



Ministry of Agriculture  
and Food Security



# ASARECA Contribution to Member States

## THE STATE OF ERITREA

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.

Eritrea is a founding member and one of the 14 Member States of ASARECA. Since inception, ASARECA has been working mainly with National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI) and the Ministry of Agriculture to jointly address AR4D challenges in the country. Between 1994 and 2023, ASARECA invested US\$ 3.69 million to catalyze agricultural transformation in Eritrea through key beneficiary projects highlighted below:

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

# ASARECA work in the State of Eritrea

## Promoting pearl millet

ASARECA supported scientists from Eritrea, Sudan, Kenya and Tanzania to develop a profitable cropping system and value-chain for Pearl Millet to enhance its production in the arid and semi arid lands of the sub-region. ASARECA investments boosted the capacity of Eritrea to enhance its genetic resources and address post harvest, utilization, input delivery and marketing constraints. Following successful implementation of the project, researchers in ASARECA countries in June 2010 endorsed pearl millet as the crop that is most suitable for the semi arid areas.

## Sorghum-legume intercrop for food security

ASARECA supported researchers from Eritrea, Uganda and Sudan to increase the productivity of sorghum, legumes and livestock. The project focused on boosting efficient farm production, post harvest handling, value addition and diversification and marketing. In Eritrea, this project was implemented with NARI, which was supplied with high yielding and striga resistant sorghum varieties and legumes (green gram (Filsan)) from ICRISAT for on-farm evaluation. Farmers, extension staff and scientists were sensitized and their capacity built on best agronomic practices, soil and water conservation practices, techniques for sorghum legume intercrop, seed production, and value addition. As a result, all the 160 farmers who participated in the project activities adopted the variety, which they intercropped with green gram, alongside other practices such as tie-ridges; application of fertilizer; and use of quality seed. Consequently, yields of both green gram and sorghum increased by over 100 percent. Households in the intervention areas reported improved nutritional benefits associated with feeding on green gram, which is rich in protein, magnesium and iron

## Response farming for climate change

Due to increasingly unpredictable and erratic onset, quantity, distribution and cessation of rainfall in the sub-region, it has been challenging for farmers to make decisions on when to start land preparation, planting and estimating quantities of seed for planting. This has affected agricultural productivity, leading to food insecurity. Informed by these trends, ASARECA coordinated Scientists from Eritrea and other member countries to enhance the capacity of smallholders to adapt to variability through response farming innovations. Relevant historical climatic and crop production data was collected and analyzed to map out trends that researchers could use to prepare the farmers to respond to variability. The project developed and promoted options for tactical decision-making and trained farmers on farm-level water management. The project also built the capacity of researchers



Researchers in ASARECA countries endorsed pearl millet as the crop that is most suitable for the semi-arid areas.

to generate and disseminate timely weather advisories and promoted communication systems to disseminate the advisories.

## 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 the rain, runoff, surface, and ground water at farm, and at the watershed level. In Eritrea, the project was implemented in Amadir and Molqi watersheds in the Sahelian rainfall zone.

Through ASARECA funding, researchers from NARI provided technical support to farmers to establish two check dams and terraces to control soil erosion and prevent siltation of Amadir and Molqi dams. As a result, the farmers now enjoy continuous supply of clean water. Using the skills learnt, farmers on their own constructed over 60 check dams and dug about 6,000 *tumbukiza* pits to harvest water and establish woodlots. With a reliable source of water established, over 300 farmers



planted 1,200 trees to conserve the environment, and adopted Rhamnus prinoides and high yielding varieties of sorghum and malt barley. Because of these improvements, farmers in the intervention areas reported improved food security status. The farmers also reported better income from sales of sorghum, malt barley and Rhamnus prinoides. Realizing the potential of improving livelihoods countrywide through this initiative, the Eritrean government allocated about US\$ 68,000 to NARI to scale up project activities.

### Facilitating learning through benchmarking

ASARECA organized two benchmarking exercises for eight (8) ASARECA member countries including **Eritrea**, 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;



Senior researchers from Eritrea participated in the benchmarking exercise.

(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.

### ASARECA 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 **Eritrea**, 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 **Eritrea**; 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 **Eritrea** 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.

## Other ASARECA supported projects implemented in Eritrea

- Characterization of Production Traits and Establishment of Genetic Potential for Improved Indigenous Sheep and Goats.
- Strengthening Regional Germplasm Collection and Forage Seed Production.
- Evaluation of Striga Resistant and Drought-tolerant Farmer Preferred Sorghum Varieties.
- Developing Gender Responsive Community Based Low-Cost Tissue Culture for Improved Food Security.
- Fighting Striga: Resistance Genes Deployed to Boost Sorghum Productivity.

## 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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