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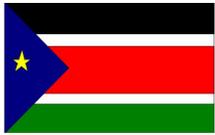
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Madagascar



Rwanda



South Sudan



Sudan



Tanzania



Uganda



ASSOCIATION FOR STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA



ASARECA STRATEGY AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK - 2019-2028

Repositioning to Deliver Transformative Research Outcomes

DECEMBER, 2018



**ASSOCIATION FOR STRENGTHENING AGRICULTURAL
RESEARCH IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA**

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FRAMEWORK-2019-2028**

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Citation: ASARECA, 2019. Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa. ASARECA Strategy and Results Framework - 2019- 2028.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AARP	African Agricultural Research Programme.
A-SRF	ASARECA Strategy and Results Framework.
ACTESA	Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa.
AFAAS	African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services.
AfDB	African Development Bank.
AR4D	Agricultural Research for Development.
ARIs	Advanced Research institutes.
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa.
AU	African Union.
AUC	African Union Commission.
BecA	Biosciences for Eastern and Central Africa.
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.
CGIAR	Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research.
CGS	Competitive Grant System.
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.
CRPs	CGIAR Commodity Research Programmes.
EAAPP	Eastern Africa Agricultural Productivity Programme.
EAC	East African Community.
ECA	Eastern and Central Africa.
ECAPAPA	East and Central Africa Programme for Agricultural Policy Analysis.
ECAATP	Eastern and Central Africa Agricultural Transformation programme
FAAP	Framework for African Agricultural Productivity.
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa.
FFA	Framework For Action.
IAR4D	Integrated agricultural research for development.
IARCs	International Agricultural Research Centres.
ICER	Internally Commissioned External Review.
ICT	Information and communication technology.
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development.
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.
NAFSIPs	National Agricultural and Food Security Investment Plans.
NARES	National agricultural research and extension system.
NARIs	National agricultural research institutes.
NARS	National agricultural research system.
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa’s Development.
NPCA	NEDAP Planning and Coordinating Agency.
PAAP	Policy Analysis and Advocacy Programme.
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation.
RECs	Regional economic communities.
RCoE	Regional Centres of Excellence.
RLCCs	Regional Lead Commodity Centres.

RUFORUM	Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture.
S3A	Science Agenda for Agriculture in African.
SGDs	Sustainable Development Goals.
SPAAR	Special Programme for African Agricultural Research.
SRO	Sub Regional Organizations.
TAAT	Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation.
UniBRAIN	Universities Business and Research in Agricultural Innovation.



FOREWORD

During the last 24 years of ASARECA's existence, the agricultural research for development environment in which it was established has undergone major changes. Because of these changes plus the fact that the second ASARECA Strategic Plan was coming to an end in 2016, the Board of Directors and the Management made a strategic decision to re-examine the ASARECA's focus and niche in the crowded agricultural research landscape. As part of this process, ASARECA developed a ten-year ASARECA Strategy and Results Framework (A-SRF) for the period 2017-2026.

The process of preparing this A-SRF was completed in December 2016, with implementation expected to commence in 2017. However, this did not happen because the A-SRF was not translated into an operational plan due to a shift in priority to support a transition and reform process in ASARECA for the period 2017-2018. Because of this, the ASARECA Board of Directors and the Management initiated a process to refresh and update the 2017-2026 A-SRF to now cover the period 2019-2028 and capture any new changes that may have occurred in the ASARECA's operating environment during the two years transition period.

The new A-SRF has been developed within the context and in conformity with new and evolving institutional and policy reforms, while taking advantage of the current and emerging opportunities to enhance ASARECA's capacity and competency to be proactive in responding to current and emerging challenges facing agricultural transformation and development in the ECA sub region. This was achieved through extensive consultations with the ECA member States and partners, both from within and outside the Association. This process was intended to ensure that the new A-SRF: (i) takes into account the achievements and lessons learnt during the implementation of previous Strategic Plans; (ii) incorporates all constructive views and suggestions from all key stakeholders; (iii) builds on the current gains and strengths of implementing assorted regional initiatives; and (iv) contributes significantly to inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation and development.

During this strategic planning process, ASARECA managed to: (i) redefine its niche and set clear priority areas of focus for it to remain relevant in the changing AR4D environment; (ii) reposition itself in order to continue providing support in transforming the sub regional agriculture; (iii) re-examine its effectiveness, visibility, sustainability and impact; (iv) identify and articulate areas of comparative advantage that it can leverage on to facilitate delivery of priority AR4D outcomes; and (v) define the basis for developing an appropriate organizational structure and operational modalities.

This A-SRF is well aligned to the major regional, continental and global frameworks including: (i) the CAADP 10-year Results Framework which is the overarching continental agriculture development framework; (ii) the complementary African Union Malabo Declaration on accelerated African agricultural growth and transformation in line with the AUC/NEPAD Agency Implementation Strategy and Roadmap; (iii) the agricultural sector and related strategies of the relevant Regional Economic Communities; (iv) the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa; (v) the Science Agenda for

Agriculture in Africa; (vi) the framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa; and (vii) the relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Similarly, ASARECA has committed itself to focus on four thematic areas that are well aligned to the major ongoing national, regional and continental initiatives, namely: (i) Transformative Capacity Strengthening and Integration; (ii) Agricultural Transformation Technologies and Innovations; (iii) Enabling Policy Environment, Functional Markets and Transformative Institutions; and (iv) Knowledge and Information Management. These thematic areas of focus are significantly different from the past themes and programmes as evidenced by: (i) What ASARECA has chosen to do under each thematic area of focus; (ii) How it will do it; and (iii) the Level at which it will do it in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

Given that this A-SRF is the outcome of continuous learning, discussion, communication, negotiation and consensus building by the ASARECA stakeholders and partners, we wish to thank all who participated in the process. Specifically, we thank the: (i) members of the ASARECA Board of Directors for their continuous engagement, guidance and advice that contributed enormously to the overall success of the planning process; (ii) past and current development partners for their continued financial and technical support; (iii) ASARECA stakeholders, partners and collaborators for their active participation and engagement in the planning process; (iv) former ASARECA Interim Executive Secretaries for providing overall guidance and coordination of the strategic planning process; and (v) ASARECA staff for their commitment and full participation in the development of this A-SRF. The contribution of all other groups and individuals that assisted in one way or another towards the development of this A-SRF is greatly acknowledged.

In conclusion, this A-SRF provides strategic direction and a framework for: (i) prioritizing key activities to pursue; (ii) guiding operational and functional planning; (iii) allocating resources; and (iv) developing organizational structure and operational modalities. The roadmap outlined in this A-SRF shall form the basis for developing detailed five-year medium term operational plans that are required to operationalize it. It is our hope that all ASARECA stakeholders, partners and collaborators will find this A-SRF adequately reflective of their agricultural research for development needs, and thus call upon all the ASARECA member States and the development partners to support and collaborate in its implementation.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Agona'.

Dr. Ambrose Agona,
Chairman, ASARECA Board of Directors



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.J. Mbonigaba Muhinda'.

Prof. J.J. Mbonigaba Muhinda,
ASARECA Executive Secretary





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 Background

1.1 The Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) is a sub regional not-for-profit association. It was established in 1994 by ten member States represented by their National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) following the approval of the Framework For Action (FFA) for agricultural research in Eastern and Central Africa by the Special Programme for Africa Agricultural Research (SPAAR). The original ten member States included Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. South Sudan joined the association at the General Assembly meeting convened in December, 2011 raising the membership of the regional Association to eleven.

1.2 The agricultural research for development (AR4D) environment in which ASARECA was formed has changed dramatically over its 20-year existence. Because of these changes plus the fact that the second ASARECA Strategic Plan was coming to an end in 2016, the ASARECA Board of Directors and Management made a strategic decision to re-examine its focus and niche in the crowded agricultural research landscape. As part of this process, ASARECA has developed this ten-year ASARECA Strategy and Results Framework (A-SRF) for the period 2019-2028.

2.0 ASARECA Vision, Mission and Core Values

2.1 The ASARECA's guiding vision that requires the Association and its stakeholders and partners to stretch their future expectations, aspirations and performance is to see ***“A transformed ECA agricultural sector supporting improved livelihoods, sustained economic growth and inclusive development”***.

2.2 The mission statement that expresses the fundamental purpose and business of the repositioned ASARECA is ***“To contribute to increased productivity, commercialization and competitiveness of the ECA agricultural sector through strengthening, catalyzing and coordinating agricultural research for development in the ECA sub region”***.

2.3 The guiding Core Values that ASARECA and its stakeholders and partners hold in common and put into practice while performing their functional obligations include ***Inclusivity, Accountability, Transparency, Transformative, Sustainability, Subsidiarity and Integrity***.

3.0 What the Repositioned ASARECA will Do Differently

3.1 ASARECA understands that agricultural transformation requires an integrated delivery approach across an ecosystem of partnerships. While various initiatives exist in the agricultural sector across the ECA sub region, there is limited integration and coordination of execution and investments by governments, development partners, private sector and implementing partners. In this regards, this A-SRF is designed to reposition ASARECA strategically to perform a **higher level facilitative, supportive, coordination and advocacy role** to enhance sustainable agricultural transformation, sustained economic growth and inclusive development in the ECA sub region.

3.2 Improving efficiency in delivering regional AR4D outcomes and impact: The ASARECA of this A-SRF will be an **Innovative convener, Partnership broker, Strategic catalyser, Process facilitator, Effective communicator and Efficient coordinator** of priority regional AR4D initiatives. To achieve this, ASARECA will position itself strategically to improve the **relevance, effectiveness and efficiency** of the sub regional AR4D leading to significant improvement in **value for money** in the delivery of inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation and development outcomes and impact. ASARECA will achieve this by supporting the attainment of **economies of scale and scope** in the conduct of priority regional research and by significantly reducing **duplication and misalignment of efforts and resources**.

3.3 In this regard, therefore, the mandate of the repositioned ASARECA is to:

- (a) Identify regional research priorities and opportunities through credible, authentic and participatory on-going strategic visioning processes.
- (b) Commission, broker and manage strategic research partnerships to address identified regional priorities in the most effective, efficient and synergetic ways.
- (c) Nurture pathways for on-time delivery, spill over and scaling up of regional agricultural research results to deliver agricultural outcomes and impact.
- (d) Mobilize, allocate and manage regional AR4D investments to support generation of regional agricultural research public goods and services.
- (e) Monitor and evaluate returns on AR4D investment and repackage lessons and best practices to inform decision making processes and action.

3.4 Repositioned ASARECA value proposition and value addition: To deliver on the above mandate, ASARECA will reposition itself as the sub regional **“Go to Service Provider of Choice”** for AR4D products and services. In this regard, the ASARECA’s driving **Value Proposition** is **“Strengthening, catalyzing and coordinating the ECA sub regional agricultural research for development initiatives by strengthening and integrating capacities; supporting and coordinating development and scaling up of technologies and innovations; advocating for enabling environment, functional markets and institutions; and managing and communicating knowledge and information**. ASARECA shall deliver on this driving Value Proposition by undertaking functions that **add value** to the conduct and outcome of regional AR4D initiatives in the ECA sub region.

3.5 ASARECA’s capability to deliver regional research outcomes and impact: ASARECA is an African led institution with a regional mandate to strengthen, catalyze and coordinate agricultural research for development in the ECA sub region. This mandate is derived from its constituents and conferred by the NARS of the ECA member States. In this regard, ASARECA has a comparative advantage and proven capability, build over the years, to add value and to significantly improve value for money in the delivery of high quality demand driven regional research results to support the attainment of inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation outcomes and impact.

4.0 Thematic Areas of Focus and Strategic Results/Intermediate Outcomes

4.1 The ASARECA stakeholders and partners have identified what it should do as a sub regional organization and rationalized it into four thematic areas of focus and four corresponding strategic results/intermediate outcomes as outlined in the table below.

