



DeSIRA+ Central Africa

Transition towards sustainable food systems through scaling agroecological innovations in Central Africa



OBJECTIVES

General objective: Strengthen the agroecological transition in Central Africa—specifically in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Rwanda—by promoting sustainable food systems that enhance resilience and improve the livelihoods of food system actors.

Specific objectives: Contribute to the dissemination and scaling of impactful agroecological innovations. Improve the institutional and policy environment for innovation and agroecological transition.



LOGIC OF INTERVENTION

The DeSIRA+ AC project aims to strengthen the agroecological transition in Central Africa (Burundi, DRC, Rwanda) by supporting innovation, scaling of sustaina-

ble practices, and improving the enabling environment. The intervention is built on the following logic:

Agroecology as a holistic response: Agroecology is promoted as a comprehensive approach to address environmental degradation, food insecurity, and socio-economic vulnerability. It integrates ecological principles with local knowledge, gender equity, and climate resilience.

Innovation through multi-actor partnerships: The project supports innovation processes led by actors outside the research sphere—such as civil society organisations, farmers' groups, and public/private institutions—while involving research actors in a supporting role. These partnerships co-create, test, and scale agroecological solutions.

Scaling proven practices: Innovations that have demonstrated effectiveness in other contexts are adapted and scaled in the target countries. The project supports

both the consolidation of promising practices and their broader adoption through targeted calls for proposals.

Strengthening capacities and structures: The project builds the capacities of consortia members to manage projects, implement innovations, and engage in policy dialogue. It also strengthens civil society's role in advocacy and dissemination.

Evidence-based policy influence: By generating tangible evidence of the benefits of agroecological practices—such as improved productivity, resilience, and income—the project aims to influence national and regional policies. This includes organising dialogue spaces and producing policy briefs.

Sustainability and local ownership: The intervention emphasises local leadership, alignment with existing programmes, and integration into national strategies to ensure long-term sustainability. It leverages existing networks and initiatives to maximise impact.

Learning and adaptation: Continuous monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) are embedded in the project to adapt strategies, share lessons, and improve effectiveness. Digital tools and knowledge exchange platforms support this process.



STATE OF PLAY OF THE PROJECT

Due to geopolitical context, the project is running behind schedule. Exchange with national partners (ministries) is complex for a variety of reasons (new government, diplomatic relations with Belgium, etc.).

Mobilisation: Coordination structures (COS, CoTech) are established.

- The first COS was held in April 2025;
- The CoTech are being set up in each country.

Calls for proposals: Planned in two phases per country (Burundi, DRC, Rwanda):

- The first call for proposal was launched in June 2025, and the evaluation of concept notes is now taking place. Invitation for the second phase will come in October, with planned selection of final grantees in December 2025;
- The second call for proposal is going to be launched in October in Rwanda and Burundi with expected selection in Q1 2026.

Direct grant: Finalisation of a direct grant in DRC to complement and continue activities of DeSIRA Hevea Sankuru.



MAIN INTERVENTIONS/COMPONENTS

Component 1: Scaling agroecological innovations

- Launch country-specific calls for proposals targeting consortia of actors;
- Support testing, adaptation, and scaling of validated agroecological practices;
- Promote innovations such as composting, agroforestry, biopesticides, and climate-resilient farming, etc.

Component 2: Enabling environment for agroecology

- Strengthen capacities of actors to support innovation and scaling;
- Facilitate national and regional dialogue spaces;
- Influence policy through evidence-based advocacy and knowledge sharing.

BASIC INFORMATION

Contracting entity: Enabel

Implementing partners: Enabel, Ministries of Agriculture, civil society, research institutions.

Countries: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda.

Start: December 2024.

Duration: 4 years.

Funding: The 10M€ project is funded by the European Union.

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