governmental organizations and project partners, leading to loss of ownership and support for project and disruptions in policy participation and uptake.

Below is the graph that depicts the impact pathway.



Main activities

The main activities of the project are:

Output 1: Innovation partnerships established, facilitated and strengthened to streamline climate-smart agriculture best practices (Lead partner: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations)

- ✓ Organize inception workshops in innovation partnerships at the district level and a national inception workshop,
- ✓ Identify and coach facilitators for the establishment and facilitation of local innovation partnerships,
- ✓ Conduct a participatory stakeholder mapping, assessment of the organizational capacity needs of CSA, and preparation of action plans in six innovation partnerships,
- ✓ Develop capacities of local innovation partnership actors (NGOs, local government, and farmer organizations) on resource mobilization for climate-relevant projects,
- ✓ Support meetings of the project steering committee, innovation partnerships, and of national validation workshops or events,
- ✓

Output 2: Technical capacity needs and functional knowledge gaps on climate-smart agriculture are addressed (Lead Partner: University of Rwanda)

- ✓ Analysis of current food Systems and stakeholder mapping through action research,
- ✓ Facilitate a research exchange program between Rwandan University and EU research institution in support of the project activities,
- ✓ Establish business partnerships to scale up innovations along the value chains.

Output 3: Climate smart agricultural best practices are adopted and endorsed by the policies for their scaling up (Lead partner: Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board)



- ✓ Conduct review of enabling environment for agricultural innovation and organize policy consultations at local and national levels,
- ✓ Disseminate improved seeds of targeted value-chains in different districts and fertiliser recommendations through various approaches including screenhouses, demos plots, field trials, Farmer Field Schools (FFS), Twigire Muhinzi groups, etc.
- ✓ Integrate climate-relevant, development-smart innovation and lessons learned into policy processes in Rwanda,
- ✓ Develop and implement strategies for dissemination and scaling up project's best practices, and
- ✓ Implementation of communication and visibility plan.

Results achieved to date (April 2023)

Under Output (1): Innovation partnerships established, facilitated and strengthened to streamline climate-smart agriculture best practices:

Under this output, a number of milestones were recorded as follows:

- ✓ Inception workshops at district level and national level organized,
- ✓ Eight Innovation partnerships are being strengthened, 12 facilitators recruited and trained to support the established Innovation partnerships,
- ✓ A participatory stakeholder mapping was conducted to assess the organizational capacity, needs on Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA), action plans for eight innovation partnerships drawn,
- ✓ Currently the project is developing Innovation partnership – Capacities.
- ✓ Meetings of national project steering committee were organized for the overall coordination of the project, and deliverables by University of Rwanda (UR) and Rwanda Agriculture and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB) validated.

Under Output (2): Technical capacity needs and functional knowledge gaps on climate-smart agriculture are addressed:

- ✓ A diagnostic analysis of farming systems in the six districts was conducted by UR and Ecole Supérieure d'Agro-Développement (ISTOM),
- ✓ Design and conduct the research activities related to the analysis of the various food systems and stakeholder mapping in the project areas: upon the finalization of the diagnostic analysis of the targeted value chains, the six MSc and one PhD students developed their proposals based on findings of the diagnostic study,
- ✓ Academic exchange program: two students from ISTOM were recruited and deployed in Nyagatare and Burera Districts to support the diagnostic analysis of dairy value chains. They contributed to the assessment of the drivers of milk production, in both districts, so as to inform the research action and provide a baseline for project monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment.

Output (3) Climate Smart Agricultural best practices are adopted and endorsed by the policies for their scaling up (Lead Partner: RAB)

- ✓ The improved seeds and fertilizer recommendations of targeted value-chains in six districts were disseminated through various approaches including demo plots accompanied by FFSs.
- ✓ The project's communication and visibility plan was revised and presented to the stakeholders for validation. Based on that plan, communication and visibility activities were implemented.

Organization

FAO is responsible for the overall management and coordination of the project and implementation of activities under the 3 outputs.

A Rwandan University in cooperation with a European University are coordinating the technical and research-related activities under this project.



The Rwanda Agricultural and Animal Resources Development Board (RAB) is in charge of documenting best practices and innovation and this entails the responsibilities related to dissemination, informing policy and scale up of best practices and innovations pertaining the project.

The European Research Institution provides technical support in the implementation of project activities, especially those under Output 2 related to the technical capacity needs and functional knowledge gaps on climate-smart agriculture.

Implementing organization

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



Ministry of Agriculture and Animal
Resources (MINAGRI)

Partners of the project

- ✓ Rwanda Agriculture Board and Animal Resources (RAB),
- ✓ University of Rwanda (UR)
- ✓ Ecole Supérieure D'Agro-Développement International (ISTOM)

Other main stakeholders

Farmers' organisations and NGO of six districts: Burera, Rutsiro, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Bugesera, and Ruhango.

Location

Rwanda: In Burera, Rutsiro, Gatsibo, Nyagatare, Bugesera, and Ruhango Districts.

Funding

EU	€ 2,000,000
Total budget	€ 2,000,000

Duration

Four years: from 1 February 2021 to 31 January 2025.

Updated on 28/04/2023