Thematic Areas of Focus	Corresponding Strategic Results/Intermediate Outcomes
(a) Transformative Capacity Strengthening and Integration.	(a) Strengthened and integrated capacities and competencies to support agricultural transformation in the ECA sub region.
(b) Agricultural Transformation Technologies and Innovations.	(b) Enhanced support for development and scaling up of agricultural transformation technologies, innovations and management practices.
(c) Enabling Policy Environment, Functional Markets and Transformative Institutions.	(c) Enhanced support and advocacy for establishment of enabling policy environment, functional markets and transformative institutions and institutional arrangements.
(d) Knowledge and Information Management.	(d) Improved management and access to reliable and up-to-date knowledge and information for informed decision making and action.

4.2 While the thematic areas of focus identified by the ASARECA stakeholders and partners have some similarities with what ASARECA has historically sought to do, the approach, success drivers, strategic focus and the expected outcomes differ significantly from the past themes and programmes as evidenced by *“What ASARECA has chosen to do under each thematic area of focus; How it will do it; and the Level at which it will do it in line with the principle of subsidiarity”*.

5.0 Strategic Alignment

5.1 ASARECA has committed itself to focus on four thematic areas that are well aligned to the major ongoing regional and continental initiatives. By committing to deliver on these thematic areas, ASARECA is strategically positioned to contribute significantly to the development and implementation of the national, regional and continental frameworks.

5.2 In particular, ASARECA has committed to provide technical support in the development and implementation of (i) the National Agricultural and Food Security Investment Plans (NAFSIPs) of the ECA Member States; (ii) the CAADP 10-year Results Framework and the complementary African Union Malabo Declaration on Accelerated African Agricultural Growth and Transformation (A3GT); (iii) the agricultural sector and related strategies of the relevant Regional Economic Communities; (iv) the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA); (v) the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A); (vi) the Feed the Future Strategy; (vii) the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) programme; (viii) the African Agricultural Research Programme (AARP); (ix) the framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa (SAMA); and (xi) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

6.0 Thematic Areas of Focus and Strategic Result Areas

6.1 Transformative Capacity Strengthening and Integration

(a) This thematic area shall focus on strengthening and integration of different types of AR4D capacities and competencies at systemic, organizational and individual levels to support and contribute significantly to the attainment of inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation in the ECA member States.

(b) The strategic result areas required to deliver this thematic area include (i) Strengthen and integrate capacities and competencies for inclusive stakeholder engagement, strategic visioning and policy formulation; (ii) Strengthen and integrate capacities and competencies for generation, access and utilization of agricultural knowledge and information; and (iii) Strengthen and integrate capacities and competencies for effective institutional development, management and performance monitoring and evaluation.

6.2 Agricultural Transformation Technologies and Innovations

(a) This thematic area shall focus on supporting and coordinating the development and adaptation of technologies and innovations to address priority regional agricultural transformation challenges; development of approaches, methods, tools and pathways for enhancing uptake and widespread utilization of technologies, innovations and

management practices; enhancing scaling up of priority integrated regional agricultural value chains; and supporting development of private sector-driven agribusinesses and entrepreneurships.

(b) The strategic result areas required to deliver this thematic area include (i) Support and coordinate development and adaptation of gender responsive and climate-smart technologies, innovations and management practices; (ii) Support and coordinate scaling up of gender responsive and climate-smart technologies, innovations and management practices; and (iii) Support and coordinate development and scaling up of gender responsive and youth focused regional value chains and agribusinesses.

6.3 Enabling Policy Environment, Functional Markets and Transformative Institutions

(a) ASARECA has made significant contribution in policy analysis and advocacy in the past and, therefore, this thematic area will build on these past successes and lessons learned. The focus for this thematic area is, therefore, to support and advocate for creation of enabling environment, establishment of functional and structured regional markets and strengthening of regional institutions.

(b) The strategic result areas required to deliver this thematic area include (i) Support and advocate for establishment of transformative enabling policy and regulatory environment; (ii) Support and advocate for establishment of functional and structured regional input and output markets; and (iii) Support and advocate for establishment of transformative regional institutions and institutional arrangements.

6.4 Knowledge and Information Management

(a) This thematic area of focus shall build on the lessons and experiences from ASARECA's past knowledge and information initiatives to advocate for and explore ways through which data, information, knowledge and tools relevant for AR4D can increasingly be placed in the public domain. This thematic area shall, therefore, focus on improving management and access to reliable and up-to-date data, information and knowledge to inform agricultural transformation decision making processes and action in the ECA sub region.

(b) The strategic result areas required to deliver this thematic area include (i) Establish and manage regional technology and information clearing house; (ii) Establish and manage regional data bases, system models and decision-support tools; and (iii) Establish and manage functional platforms for communicating and exchanging knowledge and information.

7.0 Strategy and Results Framework Implementation Arrangements

The A-SRF has outlined clear thematic areas of focus and their respective strategic results that can only be realized through sound planning and coordinated implementation. To ensure effective and efficient implementation of this A-SRF, the ASARECA's governance and management will be strengthened so as to enable it perform its sub regional mandate. In addition to this, ASARECA will develop and operationalize the necessary strategic management instruments required for smooth implementation of this A-SRF and the medium term operational plans. Some of these strategic management instruments that will be developed and operationalized include:

- (i) Detailed medium term operational plans covering the period 2019-2023 and 2024-2028.
- (ii) Regional framework for strategic visioning, priority setting and programming.
- (iii) Reconfigured CGS for financing truly competitive regional research to address priority regional research challenges.
- (iv) Partnership strategy.
- (v) Resource mobilization and sustainability strategy.
- (vi) Communication strategy.
- (vii) Risk management plan.
- (viii) Regional research policy to guide the conduct, coordination and management of regional research.
- (ix) Strategies and guidelines for mainstreaming cross-cutting issues into all programmes and projects.
- (x) Performance based monitoring, evaluation and learning system for tracking the implementation of programmes and projects.







1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (ASARECA) was established as a sub regional not-for-profit association in 1994 by ten member States represented by their National Agricultural Research Institutes (NARIs) following the approval of the Framework For Action (FFA) for agricultural research in Eastern and Central Africa by the Special Programme for Africa Agricultural Research (SPAAR). The original ten member States included Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Upon attaining its independence, South Sudan joined the association at the General Assembly meeting held in December, 2011 raising the membership of the sub regional Association to eleven.

The strategic direction and focus of ASARECA over the last two decades has been shaped by several documents that include the (i) Long Term Strategic Plan of 1997; (ii) Networks, Programmes and Projects Strategic Plans; (iii) Second Strategic Plan - 2007-2016; (iv) Operational Plan One - 2008-2013; (v) Research Programmes and Support Units Strategic Plans; and (vi) Operational Plan Two - 2014-2018. Taken together, these planning documents define the main phases of ASARECA's evolution and strategic direction over the last two decades.

1.2 Achievements Delivered with Past Investments

The implementation of the past ASARECA's strategic and operational plans went through different times with different challenges occasioned by a fast-changing and complex socio-economic and institutional environment characterized by declining financial resource availability; a wide range of sector reforms and increased stakeholder awareness; global market liberalization with both positive and negative effects on the agricultural sectors of many African countries; inadequate policy coordination among African countries; high input prices relative to output prices; emergence of new biophysical constraints occasioned by climate change; brain drain due to external competition; and political instabilities in some African countries among others. These challenges affected operational implementation of ASARECA's activities in one way or another. These challenges notwithstanding, ASARECA has been able to accomplish major achievements as summarized below.

(i) *Benefits to households and individual farmers:* A total of 228,349 rural households benefited directly from ASARECA-related support initiatives, and over 1.37 million individuals directly benefited from an assortment of ASARECA supported initiatives. Furthermore, 56,228 farmers and other stakeholders accessed and used new technologies, innovations and management practices (TIMPs) generated and availed for uptake from ASARECA supported project interventions.

(ii) *Generated or improved technologies, innovations and management practices:* A total of 364 different TIMPs were either generated or improved to suit farmers' demands. A total of 435 demand-driven gender-responsive TIMPs were availed for uptake by targeted stakeholders.

(iii) *Quality pre-basic, basic and certified seeds:* Over 1,000 hectares of land were dedicated to improved TIMPs, especially for production and multiplication of quality pre-basic, basic and certified seeds. Over 800 metric tons of quality seed of selected crops were produced and either sold or distributed to farmers for further multiplication.

(iv) *Reclamation of degraded lands and watersheds:* Over 5,000 hectares of highly degraded lands and watersheds were reclaimed through ASARECA supported initiatives. This enabled the targeted households to have steady water supply for domestic and farm use.

(v) *Contribution to the establishment of enabling policy environments:* ASARECA has contributed to the establishment of enabling policy environments through participation in the review of existing policies, laws, regulations and management practices. A total of 89 policies, laws, regulations and procedures were analyzed, 39 were presented for legislation and dialogue, while 37 were approved by national legislative bodies, the East African Community (EAC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

(vi) *Infrastructure capacity strengthening and partnership:* As part of enhancing capacity strengthening of the NARS, over 400 assorted infrastructure and facilities were provided to targeted partner institutions particularly the weaker NARIs. At the same time, over 280 different partnerships were formed.

(vii) *Human resource capacity strengthening:* Over 60,000 men and women were trained in the areas of integrated water management, value addition, integrated soil fertility management, value chain development, project management, monitoring and evaluation, environment and social safeguards, basic agronomic and management practices among others. In addition, over 150 students (15 PhD, 112 MSc, 4 BSc and 19 Diploma/Certificate) benefited from ASARECA long-term training.

(viii) *Production and delivery of information packages:* ASARECA facilitated the production of over 700 different information packages that include peer reviewed journal articles, books, book chapters, electronic newsletters, policy briefs, conference proceedings and manuals. These products were made available through over 250 different delivery pathways such as websites, flyers, television, radio, short message system (SMS), dissemination events, media events, farm trials and multimedia such as YouTube among others.

1.3 The Need for a Repositioning Strategy

During the last 20 years of ASARECA's existence, the agricultural research for development (AR4D) environment in which it was established for has undergone major changes. In particular, various developments have taken place in the national, regional and global arena; several of its collaborating partners and member States have grown in capacity and have also revised their strategies and development plans providing new potential areas of future collaboration; new regional, continental and global frameworks and development programmes have emerged; and the need for rapid transformation of the African agriculture has gained significant political support at the national, regional and continental levels.

In addition to this, ASARECA is currently operating in an increasingly congested institutional landscape with both competitive and collaborative pressures. At the apex of this institutional landscape are continental bodies from which ASARECA may derive both mandate and show some accountability. These bodies are the technical and policy organs of the African Union. ASARECA, as a sub regional organization, is a member of the apex organization, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA). FARA seeks to play, at the continental level, a similar coordinating and convening role, to that which ASARECA should be playing at the sub regional level.

At the regional and global levels, organizations and programmes have also grown in capacity and offer ASARECA both competition and opportunities for future collaboration. Some of these organizations and programmes include the African Union (AU), New Partnerships for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the South African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC), the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Development Bank (AfDB) as well as other Sub Regional Organizations (SROs), the CGIAR Centres, International Agricultural Research Centres (IARCs) and the Development Partners.

Because of these changes plus the fact that the second ASARECA Strategic Plan was coming to an end in 2016, the ASARECA Board of Directors and Management made a strategic decision to re-examine its focus and niche in the crowded agricultural research landscape. As part of this process, ASARECA developed a ten-year ASARECA Strategy and Results Framework (A-SRF) for the period 2019-2028. The new A-SRF is expected to reposition ASARECA strategically to contribute significantly to accelerated agricultural transformation and growth leading to improved food and nutrition security, improved livelihoods, sustained economic growth and inclusive development in the ECA sub region.



2.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1 Role of Agriculture in National and Regional Development

The agricultural sector plays a major role in the economic development in the ECA sub region and is the source of livelihood for a high proportion of the population actively involved in agricultural-based activities. In almost every country, the rural economy provides most of the agricultural production of food and fibre and is the primary source of water, energy and fishery among others. Agriculture employs the largest share of the human population; generates income; and provides inputs into other sectors of the economy. In addition to this, agriculture is a valuable source of raw materials for industry and an important source of foreign exchange since significant volumes of regional export is agricultural produce.

The performance of agriculture impacts heavily on nearly all other sectors of development and is, therefore, the mainstay of the national economies of the ECA member States by providing the basis for the development of the other sectors. By contributing raw materials to the manufacturing and industrial sector, the agricultural sector has a definite role to play in the progress of the ECA member States towards becoming food secure and newly industrialized countries. However, for the agricultural sector to improve on its contribution to the overall goal of national economic growth, wealth creation, food security and poverty alleviation, the sector must be transformed from subsistence to a commercial and profitable business enterprise.

2.2 Role of Research in Agricultural Development

The ECA member States are endowed with land, water, human resource and favourable climatic conditions capable of sustaining a highly productive agricultural sector. However, agricultural development in the ECA member States is faced with many challenges in the main areas of production and processing; natural resources management; climate change; institutional and infrastructure; policy and market; and low level government funding. Because of these challenges, the contribution of the agricultural sector to economic growth and attainment of food and nutrition security in the ECA member States is still lagging behind expectations. These challenges notwithstanding, agricultural research in the ECA member States has made significant contributions towards improvement of production and productivity in the past through development of improved crop varieties, livestock breeds and natural resource management practices.

The impact indicators of the long-term investments in agricultural research may be grouped into three categories that include (i) the productivity impact that focuses on the efficient use of resources; (ii) the livelihood impact which determines whether gains of increased productivity benefit the mass of society; and (iii) the environmental impact which determines whether the gains achieved by the first two impact indicators

can be sustained. Overall evidence from a broad range of research impact studies shows that returns from investments in agricultural research is two to three times higher than from other agricultural and non-agricultural investments. The benefits of additional income generated from agricultural research are passed on to producers through higher profits and to consumers in the form of lower prices and better products. Investment in agricultural research is, therefore, key to economic growth since the benefits produced are widely and more equitably distributed.

2.3 National Agricultural Research and Extension Systems

Planning, management and coordination of the national agricultural research and extension systems (NARESS) in the ECA sub region is undertaken under different systems that are also called by different names in different countries. Some of the ECA member States are yet to establish strong NARESSs. In addition to this, most of the ECA member States have not committed adequate resources to fund priority agricultural research and extension programmes despite having committed themselves to the Maputo Declaration to increase allocations to agriculture and rural development to 10% of budgetary resources.

In most of the ECA member States, the institutes and organizations that form the NARESSs undertake agricultural research and extension independently with minimal reference to each other leading to serious duplication of efforts. This situation is unsuitable for optimal exploitation of synergies and complementarity among the agricultural research and extension. This is more so because the emphasis is increasingly shifting away from the development of production increasing technologies towards new approaches concerned with diversification; value-addition; capturing markets; maximizing on-farm and off-farm income; forming and entering market chains; improving product quality and food safety; and balancing equity and environmental interests with those of economic growth while limiting the negative effects of agriculture. To improve the delivery of research and extension outcomes and impact, therefore, these institutions require an effective and efficient linkage and coordination mechanisms designed to enhance information generation, sharing and utilization so as to facilitate a knowledge and information driven agricultural sector that contributes significantly to poverty reduction, improved livelihood and economic growth.

2.3.1 Private Sector Participation in Agricultural Transformation and Development

The ECA agricultural growth is increasingly being fuelled by the private sector, opening up income generating and employment opportunities for rural populations, and for smallholder farmers in particular. Greater involvement in setting priorities for AR4D as well as inclusion in implementation of projects alongside researchers and farmers has positioned the private sector as a potential engine of growth in rural economies. Most private sector organizations are engaged in release of new varieties; production

of seed and planting materials; provision of extension services, farm inputs, agricultural equipment and machinery; veterinary care; and food storage, processing, transportation and packaging that are enabling many products to meet stringent global quality and hygiene standards. With the right enabling policy and regulatory environment, the private sector has, therefore, the potential to bring added innovation, different business experiences, proven methodologies and access to additional resources to propel agriculture from subsistence based, low input/low output farming, to a more market-oriented system integrated into the global food system.

2.4 Agricultural Development Challenges Facing ECA Sub Region

The ECA member States are naturally endowed with land, water, human resource and favourable climatic conditions capable of sustaining a highly productive agricultural sector. However, the contribution of many of these countries' agricultural sector to growth, attainment of food and nutrition security and increased prosperity for their people is still lagging behind expectations and recognized potential. Majority of these countries have been slow in developing most commercial crops despite existence of huge potential for export and diversification sources of food for human consumption.

Because of the recognition of the potential role of agriculture, African Heads of States and Governments have made specific agricultural policy commitments that include the Maputo Declaration of 2003; the Malabo Declaration of 2014 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2014. These policy commitments have made agriculture to gain significant political support at the continental level with a very strong recognition of the role of agricultural research in their realization.

The adoption of the new CAADP Results Framework by the Heads of States and Governments came at a time when worldwide hunger has decreased by 132 million people in the last 20 years but increased by 64 million, from 175 to 239 million in Africa over the same period. Africa is a net importer of food having imported, for instance, 43 million tons of food worth USD 50 billion in 2011. While global population is projected, by 2013 basis, to increase by 33% to 9 billion people by 2050, Africa's population is projected to increase by 115% from 1.1 to 2.39 billion within the same period. This high rate of population growth would require at least a similar increase in food production to maintain the current status quo. These figures point to the bitter reality that urgent efforts are needed to transform agricultural production and productivity on the continent, in line with the CAADP framework to which African governments have pledged their support.

The challenges facing the agricultural sector in Africa vary with respect to region, country and commodities. The effects of some of the challenges have been accelerated by past worldwide food price crisis and its underlying drivers. The main challenges limiting the growth of the agricultural sector, as indicated in many national policies and plans of the ECA member States, occur in the broad areas outlined below.

(a) Production and processing related challenges: (i) Enhancing use of modern technologies; (ii) Reducing the cost and level of adulteration of key inputs; (iii) Reducing the impact of pests and diseases; and (iv) Value addition, processing and product development among others.

(b) Natural resources management and climate change related challenges: (i) Improving management and utilization of resources; (ii) Enhancing effective ecosystems management; (iii) Arresting degradation and enhancing biodiversity; (iv) Arresting and rehabilitating land and soil resources degradation; (v) Improving management of scarce water resources; and (vi) Adapting and mitigating climate change among others.

(c) Institutional and infrastructure related challenges: (i) Strengthening the effectiveness of extension services; (ii) Strengthening demand-driven research and absorption of modern technologies; (iii) Strengthening governance and reducing corruption; (iv) Improving management and access to knowledge and information; (v) Expanding the application of information and communication technology; and (vi) Building appropriate infrastructure among others.

(d) Policy and market related challenges: (i) Formulating appropriate policies and regulatory frameworks; (ii) Ensuring sufficient budgetary allocation and credit availability; (iii) Establishing favourable macro-economic factors and external environment; (iv) Strengthening markets and marketing infrastructure; (v) Reducing population increase; and (vi) Decreasing incidence and impact of diseases and drug abuse among others.

2.5 Available Opportunities for ECA Agricultural Transformation

Agriculture can play a major role in the Africa's development if three major transformations in agriculture are achieved. These transformations include (i) significant increases in sustainable production; (ii) significant increases in sustainable productivity; and (iii) significant increases in market driven value addition. In order to realize these increases, there will be a need for significant adoption of sustainable agricultural mechanization along the input and output supply value chains that is private sector driven, gender responsive, youth focused, environmentally compatible, climate-smart and affordable to the smallholder farmers.

The agriculture related changes and commitments that have been made over the past decade have major influence on the ASARECA's operating environment and the role it can play in the realization of these commitments. Some of the available and emerging opportunities brought about by these changes and commitments that would require ASARECA to strategically position itself to provide support to the member States to enable them achieve inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation for improved livelihoods, economic growth and shared prosperity include those outlined below.

2.5.1 Research, Technology and Knowledge Related Opportunities

(i) **Increased call for research to cope with climate change:** Africa contributes the least to greenhouse gas emissions, yet it is expected to be among the most negatively affected by climate change. The AR4D concerns about climate change are twofold. First is the adaptation and mitigation challenges and the second concern is the extent to which agriculture contributes to climate change itself. To address the climate change challenges, the ECA member States require support to bring innovative climate-smart agriculture to the forefront of AR4D.

(ii) **Increased need to turn the existing knowledge into action:** There has been increasing call from development organizations for serious focus on promoting uptake, utilization and scaling up of existing agricultural knowledge. These calls are based on the fact that knowledge is not lacking but what is lacking is the will and commitment to turn this knowledge into practices. There is, therefore, a need for identification of existing agricultural knowledge and development of appropriate up scaling and uptake approaches and pathways for use by the ECA member States to ensure that knowledge and information reach the intended users at the right time, in the right place and using the right communication channels.

(iii) **Integrated regional value chains approach to agricultural transformation:** Developing regional value chains for strategic agricultural commodities, especially those identified by the AU Food Security Summit in Abuja and in line with the recent Malabo Declaration, provide a huge opportunity for the ECA member States to enhance their agricultural transformation and global competitiveness. In order to adopt the value chain approach for research within the framework of Integrated Agricultural Research for Development (IAR4D) designed to transform the agricultural sector from subsistence to a commercial and profitable business enterprise, the ECA member States need to be supported through provision of evidence-based approaches and models for developing well coordinated and integrated regional value chains as a strategy for promoting public-private partnerships as well as penetrating and participating effectively in global value chains.

(iv) **The need to support the science agenda for agriculture in Africa:** The Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A) is an African-owned and African-led process that articulates the science, technology, extension, innovations, policy and social learning that Africa needs to apply in order to meet its agricultural and overall development goals. The ECA member States need to be supported in the application of science to support sustainable agricultural transformation.

(v) **New opportunities brought about by advances in science and technology:** Because of the advances in science and technology, agriculture is now seen to be at the core of the new bio-economy; a user of and contributor to big data for innovation; part of the solution to environmental problems; an engine of economic growth; and the source of healthy food. The ECA member States need support to access and utilize

these advances in science and technology including the breakthroughs in nutrition, genetics, informatics, modelling, mobile telephony, satellite imaging, remote sensing, meteorology, nanotechnology, precision farming and conservation agriculture that are driving global investments in agriculture.

(vi) Meeting the dual goals of food security and environmental sustainability: Agriculture is now well positioned within the environmental agenda due to recognition of the need for a landscape approach to conservation and productive uses. The rapid growth of bio-fuels has also linked agricultural and energy markets leading to creation of opportunities for producers. The ECA member States need support to broaden the sustainable management of landscapes and natural resources for multiple purposes with tradeoffs and synergies between conservation and productive uses to meet the dual goals of food security and environmental sustainability.

(vii) Agricultural research contribution to food and nutrition security: Food security encompasses the availability, access and utilization of nutritious foods. In the ECA sub region, the rising urbanization and growing per capita incomes is expected to double the marketed volumes of foodstuffs and increase demand for high-value foods such as processed foods, packaged convenience foods and pre-prepared foods. The ECA member States need support to ensure that AR4D is, not only geared towards ensuring the availability and access of foods, but also its processing, packaging and consumption in forms that guarantee adequate nutrition and safety.

2.5.2 Institutional, Policy and Commitments Related Opportunities

(i) Changing African institutional landscape: ASARECA is operating in an increasingly competitive and congested institutional landscape, with both competitive and collaborative pressures. At the apex are the continental bodies from which ASARECA may derive both mandate and show some accountability. Given this crowded field, there is a need for ASARECA to identify its clear niche and mandate vis a vis that of these technical and policy organs of the African Union and establish appropriate partnerships and collaborations.

(ii) Evolving sub regional national agricultural research systems: Within the member States, ASARECA works in partnership with the NARS. Some of these NARS have evolved differently over time leading to uneven growth and sophistication in the different countries. Given this state of affairs, there is a need for support in the development and operationalization of appropriate ways and approaches for strengthening the capacities and mode of partnership and collaboration between the developed and less developed NARS in the ECA member States.

(iii) Increased call for recognition of the role of women and youth in the agricultural transformation agenda: Given the extensive participation of women in all aspects of agricultural production and considering that the ECA sub region is home to a large young

population, presents a huge potential for sustainable agricultural production. Despite their significant roles, women commonly suffer huge gender inequalities in access to land, resource entitlements and other key productive resources. In this regard, the ECA member States need to be supported through provision of evidence-based approaches for mainstreaming gender in agriculture to reduce the gender inequalities and ensure effective participation of women and youth in the sustainable agricultural transformation agenda.

(iv) Sustaining CAADP momentum results framework: The launch of CAADP 10 year Results Framework is expected to guide the ECA member States, as well as sub regional, regional and continental support institutions and stakeholders in determining what actions to continue doing, what new things to start doing, and what things to stop doing. There is, therefore need to provide support to these countries in the implementation of the CAADP implementation strategy and roadmap (IS&R) for operationalizing the 2014 Malabo Declaration.

(v) Global agenda for sustainable development: Five of the 17 United Nations SDGs are directly relevant to the ASARECA mandate besides having the potential to contribute to different aspects of other seven goals. ASARECA needs to support the member States by providing evidence based approaches and models to enable them take advantage of the opportunities for partnerships and collaboration to address these global goals at the national and sub regional levels.

(vi) The need to assess new opportunities and challenges brought about by global programmes: Currently, there are many global programmes operating in the African continent such as Feed the Future and Future Harvest as well as those implemented by organizations such as FAO, GFAR, CGIAR Centres and IARCS among others. These global initiatives aim at contributing directly to the achievement of the SDGs particularly those that touch on food and nutrition security and sustainable development. In this regard, there is need for ASARECA to assess the new opportunities and challenges brought about by these global initiatives and the extent to which they are likely to complement, duplicate or complicate ASARECA's work as well as those of the national and sub regional bodies.

(vii) Increasing private sector contribution to agricultural development: There is a continued appreciation of the contribution of the private sector to AR4D and the subsequent benefits to people's livelihoods in some of the African countries over the past ten years. This appreciation has come about partly due to the recognition that change is driven by markets and that the greatest market opportunity for African countries lies in expanding regional and intra-continental trade. Given this understanding, there is need to provide support to the ECA member States to create enabling environments for the private sector to realize its full potential for contributing to sustainable agricultural transformation and economic development.



3.0 ASARECA STRATEGIC DIRECTION

3.1 Strategic Repositioning of ASARECA

Given the analysis of the trends, challenges, opportunities and institutional arrangements in the dynamic and changing AR4D landscape, the Critical Strategic Issues that should influence ASARECA's strategic direction include the following:

- (i) The need to embrace and mainstream the science, technology, innovations, policy and social learning following the endorsement of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) and the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A) by African heads of States in 2014.
- (ii) The need to provide support to the ECA member States in the planning and implementation of the CAADP 10-year Results Framework and the relevant United Nations SDGs.
- (iii) Emergence of new agricultural transformation initiatives and programmes such as the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT), the African Agricultural Research Programme (AARP) and the framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa (SAMA) among others.
- (iv) The increased call to bring innovative climate-smart agriculture to the forefront of agricultural research to cope with climate change.
- (v) Existence of poor and uncoordinated generation, access and utilization of agricultural knowledge and information for informed planning, decision making and policy formulation.
- (vi) An increasingly assertive and influential private sector driving agricultural research, extension, education and product development.
- (vii) Development partners demanding greater impact and accountability and emergence of other influential supporters of agricultural development.
- (viii) A resurgent of stronger national agricultural research, extension and education systems as well as existence of weaker ones in the ASARECA member States.
- (ix) Increased call to focus more on promoting uptake, utilization and scaling up of existing agricultural knowledge.
- (x) The need to develop regional value chains for strategic agricultural commodities to enhance agricultural transformation and global competitiveness.
- (xi) A wide range of government-led reforms taking place in the public sector aimed at improving management and service delivery.
- (xii) Increased agricultural sector stakeholders and clients awareness of their needs and rights for quality agricultural products and services.
- (xiii) Existence of uncoordinated regional prioritization, programming and implementation of programmes and projects.
- (xiv) The need to re-examine how ASARECA's mandate converge and diverge with those of other similar organizations.
- (xv) Existence of human, financial and physical capacity gaps for AR4D technical, managerial and leadership in the ECA sub region.

- (xvi) The need to access and utilize new opportunities brought about by advances in science and technology.
- (xvii) An increasingly congested institutional landscape leading to overlap, duplication and competition from similar organizations in the delivery of AR4D products and services.
- (xviii) Greater influence of paradigms that place multi-disciplinarity, multi-stakeholder processes, innovation systems and adaptive learning at the centre of AR4D.

3.2 ASARECA Vision and Mission

The ASARECA's guiding Vision that requires the Association and its stakeholders and partners to stretch their future expectations, aspirations and performance is to see:

“A transformed ECA agricultural sector supporting improved livelihoods, sustained economic growth and inclusive development”.

The Mission statement that expresses the fundamental purpose and business of the repositioned ASARECA is:

“To contribute to increased productivity, commercialization and competitiveness of the ECA agricultural sector through strengthening, catalyzing and coordinating agricultural research for development in the ECA sub region”.

3.3 ASARECA Core Values

Decisions and actions by the repositioned ASARECA the “Secretariat” and ASARECA the “Association” are consistently based on a set of clear principles outlined as the guiding Core Values. These guiding Core Values that ASARECA and its stakeholders and partners hold in common and put into practice while performing their functional obligations include ***Inclusivity, Accountability, Transparency, Transformative, Sustainability, Subsidiarity and Integrity.***

3.4 What the Repositioned ASARECA will Do Differently

3.4.1 Improving Efficiency in Delivering Regional AR4D Outcomes and Impact

The trends, challenges, opportunities and changes summarized above as well as the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated African Agricultural Growth and Transformation, provided the justification and the need for ASARECA to strategically reposition itself to perform a ***higher level facilitative, supportive, coordination and advocacy role*** to enhance sustainable agricultural transformation, sustained economic growth and inclusive development in the ECA sub region. In doing this, ASARECA understands that agricultural transformation requires an integrated delivery approach across an

ecosystem of partnerships. While various initiatives exist in the agricultural sector across the ECA sub region, there is limited integration and coordination of execution and investments by governments, development partners, private sector and implementing partners.

Given this understanding, the ASARECA of this A-SRF will be an ***Innovative convener, Partnership broker, Strategic catalyser, Process facilitator, Effective communicator and Efficient coordinator*** of priority regional AR4D initiatives. To achieve this, ASARECA will position itself strategically to improve the ***relevance, effectiveness and efficiency*** of the sub regional AR4D leading to significant improvement in ***value for money*** in the delivery of inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation and development outcomes and impact. ASARECA will achieve this by supporting the attainment of ***economies of scale and scope*** in the conduct of priority regional research and by significantly reducing ***duplication and misalignment of efforts and resources***.

In this regard, therefore, the mandate of the repositioned ASARECA is to:

- (a) Identify regional research priorities and opportunities through credible, authentic and participatory on-going strategic visioning processes.
- (b) Commission, broker and manage strategic research partnerships to address identified regional priorities in the most effective, efficient and synergetic ways.
- (c) Nurture pathways for on-time delivery, spill over and scaling up of regional agricultural research results to deliver agricultural outcomes and impact.
- (d) Mobilize, allocate and manage regional AR4D investments to support generation of regional agricultural research public goods and services.
- (e) Monitor and evaluate returns on AR4D investment and repackage lessons and best practices to inform decision making processes and action.

3.4.2 Repositioned ASARECA Value Proposition and Value Addition

To deliver on the above mandate, ASARECA will reposition itself as the sub regional ***“Go to Service Provider of Choice”*** for AR4D products and services. In this regard, the ASARECA’s driving ***Value Proposition*** designed to enable it contribute significantly to the accelerated sustainable agricultural transformation and growth for shared prosperity and improved food and nutrition security and livelihood of the ECA people is ***“Strengthening, catalyzing and coordinating the ECA sub regional agricultural research for development initiatives by strengthening and integrating capacities; supporting and coordinating development and scaling up of technologies and innovations; advocating for enabling environment, functional markets and institutions; and managing and communicating knowledge and information.*** The repositioned ASARECA shall deliver on this driving Value Proposition by undertaking the following functions that ***add value*** to the conduct and outcome of regional AR4D initiatives in the ECA sub region:

- (i) Providing leadership in agricultural research strategic visioning, priority setting and programming.

- (ii) Strengthening and integrating agricultural research capacities and competencies at systemic, organizational and individual levels to support agricultural transformation and implementation of regional, continental and global frameworks.
- (iii) Supporting and coordinating the development and scaling up of gender responsive and climate-smart agricultural transformation technologies, innovations and management practices.
- (iv) Managing and communicating integrated agricultural knowledge and information to inform agricultural transformation decision making processes and action.
- (v) Establishing and managing value adding partnerships, strategic alliances and collaborations to address priority agricultural transformation research challenges and opportunities.
- (vi) Providing research evidence to support formulation, harmonization and implementation of evidence-based policies and regulatory frameworks.
- (vii) Supporting and catalyzing participation of private sector in agricultural research, value chain development and the establishment of private sector-driven agribusinesses and entrepreneurship.
- (viii) Providing research evidence to support the establishment of functional, structured and accessible regional markets.
- (ix) Supporting and coordinating the harmonization and rationalization of agricultural sector policies, standards, guidelines and procedures.
- (x) Participating actively in regional, continental and global agricultural transformation discussions, agenda setting and implementation.
- (xi) Supporting and coordinating the development and scaling up of priority regional agricultural commodity and food value chains.
- (xii) **Supporting and coordinating the establishment and effective management of regional centres of leadership and national centres of specialization.**
- (xiii) **Supporting and coordinating the establishment and management of agricultural transformation research institutions and institutional arrangements.**
- (xiv) **Supporting mobilization and allocation of resources from different sources to fund the development and implementation of regional priority agricultural research programmes and projects.**
- (xv) **Supporting and coordinating monitoring, evaluation and reporting to track progress on the development, adoption and impact of agricultural transformation AR4D interventions.**

3.4.3 ASARECA's Capability to Deliver Regional Research Outcomes and Impact

ASARECA is an African led institution with a regional mandate to strengthen, catalyze and coordinate agricultural research for development in the ECA sub region. This mandate is derived from its constituents and conferred by the NARS of the ECA member States. In this regard, ASARECA has a comparative advantage and proven capability, build over the

years, to add value and to significantly improve value for money in the delivery of high quality demand driven regional research results to support the attainment of inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation outcomes and impact because it:

- (i) Has over two decade experience of combining efforts and resources to produce cost effective technologies, innovations, knowledge and best practices for sharing among ECA member States as regional public goods.
- (ii) Has a unique structure built on partnership with national, regional and international research, extension, and training organizations; public and private sector actors; farmer organizations; nongovernmental organizations; and development agencies.
- (iii) Has a strong social capital build over the years and a good understanding of the ECA sub regional agricultural sector challenges and available opportunities that bestow a strong convening power.
- (iv) Is strategically positioned as a bridging organization that facilitates linkages between stakeholders and organizations within and between countries to enable them work more effectively, efficiently and synergistically.
- (v) Is a recognized regional agricultural knowledge hub that facilitates stakeholders and partners to learn from one another by generating, accessing and sharing knowledge and information.
- (vi) Has the capacity to provide high-quality backstopping by ensuring quality technical knowledge sharing and learning and by providing advisory services and training to strengthen management and supervision of programmes and projects.
- (vii) Has wide experience in the development and implementation of regional multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaborative programmes and projects with national, regional and international organizations.
- (viii) Has wide experience at the national level gained through working with agricultural research institutes, universities, extension agencies, farmer and producer organizations, private sector, regulatory agencies and nongovernmental organizations.
- (ix) Has wide experience at the regional and continental levels gained through working with regional economic communities and other relevant sub regional organizations.
- (x) Has wide experience in working with international agricultural organizations and partners through established research for development collaboration arrangement.

3.5 Thematic Areas of Focus

Given the Mission, Mandate and Value Proposition, ASARECA has identified four thematic areas of focus that are integrally linked and, therefore, spill over and reinforce one another. The thematic areas of focus were arrived at through rationalization of the identified critical strategic issues and the core functions that were derived from extensive consultations with ASARECA stakeholders and partners and in consideration of the available and emerging opportunities in its operating environment.

The four ASARECA thematic areas of focus include:

- (a) Transformative Capacity Strengthening and Integration.
- (b) Agricultural Transformation Technologies and Innovations.
- (c) Enabling Policy Environment, Functional Markets and Transformative Institutions.
- (d) Knowledge and Information Management.

While the thematic areas of focus identified by the ASARECA stakeholders and partners have some similarities with what ASARECA has historically sought to do, the approach, success drivers, strategic focus and the expected outcomes differ significantly from the past themes and programmes as evidenced by ***“What ASARECA has chosen to do under each thematic area of focus; How it will do it; and the Level at which it will do it in line with the principle of subsidiarity”***.

3.6 Strategic Results

In order to deliver on the four thematic areas, ASARECA has formulated four corresponding strategic results/intermediate outcomes that include:

- (a) Strengthened and integrated capacities and competencies to support agricultural transformation in the ECA sub region.
- (b) Enhanced support for development and scaling up of agricultural transformation technologies, innovations and management practices.
- (c) Enhanced support and advocacy for establishment of enabling policy environment, functional markets and transformative institutions and institutional arrangements.
- (d) Improved management and access to reliable and up-to-date knowledge and information for informed decision making and action.

Attainment of the four strategic results is deemed necessary and sufficient to deliver ASARECA’s purpose/outcome of ***“Strengthened, catalyzed and coordinated agricultural research for development in the ECA sub region”***. Achievement of this purpose/outcome will contribute to the realization of the overall ASARECA goal/impact of ***“Enhanced contribution to increased productivity, commercialization and competitiveness of the ECA agricultural sector”***.

3.7 Strategic Alignment

ASARECA has committed itself to focus on four thematic areas of focus that are well aligned to the major ongoing regional and continental initiatives. By committing to deliver on these thematic areas of focus, ASARECA is strategically positioned to contribute significantly to the development and implementation of national, regional, continental and global frameworks as outlined below.

- (a) ***National Agricultural and Food Security Investment Plans:*** ASARECA shall provide support to the ECA member States in the development and implementation

of their National Agricultural and Food Security Investment Plans (NAFSIPs) to achieve sustainable agricultural transformation and inclusive growth.

(b) CAADP 10-year Results Framework: ASARECA shall provide support to the ECA member States in the implementation of the CAADP 10-year Results Framework as the overarching continental agriculture development framework and the complementary African Union Malabo Declaration on accelerated African agricultural growth and transformation (A3GT) in line with the AUC/NEPAD Agency Implementation Strategy and Roadmap strategic action areas of (i) Transforming agriculture and sustaining inclusive growth; and (ii) Strengthening systemic capacity to implement and deliver results.

(c) Continental frameworks and programmes: ASARECA shall work closely with FARA and other regional and continental initiatives to support the implementation of (i) the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA); (ii) the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A); (iii) the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) programme; (iv) the African Agricultural Research Programme (AARP); and (v) the framework for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in Africa (SAMA).

(d) Global Frameworks and initiatives: ASARECA shall partner with other relevant regional, continental and global initiatives such as (i) the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly in the delivery of the SDG 2 that seeks to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030, as well as SDGs 1 on poverty, 3 on good health and well-being, 5 on gender equality and 13 on climate action besides having the potential to contribute to different aspects of other seven goals; (ii) the Feed the Future Strategy; (iii) The CGAIR Centres/Commodity Research Programmes, particularly in the implementation of the TAAT and AARP Programmes; and (iv) programmes and projects implemented by International Agricultural Research Centres and Advanced Research Institutes.

(e) Regional Economic Community's strategies and policies: In its capacity as a sub regional organization, ASARECA shall provide technical support to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); the East African Community (EAC); and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the implementation of the relevant agricultural sector strategies and policies.





4.0 THEMATIC AREAS OF FOCUS

As outlined in Chapter 3.0, the ASARECA's support and contribution to the attainment of inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation in the ECA sub region has been rationalized into four Thematic Areas of Focus. This Chapter goes further to present the rationale and justification, challenges and opportunities and strategic result areas under each thematic area of focus.

4.1 Transformative Capacity Strengthening and Integration

4.1.1 Rationale and Justification

Capacity development has always been seen as the core business of ASARECA having been established as an association for “strengthening” research capacity of the sub regional national agricultural research institutes. In the past, ASARECA has carried out capacity strengthening either as standalone training activities and events or more commonly, embedded within research programmes and projects. However, under this approach, most of the capacity strengthening activities focussed on individuals and groups with limited attention to strengthening of organizations.

Under this thematic area of focus, ASARECA shall undertake a comprehensive and holistic approach to the identification and strengthening of the different types of AR4D capacities and competencies at the systemic, organizational and individual levels to support the attainment of inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation in the ECA member States. To be effective, this approach shall be developed through a process of consultation between the NARS and all other relevant capacity strengthening stakeholders including universities, private sector, farmer organizations and civil society among others. Given the growing role of the private sector in outreach and capacity strengthening along agricultural value chains and the associated agribusinesses, the capacity strengthening approach shall also seek to harness private sector contributions to the capacity strengthening effort.

In this thematic area of focus, ASARECA will be able to focus the capacity strengthening activities more efficiently and to increase the portfolio of these activities. ASARECA will achieve this by collecting, analysing and sharing the latest research findings and results on capacity strengthening so as to provide the NARIs and their partners with the best-practice advice and tools to support capacity strengthening. ASARECA will also organize specific support to capacity strengthening that benefit from a cross-system approach, including formulating short courses and training to build the skills of researchers, research managers, policymakers and planners, extension personnel and other actors. In addition, ASARECA will support original research on the “how to” of capacity strengthening, including in depth analysis of successes and failures and the factors that determine them.

4.1.2 Challenges and Opportunities

Some of the major challenges, stated in the opportunity format, that this thematic area shall address include the following:

- (i) Institutionalizing and catalyzing strategic capacity strengthening partnerships to address AR4D capacity needs in the ECA sub region.
- (ii) Responding to organizational development capacity strengthening needs of NARS with special attention to the weaker NARIs.
- (iii) Strengthening capacity for establishing enabling environment for AR4D to support agricultural transformation.
- (iv) Strengthening capacity for effective organizational management, governance and performance assessment.
- (v) Building sustainable capacity to build capacity so as to create a sustainable AR4D capacity in the ECA sub region.
- (vi) Supporting the integration of research-based learning outputs into the curricula of institutions of higher learning to support capacity development.
- (vii) Strengthening capacity for developing and repackaging of cost-effective training materials, approaches and delivery mechanisms including the use of the revolutionary ICT technologies.
- (viii) Strengthening capacity for changing mindset and focus of agricultural policy makers, planners, institutional/research leaders, managers, researchers and agricultural practitioners.
- (ix) Strengthening capacity on formation and management of successful and value adding partnerships, strategic alliances and collaborations.
- (x) Supporting training and retention of adequate research scientists and technical support staff particularly in the weak NARIs and in specialized fields.
- (xi) Strengthening capacity for researchers and extension personnel in communication and promotion of uptake and scaling up of technologies and innovations.
- (xii) Strengthening capacities for collection and sharing of knowledge, information and experiences for informed decision making.
- (xiii) Improving leverage of the existing AR4D capacities to get more done with the available capacities while working on long term improvement of capacities.
- (xiv) Developing need-based and functional capacity monitoring and evaluation system for tracking the outcomes and impact of capacity development initiatives.

4.1.3 Strategic Result Areas

This thematic area shall focus on strengthening and integration of different types of AR4D capacities and competencies at systemic, organizational and individual levels to support and contribute significantly to the attainment of inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation in the ECA member States. This capacity strengthening and integration will also include strengthening of ASARECA's internal capacities and competencies to enable it perform its sub regional mandate. To deliver on this, ASARECA shall work with

a broad range of partners and employ different strategies and approaches. The design for the capacity assessment and development under this thematic area shall be driven by three guiding questions that include (i) capacity for why?; (ii) capacity for whom?; and (iii) capacity for what?.

This thematic area shall contribute to the attainment of the overall ASARECA purpose/ outcome through the attainment of its strategic result of **“Strengthened and integrated capacities and competencies to support agricultural transformation in the ECA sub region.** The thematic area shall deliver this strategic result through implementation of intervention strategies under the following strategic result areas:

- (a) Strengthen and integrate capacities and competencies for inclusive stakeholder engagement, strategic visioning and policy formulation.
- (b) Strengthen and integrate capacities and competencies for generation, access and utilization of agricultural knowledge and information.
- (c) Strengthen and integrate capacities and competencies for effective institutional development, management and performance monitoring and evaluation.





4.2 Agricultural Transformation Technologies and Innovations

4.2.1 Rationale and Justification

ASARECA will be on the lookout for regional AR4D opportunities and challenges such as threats from major crop or livestock diseases; opportunities for developing highly promising regional value chains with transformative potential; and the need for development, adaptation and scaling up of proven agricultural transformation technologies and innovations. ASARECA will proactively identify and bring together stakeholder institutions to generate and scale up specific gender responsive and climate-smart technologies and innovations to address identified regional AR4D challenges and take advantage of the available and emerging opportunities. In doing this, the focus will be on those challenges and opportunities that are truly regional and the technologies and innovations to be generated and scaled up will be those that meet the criteria of regional public goods.

This thematic area of focus shall, therefore, pay attention to partnership opportunities that have the greatest potential to unlock broader AR4D bottlenecks and develop processes for appropriate partnership development and nurturing. The role of ASARECA here will be to bring AR4D institutions, including public and private sector players and civil society, together in order to leverage complementary skills, capacities and resources in a coordinated manner to develop technologies and innovations to address the identified challenges. An important starting point for brokering these partnerships will be a good inventory and understanding of capacities available in the ECA sub region in terms of human resources, facilities and information databases. To deliver on this role, as well as the broader convening role, ASARECA will strengthen its partnership brokerage skills internally to enable it build these skills in the partner organizations as part of the capacity building expected of this role.

4.2.2 Challenges and Opportunities

Some of the major challenges, stated in the opportunity format, that this thematic area shall address include the following:

- (i) Strengthening participatory research planning, priority setting, programme/project development and implementation to address demand driven regional priorities.
- (ii) Advocating for increase in budgetary allocation to finance communication and promotion of uptake and scaling up of research results.
- (iii) Advocating for linking reward and incentive systems for researchers to delivery of outcomes and impact instead of academic qualification and scientific publications.
- (iv) Improving monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects for communication, uptake, utilization and impact of technologies and innovations.

- (v) Strengthening dissemination processes to improve uptake, utilization and scaling up of agricultural technologies and innovations.
- (vi) Ensuring sufficient involvement of farmers and other end-users in the generation of technologies and innovations to ensure relevance and appropriateness.
- (vii) Improving development, upgrading and competitiveness of agricultural value chains to enhance their contribution to improved livelihoods, employment and wealth creation, and income generation.
- (viii) Strengthening linkages between research, extension and training/education institutions to improve agricultural research, extension and training service delivery.
- (ix) Improving investments in AR4D by governments and the private sector to reduce over reliance on development partner funding that is not sustainable.
- (x) Improving coordination of national and regional AR4D initiatives to work together more effectively and synergistically around identified regional priorities.
- (xi) Improving on packaging and communication of scientific research results in forms that are easily understandable by different end users.

4.2.3 Strategic Result Areas

This thematic area shall focus on supporting and coordinating the development and adaptation of technologies and innovations to address regional agricultural transformation challenges; development of approaches, methods, tools and pathways for enhancing uptake and widespread utilization of existing and emerging technologies, innovations and management practices; enhancing scaling up of priority integrated regional agricultural value chains; and supporting development of private sector-driven agribusinesses and entrepreneurs. To achieve this, ASARECA will work closely with FARA particularly under the framework for Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) programme and the African Agricultural Research Programme (AARP).

This thematic area shall contribute to the attainment of the overall ASARECA purpose/outcome through the attainment of its strategic result of ***“Enhanced support for development and scaling up of agricultural transformation technologies, innovations and management practices”***. Attainment of this strategic result will ensure availability of appropriate TIMPs for addressing regional challenges as well as enhancing the process of ***“Going-to-Scale by bringing more quality benefits, to more people, over a wider geographical area, more quickly, more equitably and more sustainably”***. The thematic area shall deliver this strategic result through implementation of intervention strategies under the following strategic result areas:

- (a) Support and coordinate development and adaptation of gender responsive and climate-smart technologies, innovations and management practices.
- (b) Support and coordinate scaling up of gender responsive and climate-smart technologies, innovations and management practices.
- (c) Support and coordinate development and scaling up of gender responsive and youth focused regional value chains and agribusinesses.

4.3 Enabling Policy Environment, Functional Markets and Transformative Institutions

4.3.1 Rationale and Justification

Agricultural policies are a powerful tool for enhancing sustainable agricultural transformation and development as they provide incentives to make choices for agricultural production and, at the same time, address the need for functioning markets and institutions to handle increased production. In majority of the ECA member States, policies for agriculture consist of government decisions that influence the level and stability of input and output prices, public and private sector investments, costs, revenues and allocation of resources. These policies affect agriculture either directly or indirectly and are all aimed at improving agricultural production. Appropriate policies and governance mechanisms are crucial to addressing sustainable development of agricultural sector and are, therefore, key to placing agricultural development in the poverty reduction, food and nutrition security, and welfare enhancement paradigm.

To achieve inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation in the ECA sub region, transformative institutions and institutional arrangements are needed to facilitate increased agricultural production, productivity and value addition. This is because the most important economic preoccupation of the people in rural areas is agriculture that needs to be organized as a viable business to make it more productive, competitive, profitable, rewarding and attractive to the people who live on it, particularly the large population of unemployed youth. For this to happen, however, these transformative institutions and institutional arrangements must also help in fixing the broken value chains in agriculture so as to take advantage of the huge opportunities associated with this process.

In this thematic area, ASARECA will support the identification of critical regional policy, markets and institutional gaps and advocate for convening of specific processes for addressing them. Work in this area will build on experiences from the former Eastern and Central Africa Programme for Agricultural Policy Analysis (ECAPAPA) and Policy Analysis and Advocacy Programme (PAAP) of ASARECA. ASARECA will also continue to engage the RECs as well as the African Union Commission (AUC) and NEPAD to leverage appropriate convening power as key institutions in facilitating adoption of harmonized policies, establishment of functional and structured regional markets and transformative institutional arrangements. In addition, ASARECA will also identify standards, practices and norms which constrain the performance of AR4D and broker partnerships with public and private sector players to unlock such bottlenecks.

4.3.2 Challenges and Opportunities

Some of the major challenges, stated in the opportunity format, that this thematic area shall address include the following:

- (i) Harmonizing the national and regional policies on division of labour between research and extension systems to improve the uni-directional linear model of research-extension-farmer that has been shown to be ineffective.
- (ii) Strengthening partnerships among relevant organizations and agencies involved in advocacy and formulation of agriculture related policies to advance the ECA sub regional AR4D agenda.
- (iii) Strengthening policy research and analysis to generate data and information for use in formulating evidence based policies and regulatory frameworks.
- (iv) Improving communication between policymakers and researchers and packaging of information in forms that can be easily understood by policymakers.
- (v) Enhancing market research and market development to improve efficiency of market systems and achieve competitive advantage.
- (vi) Improving market facilities, institutions and institutional arrangements to enhance market access.
- (vii) Enhancing agricultural product diversification and value addition to capture export markets and reduce vulnerability of incomes.
- (viii) Advocating for establishment of enabling environment to facilitate exploitation of the regional market potential created by regional integration and globalization.
- (ix) Strengthening farmer and producer organizations to improve their participation in policymaking, trade negotiations and access to inputs and outputs markets.
- (x) Strengthening capacity of national systems to enhance implementation and enforcement of national laws, regulations and standards to improve quality control and facilitate trade.
- (xi) Improving on the wide variations in regional policy implementation practice among ECA member States.
- (xii) Addressing the weaknesses in harmonization and implementation of intellectual property rights to improve sharing of technologies, germplasm exchange and investment in the agricultural sector especially by the private sector.

4.3.3 Strategic Result Areas

ASARECA has made significant contribution in policy analysis and advocacy in the past and, therefore, this thematic area will build on these past successes and lessons learned. The focus for this thematic area is, therefore, to support and advocate for creation of enabling environment, establishment of functional and structured regional input and output markets and strengthening of regional institutions and institutional arrangements. To achieve this, ASARECA shall work closely with the regional RECs and, in particular, with the Alliance for Commodity Trade in Eastern and Southern Africa (ACTESA) to generate and provide the required data and information to support evidence based policy formulation, establishment of regional markets and strengthening of regional institutions and institutional arrangements.

This thematic area shall contribute to the attainment of the overall ASARECA purpose/outcome through the attainment of its strategic result of ***“Enhanced support and advocacy for establishment of enabling policy environment, functional markets and***

transformative institutions and institutional arrangements". The thematic area shall deliver this strategic result through implementation of intervention strategies under the following strategic result areas:

- (a) Support and advocate for establishment of transformative enabling policy and regulatory environment.
- (b) Support and advocate for establishment of functional and structured regional input and output markets.
- (c) Support and advocate for establishment of transformative regional institutions and institutional arrangements.



4.4 Knowledge and Information Management

4.4.1 Rationale and Justification

Today's digital age has increased access to information in terms of volumes and speed. The associated growth in digital content and tools has changed the way information is created, collated and availed. This presents both challenges and opportunities in accessing the right information and in the right format for particular audiences for use in decision making. Despite this technology revolution, however, access to appropriate information remains a bottleneck to agricultural innovation in Africa. While some attempts are being made at various levels on the continent, this challenge still remains and, therefore, a significant amount of data and information on Africa is accessed from sources located outside the continent and used to serve as proxies in decision making.

In the ECA sub region, a lot of data and information have been and continue to be generated at local, national and regional levels by a range of stakeholders. However, much of this remains in raw form or is processed for "elite audiences" and, therefore, not useful or accessible to those who need it most. In addition, significant amounts of data are of little value because their integrity has not been tested through analysis and use. These data need to be transformed into knowledge products that are reliable, up-to-date, in the right format and in the right place. End-users also need support in learning how to access and adapt new information to their own unique contexts such as evidence based policy formulation, investment decision making, monitoring and evaluating impact of interventions and capacity building among other uses.

In this thematic area, higher level regional analyses that bring together national data shall be used to provide significant added value to data collection efforts. In addition, quality data collection and expert analysis drawing on resources from multiple countries or sources shall form the basis for more robust prediction and forecasting to inform longer term decision making and investments at the national and regional levels. Results of these analyses shall be used to generate knowledge products that shall be made accessible to different clients through various forms. This approach will be expected to save a significant amount of resources by ensuring that data and information are shared for use for different purposes by different stakeholders and that subsequent collection and collation are informed by value derived from previous analyses and use. This will be expected to eliminate the current situation where researchers and development agencies have to go through frequent surveys asking almost the same questions that can be answered from data sets previously collected.

4.4.2 Challenges and Opportunities

Some of the major challenges, stated in the opportunity format, that this thematic area shall address include the following:

- (i) Enhancing the use of revolutionary information communication technologies to open new avenues for knowledge management.

- (ii) Establishing databases and ensuring their regular updating and strengthening to address gaps and keep the data and information up to date.
- (iii) Improving the mechanisms, infrastructure and incentives for agricultural knowledge and information management.
- (iv) Improving systematic collection and collation of the existing data and information produced by various institutions to improve storage and access.
- (v) Enhancing quality, relevance and coherence of data coming from research programmes and projects to improve their value in planning and decision making processes.
- (vi) Inculcating knowledge and information sharing practice among AR4D stakeholders as a critical prerequisite for sparking creative thinking and innovativeness.
- (vii) Improving linkages and communication between data suppliers and users to enhance data collection, analysis, sharing and utilization.
- (viii) Establishing systems for capture and storage of data from different sources in readily accessible formats for analysis and use in different ways and purposes.
- (ix) Improving access to information by the public, policymakers and planners for use in evidence based policy formulation and planning processes.
- (x) Strengthening, harnessing and integration of indigenous and farmer knowledge into mainstream agricultural innovation and knowledge management systems and dissemination.

4.4.3 Strategic Result Areas

This thematic area of focus shall build on the lessons and experiences from ASARECA's past knowledge and information work as well as other ongoing initiatives to advocate for and explore ways through which data, information, knowledge and tools relevant for AR4D can increasingly be placed in the public domain. This will require the development of formal and standardized mechanisms for collecting and collating information and their transformation into knowledge products. To achieve this, ASARECA will position itself as a true regional knowledge and information hub and the place to go for data, information, knowledge and tools on AR4D in ECA sub region. In doing this, ASARECA will work closely with the ongoing initiatives that are aimed at establishing continental harmonized data harvesting architecture that is shared among the sub regional organizations and co owned/managed with FARA in the context of the Science for Agriculture Consortium (S4AC) and Data information systems (DatainformS) and agri-sti-barometer. The knowledge and information management shall be supported by an effective monitoring, evaluation, communication and learning system backed by a user-friendly, cutting edge ICT environment. The thematic area shall, therefore, focus on improving management and access to reliable and up-to-date data, information and knowledge to inform agricultural transformation decision making processes and action in the ECA sub region.

This thematic area shall contribute to the attainment of the overall ASARECA purpose/ outcome through the attainment of its strategic result of ***“Improved management and***

access to reliable and up-to-date knowledge and information for informed decision making and action". The thematic area shall deliver this strategic result through implementation of intervention strategies under the following strategic result areas:

- (a) Establish and manage regional technology and information clearing house.
- (b) Establish and manage regional data bases, system models and decision-support tools.
- (c) Establish and manage functional platforms for communicating and exchanging knowledge and information.







5.0 STRATEGY AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 Implementation Approach

(a) **Development of operational plans:** The A-SRF has outlined clear thematic areas of focus and their respective strategic results that can only be realized through sound implementation plans. To operationalize the A-SRF, therefore, ASARECA will develop two detailed medium term operational plans (MTOPs) covering the period 2019-2023 and 2024-2028. In developing the MTOPs, ASARECA will engage its stakeholders and partners in formulating intervention strategies that are necessary and sufficient for delivering the strategic result areas under each thematic area of focus so as to deliver on the ASARECA strategic results and purpose. In order to ensure proper alignment and harmonization with the A-SRF, the MTOPs shall be developed using a nesting approach that links the strategic results, strategic result areas and intervention strategies for better outcome mapping and impact orientation.

(b) **Providing technical leadership in regional strategic visioning, priority setting and programming:** The current approach where each AR4D stakeholder group develops and executes its own priorities is not only expensive but is also responsible for the often supply-driven AR4D type of initiatives. This state is as a result of a void created by the absence of a credible bottom-up process that is truly participatory and led by an institution owned by member States and with clout for such a role. In this A-SRF, ASARECA has recognized its sub regional role in providing technical leadership and convening function in strategic visioning, priority setting and programming approaches. Working within the broader continental context guided by the Malabo commitments and the CAADP implementation process and in collaboration with FARA, ASARECA commits to providing this leadership in the ECA sub region. To deliver on this crucial function, ASARECA will establish a regional AR4D forum for ECA sub region to serve as a mechanism for regularly bringing together key stakeholders in the AR4D space to identify priorities and to share progress being made. A key role for this forum, to be implemented as an on-going AR4D partnership platform, will be to continuously examine AR4D priorities and assess the extent to which these are being addressed through programming across the range of institutions.

(c) **Promoting coordinated action, collaboration and synergy:** The agenda for AR4D in the ECA sub region has changed dramatically with numerous AR4D programmes and projects being implemented by a wide range of organizations and development partners. The focus of many of these programmes and projects is overlapping and, between them, have high transaction costs. They target the same ultimate end user, the farmer, and invariably seek to work with the same national institutions, many of which are already constrained by limited capacity and are overwhelmed with partnership demands. ASARECA, as a sub regional organization with mandate on AR4D in ECA sub region, will provide the needed coordination of the currently disperse initiatives through

credible processes and convenings that ensure collaboration and synergies between research institutions and organizations. Indeed, an authentic convening function aimed at on-going reflections on sub regional AR4D needs and co-creation of solutions and response mechanisms is consistent with what the CAADP II process, that seeks to deliver the Malabo commitments, expects of sub regional technical organizations such as ASARECA. A strategic positioning by ASARECA that leverages on this desired function will give the Association the mandate and clout needed to deliver on this role.

(d) *Regional research policy to guide the conduct, coordination and management of regional research:* ASARECA has the mandate of strengthening, catalyzing and coordinating agricultural research for development in the ECA sub region. To deliver on this mandate, ASARECA will develop and implement a sub regional research policy to guide decision making processes in the conduct, coordination and management of regional research. More specifically, the regional research policy shall be expected to provide guidance on regional research planning, implementation, management, monitoring, evaluation and reporting; authorship and dispute resolution in regional collaborative research; management of research data and information; dissemination and publication of collaborative research results; researcher’s obligations, rights and responsibilities; research misconduct, plagiarism, integrity and ethical considerations; and ownership and commercialization of research outputs including intellectual property rights among other aspects connected with the conduct, coordination and management of regional research.

(e) *Strengthening ASARECA governance and management:* According to the ASARECA constitution, the established governance organs include the Patron Ministers, the General Assembly, the Board of Directors and the ASARECA Secretariat. The ASARECA constitution, governance manual and operational manual spell out the governance systems and processes for these governance organs of ASARECA, including the role of their respective committees. In order to improve on the performance of the Association, the three levels of governance shall be appropriately restructured and strengthened to support the repositioned ASARECA in the implementation of the A-SRF. This restructuring of ASARECA will include the development of a suitable organizational and management structure; preparation and implementation of the required governance and management instruments; and implementation of the required changes through a structured change management process.

5.2 Competitive Grant System

ASARECA will capitalize on the lessons learned in managing the past competitive grant system (CGS) to address the criticisms and dissatisfactions that were raised in the past reviews and evaluations. Specifically, ASARECA will develop and operationalize a more inclusive and sustainable CGS for financing truly competitive regional research that is capable of focusing research on high regional priorities; promoting genuine and beneficial research partnerships and collaborations; encouraging more demand-driven research and approaches; making regional research more efficient and cost-effective;

and expanding the base of research providers and financiers to include the private sector.

To achieve this, ASARECA will sensitize the member States on what constitutes a Regional Public Good (RPG) to prevent them from putting undue pressure on it to fund short duration, low budget projects that produce single bits of technologies that can be easily produced by individual NARIs and do not add much value at the regional level. The reconfigured CGS will be designed to favour larger regional projects that can produce a complete package with defined final product that no single country can produce on its own and with immediate application across several countries including facilitating market-testing and dissemination of the developed products to provide models for “research-into-use”.

Through this CGS, ASARECA will develop mechanisms for funding strategic commissioned studies on priority areas for agricultural transformation. The strategic commissioned studies will be in line with the ASARECA’s desire to position itself as the technical arm and implementing partner of the RECs and one that is capable of generating and providing technical information to guide regional and continental planning and policy decisions.

5.3 Strategic Partnerships

The repositioned ASARECA is expected to have a relatively small, but-fit-for-purpose, Secretariat that can foster stakeholder engagements through strategic partnership arrangements with much of the programme and project implementation devolved, as may be necessary, to the partner institutions in the member States. ASARECA will strive to bring together stakeholders, on an on-going basis, as part of its broader convening role that underpins coordinated AR4D implementation in the ECA sub region. In doing this, ASARECA will be selective in choice of partners and innovative in developing partnerships, strategic alliances and collaborations in ways that leverage expertise and other resources for specific initiatives, such as mega initiatives addressing specific regionally important challenges.

Managing multiplicities of partnerships presents many challenges and transaction costs associated with proactive management of expectations, negotiations and conflict resolution. ASARECA will, therefore, consider carefully how each critical partnership is managed, who is responsible and what are the key dimensions and content of each partnership. To guide the establishment and management of these partnerships, ASARECA will develop and operationalize an appropriate partnership strategy.

5.4 Resource Mobilization

ASARECA is coming from a past in which it has been more or less a grant-maker and manager with much of its efforts spent in funds and project management. The new

focus on a partnership and convening role, with emphasis on capacity development and knowledge management, requires different kind of skills and resources, predominantly to support AR4D processes. In this regard, ASARECA will be proactive in the identification of regional priority areas of focus and developing them into bankable programmes and projects with clearly articulated and compelling deliverables in terms of agricultural development outcomes for use in mobilizing resources from different development partners and the private sector. To achieve this, ASARECA will develop and implement a resource mobilization and sustainability strategy to guide its efforts in mobilizing the resources required to implement the A-SRF medium term operational plans.

The current trends indicate that many development partners will continue to work directly with the RECs and member States. In addition to this, some development partners subscribe to and have demonstrated preferences for consortia, as outlined in the 2005 Paris declaration on aid effectiveness. ASARECA will explore what models work for which development partner and will, therefore, strive to pool resources or grants from multiple sources to fund regional high priority initiatives. In doing this, ASARECA is very much aware that the most critical strategy for mobilizing resources to fund the implementation of the A-SRF is for it to enhance its image as a relevant, effective and efficient regional mechanism for producing deliverable AR4D results and adding value. Besides this, ASARECA will develop and maintain a reputation as an effective regional organization with unquestionable credibility and reputation. In this regard, keeping development partners informed of changing priorities, challenges and opportunities as they arise will be very critical. In line with this, ASARECA recognizes and thanks the development partners and collaborators that have supported it over the years as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Recognizing and thanking development partners and collaborators that have supported ASARECA in the past

Development partners and collaborators that have supported ASARECA in the recent past
ACIAR-Australia Centre for International Agricultural Research.
AfDB- African Development Bank (<i>Direct and through FARA</i>).
Bioversity International.
BMGF - Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
Bonn University/ZEF – Centre for Development Research.
Christian Bonte-Friedheim.
CIAT - International Center for Tropical Agriculture.
CIDA- Canadian International Development Agency.
CIMMYT- International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center.

COMESA - Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.
CORAF/WECARD - West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development.
Cornell University.
CTA - The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation.
DANIDA - Danish International Development Agency.
DFID - Department for International Development (<i>Direct and through FARA & Greenwich</i>).
Ethiopia-EAAPP - Eastern African Agricultural Productivity Programme.
European Union (<i>Direct</i>).
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
FARA - Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa.
GFAR - Global Forum on Agricultural Research.
Global Crop Diversity Trust.
GTZ - German Technical Cooperation Agency.
HarvestPlus (CGIAR).
IDRC - International Development Research Centre.
IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development.
IFPRI - International Food Policy Research Institute.
ILRI/CAAFS - International Livestock Research Institute/Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security.
Kenya-EAAPP - Eastern African Agricultural Productivity Programme.
Member NARIs -National Agricultural Research Institutes.
MSU - Michigan State University.
NRI- Natural Resources Institute, Greenwich University.
REA-EC - Research Executive Agency - European Commission.
Secretariat Earned Income.
SIDA - Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.
Tanzania-EAAPP - Eastern African Agricultural Productivity Programme.
Uganda-EAAPP - Eastern African Agricultural Productivity Programme.
UNDP United Nations Development Programme.
USAID - United States Agency for International Development (Direct and through World Bank).
USDA-ARS - United States Department of Agriculture - Agricultural Research Service.
World Bank - <i>MDTF - Multi Donor Trust Fund</i> .

5.5 Ensuring Effective Communication

ASARECA originated as an association of research organizations whose clients were mainly the NARIs. However, ASARECA's stakeholder portfolio has broadened to include other institutions in AR4D. To be successful in the delivery of its mandate, especially its convening, partnership and regional AR4D coordination function, ASARECA will radically change its external communication strategy. Communication will be a key management function of ASARECA dedicated to the dissemination of knowledge and information to the full range of agricultural sector stakeholders. A key product of the ASARECA's convening and coordinating role is the flow of targeted communications adapted to different audiences and for specific purposes. To achieve this, ASARECA will develop and implement an appropriate communication strategy.

5.6 Risk Management

There are several risks to which ASARECA will potentially be exposed to during the implementation of this A-SRF, including the timely availability of resources. ASARECA will be intelligent about the risks it must take to gain and sustain competitive advantage, as well as the risks that must be avoided to protect its niche. Some of the risks that ASARECA may be potentially exposed to include weak political goodwill from the member States; organizational ineffectiveness and inefficiency; resistance to change; insufficient funding and financial integrity; uncertain development partner support; instability and safety within the ECA sub region; and poor and untargeted information flow among others. ASARECA will prepare an appropriate risk management plan to facilitate proactive monitoring of the risks and implementation of mitigation measures.

5.7 Cross-Cutting Issues

(a) Gender Considerations: Gender is no longer viewed as a women's issue or an issue for development partners, but as an important dimension in understanding the needs of women and men as the people for whom ASARECA exists. The mainstreaming of gender into agriculture shall, therefore, be a key strategy for ASARECA, not only for the promotion of equality between men, women and youth, but also for sustainable agricultural production, integrated natural resource management and environmental conservation. The inclusion of gender analysis among intended beneficiaries as one of several socio-economic factors will enable ASARECA to target gender issues while at the same time putting a humane face to inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation and development. To achieve this, ASARECA shall develop and implement a gender mainstreaming strategy to guide incorporation of gender considerations in all its actions.

(b) Environmental Sustainability: The increasing demand for food and raw materials from an expanding population has continued to place great strains on what are mostly low-input systems. To feed the growing population, the current low-input systems need to be intensified to raise production and productivity on the existing

agricultural and pastoral lands and safeguard natural lands and watersheds. These systems are, however, highly diverse with a multitude of cropping systems and practices and strong heterogeneity in farmers' access to resources. To address this complexity, ASARECA will continue to use and adapt the existing country systems for environmental and social assessments to strengthen technical capacity. In doing this, emphasis shall be placed on implementation of mitigation measures, utilization of appropriate environmental and social safeguards instruments, and reporting on both the outputs and outcomes on a regular basis. To achieve this, ASARECA will develop and implement an environmental and social safeguard strategy.

(c) HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Drug and Substance Abuse: The Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), malaria, drug and substance abuse pandemic can reduce the potential of ASARECA and its partners in making significant contributions towards meeting the SDGs and sustainable agricultural transformation. Women are particularly badly affected by the diseases because they are more susceptible to infection and they bear most of the burden of caring for infected family members. Affected rural households cannot produce sufficient nutritious food, aggravating the impact of the diseases. Given the role of agriculture in food and nutrition security as a factor in managing the diseases, ASARECA will ensure that HIV/AIDS, malaria, drug and substance abuse is treated as both an emergency and a long-term development issue that requires proactive leadership and a long-term multi-sectoral commitment.

5.8 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

ASARECA shall develop and operationalize a rigorous and continuous participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning (ME&L) system capable of tracking the implementation of this A-SRF and the MTOPs. The ME&L system shall include (i) Development and utilization of appropriate M&E tools and instruments; (ii) Continuous internal monitoring; (iii) Regular external independent evaluations and audits; (iv) Feedback, information sharing and learning; (v) Capacity building and indicators harmonization; and (vi) Periodic progress reporting. Both quantitative and qualitative indicators shall be used to track the implementation of this A-SRF and the MTOPs using gender disaggregated data and information so as to ensure that women, men and youth benefit equally.

ASARECA will support the NARS in the member States in the development and utilization of user friendly tools and instruments to ensure effective streamlining of ME&L in the ECA sub region. Among the key tools and instruments to be developed and institutionalized include performance monitoring plan; baseline study guidelines; and performance measurement framework. The use of these tools and instruments shall ensure that reports received from implementing partners are harmonized. To ensure consistency under CAADP framework, ASARECA will ensure closer collaboration and harmonization of the ME&L tools and instruments with those of FARA and other SROs.

The ME&L system shall constitute a learning platform for implementers and partners at the national and regional levels. Learning will be achieved through timely and periodic collection and analysis of data and sharing of these data with the implementing partners and collaborating institutions and organizations, member States, development partners and other relevant stakeholders for use in decision making processes and action. To achieve this, ASARECA will establish a strong ME&L Unit, linked to the knowledge and information thematic area of focus, to carry out key activities including operationalization of ME&L database and ASARECA Management Information System (MIS); strengthening of ME&L support to implementing partners; improvement of the management of the quality of data; ensuring systematic application of the ASARECA results framework across the Association; and strengthening of the M&E capacity of less resourced NARS.

Figure 1 shows the ASARECA Results Framework, theory of change and impact pathway indicating how different levels of outcomes and impact will be achieved, how they interact with each other and what enabling environment is required to deliver them. This Results Framework will form the basis for formulating further theories of change supported by detailed result frameworks with staged objectively verifiable indicators, key performance indicators and milestones to be specified in the MTOPs and annual work plans.



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Figure 1: ASARECA Results Framework, theory of change and impact pathway

<p><i>This ASARECA Results Framework and impact pathway forms the basis for formulating result frameworks with staged objectively verifiable indicators to be outlined in the five year A-SRF Medium Term Operational Plans.</i></p>					
Vision	<p>Advancement Towards ASARECA Vision:</p> <p>A transformed ECA agricultural sector supporting improved livelihoods, sustained economic growth and inclusive development.</p>				
Mission	<p>Progress Towards Realization of ASARECA Mission:</p> <p>Contributing to increased productivity, commercialization and competitiveness of the ECA agricultural sector through strengthening, catalyzing and coordinating agricultural research for development in the ECA sub region.</p>				
Goal/ Impact	<p>Contribution to the Realization of ASARECA Goal/Impact:</p> <p>Enhanced contribution to increased productivity, commercialization and competitiveness of the ECA agricultural sector.</p>				
Purpose/ Outcome	<p>Achievement of ASARECA Purpose/Outcome:</p> <p>Strengthened, catalyzed and coordinated agricultural research for development in the ECA sub region.</p>				
<p>Attainment of sufficient Strategic Results/Intermediate Outcomes required to achieve the ASARECA Purpose/Outcome</p>					
Strategic Results/ Intermediate Outcomes	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>1.0 Strengthened and integrated capacities and competencies to support agricultural transformation in the ECA sub region.</td> <td>2.0 Enhanced support for development and scaling up of agricultural transformation technologies, innovations and management practices.</td> <td>3.0 Enhanced support and advocacy for establishment of enabling policy environment, functional markets and transformative institutions and institutional arrangements.</td> <td>4.0 Improved management and access to reliable and up-to-date knowledge and information for informed decision and action.</td> </tr> </table>	1.0 Strengthened and integrated capacities and competencies to support agricultural transformation in the ECA sub region.	2.0 Enhanced support for development and scaling up of agricultural transformation technologies, innovations and management practices.	3.0 Enhanced support and advocacy for establishment of enabling policy environment, functional markets and transformative institutions and institutional arrangements.	4.0 Improved management and access to reliable and up-to-date knowledge and information for informed decision and action.
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<p>Achievement of necessary and sufficient immediate outcomes required to delivery Strategic Results/Intermediate Outcomes</p>					

<p>Immediate Outcomes</p>	<p>1.1 Strengthened and integrated capacities and competencies for inclusive stakeholder engagement, strategic visioning and policy formulation.</p> <p>1.2 Strengthened and integrated capacities and competencies for generation, access and utilization of agricultural knowledge and information.</p> <p>1.3 Strengthened and integrated capacities and competencies for effective institutional development, management and performance monitoring and evaluation.</p>	<p>2.1 Supported and coordinated development and adaptation of gender responsive and climate-smart technologies, innovations and management practices.</p> <p>2.2 Supported and coordinated scaling up of gender responsive and climate-smart technologies, innovations and management practices.</p> <p>2.3 Supported and coordinated development and scaling up of gender responsive and youth focused regional value chains and agribusinesses.</p>	<p>3.1 Supported and advocated establishment of transformative policy and regulatory environment.</p> <p>3.2 Supported and advocated establishment of functional and structured regional input and output markets.</p> <p>3.3 Supported and advocated establishment of transformative regional institutions and institutional arrangements.</p>	<p>4.1 Established and effectively managed regional technology and information clearing house.</p> <p>4.2 Established and effectively managed regional data bases, system models and decision-support tools.</p> <p>4.3 Established and effectively managed functional Platforms for communicating and exchanging knowledge and information.</p>
<p><i>Linking the Strategy and Results Framework to the Medium Term Operational Plan result framework and implementation plan</i></p>				

Intervention strategies and Activities	<i>Conduct of necessary and sufficient activities required to delivery intervention strategies and achieve immediate outcomes</i>			
Inputs and Resources	<i>Availability of sufficient inputs/resources and efficient management of ASARECA the Secretariat and ASARECA the Association</i>			
Critical Assumptions that must hold true to enable ASARECA deliver on its results chain				
1. The ECA member State leadership will continue to ensure sustained increase in public investment to agricultural research for development.	2. Agriculture will continue to be a major driver of sustainable rural and national agricultural and economic development of the ECA member States.	3. The ECA member States will follow agriculture-led inclusive growth strategy for social and economic transformation.	4. The RECs will recognize and support the repositioned ASARECA to provide support in the implementation of their agricultural strategies and programmes.	5. Development partners will continue to support the repositioned ASARECA and agricultural development in the ECA sub region.



Annex 1: The CAADP Results Framework – 2015-2025

Impact to which agriculture contributes.	Level 3 – Agriculture’s contribution to economic growth and inclusive development.			
	1.1 Wealth creation.	1.2 Food and Nutrition Security.	1.3 Economic opportunities, poverty alleviation and shared prosperity.	1.4 Resilience and sustainability.
	↑	↑	↑	↑
Change in African agriculture resulting from CAADP implementation on support.	Level 2 – Agricultural transformation and sustained inclusive agricultural growth.			
	2.1 Increased agricultural production and productivity.	2.2 Increased intra-African regional trade and better functioning of national and regional markets.	2.3 Expanded local agro-industry and value chain development inclusive of women and youth.	2.4 Increased resilience of livelihoods and improved management of risks in the agriculture sector.
	↑	↑	↑	↑
Added value of CAADP support to institutional transformation and systemic capacities.	Level 3 – Strengthening systemic capacity to deliver results.			
	3.1 Effective and inclusive policy design and implementation processes.	3.2 Effective and accountable institutions including assessing implementation of policies and commitment.	3.3 Strengthened evidence based planning, implementation and review.	3.4 Improved multi-sectoral coordination, partnerships and mutual accountability in sectors related to agriculture.
			3.5 Increased public and private investments in agriculture.	3.6 Increased capacity to generate, analyze and use data, information on knowledge and innovations.

Annex 2: CAADP Implementation Strategy and Roadmap - Strategic Objectives and Strategic Action Areas

Implementation Strategy and Roadmap - Strategic Objectives	Strategic Action Areas (SAAs)
Objective 1: Transformed agriculture and sustained inclusive growth.	SAA 1a: Adopt measures to increase sustainable agricultural production and productivity in an inclusive manner.
	SAA 1b: Markets infrastructure, regional trade and integration, and value chains development.
	SAA 1c: Increase resilience of livelihoods and production systems to climate variability and change and other shocks.
	SAA 1d: Strengthen governance of land, water and other natural resources.
Objective 2: Strengthened systemic capacity to implement and deliver results.	SAA 2a: Build and strengthen capacity for evidence-based planning, review and dialogue.
	SAA 2b: Review and implement policy and institutional reforms that strengthen leadership, management and technical capacity in agriculture.
	SAA 2c: Strengthen leadership to champion agriculture agenda, broker and mentor effective partnerships and to enhance coordination.
	SAA 2d: Enhance skills, knowledge and agricultural education.
	SAA 2e: Strengthen data and statistics for evidence-based planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and review processes.
	SAA 2f: Establish and institutionalize mutual accountability mechanisms with regular peer reviews and strong dialogue platforms.
	SAA 2g: Identify and enhance innovative models for increased public and private sector financing for agriculture investments along the value chain.

Annex 3: United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

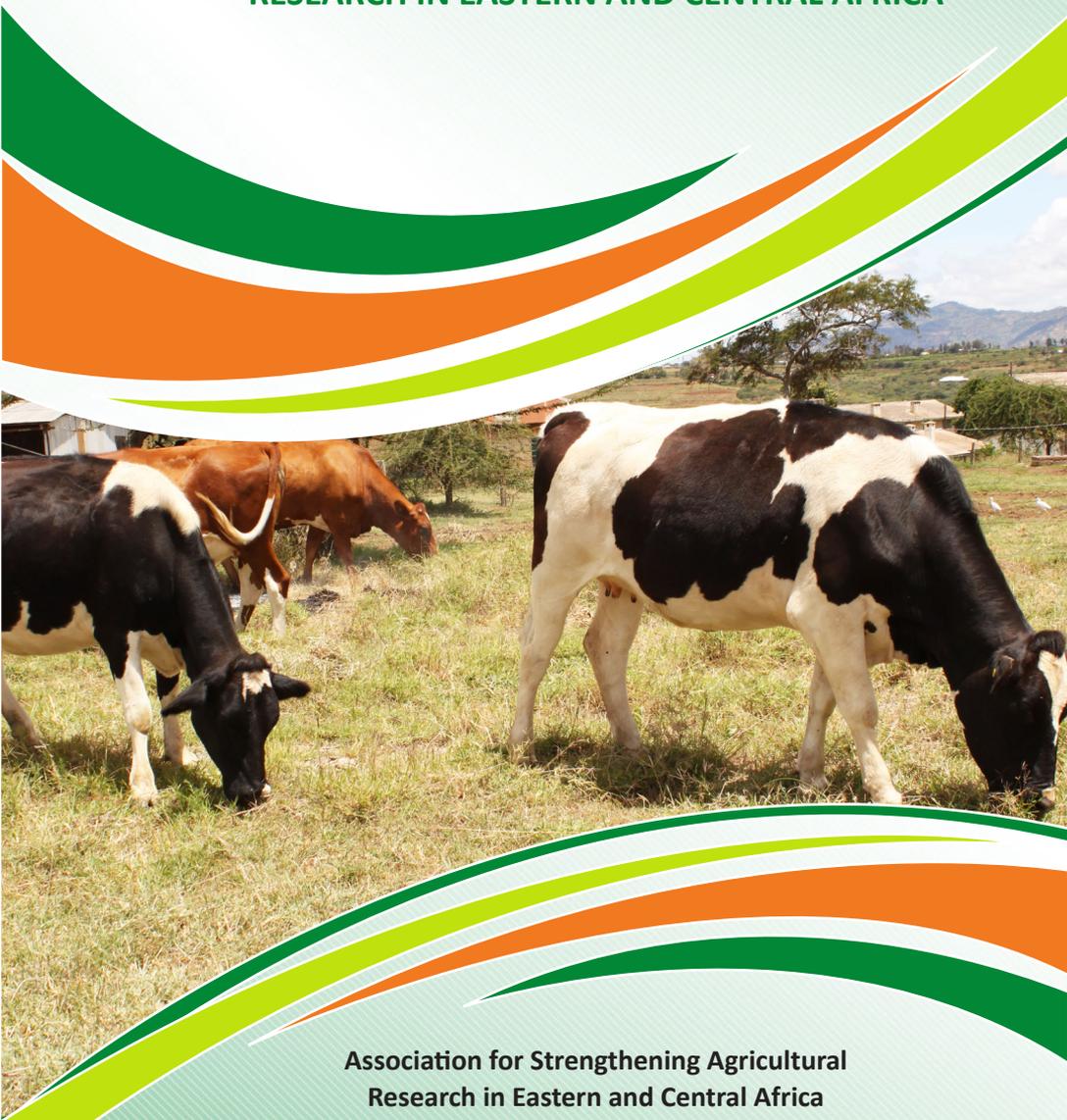
Goal	Description
Goal 1.	End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
Goal 2.	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
Goal 3.	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
Goal 4.	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.
Goal 5.	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
Goal 6.	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
Goal 7.	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.
Goal 8.	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
Goal 9.	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
Goal 10.	Reduce inequality within and among countries.
Goal 11.	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
Goal 12.	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
Goal 13.	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
Goal 14.	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
Goal 15.	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
Goal 16.	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
Goal 17.	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable Development.







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